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BARROW'S SERMONS.

SERMONS,
ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY
ISAAC BARROW, D. D.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOLUME I,
containing
TWENTY-FOUR SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. BAYNES AND SON, T. HAMILTON,
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1823.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENEAGE,

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM,

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND,

AND

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY-COUNCIL.

MY LORD,

I TAKE the boldness to present your Lordship with some of the fruits of my deceased Son's studies in divinity. And since it hath pleased God, to my unspeakable grief and loss, to deprive me of so great a blessing, and comfort of my old age, it is no small mitigation of my sorrow, that whilst he lived he was not unprofitable to the world, and that now he is dead, he hath left those monuments of his piety and learning behind him, which I am told are generally thought not unworthy to be imparted to the public.

IF these Sermons be such, I have no cause to doubt but they will easily obtain your Lordship's patronage, who are so known a favourer of all that is virtuous and worthy, especially of religion and the ministers of it; of which I had particular experience upon the death of my good Son, when

your Lordship was pleased, with so much humanity and condescension, to send to comfort me under that sad loss, and to express your own resentment of it.

But whatever these Sermons be, since I have no other way to acknowledge my great obligations to your Lordship upon all occasions, I hope your Lordship will please favourably to accept of this, how small soever, yet sincere testimony of my dutiful respects and gratitude. I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

and most obedient servant,

THOMAS BARROW.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE
OF
DR. ISAAC BARROW:

TO THE

REV. DR. TILLOTSON, DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

SIR,

THE affection of friends, or interest of the bookseller, has made it usual to prefix the life of an author before his works; and sometimes it is a care very necessary to give him a high and excellent character, the better to protect his writings against that censoriousness and misconstruction to which all are subject. What Dr. Barrow has left do as little as any need such an advantage, standing firm on their own worth; nay, his Works may supply the want of a history of his life, if the reader take along with him this general remark, that his Sermons were the counterpart of his actions; therein he has drawn the true picture of himself, so that in them *being dead he yet speaketh*, or rather, *is spoken of*. (Heb. xi. 4, marg.) Yet we the readers do gladly entertain any hopes of seeing his example added to his doctrine, and we think we express some kind of gratitude for your reviewing, digesting, and publishing his Sermons, if we desire from you his Life too.

His Sermons have cost you so much pains, as would have produced many more of your own; if now his Life should ask a farther part of your time, it were still promoting the same ends, the Doctor's honour, and the public good. What memorials I can recollect, I here present you, that when you have refined this ore, it may be admitted as my offering toward his statue. What may be said would have had a stronger impression upon our passions, when they were moved upon the first news of so great a loss; or perhaps it were best to forbear, till the publication of all his Works, when the reader will be farther prepared to admire him. But I proceed in the order of time, that the other particulars occurring to your memory, or suggested by other friends, may more readily find their proper place, and so give the better lustre to one another: and this I think the fitter to be observed, because the harmonious, regular, constant tenor of his life, is the most admirable thing in it. For though a life full of variety, and even of contrariety, were more easy to be writ, and to most more pleasant to be read, it less deserves to be imitated.

Dr. Isaac Barrow was the son of Mr. Thomas Barrow, (a citizen of London of good reputation yet living, brother to Isaac Barrow, late Lord Bishop of St. Asaph,) son of Isaac Barrow, Esq. of Spiny Abbey in Cambridgeshire, (where he was a Justice of Peace for forty years,) son of Plilip Barrough, who has in print a Method of Physic, and had a brother, Isaac Barrow, Doctor of Physic, a benefactor to Trinity College, and there tutor to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, and Lord Treasurer.

He was born in London, October 1630: his mother was Ann, daughter of William Buggin, of North Cray in Kent, Esq. whose tenderness he did not long enjoy, she dying when he was about four years old.

His first schooling was at the Charter-house for two or three years, when his greatest recreation was in such sports

as brought on fighting among the boys: in his aftertime a very great courage remained, whereof many instances might be set down; yet he had perfectly subdued all inclination to quarrelling, but a negligence of his clothes did always continue with him. For his book, he minded it not; and his father had little hope of success in the profession of a scholar, to which he had designed him. Nay, there was then so little appearance of that comfort which his father afterward received from him, that he often solemnly wished, that if it pleased God to take away any of his children, it might be his son Isaac: so vain a thing is man's judgment, and our providence unfit to guide our own affairs.

Removing thence to Felsted in Essex, he quickly made so great a progress in learning and all things praiseworthy, that his master appointed him a little tutor to the Lord Viscount Fairfax of Emely in Ireland. While he stayed here he was admitted in Peter-house, his uncle the Bishop's College; but when he removed to (and was fit for) the University of Cambridge, Feb. 1645, he was planted in Trinity College. His condition was very low, his father having suffered much in his estate on account of adhering to the King's cause; and being gone away from London to Oxford, his chief support at first was from the liberality of the famous and reverend Dr. Hammond, to whose memory he paid his thanks in an excellent Epitaph, (among his Poems,) wherein he describes the Doctor and himself too; for the most, and most noble parts of the character do exactly agree to them both. Being now, as it were, without relations, he abused not the opportunity to negligence in his studies, or licentiousness in his manners, but seasoned his tender years with the principles and the exercise of diligence, learning, and piety, the best preparatives for the succeeding varieties of life.

The young man continued such a royalist, that he would never take the Covenant; yet carrying himself with fair-

ness, candour, and prudence, he gained the good-will of the chief governors of the University. One day Dr. Hill, Master of the College, laying his hand on his head, said, *Thou art a good lad ; 'tis pity thou art a Cavalier* : and when in an Oration on the Gunpowder-Treason he had so celebrated the former times, as to reflect much on the present, some Fellows were provoked to move for his expulsion ; but the Master silenced them with this ; *Barrow is a better man than any of us*. Afterward, when the Engagement was imposed, he subscribed it ; but upon second thoughts, repenting of what he had done, he went back to the commissioners, and declared his dissatisfaction, and got his name rased out of the list.

For the juniors, he was always ready to give them his help, and very freely ; though for all the exercises he made for them in verse and prose he never received any recompense but one pair of gloves.

While he was yet a young scholar, his judgment was too great to rest satisfied with the shallow and superficial physiology then commonly taught and received in the Universities, wherewith students of meaner abilities contentedly took up : but he applied himself to the reading and considering the writings of the Lord Verulam, Monsieur Descartes, Galileo, and other the great wits of the last age, who seemed to offer something more solid and substantial.

When the time came that he could be chosen Fellow of his College, ann. Dom. 1649, he obtained by his merit ; nothing else could recommend him who was accounted of the contrary party. After his election, finding the times not favourable to men of his opinion in the affairs of Church and State, to qualify him (as he then thought) to do most good, he designed the profession of physie, and for some years bent his studies that way, and particularly made a great progress in the knowledge of anatomy, botanics, and chemistry. But afterward, upon

deliberation with himself, and conference with his uncle, the late Lord Bishop of St. Asaph, thinking that profession not well consistent with the oath he had taken when admitted Fellow, to make divinity the end of his studies, he quitted medicine, and applied himself chiefly to what his oath seemed to oblige him.

He was upon all opportunities so open and communicative, that many of his friends in that College (for out of it he had few acquaintance,) can, and I hope some one will, report frequent instances of his calm temper in a factious time, his large charity in a mean estate, his factious talk upon fit occasions, his indefatigable industry in various studies, his clear judgment on all arguments, his steady virtue in all difficulties, which they must often have observed, and can better describe.

Of his way of discourse I shall here note one thing, that when his opinion was demanded, he did usually speak to the importance as well as to the truth of the question: this was an excellent advantage, and to be met with in few men's conversation.

Tractare res multi norunt, æstimare pauci. CARDAN.

While he read Scaliger on Eusebius, he perceived the dependence of chronology on astronomy, which put him on the study of Ptolemy's *Almagest*; and finding that book and all astronomy to depend on geometry, he applied himself to Euclid's *Elements*, not satisfied till he had laid firm foundations; and so he made his first entry into the mathematics, having the learned Mr. John Ray then for his *socius studiorum*, and always for his esteemed friend: he proceeded to the demonstration of the other ancient mathematicians, and published his *Euclid* in a less form and a clearer method than any one had done before him: at the end of his demonstration of Apollonius he has writ,

April 14.

May. 16.

Intra hæc temporis intervalla peractum hoc opus.

To so much diligence nothing was impossible: and in

all his studies his way was not to leave off his design, till he brought it to effect: only in the Arabic language he made an essay for a little while, and then deserted it. In the same place having also writ, *Labore et constantia*, he adds, *Bonæ si conjungantur humilitati et subministrant charitati*. With these speculations the largeness of his mind could join poetry, to which he was always addicted, and very much valued that part thereof which consists of description; but the hyperboles of some modern poets he as much slighted: for our plays, he was an enemy to them, as a principal cause of the debauchery of these times; (the other causes he thought to be the French education and the ill examples of great persons:) for satires, he writ none; his wit was pure and peaceable.

When Dr. Duport resigned the chair of Greek Professor, he recommended this his pupil for his successor, who justified his Tutor's opinion by an excellent performance of the probation exercise; but being thought inclined to Arminianism, he obtained it not: however, he always acknowledged the favour which Dr. Whichcote shewed him on that, as on all occasions. The partiality of others against him in that affair some thought might help forward his desire to see foreign countries. I make no doubt, but that he, who in lesser occurrences did very judiciously consider all circumstances, had on good grounds made this resolution, and wish we now knew them; for the reasons and counsels of action would take off from the dryness of this narration, and more strongly recommend him to imitation.

To provide for his voyage, ann. Dom. 1654, he sold his books, and went first into France: at Paris he found his father attending the English Court, and out of his small *viaticum* made him a seasonable present. He gave his College an account of his voyage thither, which will be found among his Poems; and some farther observations in a letter, which will shew his piercing judgment

in political affairs, when he applied his thoughts that way.

After some months he went to Italy, and made a stay at Florence; where he had the favour, and neglected not the advantage, to peruse many books in the Great Duke's library, and ten thousand of his medals, and discourse thereon with Mr. Fitton, the fame of whose extraordinary abilities in that sort of learning had caused the Duke to invite him to the charge of that great treasury of antiquity.

Florence was too dear a place for him to remain in long: his desire was to visit Rome, rather than any other place; but the plague then raging there, he took ship at Livorn, (Nov. 1657,) for Smyrna, where he made himself most welcome to Consul Bretton, and the merchants; and so at Constantinople, to Sir Thomas Bendish, the English Ambassador, and Sir Jonathan Daws, from whose civility he received many favours; and there ever after continued between them an intimate friendship.

As he could presently learn to play at all games, so he could accommodate his discourse to all capacities, that it should be grateful and profitable; he could argue a point without arrogance or passion to convince the learned, and could talk pleasantly to the entertainment of easier minds, yet still maintaining his own character, which had some such authority as is insinuated in these words of Cicero to Atticus, (Ep. xx. l. 14.) *Non te Bruti nostri vulticulus ab ista oratione deterret?*

At Constantinople, the see of St. Chrysostom, he read over all the works of that Father, whom he much preferred before any of the others, and remained in Turkey above a year. Returning thence to Venice, as soon as he was landed the ship took fire, and with all the goods was burnt, but none of the people had any harm. He came thence home through Germany and Holland; and some

part of these travels and observations are also related in his Poems.

The term of time was now somewhat past, before which all Fellows of Trinity College are by the oath obliged to take upon them priestly orders, or quit the College: he had no rest in his mind, till he got himself ordained, notwithstanding the times were then very unsettled, the Church of England at a very low ebb, and circumstances much altered from what they were when he took the oath, wherewith others satisfied themselves in the neglect of orders.

When the Church and State flourished upon the King's restoration, his friends expected great things for him who had suffered and deserved so much: yet nothing came; so that he was sensible enough to say, (which he has not left among his Poems,)

*Te magis optavit rediturum, Carole, nemo,
Et nemo sensit te rediisse minus.*

1660, he was without a competitor chosen to the Greek Professorship in Cambridge; of which I can only say, that some friend (to himself I mean) thought fit to borrow, and never to restore those Lectures.

July 16, 1662, he was chosen to the Geometry Lecture at Gresham College, vacant by the death of Mr. Laurence Rook. Dr. Wilkins, who, while Trinity College had the happiness of his mastership, thoroughly observed and much esteemed him, and was always zealous to promote worthy men and generous designs, did interpose vigorously for his assistance, well knowing that few others could fill the place of such a predecessor; he not only discharged the duty incumbent on him, but supplied the absence of his learned colleague Dr. Pope, Astronomy Professor; and among other of his Lectures were divers of the Projections of

the Sphere; which he lent out also, and many other papers we hear no more of. He so well answered all expectation, and performed what Dr. Wilkins had undertaken for him, that when (1663) Mr. Lucas founded a Mathematic Lecture at Cambridge, the same good and constant friend recommended him to the executors, Mr. Raworth and Mr. Buck, who very readily conferred on him that employment: and the better to secure the end of so noble and useful a foundation, he took care that himself and successors should be bound to leave yearly to the University ten written Lectures; and those of his which have been, and others yet to be printed, will best give an account how well he acquitted himself of that service. But after that learned piece *Geometricæ Lectiones* had been some while in the world, he had heard only of two persons that had read it through; these two were Monsieur Slusius of Liege, and Mr. Gregory of Scotland, two that might be reckoned instead of thousands: yet the little relish that such things met with did help to loosen him from these speculations, and the more engage his inclination to the study of morality and divinity, which had always been so predominant, that when he commented on Archimedes, he could not forbear to prefer and admire much more Suarez for his book *De Legibus*: and before his Apollonius I find written this divine ejaculation:

Ὁ Θεὸς γεωμετρεῖ.

Tu autem, Domine, quantus es geometra? quum enim hæc scientia nullos terminos habeat; cum in sempiternum novorum theorematum inventioni locus relinquatur, etiam pene humanum ingenium, tu uno hæc omnia intuitu perspecta habes, absque catena consequentiæ, absque tædio demonstrationum. Ad cætera pene nihil facere potest intellectus noster; et tanquam brutorum phantasia videtur non nisi incerta quædam somniare, unde in iis quot sunt homines tot existunt fere sententiæ: in his conspiratur ab omnibus,

in his humanum ingenium se posse aliquid, imo ingens aliquid et mirificum visum est, ut nihil magis mirum, quod enim in cæteris pene ineptum in hoc efficax, sedulum, prosperum, &c. Te igitur vel ex hac re amare gaudeo, te suspicor, atque illum diem desiderare suspiriis fortibus, in quo purgata mente et claro oculo non hæc solum omnia absque hac successiva et laboriosa imaginandi cura, verum multo plura et majora ex tua bonitate et immensissima sanctissimaque benignitate conspiciere et scire concedetur, &c.

The last kindness and honour he did to his mathematic chair was to resign it (166) to so worthy a friend and successor as Mr. Isaac Newton, fixing his resolution to apply himself entirely to divinity; and he took a course very convenient for his public person as a preacher, and his private as a Christian; for those subjects which he thought most important to be considered for his own use, he cast into the method of sermons for the benefit of others, and herein was so exact, as to write some of them four or five times over. And now he was only a Fellow of Trinity College, till my Lord Bishop of St. Asaph gave him a small sinecure in Wales, and the Right Reverend Seth, Lord Bishop of Salisbury, (who very much valued his conversation,) a prebend in his Church; the advantages of both which he bestowed in a way of charity, and parted with them as soon as he was made Master of his College, (1672,) he and his relations being by that time out of a necessitous condition: the patent for his mastership being so drawn for him as it had been for some others, with permission to marry, he caused to be altered, thinking it not agreeable with the statutes, from which he desired no dispensation.

He had hitherto possessed but a scanty estate, which yet was made easy to him by a contented mind, and not made a trouble by envy at more plentiful fortunes: he could in patience possess his soul when he had little else; and now

with the same decency and moderation could maintain his character under the temptations of prosperity.

When the King advanced him to this dignity, he was pleased to say, *he had given it to the best scholar in England*: his Majesty had several times done him the honour to discourse with him, and this preferment was not at all obtained by faction or flattery; it was the King's own act, though his desert made those of the greatest power forward to contribute to it, particularly Gilbert, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Duke of Buckingham, then Chancellor of Cambridge, and formerly a member of Trinity College.

It were a disrespect to his College to doubt that where he had spent so much time, and obliged so many persons, he should not be most welcome; they knew, as his power increased, the effects of his goodness would do so too; and the senior Fellows so well understood and esteemed him, that with good-will and joy they received a Master much younger than any of themselves.

Besides the particular assistance he gave to many in their study, he concerned himself in every thing that was for the interest of his College. Upon the single affair of building their Library, he writ out quires of paper, chiefly to those who had been of the College, first to engage them, and then to give them thanks, which he never omitted. These letters he esteemed not enough to keep copies of; but by the generous returns they brought in, they appeared to be of no small value; and those gentlemen that please to send back their letters will deserve to be accounted farther benefactors in the Library. He had always been a constant and early man at the chapel, and now continued to do the same; and was therein encouraged, not only by his own devotion, but by the efficacy his example had upon many others of his College.

In this place, seated to his ease and satisfaction, a station

wherein of all others in the world he could have been most useful, and which he meant not to make use of as a step to ascend higher, he abated nothing of his studies; he yielded the day to his public business, and took from his morning sleep many hours, to increase his stock of Sermons, and write his Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy. He understood Popery both at home and abroad; he had narrowly observed it, militant in England, triumphant in Italy, disguised in France; and had earlier apprehensions than most others of the approaching danger, and would have appeared with the forwardest in a needful time: for his engagement in that cause, and his place in your friendship, I would (with the leave of the most worthy Dean of St. Paul's, his highly respected friend,) call him another Dr. Stillingfleet.

But so it pleased God, that being invited to preach the Passion-Sermon, April 13, 1677, at Guildhall Chapel, (and it was the second Sermon for which he received a pecuniary recompense,) he never preached but once more, falling sick of a fever: such a distemper he had once or twice before, otherwise of a constant health: this fatally prevailed against the skill and diligence of many physicians his good friends.

I think not myself competent to give an account of his life, much less of his sickness and death: if great grief had not forced silence, you, Sir, his dearest and most worthy friend, had perpetuated the remarkables of that sad scene, in a funeral sermon.

Our passions, which have hitherto been kept within the banks, should now be permitted to overflow, and they even expect to be moved by a breath of eloquence; but that is not my talent. In short, his death was suitable to his life: not this imperfect slight life, as I relate it, but that admirable, heroic, divine life which he lived.

He died the 4th of May, 1677; and had it not been too

inconvenient to carry him to Cambridge, then wit and eloquence had paid their tribute for the honour he has done them.

Now he is laid in Westminster Abbey, with a monument erected by the contribution of his friends, a piece of gratitude not usual in this age, and a respect peculiar to him among all the glories of that Church. I wish they would (as I have ventured) bring in their symbols toward the history of his life; there are many which long before me had the advantage of his conversation, and could offer more judicious observations, and in a style fit to speak of Dr. Barrow.

In the Epitaph, Dr. Mapletoft, his much esteemed friend, doth truly describe him; his picture was never made from the life, and the effigies on his tomb doth little resemble him. He was in person of the lesser size, and lean; of extraordinary strength, of a fair and calm complexion, a thin skin, very sensible of the cold; his eyes grey, clear, and somewhat short-sighted; his hair of a light auburn, very fine and curling. He is well represented by the figure of Marcus Brutus on his denarii; and I will transfer hither what is said of that great man.

Virtue was thy life's centre, and from thence

Did silently and constantly dispense

The gentle vigorous influence

To all the wide and fair circumference.

COWLEY.

The estate he left was books; those he bought, so well chosen as to be sold for more than they cost; and those he made, whereof a catalogue is annexed; and it were not improper to give a farther account of his Works than to name them: beside their number, variety, method, style, fulness, and usefulness, I might thence draw many proofs to confirm what I have before endeavoured to say to his advantage, and many more important reflections will be obvious to you, than to such a reader as I am. I will only take leave to say, that for his little piece of *The Unity*

of the Church, he has better deserved of the Church and religion, than many who make a greater figure in ecclesiastic history and politics. But such remarks will be more fitly placed in what we expect from his learned friends of the University. And to them I must also refer for the observables at the taking his several degrees, and discharging the office of Vice-Chancellor.

There are beside other particulars which are grateful to talk over among friends, not so proper perhaps to appear in a public writing. For instance, one morning going out of a friend's house, before which a huge and fierce mastiff was chained up, (as he used to be all day,) the dog flew at him; and he had that present courage to take the dog by the throat, and after much struggling bore him to the ground, and held him there, till the people could rise and part them, without any other hurt than the straining of his hands, which he felt some days after.

Some would excuse me for noting that he seemed intemperate in the love of fruit; but it was to him physic, as well as food; and he thought, that if fruit kills hundreds in autumn, it preserves thousands: and he was very free too in the use of tobacco, believing it did help to regulate his thinking.

I did at first mention the uniformity and constant tenor of his life, and proceeding on have noted several particulars of very different nature. I therefore explain myself thus; that he was always one by his exact conformity to the rule in a virtuous and prudent conversation; he steered by the same compass to the same port, when the storms forced him to shift his sails. His fortune did in some occasions partake of the unsettledness of the times wherein he lived; and to fit himself for the several works he was to do, he entered upon studies of several kinds, whereby he could not totally devote himself to one; which would have been more for the public benefit, according to his own opinion, which was, that general scholars did more

please themselves, but they who prosecuted particular subjects did more service to others.

Being thus engaged with variety of men and studies, his mind became stored with a wonderful plenty of words wherewith to express himself: and it happened that sometime he let slip a word not commonly used, which upon reflection he would doubtless have altered, for it was not out of affectation.

But his life were a subject requiring other kind of discourses; and as he that acts another man, doth also act himself; so he that would give an account of the excellent qualities in Dr. Barrow, would have a fair field wherein to display his own. Another Camerarius or Gassendus would make another Life of Melancthon, or Piereskus. What I am doing will not prevent them; I shall be well satisfied with my unskilfulness, if I provoke them to take the argument into better hands.

All I have said, or can say, is far short of the idea which Dr. Barrow's friends have formed of him, and that character under which he ought to appear to them who knew him not. Beside all the defects on my part, he had in himself this disadvantage of wanting foils to augment his lustre, and low places to give eminence to his heights; such virtues as his, contentment in all conditions, candour in doubtful cases, moderation among differing parties, knowledge without ostentation, are subjects fitter for praise than narrative.

If I could hear of an accusation, that I might vindicate our friend's fame, it would take off from the flatness of my expression; or a well-managed faction, under the name of zeal, for or against the Church, would shew well in story; but I have no shadows to set off my piece. I have laid together a few sticks for the funeral-fire, dry bones which can make but a skeleton, till some other hand lay on the flesh and sinews, and cause them to live and move. You will encourage others by pardoning me,

which I promise myself from that goodness wherewith Dr. Barrow and you have used to accept the small service with the great devotion of,

Sir,

Your obedient

And humble Servant,

A. H.

London,
April 10, 1683.

ISAACUS BARROW,

S. T. P. REGI CAROLO II. A SACRIS.

Vir prope divinus, et vere magnus, si quid magni habent

Pietas, probitas, fides, summa eruditio, par modestia,

Mores sanctissimi undequaque, et suavissimi.

Geometriæ Professor Londini Greshamensis,

Græcæ Linguæ, et Matheseos apud Cantabrigienses suos.

Cathedras omnes, ecclesiam, gentem ornavit.

Collegium S.S. Trinitatis Præses illustravit,

Jactis bibliothecæ vere Regiæ fundamentis auxit.

Opes, honores, et universum vitæ ambitum,

Ad majora natus, non contempsit, sed reliquit seculo.

Deum, quem a teneris coluit, cum primis imitatus est

Paucissimis egendo, benefaciendo quam plurimis,

Etiam posteris, quibus vel mortuus concionari non desinit.

Cætera, et pene majora ex scriptis peti possunt.

Abi, Lector, et æmulare.

Obiit IV. die Maii, ann. DOM. MDCLXXVII.

Ætat. suæ XLVII.

Monumentum hoc Amici posuere.

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PSALM lxiv. 9, 10.

And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God ; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him ; and all the upright in heart shall glory. p. 220.

SERMON XII.

A Consecration Sermon.

PSALM cxxxii. 16.

I will also clothe her priests with salvation. p. 251.

SERMON XIII.

Not to offend in Word, an Evidence of a high Pitch of
Virtue.

JAMES iii. 2.

If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man. p. 283.

SERMON XIV.

Against foolish Talking and Jestings.

EPHES. v. 4.

—*Nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.* p. 303.

SERMON XV.

Against rash and vain Swearing.

JAMES v. 12.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not. p. 329.

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Of Evil-speaking in general.

TITUS iii. 2.

—*To speak evil of no man.* p. 354.

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The Folly of Slander.

PROV. x. 18.

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SERMON XVIII.

The Folly of Slander.

PROV. x. 18.

He that uttereth slander is a fool. p. 400.

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Against Detraction.

JAMES iv. 11.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. p. 415.

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MATTH. vii. 1.

Judge not.

p. 431.

SERMON XXI.

Of Quietness, and doing our own Business.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.

p. 457

SERMON XXII.

Of Quietness, and doing our own Business.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.

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SERMON XXIII.

Of the Love of God.

MATTH. xxii. 37.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

p. 490.

SERMON XXIV.

Of the Love of God.

MATTH. xxii. 37.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

p. 511.

SERMON I.

THE PLEASANTNESS OF RELIGION.

PROV. iii. 17.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

THE meaning of these words seems plain and obvious, and to need little explication. *Her ways*, that is, the ways of Wisdom. What this Wisdom is, I shall not undertake accurately to describe. Briefly, I understand by it, an habitual skill or faculty of judging aright about matters of practice, and choosing according to that right judgment, and conforming the actions to such good choice. *Ways* and *paths* in Scripture-dialect are the courses and manners of action. For *doing* there is commonly called *walking*; and the methods of doing are the *ways* in which we walk. By *pleasantness* may be meant the joy and delight accompanying, and by *peace* the content and satisfaction ensuing such a course of actions. So that, in short, the sense of these words seems simply to be this; that a course of life directed by wisdom and good judgment is delightful in the practice, and brings content after it. The truth of which proposition it shall be my endeavour at this time to confirm by divers reasons, and illustrate by several instances.

I. Then, Wisdom of itself is delectable and satisfactory, as it implies a revelation of truth, and a detection of error to us. It is like light, pleasant to behold, casting a

SERM.
I.
Veritatis
lucis menti

SERM. sprightly lustre, and diffusing a benign influence all about ;
 I. presenting a goodly prospect of things to the eyes of our
 mind : displaying objects in their due shapes, postures,
 magnitudes, and colours ; quickening our spirits with a
 comfortable warmth, and disposing our minds to a cheer-
 ful activity ; dispelling the darkness of ignorance, scatter-
 ing the mists of doubt, driving away the spectres of de-
 lusive fancy ; mitigating the cold of sullen melancholy ;
 discovering obstacles, securing progress, and making the
 passages of life clear, open, and pleasant. We are all na-
 turally endowed with a strong appetite to know, to see, to
 pursue truth ; and with a bashful abhorrency from being
 deceived and entangled in mistake. And as success in in-
 quiry after truth affords matter of joy and triumph ; so be-
 ing conscious of error and miscarriage therein, is attended
 with shame and sorrow. These desires Wisdom in the
 most perfect manner satisfies, not by entertaining us with
 dry, empty, fruitless theories, upon mean and vulgar sub-
 jects ; but by enriching our minds with excellent and useful
 knowledge, directed to the noblest objects, and serviceable
 to the highest ends. Nor in its own nature only, but,

II. Much more in its worthy consequences is Wisdom
 exceedingly pleasant and peaceable : in general, by dis-
 posing us to acquire and to enjoy all the good, delight,
 and happiness we are capable of ; and by freeing us from
 all the inconveniences, mischiefs, and infelicities our con-
 dition is subject to. For whatever good from clear un-
 derstanding, deliberate advice, sagacious foresight, stable
 resolution, dexterous address, right intention, and orderly
 proceeding doth naturally result, Wisdom confers : what-
 ever evil blind ignorance, false presumption, unwary cre-
 dulity, precipitate rashness, unsteady purpose, ill con-
 trivance, backwardness, inability, unwieldiness and con-
 fusion of thought, beget, Wisdom prevents. From a thou-
 sand snares and treacherous allurements, from innumera-
 ble rocks and dangerous surprises, from exceedingly many
 needless incumbrances and vexatious toils of fruitless en-
 deavour, she redeems and secures us. More particularly,

hominis ni-
 hil dulcius.
Cic. Acad.

III. Wisdom assures us we take the best course, and proceed as we ought. For by the same means we judge aright, and reflecting upon that judgment are assured we do so: as the same arguments by which we demonstrate a theorem convince us we have demonstrated it, and the same light by which we see an object makes us know we see it. And this assurance in the progress of the action exceedingly pleases, and in the sequel of it infinitely contents us. He that judges amiss, not perceiving clearly the rectitude of his process, proceeds usually with a dubious solicitude; and at length, discovering his error, condemns his own choice, and receives no other satisfaction but of repentance. Like a traveller, who, being uncertain whether he goes in the right way, wanders in continual perplexity, till he be informed, and then too late, understanding his mistake, with regret seeks to recover himself into it. But he that knows his way, and is satisfied that it is the true one, walks on merrily and carelessly, not doubting he shall in good time arrive to his designed journey's end. Two troublesome mischiefs therefore Wisdom frees us from, the company of anxious doubt in our actions, and the consequence of bitter repentance: for no man can doubt of what he is sure, nor repent of what he knows good.

IV. Wisdom begets in us a hope of success in our actions, and is usually attended therewith. Now what is more delicious than hope? what more satisfactory than success? *That* is like the pursuit of a flying enemy, *this* like gathering the spoil; *that* like viewing the ripe corn, *this* like the joy of harvest itself. And he that aims at a good end, and knows he uses proper means to attain it, why should he despair of success, since effects naturally follow their causes, and the Divine Providence is wont to afford its concurrence to such proceedings? Beside that such well-grounded hope confirms resolution, and quickens activity, which mainly conduce to the prosperous issue of designs. Farther,

V. Wisdom prevents discouragement from the possibility of ill success, yea and makes disappointment itself

SERM. tolerable For if either the foresight of a possible miscarriage should discourage us from adventuring on action, or inculpable frustration were intolerable, we should with no heart apply ourselves to any thing; there being no designs in this world, though founded upon the most sound advice, and prosecuted by the most diligent endeavour, which may not be defeated, as depending upon divers causes above our power, and circumstances beyond our prospect. The inconstant opinions, uncertain resolutions, mutable affections, and fallacious pretences of men, upon which the accomplishment of most projects rely, may easily deceive and disappoint us. The imperceptible course of nature exerting itself in sudden tempests, diseases, and unlucky casualties, may surprise us, and give an end to our businesses and lives together. However, the irresistible power of the Divine Providence, guided by the unsearchable counsel of his will, we can never be assured that it will not interpose, and hinder the effects of our endeavours. Yet notwithstanding, when we act prudently, we have no reason to be disheartened; because, having good intentions, and using fit means, and having done our best, as no deserved blame, so no considerable damage can arrive to us: and though we find Almighty God hath crossed us, yet we are sure he is not displeas'd with us. Which consideration, wherewith Wisdom furnishes us, will make the worst success not only tolerable, but comfortable to us. For hence we have reason to hope, that the All-wise Goodness reserves a better reward for us, and will sometime recompense not only the good purposes we unhappily pursued, but also the unexpected disappointment we patiently endured; and that however we shall be no losers in the end. Which discourse is mainly fortified by considering how the best and wisest attempts have often miscarried. We see Moses, authorized by God's command, directed by his counsel, and conducted by his hand, intended to bring the Israelites into the land of Canaan; yet by the unreasonable incredulity and stubborn perverseness of that people he had his purpose frustrated. The holy prophets afterward

earnestly endeavoured to contain the same people within compass of obedience to the divine commands, and to reduce them from their idolatrous and wicked courses; yet without correspondent effect. Our Saviour, by the example of his holy life, continual instruction, and vehement exhortations, assayed to procure a belief of and submission to his most excellent doctrine; yet how few *believed his report*, and complied with his discipline! Yea, Almighty God himself often complains, how in a manner his designs were defeated, his desires thwarted, his offers refused, his counsels rejected, his expectations deceived. *Wherefore*, I sa. v. 4. (saith he concerning his vineyard,) *when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* And again, *I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious* I sa. lxx. 2. *people.* And again, *I have even sent unto you all my prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them: yet they* Jer. vii. 25, *hearkened not unto me.* 26. Wherefore there is no good cause we should be disheartened, or vexed, when success is wanting to well-advised purposes. It is foolish and ill-grounded intentions, and practices unwarrantable by good reason, that make the undertakers solicitous of success, and being defeated leave them disconsolate. Yea farther,

VI. Wisdom makes all the troubles, griefs, and pains incident to life, whether casual adversities, or natural afflictions, easy and supportable; by rightly valuing the importance, and moderating the influence of them. It suffers not busy fancy to alter the nature, amplify the degree, or extend the duration of them, by representing them more sad, heavy, and remediless than they truly are. It allows them no force beyond what naturally and necessarily they have, nor contributes nourishment to their increase. It keeps them at a due distance, not permitting them to encroach upon the soul, or to propagate their influence beyond their proper sphere. It will not let external mischances, as poverty and disgrace, to produce an inward sense which is beyond their natural efficacy: nor corporeal affections of sickness and pain to disturb the mind, with which they have nothing to do. The region

SERM. of these malignant distempers being at most but the habit
I. of the body, Wisdom by effectual antidotes repels them from the heart, and inward parts of the soul. If any thing, sin, and our unworthy miscarriages toward God, should vex and discompose us: yet this trouble Wisdom, by representing the divine goodness, and his tender mercies in our ever-blessed Redeemer, doth perfectly allay. And as for all other adversities, it abates their noxious power, by shewing us they are either merely imaginary, or very short and temporary: that they admit of remedy, or at most do not exclude comfort, not wholly hindering the operations of the mind, nor extinguishing its joys; that they may have a profitable use, and pleasant end; and, however, neither imply bad conscience, nor induce obligation to punishment. For,

VII. Wisdom hath always a good conscience attending it, that purest delight and richest cordial of the soul; that brazen wall, and impregnable fortress against both external assaults, and internal commotions; that *continual feast*, whereon the mind, destitute of all other repast, with a never languishing appetite, may entertain itself; that faithful witness, and impartial judge, whoever accuses, always acquitting the innocent soul; that certain friend, in no strait failing, in no adversity deserting; that sure refuge in all storms of fortune, and persecutions of disgrace; which, as Solomon here notes, renders a man's *sleep sweet*, and undisturbed with fearful phantasms, his heart light, and his steps secure; and, if any thing, can make the Stoical paradox good, and cause the wise man to smile in extremity of torment; arming his mind with an invincible courage, and infusing a due confidence into it, whereby he bears up cheerfully against malicious reproach, undauntedly sustains adversity, and triumphs over bad fortune. And this invaluable treasure the wise man is only capable of possessing; who certainly knows, and heartily approves the grounds upon which he proceeds; whereas the fool, building his choice upon blind chance, or violent passion, or giddy fancy, or uncertain example, not upon the steady warrant of good reason, cannot avoid

being perplexed with suspicion of mistake, and so necessarily is deprived of the comfort of a good conscience. SERM.
I.

VIII. Wisdom confers a facility, expert readiness, and dexterity in action; which is a very pleasant and commodious quality, and exceedingly sweetens activity. To do things with difficulty, struggling, and immoderate contention, disheartens a man, quells his courage, blunts the edge of his resolution, renders him sluggish and averse from business, though apprehended never so necessary, and of great moment. These obstructions Wisdom removes, facilitating operations, by directing the intention to ends possible and attainable, by suggesting fit means and instruments to work by, by contriving right methods and courses of process; the mind by it being stored with variety of good principles, sure rules, and happy expedients, reposed in the memory, and ready upon all occasions to be produced, and employed in practice.

IX. Wisdom begets a sound, healthful, and harmonious complexion of the soul, disposing us with judgment to distinguish, and with pleasure to relish savoury and wholesome things, but to nauseate and reject such as are ingrateful, and noxious to us; thereby capacifying us to enjoy pleasantly and innocently all those good things the divine goodness hath provided for, and consigned to us; whence to the soul proceeds all that comfort, joy, and vigour, which results to the body from a good constitution, and perfect health.

X. Wisdom acquaints us with ourselves, our own temper and constitution, our propensions and passions, our habitudes and capacities; a thing not only of mighty advantage, but of infinite pleasure and content to us. No man in the world less knows a fool than himself; nay, he is more than ignorant, for he constantly errs in the point, taking himself for, and demeaning himself as toward another, a better, a wiser, and abler man than he is. He hath wonderful conceits of his own qualities and faculties; he affects commendations incompetent to him; he soars at employment surpassing his ability to manage. No comedy can represent a mistake more odd and ridi-

SERM.
I. culous than his: for he wanders, and stares, and hunts after, but never can find nor discern himself; but always encounters with a false shadow instead thereof, which he passionately hugs and admires. But a wise man, by constant observation, and impartial reflection upon himself, grows very familiar with himself: he perceives his own inclinations, which, if bad, he strives to alter and correct; if good, he cherishes and corroborates them: he apprehends the matters he is fitting for, and capable to manage, neither too mean and unworthy of him, nor too high and difficult for him; and those applying his care to, he transacts easily, cheerfully, and successfully. So being neither puffed up with vain and overweening opinion, nor dejected with heartless diffidence of himself; neither admiring, nor despising; neither irksomely hating, nor fondly loving himself; he continues in good humour, maintains a sure friendship and fair correspondence with himself, and rejoices in the retirement and private conversation with his own thoughts: whence flows a pleasure and satisfaction unexpressible.

XI. Wisdom procures and preserves a constant favour and fair respect of men, purchases a good name, and upholds reputation in the world: which things are naturally desirable, commodious for life, encouragements to good, and preventive of many inconveniencies. The composed frame of mind, uniform and comely demeanour, compliant and inoffensive conversation, fair and punctual dealing, considerate motions, and dexterous addresses of wise men naturally beget esteem and affection in those that observe them. Neither than these things is there any thing more commendable to human regard. As symmetry and harmony to the animal senses, so delectable is an even temper of soul and orderly tenour of actions to rational apprehensions. Folly is freakish and humorous, impertinent and obstreperous, inconstant and inconsistent, peevish and exceptionous; and consequently fastidious to society, and productive of aversion and disrespect. But the wise man is stable in his ways, consonant to himself, suiting his actions to his words, and

those to his principles, and all to the rule of right reason; **SERM.**
so that you may know where to find him, and how to deal 1.
with him, and may easily please him, which makes his acquaintance acceptable, and his person valuable: beside that real worth of itself commands respect, and extorts veneration from men, and usually prosperity waits upon his well-advised attempts, which exceedingly adorn and advance the credit of the undertaker: however, if he fail sometime, his usual deportment salves his repute, and easily makes it credible it was no fault of his, but of his fortune. If a fool prosper, the honour is attributed to propitious chance; if he miscarry, to his own ill management: but the entire glory of happy undertakings crowns the head of Wisdom; while the disgrace of unlucky events falls elsewhere. His light, like that of the sun, cannot totally be eclipsed; it may be dimmed, but never extinguished, and always maintains a day, though overclouded with misfortune. Who less esteems the famous African captain for being overthrown in that last fatal battle, wherein he is said to have shewn the best skill, and yet endured the worst of success? Who contemns Cato, and other the grave citizens of Rome, for embracing the just, but improsperous cause of the commonwealth? A wise man's circumstances may vary and fluctuate like the floods about a rock; but he persists unmoveably the same, and his reputation unshaken: for he can always render a good account of his actions, and by reasonable apology elude the assaults of reproach.

XII. Wisdom instructs us to examine, compare, and rightly to value the objects that court our affections, and challenge our care; and thereby regulates our passions, and moderates our endeavours, which begets a pleasant serenity and peaceable tranquillity of mind. For when, being deluded with false shews, and relying upon ill-grounded presumptions, we highly esteem, passionately affect, and eagerly pursue things of little worth in themselves, or concernment to us, as we unhandsomely prostitute our affections, and prodigally mis-spend our time, and vainly lose our labour; so the event not answering

SERM. our expectation, our minds thereby are confounded, dis-
I. turbed, and distempered. But when, guided by right reason, we conceive great esteem of, and zealously are enamoured with, and vigorously strive to attain things of excellent worth, and weighty consequence; the conscience of having well placed our affections, and well employed our pains, and the experience of fruits corresponding to our hopes, ravishes our mind with unexpressible content. And so it is: present appearance and vulgar conceit ordinarily impose upon our fancies, disguising things with a deceitful varnish, and representing those that are vainest with the greatest advantage; whilst the noblest objects, being of a more subtle and spiritual nature, like fairest jewels enclosed in a homely box, avoid the notice of gross sense, and pass undiscerned by us. But the light of Wisdom, as it unmaskes specious imposture, and bereaves it of its false colours; so it penetrates into the retirements of true excellency, and reveals its genuine lustre. For example, corporeal pleasure, which so powerfully allures and enchants us, Wisdom declares that it is but a present, momentary, and transient satisfaction of brutish sense, dimming the light, sullyng the beauty, impairing the vigour, and restraining the activity of the mind; diverting from better operations, and indisposing it to enjoy purer delights; leaving no comfortable relish or gladsome memory behind it, but often followed with bitterness, regret, and disgrace. That the profit the world so greedily gapes after is but a possession of trifles, not valuable in themselves, nor rendering the masters of them so; accidentally obtained, and promiscuously enjoyed by all sorts, but commonly by the worst of men; difficultly acquired, and easily lost; however, to be used but for a very short time, and then to be resigned into uncertain hands. That the honour men so dote upon is ordinarily but the difference of a few petty circumstances, a peculiar name or title, a determinate place, a distinguishing ensign; things of only imaginary excellence, derived from chance, and conferring no advantage, except from some little influence they have upon the arbitrary opinion and fickle

humour of the people ; complacence in which is vain, and reliance upon it dangerous. That power and dominion, which men so impatiently struggle for, are but necessary evils introduced to restrain the bad tempers of men ; most evil to them that enjoy them ; requiring tedious attendance, distracting care, and vexatious toil ; attended with frequent disappointment, opprobrious censure, and dangerous envy ; having such real burdens, and slavish incumbrances, sweetened only by superficial pomps, strained obsequiousness, some petty privileges and exemptions scarce worth the mentioning. That wit and parts, of which men make such ostentation, are but natural endowments, commendable only in order to use, apt to engender pride and vanity, and hugely dangerous, if abused or misemployed. What should I mention beauty, that fading toy ; or bodily strength and activity, qualities so palpably inconsiderable ? Upon these and such like flattering objects, so adored by vulgar opinion, Wisdom exercising severe and impartial judgment, and perceiving in them no intrinsic excellence, no solid content springing from them, no perfection thence accruing to the mind, no high reward allotted to them, no security to the future condition, or other durable advantages proceeding from them ; it concludes they deserve not any high opinion of the mind, nor any vehement passion of the soul, nor any laborious care to be employed on them, and moderates our affections toward them : it frees us from anxious desire of them ; from being transported with excessive joy in the acquisition of them ; from being overwhelmed with disconsolate sorrow at the missing of them, or parting with them ; from repining and envying at those who have better success than ourselves in the procuring them ; from immoderate toil in getting, and care in preserving them : and so delivering us from all these unquiet anxieties of thought, tumultuous perturbations of passion, and tedious vexations of body, it maintains our minds in a cheerful calm, quiet indifferency, and comfortable liberty. On the other side, things of real worth and high concernment, that produce great satisfaction to the mind, and are

SERM. mainly conducive to our happiness, such as are a right understanding and strong sense of our obligations to Almighty God, and relations to men, a sound temper and complexion of mind, a virtuous disposition, a capacity to discharge the duties of our places, a due qualification to enjoy the happiness of the other world ; these and such like things, by discovering their nature, and the effects resulting from them, it engages us highly to esteem, ardently to affect, and industriously to pursue ; so preventing the inconveniencies that follow the want of them, and conveying the benefits arising from the possession of them.

XIII. Wisdom distinguishes the circumstances, limits the measures, determines the modes, appoints the fit seasons of action ; so preserving decorum and order, the parent of peace, and preventing confusion, the mother of iniquity, strife, and disquiet. It is in the business of human life as in a building ; a due proportion of bigness, a fit situation of place, a correspondency of shape, and suitability of colour, is to be observed between the parts thereof, a defect in any of which requisites, though the materials hap to be choice and excellent, makes the whole fabric deformed and ugly to judicious apprehension. The best actions, if they swell, and exceed their due measure, if they be unskillfully misplaced, if in uncouth manner performed, they lose their quality, and turn both to the disgrace and disadvantage of life. It is commendable to pray ; but they that would always be performing that duty, by their absurd devotion procured to themselves the title of heretics : and they that will stand praying in places of public concourse, deserved our Saviour's reprehensions ; and those men who, against the custom and ordinary use, would needs pray with their faces covered, you know St. Paul insinuates of them, that they were fond and contentious persons. Friendly admonition is very laudable, and of rare use ; but being upon all occasions immoderately used, or in public society so as to encroach upon modesty, or endamage reputation ; or when the person admonished is otherwise employed, and

attent upon his business ; or being delivered in an imperiously insulting way, or in harsh and opprobrious language ; it becomes unsavoury and odious, and both in shew and effect resembles a froward, malicious exceptionousness. It were infinite to compute in how many instances want of due order, measure and manner, do spoil and incommodate action. It is Wisdom that applies remedy to these mischiefs. Things must be compared to, and arbitrated by, her standard, or else they will contain something of monstrous enormity ; either strutting in unwieldy bulk, or sinking in defective scantness. If she do not fashion and model circumstances, they will sit ugly on the things that wear them ; if she do not temper the colours, and describe the lineaments, the draught of practice will be but rude and imperfect, and little resemble the true patterns of duty : but if she interpose, and perform her part, all things will appear conformable, neat, and delicate.

XIV. Wisdom discovers our relations, duties, and concerns, in respect of men, with the natural grounds of them ; thereby both qualifying and inclining us to the discharge of them : whence exceeding convenience, pleasure, and content ensues. By it we understand we are parts and members of the great body, the universe ; and are therefore concerned in the good management of it, and are thereby obliged to procure its order and peace, and by no irregular undertaking to disturb or discompose it ; which makes us honest and peaceable men : that we proceed from the same primitive stock, are children of the same father, and partake of the same blood with all men ; are endowed with like faculties of mind, passions of soul, shape of body, and sense of things : that we have equally implanted in our original constitution inclinations to love, pity, gratitude, sociableness, quiet, joy, reputation : that we have an indispensable need and impatient desire of company, assistance, comfort, and relief ; that therefore it is according to the design of nature, and agreeable to reason, that to those, to whom our natural condition by so many bands of cognation, similitude, and mutual necessitude, hath knit and conjoined us, we should bear a kind respect and

SERM. tender affection ; should cheerfully concur in undergoing the
 I. common burdens; should heartily wish and industriously promote their good, assist them in accomplishing their reasonable desires, thankfully requite the courtesies received from them, congratulate and rejoice with them in their prosperity, comfort them in their distresses, and, as we are able, relieve them ; however, tenderly compassionate their disappointments, miseries, and sorrows. This renders us kind and courteous neighbours, sweet and grateful companions. It represents unto us the dreadful effects and insupportable mischiefs arising from breach of faith, contravening the obligations of solemn pacts, infringing public laws, deviating from the received rules of equity, violating promises, and interrupting good correspondence among men ; by which considerations it engages us to be good citizens, obedient subjects, just dealers, and faithful friends. It minds us of the blindness, impotence, and levity, the proneness to mistake, and misbehaviour that human nature necessarily is subject to ; deserving rather our commiseration, than anger or hatred, which prompts us to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to be gentle in censure, to be insensible of petty affronts, to pardon injuries, to be patient, exorable, and reconcileable to those that give us greatest cause of offence. It teaches us, the good may, but the evil of our neighbour can in no wise advantage us ; that from the suffering of any man, simply considered, no benefit can accrue, nor natural satisfaction arise to us ; and that therefore it is a vain, base, brutish, and unreasonable thing, for any cause whatsoever, to desire or delight in the grief, pain, or misery of our neighbour, to hate or envy him, or insult over him, or devise mischief to him, or prosecute revenge upon him ; which makes us civil, noble, and placable enemies, or rather no enemies at all. So that Wisdom is in effect the genuine parent of all moral and political virtue, justice, and honesty ; as Solomon says in her person, *I lead in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment.* And how sweet these are in the practice, how comfortable in the consequences, the testimony of conti-

nual experience, and the unanimous consent of all wise men SERM.
sufficiently declare. But farther, I.

XV. The principal advantage of Wisdom is, its acquainting us with the nature and reason of true religion, and affording convictive arguments to persuade to the practice of it; which is accompanied with the purest delight, and attended with the most solid content imaginable. I say, the nature of religion, wherein it consists, and what it requires; the mistake of which produceth daily so many mischiefs and inconveniencies in the world, and exposes so good a name to so much reproach. It sheweth it consisteth not in fair professions and glorious pretences, but in real practice; not in a pertinacious adherence to any sect or party, but in a sincere love of goodness, and dislike of naughtiness, wherever discovering itself; not in vain ostentations and flourishes of outward performance, but in an inward good complexion of mind, exerting itself in works of true devotion and charity; not in a nice orthodoxy, or politic subjection of our judgements to the peremptory dictates of men, but in a sincere love of truth, in a hearty approbation of, and compliance with, the doctrines fundamentally good, and necessary to be believed; not in harsh censuring and virulently inveighing against others, but in careful amending our own ways; not in a peevish crossness and obstinate repugnancy to received laws and customs, but in a quiet and peaceable submission to the express laws of God, and lawful commands of man; not in a furious zeal for or against trivial circumstances, but in a conscionable practising the substantial parts of religion; not in a frequent talking or contentious disputing about it, but in a ready observance of the unquestionable rules and prescripts of it: in a word, that religion consists in nothing else but doing what becomes our relation to God, in a conformity or similitude to his nature, and in a willing obedience to his holy will: to which by potent incentives it allures and persuades us; by representing to us his transcendently glorious attributes, conspicuously displayed in the frame, order, and government of the world: that wonderful Power, which

SERM. erected this great and goodly fabric ; that incomprehensible
I. Wisdom, which preserves it in a constant harmony ; that immense Goodness, which hath so carefully provided for the various necessities, delights, and comforts of its innumerable inhabitants. I say, by representing those infinitely glorious perfections, it engages us with highest respect to esteem, reverence, and honour him. Also, by minding us of our manifold obligations to him, our receiving being, life, reason, sense, all the faculties, powers, excellencies, privileges, and commodities of our natures from him ; of his tender care and loving providence continually supporting and protecting us ; of his liberal beneficence, patient indulgence, and earnest desire of our good and happiness, by manifold expressions evidently manifested toward us ; it inflames us with ardent love, and obliges us to officious gratitude toward him. Also, by declaring the necessary and irreconcilable contrariety of his nature to all impurity and perverseness, his peerless majesty, his irresistible power, and his all-seeing knowledge, it begets an awful dread and a devout fear of him. By discovering him, from his infinite benignity, willing, and from his unlimited power only, able to supply our needs, relieve us in distresses, protect us from dangers, and confer any valuable benefit upon us, it engenders faith, and encourages us to rely upon him. By revealing to us his super-eminent sovereignty, uncontrollable dominion, and unquestionable authority over us ; together with the admirable excellency, wisdom, and equity of his laws, so just and reasonable in themselves, so suitable to our nature, so conducive to our good, so easy and practicable, so sweet and comfortable ; it powerfully inclines, and by a gentle force, as it were, constrains us to obedience. By such efficacious inducements Wisdom urges us to all duties of religion, and withal surely directs us (as I before said) wherein it consists ; teaching us to have right and worthy apprehensions of the divine nature, to which our devotion, if true and good, must be suited and conformed : and so it frees us, as from irreligion and profane neglect of God, so from fond superstitions, the sources

of so much evil to mankind. For he that wisely hath considered the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, cannot imagine God can with a regardless eye overlook his presumptuous contempts of his laws, or endure him to proceed in an outrageous defiance of Heaven, to continue hurting himself, or injuring his neighbour; nor can admit unreasonable terrors, or entertain suspicious conceits of God, as of an imperious master, or implacable tyrant over him, exacting impossible performances from, or delighting in the fatal miseries of his creatures; nor can suppose him pleased with hypocritical shews, and greatly taken with superficial courtships of ceremonious address; or that he can in any wise favour our fiery zeals, fierce passions, or unjust partialities about matter of opinion and ceremony; or can do otherwise than detest all factious, harsh, uncharitable, and revengeful proceedings, of what nature, or upon what ground soever; or that he can be so inconsistent with himself, as to approve any thing but what is like himself, that is, righteousness, sincerity, and beneficence.

SERM.

I.

Lastly, Wisdom attracts the favour of God, purchaseth a glorious reward, and secureth perpetual felicity to us. *For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom.* Wis. vii. 28. And, *Glorious is the fruit of good labours; and the root of wisdom shall never fall away.* iii. 15. And, *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom; and, Whoso findeth her, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.* Prov. iii. 13. viii. 35. These are the words of wise Solomon, in the book of Wisdom, and in the Proverbs. God loveth her, as most agreeable to his nature; as resembling him; as an offspring, beam, and efflux of that Wisdom which founded the earth, and established the heavens; as that which begetteth honour, love, and obedience to his commands, and truly glorifies him; and as that which promotes the good of his creatures, which he earnestly desires. And the paths she leads in are such as directly tend to the promised inheritance of joy and bliss.

Thus have I simply and plainly presented you with part of what my meditation suggested upon this subject: it

SERM. remains that we endeavour to obtain this excellent endow-
I. ment of soul, by the faithful exercise of our reason, careful
observation of things, diligent study of the divine law, watchful reflection upon ourselves, virtuous and religious practice; but especially, by imploring the divine influence, the original spring of light, and fountain of all true knowledge, following St. James's advice: *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth freely.* Therefore, O everlasting Wisdom, the Maker, Redeemer, and Governor of all things, let some comfortable beams from thy great body of heavenly light descend upon us, to illuminate our dark minds, and quicken our dead hearts; to enflame us with ardent love unto thee, and to direct our steps in obedience to thy laws, through the gloomy shades of this world, into that region of eternal light and bliss, where thou reignest in perfect glory and majesty, one God ever blessed, world without end. Amen.

SERMON II.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 TIM. iv. 8.

—*But Godliness is profitable for all things.*

How generally men, with most unanimous consent, are devoted to profit, as to the immediate scope of their designs, and aim of their doings, if with the slightest attention we view what is acted upon this theatre of human affairs, we cannot but discern. All that we see men so very serious and industrious about, which we call business; that which they trudge for in the streets, which they work or wait for in the shops, which they meet and crowd for at the exchange, which they sue for in the hall, and solicit for at the court, which they plow and dig for, which they march and fight for in the field, which they travel for at land, and sail for (among rocks and storms) upon the sea, which they plod for in the closet, and dispute for in the schools, (yea, may we not add, which they frequently pray for and preach for in the church?) what is it but profit? Is it not this apparently, for which men so eagerly contest and quarrel, so bitterly envy and emulate, so fiercely clamour and enveigh, so cunningly supplant and undermine one another; which stuffeth their hearts with mutual hatred and spite, which tippeth their tongues with slander and reproach, which often embrueth their hands with blood and slaughter; for which they expose their lives and limbs to danger, for

SERM.
II.

Prov. xiv.
23.
Φίλ, δὲ θεο-
λῶ ὡς μίγα
δύνασθον
πανταχοῦ.
Aristoph.
Plut.

SERM. II. which they undergo grievous toils and drudgeries, for which they distract their mind with cares, and *pierce their heart with sorrows*; to which they sacrifice their present ease and content, yea, to which commonly they prostitute their honour and conscience? This, if you mark it, is the great mistress, which is with so passionate rivalry every where wooed and courted; this is the common mark, which all eyes aim, and all endeavours strike at; this the hire which men demand for all their pains, the prize they hope for all their combats, the harvest they seek from all the year's assiduous labour. This is the bait, by which you may inveigle most men any whither; and the most certain sign, by which you may prognosticate what any man will do: for mark where his profit is, there will he be. This some professedly and with open face, others slyly and under thin veils of pretence, (under guise of friendship, of love to public good, of loyalty, of religious zeal :) some directly and in a plain track, others obliquely and by subtile trains; some by sordid and base means, others in ways more cleanly and plausible; some gravely and modestly, others wildly and furiously; all (very few excepted) in one manner or another, do clearly in most of their proceedings level and drive at*.

This practice then being so general, and seeing that men are reasonable creatures, that it is so cannot surely proceed from mere brutishness, or dotage; there must be some fair colour or semblance of reason, which draweth men into, and carrieth them forward in this way. The reason indeed is obvious and evident enough; the very name of profit implieth it, signifying that which is useful, or conducive to purposes really or seemingly good. The gain of money, or of somewhat equivalent thereto, is therefore specially termed profit, because it readily supplieth necessity, furnisheth convenience, feedeth pleasure,

* *Prima fere vota, et cunctis notissima templis,*

Divitiæ ut crescant, &c.

Juv. Sat. x.

Omnes ad affectum atque appetitum utilitatis suæ naturæ ipsius magisterio atque impulsione ducuntur. Salv. ad Eccl. Cath. 2.

satisfieth fancy and curiosity, promoteth ease and liberty, supporteth honour and dignity, procureth power, dependencies, and friendships, rendereth a man somebody considerable in the world; in fine, enableth to do good, or to perform works of beneficence and charity. Profit is therefore so much affected and pursued, because it is, or doth seem, apt to procure or promote some good desirable to us.

If therefore a project should be proposed to us very feasible, and probable to succeed, in pursuance whereof assuredly we might obtain great profit; methinks, in consistence with ourselves, and conformably to our usual manner of acting, we should be very ready to embrace and execute it. Such a project it is, which, in my text, by a very trusty voucher and skilful judge of such things, and one who had himself fully experimented it, is proposed; which in itself is very practicable, so that any of us may, if we have a mind to it, and will be at the pains, throughly compass and carry it on: which will exceedingly turn to account, and bring in gains unto us unspeakably vast; in comparison whereto all other designs, which men with so much care and toil do pursue, are very unprofitable or detrimental, yielding but shadows of profit, or bringing real damage to us.

It is briefly this, to be religious or pious; that is, in our minds stedfastly to believe on God, (such as nature in some measure, and revelation more clearly, declareth him,) in our hearts earnestly to love and reverence him, through all our practice sincerely and diligently to observe his laws. This is it which St. Paul affirmeth to be *profitable for all things*, and which it is my intent, by God's help, to recommend unto you as such; demonstrating it really to be so, by representing some of those numberless benefits and advantages which accrue from it, extending to all conditions and capacities of men, to all states, all seasons, and in effect to all affairs of life.

It hath been ever a main obstruction to the practice of piety, that it hath been taken for no friend, or rather for an enemy to profit; as both unprofitable and prejudicial

SERM. to its followers: and many semblances there are counte-
 II. nancing that opinion. For religion seemeth to smother or
 to slacken the industry and alacrity of men in following
 profit, many ways: by charging them to be content with
 a little, and careful for nothing; by diverting their affec-
 tions and cares from worldly affairs to matters of another
 nature, place, and time, prescribing in the first place to
 seek things spiritual, heavenly, and future; by disparaging
 all secular wealth, as a thing, in comparison to virtue
 and spiritual goods, very mean and inconsiderable; by
 checking greedy desires and aspiring thoughts after it; by
 debarring the most ready ways of getting it, (violence, ex-
 action, fraud, and flattery,) yea, straitening the best ways,
 eager care and diligence; by commending strict justice in
 all cases, and always taking part with conscience when it
 clasheth with interest; by paring away the largest uses of
 wealth, in the prohibition of its free enjoyment to pride or
 pleasure; by enjoining liberal communication thereof in ways
 of charity and mercy; by engaging men to expose their
 goods sometimes to imminent hazard, sometimes to certain
 loss; obliging them to forsake all things, and to embrace
 poverty for its sake.

It favoureth this conceit, to observe, that often bad men
 by impious courses do appear to thrive and prosper; while
 good men seem for their goodness to suffer, or to be no wise
 visibly better for it, enduring much hardship and distress.

It furthereth the prejudice, that some persons, void of
 true piety, or imperfectly good, (some *dabblers* in religion,)
 do not from their lame, slight, and superficial performances,
 feel satisfactory returns, such as they did presume to find;
 and thence, to the defamation of piety, are apt to say, with
 Mal. iii. 14. those men in the Prophet, *It is vain to serve God; and what
 profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we
 have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? Yea,*
 that sometimes very pious men, being out of humour, and
 somewhat discomposed by the urgent pressures of affliction,
 the disappointments and crosses incident to all men here in
 this region of trouble, are apt to complain and expres them-

selves dissatisfied, saying with Job, *It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God. What advantage will it be unto me, and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* or with David, *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency: for all the day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning.*

SERM.

II.

Job xxxiv.

9. xxxv. 3.

Ps. lxxiii.

13. 14.

To these considerations, disadvantageous in this respect to piety, may be added, that the constant and certain profits emergent from it (although incomparably more substantial, and to the mind more sensible than any other) are not yet so gross and palpable, that men, who from being immersed in earth and flesh are blind in error, dull of apprehension, vain and inconsiderate in their judgments, tainted and vitiated in their palates, can discern their worth, or relish their sweetness. Hence it is that so many follow the judgment and practice of those in Job, *who say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?*

Job xxi.

14, 15.

For voiding which prejudices, and the recommendation of St. Paul's project, I shall, as I said, propose some of those innumerable advantages, by considering which the immense profitableness of piety will appear. And first, I shall mention those considerations, which more plainly do import universality; then shall touch some benefits thereof, seeming more particular, yet in effect vastly large, and of a very diffusive influence.

I. First then, we may consider, that piety is exceeding useful for all sorts of men, in all capacities, all states, all relations; fitting and disposing them to manage all their respective concernments, to discharge all their peculiar duties, in a proper, just, and decent manner.

It rendereth all superiors equal and moderate in their administrations; mild, courteous, and affable in their converse; benign and condescensive in all their demeanour toward their inferiors.

Eph. vi. 9.

Col. iv. 1.

Correspondently it disposeth inferiors to be sincere and

Eph. vi. 5.

SERM. faithful, modest, loving, respectful, diligent, apt willingly to yield due subjection and service.

II.

Col. iii. 22. It inclineth princes to be just, gentle, benign, careful for
1 Pet. ii. 18. their subjects' good, apt to administer justice uprightly, to protect right, to encourage virtue, to check wickedness.

Rom. xiii. Answerably it rendereth subjects loyal, submissive, obedient,
1. quiet, and peaceable, ready to yield due honour, to
Tit. iii. 1. pay the tributes and bear the burdens imposed, to discharge
1 Pet. ii. 13. all duties, and observe all laws prescribed by their govern-
1 Pet. iv. 9. all duties, and observe all laws prescribed by their govern-
Phil. ii. 14. nors, conscionably, patiently, cheerfully, without reluctancy, grudging, or murmuring.

Eph. vi. 4. It maketh parents loving, gentle, provident for their
Col. iii. 21. children's good education, and comfortable subsistence;
1 Tim. v. 8. children again, dutiful, respectful, grateful, apt to requite
Eph. vi. 1. their parents.
Col. iii. 20.

Eph. v. 25. Husbands from it become affectionate and compliant to
Col. iii. 19. their wives; wives submissive and obedient to their hus-
1 Pet. iii. 7 bands.

Eph. v. 22. It disposeth friends to be friends indeed, full of cordial
Col. iii. 18. affection and good-will, entirely faithful, firmly constant,
Tit. ii. 5. industriously careful and active in performing all good of-
1 Pet. iii. 5. fices mutually.

It engageth men to be diligent in their calling, faithful to their trusts, contented and peaceable in their station, and thereby serviceable to public good.

Gal. vi. 2. It rendereth all men just and punctual in their dealing,
10. orderly and quiet in their behaviour, courteous and com-
Phil. iv. 8 plaisant in their conversation, friendly and charitable upon
1 Thess. iii. 12. all occasions, apt to assist, to relieve, to comfort one another.

2 Cor. ix. 13. It tieth all relations more fastly and strongly, assureth and augmenteth all endearments, enforceth and establisheth all obligations by the firm bands of conscience; set aside which, no engagement can hold sure against temptations of interest or pleasure. Much difference there is between performing these duties out of natural temper, fear of punishment, hope of temporal reward, selfish design, regard to credit, or other the like principles, and the discharging them out of religious conscience: this alone will

keep men tight, uniform, resolute, and stable; whereas all other principles are loose and slippery, will soon be shaken and falter. SERM. II.

In consequence to those practices springing from it, piety removeth oppression, violence, faction, disorders, and murmurings, out of the state; schisms and scandals out of the church; pride and haughtiness, sloth and luxury, detraction and sycophantry, out of the court; corruption and partiality out of judicatures; clamours and tumults out of the street; brawlings, grudges, and jealousies out of families; extortion and cozenage out of trade; strifes, emulations, slanderous backbitings, bitter and foul language out of conversation; in all places, in all societies it produceth, it advanceth, it establisheth, order, peace, safety, prosperity, all that is good, all that is lovely or handsome, all that is convenient or pleasant for human society and common life. It is that which, as the Wise Man saith, *exalteth a nation*; it is that which *establisheth a throne*.

It is indeed the best prop and guard that can be of government, and of the commonweal: for it settlcth the body politic in a sound constitution of health, it firmly cementeth the parts thereof; it putteth all things into a right order and steady course. It procureth mutual respect and affection between governors and subjects, whence ariseth safety, ease, and pleasure to both. It rendereth men truly good, (that is, just and honest, sober and considerate, modest and peaceable,) and thence apt, without any constraint or stir, to yield every one their due; not affected to needless change, not disposed to raise any disturbance. It putteth men in good humour, and keepeth them in it; whence things pass smoothly and pleasantly. It cherisheth worth, and encourageth industry; whence virtue flourisheth, and wealth is increased; whence the occasions and means of disorder are stopped, the pretences for sedition and faction are cut off. In fine, it certainly procureth the benediction of God, the source of all welfare and prosperity; whence, *When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth*; and, *When the righteous are*

Prov. xiv.
34. xvi. 12.
xx. 28.
xxix. 14.
viii. 15.
xxix. 8.

Prov. xi. 10.
xxix. 2.

SERM. *in authority, the people rejoice, saith the great politician*
 II. Solomon.

It is therefore the concernment of all men, who, as the
 Psal. xxxiv. Psalmist speaketh, *desire to live well, and would fain see*
 12.
 1 Pet. iii. 10 *good days*; it is the special interest of great persons, (of
 the magistracy, the nobility, the gentry, of all persons
 that have any considerable interest in the world,) who
 would safely and sweetly enjoy their dignity, power, or
 wealth, by all means to protect and promote piety, as the
 best instrument of their security, and undisturbedly enjoy-
 ing the accommodations of their state. 'Tis in all respects
 their best wisdom and policy; that which will as well pre-
 serve their outward state here, as satisfy their consciences
 within, and save their souls hereafter. All the Machiave-
 lian arts and tricks, all the sleights and fetches of worldly
 craft, do signify nothing in comparison to this one plain
 and easy way of securing and furthering their interests.

If then it be a gross absurdity to desire the fruits, and
 not to take care of the root, not to cultivate the stock, whence
 they sprout; if every prince gladly would have his subjects
 loyal and obedient, every master would have his servants
 honest, diligent, and observant, every parent would have his
 children officious and grateful, every man would have his
 friend faithful and kind, every one would have those just
 and sincere, with whom he doth negotiate or converse; if
 any one would choose to be related to such, and would es-
 teem their relation a happiness; then consequently should
 every man in reason strive to further piety, from whence
 alone those good dispositions and practices do proceed.

II. Piety doth fit a man for all conditions, qualifying him
 to pass through them all with the best advantage, wisely,
 cheerfully, and safely; so as to incur no considerable harm
 or detriment by them.

Is a man prosperous, high, or wealthy in condition?
 Piety guardeth him from all the mischiefs incident to that
 state, and disposeth him to enjoy the best advantages there-
 of. It keepeth him from being swelled and puffed up with
 vain conceit, from being transported with fond compla-

cence or confidence therein ; minding him, that it is purely the gift of God, that it absolutely dependeth on his disposal, so that it may soon be taken from him ; and that he cannot otherwise than by humility, by gratitude, by the good use of it, be secure to retain it ; minding him also, that he shall assuredly be forced to render a strict account concerning the good management thereof. It preserveth him from being perverted or corrupted with the temptations, to which that condition is most liable ; from luxury, from sloth, from stupidity, from forgetfulness of God, and of himself ; maintaining among the floods of plenty a sober and steady mind. It fenceth him from insolence, and fastuous contempt of others ; rendereth him civil, condescensive, kind and helpful to those who are in a meaner state. It instructeth and inciteth him to apply his wealth and power to the best uses, to the service of God, to the benefit of his neighbour, for his own best reputation, and most solid comfort. It is the right ballast of prosperity, the only antidote for all the inconveniencies of wealth ; that which secureth, sweeteneth, and sanctifieth all other goods : without it all apparent goods are very noxious, or extremely dangerous ; riches, power, honour, ease, pleasure, are so many poisons, or so many snares, without it. Again, is a man poor and low in the world ? Piety doth improve and sweeten even that state : it keepeth his spirits up above dejection, desperation, and disconsolateness ; it freeth him from all grievous solicitude and anxiety ; shewing him, that although he seemeth to have little, yet he may be assured to want nothing, he having a certain succour and never-failing supply from God's good providence ; that, notwithstanding the present straitness of his condition, or scantness of outward things, he hath a title to goods infinitely more precious and more considerable. A pious man cannot but apprehend himself like the child of a most wealthy, kind, and careful father, who, although he hath yet nothing in his own possession, or passing under his name, yet is assured, that he can never come into any want of what is needful to him : the Lord of all things (who hath all things in heaven and earth at his dis-

SERM.

II.

SERM. posal, who is infinitely tender of his children's good, who
 II. doth incessantly watch over them) being his gracious Fa-
 ther, how can he fear to be left destitute, or not to be com-
 petently provided for, as is truly best for him ?

This is the difference between a pious and an impious man. Is the pious man in need ? he hath then an invisible refuge to fly to, an invisible store to furnish him ; he hath somewhat beyond all present things to hope in, to comfort himself with : whereas the impious person hath nothing beside present appearances to support or solace himself by ; the which failing, down he sinketh into dejection and despair. Is the good man in affliction ? he knoweth that it cometh not on him without God's wise appointment, nor without good intention toward him, for probation, exercise, and improvement of his virtues, or for wholesome correction of his bad dispositions ; that it is only physic and discipline to him, which shall have a comfortable issue ; that it shall last no longer than it is expedient for him that it should : wherefore he patiently submitteth to it, and undergoeth it cheerfully, with the same mind wherewith a patient swalloweth down an unsavoury potion, which he presumeth will conduce to his health^b. Never, indeed, hath any man enjoyed more real content, or hath been more truly satisfied, than good men have been in a seeming depth of adversity. What men ever upon earth have been more sorely afflicted, have underwent greater losses, disgraces, labours, troubles, distresses in any kind, than did the holy Apostles ? Yet did they most heartily rejoice, exult, and triumph in them all^c. Such a wondrous virtue hath piety to change all things into matter of consolation and joy. No condition in effect can be evil or sad to a pious man : his very sorrows are pleasant, his

^b Scimus amicos Dei ab amantissimo, misericordissimo Patre Deo mala ista pœnalia recipere, non ut pœnam seu vindictam iracundiæ, sed magis ut correctiones et medicamenta stultitiæ, et adjumenta virtutis, ut malleationes sive fabricationes, et tunsiones, sive ablutiones, et candidationes. *Guil. Par. de Sacram.*

^c Ἐκείνους μὲν γὰρ ἐπεκούφιζεν ἡ χαρὰ τῆς μαρτυρίας, καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς τῶν ἐσθηγγε-
 μένων, καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγάπη, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ πατρικόν. *Euseb. v. 1. Mart.*
 Lugd.

infirmities are wholesome, his wants enrich him, his disgraces adorn him, his burdens ease him; his duties are privileges, his falls are the grounds of advancement, his very sins (as breeding contrition, humility, circumspection, and vigilance,) do better and profit him: whereas impiety doth spoil every condition, doth corrupt and embase all good things, doth embitter all the conveniencies and comforts of life.

SERM.
II.

III. Piety doth virtually comprise within it all other profits, serving all the designs of them all: whatever kind of desirable good we can hope to find from any other profit, we may be assured to enjoy from it.

He that hath it is *ipso facto* vastly rich, is entitled to immense treasures of most precious wealth; in comparison whereto all the gold and all the jewels in the world are mere baubles. He hath interest in God, and can call him his, who is the *all*, and in regard to whom all things existent are *less than nothing*. The infinite power and wisdom of God belong to him, to be ever, upon all fit occasions, employed for his benefit. All the inestimable treasures of heaven (a place infinitely more rich than the Indies) are his, after this moment of life, to have and to hold for ever: so that great reason had the Wise Man to say, that *In the house of the righteous is much treasure*. Piety therefore is profitable, as immediately instating in wealth: and whereas the desired fruits of profit are chiefly these, honour, power, pleasure, safety, liberty, ease, opportunity of getting knowledge, means of benefiting others; all these, we shall see, do abundantly accrue from piety, and in truth only from it.

The pious man is in truth most honourable. *Inter homines pro summo est optimus*, saith Seneca; whom Solomon translateth thus: *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*. He is dignified by the most illustrious titles, a son of God, a friend and favourite to the sovereign King of the world, an heir of heaven, a denizen of the Jerusalem above: titles far surpassing all those which worldly state doth assume. He is approved by the best and most infallible judgments, wherein true honour resideth. He is re-

Sen. Ep. xc.

Prov. xii.

26.

Κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὁ ἀγαθὸς μόνος τιμητός. Aristot. Eth. iii. 3.

SERM. II. spected by God himself, by the holy angels, by the blessed saints, by all good and all wise persons; yea, commonly, by all men: for the effects of genuine piety are so venerable and amiable, that scarce any man can do otherwise than in his heart much esteem him that worketh them.

Prov. xii. 3, 4.

The pious man is also the most potent man: he hath a kind of omnipotency, because he can do whatever he will, that is, what he ought to do^d; and because the Divine Power is ever ready to assist him in his pious enterprises, so that *he can do all things by Christ that strengtheneth him*. He is able to combat and vanquish him that is *ὁ ἰσχυρὸς* the stout and mighty one; to wage war with happy success *against principalities and powers*. He conquereth and commandeth himself, which is the bravest victory and noblest empire: he quelleth fleshly lusts, subdueth inordinate passions, and repelleth strong temptations. He, *by his faith, overcometh the world* with a conquest far more glorious than ever any Alexander or Cæsar could do. He, in fine, doth perform the most worthy exploits, and deserveth the most honourable triumphs that man can do.

Prov. xvi. 32. xxv. 28. Vide Sen. de Ben. v. 7.

The pious man also doth enjoy the only true pleasures; hearty, pure, solid, durable pleasures; such pleasures as those, of which the divine Psalmist singeth: *In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*. That *all joy in believing*, that *gaiety of hope*, that *incessant rejoicing in the Lord*, and *greatly delighting in his law*, that continual feast of a good conscience, that *serving the Lord with gladness*, that *exceeding gladness with God's countenance*, that *comfort of the Holy Spirit*, that *joy unspeakable and full of glory*; the satisfaction resulting from the contemplation of heavenly truth, from the sense of God's favour, and the pardon of his sins, from the influence of God's grace, from the hopes and anticipation of everlasting bliss; these are pleasures

^d Tantum quantum vult potest, qui se nisi quod debet non putat posse. Senec. Ep. xc.

indeed, in comparison whereto all other pleasures are no more than brutish sensualities, sordid impurities, superficial touches, transient flashes of delight: such as should be insipid and unsavoury to a rational appetite; such as are tinctured with sourness and bitterness, have painful remorse or qualms consequent ^e. All the pious man's performances of duty and of devotion are full of pure satisfaction and delight here, they shall be rewarded with perfect and endless joy hereafter.

As for safety, the pious man hath it most absolute and sure; he being guarded by Almighty power and wisdom; *resting under the shadow of God's wings; God upholding him with his hand, ordering his steps, so that none of them shall slide, holding his soul in life, and suffering not his feet to be moved*; he being, by the grace and mercy of God, secured from the assaults and impressions of all enemies, from sin and guilt, from the Devil, world, and flesh, from death and hell, which are our most formidable, and in effect only dangerous enemies.

As for liberty, the pious man most entirely and truly doth enjoy that; he alone is free from captivity to that cruel tyrant Satan, from the miserable slavery to sin, from the grievous dominion of lust and passion. He can do what he pleaseth, having a mind to do only what is good and fit. The Law he observeth is worthily called *the perfect law of liberty*; the Lord he serveth pretendeth only to command freemen and friends: *Ye are my friends*, said he, *if ye do whatever I command you*; and, *If the Son set you free, then are ye free indeed*.

And for ease, it is he only that knoweth it; having his mind exempted from the distraction of care, from disorder of passion, from anguish of conscience, from the drudgeries and troubles of the world, from the vexations and disquiets which sin produceth. He findeth it made good to him,

^e Quid enim jucundius, quam Dei Patris et Domini reconciliatio, quam veritatis revelatio, quam errorum cognitio, quam tot retro criminum venia? quæ major voluptas, quam fastidium ipsius voluptatis, quam sæculi totius contemptus, quam vera libertas, quam conscientia integra, quam vita sufficiens, quam mortis timor nullus, &c.? *Tert. de Spectac.* 29.

SERM.
II.

Ps. xvii. 8.
xxxvi. 7.
lvii. 1. lxi.
4. xci. 4.
xxxvii. 24.
cxix. 117.
xxxvii. 23.
31. cxix.
133. lxxvi. 9.
cxix. 45.

Jam. i. 25.

John xv.
14 viii. 36.
Οὐ γὰρ ἐστίν,
ὅτι ἐστὶν ἐλευ-
θερος, ἀλλ' ἢ
μὴ μόνος ὁ
Χριστὸς ζῶν.
*Chrysost. ad
Theod.*

SERM. which our Lord inviting him did promise, *Come unto me, II. all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*: he feeleth the truth of those divine assertions, *Thou Matt. xi. 28. Is. xxvi. 3. Ps. cxix. 165. will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; and, Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.*

As for knowledge, the pious man alone doth attain it considerably, so as to become truly wise and learned to purpose. *Evil men, saith the Wise Man himself, who knew well, understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things.* It is the pious man that employeth his mind upon the most proper and worthy objects, that knoweth things which certainly best deserve to be known, that hath his soul enriched with the choicest notions; he skilleth to aim at the best ends, and to compass them by the fittest means; he can assign to each thing its due worth and value; he can prosecute things by the best methods, and order his affairs in the best manner: so that he is sure not to be defeated or disappointed in his endeavours, nor to misspend his care and pains, without answerable fruit. He hath the best master to instruct him in his studies, and the best rules to direct him in his proceedings: he cannot be mistaken, seeing in his judgment and choice of things he conspireth with infallible wisdom. Therefore *ὁ εὐσεβῶν ἀκρῶς φιλοσοφεῖ, the pious man is the exquisite philosopher. The fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. The fear of the Lord (as is said again and again in Scripture) is the head (or top) of wisdom. A good understanding have all they that keep his commandments.*

Trismeg. Job xxviii. 28.
Prov. ix. 10 i. 7.
Psal. cxi. 10. cxix. 34. 99. 104. 130.

Farther: the pious man is enabled and disposed (hath the power and the heart) most to benefit and oblige others. He doth it by his succour and assistance, by his instruction and advice, which he is ever ready to yield to any man upon fit occasion: he doth it by the direction and encouragement of his good example: he doth it by his constant and earnest prayers for all men: he doth it by drawing down blessings from heaven on the place where he resideth. He is upon all accounts the most true, the most common

benefactor to mankind; all his neighbours, his country, the world, are in some way or other obliged to him: at least, he doth all the good he can, and in wish doth benefit all men. SERM.
II.

Thus all the fruits and consequences of profit, the which engage men so eagerly to pursue it, do in the best kind and highest degree result from piety, and indeed only from it. All the philosophical bravadoes concerning a wise man being only rich, only honourable, only happy, only above fortune, are verified in the pious man: to him alone, as such, with a sure foundation, without vanity, with evident reason, those aphorisms may be applied. They are paradoxes and fictions abstracting from religion, or considering men only under the light and power of nature; but supposing our religion true, a good Christian soberly, without arrogance, in proportion and according to the measure of his piety, may assume them to himself, as the holy Apostles did: *I possess all things, I can do all things*, he may in a sort say after St. Paul.

As for all other profits, secluding it, they are but imaginary and counterfeit, mere shadows and illusions, yielding only painted shows instead of substantial fruit. Sen Ep. 29.

If from bare worldly wealth (that which usurpeth the name of profit here) a man seeketh honour, he is deluded, for he is not thereby truly honourable; he is but a shining earth-worm, a well-trapped ass, a gaudy statue, a theatrical grandee: with God, who judgeth most rightly, he is mean and despicable: no intelligent person can inwardly respect him. Even here, in this world of fallacy and dotage, the wisest and soberest men, whose judgment usually doth sway that of others, cannot but contemn him, as master of no real good, nor fit for any good purpose; as seeing that in the end he will prove most beggarly and wretched.

If a man affecteth power thence, he is grievously mistaken: for, instead thereof, he proveth exceedingly feeble and impotent, able to perform nothing worthy a man, subject to fond humours and passions, servant to divers lusts and pleasures, *captivated by the Devil at his pleasure*, over-

SERM. borne by temptation, hurried by the stream of the world',
 II. and liable to the strokes of fortune.

If he propoundeth to himself thence the enjoyment of pleasure, he will also much fail therein: for in lieu thereof he shall find care and trouble, surfeiting and disease, wearisome satiety and bitter regret; being void of all true delight in his mind, satisfaction in his conscience; nothing here being able to furnish solid and stable pleasure.

If he fancieth safety, he deludeth himself: for how can he be safe, who is destitute of God's protection and succour; who is the object of Divine wrath and vengeance; who is assailed by many fierce and powerful enemies; whom the roaring lion is ready to devour; whom death and *sudden destruction* are coming to seize upon; whom guilt threateneth, and hell gapeth for; who without any guard or fence standeth exposed to such imminent, such horrid and ghastly dangers?

If he thirst for liberty, he will be frustrated: for he can be no otherwise than a slave, while he continueth impious; *servus tot dominorum, quot vitiorum, a slave to so many masters as he keepeth vices*: a slave to himself and his own lusts: carrying about with him the fetters of unsatiable desire, being hampered with inconsistent and irregular affections.

Ease he cannot obtain, being oppressed with unwieldy burdens of sin, of care, of trouble; being tossed with restless agitations of lust and passion; being *like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*.

If he meaneth to get wisdom, he is out; for wisdom and impiety are incompatible things. All his knowledge is vain, all his speculations are no better than dreams, seeing he erreth in the main point, and is *not wise to salvation*.

He is, in fine, extremely mistaken, and in all his projects will be lamentably disappointed, whoever fancieth any true profit without piety: he never can attain to be so much as wealthy; but drudge and plod what he can,

must be a beggar, and a forlorn wretch. For how can he be any wise rich, who doth want all the best things, the only valuable things in the world, which any man may have, which any good man doth possess? How can he be rich, who is destitute of the most needful accommodations of life; who constantly feedeth on the coarsest and most sordid fare, (the dust of self, the dung of sensuality;) who hath no faithful or constant friends, (nothing earthly can be such;) who is master of nothing but dirt, or chaff, or smoke? Whereas also riches do consist, not in what one enjoyeth at present, (for that can be little,) but in a presumed ability to enjoy afterward what he may come to need or desire; or in well-grounded hopes that he shall never fall into want or distress. How can that man be rich, who hath not any confidence in God, any interest in him, any reason to expect his blessing? yea, who hath much ground to fear the displeasure of him, in whose hand all things are, and who arbitrarily disposeth of all? Piety therefore is the only profitable thing, according to just esteem. *She is more precious than rubies, and all the things we can desire are not to be compared to her.* Upon this account it is most true, what the Psalmist affirmeth, *A little that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly.*

SERM.
II.

Prov. iii. 15.

Ps. xxxvii.
16.

IV. That commendation is not to be omitted, which is nearest at hand, and suggested by St. Paul himself to back this assertion concerning the universal profitableness of piety; *For, saith he, it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:* that is, God hath promised to reward it with blessings appertaining to this mortal life, and with those which concern the future eternal state.

As for the blessings of this life, although God hath not promised to load the godly man with affluence of worldly things, not to put him into a splendid and pompous garb, not to dispense to him that which may serve for pampering the flesh, or gratifying wanton fancy, not to exempt him from all the inconveniences to which human nature and this worldly state are subject; yet hath he promised

SERM. to furnish him with whatever is needful or convenient for him,
 II. in due measure and season, the which he doth best understand. There is no good thing which a man naturally desireth, or reasonably can wish for, which is not in express terms proposed as a reward, or a result of piety.

Prov. x. 6. In general, it is declared, that *Blessings are upon the*
 Deut. *head of the just*; that, *No good thing God will withhold*
 xxviii. 8. *from them that walk uprightly*; that, whatever otherwise
 xxx. 9. *doth fall out, it assuredly shall be well with them that fear*
 Ps. lxxxiv. 11. *God*; that, *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that*
 Eccles. viii. 12. *walketh in his ways*:—*happy shalt thou be, and it shall be*
 Isa. iii. 10. *well with thee*; that, *There shall no evil happen to the just*;
 Ps. cxxviii. 1, 2. *that, All things work together for good to them that love God.*

Particularly, there are promised to the pious man,
 Prov. xii. 21. A supply of all wants. *The Lord will not suffer the soul*
 Rom. viii. 28. *of the righteous to famish. The righteous eateth to the sa-*
 Prov. x. 3. *tisfying of his soul. There is no want to them that fear*
 Prov. xiii. 25. *God. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but*
 Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10. *they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*

A protection in all dangers. *The eye of the Lord is up-*
 xxxiii. 19. *on them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;*
 xxxvii. 3. *to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in*
 19. xxxiii. 18. *famine. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any*
 xxxiv. 20. *plague come nigh thy dwelling: He shall give his angels*
 cxii. 7. *charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

Guidance in all his undertakings and proceedings. *The*
 Ps. xxxvii. 23, &c. *steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord—none of his*
 Prov. iii. 6. *steps shall slide.—In all thy ways acknowledge him, and*
 (Prov. xi. 3. 5. xvi. 3.) *he shall direct thy paths.*

Success and prosperity in his designs. *Commit thy way*
 Ps. i. 3. *unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to*
 Job xxii. 28. *pass.—Whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.—Thou*
 Deut. xxviii. 8. *shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established; and the*
 12. *light shall shine upon thy ways. The Lord shall command*
 Prov. xxiii. 18. *a blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou*
 18. *settest thine hand unto. Thine expectation shall not be*
 cut off.

Comfortable enjoying the fruits of his industry.—*Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands.* **SERM. II.**

Satisfaction of all reasonable desires. *The desire of the righteous shall be granted. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he will hear their cry, and will save them.* Ps. cxxviii. 2. Prov. x. 24. Ps. xxxvii. 4. cxlv. 19.

Firm peace and quiet. *The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Great peace have they which love thy law. The fruit of righteousness is sowed in peace.* Isa. xxxii. 17. Psal. cxix. 165. James iii. 18.

Joy and alacrity. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.* Psal. xcvi. 11. Prov. xxix. 6.

Support and comfort in afflictions. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.* Ps. cxlvii. 3. Psal. xxxi. 24. xxvii. 14.

Deliverance from trouble. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.* Ps. xxxiv. 19. xxxvii. 39.

Preservation and recovery from mishaps, or miscarriages. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* Ps. xxxvii. 24.

Preferment of all sorts, to honour and dignity, to wealth and prosperity. *Wait upon the Lord, and keep his way; and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land. By humility and fear of the Lord are riches and honour. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord—wealth and riches are in his house. The upright shall have good things in possession. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasure. The tabernacle of the righteous shall flourish.* Ps. xxxvii. 34. Prov. xxii. 4. Ps. cxii. 1. 3. Prov. xxviii. 10. (Job xxxvi. 7.) Job xxxvi. 11.

Long life. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days. By me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. Let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add unto thee.* Prov. x. 27. ix. 11 iii. 1. 2. 16.

SERM. A good name enduring after death. *The memory of the*
 III. *just is blessed.*

Prov. x. 7. Blessings entailed on posterity. *His seed shall be mighty*
 25.

Ps. xxxvii. *upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

26. cxii. 2. *The root of the righteous shall not be moved.*

(Exod. xx. 6.) Thus is a liberal dispensation even of temporal goods an-

Prov. xii. 3. nexed by God's infallible word unto the practice of piety. It is indeed more frequently, abundantly, and explicitly pro-

Prov. xi. 31. mised unto God's ancient people, as being a conditional in-

Deut. xxviii. 1. gredient of the covenant made with them, exhibited in that

vii. 12. xi. as a recompence of their external performance of religious

13. works prescribed in their Law. The Gospel doth not so

clearly propound it, or so much insist upon it, as not princi-

2 Cor. iv. 17. pally belonging to the evangelical covenant, the which, in re-

Rom viii. 18. gard to the performance of its conditions by us, peculiarly

doth offer blessings spiritual, and relating to the future state;

as also scarce deserving to be mentioned in comparison to

those superior blessings. Yet as the celestial benefits, al-

though not openly tendered in the Jewish Law, were yet

mystically couched therein, and closely designed for the spi-

ritual and hearty practisers of religion; so is the collation of

temporal accommodations to be understood to belong to all

pious Christians: there is a *codicil*, as it were, annexed to

the New Testament, in which God signifieth his intention

to furnish his children with all that is needful or convenient

for them. His providence hath not ceased to watch over

us, his bounty doth not fail toward us even in this respect;

his care will not be wanting to feed us and clothe us com-

fortably, to protect us from evil, to prosper our good

undertakings. Hence doth he command us to care for

nothing, but to cast our care upon him, to recommend our

business to him, because he careth for us; he will never for-

sake us; he will hear our prayers, and help us. Hence

we are enjoined not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the

living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. Hence

it is said, that *The divine power hath given us all things*

pertaining unto life and godliness, through the knowledge

of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Hence it is

1 Pet. v. 7.

Phil. iv. 6.

1 eb xi 5.

Math. vi.

25.

1 Tim. vi.

17.

2 Pet. i. 3.

promised by our Lord, that, *If we seek first the kingdom of God, all things shall be added to us.* Hence it is inferred, SERM. II.
 as consequential to the nature of the evangelical dispensation, Matth. vi. 33.
 that we cannot want any good thing; *He, saith St. Paul, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32.
 In fine, hence it is proposed as notorious, that nothing is permitted to fall out otherwise than as conduceth to our good. *We know, saith St. Paul, that all things work together for good unto those that love God: nor will God, in any case, suffer us to be tempted, by any want or pressure, beyond what we are able to bear.* Rom. viii. 28. 1 Cor. x. 13.
 Thus is piety evidently profitable, as *having the promises of this life, or exhibiting all temporal blessings desirable to the practisers thereof.*

But infinitely more profitable it is, as *having the promises of the future life, or as procuring a title to those incomparably more excellent blessings of the other world; those indefectible treasures, that incorruptible, undefiled, and never-fading inheritance, reserved in heaven for us; that exceeding weight of glory; those ineffable joys of paradisc,* Luke xii. 33. 1 Pet. i. 4. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Pet. i. 8. iv. 13.
 that lightsome countenance and beautifying presence of God; that inconceivably and unexpressibly joyful, glorious, perfect, and endless bliss; briefly, all that is comprised and intimated in those words of the Apostle, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* 1 Cor. ii. 9.
 Infinitely profitable surely must that be, which procureth those things for us: and in these respects great reason had St. Paul to say, that *Godliness is profitable for all things.*

But farther to evidence and recommend this point, I might propound certain peculiar advantages arising from piety, which have a very general influence upon our lives, and do afford unto them exceeding benefit: but this I must, in regard to the time and your patience, at present forbear

SERMON III.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 TIM. iv. 8.

—*But Godliness is profitable for all things.*

SERM. III. **I**N discoursing formerly upon these words, I did propound divers general considerations, serving to confirm and recommend this assertion of St. Paul. I shall now insist upon some others more particular, which yet seem much conducive to the same purpose, declaring the vast utility of religion or piety.

I. We may consider, that religion doth prescribe the truest and best rules of action; thence enlightening our mind, and rectifying our practice in all matters, and upon all occasions, so that whatever is performed according to it, is done well and wisely, with a comely grace in regard to others, with a cheerful satisfaction in our own mind, with the best assurance that things are here capable of, to find happy success and beneficial fruit.

Of all things in the world there is nothing more generally profitable than light: by it we converse with the world, and have all things set before us; by it we truly and easily discern things in their right magnitude, shape, and colour; by it we guide our steps safely in prosecution of what is good, and shunning what is noxious; by it our spirits are comfortably warmed and cheered, our life, consequently our health, our vigour, and activity are preserved. The like

benefits doth religion, which is the light of our soul, yield to it. Pious men are *children of the light*; pious works are works of light *shining before men*. *God's word* (or true religion) *is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path*; enabling us to perceive things, and judge rightly of them; teaching us to walk straightly and surely, without erring or stumbling; qualifying us to embrace what is useful, and to avoid hurtful things; preserving our spiritual life, and disposing us to act well with a vigorous alacrity: without it a man is stark blind, and utterly benighted, *gropeth* in doubt, wandereth in mistake, trippeth upon all occasions, and often falleth into mischief. *The path of the just*, saith the **Wise Man**, *is as the shining light*. *The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble*. *Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way; but wickedness overthroweth the sinner*.

SERM.

III.

Luke xvi. 5.

Eph. v. 8.

1 Thess. v.

5.

John xii.

36.

Matt. v. 16.

Eph. v. 11.

Psal. cxix.

105.

Is. lix. 10.

Job v. 14.

Deut.

xxviii. 29.

Prov. iv.

18, 19.

Prov. xiii.

6. xi. 3. 5.

Again: it is a fair ornament of a man, and a grand convenience both to himself, and to others with whom he converseth or dealeth, to act regularly, uniformly, and consistently; freeing a man's self from distraction and irresolution in his mind, from change and confusion in his proceedings; securing others from delusion and disappointment in their transactions with him. ^aEven a bad rule constantly observed is therefore better than none: order and perseverance in any way seemeth more convenient than roving and tossing about in uncertainties. But, secluding a regard to the precepts of religion, there can hardly be any sure or settled rule, which firmly can engage a man to, or effectually restrain a man from, any thing.

There is scarce in nature any thing so wild, so untractable, so unintelligible, as a man who hath no bridle of conscience to guide or check him. A profane man is like a ship, without anchor to stay him, or rudder to steer him, or compass to guide him; so that he is tossed with any wind, and driven with any wave, none knoweth whither;

^a *Via eunti aliquid extremum est; error immensus est.* Sen. Ep. 16.

SERM. whither bodily temper doth sway him, or passion doth hurry
 III. him, or interest doth pull him, or example leadeth him, or
 company inveigleth and haleth him, or humour transporteth
 him; whither any such variable and unaccountable causes
 determine him, or divers of them together distract him: whence he so rambleth and hovereth, that he can seldom himself tell what in any case he should do, nor can another guess it; so that you cannot at any time know where to find him, or how to deal with him: you cannot with reason ever rely upon him, so *unstable he is in all his ways*. He is in effect a mere child, all humour and giddiness, somewhat worse than a beast, which, following the instinct of its nature, is constant and regular, and thence tractable; or at least so untractable, that no man will be deceived in meddling with him. Nothing therefore can be more unmanly than such a person, nothing can be more unpleasant than to have to do with him^b.

But a pious man, being steadily governed by conscience, and a regard to certain principles, doth both understand himself and is intelligible to others: he presently descrieth what in any case he is to do, and can render an account of his acting: you may know him clearly, and assuredly tell what he will do, and may therefore fully confide in him^c.

What therefore law and government are to the public, things necessary to preserve the world in order, peace, and safety, (that men may know what to do, and distinguish what is their own,) that is piety to each man's private state, and to ordinary conversation; it freeth a man's own life from disorder and distraction; it prompteth men how to behave themselves toward one another with security and confidence.

This it doth by confining our practice within settled bounds: but this advantage appeareth greater, consider-

^b Nihil est tam occupatum, tam multiforme, tot ac tam variis affectibus concisum atque laceratum, quam mala mens. *Quint.* xii. 1.

^c Οἱ ἐπιεικεῖς ἑαυτοῖς ἁμονοῦσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις, ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ὄντες, ὡς εἰπεῖν τῶν τοιοῦτων μένει γὰρ τὰ βεβλήματα, καὶ οὐ μεταρρέει, ὥσπερ εὐριπτος. *Arist. Eth.* ix. 6.

ing that the rules which it prescribeth are the best that can be. Such they must needs be, as proceeding from infallible wisdom and immense goodness; being indeed no other than laws, which the all-wise and most gracious Lord and Maker of the world, out of tender kindness to his subjects and creatures, with especial regard to our welfare, hath been pleased to enact and declare. What of old he said to the Israelites concerning their laws, may with greater advantage be applied to those, which should regulate our lives: *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?* (For thy good; that was the design of their being commanded; thereto the observance of them did tend.) And that commendation, which by the Levites in Nehemiah is given to that, doth more clearly and fully agree to the Christian (general and perfect) institution: *Thou camest down from mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments.* And, *The law, saith the Apostle Paul, is holy; the commandment is holy, just, and good:* as such it is recommended to us by its Author, so we Christians are by many great arguments assured that it is, and that it is such even our natural reason dictateth; so (as to the chief instances thereof) the most wise and sober men always have acknowledged, so the general consent doth avow, and so even common experience doth attest. For, heartily to love and reverence the Maker of all things, who by every thing apparent before us demonstrateth himself incomprehensibly powerful, wise, and good, to be kind and charitable to our neighbours, to be just and faithful in our dealings, to be sober and modest in our minds, to be meek and gentle in our demeanours, to be staunch and temperate in our enjoyments, and the like principal rules of duty, are such, that the common reason of men and continual experience do approve them as hugely

SERM.
III.Deut. x.
12, 13.

Neh. ix. 12.

Rom. vii.
12.

SERM. III. conducible to the public good of men, and to each man's private welfare. So notoriously beneficial they appear, that for the justification of them we might appeal even to the judgment and conscience of those persons who are most concerned to derogate from them. For hardly can any man be so senseless, or so lewd, as seriously to disapprove or condemn them, as inwardly to blame or slight those who truly act according to them. The will of men sometimes may be so depraved, that dissolute persons wantonly and heedlessly may scoff at and seem to disparage goodness; that good men, by very bad men, for doing well, may be envied and hated: (their being so treated is commonly an argument of the goodness of their persons and of their ways:) but the understanding of men can hardly be so corrupted, that piety, charity, justice, temperance, meekness, can in good earnest considerately by any man be disallowed, or that persons apparently practising them can be despised; but rather, in spite of all contrary prejudice and disaffections, such things and such persons cannot but in judgment and heart be esteemed by all men. The lustre of them by a natural and necessary efficacy (like that of heaven's glorious light) dazzleth the sight and charmeth the spirits of all men living; the beauty of them irresistibly conquereth and commandeth in the apprehensions of men: the more they are observed, the more useful and needful they appear for the good of men; all the fruits which grow from the observance of them being to all men's taste very pleasant, to all men's experience very wholesome. Indeed, all the good whereby common life is adorned, is sweetened, is rendered pleasant and desirable, doth spring thence; all the mischiefs which infest particular men, and which disturb the world, palpably do arise from the transgression or neglect thereof.

If we look on a person sticking to those rules, we shall perceive him to have a cheerful mind and composed passions, to be at peace within, and satisfied with himself; to live in comely order, in good repute, in fair correspondence, and firm concord with his neighbours. If we mark what preserveth the body sound and lusty, what keepeth

the mind vigorous and brisk, what saveth and improveth the estate, what upholdeth the good name, what guardeth and graceth a man's whole life; it is nothing else but proceeding in our demeanour and dealings according to the honest and wise rules of piety. If we view a place where these commonly in good measure are observed, we shall discern, that peace and prosperity do flourish there; that all things proceed on sweetly and fairly; that men generally drive on conversation and commerce together contentedly, delightfully, advantageously, yielding friendly advice and aid mutually, striving to render one another happy; that few clamours or complaints are heard there, few contentions or stirs do appear, few disasters or tragedies do occur; that such a place hath indeed much of the face, much of the substance of Paradise.

But if you mind a person who neglecteth them, you will find his mind galled with sore remorse, racked with anxious fears and doubts, agitated with storms of passion and lust, living in disorder and disgrace, jarring with others, and no less dissatisfied with himself. If you observe what doth impair the health, doth weaken and fret the mind, doth waste the estate, doth blemish the reputation, doth expose the whole life to danger and trouble; what is it but thwarting these good rules? If you consider a place where these are much neglected, it will appear like a wilderness of savage beasts, or a sty of foul swine, or a hell of cursed fiends; full of roaring and tearing, of factions and feuds, of distractions and confusions, of pitiful objects, of doleful moans, of tragical events. Men are there wallowing in filth, wildly revelling, bickering and squabbling, defaming, circumventing, disturbing and vexing one another; as if they affected nothing more than to render one another as miserable as they can. It is from lust and luxury, from ambition and avarice, from envy and spite, and the like dispositions, which religion chiefly doth interdict, that all such horrid mischiefs do spring.

In fine, the precepts of religion are no other than such

SERM. as physicians would prescribe for the health of our bodies,
 III. as politicians would avow needful for the peace of the state, as Epicurean philosophers do recommend for the tranquillity of our mind, and pleasure of our lives; such as common reason dictateth, and daily trial sheweth conducive to our welfare in all respects: which, consequently, were there no law exacting them of us, we should in wisdom choose to observe, and voluntarily impose on ourselves, confessing them to be fit matters of law, as most advantageous and requisite to the good (general and particular) of mankind. So that what Plutarch reporteth
 Plut.in.Sol. Solon to have said, that *he had so squared his laws to the citizens, that all of them might clearly perceive, that to observe them was more for their benefit and interest than to violate them,* is far more true concerning the divine laws.

II. We may consider more particularly, that piety yieldeth to the practiser all kind of interior content, peace, and joy; freeth him from all kinds of dissatisfaction, regret, and disquiet; which is an inestimably great advantage: for certainly the happiness and misery of men are wholly or chiefly seated and founded in the mind. If that is in a good state of health, rest, and cheerfulness, whatever the person's outward condition or circumstances be, he cannot be wretched: if that be distempered or disturbed, he cannot be happy. For what if a man seem very poor; if he be abundantly satisfied in his own possessions and enjoyments? What if he tasteth not the pleasures of sense; if he enjoyeth purer and sweeter delights of mind? What if tempests of fortune surround him; if his mind be calm and serene? What if he have few or no friends; if he yet be throughly in peace and amity with himself, and can delightfully converse with his own thoughts? What if men slight, censure, or revile him; if he doth value his own state, doth approve his own actions, doth acquit himself of blame in his own conscience? Such external contingencies can surely no more prejudice a man's real happiness, than winds blustering abroad can harm or trouble him that abideth in a good room within doors, than storms and fluctuations

at sea can molest him who standeth firm upon the shore. On the other hand, the greatest affluence of seeming goods will avail nothing, if real content of mind be wanting. For what will the highest eminence of outward state import to him that is dejected in his own conceit? What if the world court and bless him, or if all people do admire and applaud him; if he be displeas'd with, if he condemneth, if he despiseth himself? What if the weather look fair and bright without, if storms rage in his breast, if black clouds do overcast his soul? What if he do abound with friends, and enjoy peace abroad; if he find distraction at home, and is at cruel variance with himself? How can a man enjoy any satisfaction, or relish any pleasure, while sore remorse doth sting him, or solicitous doubts and fears do rack him?

SERM.
III.

Prov. xviii.

4.

Now that from the practice of religion, and from it alone, such inward content and pleasure do spring; that it only ministereth reason of content, and disposeth the mind to enjoy it; that it extirpateth the grounds and roots of discontent; that it is the only mother of true, sober alacrity and tranquillity of mind, will, upon considering things, be manifest.

There is no other thing here in this world that can yield any solid or stable content to our mind. For all present enjoyments are transient and evanid; and of any future thing, in this kingdom of change and contingency, there can be no assurance. There is nothing below large enough to fill our vast capacities, or to satiate our boundless desires, or to appease our squeamish delicacy. There is nothing whose sweetness we do not presently exhaust and suck dry; whereof thence we do not soon grow weary, quite loathing, or faintly liking it. There is not any thing which is not slippery and fleeting; so that we can for a long time hope to possess it, or for any time can enjoy it, without restless care in keeping it, and anxious fear of losing it. Nothing

Prov. xxvii.

24.

Prov. xxvii.

20.

a Chrysostom. in Rom. i. Or. 1. Εὐθυμίαν γὰρ καὶ χαρὰν ἐκ ἀρχῆς μέγιστος, οὐ χρημάτων πλῆθος, οὐ δυναστείας ὄγκος, οὐκ ἰσχὺς σώματος, οὐ πολυτέλεια τραπέζης, οὐχ ἱματίων κόσμος, οὐκ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀιδρωστίων ποιῆν εἴωθεν, ἀλλ' ἡ εὐπρόσωμα μόνον πνευματικὸν, καὶ συνειδὸς ἀγαθόν.

SERM. there is, in the pursuance, the custody, the defence and
 III. maintenance whereof we are not liable to disappointments
 and crosses. Nothing consequently there is productive of
 any sound content to the fastidious, impatient, greedy, and
 restless heart of man. The greatest confluence of present,
 corporeal, secular things (of all the health, the riches, the
 dignity, the power, the friendships and dependencies, the
 wit, the learning and wisdom, the reputation and renown in
 this world) will not afford much of it: which yet is but an
 imaginary supposition; for in effect hardly do all such
 accommodations of life concur in any state. There is
 Eccles. x. 1. ever some *dead fly* in our box, which marreth our *ointment*; some
 adherent inconvenience, which soureth the gust of
 our enjoyments: there is always some good thing absent,
 which we do want or long for; some ill thing present, or
 in prospect, which we abhor, would avoid, do fear may
 come. If, therefore, we would find content, we must not
 seek it here; we must want it, or have it from another
 world: it must come hither from heaven, and thence only
 piety can fetch it down. This, instead of these unsatis-
 fying, uncertain, and unstable things, supplieth us with
 goods adequate to our most outstretched wishes, infalli-
 bly sure, incessantly durable; *an indefectible treasure, an*
incorruptible inheritance, an unshakcable kingdom, a per-
fect and endless joy, capable to replenish the vastest heart:
 which he that hath a good title to, or a confident hope of,
 how can he be otherwise than extremely pleased, than fully
 content? It assureth the favour and friendship of God, of
 him that is absolute Lord and disposer of all things: the
 which he that hath, and confideth in, what can he want or
 wish more? what can he fear? what can annoy or dismay
 him? what can hap to him worthy to be deemed evil or sad?
 What is poverty to him, for whom God is concerned to pro-
 vide? What is disgrace to him, that hath the regard and ap-
 probation of God? What is danger to him, whom God con-
 tinually protecteth? What can any distress work on him,
 whom God doth comfort, and will relieve? What is any
 thing to him, who is sensible that all things are purposely

Θησαυρὸν
 ἀνέκλειστον,
 κληρονομίαν
 ἀφθαρτον,
 βασιλείαν
 ἀσάλευτον.

disposed to him by that Wisdom which perfectly knoweth what is best; by that Goodness which entirely loveth him? In fine, he that is conscious to himself of being well-affected in mind, and acting the best way, who is satisfied in the state of his soul, secure from God's displeasure, and hopeful of his favour, what can make any grievous impression on him? What other affections than such as are most grateful and pleasant can lodge in his soul? Joy and peace have natural seeds in such a mind, and necessarily must spring up there; in proportion, I mean, and according to the degrees of piety resident therein.

The Epicureans did conceit and boast, that having, by their atheistical explications of natural effects, and common events here, discarded the belief and dread of religion, they had laid a strong foundation for tranquillity of mind, had driven away all the causes of grief and fear, so that nothing then remained troublesome or terrible unto us; and consequently, what, said they, could forbid, but that we should be entirely contented, glad, and happy?—*Nos exaquat victoria celo*; no God then surely could be more happy than we. But their attempt in many respects was vain and lame. They presumed of a victory which it is impossible to obtain: and supposing they had got it, their triumph would not have been so glorious, their success would not have been so great, as they pretended. For seeing no Epicurean discourse can baffle the potent arguments which persuade religion; (those arguments which the visible constitution of nature, the current tradition of all ages, the general consent of men, the pregnant attestations of history and experience concerning supernatural and miraculous events, do afford;) since the being and providence of God have proofs so clear and valid, that no subtlety of man can so far evade them, as not to be shaken with them, as wholly to be freed from doubt and suspicion of their truth; since there can be no means of evincing the negative part in those questions to be true or probable; it is impossible that any considering man, in this cause against religion, should suppose himself to have acquired an

SERM. absolute and secure victory, or that he should reap substantial
 III. fruit of comfort thence. It cannot be, that any man should
 enjoy any perfect quiet, without acting so as to get some good
 hope of avoiding those dreadful mischiefs, which religion
 threateneth to the transgressors of its precepts. Were there
 indeed but reason enough to stir, if not to stagger, an infi-
 del; were it somewhat dubious whether, yea, were it great
 odds that there are not reserved any punishments for im-
 piety, as indeed there is, if not the perfectest assurance ima-
 ginable, yet vast advantage on the contrary side; were there
 but any small reason for a judgment to come, as there are
 apparently very many and great ones; had most men con-
 spired in denying Providence, as ever generally they have
 consented in avowing it; were there a pretence of miracles
 for establishing the mortality and impunity of souls, as there
 have been numberless strongly testified by good witnesses
 and great events, to confirm the opposite doctrines; did
 most wise and sober men judge in favour of irreligion, as
 commonly they ever did and still do otherwise; yet wisdom
 would require that men should choose to be pious, since
 otherwise no man can be thoroughly secure. It is a wildness,
 not to dread the least possibility of incurring such horrible
 mischiefs: any hazard of such importance cannot but startle
 a man in his wits. To be in the least obnoxious to eternal
 torments, if men would think upon it as men, (that is, as
 rational and provident creatures,) could not but disturb
 them. And indeed so it is in experience; for whatever they
 say, or seem, all atheists and profane men are inwardly sus-
 picious and fearful; they care not to die, and would gladly
 escape the trial of what shall follow death. But let us
 grant or imagine the Epicurean successful as he could
 wish in this enterprize of subduing religion: yet except
 therewith he can also trample down reason, new mould
 human nature, subjugate all natural appetites and pas-
 sions, alter the state of things here, and transform the
 world, he will yet in the greatest part fail of his conceited
 advantages; very short he will fall of triumphing in a

contented and quiet mind. That which accrue thence will at most be no more than some negative content, or a partial indolency, arising from his being rescued from some particular cares and fears; which exceedeth not the tranquillity of a beast, or the stupidity of one that is out of his senses: that is all he can claim, which yet is more than he can ever compass. For he cannot be as a beast, or a mere sot, if he would: reason, reflecting on present evils, and boding others future, will afflict him; his own insatiable desires, unavoidable fears, and untameable passions, will disquiet him. Were the other world quite out of his faith, or his thought, yet this world would yield trouble sufficient to render him void of any steady rest, or solid joy. All men ever have, and ever will complain, that the burdens, crosses, satieties of this life, do much surpass the conveniences and comforts of it. So that, were no other to be expected or feared, this of itself would become grievous and nauseous; we should soon have enough or too much of it, without a support and supply from other-where. In the largest affluence of things, in the deepest calm of our state, we are apt to nauseate, and are weary even of our prosperity itself; the which indeed commonly hath ingredients not only somewhat unsavoury, but very bitter and loathsome. We may add, that had those profane attempters quite banished religion, they with it must have driven away all the benefits and comforts of it: which, even supposing them but imaginary, are yet the greatest which common life doth need, or can desire: with it they would send packing justice, fidelity, charity, sobriety, and all solid virtue, things which cannot firmly subsist without conscience: which being gone, human life would be the most disorderly, most unsafe, most wretched and contemptible thing that can be; nothing but insipid and flashy sensualities would be left behind to comfort a man with; and those hardly any man (by reason of competitions and contentions for them, nowise restrainable) could enjoy quietly or safely. It is, therefore, piety alone, which, by raising hopes of blessings and joys incomparably superior

Non tem-
pestate vex-
or, sed nau-
sea. *Senec.*
de Tranq.
An. 1.

SERM. III. to any here, that cannot be taken from us, can lay any ground of true content, of substantial and positive content; such as consisteth not only in removing the objects and causes of vexatious passions, but in employing the most pleasant affections (love, hope, joy,) with a delightful complacence upon their proper and most noble objects.

Rom. xiv. 17. *The kingdom of God* (and that only, no other kingdom hath that privilege) *consisteth in righteousness* (first, then in *peace and spiritual joy*. No philosopher, with truth and reason, can make that overture to us, which our Lord

Matt. xi. 28. doth; *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest to your souls*. Out of religion there can be no aphorism pretended like to that of the

Isa. xxvi. 3. Prophet, *Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee*.

If, indeed, we distinctly survey all the grounds and sources of content, it will appear that religion only can afford it.

Doth it result from a well governing and ordering our passions? Then, it is plain, that only a pious man is capable thereof: for piety only can effect that; it alone, with the powerful aid of Divine grace, doth guide our passions by exact rules, doth set them upon worthy objects, doth temper and tune them in just harmony, doth seasonably curb and check them, doth rightly correct and reform them^c.

This no bare reason (which naturally is so dim and so feeble in man) can achieve: much less can unreasonableness do it, which is ever prevalent in irreligious persons. Their passions do ever run wildly and at random, in no good pace, within no good compass, toward the meanest and basest objects; whence they can have no rest or quiet in their minds. As they are constantly offending, so will they ever be punishing themselves, with intestine broils and conflicts, with dissatisfactions and regrets. Hence, *There is*

Isa. xlviii. 22.

^c Mala mens—cum insidiatur, spe, curis, labore dstringitur; et jam cum sceleris compos fuerit, solitudine, penitentia, pœnarum omnium expectatione torquetur. *Quint. xii. 1.*

no pœæ to the wicked. He is like the troubled sea, which cannot rest. God (as St. Austin speaketh) hath said it, and so it is, Every inordinate mind is a punishment to itself. SERM. III. Isa. lvii. 20.

Doth content spring from a hearty approbation of, or a complacency, in a man's own actions; from reflection that he constantly doth act according to reason and wisdom, to justice and duty? Then can the pious man alone pretend to it, who knoweth that he walketh *inoffensively toward God and man*; that he consulteth his own best interest and welfare; that assuredly no bad consequence can attend his unblameable behaviour; that most wise men have declared their approbation of his proceedings; that if he prove in his chief design mistaken, yet no mischief can thence befall him; yea, that he is not thereby quite disappointed, seeing even much present satisfaction and convenience do arise up to him from his practice.

Doth content grow from a sound and healthful constitution of soul? It is the pious man alone that hath that, whose mind is clear from distempers of vice and passion. The impious man is infirm, out of order, full of disease and pain, according to the Prophet's description of him;—*The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.* Isa. i. 5, 6.

Doth content arise specially from good success in our attempts, or from prosperous events befalling us? Then it is the pious man who is most capable thereof: for he only is secure, that what seemeth good and prosperous is really such to him, as meant for his good by the Divine goodness, as tending thereto by the guidance of infallible wisdom. As he only hath ground to hope for success, because he confideth in God, because he dutifully seeketh God's help, because God is favourably disposed toward him, because God *ordereth his steps*, because God is by promise engaged to bless him, because he

† Nulla major pœna nequitiae est, quam quod sibi ac suis displicet. *Sen. Ep.* 42.

Τιμωρία πάσης ἀδικίας ἀπόλουθος. *Plat. de Leg.* 5.

Deus jussit, et ita est, Sibi pœna est omnis inordinatus animus. *Aug. Conf.*

SERM. is conscious of intentions to render God thanks and praise for
 III. it, to employ his success to God's honour and service: so he
 only can be satisfied with the appearance of success, being
 able with assurance to say after St. Paul, *We know that to
 those who love God all things co-operate for good.*

Rom. viii.
28.

Is security from danger, from trouble, from want, from
 all evil, a source or matter of content? It certainly doth
 attend the pious man; God being his especial protector,
 his comforter, his purveyor. *There shall no evil befall the
 just; There shall no plague come near his dwelling. God
 keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. He deli-
 vereth the righteous out of their troubles. The desire of the
 righteous shall be granted. There is no want to them that
 fear God.* So do the holy oracles assure us.

Prov. xii.

21.

Ps xci 10.

xxxiv. 20.

17.

Prov x. 24.

Ps. xxxiv. 9.

Doth contentedness spring from sufficiency, real or appre-
 hended? This appertaineth peculiarly to the pious man: for,
 having God, the master of all, for his portion, he hath the
 richest estate that can be; he hath all that he can desire,
 he cannot but take himself to have enough. Hence *Godli-
 ness with contentedness* (*μετ' ἀνταρξίας, with sufficiency*) is, as
 St. Paul saith, *μέγας πορισμὸς, the great way of gaining.* He
 saith it not, as supposing godliness and contentedness to be
 separable; but rather, as implying godliness therefore to be
 most gainful, because sufficiency and contentedness do ever
 attend it. In fine, if that saying of Seneca be true that,

1 Tim. vi.

6.

Si cui sua
 non videntur
 amplissima,
 licet totius
 mundi dominus
 sit, tamen
 miser est.
 Sen. Ep. 9.

*If to any man the things he possesseth do not seem most ample,
 although he be master of the whole world, he is yet
 miserable;* then assuredly the pious man only can be happy;
 for to him alone his possessions can seem the largest and
 best, such as there can be no possible accession to, or
 amendment of. For nothing can be greater or better than
 God, in whom he hath a stedfast propriety, whose infinite
 power and wisdom are engaged to do him the utmost good
 that he is capable of. And farther,

III. Seeing we have mentioned happiness, or the *sum-
 mum bonum*, the utmost scope of human desire, we do
 add, that piety doth surely confer it. Happiness, what-
 ever it be, hath certainly an essential coherence with piety.

These are reciprocal propositions, both of them infallibly true, He that is pious is happy ; and, He that is happy is pious. No man doth undertake or prosecute any thing, which he doth not apprehend in some order or degree conducing to that which all men under a confused notion regard and tend to, which they call happiness, the highest good, the chiefest desirable thing. But in their judgments about this thing, or the means of attaining it, as men dissent much ; so of necessity most of them must be mistaken. Most, indeed, do aim and shoot at a mere shadow of profit, or at that which is very little considerable, and in comparison nothing at all ; which little conduceth to the perfection of their nature, or the satisfaction of their desire. If they miss the mark, they are disappointed ; if they hit it, they are no less, and in effect hit nothing. But whatever this grand matter is, in whatever it consisteth, however it be procured ; be it the possession and fruition of some special choice goods, or an aggregration and affluence of all goods ; piety surely is the main ingredient and principal cause thereof. All other goods without it are insignificant and unuseful thereto ; and it cannot be wanting where piety is. Be a man never so rich, so powerful, so learned and knowing, so prosperous in his affairs, so honourable in the opinions and affections of men : yet nowise happy can he be, if he is not pious ; being he wanteth the best goods, and is subject to the worst evils ; being he wanteth the love and favour of God, he wanteth peace and satisfaction of conscience, he wanteth a right enjoyment of present things, he wanteth security concerning his final welfare. Be he never so poor, so low in the eyes of men, so forlorn and destitute of worldly conveniences ; yet if he be pious, he cannot be wretched : for he hath an interest in goods incomparably most precious, and is safe from all considerable evils ; he hath a free resort to the inexhaustible fountain of all happiness, he hath a right to immense and endless felicity, the which eminently containeth all the goods we are capable of ; he is possessed thereof in hope and certain reversion, there is but a moment to pass be-

SERM. fore his complete fruition of it. The want of all other
 III. petty things no more can maim the integrity of his felicity, than cutting the hair, or paring the nails, do mutilate a man: all other things are but superfluities or excrescences in regard to the constitution of happiness. Whatever happeneth, that will assuredly be true, which is so much in-

Ps. cxxviii.
 1, 2. cxii.
 1.

culcated in holy Scripture, *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways; happy shall he be, and it shall be well with him.* Piety is indeed fraught with beatitudes, every part thereof yieldeth peculiar blessedness.

Matt. v.

To the love of God, to charity toward our neighbour, to purity of heart, to meekness, to humility, to patience, to mercifulness, to peaceableness, beatitude is ascribed by our Lord, the great Judge and Dispenser of it. Each religious performance hath happy fruits growing from it, and blissful rewards assigned thereto. All pious dispositions are fountains of pleasant streams, which by their confluence do make up a full sea of felicity.

IV. It is a peculiar advantage of piety, that it furnisheth employment fit for us, worthy of us, hugely grateful, and highly beneficial to us. Man is a very busy and active creature, which cannot live and do nothing, whose thoughts are in restless motion, whose desires are ever stretching at somewhat, who perpetually will be working either good or evil to himself: wherefore greatly profitable must that thing be, which determineth him to act well, to spend his care and pain on that which is truly advantageous to him; and that is religion only. It alone fasteneth our thoughts, affections, and endeavours, upon occupations worthy the dignity of our nature, suiting the excellency of our natural capacities and endowments, tending to the perfection and advancement of our reason, to the enriching and ennobling of our souls. Secluding that, we have nothing in the world to study, to affect, to pursue, not very mean and below us, not very base and misbecoming us, as men of reason and judgment. What have we to do but to eat and drink, like horses or like swine; but to sport and play, like children or apes; but

to bicker and scuffle about trifles and impertinences, like idiots? what, but to serape or scramble for useless pelf; to hunt after empty shows and shadows of honour, or the vain fancies and dreams of men? what, but to wallow or bask in sordid pleasures, the which soon degenerate into remorse and bitterness? To which sort of employments were a man confined, what a pitiful thing would he be, and how inconsiderable were his life! Were a man designed only, like a fly, to buzz about here for a time, sucking in the air, and licking the dew, then soon to vanish back into nothing, or to be transformed into worms; how sorry and despicable a thing were he? And such, without religion, we should be. But it supplieth us with business of a most worthy nature and lofty importance; it setteth us upon doing things great and noble as can be; it engageth us to free our minds from all fond conceits, and cleanse our hearts from all corrupt affections; to curb our brutish appetites, to tame our wild passions, to correct our perverse inclinations, to conform the dispositions of our soul and the actions of our life to the eternal laws of righteousness and goodness: it putteth us upon the imitation of God, and aiming at the resemblance of his perfections; upon obtaining a friendship and maintaining a correspondence with the High and Holy One; upon fitting our minds for conversation and society with the wisest and purest spirits above; upon providing for an immortal state, upon the acquist of joy and glory everlasting. It employeth us in the divinest actions, of promoting virtue, of performing beneficence, of serving the public, and doing good to all: the being exercised in which things doth indeed render a man highly considerable, and his life excellently valuable.

It is an employment most proper to us as reasonable men. For what more proper entertainments can our mind have, than to be purifying and beautifying itself, to be keeping itself and its subordinate faculties in order, to be attending upon the management of thoughts, of passions, of words, of actions depending upon its governance?

SERM.
III.

It is an employment most beneficial to us : in pursuing which we greatly better ourselves, and improve our condition ; we benefit and oblige others ; we procure sound reputation and steady friendships ; we decline many irksome mischiefs and annoyances ; *we do not*, like those in the Prophet, *spend our labour for that which satisfieth not, nor spend our money for that which is not bread* : for both temporal prosperity and eternal felicity are the wages of the labour which we take herein.

It is an employment most constant, never allowing sloth or listlessness to creep in, incessantly busying all our faculties with earnest contention ; according to that profession of St. Paul, declaring the nature thereof, *Herein always do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man*. Whence it is called a *fight*, and a *race*, implying the continual earnestness of attention and activity, which is to be spent thereon.

It is withal a sweet and grateful business : for it is a pious man's character, that *he delighteth greatly in God's commandments* ; that *the commandments are not grievous to him* ; that it is *his meat and drink to do God's will* ; that *God's words* (or precepts) *are sweeter than honey to his taste* ; that *the ways of religious wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*. Whereas all other employments are wearisome, and soon become loathsome : this, the farther we proceed in it, the more pleasant and satisfactory it groweth §. There is perpetual matter of victory over bad inclinations pestering us within, and strong temptations assailing us without : which to combat hath much delight ; to master, breedeth unexpressible content. The sense also of God's love, the influences of his grace and comfort communicated in the performances of devotion and all duty, the satisfaction of a good conscience, the assured hope of reward, the foretastes of future bliss, do season and sweeten all the labours taken, and all the difficulties undergone therein.

§ Non potest cuiquam semper idem placere, nisi rectum. Sen. 20.

Dedit hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis jurent. Quinti.
i. 12.

In fine, the bare light of nature hath discerned, that were it not for such matters as these to spend a man's care and pains upon, this would be a lamentable world to live in. There was, for instance, an emperor great and mighty as ever did wield sceptre upon earth, whose excellent virtue, coupled with wisdom, (inferior, perhaps, to none that any man ever without special inspiration hath been endowed with,) did qualify him with most advantage to examine and rightly to judge of things here; who, notwithstanding all the conveniences which his royal estate and well settled prosperity might afford, (the which surely he had fully tasted and tried,) did yet thus express his thoughts: *Τί μοι ζῆν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ Θεῶν, ἢ προνοίας κενῷ;* M. Ant. ii. 11. vi. 10.
What doth it concern me to live in a world void of God, or void of Providence? To govern the greatest empire that ever was, in the deepest calm; to enjoy the largest affluences of wealth, of splendour, of respect, of pleasure; to be loved, to be dreaded, to be served, to be adored by so many nations; to have the whole civil world obsequious to his will and nod; all these things seemed vain and idle, not worthy of a man's regard, affection, or choice, in case there were no God to worship, no providence to observe, no piety to be exercised. So little worth the while common sense hath adjudged it to live without religion.

V. It is a considerable benefit of piety, that it affordeth the best friendships and sweetest society. Man is framed for society, and cannot live well without it: many of his faculties would be useless, many of his appetites would rest unsatisfied in solitude. To have a friend wise and able, honest and good, unto whom upon all occasions we may have recourse for advice, for assistance, for consolation, is a great convenience of life: and this benefit we owe to religion, which supplieth us with various friendships of the best kind, most beneficial and most sweet unto us.

Nullius homini sine socio jucunda possessio est. Sen. Ep. 6.
Ut aliarum rerum nobis innata dulcedo est, sic amicitia. Sen. Ep. 9.

It maketh God our friend, a friend infinitely better than all friends, most affectionate and kind, most faithful and sure, most able, most willing, and ever most ready to per-

SERM. form all friendly offices, to yield advice in all our doubts, succour in all our needs, comfort in all our troubles, satisfaction to all our desires. Unto him it ministereth a free

III.

Prov. xii. 2.

Psal xxxiv.

15. xxxiii.

18. cxlv.

19. xxxvii.

28.

Job xxxvi.

7.

address upon all occasions; with him it alloweth us continually a most sweet and pleasant intercourse. The pious man hath always the all-wise God to counsel him, to guide his actions and order his steps; he hath the Almighty to protect, support, and relieve him; he hath the immense Goodness to commiserate and comfort him; unto him he is not only encouraged, but obliged to resort in need; upon him he may, he ought to discharge all his cares and burdens.

It consequently doth engage all creatures in the world to be our friends, or instruments of good to us, according to their several capacities, by the direction and disposal of God. All the servants of our great Friend will, in compliance to him, be serviceable to us, *Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee*: so Job's friend promiseth him upon condition of piety. And God himself confirmeth that promise; *In that day, saith he in the Prophet, will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground.*

Job v. 23.

Hos. ii. 18.

Isa. xlii. 2.

Ps. cxxi. 6.

Ps. xci. 13.

Mark xvi

18.

Deut.

xxviii. 12.

And again, *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* And, *The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.* *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot. They shall take up scorpions; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them:* (so our Lord promised to his disciples.) Not only the heavens shall dispense their kindly influences, and the earth yield her plentiful stores, and all the elements discharge their natural and ordinary good offices; nor only the tame and sociable creatures shall upon this condition faithfully serve us; but even the most wild, most fierce, most ravenous, most venomous creatures shall, if there be need, prove friendly and helpful, or at

least harmless to us; as were the ravens to Elias, the lions to Daniel, the viper to St. Paul, the fire to the three children.

SERM.
III.

1 Kings
xvii. 6.

But especially piety doth procure the friendship of the good angels, that puissant host of glorious and happy spirits; they all do tenderly love the pious person; they are ever ready to serve and do him good, to protect him from danger, to aid him in his undertakings, to rescue him from mischiefs. What an honour, what a blessing is this, to have such an innumerable company of noble friends (the courtiers and favourites of heaven) deeply concerned and constantly vigilant for our welfare!

Psal. xxxiv.
7. xci. 11.
Heb. 1. 14.

It also engageth the blessed saints in glory, *the spirits of just men perfected, the church of the first-born*, to bear dearest affection to us, to further our prosperity with their good wishes and earnest prayers, mightily prevalent with God.

It rendereth all sorts of men our friends. To good men it uniteth us in holy communion; the communion of brotherly charity and hearty good will, attended with all the good offices they are able to perform: to other men it reconcileth and endeareth us; for that innocent and inoffensive, courteous and benign, charitable and beneficent demeanour, (such as piety doth require and produce,) are apt to conciliate respect and affection from the worst men. For, *Vincit malos pertinax bonitas*; men hardly can persist enemies to him whom they perceive to be their friend: and such the pious man in disposition of mind, and in effect when occasion serveth, is toward all men^k; being sensible of his obligation to love all men, and, *us he hath opportunity, to do good to all men*. It assureth and more strictly endeareth our friends to us. For, as it maketh us hearty, faithful, constant friends to others, so it reciprocally tieth others to us in the like sincerity and fastness of good will.

Sen. de Be-
nef. vii. 21.

Gal vi. 10.

Oi αγαθοι
ηδοναι
αλλη-
λων. Arist.
Eth. viii. 4.

It reconcileth enemies. For, *when a man's ways do please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him*. It⁷.

Prov. xvi.

^k Qui sibi amicus est, scito hunc amicum omnibus esse. Sen. Ep. 6.

SERM. hath a natural efficacy to that purpose, and Divine blessing
 III. promoteth it.

By it all conversation becometh tolerable, grateful, and useful. For a pious man is not easily disturbed with any crossness or perverseness, any infirmity or impertinency of those he converseth with: he can bear the weaknesses and the failings of his company; he can by wholesome reflections upon all occurrences advantage and please himself.

Quæris
 quid profe-
 cerim?
 amicus esse
 mihi copi.
 Sen. Ep. 6.

In fine, piety rendereth a man a true friend and a good companion to himself; satisfied in himself, able to converse freely and pleasantly with his own thoughts. It is for the want of pious inclinations and dispositions, that solitude (a thing which sometimes cannot be avoided, which often should be embraced) is to most men so irksome and tedious, that men do carefully shun themselves, and fly from their own thoughts; that they decline all converse with their own souls, and hardly dare look upon their own hearts and consciences: whence they become aliens from home, wholly unacquainted with themselves, most ignorant of their own nearest concernments, no faithful friends or pleasant companions to themselves; so for refuge and ease they unseasonably run into idle or lewd conversation, where they disorder and defile themselves^m.

Nunquam
 minus so-
 lus, quam
 cum solus.

But the pious man is, like Scipio, *never less alone, than when alone*: his solitude and retirement is not only tolerable, but commonly the most grateful and fruitful part of his life: he can ever with much pleasure, and more advantage, converse with himself; digesting and marshalling his thoughts, his affections, his purposes into good order; searching and discussing his heart, reflecting on his past

^l Συνδιάζειν τε οὗτος ἑαυτῷ βούλεται· ἥδεως γὰρ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ. (Aristot. Eth. ix. 4.) τῶν τε γὰρ πεπραγμένων ἐπιτηρεῖς αἱ μνήμαι, καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐπιπίδες ἀγαθαί.

^m Nemo est, cui non satius sit cum quolibet esse, quam secum. Sen. Ep. 95.

ⁿ Ἔνοι τὰν ἴδιον βίον, ὡς ἀπερσέσατον θάλαμα, προσδεῖν οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, &c. Plut. περὶ Πολυπρα. p. 916.

Ζητοῦσιν οἱ μοχθηροὶ μεθ' ὧν συνημερεύουσιν, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ φεύγουσιν. Arist. ix. 4.

ways, enforcing his former good resolutions, and framing new ones; inquiring after edifying truths; stretching his meditations toward the best and sublimest objects, raising his hopes and warming his affections towards spiritual and heavenly things; asking himself pertinent questions, and resolving incident doubts concerning his practice: in fine, conversing with his best friend in devotion; with admiration and love contemplating the divine perfections displayed in the works of nature, of providence, of grace; praising God for his excellent benefits and mercies; confessing his defects and offences; deprecating wrath and imploring pardon, with grace and ability to amend; praying for the supply of all his wants ^u. All which performances yield both unconceivable benefit and unexpressible comfort. So that solitude (that which is to common nature so offensive, to corrupt nature so abominable) is to the pious man extremely commodious and comfortable: which is a great advantage peculiar to piety, and the last which I shall mention.

So many, and many more than I can express, vastly great and precious advantages do accrue from piety; so that well may we conclude with St. Paul, that *Godliness is profitable for all things*.

It remaineth that, if we be wise, we should, if we yet have it not ingrafted in us, labour to acquire it; if we have it, that we should endeavour to improve it, by constant exercise, to the praise of God, the good of our neighbour, and our own comfort. Which that we may effectually perform, Almighty God in mercy vouchsafe, by his grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. *Amen.*

^u Acquiescit sibi, cogitationibus suis traditus. *Sen. Ep. 9*

Sapiens nunquam solus esse potest, habet secum omnes qui sunt, quique unquam fuerunt boni; et animum liberum quocunque vult transfert: quod corpore non potest, cogitatione complectitur; et si hominum inops fuerit, loquitur eum Deo. Nunquam minus solus erit, quam cum solus fuerit. *Hier. adv. Jovin. i. 28.*

SERMON IV.

THE REWARD OF HONOURING GOD.

I SAM. ii. 30.

For them that honour me I will honour.

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THE words are in the strictest sense the word of God, uttered immediately by God himself; and may thence command from us an especial attention and regard. The history of that which occasioned them is, I presume, well known; neither shall I make any descant or reflection thereon; but to take the words separately, as a proposition of itself, affording a complete instruction and ample matter of discourse. And as such, they plainly imply two things: a duty required of us to *honour God*; and a reward proffered to us, upon performance of that duty, being *honoured by God*. It is natural for us, before we are willing to undertake any work, to consider the reward or benefit accruing from it; and it is necessary, before we can perform any duty, to understand the nature thereof. To this our method of action I shall suit the method of my discourse; first endeavouring to estimate the reward, then to explain the duty. Afterward I mean to shew briefly why in reason the duty is enjoined; how in effect the reward is conferred.

I. The reward may be considered either absolutely, (as what it is in itself;) or relatively, (as to its rise, and whence it comes.)

1. For itself, it is honour; a thing, if valued according to the rate it bears in the common market, of highest price

among all the objects of human desire; the chief reward which the greatest actions and which the best actions do pretend unto, or are capable of; that which usually bears most sway in the hearts, and hath strongest influence upon the lives of men; the desire of obtaining and maintaining which doth commonly overbear other most potent inclinations. The love of pleasure stoops thereto: for men, to get or keep reputation, will decline the most pleasant enjoyments, will embrace the hardest pains. Yea, it often prevails over the love of life itself, which men do not only frequently expose to danger, but sometimes devote to certain loss, for its sake. If we observe what is done in the world, we may discern it to be the source of most undertakings therein: that it not only moveth the wheels of public action, (that not only for it great princes contend, great armies march, great battles are fought;) but that from it most private business derives its life and vigour: that for honour especially the soldier undergoes hardship, toil, and hazard; the scholar plods and beats his brains; the merchant runs about so busily, and adventures so far; yea, that for its sake the meanest labourer, and artificer doth spend his sweat, and stretch his sinews. The principal drift of all this care and industry (the great reason of all this scuffling for power, this searching for knowledge, this scraping and scrambling for wealth) doth seem to be, that men would live in some credit, would raise themselves above contempt¹.

In such request, of such force, doth honour appear to be. If we examine why, we may find more than mere

¹ Ἴδοις δ' ἂν καὶ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν τοὺς ἐπιτιμιαστάτους, ὑπὲρ ἄλλου μὲν οὐδενὸς ἂν τὸ ζῆν ἄντικαταλλαξαμένους; ὑπὲρ δὲ τοῦ τυχεῖν καλῆς δόξης, ἀποθνήσκειν ἐθελόντας. *ISOCR. Orat. ad Philip.*

Mors tum æquissimo animo appetitur, cum suis se laudibus vita occidens consolari potest. *Cic. i. Tusc.*

— *Laudis avidi pecuniæ liberales erant, gloriam ingentem divitias honestas volebant; hanc ardentissime dilexerunt, propter hanc vivere voluerunt, pro hac et mori non dubitaverunt. Cæteras cupiditates hujus unius ingenti cupiditate presserunt. Aug. de Civ. Dei, v. 12.*

Αἱ γὰρ δυναστεῖαι καὶ ὁ πλῆτος διὰ τὴν τιμὴν ἴσιν αἰρετά. *Arist. Eth. iv. 3.*

Honos alit artes, omnesque incenduntur ad studia gloria, &c. *Cic. Tusc. Quæst. I.*

The Reward of honouring God.

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fashion (or mutual imitation and consent) to ground the experiment upon. There is one obvious reason why no mean regard should be had thereto; its great convenience and usefulness: for that a man cannot himself live safely, quietly, or pleasantly, without some competent measure thereof; cannot well serve the public, perform offices of duty to his relations, of kindness to his friends, of charity to his neighbours, but under its protection, and with its aid: it being an engine very requisite for the managing any business, for the compassing any design, at least sweetly and smoothly; it procuring to us many furtherances in our proceedings, removing divers obstacles out of our way, guarding a man's person from offences, adding weight to his words, putting an edge upon his endeavours: for every one allows a favourable ear to his discourse, lends an assisting hand to his attempts, grants a ready credence to his testimony, and makes a fair construction of his doings, whom he esteems and respects. So is honour plainly valuable among the *bona utilia*, as no small accommodation of life; and as such, reason approves it to our judgment^m.

But searching farther, we shall find the appetite of honour to have a deeper ground, and that it is rooted even in our nature itself. For we may descry it budding forth in men's first infancy, (before the use of reason, or speech;) even little children being ambitious to be made much of, maintaining among themselves petty emulations and competitions, as it were about punctilios of honour. We may observe it growing with age, waxing bigger and stronger together with the increase of wit and knowledge, of civil culture and experience; that the maturest age doth most resent and relish it; that it prevails most in civilized nations; that men of the best parts, of the highest improve-

Vidi ego et
expertus
sum zelan-
tem parvu-
lum, &c.
Aug.

^m Vide *Hier. Ep. ad Celent.*

Conscientia nobis necessaria est, fama proxima. Qui conscientia fidens, famam negligit, crudelis est. *Aug.*

Πρὸς χρείας ἐπιτήδειον ὄργανον ἡ δόξα. *Galen.*

Nec vero negligenda fama est; nec mediocre telum ad res gerendas existimare oportet benevolentiam civium. *Cic. de Amic.*

Vide *Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. 17.*

ments, of the weightiest employments, do most zealously affect it and stand upon it; that they who most struggle with it do most feel its might, how difficult it is to resist and restrain it, how impossible it is to stifle or extinguish it. For the philosopher, with all his reasons and considerations, cannot dispute it down, or persuade it away; the anchorite cannot, with all his austerities, starve it, or by his retirement shun it; no affliction, no poverty, no wretchedness of condition can totally suppress it. It is a spirit that not only haunts our courts and palaces, but frequents our schools and cloisters, yea, creeps into cottages, into hospitals, into prisons, and even dogs men into desarts and solitudes; so close it sticks to our nature. Plato saith, it is the last coat which a wise man doth put off. But I question whether he could shew us that wise man who had done it, or could tell us where he dwelt, except perhaps in his own Utopian republic. For they who most pretend to have done it (who in their discourse most vilify honour; who talk like Chrysippus, that a wise man for reputation sake will not so much as stretch out his finger; or like Seneca, that we should do every thing purely for conscience sake, without any regard to men's opinion; who make harangues and write volumes against gloryⁿ) do yet appear by their practice, sometimes, by so doing, to aim at it: even as men do usually complain of and eagerly quarrel with that which they most affect and woo. Chrysippus wrote, as we are told, above 700 books, most of them concerning logical quirks, and such as one can hardly imagine what other drift he could have in composing them, besides ostentation of his subtilty and sharpness of wit. Seneca, if history do not wrong him, and the face of his actions do not misrepresent him, was not in his heart exempt from a spice of ambition. Yea, that excellent emperor M. Aurelius, who would often speak like a Stoic, could not but commonly act like a man, more by his practice commending honour.

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In solitudi-
ne sitis sub-
rept super-
bia. Hier.

Cic. de Fin.
3.

Laert.

ⁿ Nihil opinionis causa, omnia conscientiae faciam. Sen. de V. B.
Nil sit illi cum ambitione famaue commune, sibi placeat. Epist. 113.
Justum esse gratis oportet. Ib.
Id. de Ira, ii. 41.

SERM. than he disparaged it in his words. For story represents him
 IV. very careful and jealous of his credit, very diligent to pre-
 Tert. Apol. serve it and to repair it^o. Tertullian calls such philosophers
negotiatores famæ, merchants for fame: and it is perchance
 some part of their cunning in that trade, which makes them
 strive to beat down the price of this commodity, that they
 may more easily engross it to themselves. However, expe-
 rience proves that such words are but words, (words spoken
 out of affectation and pretence, rather than in good earnest
 and according to truth;) that endeavours to banish or to
 extirpate this desire are but fond and fruitless attempts.
 The reason why is clear: for it is as if one should dispute
 against eating and drinking, or should labour to free him-
 self from hunger and thirst: the appetite of honour being
 indeed, as that of food, innate unto us, so as not to be
 quenched or smothered, except by some violent distemper
 or indisposition of mind^p; even by the wise Author of our
 nature originally implanted therein, for very good ends and
 uses, respecting both the private and public benefit of men;
 as an engagement to virtue, and a restraint from vice; as
 an excitement of industry, an incentive of courage, a support
 of constancy in the prosecution of worthy enterprises; as a
 serviceable instrument for the constitution, conservation, and
 improvement of human society. For did not some love of
 honour glow in men's breasts, were that noble spark quite ex-
 tinct, few men probably would study for honourable qualities,
 or perform laudable deeds; there would be nothing to keep
 some men within bounds of modesty and decency, to deter
 them from doing odious and ugly things; men, not caring
 what others thought of them, would not regard what they
 did themselves; a barbarous sloth, or brutish stupidity,
 would overspread the world, withdrawing from common
 life most of its ornaments, much of its convenience; men

Αἰδώς δ' οἰ-
 χουμένη πάν-
 των γενέσκει-
 ρα κακίστων.
 Naz. Carm.
 56.

^o Erat famæ suæ curiosissimus, et male loquentium dictis vel literis ve sermone respondebat. *Capit.*

^p Ut quidam morbo aliquo et sensus stupore suavitatem cibi non sentiunt; sic libidinosi, avari, facinorosi veræ laudis gestum non habent. *Cic. Philipp. 2.*

generally would, if not altogether shun society, yet at least decline the cares and burdens requisite to the promoting its welfare, for the sustaining which, usually the chief encouragement, the main recompense, is this of honour. That men therefore have so tender and delicate a sense of their reputation, (so that touching it is like pricking a nerve, as soon felt, and as smartly offensive,) is an excellent provision in nature; in regard whereto honour may pass among the *bona naturalia*, as a good necessary for the satisfaction of nature, and for securing the accomplishment of its best designs.

A moderate regard to honour is also commendable as an instance of humanity or good will to men, yea, as an argument of humility, or a sober conceit of ourselves. For to desire another man's esteem, and consequently his love, (which in some kind or degree is an inseparable companion of esteem,) doth imply somewhat of reciprocal esteem and affection toward him; and to prize the judgment of other men concerning us, doth signify, that we are not oversatisfied with our own.

We might, for its farther commendation, allege the authority of the more cool and candid sort of philosophers, (such as grounded their judgment of things upon notions agreeable to common sense and experience; who adapted their rules of practice to the nature of man, such as they found it in the world, not such as they framed it in their own fancies,) who have ranked honour among the principal of things desirable, and adorned it with fairest eulogies; terming it a divine thing, the best of exterior goods, the most honest fruit and most ample reward of true virtue; adjudging, that to neglect the opinions of men (especially of persons worthy and laudable) is a sign of stupid baseness, that to contemn them is an effect of unreasonable haughtiness; representing the love of honour (rightly grounded and duly moderated) not only as the parent and guardian (as productive and preservative) of other virtues, but as a virtue itself, of no small magnitude and lustre in the constellation of virtues. the virtue of

SERM.
IV.

Negligere
quid de se
quisque
sentiat arro-
gantis est et
dissoluti.
Cic. de
Offic. 1.

SERM. generosity^q. A virtue, which, next to the spirit of true religion, (next to a hearty reverence toward the supreme blessed Goodness, and that holy charity toward men, which springeth thence,) doth lift a man up nearest to heaven; doth raise his mind above the sordid desires, the sorry cares, the fond humours, the perverse and froward passions, with which men commonly are possessed and acted: that virtue, which inflames a man with courage, so that he dares perform what reason and duty require of him, that he disdains to do what is bad or base; which inspires him with sincerity, that he values his honesty before all other interests and respects, that he abhors to wrong or deceive, to flatter or abuse any man, that he cannot endure to seem otherwise than he is, to speak otherwise than he means, to act otherwise than he promises and professes; which endows him with courtesy, that he is ready to yield every man his due respect, to afford any man what help and succour he is able; that virtue, which renders a man upright in all his dealings, and correspondent to all his obligations; a loyal subject to his prince, and a true lover of his country, a candid judge of persons and things, an earnest favourer of whatever is good and commendable, a faithful and hearty friend, a beneficial and useful neighbour, a grateful resenter and requiter of courtesies, hospitable to the strangers, bountiful to the poor, kind and good to all the world: that virtue, in fine, which constitutes a man of honour, who surely is the best man next to a man of conscience. Thus may honour be valued from natural light, and according to common sense^r.

^q Θεῖόν τι ἢ τιμὴ. *Plat. de Leg.* iv.

Καλὸν τοῖς πολλαῖς πόλεσι τὸ παρακέλευσμά ἐστι, προσιμῶν εὐδοξίαν πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν. *Idem de Rep.* xii.

Μέγιστον τῶν ἐκ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἡ τιμὴ. *Arist. Eth.* iv. 3.

Levis est animi, justam gloriam, qui est fructus virtutis honestissimus, repudiare. *Cic. in Pis.*

Ex omnibus præmiis virtutis amplissimum est præmium gloria. *Idem pro Mil.*

^r Trahimur omnes laudis studio, et optimus quisque maxime gloria ducitur. *Cic. pro Arch.*

But beyond all this, the holy Scripture (that most certain standard, by which we may examine and determine the true worth of things) doth not teach us to slight honour, but rather in its fit order and just measure to love and prize it. It indeed instructs us to ground it well, (not upon bad qualities or wicked deeds, that is villanous madness; not upon things of a mean and indifferent nature, that is vanity; not upon counterfeit shows and pretences, that is hypocrisy; but upon real worth and goodness, that may consist with modesty and sobriety:) it enjoins us not to be immoderate in our desires thereof, or complacences therein, not to be irregular in the pursuit or acquist of it; (to be so is pride and ambition;) but to affect it calmly, to purchase it fairly: it directs us not to make a regard thereto our chief principle, not to propound it as our main end of action: it charges us to bear contentedly the want or loss thereof, (as of other temporal goods;) yea, in some cases, for conscience sake, or for God's service, (that is, for a good incomparably better than it,) it obliges us willingly to prostitute and sacrifice it, choosing rather to be infamous than impious, (to be in disgrace with men, rather than in disfavour with God's;) it, in fine, commands us to seek and embrace it only in subordination and with final reference to God's honour. Which distinctions and cautions being provided, honour is represented in holy Scripture as a thing considerably good, which may be regarded without blame, which sometimes in duty must be regarded. It is there preferred before other good things, in themselves not despicable. For, *A good name is better than precious ointment; yea, A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches*, saith the Wise Man. It is called a gift of God: for, *There is a man, saith the Preacher, to whom God hath given riches and honour*. Yea, not only a simple gift, but a blessing, conferred in kindness, as a reward and encouragement of goodness: for, *By humility and*

Eccles. vii.

1.
Prov. xxii.

1.

Eccles. vi. 2.

Prov. xxii.

4.

Οἱ χαρίεντες καὶ πρακτικοί, plausible and active men do, saith Aristotle, place happiness in honour, *Eth. i. 4.*

§ Non vis esse justus sine gloria? at mehercule saepe justus esse debes cum infamia, *Sen. Epist. cxiii.*

SERM. *the fear of the Lord, saith he again, are riches and honour.*

- IV. Whence it is to be acknowledged as an especial benefit, and a fit ground of thanksgiving; as is practised by the Psalmist in Psal. xxi. 5. his royal hymn: *Honour, saith he, and majesty hast thou laid upon him.* Wisdom also is described unto us bearing Prov. iii. 16. *in her left hand riches and honour:* and Wisdom surely will not take into any hand of hers, or hold therein, what is worth nothing. No: we are therefore moved to procure Prov. iv. 8. her, because, *exalting her, she shall promote us.—She shall give unto our head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to us.* We are also enjoined to render honour as the best expression of good-will and gratitude toward them who best deserve in themselves, or most deserve of us; to our prince, to our parents, to our priests, especially to such of them *as govern and teach well*, to all I Pet. ii. 17. good men, (Have such in reputation, says the Apostle.) I Tim. v. 3. 17. And were not honour a good thing, such injunctions would be unreasonable. Yea, because we are obliged to bear good Phil. ii. 9. will toward all men, St. Peter bids us to *honour all men.* I Pet. ii. 17. From hence also, that we are especially bound to render honour unto God himself, we may well infer with Aristotle, Aristot. Eth. iv. 3. that *honour is the best thing in our power to offer.* To these considerations may be added, that we are commanded to walk *εὐσχημόνως* (*decently*, or *speciously*, which implies a regard to men's opinion;) to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*, (τὰ καλὰ, that is, not only things good in substance, Rom. xiii. 13. but goodly in appearance;) to *have our conversation honest* Rom. xii. 17. *before the Gentiles*, (καλῶν again, that is, fair, or comely, and plausible, such as may commend us and our profession to the judgment of them who observe us.) St. Paul also exhorts I Pet. ii. 12. us to *mind*, not only *what things are true, are just, are pure;* but also ὅσα σεμνὰ (*whatever things are venerable*, or apt to beget respect,) ὅσα πρῶσφιλή (*whatever things are lovely*, or gracious in men's eyes and esteem,) ὅσα εὐφρημα, (*whatever things are well reported, or well reputed of.*) He requires us not only, *if there be any virtue*, (any thing very good in itself,) but, *if there be any praise*, (any thing much approved in common esteem,) that we should *mind such*

things. Lastly, the blessed state hereafter (the highest instance of divine bounty, the complete reward of goodness) is represented and recommended to us as a state of honour and glory; to be ambitious whereof is the character of a good man. *To every man, saith St. Paul, shall God render according to his works: to them, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.* SERM.
IV.

Such is the reward propounded to us in itself; no vile or contemptible thing, but upon various accounts much valuable; that which the common apprehensions of men, plain dictates of reason, a predominant instinct of nature, the judgments of very wise men, and divine attestation itself conspire to commend unto us as very considerable and precious. Such a reward our text prescribes us the certain, the only way of attaining.

2. Such a benefit is here tendered to us (that which yet more highly commends it, and exceedingly enhances its worth) by God himself: *I, saith he, will honour.* It is sanctified by coming from his holy hand; it is dignified by following his most wise and just disposal; it is fortified and assured by depending on his unquestionable word, and uncontrollable power: who, as he is the prime Author of all good, so he is in especial manner the sovereign dispenser of honour. *The king, we say, is the fountain of honour.* What any king, as the representative and delegate of God, is in his particular kingdom, that is almighty God absolutely and independently in all the world. *Both riches and honour, saith good king David, come of thee, for thou rulest over all: in thine hand is power and might; in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.* 1 Chron. xxix. 12. He whose grants are in effect only sure and valid, whose favours only do in the end turn to good account, he freely offers us most desirable preferment: he doth himself graciously hold forth most authentic patents, by virtue of which we may all become *right honourable, and persons of quality indeed*; having not only the names and titles, the outward ensigns and badges of dignity, (such as earthly princes confer,) but the substantial reality, the assured enjoyment thereof. (For

SERM. man can only impose law upon tongues and gestures ; God
IV. alone commandeth and inclineth hearts, wherein honour chiefly resideth.) He offers it, I say, most freely indeed, yet not absolutely : he doth not go to sell it for a price, yet he propounds it under a condition ; as a most just and equal, so a very gentle and easy condition. It is but an exchange of honour for honour ; of honour from God, which is a free gift, for honour from us, which is a just duty ; of honour from him our sovereign Lord, for honour from us his poor vassals ; of honour from the most high Majesty of heaven, for honour from us vile worms, creeping upon the earth. Such an overture one would think it not only reasonable to accept, but impossible to refuse. For can any man dare not to honour invincible power, infallible wisdom, inflexible justice ? Will any man forbear to honour immense goodness and bounty ? Yes, it seems there are men so mad as to reject so fair an offer ; so bad as to neglect so equal a duty. Let us therefore consider what it is that is here required of us, or wherein this honouring of God consists, that we may thereby discern when we perform this duty, when we are deficient therein.

II. There are several ways of honouring God, or several parts and degrees of this duty ; all which we may refer to two sorts, conceiving the duty as a compound, made up of two main ingredients, (correspondent to those two parts in which they reside, and of which our nature consists ; which distinction St. Paul suggesteth, when he saith, *Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's,*) one of them being, as it were the form and soul, the other as the matter and body of the duty.

1 Cor. vi.
20.

1. The soul of that honour which is required of us toward God, is that internal esteem and reverence which we should bear in our hearts towards him ; importing that we have impressed upon our minds such conceptions about him as are worthy of him, suitable to the perfection of his nature, to the eminency of his state, to the just quality of his works and actions : that we apprehend him to be, what he really is, in his nature, superlatively good.

wise, powerful, holy, and just: that we ascribe unto him the production and conservation of all beings, together with an entire superintendency over, and absolute disposal of, all events: that we conceive ourselves obliged to submit unto, and acquiesce in, all his dispensations of providence, as most wise and most righteous; to rely upon the declarations of his mind, (whether in way of assertion, or promise,) as infallibly true and certain. In such acts of mind the honouring of God doth primarily consist. In acts, I say: not in speculative opinions concerning the divine excellencies, (such as all men have, who are not downright atheists or infidels, floating in the fancy, or dormant in the mind;) but in continually present, lively, effectual acts of apprehension and judgment, sinking down into the heart and affections, and quickening them to a congruous, real performance. Such an apprehension of God's power, as shall make us to dread his irresistible hand, shall cause us to despair of prospering in bad courses, shall dispose us to confide in him, as able to perform whatever he wills us to expect from him: such an opinion of his wisdom, as shall keep us from questioning whether that is best which God declares to be so; as shall hinder us from presuming (in compliance with our own shallow reason, or vain fancy) to do any thing against God's judgment and advice: such a conceit of God's justice, as shall render us careful to perform what his law promises to reward, and fearful to commit what it threatens to punish: such a persuasion concerning God's goodness, as shall kindle in us an hearty affection toward him, shall make us very sensible of his bounty, and ready to yield returns of duty and gratitude unto him; as shall preserve us from being distrustful of his providence, or doubtful in our need and distress of finding relief from him: such a vigorous and fruitful esteem of God in all respects, as shall produce in us dispositions of mind, and actions of life, agreeable to our various relations and obligations to him; becoming us as his creatures and children, as his subjects and servants. This is indeed the soul of the duty, which being absent, all exterior (how specious

SERM. soever) either professions or performances, are but as pictures, having in them somewhat of resemblance in shape and colour, nothing of life: yea rather, as carcases, not only dead and senseless, but rotten and filthy in God's

Mat. xv. 8. *sight. This people, saith God, do honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* Such honour is indeed no honour at all, but impudent abuse and profane mockery: for what can be more abominably vain, than for a man to court and cajole him who knows his whole heart, who sees that he either minds not, or means not what he says? It behoves us therefore, by all proper means, by contemplating the works and actions of God, (his admirable works of nature, the wise proceedings of his providence, the glorious dispensations of his grace,) by meditating on his word, by praying for his grace, by observing his law and will, to raise up in our hearts, to foment and cherish this internal reverence, which is the true spring of all piety, the principle which forms and actuates that other sort, coming next to be touched on, being the body of our due honour to God; concurring in its order to the integrity thereof, as without which the interior part would be a kind of ghost, too thin in substance, too remote from sense, too destitute of good fruit and use.

2. This bodily part consists in outward expressions and performances, whereby we declare our esteem and reverence of God, and produce or promote the like in others. For our thus honouring God respects those two ends and effects, the uttering our own, the exciting in others a reverence toward him. And it we may first view in the general, or gross bulk thereof; then survey its principal members.

First, in general, God is honoured by a willing and careful practice of all piety and virtue for conscience sake, or in avowed obedience to his holy will. This is the most natural expression of our reverence toward him, and the most effectual way of promoting the same in others. A subject cannot better demonstrate the reverence he bears toward his prince, than by (with a cheerful diligence) observing his laws; for by so doing he declares that he acknowledgeth the authority, and revereth the

majesty, which enacted them; that he approves the wisdom which devised them, and the goodness which designed them for public benefit; that he dreads his prince's power, which can maintain them, and his justice, which will vindicate them; that he relies upon his fidelity, in making good what of protection or of recompense he propounds to the observers of them. No less pregnant a signification of our reverence toward God do we yield in our gladly and strictly obeying his laws; thereby evidencing our submission to God's sovereign authority, our esteem of his wisdom and goodness, our awful regard to his power and justice, our confidence in him, and dependance upon his word. As also the practice of wholesome laws, visibly producing good fruits, (peace and prosperity in the commonwealth,) doth conciliate respect unto the prince, he thereby appearing wise and good, able to discern, and willing to choose what confers to public benefit: so actions conformable to the divine law, being (by God's wise and gracious disposal) both in themselves comely and lovely, and in effect, as St. Paul saith, *good and profitable to men*, conducing indeed not only to private, but also to public welfare, to the rendering human society comfortable, to the settling and securing common tranquillity, the performance of them must needs bring great commendation to the author and ordainer of them. By observing them we shall, as St. Peter speaks, *set forth the virtues of him that called us* to such a practice. The light and lustre of good works, done in regard to divine command, will cause men to see clearly the excellencies of our most wise and gracious Lord; will consequently induce and excite them to glorify our Father which is in heaven. In this, saith our Saviour, *is my Father glorified, if you bear much fruit*. The goodness to the sight, the pleasantness to the taste, which is ever perceptible in those fruits which genuine piety beareth, the beauty men see in a calm mind and a sober conversation, the sweetness they taste from works of justice and charity, will certainly produce veneration to the doctrine which teacheth such things, and to the authority which enjoins them. It is an aggravation of impiety, often insisted

Tit. iii. 8.
Neh. ix. 13.
Deut. x. 13.

1 Pet. ii. 9.

Matt. v. 16.
John xv. 8.

SERM. upon in Scripture, that it slurs, as it were, and defames

VI. God, brings reproach and obloquy upon him, causes his name to be profaned, to be cursed, to be blasphemed : and it is answerably a commendation of piety, that by the practice thereof we (not only procure many great advantages to ourselves, many blessings and comforts here, all joys and felicities hereafter : but do also thereby) beget esteem to God himself, and sanctify his ever-blessed name ; cause him to be regarded and revered, his name to be praised and blessed among men. It is by exemplary piety, by *providing things honest in the sight of all men*, by doing things honourable and laudable, (such are all things which God hath been pleased to command us,) that we shall be sure to fulfil that precept of St. Paul, of *doing all things to the glory of God* ; which is the body of that duty we speak of.

Secondly, But there are, deserving a particular inspection, some members thereof, which in a peculiar and eminent manner do constitute this honour ; some acts which more signally conduce to the illustration of God's glory. Such are,

1. The frequent and constant performance (in a serious and reverent manner) of all religious duties, or devotions immediately addressed to God, or conversant about him : that which the Psalmist styles, *Giving the Lord the honour due to his name, worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness*.

2. Using all things peculiarly related unto God, his holy name, his holy word, his holy places, (the places *where his honour dwelleth*,) his holy times, (religious fasts and festivities,) with especial respect.

3. Yielding due observance to the deputies and ministers of God, (both civil and ecclesiastical) as such, or because of their relation to God : the doing of which God declares that he interprets and accepts as done unto himself.

4. Freely spending what God hath given us (out of respect unto him) in works of piety, charity, and mercy ;

that which the Wise Man calls, *honouring the Lord with our substance.* SERM.
IV.

5. All penitential acts, by which we submit unto God, and humble ourselves before him. As Achan, by confessing of his sin, is said to *give glory to the Lord God of Israel.* Prov. iii. 9.
xiv. 31.

6. Cheerful undergoing afflictions, losses, disgraces, for the profession of God's truth, or for obedience to God's commands. (As St. Peter is said *by his death, suffered up- on such accounts, to glorify God.*) Josh. vii. 19.
Apoc. xvi.
9.
John xxi.
19.

These signal instances of this duty (represented as such in holy Scripture) for brevity's sake I pass over; craving leave only to consider one, most pertinent to our present business, and indeed a very comprehensive one; which is this:

7. We shall especially honour God, by discharging faithfully those offices which God hath entrusted us with; by improving diligently those talents which God hath committed to us; by using carefully those means and opportunities which God hath vouchsafed us, of doing him service, and promoting his glory. Thus he to whom God hath given wealth, if he expend it (not to the nourishment of pride and luxury, not only to the gratifying his own pleasure or humour, but) to the furtherance of God's honour, or to the succour of his indigent neighbour, (in any pious or charitable way,) he doth thereby in especial manner honour God. He also on whom God hath bestowed wit and parts, if he employ them (not so much in contriving projects to advance his own petty interests, or in procuring vain applause to himself, as) in advantageously setting forth God's praise, handsomely recommending goodness, dexterously engaging men in ways of virtue, (doing which things is true wit and excellent policy indeed,) he doth thereby remarkably honour God. He likewise that hath honour conferred upon him, if he subordinate it to God's honour, if he use his own credit as an instrument of bringing credit to goodness, thereby adorning and illustrating piety, he by so doing doth eminently practise this duty. The like may be said of any other good quality, any ca

SERM. capacity or advantage of doing good; by the right use thereof
 IV. we honour God: for that men, beholding the worth of such
 good gifts, and feeling the benefit emergent from them,
 will be apt to bless the donor of them; as did they in the
 Gospel, who, seeing our Saviour cure the paralytic man,

Matt. ix. 8. did presently *glorify God, who had given such power unto men.*

But especially they to whom power and authority is committed, as they have the chief capacity, so they are under an especial obligation thus to honour God: they are particularly concerned to hear and observe that royal proclamation, *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the honour due unto his name.* When such persons

Psal. xxix.
 1, 2.

Dan. iv. 34.
 I blessed the
 most High,
 and praised
 and ho-
 noured
 him, &c.

(like King Nebuchadnezzar returned to his right senses) do seriously acknowledge their power and eminency derived from God alone; when they profess subjection unto him, and express it in their practice, not only driving others by their power, but drawing them by their example, to piety and goodness; when they cause God's name to be duly worshipped, and his laws to be strictly observed; when they favour and encourage virtue, discourage and chastise wickedness; when they take care that justice be impartially administered, innocence protected, necessity relieved, all iniquity and oppression, all violence and disorder, yea, so much as may be, all affliction and wretchedness be prevented, or removed; when they by all means strive to promote both the service of God, and the happiness of men, (*dispensing* equally and benignly to the family over which their Lord hath set them, *their meat*

Matt. xxiv.
 45.

1 Tim. ii. 2. *in due season*; providing that men under them *may live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty*; doing which is the business allotted to them, the interest, as it were, of God, which he declares himself concernedly to tender, and by their ministry to prosecute;) when they carefully do such things, then do they indeed approve themselves worthy honourers of their high Master and heavenly King; then do they truly act God's part, and represent his person decently. When the actions of these visible gods are so divinely good and beneficial, men will be easily induced, yea, can

hardly forbear to reverence and magnify the invisible Founder of their authority. By so doing, as they will set before men's eyes the best pattern of loyalty; as they will impress upon men's hearts the strongest argument for obedience and respect toward themselves; as they shall both more plainly inform and more effectually persuade people to the performance of their duty unto them, than by all the law and all the force in the world; as they will thereby consequently best secure and maintain their own honour, and their own welfare, (for men will never be heartily loyal and submissive to authority, till they become really good; nor will they ever be very good, till they see their leaders such:) so they will together greatly advance the praise and glory of him in whose name they rule, to whose favour they owe their power and dignity; *in whose hand*, as the Prophet saith, *is their breath, and whose are all their ways.* For Dan. v. 23. all men will be ready most awfully to dread him, unto whom they see princes themselves humbly to stoop and bow; no man will be ashamed or unwilling to serve him, whom he shall observe that his lords and governors do concern themselves to worship: the world cannot but have a good opinion of him, a participation of whose power and majesty yields such excellent fruits; it will not fail to adore him, whose shadows and images are so venerable. It is a most notorious thing, both to reason and inexperience, what extreme advantage great persons have, especially by the influence of their practice, to bring God himself, as it were, into credit: how much it is in their power easily to render piety a thing in fashion and request. For in what they do, they never are alone, or are ill attended; whither they go, they carry the world along with them: they lead crowds of people after them, as well when they go in the right way, as when they run astray. The custom of living well, no less than other modes and garbs, will be soon conveyed and propagated from the court; the city and country will readily draw good manners thence, (good manners truly so called, not only superficial forms of civility, but real

SERM.
IV.

practices of goodness.) For the main body of men goeth not *qua eundum, sed qua itur*, not according to rules and reasons, but after examples and authorities; especially of great persons, who are like stars, shining in high and conspicuous places, by which men steer their course: their actions are to be reckoned not as single or solitary ones, but are, like their persons, of a public and representative nature, involving the practice of others, who are by them awed, or shamed into compliance. Their good example especially hath this advantage, that men can find no excuse, can have no pretence why they should not follow it. Piety is not only beautified, but fortified by their dignity; it not only shines in them with a clearer lustre, but with a mightier force and influence: a word, a look (the least intimation) from them will do more good, than others' best eloquence, clearest reason, most earnest endeavours. For it is in them, if they would apply themselves to it, as the wisest prince implies, to

Prov. xx. 8. *scatter iniquity with their eyes.* A smile of theirs were able to enliven virtue, and diffuse it all about; a frown might suffice to mortify and dissipate wickedness. Such apparently is their power of honouring God; and in proportion thereto surely great is their obligation to do it: of them peculiarly God expects it, and all equity exacts it. What the meaner rank of servants (who are employed in baser drudgeries, whose fare is more coarse, whose wages are more scant, who stand at greater distance from their lord, and receive no such ample or express marks of his favour, what these) do is of some consequence indeed, but doth not import so much to the master's reputation; their good word concerning him, their good carriage toward him doth not credit him so much. But those whom he employs in matters of highest trust and importance to his affairs, whom he places in the nearest degree to himself, (seats even in his own throne, upon his own tribunal,) whom he feeds plentifully and daintily, maintains in a handsome garb, allows largely, as their deportment doth much reflect on their lord's esteem, as they are highly capable of advancing his repute:

so all the rules of ingenuity and gratitude, all the laws of justice and equity do oblige them earnestly to endeavour it. SERM.
IV.
 And it is indeed no less their concernment to do so. For if there be disorders, prejudicial to the master's honour and interest, frequently committed in the family, it is those servants must be responsible: if due order be there kept to his glory and advantage, they shall chiefly be commended, and peculiarly hear the *Euge, bone serve*. They must be loaded with other men's faults, or crowned for other men's virtues, as their behaviour hath respectively contributed to them. Those universal rules of equity, proposed in the Gospel, will, in God's reckoning with and requiring men, be punctually observed: *to whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required*: answerable to the improvement of what is delivered in trust shall the acceptance be. Matt. xxv.
23.
Luke xii.
48.

I have insisted somewhat more largely on this point, because our text hath a particular aspect thereon; the words being uttered upon occasion of Eli, then judge in Israel, his not using authority to these purposes; his forbearing to redress a grievous abuse, committed by his own sons, to the disservice and dishonour of God. Whence to persons of his rank is this law especially directed; upon them is this duty chiefly incumbent; on them assuredly, (as sure as God is true,) if they will observe the duty, the reward shall be conferred. God will certainly not only preserve the honour they have already, but will accumulate more honours on them.

These are general truths; the particular application of them is ours. God, I pray, vouchsafe his grace and blessing, that it may be made to our benefit and comfort.

III. I should now shew why the duty is required of us, or how reasonable it is. I must not (and the matter is so palpable that I need not) spend many words on that. God surely doth not exact honour from us because he needs it, because he is the better for it, because he, for itself, delights therein. For (beside that he cannot want any thing without himself, that he cannot any wise need mortal breath to

SERM. IV. praise him^a, or hands of flesh to serve him, who hath millions of better creatures than we absolutely at his devotion, and can with a word create millions of millions more, fitter than we to honour him) the best estimation we can have of him is much below him; the best expression we can make is very unworthy of him. He is infinitely excellent, beyond what we can imagine or declare: his *name is exalted above all blessing and praise; his glory is above the earth and heaven*. So that all our endeavours to honour him are, in comparison to what is due, but defects, and in a manner disparagements to him. It is only then (which should effect our ingenuity to consider) his pure goodness that moves him, for our benefit and advantage, to demand it of us.

Neh. ix. 5.
Ps. cxlviii.
13.
Eccles.
xlili. 30.

1. For that to honour God is the most proper work of reason; that for which primarily we were designed and framed; (for as other things were made to afford the matter and occasion, so man was designed to exercise the act of glorifying God:) whence the performance thereof doth preserve and perfect our nature; to neglect it being unnatural and monstrous.

Sen. Ep. 76.

2. For that also it is a most pleasant duty. He is not a man, (hath lost all natural ingenuity and humanity,) who doth not delight to make some returns thither, where he hath found much good will, whence he hath felt great kindness. Since then all the good we have, we have received from God's favour, it cannot but be very pleasant to render somewhat of requital, as it were, unto him; and we can render no other but this. We cannot make God more rich, more joyful, more happy than he is: all that we can do is, to express our reverence toward him.

3. For that likewise our honouring God disposes us to the imitation of him, (for what we do reverence we would resemble,) that is, to the doing those things wherein our chief perfection and happiness consists, whence our best content and joy doth spring.

^a Ἀκήρατος γὰρ αὐτῷ ἡ ἕσπευ καὶ ἀνευδὴς οὖσα, ἕθενος ἕτερος προσδίδεται· οἱ δὲ κινῶντες αὐτὸν λαμπρότεροι γίνονται. Chrysost. in Psal. cxliv. et vide in Psal. ciii.

4. In fine, for that the practice of this duty is most profitable and beneficial to us; unto it by an eternal rule of justice our final welfare and prosperity being annexed: whence God hath declared it to be the way and condition of our attaining that thing which we so like and prize, honour to ourselves; which by promise he hath engaged himself to confer on those who honour him. And,

SERM.
IV.

IV. This promise he makes good several ways: some of them I shall briefly suggest.

1. The honouring God is of itself an honourable thing; the employment which ennobles heaven itself, wherein the highest angels do rejoice and glory. It is the greatest honour of a servant to bring credit to his master, of a subject to spread his prince's renown, and (upon grounds vastly more obliging) of a creature to glorify his Maker: that we may do so is an honour we should be glad, may be proud of.

2. By honouring God we are immediately instated in great honour; we enter into most noble relations, acquire most illustrious titles, enjoy most glorious privileges; we become the friends and favourites of heaven, are adopted into God's family, and are styled his children; do obtain a free access unto him, a sure protection under him, a ready assistance from him in all our needs. And what honour can exceed, can equal this?

3. God hath so ordered it, that honour is naturally consequent upon the honouring him. God hath made goodness a noble and a stately thing; hath impressed upon it that beauty and majesty which commands an universal love and veneration, which strikes presently both a kindly and an awful respect into the minds of all men. *The righteous is* Prov. xii. 26. *more excellent than his neighbour.* Power may be dreaded, riches may be courted, wit and knowledge may be admired; but only goodness is truly esteemed and honoured^b. Not only men of goodness and discretion, but even the vulgar sort of

^b Γίνου τοῦ πλησίον τιμιώτερος ἐν τῷ φανῆναι χερσότητος, &c. Νατ. Orat. ἀε Παμπ.

SERM. men (yea, as Plato hath well observed, the worst men)
 IV. do pass this judgment, do prefer true goodness above all things^c.

4. God, by his extraordinary providence, as there is reason and occasion, doth interpose, so as to procure honour to them, to maintain and further their reputation, who honour him. God *fashioneth the hearts of men: the hearts of the greatest men are in his hand; he turneth them as the rivers of waters, whithersoever he will: he consequently raiseth or depresseth us, as he pleases, in the judgments and affections of men. When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*, saith the Wise Man; that is, he disposeth the most averse minds to love and honour him. No envy can supplant, no slander can deface the credit of such a person; since God hath taken it into his charge and care, since he hath said it, that *he will bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon day*. God also by secret methods, and undiscernible trains, ordereth all events, managing our thoughts and designs, our enterprises and actions so, that the result of them shall be matter of benefit, comfort, and reputation, or of disaster, regret, and disgrace, as he thinks good. Victory and success he absolutely disposeth of, and consequently of the honour that follows them; and they do usually attend the honours of God: for, as it is in the Psalm, *a good success have they who keep his commandments*. Many are the instances of persons, (such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Job, and Daniel,) who, for their signal honouring of God, from a base and obscure, or from an afflicted and forlorn condition, have, in ways strange and wonderful, been advanced to eminent dignity, have been rendered

Is gloria maxime excellit, qui virtute plurimum præstat. Cic.

Κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὁ ἀγαθὸς μόνος τιμητός. Arist. Eth. iv. 3.

Adeo gratiosa virtus est, ut insitum sit etiam malis probare meliora. Sen de Benef. iv. 17.

^c Θείον τι καὶ εὐσχοχόν ἐσι καὶ τοῖς κακοῖς· ὥστε πάμπολλοι τῶν σφόδρα κακῶν εὐ τοῖς λόγοις καὶ ταῖς δόξαις διαίρῃνται τῆς ἀμείνης τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τοὺς χεῖρας. Plat. de Repub. xii.

most illustrious, by the providence of him, who raiseth SERM. IV.
the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar out of the
*dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inhe-
rit the throne of glory. He doth it in an evident manner, P's. cvii. 41.
 and eminent degree, to some; he doth it in a convenient I Sam. ii. 8.
 way, and competent measure, to all that honour him.*

5. Whereas men are naturally inclined to bear much Cic. Tusc.
 regard to the judgment of posterity concerning them, are ^{1.}
 desirous to leave a good name behind them, and to have
 their memory retained in esteem: God so disposes things,
 that *the memory of the just shall be blessed; that his right-*
eousness shall be had in everlasting remembrance; that his P's. cxii. 6.
light shall rejoice, (or burn clearly and pleasantly, even ^{9.}
 when his life is put out here.) ^dNo spices can so em-
 balm a man, no monument can so preserve his name and
 memory, as a pious conversation, whereby God hath been
 honoured, and men benefited. The fame of such a person
 is, in the best judgments, far more precious and truly glo-
 rious, than is the fame of those who have excelled in any
 other deeds or qualities. For what sober man doth not
 in his thoughts afford a more high and hearty respect to
 those poor fishermen, who by their heroical activity and
 patience did honour God in the propagation of his heaven-
 ly truth, than to all those Hector in chivalry, those con-
 querors and achievers of mighty exploits, (those Alexan-
 ders and Cesars,) who have been renowned for doing things
 which seemed great, rather than for performing what was
 truly good? To the honour of those excellent poor men,
 conspicuous monuments have been erected every where;
 anniversary memorials of their names and virtues are cele-
 brated; they are never mentioned or thought of without
 respect; their commendations are interwoven with the praises
 of their great Lord and Maker, whom they honoured ^{e.}

^d Ανάγκη, ὡς ἔοικε, μέλλειν ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦ ἔπιτα χρόνον ἐπιθεῖν καὶ τυχεῖναι
 κατὰ τινα φύσιν, οἱ μὲν ἀνδραποδαδίστατοι, οὐδὲν φροντίζοντες αὐτῶ· οἱ δ' ἐπεικίστατοι,
 πᾶν ποιῶντες ἕως ἂν εἰς τὸν ἔπιτα χρόνον εὐ ἀκούωσιν. *Plat. Epist. ii.*

^e Τῶν δὲ δούλων τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ τὰ σήματα λαμπρὰ, καὶ ἡμίραι καταφανεῖς, ἰσορῶν
 τῇ οἰκυμένη ποιῆσαι, &c. *Chrys. in 2 Cor. Or. 27.*

SERM.

IV.

2 Cor. iv.
17.John viii.
49, 50.
Heb. ii. 9.
xiii. 2.

6. Lastly, to those who honour God here, God hath reserved an honour infinitely great and excellent, in comparison whereto all honours here are but dreams, the loudest acclamations of mortal men are but empty sounds, the brightest glories of this world are but duskish and fleeting shadows; an honour most solid, most durable; *an eternal weight of glory*. They shall, in the face of all the world, be approved by the most righteous Judge's unquestionable sentence; they shall be esteemed in the unanimous opinion of angels and saints; they shall be applauded by the general voice and attestation of heaven; they shall then be seated upon unmoveable thrones, their heads encircled with unfading crowns, their faces shining with rays of unconceivable glory and majesty. The less of honour they have received here, in this transitory moment of life, the more thereof they shall enjoy in that future eternal state; where, with him who, through the whole course of his life, *sought not his own honour, but the honour of him that sent him*; who, *for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour*; who, *for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set at the right hand of God*; with those who consecrated all their endeavours, and who sacrificed their lives to the promoting of God's honour, they shall possess everlasting glory. Which, together with them, God Almighty of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, be for ever all honour and praise. Amen.

SERMON V.

UPRIGHT WALKING SURE WALKING.

PROV. x. 9.

He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.

THE world is much addicted to the politics; the heads of men are very busy in contrivance, and their mouths are full of talk about the ways of consulting our safety, and securing our interests. May we not therefore presume, that an infallible maxim of policy, proposing the most expedite and certain method of security in all our transactions, will be entertained with acceptance? Such an one the greatest politician and wisest man for business (if we may take God's word for it) that ever was or will be, doth here suggest to us. For the practice couched in our text he otherwise voucheth for a point of policy, telling us, that *A man of understanding walketh uprightly*: and here he recommendeth it as a method of security, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*. SERM. V.

Treating upon which *aphorism*, I shall, by God's help, endeavour, first, in way of explication, briefly to describe the practice itself; then, in way of proof, by some considerations to declare, that security doth attend it.

For explication. *To walk* (as well in the style of holy Scripture, as in other writings, and even in common speech) doth signify our usual course of dealing, or the constant tenor of our practice.

SERM. *Uprightly*, according to the original, might be rendered, V. *in perfection, or, with integrity*: and by the Greek translators in several places is supposed chiefly to denote sincerity and purity of intention.

נתום

He that
walketh in
his upright-
ness, feareth
the Lord.
Prov. xiv. 2.

In effect, the phrase, *He that walketh uprightly*, doth import, one who is constantly disposed in his designs and dealings to bear a principal regard to the rules of his duty, and the dictates of his conscience; who, in every case emergent is ready to perform that, which upon good deliberation doth appear most just and fit, in conformity to God's law and sound reason, without being swayed by any appetite, any passion, any sinister respect to his own private interest of profit, credit, or pleasure, to the commission of any unlawful, irregular, unworthy, or base act; who generally doth act out of good principles; (namely, reverence to God, charity to men, sober regard to his own true welfare;) who doth aim at good ends, that is, at God's honour, public benefit, his own salvation, other good things subordinate to those, or well consistent with them; who doth prosecute his designs by lawful means, in fair ways, such as honest providence and industry, veracity and fidelity, dependence upon God's help, and prayer for his blessing: in short, one who never advisedly doth undertake any bad thing, nor any good thing to ill purposes; nor doth use any foul means to compass his intents.

For proof. That such an one doth ever proceed with much security, from the following considerations may appear.

I. An upright walker is secure of easily finding his way. For it commonly requireth no reach of wit or depth of judgment, no laborious diligence of inquiry, no curious intentness of observation, no solicitous care, or plodding study, to discern in any case what is just; we need not much trouble our heads about it, for we can hardly be to seek for it. If we will but open our eyes, it lieth in view before us, being the plain, straight, obvious road, which common reason prompteth, or which ordinary instruction pointeth out to us; so that usually that di-

rection of Solomon is sufficient, *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee.—Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left.*

SERM.
V.

Prov. iv. 23.
27. xvii. 21.
xiv. 6.

The ways of iniquity and vanity, (if we may call them *ways*, which indeed are but exorbitances and seductions from the way,) ill designs and bad means of executing designs, are very unintelligible, very obscure, abstruse, and intricate; being infinitely various, and utterly uncertain: so that out of them to pick and fix on this or that may puzzle our heads, and perplex our hearts; as to pursue any of them may involve us in great difficulty and trouble. But the ways of truth, of right, of virtue, are so very simple and uniform, so fixed and permanent, so clear and notorious, that we can hardly miss them, or (except wilfully) swerve from them. For they by divine wisdom were chalked out, not only for ingenious and subtile persons, (men of great parts, of refined wits, of long experience,) but rather for the vulgar community of men, the great body of God's subjects, consisting in persons of meanest capacity, and smallest improvement: being designed to *make wise the simple, to give the young man knowledge and discretion*: to direct all sorts of people in their duty, toward their happiness; according to that in the Prophet, *A high way shall be there, and it shall be called, The way of holiness—the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

Psal. xix. 7.
cxix. 130.
Prov. viii. 5.
i. 4.
Ps. cxix. 9.
Isa. xxxv.
Ὁδοὶ ἁγίας
ὁδὸν. LXX.
Rom. ii. 15.
Isa. xxx.
21.
Ps. xxxvii.
31.

They are in very legible characters graven by the finger of God upon our hearts and consciences, so that by any considerate reflection inwards we may easily read them: or they are extant in God's word, there written as with a sun-beam, so perspicuously expressed, so frequently inculcated, that without gross negligence or strange dulness we cannot but descry them. For who with half an eye may not see, that the practice of pious love and reverence toward God, of entire justice and charity toward our neighbour, of sober temperance and purity toward ourselves, is approved by reason, is prescribed by God to us?

Hence in the holy Scriptures, as bad ways are called dark, crooked, rough, slippery ways: so the good ways

Prov. iv. 19.
ii. 13, 15.
Jo. viii. 12.

SERM. V. are said to be ^a clear, plain, direct, even ways: ^b *The path of the just, say they, is as a shining light. All the words of my mouth are plain to him that understandeth, (or, that considereth them.) My foot standeth in an even place. The law of his God is in his heart: and none of his steps shall slide.*

Hence it is affirmed, that an upright man doth hardly need any conduct beside his own honesty. For, ^c *The integrity, saith Solomon, of the upright shall guide them; and, The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way.*

But in case such an one should ever be at a stand or at a loss, in doubt of his course, he hath always at hand a most sure guide to conduct or direct him. It is but asking the way of him, or saying, with the Psalmist, ^d *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths; Teach to do thy will, and, Lead me in the way everlasting; O let me not wander from thy commandments: and then ^e his ears, as the Prophet saith, shall hear a word behind him, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; then the words of the Psalmist shall be verified, What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way.*

Hence is the upright man happily secured from tiring pains in the search, from racking anxieties in the choice, from grating scruples and galling regrets in the pursuit of his way.

II. The upright walker doth tread upon firm ground. He doth build his practice, not upon the perilous bogs, the treacherous quagmires, the devouring quicksands of uncouth, bold, impious paradoxes, (such as have been vented by Epicurus, by Machiavel, by others more lately, whose infamous names are too well known, as the effects of their pestilent notions are too much felt;) but upon solid, safe, approved, and well tried principles; viz. these, and the like coherent with them: That there is an eternal God, incomprehensibly powerful, wise, just, and good; who is always present with us, and ever intent upon us; viewing not only all our external actions, (open and se-

cret,) but our inmost cogitations, desires, and intentions, by the which our actions chiefly are to be estimated: that he, as governor of the world, and judge of men, doth concern himself in all human affairs, disposing and managing all events according to his righteous pleasure; exacting punctual obedience to his laws, and dispensing recompenses answerable thereto; with impartial justice rewarding each man according to the purposes of his heart and the practices of his life: that all our good and happiness doth absolutely depend on God's favour; so that to please him can only be true wisdom, and to offend him the greatest folly; that virtue is incomparably the best endowment whereof we are capable, and sin the worst mischief to which we are liable: that no worldly good or evil is considerable in comparison with goods or evils spiritual: that nothing can be really profitable or advantageous to us, which doth not consist with our duty to God, doth not somewise conduce to our spiritual interest and eternal welfare: yea, that every thing not serviceable to those purposes is either a frivolous trifle, or a dangerous snare, or a notable damage, or a woful bane to us: that content of mind, springing from innocence of life, from the faithful discharge of our duty, from satisfaction of conscience, from a good hope in regard to God and our future state, is in our esteem and choice much to be preferred before all the delights which any temporal possession or fruition can afford; and, that a bad mind is the sorest adversity which can befall us. Such are the grounds of upright practice, more firm than any rock, more unshakeable than the foundations of heaven and earth; the which are assured by the sacred Oracles, and attested by many remarkable providences; have ever been avowed by the wiser sort, and admitted by the general consent of men, as for their truth, most agreeable to reason, and for their usefulness, approved by constant experience; the belief of them having apparently most wholesome influence upon all the concerns of life, both public and private; indeed, being absolutely needful for upholding government, and preserving human society; no obligation. no faith or con-

SERM. V. fidence between men, no friendship or peace being able to subsist without it. Whence the practice built on such foundations must be very secure. And if God shall not cease to be, if he will not let go the reins, if his word cannot deceive, if the wisest men are not infatuated, if the common sense of mankind do not prove extravagant, if the main props of life and pillars of society do not fail; he that walketh uprightly doth proceed on sure grounds.

III. The upright person doth walk steadily, maintaining his principal resolutions, and holding his main course, through all occasions, without flinching or wavering, or desultory inconsistency and fickleness; his integrity being an excellent ballast, holding him tight and well poised in his deportment; so that waves of temptation dashing on him do not make him roll in uncertainty, or topple over into unworthy practices.

Lust, passion, humour, interest, are things very mutable, as depending upon temper of body, casualties of time, the winds and tides of this vertiginous world: whence he that is guided or moved by them must needs be *many minded* and *unstable in all his ways*; will *reel to and fro like a drunken man, and be at his wit's end*; never enjoying any settled rest of mind, or observing a smooth tenor of action. But a good conscience is very stable, and persisteth unvaried through all circumstances of time, in all vicissitudes of fortune. For it steers by immoveable pole-stars, the inviolable rules of duty; it aimeth at marks which no force can stir out of their place; its objects of mind and affection are not transitory; its hopes and confidences are fixed on the *rock of ages*. Whence an upright person in all cases, and all conditions, (prosperous or adverse,) is the same man, and goeth the same way. Contingencies of affairs do not unhinge his mind from its good purposes, or divert his foot from the right course. Let the weather be fair or foul, let the world smile or frown, let him get or lose by it, let him be favoured or crossed, commended or reproached, (*by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report,*) he will do what his duty requireth: the external state of things must not alter the

Jam. i. 8.
Ps. cvii. 27.

Τετραγωνος.
Justum et
tenacem
propositi vi-
rum. &c.
Hor. Od. III.
3. 1.

2 Cor. vi. 8.

moral reason of things with him. This is that which the Psalmist observeth of him; *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord. His heart is stablished and will not shrink.* And this the Wise Man promiseth to him; *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

SERM.
V.

Psal. cxii. 7,
8.
Prov. iii.
25.
Prov. xvi. 3.

Hence a man is secured from diffidence in himself, and distraction in his mind, from frequently being off the hooks, from leading an unequal life, clashing with itself, from deluding and disappointing those with whom he converseth or dealeth, and consequently from the inconveniences issuing thence.

IV. The way of uprightness is the surest for dispatch, and the shortest cut toward the execution or attainment of any good purpose; securing a man from irksome expectations and tedious delays, the which, as the Wise Man saith, *do make the heart sick.*

Prov. xiii.
12.

It in Scripture is called *the straight and the plain way.* And as in geometry, of all lines or surfaces contained within the same bounds, the straight line and the plain surface are the shortest; so it is also in morality: by the right line of justice, upon the plain ground of virtue, a man soonest will arrive to any well-chosen end.

Luke iii. 5.

In this way there are no bewildering intrigues and mazes, no crooked windings and turnings, no occasions forcing men to dance hither and thither, to skip backward and forward, to do and undo; which courses do protract business, and commonly do hinder from ever dispatching it. But a man acting justly and fairly doth continually proceed on in the direct open road, without retreat, excursion, or deflection; *not turning aside* (as the phrase is in holy writ) *to the right hand or to the left.*

Prov. iv. 27.
Deut. v. 32.
xxviii. 14.

To clamber over fences of duty, to break through hedges of right, to trespass upon hallowed enclosures, may seem the most short and compendious ways of getting thither where one would be: but doth not a man venture breaking his neck, or scratching his face, incurring mischief and trouble thereby? Is he not liable to the fate to which the Preacher

SERM. doometh him, *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it: and*
 V. *whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him?* For in-
 stances, to grow rich, fraud, extortion, corruption, oppression,
 overreaching and supplanting may seem the readiest and most
 expedite ways; but in truth they are the farthest ways about,
 or rather no ways at all: for that which is got by those
 means is not our own; nor is the possession of it truly
 wealth, but usurpation, or detention of spoil and rapine,
 which we ought to disgorge. And however to the getting
 it there are often mighty difficulties occurring from men,
 there are commonly insuperable obstacles interposed by
 God; who hath expressly condemned and cursed those
 ways, declaring that, *wealth gotten by vanity (or cozenage)*
shall be diminished; that he that oppresseth to increase his
riches, shall surely come to want; that he who (thus) hast-
eth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and considereth not that po-
verty shall come upon him; that as the 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. Whereas the plain way of ho-
 nest harmless industry, (joined with a pious regard to him
 who is the dispenser of all good things,) how slow soever it
 may seem, is the most speedy, because the only safe way to
 thrive; having, beside all secondary advantages, the security
 of those oracles; *The hand of the diligent shall make rich:*
He that gathereth by labour shall increase: By humility
and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

V. The way of uprightness is in itself very safe, free of
 danger, tending to no mischief; according to those sayings
 of the Wise Man; *There shall no evil happen to the just:*
In the way of righteousness is life; and in the path thereof
there is no death.

He who designeth only that which is just and reasonable,
 who innocently and fairly prosecuteth his intent, can run
 no great hazard, cannot fall into any extreme disaster, can-
 not irrecoverably sink into miserable disappointment.

He probably will not receive much harm from men, or

trouble from the world: for, as he meaneth innocently, as he dealeth inoffensively, (not violently assailing, nor fraudulently circumventing, not any wise injuriously or maliciously abusing any man,) as he doth yield no just provocation or urgent temptation to oppose him; so he is not very likely to meet with obstructions or crosses thwarting his designs. He can hardly raise up adversaries, at least such as will prove very formidable, or very fierce and implacable toward him.

He may be sure that few wise men, and no good men, will trouble him; but that such rather will afford their countenance and furtherance to his undertakings.

But assuredly he shall have the favourable protection of Almighty God, who thoroughly knowing his heart, and observing the righteousness of his intentions and proceedings, will not suffer him to incur any notable, destructive, remediless calamity. His prayer, dictated by good conscience, *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me*, will certainly be heard; God having passed his word for it in numberless places of Scripture; particularly in those remarkable words of Isaiah: *He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: his bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.* That is, a man who is constantly upright in his dealings, shall, by the divine providence, be infallibly and impregnably preserved from any grievous mischief, from any sore want, from any extreme distress.

The way of uprightness is ever guarded with angels, ready to promote the affairs of the honest person, or at least to protect him from evil. He may hopefully say to himself, as Abraham did to his servant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his ungel with thee, and prosper thy way*: or he confidently may apply to himself that of the Psalmist, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep*

SERM.
V.

Psal. xxv.
21.
(Prov. xiii.
6. xi 6.)
Prov. ii 7.
xviii. 10.
xxviii. 18.
xxix. 25.
Psal. xviii.
2. 30. 35.
xxxiii. 4.
xxiv. 4. 5.
Job. xi. 14,
15.
Isa. xxxiii.
15, 16.

Gen. xxiv.
40.

Psal. xci.
11, 12,

SERM. *thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

V.

However, the sequel will be tolerable: whatever the success of his undertaking be, it can be no ruin, no slur, no heart-breaking to him. His conscience is safe, his credit is entire, his hopes are good; he is perfectly secure from being tainted with foul guilt, from being exposed to due reproach, from being stung with vexatious remorse, from being plunged into a gulf of desperation or disconsolateness.

For,

VI. The way of uprightness is fair and pleasant. He that walketh in it hath good weather, and a clear sky about him; a hopeful confidence and a cheerful satisfaction do ever wait upon him. *It is joy, as the Wise Man saith, to the just to do judgment.*

Prov. xxi.
15.

(Prov. xxiii.
17, 18.)

Being conscious to himself of an honest meaning, and a due course of prosecuting it, he feelth no check or struggling of mind, no regret or sting of heart; being thoroughly satisfied and pleased with what he is about, his judgment approving, and his will acquiescing in his procedure as worthy of himself, agreeable to reason, and conformable to his duty.

He therefore briskly moveth forward with alacrity and courage; there being within him nothing to control or countermand him, to pull him back, to make him halt, to distract or disturb him.

Nor hardly can any thing abroad dismay or discourage him. For he may reasonably hope for the good will of men, and cannot hugely dread their opposition. He may strongly presume upon the propitious aspect and favourable succour of heaven, which always smileth and casteth benign influences on honest undertakings.

Prov. xi. 20.

Jer. xxxii.

19.

Prov. xxiv.

14.

Heb. iv. 16.

He that hath chosen a good way, may with assurance commend his way to God's providence; he may depend upon God for his concurrent benediction; he, with an humble boldness, may address prayers to God for his protection and aid. He so doing hath interest in divers clear declarations and express promises of good success; such as those; *Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him,*

Ps. xxxvii.

5. Iv. 22.

Prov. xvi. 3.

Eccles. ii.

10.

and he shall bring it to pass. *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will save them.* **SERM. V.**

He may dare to refer his case to the severest examination, saying with Job, ^a *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity;* and with the Psalmist, ^b *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*

He with an humble confidence can appeal to God, borrowing the words of Hezekiah, ^c *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.*

Hence, *The hope of the righteous*, as the Wise Man telleth us, *is gladness.* He, considering the goodness, the justice, the fidelity of God, whereof his integrity doth render him capable and a proper object, cannot but conceive a comfortable hope of a good issue.

And obtaining success, he doth not only enjoy the material pleasure thereof, but the formal satisfaction that it is indeed good success, or a blessing indulged to him by special favour of God; enabling him to say with the Psalmist, *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*

However, an upright dealer hath this comfortable reserve, that whatever doth befall him, however the business goeth, he shall not condemn and punish himself with remorse; he shall not want a consolation able to support and to erect his mind. He shall triumph, if not in the felicity of his success, yet in the integrity of his heart, and the innocence of his deportment; even as blessed Job did under all the pressures of his adversity: for, *Till I die*, Job xxvii. 5, 6. *I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*

So true it is upon all accounts, that, according to that

SERM. assertion in the Psalm, *Light is sown for the righteous, and joyful gladness for the upright in heart.*

V. *Psalm xcvi. 11.* VII. He that walketh uprightly is secure as to his honour and credit. He is sure not to come off disgracefully, either at home in his own apprehensions, or abroad in the estimations of men. He doth not blush at what he is doing, nor doth reproach himself for what he hath done. No blemish or blame can stick upon his proceeding.

By pure integrity a man first maintaineth a due respect and esteem for himself, then preserveth an entire reputation with others; he reflecteth on his own heart with complacence, and looketh upon the world with confidence. He hath no fear of being detected, or care to smother his intents. He is content that his thoughts should be sounded, and his actions sifted to the bottom. He could even wish that his breast had windows, that his heart were transparent, that all the world might see through him, and descry the clearness of his intentions. The more curiously his ways are marked, the more exactly his dealings are scanned, the more thoroughly his designs are penetrated and known; the greater approbation he is sure to receive.

The issue of things assuredly will be creditable to him; and when the day-light hath scattered all mists, hath cleared all misprisions and mistakes, his reputation will shine most brightly; the event declaring, that he had no corrupt ends; the course of his proceedings being justified by the very light of things.

God himself will be concerned to vindicate his reputation, not suffering him to be considerably defamed; according to that promise, *He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.* That in Job will be made good to him, *Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot:* And he may confidently aver with the Psalmist, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.*

Ps. xxxvii. 6, 19.
xxxiv. 5.
I Pet. ii. 6.
Job xi. 15.

Ps. cxix. 6,
39, 46.

If he findeth good success, it will not be invidious, appearing well deserved, and fairly procured: it will be

truly honourable, as a fruit and recompence of virtue, as a SERM. V.
 mark and pledge of the divine favour toward him. Ps. xci. 15.

If he seemeth disappointed, yet he will not be disparaged: wise and candid men will excuse him; good men will patronize his cause; no man of sense and ingenuity will insult on his misfortune. *He shall not, as the Psalmist assureth, be ashamed in an evil time.* Yea, often his repute from under a cloud will shine, if not with so glaring splendour, yet with a pleasant lustre; uprightness disposing him to bear adverse events with a graceful decency. Ps. xxxvii. 19.

VIII. The particular methods of acting which uprightness disposeth to observe, do yield great security from troubles and crosses in their transactions.

What is the conduct of the upright man? He is clear, frank, candid, harmless, consistent in all his behaviour, his discourse, his dealing. His heart commonly may be seen in his face, his mind doth ever suit with his speech, his deeds have a just correspondence with his professions; he never faileth to perform what he doth promise, and to satisfy the expectations which he hath raised. Prov. xiii. 5. Psal. xxxvi. 3, 4. xxxiv. 13. xv. 2.

He doth not wrap himself in clouds, that none may see where he is, or know how to find him; may discern what he is about, or whither he tendeth.

He disguiseth not his intents with fallacious pretences of conscience, of public good, of special friendship and respect. Prov. x. 18.

He doth use no disingenuous, spiteful, unjust tricks or sleights, to serve the present turn.

He layeth no baits or snares *to catch men*, alluring them into mischief or inconvenience. Jer. v. 26. (Psal. lxiv. 5. lvi. 6. ix. 15. vii. 15. x. 2. lvii. 6. xxxv. 7. cxl. 5. Prov. xxvi. 27.)

As he doth not affect any poor base ends, so he will not defile his fair intentions by sordid means of compassing them; such as are illusive simulations and subdolous artifices, treacherous collusions, sly insinuations and sycophantic detractions, versatile whifflings and dodgings, flattering colloquings and glozings, servile crouchings and fawnings, and the like. Eccles. x. 8. Psal. x. 7. lv. 21. lxiv. 6. x. 9, 10. lvi. 5.

He hath little of the serpent, (none of its lurking in-

SERM. sidiousness, of its surprising violence, of its rancorous venom, of its keen mordacity,) but much of the dove, (all its simplicity, its gentleness, its fidelity, its innocence,) in his conversation and commerce.

V

Rom. xvi.
18.

Ecclus. xix
26.

2 Sam. xv.
5.

Prov. xi. 9.

xxvi. 25.

Jam. iii. 17.

His wisdom is ever tempered with sincerity, and seasoned with humanity, with meekness, with charity; being *the wisdom which is from above, first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

Prov. xiv.
33. xxix.

11. xiii. 3.

16. xxi. 23.

xii. 23.

Ecclus. xx.
7.

Prov. xxii.
3. xxvii. 12.

xiv. 8, 15.

16.

Eccles. viii.
5.

He sometime may prudently reserve his mind, not venting it by foolish loquacity: but his words do never clash with his meaning, so as to deceive or disappoint any man.

He may warily prevent harm and decline perils: but it is without hurtful countermining, or deriving mischief on his neighbour.

He may discreetly pick out seasons, and embrace opportunities of righting or benefitting himself: but he never will seek or lay hold of advantages to prejudice others.

Prov. xii.

16. xix. 11.

He sometimes may repress insurrections of anger or disgust: but he never doth allow them to bake into rancour or malice.

He may be apt to use courteous, affable, obliging demeanour, serving to breed friendships, and to stifle enmities: but he never thereby meaneth to gull, inveigle, and entrap men; or to procure instruments and aids of any perverse design.

He is no enemy to himself, but (according to the obligations of reason and conscience) he hath always a regard to the good of others; nor is ever so selfish, as to be unjust or uncharitable to any man.

The principal engines he doth employ for achieving his enterprises are, a careful and cautious providence in contriving, a sedulous and steady diligence in acting, a circumspect heedfulness not to provoke any man by offensive carriage, by injury, by discourtesy, to obstruct him, but rather by kind demonstrations and real beneficence to engage men to further him in his proceedings:

but especially his main instrument, wherein he most confideth, is devout supplication to God for his succour and blessing. SERM.
V.

Now, is not this conduct the most secure that can be? doth it not afford many great commodities and advantages? doth it not exempt from manifold fears, and cares, and crosses, and slaveries?

It cannot but derive blessings from the God of truth, the great friend of simplicity and sincerity, the hater of falsehood and guile. Prov. xii.
19, 22.

And humanly regarding things, he that useth these methods, doth from them obtain many conveniences. He doth not lie under perpetual constraint, engaged to keep a constant guard upon himself, to watch his memory, to curb his tongue, to manage his very looks and gestures, lest they betray his intentions, and disclose his plots. He is not at the trouble of stopping holes, of mending flaws, of patching up repugnances in his actions, that his mind do not break through them. He is not afraid of the disappointment and shame which attend the detection of unworthy designs. He is not at pains to obviate the jealousies, the surmises, the diffidences, the counterplots, the preventive oppositions and assaults, which gloomy closeness and crafty dissimulation ever do raise against the practisers of them. In fine, men do not shun the conversation and the commerce of an upright person, but gladly do consort and deal with him; do seek his acquaintance and alliance: they are not apt to distrust him, to suspect him, to be shy and reserved in their intercourse with him; but readily do place an entire confidence in him, and use a clear frankness toward him. No man doth fear him as dangerous, or will cross him as an adversary. Whence as he seldom hath cause to fear, or occasion to contest with others; so he doth undisturbedly enjoy the benefits of society with great safety, ease, and comfort. Prov. xxvi.
25. x. 18.
xxi. 6.
Psal. xxvi.
4.

IX. Lastly, an upright walker hath perfect security, as to the final result of affairs, that he shall not be quite baffled in his expectations and desires. And if prosperity doth con-

SERM. V. sist in a satisfaction of mind concerning events, he cannot fail of most prosperous success. *Whatsoever he doeth, saith*

Psal. i. 3.
Prov. xii.
21.

the Psalmist of him, *it shall prosper.* How is that? Doth he, if he warreth, always get the victory? is he perpetually, when he tradeth, a considerable gainer? will he certainly, after sowing, reap a plentiful crop? Probably yes; and perhaps no. Yet assuredly he shall prosper, in the true notion of prosperity, explained by those divine sayings:

Ps. xxxvii.
37.
Isa. xxxii.
17.
Eccles. viii.
12.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever. Surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God.

He cannot be much defeated in his purposes; for, as to his general, principal, absolute designs, (that is, his design of pleasing God, and procuring his favour; his design of satisfying himself, and discharging his conscience; his design of promoting his own spiritual interest, and saving his soul; his design of doing good, of exercising charity to his neighbour, of serving the public, of obliging the world by virtuous example, and by real beneficence;) these he cannot fail throughly to accomplish; nothing can obstruct him in the prosecution, nothing can debar him from the execution of these undertakings; in spite of all the world, by the succour of that divine grace which ever doth favour and further such designs, he most happily will achieve them. And for other inferior designs, he can hardly be crossed in regard to them; for it is an essential part of integrity, not otherwise to affect or aim at private secular interests, than under condition, and with a reservation, if it be God's pleasure, if it seem good to divine wisdom. He knoweth that his pains employed on any honest purpose, in a fair way, (be it to procure some worldly advantage for himself, for his relations, or for his friends) are not lost, if they have the fruit of submission to God's will, and acquiescence in the event disposed by him. He is assured that it is good luck to have his project blasted, and that missing is better than getting, when by sovereign wisdom it is so determined. He there-

fore could not so fix his heart, or engage his affection in any such concern, that his mind is surprised, or his passions discomposed by a seeming adverseness of events to his endeavours. So that in effect he can have no bad success. For how can that occurrence be deemed bad, which plain reason dictateth in certain judgment to be most expedient for him; about which he ever was very indifferent, and with which at present he is not heartily displeas'd? How can it be taken for disappointment and misfortune, which one was prepared to embrace with satisfaction and complacence?

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Yea, to a person so disposed, that success which seemeth most adverse, justly may be reputed the best and most happy, as promoting ends incomparably more excellent than any worldly gain; as producing fruits exceedingly more wholesome and more savoury than any temporal commodity; as exercising and improving the divinest virtues, (humility, patience, meekness, moderation, contentedness,) a grain whereof is worth all the wealth, all the preferment, all that is desirable in the world.

Wherefore let the worst that can arrive, (or that which human blindness and fondness do count the worst,) yet upright persons do not come off ill, or so (matters being rightly stated) as to be losers upon the foot of the account.

If this do not satisfy grosser apprehensions, we may add, that even in these meaner concerns Almighty God is pleas'd commonly to reward and encourage upright persons by the best success. For he hath, as it were, a natural inclination to gratify those who desire to please him; and, as the Psalmist expresseth it, *hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.* He may seem concern'd in honour to countenance those who have regard to his will, and who repose confidence in his aid; discriminating them from such as presume to act against or without him, in defiance to his will, with no deference to his providence. As they do render him his due respect, by submitting to his authority, and avowing his power; so he will acknowledge them by signally favouring their concerns. Even his

Psal. xxxv.
27.
Prov. xi.20.
xv. 9.

Prov. xiv.
2.

SERM. truth and fidelity are engaged in their behalf; seeing he very often hath declared and promised, that in all matters, and upon all occasions, he will be ready to bless them.

V

Deut. xxviii. 2.

xxx. 9.

Ps. cxxviii.

1, 2. xci. 1.

xxxiv. 9.

10. lxxxiv.

11.

Matt. vi. 33.

Eccles. viii.

5.

Prov. xxviii.

10, 20. x. 6.

(Prov. xi.

18.)

Isa. l. 11.

Rom. ii. 6.

1 Cor. iii.

13. iv. 5.

1 Tim. i.

17.

X. To conclude; It is an infinite advantage of upright dealing, that at the last issue, when all things shall be most accurately tried and impartially decided, a man is assured to be fully justified in it, and plentifully rewarded for it.

As then all the deceits, which now pass under specious masks, shall be laid bare; all varnish of pretence shall be wiped off; all perverse intrigues shall be unravelled; all wicked and base intentions shall be quite stripped of the veils which now enfold them; all shrewd contrivers and engineers of mischief, all practisers of unjust and malicious

guile, shall be exposed to shame, *shall lie down in sorrow*: so then *the righteous man shall stand in great boldness*; his case will be rightly stated, and fully cleared from scandalous aspersions, from odious surmises, from unlucky prejudices and mistakes: what he hath done shall be approved; what he hath suffered shall be repaired. So that it then evidently will appear, that upright simplicity is the deepest wisdom, and perverse craft the merest shallowness; that he who is true and just to others, is most faithful and friendly to himself; that whoever doth abuse his neighbour, is his own greatest cheater and foe. For, *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, every man's work shall be made manifest. The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God.* Unto which our up-

right Judge, *the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.*

Amen.

SERMON VI.

OF THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

I THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceasing.

IT is the manner of St. Paul in his Epistles, after that he hath discussed some main points of doctrine or discipline, (which occasion required that he should clear and settle,) to propose several good advices and rules, in the observance whereof the life of Christian practice doth consist. So that he thereby hath furnished us with so rich a variety of moral and spiritual precepts, concerning special matters, subordinate to the general laws of piety and virtue; that out of them might well be compiled a body of ethics, or system of precepts *de officiis*, in truth and in completeness far excelling those which any philosophy hath been able to devise or deliver. These he rangeth not in any formal method, nor linketh together with strict connection, but freely scattereth them, so as from his mind (as out of a fertile soil, impregnated with all seeds of wisdom and goodness,) they did aptly spring up, or as they were suggested by that Holy Spirit which continually guided and governed him.

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Among divers such delivered here, this is one which shall be the subject of my present discourse; the which, having no other plain coherence (except by affinity of matter) with the rest inclosing it, I shall consider absolutely

SERM. by itself, endeavouring somewhat to explain it, and to urge
 VI. its practice.

Pray without ceasing. For understanding these words, let us first consider what is meant by the act enjoined, *praying* ; then what the qualification or circumstance adjoined, *without ceasing*, doth import.

1. The word *prayer* doth, in its usual latitude of acceptation, comprehend all sorts of devotion, or all that part of religious practice wherein we do immediately address ourselves to God, having by speech (oral or mental) a kind of intercourse and conversation with him. So it includeth that praise which we should yield to God, implying our due esteem of his most excellent perfections, most glorious works, most just and wise dispensations of providence and grace ; that thanksgiving whereby we should express an affectionate resentment of our obligation to him for the numberless great benefits we receive from him ; that acknowledgment of our entire dependence upon him, or our total subjection to his power and pleasure ; together with that profession of faith in him, and avowing of service to him, which we do owe as his natural creatures and subjects ; that humble confession of our infirmity, our vileness, our guilt, our misery, (joined with deprecation of wrath and vengeance,) which is due from us as wretched men, and grievous sinners ; that petition of things needful or convenient for us, (of supply in our wants, of succour and comfort in our distresses, of direction and assistance in our undertakings, of mercy and pardon for our offences,) which our natural state (our poor, weak, sad, and sinful state,) doth engage us to seek ; that intercession for others, which general charity or special relation do require from us, as concerned or obliged to desire and promote their good. All these religious performances prayer, in its larger notion, doth comprise ; according whereto in common use the whole body of divine service, containing all such acts, is termed *prayer* ; and temples, consecrated to the performance of all holy duties, are styled *houses of prayer* ; and that brief directory, or pregnant form of all devotion, which our Lord

dictated, is called *his prayer* : and in numberless places of Scripture it is so taken

In a stricter sense, it doth only signify one particular act among those, the petition of things needful or useful for us.

But according to the former more comprehensive meaning, I choose to understand it here; both because it is most commonly so used, (then, especially, when no distinctive limitation is annexed, or the nature of the subject matter doth not restrain it,) and because general reasons do equally oblige to performance of all these duties in the manner here prescribed : nor is there any ground to exclude any part of devotion from continual use ; we being obliged no less incessantly to praise God for his excellencies, and thank him for his benefits, to avow his sovereign majesty and authority, to confess our infirmities and miscarriages, than to beg help and mercy from God. All devotion therefore, all sorts of proper and due address to God, (that $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha\ \pi\rho\acute{o}\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\chi\eta$, *all* Eph. vi. 18. *prayer and supplication*, which St. Paul otherwise speaketh of) are here enjoined, according to the manner adjoined, *without ceasing*, $\acute{\alpha}\delta\iota\alpha\lambda\acute{\iota}\pi\tau\omega\varsigma$, that is, *indesinently*, or continually.

2. For the meaning of which expression, we must suppose, that it must not be understood as if we were obliged in every instant or singular point of time actually to apply our minds to this practice ; for to do thus is in itself impossible, and therefore can be no matter of duty ; it is inconsistent with other duties, and therefore must not be practised ; yea, will not consist with itself ; for, that we may pray, we must live ; that we may live, we must eat ; that we may eat, we must work ; and must therefore attend other matters : so that actual devotion neither must nor can swallow up all our time and care. The deliberate operations of our mind are sometimes interrupted by sleep, sometimes will be taken up in satisfying our natural appetites, sometimes must be spent in attendance upon other reasonable employments, commanded or allowed by God ; whence there can be no obligation to this practice according to that unlimited interpretation. This precept

SERM. therefore (as divers others of a like general purport and
 VI. expression) must be understood not in a natural, but moral
 sense, according as the exigence of things permitteth, or
 as the reason of the case requireth; so far as it is conve-
 niently practicable, or as it is reasonably compatible with
 other duties and needs. But we must not so restrain it as
 to wrong it, by pinching it within too narrow bounds.
 How then it may be understood, and how far it should
 extend, we shall endeavour to declare by propounding
 divers senses whereof it is capable, grounded upon plain
 testimonies of Scripture, and enforceable by good reason; ac-
 cording to which senses we shall together press the observance
 thereof.

Adoro
 Scripturæ
 penitudi-
 nem. Tert.

I. First then, *praying incessantly* may import the main-
 taining in our souls a ready disposition or habitual in-
 clination to devotion; that which in Scripture is termed
the spirit of supplication. This in moral esteem, and ac-
 cording to current language, derived thence, amounteth
 to a continual practice; a man being reckoned and said
 to do that, to which he is ever prompt and propense: as
 it is said of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful
 and lendeth*, because he is constantly disposed to supply
 his neighbour with needful relief; although he doth not
 ever actually dispense alms, or furnish his neighbour with
 supplies for his necessity. The words may signify this;
 they do at least by consequence imply so much: for if we
 do not in this, we can hardly perform the duty in any
 sense; without a good temper fitting, and a good appetite
 prompting to devotion, we scarce can or ever will apply
 ourselves thereto. If there be not in our heart a root of
 devotion, whence should it spring? how can it live, or
 thrive? If the organs of prayer are out of kelter, or out
 of tune, how can we pray? If we be not *accincti*, have
 not *the loins of our mind girt*, and *our feet shod in prepara-
 tion* to the service, when shall we set forward thereto?
My heart, said David, *is fixed, I will sing and give praise:*
fixed, that is, readily prepared, and steadily inclined to
 devotion. So should ours constantly be. As a true

Zech. xii.
 10.

Ps. xxxvii.
 26.
 Ut quamvis
 tacet Her-
 mogenes,
 eantor tam-
 en æque
 est, &c.
 Hor.

I Pet. i. 13.
 Luke xii.
 35.
 Eph. vi. 14.
 Ps. cviii. 1.
 (2 Chron.
 xxx. 19.)
 Ezz. vii.
 10.)

friend is ever ready to entertain his friend with a frank courtesy and complacency; as he ever is apt upon occasion for advice and assistance to have recourse to him: so should we be always disposed cheerfully and decently to converse with God, when he freely cometh to us, or we have need to apply ourselves to him. If there be (from stupidity of mind, from coldness of affection, from sluggishness of spirit, from worldly distraction) any indisposition or averseness thereto, we should, by serious consideration and industrious care, labour to remove them; rousing our spirits, and kindling in our affections some fervency of desire toward spiritual things: otherwise we shall be apt to shun, or to slip the opportunities inviting to devotion; our hearts will be so resty, or listless, that hardly we shall be induced to perform it, when it is most necessary or useful for us.

II. *Praying incessantly* may denote a vigilant attendance (with earnest regard, and firm purpose) employed upon devotion: such attendance as men usually bestow on their affairs, whereof although the actual prosecution sometime doth stick, yet the design continually proceedeth; the mind ever so directing its eye toward them, as quickly to espy, and readily to snatch any advantages of promoting them. This is a kind of continuance in practice, and is commonly so termed: as we say, that such an one is building a house, is writing a book, is occupying such land, although he be at present sleeping, or eating, or following any other business; because his main design never sleepeth, and his purpose continues uninterrupted. This is that which is so often enjoined under the phrase of *watching* about prayer. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always*, saith our Lord. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same*, saith St. Paul. *Be ye sober, and watch unto prayer*, saith St. Peter. Which expressions import a most constant and careful attendance upon this duty: that we do not make it a *παροργισμός*, or bye-business in our life, (a matter of small consideration or indifference, of curiosity, of chance,) to be transacted drowsily or faintly, with a desultorious and slight endeavour, by fits, as the

SERM. VI. humour taketh us; but that, accounting it a business of the choicest nature and weightiest moment, we do adhere thereto with unmoveable purpose, regard it with undistracted attention, pursue it with unwearied diligence, being always upon the guard, wakeful and expedite, intent upon and apt to close with any occasion suggesting matter thereof. That we should do thus, reason also doth oblige: for that, as in truth no business doth better deserve our utmost resolution and care; so none doth more need them; nature being so backward, and occasion so slippery, that if we do not ever mind it, we shall seldom practise it.

2 Pet. i. 12. III. *Praying incessantly* may signify, that we do actually embrace all fit seasons and emergent occasions of devotion. This in moral computation doth pass for continual performance: as a tree is said to bear that fruit, which it produceth in the season; and a man is accounted to work in that trade, which he exerciseth whenever he is called thereto. This sense is in several precepts parallel to that in hand plainly expressed. *Pray*, saith St. Paul, *with all prayer and supplication*, ἐν παντί καιρῶν and, *Watch*, saith our Lord, ἐν παντί καιρῶν δεόμενοι, *praying in every season*, or upon every opportunity. Devotion, indeed, is rarely unseasonable, or impertinent: we may offer it εὐκαιρῶς, ἀκαιρῶς, *in season, and out of season*; that is, not only taking opportunities presented for it, or urgently requiring it, but catching at them, and creating them to ourselves, when there is no such apparent and pressing need of it. But there are some special occasions, which more importunately and indispensably do exact it: some seasons there are, (either ministered by extrinsical accidents, or springing from internal dispositions,) when, without both great blame and much damage to ourselves, we cannot neglect it: times there be most proper and acceptable, when we do especially need to pray, and when we are likely to speed well therein. *Every one*, saith the Psalmist, *that is godly will pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found*: and, *My prayer*, saith he again, *is unto thee in an acceptable time*

Psal. xxxii.

6. lxi. 13.

2 Cor. vi. 2.

Isa. xlix. 8.

Thus, when we have received any singular blessing or notable favour from God, when prosperous success hath attended our honest enterprises, when we have been happily rescued from imminent dangers, when we have been supported in difficulties, or relieved in wants and straits; then is it seasonable to render sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise to the God of victory, help, and mercy; to admire and celebrate him, who is our *strength, and our deliverer, our faithful refuge in trouble, our fortress, and the rock of our salvation.* To omit this piece of devotion then is vile ingratitude, or stupid negligence and sloth.

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When any rare object or remarkable occurrence doth, upon this theatre of the world, present itself to our view, in surveying the glorious works of nature, or the strange events of Providence; then is a proper occasion suggested to send up hymns of praise to the power, the wisdom, the goodness of the world's great Creator and Governor.

When we undertake any business of special moment and difficulty, then it is expedient (wisdom prompting it) to sue for God's aid, to commit our affairs into his hand, to recommend our endeavours to the blessing of him, by whose guidance all things are ordered, without whose concurrence nothing can be effected, upon whose arbitrary disposal all success dependeth.

Δει πάλιν
προαίτιον
προνοη-
σθαι προση-
χθην. Marc.
Erem.

The beginning of any design or business (although ordinary, if considerable) is a proper season of prayer unto him, to whose bounty and favour we owe our ability to act, support in our proceedings, and comfortable issue of what we do: (for *all our sufficiency is of him: without him we can do nothing.*) Whence we can never apply ourselves to any business or work, not go to eat, to sleep, to travel, to trade, to study, with any true content, any reasonable security, any satisfactory hope, if we do not first humbly implore the favourable protection, guidance, and assistance of God.

2 Cor. iii. 5
John xv. 5.

When we do fall into doubts, or darkneses, (in the course either of our spiritual or secular affairs,) not knowing what course to steer, or which way to turn ourselves; (a case which, to so blind and silly creatures as we are,

SERM. must often happen;) then doth the time bid us to consult
VI. the great Oracle of truth, *the mighty Counsellor, the Fa-*

Jer. x. 23. *ther of lights*, seeking resolution and satisfaction, light and
Prov. xx. wisdom from him; saying with the Psalmist, *Shew me thy*
24. xvi. 9. *ways, O Lord, lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou*
Isa ix. 6. *art the God of my salvation: Order my steps in thy word,*
Jam. i. 17. *and let not any iniquity have dominion over me;* following
Psal. xxv. the advice of St. James, *If any man lack wisdom, let him*
4, 5, 8. *ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth*
xxvii. 11. *not; and it shall be given him.*

133
Jam. i. 5. When any storm of danger blustereth about us, peril-
Prov. ii. 6. ously threatening, or furiously assailing us with mischief,
Isa. xxx. 1. (so that hardly by our own strength or wit we can hope to
Psal. lvi. 3. evade) then with the wings of ardent devotion we should fly
xxxiv. 4. unto God for shelter and for relief.
xviii. 3.

When any anxious care distracteth, or any heavy bur-
den presseth our minds, we should by prayer ease our-
selves of them, and discharge them upon God, committing
the matter of them to his care and providence; according
Phil. iv. 6. to that direction of St. Paul, *Be careful for nothing: but in*
every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.

When we do lie under any irksome trouble, or sore
distress, (of want, pain, disgrace) then, for succour and
support, for ease and comfort, we should have recourse to
the Father of pities and God of all consolation; who is
2 Cor. i. 3. *nigh to all that call upon him, will also hear their cry, and*
Psal. cxlv. *will save them;* who, when the righteous cry, doth hear
18, 19. *them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles;* who is
cxlvii. 3. *so often styled the hiding-place from troubles, the help and*
xxxiv. 17. *strength, the shield and buckler, the rock, the fortress, the*
xviii. 1, 2. *high tower, the horn of salvation, to all good and distressed*
lvi. 3. *people. To him we should in such a condition have re-*
lxxxiv. 9. *course, imitating the pious Psalmist, whose practice was this:*
xxxii. 7. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: I poured out*
xxxiii. 20. *my complaint before him, I shewed before him my trouble: I*
lxxi. 3. *called unto the Lord in my distress: the Lord answered me,*
and set me in a large place.

Psal. lxxvii. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: I poured out*
2. xviii. 6. *my complaint before him, I shewed before him my trouble: I*
cxlii. 2. *called unto the Lord in my distress: the Lord answered me,*
cxviii. 5. *and set me in a large place.*

When any strong temptation doth invade us, with which by our strength we cannot grapple, but are like to sink and falter under it; then is it opportune and needful that we should seek to God for a supply of spiritual forces, and the succour of his almighty grace, as St. Paul did: when *there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet him*; then *he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him*: and he had this return from God, *My grace is sufficient for thee*.

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When also (from ignorance or mistake, from inadvertency, negligence or rashness, from weakness, from wantonness, from presumption) we have transgressed our duty, and incurred sinful guilt; then, (for avoiding the consequent danger and vengeance, for unloading our consciences of the burden and discomfort thereof,) with humble confession in our mouths, and serious contrition in our hearts, we should apply ourselves to the God of mercy, deprecating his wrath, and imploring pardon from him; remembering that promise of St. John, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity*; and that declaration of the Wise Man, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*.

2 Cor. vii.
7, 8, 9.

1 John i. 9.

Prov. xxviii.

13.

Psal. xxxii.

5. li. 1, &c.

Job vii. 20.

In these and the like cases God by our necessities doth invite and summon us to come unto him; and no less foolish than impious we are, if we do then slink away, or fly from him. Then we should (as the Apostle to the Hebrews exhorteth) *come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, (or, for reasonable relief.)

Heb. iv. 16.

* εἰς ὑψιστον
θρονου θεου

And beside those outwardly prompting and urging us, there be other opportunities, springing from within us, which we are no less obliged and concerned to embrace. When God by his gentle whispers calleth us, or by his soft impulses draweth us into his presence; we should then take heed of stopping our ears, or turning our hearts from him, refusing to hearken or to comply. We must

Jer. xxxv.

15.

Prov. i. 24.

Isa. l. 2. lxv.

12. lxvi. 4.

SERM. VI. not any wise quench or damp any sparks of devout affection kindled in us by the divine Spirit; we must not repel or resist any of his kindly suggestions or motions.

Whenever we find ourselves well affected to, or well framed for devotion; that we have a lively sense of, and a coming appetite to spiritual things; that our spirits are brisk and pure, our fancy calm and clear, our hearts tender and supple, our affections warm and nimble; then a fair season offereth itself; and when the iron is so hot, we should strike.

If at any time we feel any forward inclinations or good dispositions to the practice of this duty, we should never check or curb them, but rather should promote and advance them; pushing ourselves forward in this hopeful career; letting out the stream of our affections into this right channel, that it may run freely therein, that it may overflow and diffuse itself in exuberance of devotion. Farther,

IV. *Praying incessantly* may signify, that we should with assiduous urgency drive on the intent of our prayers, never quitting it, or desisting, till our requests are granted, or our desires are accomplished. Thus doing we may be said to pray continually: as he that goeth forward in his journey, (although he sometime doth bait, sometime doth rest and repose himself,) is said yet to be in travel; or as he that doth not wave the prosecution of his cause, (although some demurs intervene,) is deemed still to be in suit. This is that which our Lord did in the Gospel prescribe and persuade, where it is recorded of him, that

Luke xviii. *He spake a parable unto them, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* That *praying always* the ensuing discourse sheweth to import restless importunity, and perseverance in prayer: the same which so often is com-

mended to us by the phrases of *μή ἐκκακῆν*, *not to faint*,

Col. i. 9. or *falter*; *μή παύσθαι*, *not to cease*, or give over; *προσ-*

Ro. xii. 12. *καρτερεῖν*, *to continue instant*, or hold out stoutly; *ἀγωνίζ-*

12. *εἶδαι*, *to strive earnestly*, or contest and struggle in

1 Tim. v. 5. *prayers*; *προσμένειν ταῖς δεήσεσι*, *to abide at supplications*:

ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαυχτησίῳ, to watch with all perseverance.

That which also is implied by those terms, which in scriptural style do commonly express devotion: by ^a *seeking God*; which implieth, that God doth not presently, upon any slight address, discover himself in beneficial effects answerable to our desires, but after a careful and painful continuance in our applications to him: by ^b *waiting upon God*; which signifieth, that if God do not presently appear, granting our requests, we should patiently stay, expecting till he be pleased to do it in his own best time, according to that in the Psalm, ^c *Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us*: by *knocking*; which intimateth, that the door of grace doth not ever stand open, or that we can have an effectual access to God, until he, warned, and as it were excited, by our earnest importunity, pleaseth to listen, to disclose himself, to come forth unto us.

And this practice reason also doth enforce. For there are some good things absolutely necessary for our spiritual life and welfare, (such as are freedom from bad inclinations, disorderly affections, vicious habits, and noxious errors; the sanctifying presence and influence of God's holy Spirit, with the blessed graces and sweet fruits thereof; growth in virtue, delight in spiritual things, the sense of God's love and favour, with the like,) which good reason engageth us perseveringly to seek, as never to rest or be satisfied till we have acquired them in perfect degree; since we cannot ever do well without them, or ever get enough of them. In begging other inferior things, it may become us to be reserved, indifferent, and modest; but about these matters (wherein all our felicity is extremely concerned) it were a folly to be slack or timorous: as we cannot be said immoderately to desire them, so we cannot be supposed immodestly to seek them there, where only they can be found, in God's presence and hand. The case doth bear, yea, doth require, that we should be eager and hot, resolute and stiff, free and bold, yea, in a manner peremptory and impudent solicitors with God for them. So our Saviour intimateth, where, comparing the manner of God's proceeding

SERM.

VI.

^a Psal. x. 4.
xi. 10. xiv.
2. xxiv. 6.
Ixxiii. 1. Ixix.
6. 32. Ixx. 4.
Ixxxiii. 16.
Job viii. 5.
Deut. iv. 29.
Prov. viii.
17.
Ps. Ixxxvii. 6.
^b Ps. cxxiii.
2 Ixix. 3.
cxxx. 5.
xxxvii. 7.
xxv. 5.
xxvii. 14.
xxxvii. 34.
xxv. 21.
lii. 9. lix. 9.
cxlv. 15.
Isa. viii. 17.
xl. 31. xlix.
23.
IIos. xii. 6.
Lam. iii.
25, 26.
Prov. xx.
22.
^c Ps. cxxiii.
2.
Luke xii.
36.
Matt. vii. 7.
Vid. Chrys.
tom vi.
Orat. viii.
ad Theod.
2.

Αἰδῶς οὐκ
ἀγαθὴ
κεχρημένῳ
ἀνδρὶ πρὸς
ἑαυτὴν.

SERM. with that of men, he representeth one friend yielding need-
 VI. ful succour to another, not barely upon the score of

Luke xi. 8. friendship, but *διὰ τὴν ἀναίδειαν*, for his impudence; that is, for his confident and continued urgency, admitting no refusal or excuse. So doth God, in such cases, allow and oblige us to deal with him, being instant and pertinacious

Isa. lxii. 7. in our requests, *giving him no rest*, (as the phrase is in the Prophet;) not enduring to be put off, or brooking any repulse; never being discouraged, or cast into despair, by

Gen. xxxiii. 26. any delay or semblance of neglect. We may *wrestle with God*, like Jacob, and with Jacob may say, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*. Thus God suffereth himself to be prevailed upon, and is willingly overcome: thus Omnipotence may be mastered, and a happy victory may be gained over Invincibility itself. Heaven sometime may be forced by storm, (or by the assaults of extremely fervent prayer;) it assuredly will yield to a long siege. God will not ever hold out against the attempts of an obstinate suppliant. So *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*. We read in St. John's

Matt. xi. 12. Gospel of a man, that, being thirty-eight years diseased, did wait at the pool of Bethesda seeking relief: him our

Vid. Chrys. tom. v. Orat. 40. and in Joh. Cr. 36. Lord pitied and helped, crowning his patience with miraculous relief, and proposing it for an example to us of

perseverance. It is said of the Patriarch Isaac, that *he entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebecca his wife conceived*. Whereupon St. Chrysostom doth observe, that he had

Gen. xxv. 21. persevered twenty years in that petition.

Vid. tom. vi. Orat. 68.

Of good success to this practice we have many assurances in holy Scripture. *The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. Blessed are all they that wait for him. None that wait on him shall be ashamed. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint*. So hath God assured by his word, and engaged himself by promise, that he will yield unto constant

Lam. iii. 25. Isa. xxx. 18. xlix. 23. Ps. xxv. 3. xxvii. 9. Isa xl. 31. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Ezr. viii. 22. Amos v. 4. 2 Chr. xv. 12. Ps. ix. 10. *Seeking God*, the periphrasis of a religious man. Ps. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxix. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

Seeking God, the periphrasis of a religious man. Ps. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxix. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

Seeking God, the periphrasis of a religious man. Ps. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxix. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

Seeking God, the periphrasis of a religious man. Ps. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxix. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

Seeking God, the periphrasis of a religious man. Ps. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxix. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

Seeking God, the periphrasis of a religious man. Ps. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxix. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

and patient devotion ; so that it shall never want good success. SERM.
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Without this practice we cannot indeed hope to obtain those precious things ; they will not come at an easy rate, or be given for a song ; a lazy wish or two cannot fetch them down from heaven. God will not bestow them at first asking, or deal them out in one lump ; but it is upon assiduous soliciting, and by gradual communication, that he dispenseth them. So his wise good-will, for many special reasons, disposeth him to proceed : that we may (as it becometh and behoveth us) abide under a continual sense of our natural impotence and penury ; of our dependance upon God, and obligation to him for the free collation of those best gifts ; that by some difficulty of procuring them we may be minded of their worth, and induced the more to prize them : that by earnestly seeking them we may improve our spiritual appetites, and excite holy affections : that by much conversing with heaven our minds may be raised above earthly things, and our hearts purified from sordid desires : that we may have a constant employment answerable to the best capacities of our souls, worthy our care and pain, yielding most solid profit and pure delight unto us : that, in fine, by our greater endeavour in religious practice we may obtain a more ample reward thereof.

For the same reason indeed that we pray at all, we should pray thus with continued instance. We do not pray to instruct or advise God ; not to tell him news, or inform him of our wants : (*He knows them*, as our Saviour telleth us, *before we ask* :) nor do we pray by dint of argument to persuade God, and bring him to our bent ; nor that by fair speech we may cajole him or move his affections toward us by pathetic orations : not for any such purpose are we obliged to pray. But for that it becometh and behoveth us so to do, because it is a proper instrument of bettering, ennobling, and perfecting our souls ; because it breedeth most holy affections, and pure satisfactions, and worthy resolutions ; because it fitteth us for the enjoyment of happiness, and leadeth us

SERM. thither : for such ends devotion is prescribed ; and constant
 VI. perseverance therein being needful to those purposes, (praying by fits and starts not sufficing to accomplish them,) therefore such perseverance is required of us. Farther,

V. *Praying incessantly* may import, that we do with all our occupations and all occurrences interlace devout ejaculations of prayer and praise ; lifting up our hearts to God, and breathing forth expressions of devotion, suitable to the objects and occasions which present themselves. This as it nearly doth approach to the punctual accomplishment of what our text prescribeth, so it seemeth re-

Eph. vi. 18.
 v. 19.
 Col. iii. 16.

quired by St. Paul, when he biddeth us *pray always ἐν πνεύματι, in spirit*, and to sing ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, *in the heart* : that is, with very frequent elevations of spirit in holy thoughts and desires toward heaven ; with opportune resentments of heart, directing thanks and praise to God. We cannot ever be framing or venting long prayers with our lips, but almost ever our mind can throw pious glances, our heart may dart good wishes upwards ; so that hardly any moment (any considerable space of time) shall pass without some lightsome flashes of devotion ^a. As bodily respiration, without intermission or impediment, doth concur with all our actions : so may that breathing of soul, which preserveth our spiritual life, and ventilateth that holy flame within us, well conspire with all other occupations ^b. For devotion is of a nature so spiritual, so subtile, and penetrant, that no matter can exclude or obstruct it. Our minds are so exceedingly nimble and active, that no business can hold pace with them, or exhaust their attention and activity. We can never be so fully possessed by any employment, but that divers vacuities of time do intercur, wherein our thoughts and affections will be diverted to other matters. As a covetous man, what-

^a Sed non satis perspicuiunt quantum natura humani ingenii valeat, quæ ita est agilis et velox, sic in omnem partem (ut ita dixerim) spectat, ut ne possit quidem aliquid agere tantum unum ; in plura vero non eodem die modo, sed eodem temporis momento, vim suam impendat. *Quint. i. 12.*

^b Μνημονεύειν γὰρ Θεοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀναπνεύσειν καὶ εἰ δὴν τε τοῦτο εἰπεῖν, μηδὲ ἄλλο τι ἢ τῷτο πρῶκτίου. *Naz. Or. 33.*

ever beside he is doing, will be carking about his bags and treasures; an ambitious man will be devising on his plots and projects; a voluptuous man will have his mind in his dishes; a lascivious man will be doting on his amours; a studious man will be musing on his notions; every man, according to his particular inclination, will lard his business and besprinkle all his actions with cares and wishes tending to the enjoyment of what he most esteemeth and affecteth: so may a good Christian, through all his undertakings, wind in devout reflections and pious motions of soul toward the chief object of his mind and affection. Most businesses have wide gaps, all have some chinks, at which devotion may slip in. Be we never so urgently set or closely intent upon any work, (be we feeding, be we travelling, be we trading, be we studying,) nothing yet can forbid but that we may together wedge in a thought concerning God's goodness, and bolt forth a word of praise for it; but that we may reflect on our sins, and spend a penitential sigh on them; but that we may descry a need of God's help, and dispatch a brief petition for it: a *God be praised*, a *Lord have mercy*, a *God bless*, or *God help me*, will nowise interrupt or disturb our proceedings^c. As worldly cares and desires do often intrude and creep into our devotions, distracting and defiling them; so may spiritual thoughts and holy affections insinuate themselves into, and hallow our secular transactions. This practice is very possible, and it is no less expedient: for that if our employments be not thus seasoned, they can have no true life or savour in them; they will in themselves be dead and putrid, they will be foul and noisome, or at least flat and insipid unto us.

There are some other good meanings of this precept, according to which Holy Scripture (backed with good reason,) obligeth us to observe it: but those, (together with the general inducements to the practice of this duty,) that I may not farther now trespass on your patience, I shall reserve to another opportunity.

SERM.
VI.

Vid. Chrys.
Orat. v. in
Annam.
tom. v. p.
78, 79.

^c Ἐπί: κατὰ διάνοιαν, Ἐλέησόν με, ὁ Θεός, καὶ ἀπήρηταισά μου ἡ εὐχή. Chrys. Ibid.

SERMON VII.

OF THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

I THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceasing.

SERM. VII. **W**HAT the *prayer* here enjoined by St. Paul doth import, and how by it universally all sorts of devotion should be understood, we did formerly discourse. How also according to divers senses (grounded in holy Scripture, and enforced by good reason,) we may perform this duty *incessantly*, we did then declare; five such senses we did mention and prosecute: I shall now add two or three more, and press them.

VI. *Praying* then *incessantly* may imply, that we do appoint certain times conveniently distant for the practice of devotion, and carefully observe them. To keep the Jews in a constant exercise of divine worship, God did constitute a sacrifice, which was called *Tamidh*, (*ἡ διαπαντός θυσία*) the *continual sacrifice*. And as that sacrifice, being constantly offered at set times, was thence denominated *continual*; so may we, by punctually observing fit returns of devotion, be said to pray *incessantly*.

Dan. viii.

11.

Heb. xiii. 5.

Neh. x. 33.

And great reason there is that we should do so. For we know that all persons, who would not lead a loose and slattering life, but design with good assurance and advantage to prosecute an orderly course of action, are wont to distribute their time into several parcels; assigning some part thereof to the necessary refection of their bodies, some to the convenient relaxation of their minds,

some to the dispatch of their ordinary affairs, some also to familiar conversation, and interchanging good offices with their friends^d; considering, that otherwise they shall be uncertain, and *unstable in all their ways*. And in this distribution of time devotion surely should not lack its share: it rather justly claimeth the choicest portion to be allotted thereto, as being incomparably the noblest part of our duty, and mainest concernment of our lives. The feeding our souls and nourishing our spiritual life, the refreshing our spirits with those no less pleasant than wholesome exercises, the driving on our correspondence and commerce with heaven, the improving our friendship and interest with God, are affairs which above all others do best deserve, and most need being secured. They must not therefore be left at random, to be done by the bye, as it hitteth by chance, or as the fancy taketh us. If we do not depute vacant seasons, and fix periodical returns for devotion, engaging ourselves by firm resolution, and inuring our minds by constant usage to the strict observance of them, secluding from them, as from sacred enclosures, all other businesses; we shall often be dangerously tempted to neglect it, we shall be commonly listless to it, prone to defer it, easily seduced from it by the encroachment of other affairs, or enticement of other pleasures. It is requisite that our souls also (no less than our bodies) should have their meals, settled at such intervals as the maintenance of their life, their health, their strength and vigour do require; that they may not perish or languish for want of timely repasts; that a good appetite may duly spring up, prompting and instigating to them; that a sound temper and robust constitution of soul may be preserved by them.

Prayers are the bulwarks of piety and good conscience, the which ought to be placed so as to flank and relieve one another, together with the interjacent spaces of our life; that

^d Cur ipsi aliquid forensibus negotiis, aliquid desideriis amicorum, aliquid rationibus domesticis, aliquid curæ corporis, nonnihil voluptati quotidie damus? *Q:nt.* i. 12.

SERM. VII. the enemy (*the sin which doth so casily beset us*) may not come on between, or at any time assault us, without a force sufficiently near to reach and repel him.

Heb. xii. 1.

In determining these seasons and measures of time according to just proportion, honest prudence (weighing the several conditions, capacities, and circumstances of each person) must arbitrate. For some difference is to be made between a merchant and a monk, between those who follow a court, and those who reside in a cloister or a college. Some men having great encumbrances of business and duty by necessity imposed on them, which consume much of their time, and engage their thoughts; of them in reason, neither so frequent recourses to, nor so long continuance in prayer can be demanded, as from those who enjoy more abundant leisure, and freer scope of thoughts. But some fit times all may and must allow, which no avocation of business, no distraction of care should purloin from them.

Psal. xcii. 1.
2. Iv. 17.

Certain seasons and periods of this kind nature itself (in correspondence to her unalterable revolutions) doth seem to define and prescribe: those which the Royal Prophet recommendeth, when he saith, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most high: To shew forth thy loving-kindness every morning, and thy faithfulness every night.* Every day we do recover and receive a new life from God; every morning we do commence business, or revive it; from our bed of rest and security we then issue forth, exposing ourselves to the cares and toils, to the dangers, troubles, and temptations of the world: then especially therefore it is reasonable, that we should sacrifice thanks to the gracious preserver of our life, and the faithful restorer of its supports and comforts; that we should crave his direction and help in the pursuit of our honest undertakings; that to his protection from sin and mischief we should recommend ourselves and our affairs; that, by offering up to him the first-fruits of our diurnal labours, we should consecrate and consign them all to his blessing; that as we are then wont to salute all the world, so then

chiefly with humble obeisance we should accost him, who is ever present with us, and continually watchful over us. Then also peculiarly devotion is most seasonable, because then our minds being less prepossessed and pestered with other cares, our fancies becoming lively and gay, our memories fresh and prompt, our spirits copious and brisk, we are better disposed for it.

Every night also reason calleth for these duties, requiring that we should close our business and wind up all our cares in devotion ; that we should then bless God for his gracious preservation of us from the manifold hazards and the sins to which we stood obnoxious ; that we should implore his mercy for the manifold neglects and transgressions of our duty, which through the day past we have incurred ; that our minds being then so tired with study and care, our spirits so wasted with labour and toil, that we cannot any longer sustain ourselves, but do of our own accord sink down into a posture of death, we should, as dying men, resign our souls into God's hand, depositing ourselves and our concernments into his custody, who alone *doth never sleep* Ps. cxxi. 4. *nor slumber* : praying that he would guard us from all the dangers and disturbances incident to us in that state of forgetfulness, and *interregnum* of our reason ; that he would grant us a happy resurrection in safety and health, with a good and cheerful mind, enabling us thereafter comfortably to enjoy ourselves, and delightfully to serve him.

Thus if we do constantly bound and circumscribe our days, dedicating those most remarkable breaks of time unto God's service, since beginning and end do comprehend the whole, seeing, in the computation and style of Moses, *evening and morning* do constitute a day ; we may with some good congruity be said to pray incessantly.

Especially if at the middle distance between those extremes we are wont to interpose somewhat of devotion. For as then usually our spirits, being somewhat shattered and spent, do need a recruit, enabling us to pass through the residue of the day with its incumbent business ; so then it would do well, and may be requisite, in a meal of

SERM. devotion to refresh our souls with spiritual sustenance,
VII. drawn from the never-failing storehouse of divine grace ;
 which may so fortify us, that with due vigour and alacrity
 we may perform the ensuing duties to God's honour and
 our own comfort. Thus to practise was the resolution of

Psal. lv. 17. the Psalmist, that great master of devotion ; *Evening*, said
 he, *and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud.*

And this was the custom of the noble Daniel, from which
Dan. vi. 10. no occasion could divert, no hazard could deter him : *He*
kneeled, saith the story, upon his knees three times a day,
and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.

These are times which it is necessary, or very expedient
 that all men, (even persons of highest rank, and greatest
 employment) should observe. These even of old were the
 practices of religious persons, not expressly prescribed by
 God's law, but assumed by themselves ; good reason sug-
 gesting them to the first practisers, and the consenting ex-
 ample of pious men afterward enforcing them.

God indeed did himself in his Law, or by his Prophets,
 appoint public and solemn celebrations of worship to him-
 self, in sacrifices (involving prayer and accompanied there-
 with) constantly to be offered every morning and evening :

2 Chron. ii. 4. religious princes also did institute services of thanksgiving
 and praise to be performed at those times : but there doth
1 Chron. xvi. 40, 41. not appear any direct institution of private devotion, or its
xxiii. 30. circumstances ; but the practice thereof seemeth originally
Ezr. iii. 3. to have been purely voluntary, managed and measured ac-
 cording to the reason, by the choice of each person ; yet so,
 that the practice of eminently good men leading, and others
 following, it grew into a kind of common law, or standing
 rule, (seeming to carry an obligation with it,) to observe the
 times specified.

Besides those three times, there were farther other mid-
 dle times observed by devout people, who had leisure and
 disposition of mind thereto ; once between morning and
 noon, and once between noon and evening were seques-
 tered to that purpose : whence in the Acts the ninth
 hour of the day (that is, the middle interval between

noon and evening) is called *the hour of prayer*. Yea, some did impose on themselves the observation of two other times, one between evening and midnight, the other between midnight and morn. To which practice those places in the Psalms do seem to allude; *My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may meditate on thy word.* And plainly the whole number of those times, which the Psalmist observed, is expressed in those words: *Seven times a-day will I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.* Which examples whoever shall choose to follow, (in any measure,) he shall do wisely and commendably; he shall certainly have no cause to repent; he will find it richly worth his while; great benefit and comfort will thence accrue unto him.

SERM.
VII.
Acts iii. 1.

Psal. lxiii. 5,
6.

Psal. cxix.
147, 148.

Psal. cxix:
164.

If indeed Jews were so liberal in assigning, so punctual in affording such portions of time for yielding praise, and offering supplications unto God; how much more free and ready, more careful and diligent, should we be in this way of practice? we who have a religion so far more spiritual, and exempt from corporeal encumbrances; precepts so much more express and clear; so much higher obligations and stronger encouragements to this duty; whom God in especial manner so graciously doth invite, so powerfully doth attract unto himself? But farther,

VII. More especially this precept may be supposed to exact from us a compliance in carefully observing the times of devotion ordained by public authority, or settled by general custom. This in a popular and legal sense is doing a thing indoesinently, when we perform it so often as is required by law or custom. So the Apostle to the Hebrews saith of *the priests*, that *they went always into the tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God: always*, that is, at all the solemn times appointed. And thus of the Apostles it is affirmed by St. Luke, that *they were continually in the temple, blessing and praising God*; that is, they constantly resorted thither at the stated times of concourse for

Levit. xix.
30. xxvi. 2.
Ye shall
keep my
sabbaths,
and re-
verence my
sanctuary.
Heb. ix. 6.

Luke xxiv.
53.

SERM. VII. prayer. This good reason also plainly doth enjoin; for that the neglecting it is not only a disorderly behaviour in a matter of high consequence; a criminal disregard and disobedience to authority; a scandalous contempt of our neighbours, from whose laudable fashion we discost; a wrongful deserting the public, to whose good, mainly promoted by the public worship of God, we do owe the contribution of our endeavour; but a heinous affront to Almighty God, who thereby is plainly dishonoured, and in a manner openly disavowed; a huge prejudice to religion, the credit and power whereof, without visible profession, exemplary compliance, mutual consent and encouragement, cannot be upheld. Were there times by law or custom defined, (as in some places indeed there are,) when all men should be required in person solemnly to attend on their prince, for professing their allegiance, or deferring any homage to him; would not those who should wilfully refuse or decline appearance, be justly chargeable as guilty of dishonouring and wronging him? would not their such default pass for sufficient proof that they do not acknowledge him, that at least they do not much regard or value him? So, by not joining at stated times in celebration of divine worship, we may be well conceived wholly to disclaim God, or greatly to disesteem him; to slight religion, as a thing insignificant and unprofitable. Do we not indeed thereby more than intimate, that we little believe God to be our sovereign Lord and Governor; that we stand in no great awe or dread of him; that we are not much sensible of his benefits and mercies; that we repose small trust or hope in him; that we do not take ourselves much to want his protection, his guidance, his assistance, his favour and mercy? Are we not in effect like to those in Job, who say

Job xxi. 14, *unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways? What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? or what profit shall we have, if we pray unto him?*

15. Thus the standers-by commonly (some so as to be much offended at, others so as to be corrupted by our bad example,) will interpret this neglect: and so assuredly God

himself will take it from us, and accordingly deal with us. SERM. VII.
 As he claimeth this public attendance on him for his due : Psal. xxix. 1, 2. lxxvi. 2.
 (*Give, proclaimeth he by the mouth of one of his great Heralds, Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength : Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name : worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness :*) so if we to his wrong and disgrace refuse to yield it, we shall certainly find answerable resentment and recompense from him : that as we are careless to serve him, so he will be unmindful to bless us ; as we are backward to avow and glorify him, so he will not be forward to own and grace us ; as we do so deny him before men, so he will deny us before them also. 2 Tim. ii. 12.
 What other measure indeed can we imagine, or expect to receive ? will God, think we, be so partial and fond to us, so disregardful and injurious toward himself, that he will vouchsafe to appear in favour to us, when we deign not to appear in respect to him ? that he will openly tender our repute, when we apparently disregard his honour ? that he will employ his wisdom, or exert his power, in our behalf, when we scarce will think a thought, or stir a step, for his service ? Can we hope that he will freely dispense prosperous success to our enterprises, when we either care not or scorn to implore his help ? that he will reach forth undeserved blessings to us, when we subtract due praises from him ? that he will any wise shew himself bountiful and merciful toward us, when we so palpably are unjust and ingrateful toward him ? No, *surely he scorneth the scorers ; and, whosoever despiseth him, shall be lightly esteemed :* so he expressly hath threatened ; and seeing he is both infallibly true, and invincibly able, we may reasonably presume that he will accomplish his word. Prov. iii. 34. 1 Sam. ii. 33.

VIII. Lastly, *Praying incessantly* may import at large a frequency in devotion. This the words at least do exact or necessarily imply, however expounded. For doing *incessantly* cannot imply less than doing *frequently* : in no tolerable sense can we be said to do that continually, which we do seldom : but it is an ordinary scheme of speech to say that a man doth that always, which he is

SERM. VII. Acts x. 2. Luke ii. 37. went to do, and performeth often. As of the pious soldier Cornelius, it is said, that he *gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway*; and of Anna the prophetess, that she *departed not from the temple, but served God with prayers and fastings night and day*; that is, she frequently resorted to the temple, and served God with an assiduous constancy. As the words may bear, and do involve this sense, so doth the reason of the case enforce it: for very just, very fit, very needful it is to practise thus. There is ever at hand abundant reason for, and apposite matter of, devotion; therefore no large space of time should pass without it: there be perpetually depending many causes thereof; whence there is not to be allowed any long vacation from it. As every moment, we, from God's mercy and bounty, partake great favours; so should we often render thanks and praise for them: for perpetually to receive courtesies, and rarely to return acknowledgments, is notorious ingratitude and iniquity. We frequently (and in a manner continually) do fall into sins; often therefore we are obliged to confess sins, we are concerned to deprecate wrath, and beg mercy; otherwise we must long crouch under the sore burden of guilt, the sad dread of punishment, the bitter pangs of remorse, or the desperate hazard of stupid obduration. Whatever we design or undertake, toward the good management and happy success thereof, we (being ignorant and impotent creatures) do need the guidance, the assistance, and the blessing of God; so often therefore, it is requisite that we should be seeking and suing for them: if not, we do not only transgress our duties, but fondly neglect or foully betray our own concernments. The causes therefore of devotion being so constant, the effects in some correspondence should be frequent.

Such frequency is indeed necessary for the breeding, the nourishment, the growth and improvement of all piety. Devotion is that holy and heavenly fire, which darteth into our minds the light of spiritual knowledge, which kindleth in our hearts the warmth of holy desires: if therefore we do continue long absent from it, a night

of darkness will overspread our minds, a deadening coldness will seize upon our affections. It is the best food of our souls, which preserveth their life and health, which repaireth their strength and vigour, which rendereth them lusty and active; if we therefore long abstain from it, we shall starve or pine away; we shall be faint and feeble in all religious performances; we shall have none at all, or a very languid and meagre piety.

To maintain in us a constant and steady disposition to obedience, to correct our perverse inclinations, to curb our unruly passions, to strengthen us against temptations, to comfort us in anxieties and distresses, we do need continual supplies of grace from God; the which ordinarily are communicated in devotion, as the channel which conveyeth, or the instrument which helpeth to procure it, or the condition upon which it is granted. Faith, hope, love, spiritual comfort, and joy, all divine graces are chiefly elicited, expressed, exercised therein and thereby: it is therefore needful that it should frequently be used; seeing otherwise we shall be in danger to fail in discharging our chief duties, and to want the best graces.

X It is frequency of devotion also which maintaineth that friendship with God, which is the soul of piety. As familiar conversation (wherein men do express their minds and affections mutually) breedeth acquaintance, and cherisheth goodwill of men to one another; but long-forbearance thereof dissolveth or slackeneth the bonds of amity, breaking their intimacy, and cooling their kindness: so is it in respect to God; it is frequent converse with him, which begetteth a particular acquaintance with him, a mindful regard of him, a hearty liking to him, a delightful taste of his goodness, and consequently a sincere and solid good-will toward him; but intermission thereof produceth estrangement or enmity toward him. If we seldom come at God, we shall little know him, not much care for him, scarce remember him, rest insensible of his love, and regardless of his favour; a coldness, a shyness, a distaste, an antipathy toward him will by degrees creep upon us. Abstinence from his company and presence

SERM. will cast us into conversations destructive or prejudicial to
VII. our friendship with him ; wherein soon we shall contract familiarity and friendship with his enemies, (the world and the flesh,) which are inconsistent with love to him, which will dispose us to forget him, or to dislike and loathe him.

It is, in fine, the frequency of devotion which alone can secure any practice thereof, at least any practice thereof duly qualified ; so hearty, so easy, so sweet and delightful as it should be. We have all a natural averseness or indisposition thereto, as requiring an abstraction of thoughts and affections from sensible things, and a fastening them upon objects purely spiritual ; a rearing our heavy spirits above their common pitch ; a staying and settling our roving fancies ; a composing our vain hearts in a sober and steady frame, agreeable to devotion : to effect which things is a matter of no small difficulty and pain ; which therefore, without much use and exercise, cannot be accomplished ; but with it, may ; so that by frequent practice, the bent of our heart being turned, the strangeness of the thing ceasing, the difficulty of the work being surmounted, we shall obtain a good propension to the duty, and a great satisfaction therein.

This will render the way into God's presence smooth and passable ; removing, as all other obstacles, so particularly those of fear and doubt in respect to God, which may deter or discourage us from approaching to him. God being most holy and pure, most great and glorious, we, sensible of our corruption and vileness, may be fearful and shy of coming near unto him. But when, coming into his presence, we do find, that *such as his majesty is,*

Psal. xxxiv. *such is his mercy ; when we do taste and see that the Lord*
 8. *is good ; when by experience we feel, that in his presence*
 xvi. 11. *there is fulness of joy ; being abundantly satisfied with the*
 Psal. xxxvi. *fatness of his house ; having our souls there satisfied as with*
 8. *marrow and fatness ; finding, that a day in his courts is*
 lxxiv. 10. *better than a thousand spent elsewhere ; perceiving that*
 he biddeth us welcome, that he treateth us kindly, that he sendeth us away refreshed with sweetest comforts, and

rewarded with most excellent benefits; this will not only
 reconcile our hearts to devotion, but draw us into a cordial
 liking and earnest desire thereof; such as the Psalmist
 expresseth, when he saith, *My soul longeth, yea, even* Ps. lxxxiv. 2.
fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my
flesh crieth out for the living God. This will engage us
 into strong resolutions of constantly practising it; such as
 the same holy person again declareth in these words; *I*
love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my sup- Ps. cxvi. 1.
plications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, there-
fore will I call upon him as long as I live. Hence, instead
 of a suspicious estrangedness, a servile dread, or an hostile
 disaffection toward God, there will spring up an humble
 confidence, a kindly reverence, a hearty love toward him;
 which will upon all occasions drive us to him, hoping for
 his friendly succour, longing after his kind embraces. So
 will the frequency of devotion render it facile and pleasant.
 Whereas, on the contrary, disuse thereof will make it at any
 time hard and irksome; strengthening and increasing our
 natural averseness thereto: performing it seldom, we shall
 never perform it well, with that attention, that affection, that
 promptitude, that willingness and alacrity, which are due
 thereto.

According to so many senses, in so many respects, may
 we, and should we observe this precept. From thus pray-
 ing continually there can be no good exception or just ex-
 cuse. The most common pleas that will be alleged for the
 omission thereof are two; one drawn from external avoca-
 tions, the other from internal indispositions obstructing it:
 both of which are so far from being good, that being scan-
 ned, they will soon appear serving rather to aggravate than
 to excuse or abate the neglect.

I. I cannot, saith one, now attend to prayers, because I
 am not at liberty, or at leisure, being urgently called away,
 and otherwise engaged by important affairs. How much a
 sham this apology is we shall presently deserv, by asking a
 few questions about it.

1. Do we take devotion itself to be no business, or a
 business of no consideration? Do we conceit, when we

SERM. pay God his debts, or discharge our duties toward him,
VII. when we crave his aid or mercy, when we solicit the main
 concerns of our soul, (yea, of our body also and its
 estate,) that we are idle or misemployed; that we lavish
 our time, or lose our pains?

2. What other affairs can we have of greater moment
 or necessity than this? Can there be any obligation more
 indispensable than is that of yielding due respect and ser-
 vice to our Maker, our great Patron, our most liberal Be-
 nefactor? Can there be any interest more close or weighty
 than this, of providing for our souls' eternal health and
 happiness? Is not this, indeed, the great work, *the only*
necessary matter, in comparison whereto all other occu-
 pations are mere trifling, or unprofitable fiddling about no-
 thing? What will all other business signify, what will come
 of it, if this be neglected? Busy we may be, we may plod,
 we may drudge eternally; but all to no end. All our
 care is in effect improvidence, all our industry may be well
 reckoned idleness, if God be not served, if our souls are
 not secured.

3. If we survey and prize all worldly businesses, which
 among them will appear so importunate as to demand, so
 greedy as to devour, so worthy at least as to deserve all
 our time, that we cannot spare a few minutes for main-
 taining our most pleasant intercourse, and most gainful
 commerce with heaven? What are the great businesses of
 the world? what but scraping and scrambling for pelf,
 contriving and compassing designs of ambition, courting
 the favour and respect of men, making provision for carnal
 pleasure, gratifying fond curiosity or vain humour? And
 do any of these deserve to be put into the scale against,
 shall all of them together be able to sway down our spi-
 ritual employments? Shall these images, these shadows
 of business, supplant or crowd our devotion; that which
 procureth wealth inestimably precious, pleasure infinitely
 satisfactory, honour incomparably noble above all this
 world can afford? If the expense of time be, as the Phi-
 losopher said, *πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα*, *the most precious ex-
 pense* that can be; how can it be better laid out than

Luke x. 24.
 Job xxiii.
 12.

Αἱ τίχιναι
 τῶν πεισῶν
 ἐπέργειά εἰ-
 σιν ἔργον δὲ
 ἡ θεοσέβεια.

Const.
 Apost. ii. 61.

Theophr.

upon the worthiest things, such as devotion alone can afford the purchase and possession of? True virtue, sound wisdom, a quiet conscience, and steady tranquillity of mind, the love and favour of God, a title unto endless joy and bliss, are purely the gifts of heaven; and thence they will not descend of themselves, but prayer must fetch them down. If nothing then in the world be comparable to those things, how can any time be so well spent as in prayer, which acquireth them; which also best secureth whatever we have, and is the readiest way to procure whatever we want?

4. Should we not farther, honestly comparing things, easily discern, that it is no such indispensable business, but rather indeed some base dotage on lucre, some inveigling bait of pleasure, some bewitching transport of fancy, that crosseth our devotion? Is it not often a complimentary visit, an appointment to tattle or to tipple, a match for sport, a wild ramble in vice or folly, that so deeply engageth us to put off our duty?

5. Yea, is it not commonly sloth rather than activity, an averseness from this, rather than an inclination to any other employment, which diverteth us from our prayers? Is not, I say, the true reason why we pray so seldom, not because we are very busy, but because we are extremely idle; so idle, that we cannot willingly take the pains to unscrew our affections from sensible things, to reduce our wandering thoughts, to compose our hearts into a right frame, to bend our untoward inclinations to a compliance with our duty? Is it not because we do not feel that savour and satisfaction in these, which we do in other trivial and worthless employments, nor will be at the trouble to work such dispositions in our souls? Do we not betake ourselves to other conversations and commerces merely for refuge, shunning this intercourse with God and with ourselves? These, I fear, are oftener the real causes of our neglecting devotion, than any such mighty avocations which we pretend.

6. But were there, indeed, not only a counterfeit or imaginary, but a real competition between devotion and other

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lawful business, which, in reason, should carry it? in conscience, which of the two should be forborne or suspended? Is it not evidently better, that the pursuit of our temporal interests, whatever they be, should be a little checked, than that our affairs of everlasting consequence should be quite laid aside? that we should venture a small impairing of our estate, than surely endamage our souls? that we hazard to disappoint or displease a man, than dare to affront and offend the Almighty God?

7. Were it not strangely absurd and unhandsome to say, I cannot wait on God, because I must speak with a friend; I cannot go to church, although God calleth me thither, because I must haste to market; I cannot stand to pray, because I am to receive money, or to make up a bargain; I cannot discharge my duty to God, because a greater obligation than that doth lie upon me? How unconceivable an honour, how unvaluable a benefit is it, that the incomprehensibly great and glorious Majesty of heaven doth vouchsafe us the liberty to approach so near unto him, to converse so freely with him, to demand and derive from his hand the supply of all our needs, and satisfaction of all our reasonable desires? and is it then just or seemly, by such comparisons to disparage his favour, by such pretences to baffle with his goodness?

Put the case our prince should call for us to speak with him about matters nearly touching his service and our welfare; would it be according unto duty, discretion, or decency, to reply, that we are at present busy, and have no leisure, and must therefore hold ourselves excused; but that, if he will stay awhile, at another time, when we have less to do, we shall be perhaps disposed to wait upon him? The case is propounded by our Lord in that parable, wherein God is represented as a great man, that had prepared a feast, and invited many guests thereto; but they excused themselves: *One said, that he had purchased land, and must needs go out to see it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and must go to prove them; an-*

Mat. xxii.
2, &c.
Luke xiv.
16, &c.

other had married a wife and therefore could not come. These indeed were affairs considerable, as this world hath any; but yet the excuses did not satisfy: for, notwithstanding, the great person was angry, and took the neglect in huge disdain.

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Ἐπιτα ὅτι
σάνψις ταῦ-
τα καὶ πρό-
φασις, &c.
Chrys. in
Joh. Orat.
11.

8. Moreover, if we reflect what vast portions of time we squander away upon our petty matters, upon voluptuous enjoyments, upon fruitless pastimes, upon impertinent talk; how can we satisfy ourselves in not allotting competent time for God's service, our own salvation, and the future everlasting state? Doth not he, who, with the continuance of our life, bestoweth on us all our time, deserve that a pittance of it should be reserved for himself? Can all the world duly claim so great an allowance thereof? May not our soul (which is far our noblest part, which indeed is all ourselves) justly challenge a good share of our time to be expended on it? or shall this mortal husk engross it all? Must eternity, which comprehendeth all time, have no time belonging to it, or allotted for its concernments?

9. Again, is it not great imprudence so to lay our business, that any other matter shall thwart or thrust out devotion? Easily with a little providence may things be so ordered, that it, without interfering or justling, may well consist with all other both needful business, and convenient divertisement; so that it shall neither obstruct them, nor they extrude it: and are we not very culpable, if we do not use so much providence^a?

10. In truth, attending upon devotion can be no obstacle, but will be great furtherance to all other good business. It is the most sure, most pleasant, most advantageous and compendious way of transacting affairs, to mix prayers and praises with them; it is the best oil that can be, to make the wheels of action go on smoothly and speedily; it not only sanctifieth our undertakings, but much promoteth and exceedingly sweeteneth the manage-

^a Πρωτων μὲν, αὐτὸ πᾶσα ἔγκλημα οὐ μικρὸν, τὸ κυκλῶσθαι τούτων πραγμάτων πλῆθει, καὶ τοῖς βιωτικαῖς οὕτω προσκλῶσθαι. διὰ ταῦτα, ὡς μὲν μικρὸν εἰς τὰ πάντων ἀναγκαιότερα ἄγειν σχολή. Chrys. in Joh. i. 11 (Or. 11.)

SERM. ment of them. For the conscience of having rendered
 VII. unto God his due respect and service, of having entrusted
 our affairs to his care, of having consequently engaged his
 protection and assistance for us, will dispose us to do things
 with a courageous alacrity and comfortable satisfaction; will
 fill us with a good hope of prospering; will prepare us
 however to be satisfied with the event, whatever it shall be;
 will in effect procure a blessing and happy success, such as
 we may truly rejoice and triumph in, as conferred by God
 in favour to us. Whereas neglecting these duties, we can
 have no solid content or savoury complacence in any thing
 we undertake: reflecting on such misbehaviour (if we be
 not downright infidels, or obdurate reprobates in impiety)
 will quash or damp our courage; having thence forfeited all
 pretence to God's succour, and provoked him to cross us,
 we must needs suspect disappointment: as we have no reason-
 able ground to hope for success; so we cannot, if success
 arriveth, be heartily satisfied therein, or take it for a blessing.

He therefore that is such a niggard of his time, that he
 grudgeth to withhold any part thereof from his worldly oc-
 casions, deeming all time cast away that is laid out in wait-
 ing upon God, is really most unthrifty and prodigal thereof:
 by not sparing a little he wasteth all his time to no purpose;
 by so eagerly pursuing, he effectually setteth back his de-
 signs; by preposterously affecting to dispatch his affairs, he
 rendereth them endless, or, which is the same, altogether
 unprofitable.

In fine, we may be sure that no time is spent even so
 prudently and politicly, with so great advantage and so real
 fruit to ourselves, as that which is employed upon devo-
 tion. In sacrificing his time, his pains, his substance, any
 thing he hath or can do, to God's service, no man can be a
 loser.

We have also many examples plainly demonstrating the
 consistency of this practice with all other business. Who
 ever had more or greater affairs to manage, and who ever
 managed them with greater success, than David; upon
 whom did lie the burden of a royal estate, and the care

over a most populous nation ; the which *he fed with a faithful and true heart, and ruled prudently with all his power* ; who waged great wars, vanquished mighty enemies, achieved many glorious exploits, underwent many grievous troubles ? Yet could not such engagements distract or depress his mind from a constant attendance on devotion. *I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be continually in my mouth. My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.* So he declareth his resolution and his practice. Who is more pressingly employed than was Daniel, first president over so vast a kingdom, chief minister of state to the greatest monarch on earth ? Yet constantly *thrice a day did he pray and give thanks unto his God.* Who can be more entangled in varieties and intricacies of care, of pains, of trouble, than was he that prescribeth unto us this rule of praying continually ? Upon him did lie *the care of all the churches ; night and day with labour and toil did he work* for the sustenance of his life, *that he might not* (to the disparagement of the Gospel) *burden any man* ; perpetually he was engaged in all sorts of labour and travail, ever conflicting with perils, with wants, with inconveniencies numberless : yet did he exactly conform his practice to his rule, being no less indefatigable and incessant in his devotion than he was in his business. Whoever managed a greater empire than Constantine ? Yet *every day, as Eusebius reporteth, at stated times, shutting himself up, he alone privately did converse with his God*^b. The most pious men indeed have never been idle or careless men, but always most busy and active, most industrious in their callings, most provident for their families, most officious toward their friends, most ready to serve their country, most abundant in all good works ; yet have they always been most constant in devotion. So that experience clearly doth evidence, how reconcileable much devotion is to much bu-

SERM.
VII.Ps. lxxviii.
72.Ps. xxxiv. 1.
lxxi. 6.
cxlv. 2.
xxxv. 28.
lxi. 4.

Dan. vi.

2 Cor. xi.

28.

2 Thess. iii.
8.

^b Καιροῖς ἐκάστης ἡμέρας τακτοῖς ἑαυτὸν ἐγκλείων, μόνος μόνῳ τῷ αὐτῷ προσωμίλει Θεῷ. Euseb. de Vita Const. iv. 22.

SERM. VII. siness; and that consequently the prosecution of the one cannot well palliate the neglect of the other.

II. No better can any man ward himself from blame, by imputing the neglect of devotion to some indisposition within him thereto. For this is only to cover one fault with another, or to lay on a patch more ugly than the sore. It is, in effect, to say we may sin, because we have a mind to it, or care not to do otherwise. Our indisposition itself is criminal; and, as signifying somewhat habitual or settled, is worse than a single omission: it ought therefore to be corrected and cured; and the way to do it is, by setting presently upon the practice of the duty, and persisting resolutely therein: otherwise how is it possible that it should ever be removed? The longer we forbear it, the more seldom we perform it, the stronger surely will our indisposition grow, and the more difficult it will be to remove it. But if (with any degree of seriousness and good intention) we come indisposed to prayer, we may thereby be formed into better disposition, and by continual attendance thereon, we shall (God's grace co-operating, which never is wanting to serious and honest intentions) grow toward a perfect fitness for it: prayer by degrees will become natural and delightful to us

SERMON VIII.

OF THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

EPHES. v. 20.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God.

THESE words, although (as the very syntax doth immediately discover) they bear a relation to, and have a fit coherence with, those that precede, may yet, (especially considering St. Paul's style and manner of expression in the preceptive and exhortative part of his Epistles,) without any violence or prejudice on either hand, be severed from the context, and considered distinctly by themselves. And (to avoid encumbrance by farther comparison) so taking them we may observe, that every single word among them carries with it something of notable emphasis and especial significance. The first [*Giving thanks*] expresses the substance of a duty, to which we are exhorted. The next (**I** mean, in order of construction) [*to God*] denotes the object or term to which it is directed. The following [*always*] determines the main circumstance of this and all other duties, the time of performance. The last [*for all things*] declares the adequate matter of the duty, and how far it should extend. These particulars I shall consider severally, and in order.

I. First then, concerning the duty itself. *to give thanks*, or rather, *to be thankful*; (for *εὐχαριστεῖν* doth not only signify *gratias agere, reddere, dicere, to give, render, or de-*

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Vid. Rom.
xii. Eph.
vi. &c.



SERM. VIII. *clare thanks* but also *gratias habere, grate affectum esse*, to be *thankfully disposed*, to entertain a grateful affection, sense or memory: in which more comprehensive notion I mean to consider it, as including the whole duty or virtue of gratitude due to Almighty God for all his benefits, favours, and mercies; I say, concerning this duty itself, (abstractedly considered,) as it involves a respect to benefits or good things received; so in its employment about them it imports, requires, or supposes these following particulars.

1. It implies a right apprehension of, and consequently a considerate attention unto, benefits conferred. For he that is either wholly ignorant of his obligations, or mistakes them, or passes them over with a slight and superficial view, can nowise be grateful. *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doings. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all that have pleasure therein. O taste (first, and then) see that the Lord is good.*

Ps. cvii. 43.
Ps. lxiv. 9.
Ps. cxi. 2.
Ps. xxxiv. 8.

This is the method that great master of thanksgiving prescribes; first experimental notice, then wise consideration, then grateful sense, then public acknowledgment. And those we find both by him and by the Prophet Isaias (in the very same words) reprehended as wickedly ingrateful persons, who *regarded not the work of the Lord, nor considered the operation of his hands.* 'Tis part therefore of this duty incumbent on us, to take notice of, diligently and carefully to consider, the divine benefits; not to let them pass undiscerned and unregarded by us, as persons either wofully blind, or stupidly drowsy, or totally unconcerned.

Ps. xxviii. 5.
Isa. v. 12.

'Tis a general fault, that the most common and frequent, the most obvious and conspicuous favours of God, (like the ordinary phenomena of nature, which, as Aristotle observes, though in themselves most admirable, are yet least admired,) the constant rising of the sun upon us, the descent of fruitful showers, the recourse of temperate

seasons, the continuance of our life, the enjoyment of health, the providential dispensation of wealth, and competent means of livelihood, the daily protection from incident dangers, the helps of improving knowledge, obtaining virtue, becoming happy, and such like most excellent benefits, we commonly little mind or regard, and consequently seldom return the thanks due for them. Possibly some rare accidents of providence, some extraordinary judgment, some miraculous deliverance, may rouse and awaken our attention: (as it is said of the Israelites, *When he slew them, then they sought him—and remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer:*) but such advertency is not the effect so much of gratitude, as of curiosity or of necessity: the notable rarity invites, or some powerful impulse commands our notice. But the truly grateful industriously design, and are studious to know thoroughly their obligations, that they may be able to render answerable returns for them.

2. This duty requires a faithful retention of benefits in memory, and consequently frequent reflections upon them. For he that is no longer affected with a benefit than it incurs the sense, and suffers not itself to be disregarded, is far from being grateful; nay, if we believe the philosopher, is ingrateful in the worst kind, and highest degree. For, *Ingratus est, saith he, qui beneficium accepisse se negat, quod accepit; ingratus est, qui dissimulat; ingratus, qui non reddit: ingratus omnium, qui oblitus est.* He that falsely denies the reception of a benefit, and he that dissembles it, and he that doth not repay it, is ingrateful; but most ingrateful of all is he that forgets it. It is a sign the benefit made no deep impression on his mind, since it left no discernible footstep there; that he hardly ever thought of making recompense, since he hath suffered himself to become altogether incapable of doing it; neither is there any hope of his amending the past neglect; no shame, no repentance, no fair occasion can redeem him from ingratitude, in whom the very remembrance of his obligation is extinguished.

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Ps. lxxviii.
34, 35.

Ἀχαριστος
ὅστις ἐν καρδίᾳ
ἀμνημονεῖ.

Sen. iii. de
Benef. cap.
1.

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If to be sensible of a present good turn deserved the title of gratitude, all men certainly would be grateful: the Jews questionless were so. When Almighty God, by his wonderful power in extraordinary ways, delivered them from the tyranny and oppression of their prevalent enemies; when he caused streams to gush forth from the bowels of a hard rock, to refresh their thirst; when bread descended from heaven in showers, and the winds were winged with flesh, to satisfy their greedy desires; then surely they were not altogether unsensible of the divine goodness; then could they acknowledge his power, and be forward enough to engage themselves in promises of correspondent observance toward him for the future. But the mischief was, immediately after, as the Psalmist complains, *They forgot his works, and the wonders he had shewed them: They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from*

Ps. lxxviii.
11. 42.

Neh. ix. 17. *the enemy. They refused to obey, neither were mindful of the wonders that God did among them,* as Nehemiah confess-

Deut. xxxii.
18.

es in their behalf. *Of the Rock that begat them they were unmindful, and forgot the God that formed them,* as it is in Deuteronomy. They distrusted his promises, repined at his dealings, disobeyed his laws, and treacherously apostatised from his covenant. Such were the fruits of their ingrateful forgetfulness; which therefore that people is so often charged with, and so sharply reprov'd for by the Prophets.

Thy loving-kindness is ever before mine eyes.
Ps. xxvi. 3.
lxxvii. 11,
12. cxliii. 5.
ciii. 2.

On the contrary, we find that great pattern of gratitude, the royal Prophet David, continually revolving in his thoughts, imprinting upon his fancy, studying and meditating upon, recollecting and renewing in his memory, the results of divine favour. *I will remember, saith he, thy wonders of old; I will meditate of all thy works, and talk of thy doings: and, I remember the days of old; I will meditate on all thy works; I muse on the works of thy hands: and, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: and, My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, because thou hast been my help.*

Ps. lxiii. 5,
6, 7.

No place unfit, it seems, no time unseasonable for the

practice of this duty ; not the place designed for rest, not the time due to sleep, but, as David thought, more due to a wakeful contemplation of the divine goodness. Whose vigilant gratitude we should strive to imitate, devoting our most solitary and retired, our most sad and serious thoughts (not the studies only of our closet, but the consultations also of our pillow) to the preservation of those blessed ideas ; that neither length of time may deface them in our fancy, nor other care thrust them out thence.

It was a satirical answer, (that of Aristotle,) and highly opprobrious to mankind ; who, being asked, *Τί τάχιστα γηράσκει* ; *What doth the soonest grow old?* replied, *Χάρις, Thanks* : and so was that adagial verse, " *Δὴν ἠλέηται, καὶ τὲν ἔνθεν ἢ χάρις* " *No sooner the courtesy born, than the resentment thereof dead*. Such reproachful aphorisms we should labour to confute, especially as they are applicable to the divine favours, by so maintaining and cherishing our thanks for them, that they neither decay with age, nor prematurely die, nor be buried in oblivion ; but may resemble the pictures and poetical descriptions of the Graces, those goodly daughters of heaven, smiling always with a never-fading serenity of countenance, and flourishing in an immortal youth.

The middle, we may observe, and the safest, and the fairest, and the most conspicuous places in cities are usually deputed for the erections of statues and monuments dedicated to the memory of worthy men, who have nobly deserved of their countries. In like manner should we, in the heart and centre of our soul, in the best and highest apartments thereof, in the places most exposed to ordinary observation, and most secure from the invasions of worldly care, erect lively representations of, and lasting memorials unto, the divine bounty ; constantly attending to which we may be disposed to gratitude. Not one blessing, not the least favourable passage of providence ought to perish with us, though long since past, and removed out of the sphere of present sense.

We must not in our old age forget who formed us in the Ps. lxxi. 6.

SERM. womb, who brought us into the light, who suckled our infancy, who educated our childhood, who governed our youth,

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who conducted our manhood through the manifold hazards, troubles, and disasters of life. Nor in our prosperity, our

Deut. vi.

12. viii. 11.

affluence of good things, our possession of Canaan, should we be unmindful of him who relieved us in our straits, who supplied our wants, sustained our adversity, who redeemed us from Egypt, and led us through the wilderness. A succession of new and fresh benefits should not (as among some savages the manner is for the young to make away the old) supplant and expunge ancient ones, but make them rather more dear and venerable to us. Time should not weaken or diminish, but rather confirm and radicate in us the remembrance of God's goodness; to render it, as it doth gold and wine, more precious and more strong. We have usually a memory more than enough tenacious of injuries and ill turns done to us: let it never be said, to the disgrace of that noble faculty, that we can hardly forget the discourtesies of man, but not easily remember the favours of God. But farther,

3. This duty implies a due esteem and valuation of benefits; that the nature and quality, the measure and quantity, the circumstances and consequences of them be well expended; else the gratitude is like to be none, or very defective. For we commensurate our thankfulness, not so much to the intrinsic excellency of things, as to our peculiar estimations of them. A cynic perhaps would not return more thanks for a diamond, than for a pebble; nor more gratefully receive a talent of gold, than an ounce of copper; because he equally values, or rather alike contemns both.

Wherefore we find our (never-to-be-forgotten) example, the devout thanksgiver, David, continually declaring the great price he set upon the divine favours; admiring and displaying their transcendent perfections, their wonderful greatness, their boundless extension, their excessive multitude, their endless duration, their advantageous circumstances, (the excellent needfulness, convenience, and seasonableness of them; together with the

admirable freeness, wisdom, and power of the Benefactor, SERM.
 shining forth in and by them.) *I will praise thee, O Lord,* VIII.
saith he, among the people, I will sing unto thee among the Ps. cviii. 3,
nations: for thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy 4.
faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. And, Remember the Ps. cv. 5. 7.
marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the
judgments of his mouth. He is the Lord our God, his
judgments are in all the earth. And again, Thy mercy, Ps. xxxvi.
O Lord, is in the heavens, thy faithfulness reacheth unto 5, 6, 7.
the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains;
thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest
man and beast. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Ps. cxxxix.
God! and, How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O 17, 18.
Lord! O how great is the sum of them! If I should count
them, they are more in number than the sand. And again, Ps. cxi. 3.
His work is honourable and glorious, his righteousness en- cxlv. 9.
 dureth for ever: and, The Lord is good to all, and his Ps. lxxviii.
tender mercies are over all his works: and, Blessed be the 19.
Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits.

In such manner ought we diligently to survey and judiciously to estimate the effects of divine beneficence, examining every part, and descanting upon every circumstance thereof: like those that contemplate some rare beauty, or some excellent picture; some commending the exact proportions, some the graceful features, some the lively colours discernible therein. There is not the least of the divine favours, which, if we consider the condescensive tenderness, the clear intention, the undeserved frankness, the cheerful debonairity expressed therein, hath not dimensions larger than our comprehension, colours too fair, and lineaments too comely for our weak sight thoroughly to discern; requiring therefore our highest esteem and our utmost thanks.

'Tis perhaps somewhat dangerous to affix a determinate value upon any of God's benefits: (for to value them seems to undervalue them, they being really inestimable:) what then is it to extenuate, to vilify, to despise the greatest? We should esteem them, as we measure the heavens with our eye, as we compute the sands upon the shore, as

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we would prize inexhaustible mines of gold, and treasures of pearl ; that is, by confessing heartily their worth surpasses the strength of our imagination to conceive, and of our speech to utter ; that they are immense, innumerable, unconceivable, and unexpressible. But still,

4. *Giving thanks* imports, that benefits be received with a willing mind, a hearty sense, a vehement affection. The forementioned particulars are indeed necessary properties, inseparable concomitants, or pre-requisite conditions to ; but a cheerful and cordial acceptance of benefits is the form, as it were, and soul, the life and spirit, the principal and most essential ingredient of this duty.

It was not altogether unreasonable, though it went for a paradox, that dictate of the Stoics, that *animus sufficit animo*, and, that *qui libenter accepit, beneficium reddidit* : that he who with a willing and well-affected mind receives a courtesy, hath fully discharged the duty of gratitude : that other endeavours of return and compensation are rather handsome accessions to it, than indispensably requisite to the completion thereof. For as in the collation, it is not the gold or the silver, the food or the apparel, in which the benefit consists, but the will and benevolent intention of him that bestows them ; so reciprocally it is the good acceptance, the sensibleness of, and acquiescence in the benefactor's goodness, that constitutes the gratitude ; which who affords, though he be never capable of yielding other satisfaction, *voluntate voluntati satisfecit* ; and, *regum æquavit opes animo*——. It is ingenuity that constitutes (respectively) both a bountiful giver, and a thankful receiver. A truly noble benefactor purely aimeth at not any material reward, or advantage to himself ; (it were trading this, not beneficence ;) but the good profit and content of him, to whom he dispenseth his favour : of which being assured, he rests satisfied, and accounts himself royally recompens'd^a.

^a Quoties quod proposuit quis consequitur, capit operis sui fructum. Qui beneficium dat, quid proponit sibi ? prodesse ei cui dat, et sibi voluptati esse :

Such a benefactor is Almighty God, and such a tribute he requires of us; a ready embracement of, and a joyful complacency in his kindness; even such as he expressed, who said, *Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee: and, My soul shall be filled as with narrow and futness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: and, I will praise thee with my whole heart: I will be glad and rejoice in thee: and, Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name.*

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Ps. lxxiii. 3.
civ. 33
lxxi. 22.
lxxiii. 5. ix.
1, 2.
Ps. ciii. 1.

No holocaust is so acceptable to God as a heart enflamed with the sense of his goodness. He loves not only *ἡ ἀγαθὴ δόξα*, (*a merry giver,*) but *ἡ ἀγαθὴ δέξτερον*, (*a cheerful receiver,*) also. He would have us, as to desire his favour with a greedy appetite, so to taste it with a savoury relish. He designs not only to fill our mouths with food, but our hearts also with gladness.

2 Cor. ix. 7.
Aets. xiv.
17.

We must not seem to grudge or repine, to murmur or disdain, that we are necessitated to be beholden to him; lest it happen to us as it did to them of whom it is said, *While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them.* Yea, 'tis our duty not to be contented only, but to be delighted, to be transported, to be ravished with the emanations of his love: to entertain them with such a disposition of mind, as the dry and parched ground imbibes the soft dew and gentle showers; as the chill and darksome air admits the benign influences of heavenly light; as the thirsty soul takes in the sweet and cooling stream. He that with a sullen look, a dead heart, a faint sense, a cold hand, embraces the gifts of heaven, is really unthankful, though with deluges of wine and oil he makes the altars to overflow, and clouds the sky with the steam of his sacrifices. But yet farther,

Ps. lxxviii.
30, 31.

5. This duty requires due acknowledgment of our ob-

non sibi invicem reddi voluit; aut non fuit beneficium, sed negotiatio. Beneficii proprium est, nihil de reditu cogitare. Senec.

Nec est dubium quin is qui liberalis benignusque dicitur, officium, non fructum, sequatur. Cic. de Leg. i.

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ligation, significations of our notice, declarations of our esteem and good acceptance of favours conferred. It is the worst and most detestable of ingratitude, that which proceeds from pride and scorn: and such is he guilty of who is either unwilling or ashamed to confess himself obliged; who purposely dissembles a benefit, or disavows the benefactor; who refuses to render those most manifestly due, and most beasily discharged, those neither toilsome nor expensive oblations of praise and acknowledgment. This part of our duty requires, that we offer to God, not costly hecatombs, but the *calves only of our lips*, (as the prophet Hosea speaks,) not the fruit of our lands, but καρπὸν χειλέων only, (as the Apostle to the Hebrews styles it,) *the fruit of our lips, confessing to his name*; that we employ some few blasts of the breath he gave us on the celebration of his goodness, and advancement of his repute. *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs*, saith David.

Hos. xiv. 2.

Heb. xiii.

15.

ὁμολογή-
σαν.

Ps. lxi. 30,

31.

And surely it is the least homage we in gratitude owe, and can pay to Almighty God, to avow our dependance upon and obligation to him for the good things we enjoy, to acknowledge that his favours do deserve thanks, to publish to the world our experience of his goodness, to proclaim solemnly with the voice of thanksgiving his most deserved praise; resembling him who abounds in such expressions as these: *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my mouth will I make known his faithfulness to all generations. I will publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all his wondrous works. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. I have not hid thy righteousness in my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*

Ps. lxxxix.

l. xxvi. 7.

cxlv. 5.

xl. 10.

Vid. Ps.

lxi. 5. O

comehither,

and behold

the works

of God, &c.

^b Οὐδὲ γὰρ βαρὺ τι καὶ ἐπαχθὲς ἐπιζητεῖ παρὰ ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ ὁμολογεῖν μόνον τὰς ποσάυτας ἐνεργησίας, καὶ τὰς ὑπὲρ πάντων αὐτῶν ἐχρησίας ἀναφέρειν. Chrys. tom. i. pag. 54.

Thus if a grateful affection live in our hearts, it will respire through our mouths, and discover itself in the motion of our lips. There will be a conspiracy and faithful correspondence between our mind and our tongue: if the one be sensible, the other will not be silent; as if the spring works, the wheels will turn about, and the bell not fail to speak. Neither shall we content ourselves in lonesome tunes, and private soliloquies, to whisper out the divine praises; but shall loudly excite and provoke others to a melodious consonance with us. We shall, with the sweet singer of Israel, cite and invoke heaven and earth; the celestial choir of angels; the several estates and generations of men, the numberless company of all the creatures, to assist and join in concert with us, in celebrating the worthy deeds, and magnifying the glorious name of our most mighty Creator, of our most bountiful Benefactor.

Gratitude is of a fruitful and diffusive nature, of a free and communicative disposition, of an open and sociable temper: it will be imparting, discovering, and propagating itself: it affects light, company, and liberty; it cannot endure to be smothered in privacy and obscurity. Its best instrument therefore is speech, that most natural, proper, and easy mean of conversation, of signifying our conceptions, of conveying, and as it were transfusing our thoughts and passions into each other. This therefore *glory of ours*, Ps. lvi. 8. and best *organ* that we have, (as the Psalmist seems to call it,) our tongue, we should in all reason devote to the honour, and consecrate to the praise of him who made it, and who conserves it still in tune.

And, the farther to provoke us, we may consider that it hath been the manner prompted by nature, and authorized by general practice, for men of all nations, and all times, and all ways, by composed hymns and panegyric eulogies, to express their gratitude for the gifts of nature, and for the benefits indulged by Providence; in their public sacri-

° Ψυχὴ γὰρ, οἶμαι, ψυχῇ καὶ πνεῦμα πνεύματι συναπτόμενα κατὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου σποράν, &c. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* i. p. 270.

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fices and solemn festivities extolling the excellent qualities of their imaginary deities, and reciting the famous achievements of their heroes and supposed benefactors: to whose favourable help and blessing, in their conceit, they owed the fruits of the earth, the comforts of life, the defence and patronage of their countries: being indeed mistaken in the object, but not transgressing in the substance of the duty; paying a due debt, though to false creditors. And I wish we were as ready to imitate them in the one, as we are, perhaps, prone to blame them for the other. For, certainly, acknowledgments of the divine goodness, and solemn testifications of our thankful sense thereof, (whatever the abused world may now imagine,) was always, is now, and ever will be the principal and most noble part of all religion immediately addressed to God. But moreover,

6. This duty requires endeavours of real compensation, and a satisfactory requital of benefits, according to the ability and opportunity of the receiver: that we do not only verbally *dicere*, and *agnoscere*; but really *agere*, and *referre gratias*: that to him, who hath by his beneficence obliged us, we minister reciprocal assistance, comfort, and relief, if he need them, and be capable to receive them; however, by evident testimonies to discover our ready disposition to make such real returns; and withal, to suit our actions to his good liking, and in our carriage to comply with his reasonable desires. For, *as*

1 Sam. xii. 24. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you.

Heb. vi 7, *the earth which drinketh the rain often coming upon it, and*

εὐθιτον βο-
σάνην.

having been by great labour tilled, and manured with expence, *yieldeth yet no meet herbage, or fruit agreeable to the expectation of him that dresseth it, but is either wholly barren, or produceth only thorns and briars, is* (as the Apostle to the Hebrews tells us,) *to be reprobated, and nigh unto cursing*; that is, deserves no farther care or culture to be employed on it, and is to be reputed desperately worthless: so is he, (that we may apply an *apodosis* to the Apostle's comparison,) who, daily partaking the influences of divine providence and bounty, affords no answerable return, to be accounted execrably unthankful,

and unworthy of any farther favour to be shewed toward him. SERM.
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'Tis true, our *righteousness* (or *beneficence*, so the word there signifies) *doth not extend unto God*; his benefits exceed all possibility of any proportionable requital: he doth not need, nor can ever immediately receive any advantage from us: we cannot enrich him with our gifts, who by unquestionable right, and in unalterable possession, is Lord and Master of all things that do actually or can possibly exist; nor advance him by our weak commendations, who already enjoyeth the supreme pitch of glory; nor any way contribute to his in itself complete and indefectible beatitude. Yet we may by apposite significations declare our willingness to serve and exalt him: we may by our obsequious demeanour highly please and content him: we may, by our charity and benignity to those whose good he tenders, yield (though not an adequate, yet,) an acceptable return to his benefits. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* saith David, in way of counsel and deliberation: and thereupon resolves, *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord: I will pay my vows unto the Lord.* Seasonable benedictions, officious addresses, and faithful performances of vows, he intimates to bear some shadow at least, some resemblance of compensation. And so did his wise son likewise, when he thus advised, *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thy increase.* Ps. cxvi. 12.
Ver. 13, 14.
Prov. iii. 9.

Almighty God, though he really doth, and cannot otherwise do, yet will not seem to bestow his favours altogether *gratis*, but to expect some competent return, some small use and income from them. He will assert his rightful title, and be acknowledged the chief proprietary, by signal expressions of our fealty, and the payment of some though inconsiderable quit-rent, for our possessions derived from him: he will rather himself be seemingly indigent, than permit us to be really ingrateful. For knowing well that our performance of duty and respect toward him greatly conduceth to our comfort and hap-

SERM. piness^e, he requireth of us such demonstrations of them, VIII. as we conveniently are able to exhibit: he appoints services expressive of thankfulness, exacts tributes and customs, demands loans and benevolences, encourages and

Exod. xxiii. 15. accepts free-will offerings from us. *Thou shalt not appear empty before the Lord*, was a statute to the Jews, qualified and moderated by certain measures: the first-fruits of their lands, the first-born of their cattle and of themselves, the tenths of their annual increase, and a certain allotment from the spoils acquired in wars, did God challenge to himself, as fitting recompenses due for his bounty to and care over them.

Neither did the Gentiles conceive themselves exempted from the like obligation. For the ἀροθία, the *top* or *chief of their corn heaps*, they were wont to consecrate unto him who had blessed their fields with increase; and the ἀρόλεια, the *first and best of the prey*, they dedicated to the adornment of his temple by whose favourable disposal they had obtained the victory. Neither would they sooner begin their meal, and partake of their necessary refreshment, than, by pouring forth their gratulatory libation, they had performed some homage to heaven for it.

Hom. Il. H.
ad finem.

— οὐδέ τις ἔτλη

Πρὶν πίεειν, πρὶν λειψαίαι ὑπερμενείῃ Κρονίῳνι,

was the custom, it seems, in Homer's time. I shall not insist upon their ἀναθήματα, their anniversary or their casual sacrifices; but only observe, (what, if seasonable, might by many sufficient testimonies be evinced,) that those men (at least the most intelligent of them) were not so senseless as

Vid. Platonis Alcib. ii. Οὐ γὰρ, οἶμαι, τοιούτων ἔστι τὸ τῶν θεῶν ὡςτε ὑπὸ δαίρων παρὰ γισθαι, οἶον ακὸν τοκιστήν, &c.

to imagine, that the gods, to whom they performed those services, and devoted those oblations, did any wise need, or were truly benefited by them; but that they esteemed it a comely thing, by the most significant means they could invent, to declare their grateful sense of the divine goodness and indulgence toward them.

^e Ἀκίρατος γὰρ, αὐτῷ ἢ ἕσσια καὶ ἀνευδιῆς ἕσσα, ἕδιος ἐτίρω προσδοῖται· οἱ δὲ αἰνῶντες αὐτὸν, αὐτοὶ λαμπρότεροι γίνονται. S. Chrys. in Ps. cxliν. p. 885. Saviil.

And though we are, perhaps, disobliged now from the circumstantial manner, yet are we nowise freed from (but rather more strongly engaged to) the substantial performance of this sort of gratitude. We are to offer still, not dead *bulls and goats*, but, as St. Paul saith, *our own bodies*, Rom. xii. 1. *living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God*. We are excused from material, but are yet bound to yield πνευματικὰς θυσίας, *spiritual sacrifices* unto God, as St. Peter tells us. I Pet. ii. 5. We must burn incense still, that of fervent devotion; and send up continually to heaven θυσίαν τῆς αἰνέσεως, that *thank-offering of praise*, which the Apostle to the Hebrews mentions. Heb. xiii. 15. We must consecrate the first-born of our souls, (pure and holy thoughts,) and the first fruits of our strength, (or most active endeavours,) to God's service. We must slay our impure desires, mortify our corrupt affections, and abandon our selfish respects for his sake. We must give him our hearts, and present our wills entirely to his disposal. We must vow to him, and pay the daily oblation of sincere obedience. We must officiously attend his pleasure, and labour to content him by an innocent and unblemished conversation. With these things Almighty God is effectually gratified; he approves of and accepts these, as real testimonies of our thankfulness, and competent returns of his benefits.

Especially our charity and beneficence, our exhibiting love and respect to good men, (his faithful servants and near relations,) our affording help and succour to persons in need and distress, he accounts a suitable retaliation of his kindness, acknowledges to be an obligation laid upon himself, and hath by settled rules and indispensable promises obliged himself to requite them. For, *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, he will pay him again: and, God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister: and, To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased: and, I desire fruit,* saith St. Paul to the Philip- Prov. xix. 17. Heb. vi. 10. Heb. xiii. 16. Phil. iv. 17, 18.

SERM.
VIII.Rom. xii. 1.I Pet. ii. 5.Heb. xiii. 15.Μία ἀμειβὰ κυριωτάτη παρὰ ἀνθρώπων, ταῦτα δοῦν ἅπτε ἀριστὰ τῷ Θεῷ. Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 511.

SERM. *pians, that may abound to your account. But I have all,*
 VIII. *and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus*
the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet
smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. And,

Matt. xxv. *Inasmuch as ye have done it to* (that is, fed and cloth-
 40. *ed, and comforted) the least of these my brethren, ye have*
done it unto me, saith our Saviour; manifestly declaring,
that the good we do, and the respect we shew unto good
and needy men, God reckons it done unto himself.

And this point I shall conclude with the sayings of the
 wise Hebrew philosopher Ben-Sirach, *He that keepeth the*
 Eccles. *law, bringeth offerings enough: He that taketh heed to the*
 xxxv. 1, 2, *commandment, offereth a peace-offering. He that requit-*
 3. *eth a good turn, offereth fine flour: and he that giveth*
alms, sacrificeth praise. To depart from wickedness is a
thing pleasing to the Lord: and to forsake unrighteous-
ness, is a propitiation. To these I shall only add this one
particular;

7. That true gratitude for benefits is always attended
 with the esteem, veneration, and love of the benefactor.
 Beneficence is a royal and godlike thing, an argument of
 eminent goodness and power conspiring; and necessarily
 therefore, as in them that perceive and duly consider it, it
 begets respect and reverence; so peculiarly in those that
 feel its benign influence, it produces love and affection:
 like the heavenly light, which to all that behold it appears
 glorious; but more powerfully warms those that are di-
 rectly subject to its rays, and is by them more vigorously
 reflected.

And as to those that are immediately concerned there-
 in, it imports more particular regard and good-will; so,
 if they be duly sensible thereof, it engages them in mutual
 correspondence to an extraordinary esteem and benevo-
 lence: such as David upon this account professes to have
 been in himself toward God, and frequently excites others
 Ps. xviii. 1, to. *I will love thee, O Lord my strength. I will call upon*
 3, 46. *the Lord, who is worthy to be praised. The Lord liveth,*
and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be

exulted. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. And, (in the Gospel,) Because her sins, being many, were forgiven, therefore she loved much.* So true it is, that sense of favour indulged is naturally productive of love.

SERM.
VIII.
Ps. cxvi. 1.
Luke vii.
47.
"Εὐχαριστοῦντες
τοῦ κυρίου καὶ
ἐν τῷ πνεύματι
ἀεί. *Stylh.*

Thus have I plainly and simply presented you with what my meditations suggested concerning the nature and substance of this duty, with the several branches sprouting from the main stock thereof: I proceed now to that which will exceedingly enlarge the worth, and engage to the performance thereof.

II. The object and term to which it is to be directed; we are to give thanks *to God*. *To God*, I say; that is, *to him*, unto whom we are obliged, not for some small and inconsiderable trifles, but for the most weighty and valuable benefits; from whom we receive, not few or some, but all good things; whatever is necessary for our sustenance, convenient for our use, pleasant for our enjoyment; not only those that come immediately from his hand, but what we obtain from others, who from him receive both the will and the power, the means and the opportunities of doing us good; to whom we owe, not only what we ever did or do at present possess, or can hereafter hope for of good; but that we were, are, or shall ever be in capacity to receive any: to the author, upholder, and preserver of our being; without whose goodness we had never been, and without whose care we cannot subsist one moment.



To him who is the Lord and true owner of all things we partake of; whose air we breathe, whose ground we tread on, whose food sustains us; whose wholly we are ourselves, both the bodies we carry about us, (which is *the work of his hands*;) and the soul we think with, which was breathed from his mouth.

To him who hath created a whole world to serve us, a spacious, a beautiful, a stately world for us to inhabit and to disport in; who hath subjected so fair a territory to our dominion, and consigned to our use so numerous a

SERM. progeny of goodly creatures, to be managed, to be govern-
 VIII. ed, to be enjoyed by us.

So that wherever we direct our eyes, whether we reflect them inward upon ourselves, we behold his goodness to occupy and penetrate the very root and centre of our beings; or extend them abroad toward the things about us, we may perceive ourselves inclosed wholly, and surrounded with his benefits. At home we find a comely body framed by his curious artifice, various organs fitly proportioned, situated, and tempered for strength, ornament, and motion, actuated by a gentle heat, and invigorated with lively spirits, disposed to health, and qualified for a long endurance; subservient to a soul endued with divers senses, faculties, and powers, apt to inquire after, pursue, and perceive various delights and contents. To the satisfaction of which all extrinsecal things do minister matter and help; by his kind disposal, who furnishes our palates with variety of delicious fare, entertains our eyes with pleasant spectacles, ravishes our ears with harmonious sounds, perfumes our nostrils with fragrant odours, cheers our spirits with comfortable gales, *fills our hearts with food and gladness*, supplies our manifold needs, and protects us from innumerable dangers.

To him who hath inspired us with immortal minds, and impressed upon them perspicuous characters of his own divine essence; hath made us, not in some superficial lineaments, but in our most intimate constitution, to resemble himself, and to partake of his most excellent perfections; an extensive knowledge of truth, a vehement complacency in good, a forward capacity of being completely happy, (according to our degree and within our sphere.) To which blessed end by all suitable means (of external ministry and interior assistance) he faithfully conducts us; revealing to us the way, urging us in our process, reclaiming us when we deviate; engaging us by his commands, soliciting us by gentle advices, encouraging us by gracious promises; instructing us by his holy word, and admonishing us by his loving spirit.

To him who vouchsafes to grant us a free access unto, a constant intercourse and a familiar acquaintance with himself; to esteem and style us his *friends* and *children*; to invite us frequently, and entertain us kindly with those most pleasant delicacies of spiritual repast; yea, to visit us often at our home, and (if we admit) to abide and dwell with us; indulging us the enjoyment of that presence, wherein the life of all joy and comfort consists, and to behold the light of his all-cheering countenance.

Is there any thing more? Yes: *To him* who, to redeem us from misery, and to advance our estate, hath infinitely debased himself, and eclipsed the brightness of his glorious majesty; not disdaining to assume us into a near affinity, yea, into a perfect union with himself; to inhabit our frail and mortal nature, to undergo the laws and conditions of humanity, to appear in our shape, and converse, as it were, upon equal terms with us, and at last to taste the bitter cup of a most painful and disgraceful death for us.

Yea, *to him* who not only descended from his imperial throne, became a subject, and (which is more) a servant for our sake; but designed thereby to exalt us to a participation of his royal dignity, his divine nature, his eternal glory and bliss; submitting crowns and sceptres to our choice; crowns that cannot fade, and sceptres that can never be extorted from us.

Farther yet, *To him*, the excellent quality, the noble end, the most obliging manner of whose beneficence doth surpass the matter thereof, and hugely augment the benefits: who, not compelled by any necessity, not obliged by any law, (or previous compact,) not induced by any extrinsic arguments, not inclined by our merits, not wearied with our importunities, not instigated by troublesome passions of pity, shame, or fear, (as we are wont to be,) not flattered with promises of recompense, nor bribed with expectation of emolument, thence to accrue unto himself; but being absolute master of his own actions, only both lawgiver and counsellor to himself, all-sufficient, and incapable of admitting any accession to his perfect blissfulness; most willing-

SERM. ly and freely, out of pure bounty and good will, is our
 VIII. Friend and Benefactor; preventing not only our desires,
 but our knowledge; surpassing not our deserts only, but
 our wishes, yea, even our conceits, in the dispensation of his
 inestimable and unrequitable benefits; having no other
 drift in the collation of them, beside our real good and wel-
 fare, our profit and advantage, our pleasure and content.

To him who not lately began, or suddenly will cease, that
 is either uncertain or mutable in his intentions, but from
 everlasting designed, continues daily, and will (if we suffer
 him) to all eternity persevere unmoveable in his resolutions
 to do us good.

To him whom no ingratitude, no undutiful carriage, no
 rebellious disobedience of ours, could for one minute wholly
 remove, or divert from his steady purpose of caring for us:
 who regards us, though we do not attend to him; pro-
 cures our welfare, though we neglect his concernments;
 employs his restless thought, extends his watchful eye,
 exerts his powerful arm, is always mindful, and always
 busy to do us good; watching over us when we sleep,
 and remembering us when we forget ourselves: in whom
 yet 'tis infinite condescension to think of us, who are placed
 so far beneath his thoughts; to value us, who are but dust
 and dirt; not to despise and hate us, who are really so
 Ps. cxiii. 5, despicable and unworthy. For *though he dwelleth on high,*
 6. *saith the Psalmist truly and emphatically, he humbleth*
himself to behold the things that are done in heaven and
earth.

To him that is as merciful and gracious, as liberal and
 munificent toward us; that not only bestows on us
 more gifts, but pardons us more debts, forgives us more
 sins, than we live minutes; that with infinite patience
 endures, not only our manifold infirmities and imperfec-
 tions, but our petulant follies, our obstinate perversenesses,
 our treacherous infidelities; overlooks our careless ne-
 glects and our wilful miscarriages; puts up the exceed-
 ingly many outrageous affronts, injuries, and contumelies
 continually offered to his supreme majesty by us base

worms, whom he hath always under his feet, and can crush to nothing at his pleasure. SERM.
VIII.

To him yet, who, as St. James saith, *giveth freely, and upbraideth no man*; who calls us neither very frequently nor over strictly to accounts; who exacts of us no impossible, no very difficult, no greatly-burdensome or costly returns: being satisfied with the cheerful acceptance of his favours, the hearty acknowledgments of his goodness, the sincere performance of such duties, to which our own welfare, comfort, and advantage (rightly apprehended) would otherwise abundantly dispose us. JAM. i. 5.

To him, lastly, whose benefits to acknowledge is the greatest benefit of all; to be enabled to thank whom deserves our greatest thanks; to be sensible of whose beneficence, to meditate on whose goodness, to admire whose excellency, to celebrate whose praise, is heaven itself and paradise, the life of angels, the quintessence of joy, the supreme degree of felicity.

In a word, *To him* whose benefits are immensely great, innumerable many, unexpressibly good and precious. For, *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?* said he, who had employed often his most active thoughts and his utmost endeavours thereupon, and was incomparably better able to do it. Ps. cvi. 2

To this God, to this great, to this only Benefactor of ours, we owe this most natural and easy, this most just and equal, this most sweet and pleasant duty of giving thanks. *To whom* if we wilfully refuse, if we carelessly neglect to pay it, I shall only say thus much, that we are not only monstrously ingrateful, and horribly wicked; but abominably foolish, and deplorably miserable. I shall repeat this sentence once again, and wish it may have its due effect upon us: *To this great*, to this only Patron and Benefactor of ours, if we do not in some measure discharge our due debt of gratitude for his inestimable benefits and mercies, we are to be adjudged not only most prodigiously unthankful, most detestably impious, but most wofully stupid also and senseless, most desperately wretched and unhappy,



SERM. I should now proceed to consider the circumstance of
VIII. time determined in the word *always*; and the extension of the matter, implied in those words, *for all things*: and then to subjoin some farther inducements or arguments persuasive to the practice of this duty. But the time (and, I fear, your patience) failing, I shall reserve them to some other opportunity.

SERMON IX.

OF THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

EPHES. v. 20.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God.

HAVING formerly discoursed upon these words, I observed in them four particulars considerable: 1. The substance of a duty, to which we are exhorted, to *give thanks*; 2. The term unto which it is directed, *to God*; 3. The circumstance of time determined in that word *always*; 4. The extent of the matter about which the duty is employed, *for all things*. Concerning the two former particulars, wherein the duty consisted, and wherefore especially related unto God, I then represented what did occur to my meditation.

SERM.
IX.

III. I proceed now to the third, the circumstance of time allotted to the performance of this duty, expressed by that universal and unlimited term, *always*.

Which yet is not so to be understood, as if thereby we were obliged in every instant (or singular point of time) actually to remember, to consider, to be affected with, and to acknowledge the divine benefits: for the deliberate operations of our minds being sometimes wholly interrupted by sleep, otherwise preoccupied by the indispensable care of serving our natural necessities, and with attendance upon other reasonable employments, it were impossible to comply with an obligation to the performance of this duty so inter-

SERM. IX. preted. And those maxims of law, *Impossibile nulla est obligatio*, and, *Quæ rerum natura prohibentur, nulla lege confirmata sunt*, (that is, *No law or precept can oblige to impossibilities*;) being evidently grounded upon natural equity, seem yet more valid in relation to his laws, who is the judge of all the world, and in his dispensations most transcendently just and equal.

We may therefore observe, that the Hebrews are wont (in way of synecdoche, or grammatical hyperbole) so to use words of this kind, that their universal importance ought to be restrained by the quality or circumstances of the matter about which they converse. As when our **Matt. x 22.** Saviour saith, *Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake*; all is not to be taken for every singular person, (since there were some that loved our Saviour, and embraced the evangelical doctrine.) but for many, or the most. And when **Ps. xiv. 1.** David saith, *There is none that doeth good*; he seemeth only to mean, that in the general corruption of his times there were few righteous persons to be found. And so *for ever* is often used, not for a perpetual and endless, but for a long and lasting duration; and *always*, not for a continual unintermitted state of being, or action, but for such a perseverance as agrees to the condition of the thing to which it is applied.

'Tis, for instance, prescribed in Exodus, that Aaron should bear the judgment of the children of Israel (the Urim and Thummim) upon his heart before the Lord continually; that is, (not in absolute and rigorous acceptation continually, but) constantly ever when he went into the holy place to discharge the pontifical function, as the context declares. And our Saviour in the Gospel saith of himself, **Exod. xxviii. 30.** *Ἐγὼ πάντοτε ἐδίδαξα*, *I always taught in the temple*; that is, very often, and ever when fit occasion was presented. And the Apostles immediately after Christ's **Joh. xviii. 20.** ascension, *ἦσαν διαπαντός ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ*, *were, as St. Luke tells us, continually in the temple, praising and blessing God*; that is, they resorted thither constantly at the usual times or canonical hours of prayer. In like manner those in

junctions (of nearest affinity) of *rejoicing*, of *giving thanks* SERM.
always, and particularly of *praying without ceasing*, (as I IX.
 have shewn more largely in another discourse,) are to be 1 Thess v.
 taken in a sense so qualified, that the observance of them 16, 17, 18.
 may be at least morally possible. Eph. vi. 18.
Luke xviii.
1.

Thus far warrantably we may limit the extension, and mollify the rigour of this seemingly boundless term; but we can hardly allow any farther restriction, without destroying the natural signification, or diminishing the due emphasis thereof. As far therefore as it is possible for us, we must endeavour always to perform this duty of gratitude to Almighty God: and consequently,

I. Hereby is required a frequent performance thereof: that we do often actually meditate upon, be sensible of, confess and celebrate the divine beneficence. For what is done but seldom or never, (as we commonly say,) cannot be understood done always, without a *catachresis*, or abuse of words too enormous. As therefore no moment of our life wants sufficient matter, and every considerable portion of time ministers notable occasion of blessing God; as he allows himself no spacious intervals or discontinuances of doing us good: so ought we not to suffer any of those many days (vouchsafed by his goodness) to flow beside us, void of the signal expressions of our dutiful thankfulness to him; nor to admit in our course of life any long vacations from this duty. If God incessantly, and through every minute, demonstrates himself gracious unto us; we in all reason are obliged frequently and daily to declare ourselves grateful unto him.

So at least did David, (that most eminent example in this kind, and therefore most apposite to illustrate our doctrine, and to enforce the practice thereof;) for, *Every day*, saith Ps. cxlv. 2.
 he, *I will bless thee; I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Every day.* The heavenly bodies did not more constantly observe their course, than he his diurnal revolutions of praise: every day in his calendar was as it were festival, and consecrated to thanksgiving. Neither did he adjudge it sufficient to devote some small parcels of each

SERM. IX. day to this service: for, *My tongue*, saith he, *shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day*: and again, *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof*. The benefits of God he apprehended so great and numerous, that no definite space of time would serve to consider and commemorate them. He resolves therefore elsewhere to bestow his whole life upon that employment: *While I live I will praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being*: and, *I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth*. No man can reasonably pretend greater impediments, or often-er avocations from the practice of this duty, than he, upon whom the burden of a royal estate, and the care of governing a populous nation, were incumbent: yet could not they thrust out of his memory, nor extinguish in his heart, the lively sense of divine goodness; which (notwithstanding the company of other secular encumbrances) was always present to his mind, and, like a spirit, (excluded from no place by any corporeal resistance,) did mingle with and penetrate all his thoughts, and affections, and actions. So that he seems to have approached very near to the complete performance of this duty, according to the extremity of a literal interpretation, and to have been always, without any intermission, employed in giving thanks to God. The consideration, methinks, of so noble a pattern, adjoined to the evident reasonableness of the duty, should engage us to the frequent practice thereof^a.

But if the consideration of this excellent example do not, yet certainly that may both provoke us to emulation, and confound us with shame, ὃς Epictētus, a heathen man, whose words to this purpose seem very remarkable:

Lib. i. cap. 17. *Εἰ γὰρ νῦν ἔρχομεν*, saith he in Arrian's Dissert. *ἄλλο τι ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν, καὶ κοινῇ, καὶ ἰδίᾳ, ἢ ἡμεῖς τὸ θεῖον, καὶ εὐφημεῖν, καὶ ἐπιεξεργεσθαι τὰς χάριτας; ἐν ἔδει καὶ σάπτουτας, καὶ ἀρεῖντας,*

^a Εἰ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀνὴρ μυρίαὶς βαπτίζόμενος φροντίσι, καὶ πανταχόθεν περιελατόμενος, ποσαυτῶν παρεκάλει τὸν Θεὸν τίνα ἂν ἔχομεν ἀπολογίαν ἢ συγγνώμην ἡμεῖς, ποσαυτῶν πολλὴν ἄγοντες, καὶ μὴ συνεχῶς αὐτὸν ἰκετεύοντες, &c. *Chrys.* tom. v. p. 76.


καὶ ἐσθίουσας ᾄδειν τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν Θεόν; Μέγας ὁ Θεός, &c. that SERM.
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is, in our language, *If we understood ourselves, what other thing should we do, either publicly or privately, than sing hymns to, and speak well of God, and perform thanks unto him? Ought we not, when we were digging, or ploughing, or eating, to sing a (suitable) hymn to him^b? Great is God, in that he hath bestowed on us those instruments wherewith we till the ground: Great is God, because he hath given us hands, a throat, a belly; that we grow insensibly, that sleeping we breathe. Thus (proceeds he) should we upon every occurrence celebrate God, and superadd of all the most excellent and most divine hymn, for that he hath given us the faculty of apprehending and using these things orderly. Wherefore since most men are blind and ignorant of this, should there not be some one, who should discharge this office, and who should for the rest utter this hymn to God? And what can I, a lame, (and decrepit) old man do else, than celebrate God? Were I indeed a nightingale, I would do what belongs to a nightingale; if a swan, what becomes a swan: but since now I am endued with reason, I ought to praise God. This is my duty and concernment, and so I do; neither will I desert this employment, while it is in my power: and to the same song I exhort you all. Thus that worthy philosopher, not instructing us only, and exhorting with pathetic discourse, but by his practice inciting us to be continually expressing our gratitude to God.*

And although neither the admonition of prophets, nor precepts of philosophers, nor the examples of both, should prevail; yet the precedents, methinks, of dumb and senseless creatures should animate us thereto; which never cease to obey the law imposed on them by their Maker, and without intermission glorify him. For, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth* Psal. xix.
1, 2, 3.

^b Πάντα ποίουν τὸν βίον ἐρπῆν ἀγοντες, πάντα πάντοτε παρέχει τὸν Θεὸν πιστεύομενοι, γαστροῦμεν αἰνῶντες, πλῆρομεν ὑμνῶντες, κατὰ τὴν ἀλλήν πολιτείαν ἐπιτέλλοι ἀκαστρειφύμεθα. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* vii. p. 517.

SERM. *knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. It is St. Chrysostom's argumentation ;*

IX. *In Ps. cxliv. Καὶ γὰρ αἰσχυρὸν ἂν εἶη, saith he, τὸν λογικὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ τῶν ὀρεζομένων ἁπάντων τιμιώτερον, ἑλαπίον τῆς κτίσεως φέρειν κατὰ τὸν τῆς εὐφημίας λόγον ἐκ αἰσχυρὸν δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄστοπον, &c. It were an ugly thing, that man, endued with reason, and the most honourable of all things visible, should in rendering thanks and praise be exceeded by other creatures : neither is it only base, but absurd. For how can it be otherwise, since other creatures every day and every hour send up a doxology to their Lord and Maker ? For, The heavens declare the glory of God, &c.*

 If the busy heavens are always at leisure, and the stupid earth is perpetually active in manifesting the wisdom, power, and goodness of their Creator ; how shameful is it, that we (the flower of his creation, the most obliged, and most capable of doing it) should commonly be either too busy, or too idle to do it ; should seldom or never be disposed to contribute our endeavours to the advancement of his glory ? But,

2. *Giving thanks always* may import our appointing, and punctually observing, certain convenient times of performing this duty ; that is, of serious meditation upon, and affectionate acknowledgment of the divine bounty. We know that all persons, who design with advantage to prosecute an orderly course of action, and would not lead a tumultuary life, are wont to distinguish their portions of time, assigning some to the necessary refectations of their body, others to the divertisement of their minds, and a great part to the dispatch of their ordinary business : otherwise (like St. James's *double-minded man*) they would be *unstable in all their ways* ; they would ever fluctuate in their resolutions, and be uncertain when, and how, and to what they should apply themselves. And so, this main concernment of ours, this most excellent part of our duty, if we do not depute some vacant seasons for it, and observe some periodical recourses thereof, we shall be tempted often to omit it ; we shall be listless to do it, apt

to defer it, and easily diverted from it by the encroachments of other less-behaving affairs. SERM.
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The Jews, to preserve them in the constant exercise of this duty, had instituted by God a sacrifice called *קריבת* (*judge*), rendered by the Greek translators, *ἡ διαπαντὸς θυσία*, *the continual sacrifice*; to which the divine author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to allude, when in these words he exhorts: *Δι' αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διαπαντὸς τῷ Θεῷ.* Dan. viii.
11.
Heb. xiii.
15.
By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, (or the continual sacrifice of praise,) the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. As that sacrifice therefore, being offered constantly at a set time, was thence denominated *continual*; so perhaps may we, by constantly observing some fit returns of praise and thanksgiving, be said *always to give thanks.*

In determining the seasons and proportions of which, what other rule or standard can we better conform to, than that of the royal Prophet? I shall not urge his example so much; (according to which we should be obliged to a greater frequency;) for, *seven times a day*, saith he, *do I praise thee*, Ps. cxix. 64.
because of thy righteous judgments: but rather allege his general direction and opinion, proposed to us in those words of his; *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou Most High; to shew forth thy loving-kindness every morning, and thy faithfulness every night.* Ps. xcii. 1,
2. lv. 17.
It is a good thing; that is, a seemly, a convenient, a commendable, a due performance: *every morning*; that is, when our spirits, being recreated with sleep, are become more vigorous, our memories more fresh, our fancies more quick and active: *to shew forth thy loving-kindness*; that is, from a hearty sense of our obligation, to acknowledge the free bounty of him, who, in pursuance of his former kindness, hath been pleased to accumulate new favours to us; to guard us by his watchful care, when we were buried, as it were, in a senseless ignorance, and total neglect of our own welfare; to raise us from that temporary death, and to confer a new life upon us, restoring us to our health, to our means of subsistence, to all the necessary sup-

SERM. ports, and the desirable comforts of life : *every night* also ; IX. that is, when our spirits are exhausted with action, and our minds tired with thoughtfulness; when we are become weary, not of doing only, but almost of being; we should conclude our toils, and wrap up our cares in the sweet sense and grateful memory of his goodness, who hath protected us so many hours from the manifold dangers, and more sins, to which, by our weakness, and our folly, and our bad inclinations, we are through every minute exposed; and withal hath provided us so easy and so delightful a means of recovering our spent activity, of repairing our decayed strength.

Thus if we constantly begin, and thus close up, thus bound and circumscribe our days, dedicating those most remarkable periods of time to blessing God, and *making*, as the Psalmist speaks, *the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice* in him: (since beginning and ending do in a manner comprehend the whole; and the morning and evening, in Moses's computation and style, do constitute a day;) we may (not incongruously) be supposed and said to *give thanks always*. But yet farther, this may import,

3. A vigilant attendance upon this duty, such as men bestow on their employments, whereof though the actual prosecution ceases, yet the design continually proceeds. As we say, such a one is writing a book, building a house, occupying a piece of land, though he be at that present peradventure sleeping, or eating, or satisfying some other desire; because his design never sleeps, and his purpose persists uninterrupted. And thus, it seems, we are to understand our Saviour and the Apostles, when they exhort us *προσκαρτερεῖν*, to continue instant in prayer and thanksgiving; and *ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει*, to watch with all perseverance; and *γρηγορεῖν*, to wake in thanksgiving; and *μὴ παύεσθαι*, not to give over giving thanks: and to perform these duties *ἀδιαλείπτως*, incessantly, or without giving off; *μὴ ἐκκαθεῖν*, not to grow worse, faint, or faultier: (which is, in that place, made equivalent to, explicatory of doing duty always.) Which expressions denote a most

Rom. xii.

12.

Eph. vi. 18.

Col. iv. 2.

Eph. 1. 16.

1 Thess. v.

17.

1 John xviii.

1.

diligent attendance on these duties; that we may make them not a *παρρηγοιον*, a diversion or by-business of our lives, allowing only a perfunctory and desultory endeavour on them; but esteem them a weighty business, to be pursued with steadfast resolution and unwearied industry.

As our beings and powers did proceed from the goodness, so the results of them naturally tend to the glory of God; and the deliberations of our will ought to conspire with the instincts of our nature; it should be the principal design which our intention should aim at, and our endeavour always drive on, to glorify our Maker. Which doing, we may be reputed to discharge this duty, and in some sense said *always* to *give thanks*. But farther,

4. This term [*always*] doth necessarily imply a ready disposition, or habitual inclination, to give thanks, ever permanent in us: that our *hearts*, as David's was, be *fixed* Ps. cviii. 1. always (that is, fittingly prepared, and steadily resolved) to thank and *praise* God; that our affections be like tinder, though not always inflamed, yet easy inflammable by the sense of his goodness.

'Tis said of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful*, Ps. xxxvii. 26. *and lendeth*: not for that he doth ever actually dispense alms, or furnish his poor neighbour with supplies; but because his mind is ever inclinable to do it, when need requires. So a grateful man doth *always give thanks*, by being disposed to do it upon all fit occasions. 'Tis the habit that qualifies and denominates a man such or such in any kind or degree of morality. A good man is in Scripture frequently compared to a *tree bringing forth fruit in due season*; and the root thereof is this habitual disposition, which, being nourished by the dew of heaven, and quickened by the benign influence of divine grace, sprouts forth opportunely, and yields a plentiful increase of good fruit. Though we cannot always sing, our organs may be always rightly tuned for praise; at least they should never be unstrung, and wholly out of kelter.

We should maintain in ourselves a constant good temper of mind, that no opportunity surprise, and find us unprepared to entertain worthily the effects of divine favour:

SERM. otherwise we shall as well lose the benefit, as God the
IX. thanks and glory due to them. That we be always thus disposed, is not impossible, and therefore requisite. But moreover,

5. Lastly, *Giving thanks always* imports, that we readily embrace every opportunity of actually expressing our thankfulness. For so, what in some places of Scripture is enjoined to be done *continually* and *without ceasing*, is in others only required to be done upon all opportunities. Which shews, that πάντοτε is to be expounded, not so much,

Eph. vi. 18. ἐν παντί χρόνῳ, *at all times*, as ἐν παντί καιρῷ, *in every season*.

So προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντί καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι, *praying upon every opportunity in your spirit*: and, Ἀγρυπνεῖτε ἕν ἐν παντί καιρῷ

Luke xxi.
36.

δεδόμενοι, *Be watchful, praying in every season*. And this sense seems probably to be chiefly intended by this Apostle, whenever he hath (as he hath often) this expression, πάντοτε εὐχαρισεῖν, that we embrace every overture or fit occasion of giving thanks.

'Tis true, no time is unseasonable to do it: every moment we receive favours, and therefore every minute we owe thanks: yet there are some especial seasons, that do more importunately require them. We should be like those trees that bear fruit (more or less) continually; but then more kindly, and more abundantly, when more powerfully cherished by the heavenly warmth.

When any fresh, any rare, any remarkable benefit happens to us; when prosperous success attends our honest endeavours; when unexpected favours fall as it were of their own accord into our bosoms; like the grain in the golden age springing ἄσπερτα καὶ ἀνήρτοτα, without our care or our toil, for our use and enjoyment; when we are delivered from straits in our apprehension inextricable, surmount difficulties seeming insuperable, escape hazards (as we suspected) inevitable; then is a special season presented us of offering up the sacrifice of praise to the God of mercy, help, and victory.

When we revolve in our minds (as we should often do) the favourable passages of providence, that in the whole course of our lives have befallen us: how in our extreme

poverty and distress (when perhaps no help appeared, and all hopes seemed to fail us,) God hath raised us up friends SERM.
IX. who have commiserated, comforted, and succoured us; and not only so, but hath changed our sorrowful condition into a state of joy; hath (to use the Psalmist's expressions,) *turned our mourning into dancing*; hath *put off our sack-* Ps. xxx. 11. *cloth, and girded us with gladness*; hath *considered our* Ps. xxxi. 7,
8. *trouble, and known our soul in adversity*; hath *set our feet in a large room*, and furnished us with plentiful means of subsistence; how in the various changes, and adventures, and travels of our life, upon sea and land, at home and abroad, among friends, and strangers, and enemies, he hath protected us from wants and dangers; from devouring diseases, and the distemperatures of infectious air; from the assaults of bloody thieves and barbarous pirates; from the rage of fire, and fury of tempests; from disastrous casualties; from treacherous surprises; from open mischiefs, that with a dreadful face approached and threatened our destruction: then most opportunely should we with all thankful exultation of mind admire and celebrate *our strength, and our deliverer*; *our faithful refuge in trouble, and the rock of our salvation.*

Also when the ordinary effects of divine providence do in any advantageous manner present themselves to our view; when we peruse the volumes of story, and therein observe the various events of human action, especially the seasonable rewards of virtue, the notable protections and deliverances of innocence, and the unexpected punishments of malicious wickedness: then we should with thankful acclamations celebrate the divine goodness and justice; joining in concert with that heavenly choir, and saying, *Hallelujah*; Apoc. xix.
1, 2. *salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.*

Or when we contemplate the wonderful works of nature, and, walking about at our leisure, gaze upon this ample theatre of the world, considering the stately beauty, constant order, and sumptuous furniture thereof; the glorious splendour and uniform motion of the heavens; the pleasant

SERM. fertility of the earth ; the curious figure and fragrant sweetness of plants ; the exquisite frame of animals ; and all other amazing miracles of nature, wherein the glorious attributes of God (especially his transcendant goodness,) are most conspicuously displayed ; (so that by them not only large acknowledgments, but even gratulatory hymns, as it were of praise, have been extorted from the mouths of Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, and such like men, never suspected guilty of an excessive devotion ;) then should our hearts be affected with thankful sense, and our lips break forth into his praise.

Yea, from every object of sense, from every event of providence, from every common occurrence, we may extract fit matter of thanksgiving : as did our Saviour, when, considering the stupid infidelity of those proud people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, (who were not at all affected by his miraculous works, nor moved to repentance by his pathetical discourses,) and comparing it with the pious credulity of his meaner disciples, he brake forth into that divine ejaculation ; *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* *Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς Ἰησοῦς εἶπε,* saith the evangelical narration ; *Upon that occasion Jesus thus spake :* he embraced that convenient opportunity of thankfully acknowledging God's wise and gracious dispensation. And frequent occasion is afforded us daily (were our minds suitably disposed,) of doing the like.

But so much concerning the time of performing this duty.

IV. We proceed to the matter thereof, *for all things.* St. Chrysostom (in his Commentary upon the 145th Psalm,) having enumerated several particulars for which we are bound to thank God ; “ Because,” (I recite his words punctually rendered,) “ Because,” saith he, “ he hath made us, who before had no being, and made us such as we are ; because he upholds us being made, and takes care of us continually, both publicly and privately, secretly and openly, with and without our knowledge ;

“ for all visible things created for our sake, the ministry of SERM.
 “ them afforded to us; the conformation of our bodies, the IX.
 “ nobleness of our souls; his daily dispensations by mira-
 “ cles, by laws, by punishments; his various and incomp-
 “ prehensible providence; for the chief of all, that he hath
 “ not spared his only-begotten Son for our sake; the be-
 “ nefits conferred on us by baptism, and the other holy mys-
 “ teries, (or sacraments;) the ineffable good things to be
 “ bestowed on us hereafter, the kingdom of heaven, the re-
 “ surrection, the enjoyment of perfect bliss;” having, I
 say, in these words comprised the things for which we are
 obliged to thank and praise God, he thus despondently
 concludes: (Ἄν γὰρ ἕκαστός τις τούτων καταλέγῃ, εἰς πέλαγος ἄφατον
 ἐμπεσεῖται εὐεργεσιῶν, καὶ ὑψεται πύσων ἐστὶν ὑπεύθυνος τῷ Θεῷ.) “ If
 “ any one shall endeavour to recount particularly every one
 “ of these things, he will but plunge himself into an unex-
 “ pressible deep of benefits, and then perceive for how un-
 “ expressibly and inconceivable many good things he stands
 “ engaged to God.” And to the like *non plus* doth the de-
 vout Psalmist seem to be reduced, when he thus exclaims,
How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great
is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more
in number than the sand.

Ps. cxxxix.
17, 18.
xxxvi. 5, 6,
7.

I shall not therefore confound myself by launching too far into this immense ocean, nor strive minutely to compute the incomprehensible sum of the divine benefits; but only observe, that in gross, according to our Apostle's calculation, all things, which however happen to us, are ingredients thereof. No occurrence (great or small, common or particular, present or past, pleasant or sad, perpetual or transitory) is excluded from being the subject of our thanksgiving: each one may prove beneficial to us; and we are with a cheerful contentedness and a grateful resentment to receive them all from God's hand. But to observe some little distinction: I say,

1. We are to give thanks, not only for great and notable benefits, but for the least and most ordinary favours of God: though indeed none of God's favours are in them-



SERM. IX. selves small and inconsiderable. Men are wont to bless themselves, if they receive but a transient glance from a prince's eye; a smile from a great personage; any slender intimation of regard from him that is in capacity to do them good. What is it then to receive the least testimony of his good-will, from whom alone every good thing can be expected; upon whose disposal all happy success of our wishes, our hopes, and our endeavours do entirely depend! We repute him unjust, who withholds the least part of what is due from the true owner: and is not he ingrateful then, that omits to render thanks for the least of divine mercies?

1 Cor. xv. 41. *There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars, saith St. Paul. Some works of God indeed excel in lustre; yet all are glorious, all are to be discerned, all to be esteemed and thankfully entertained by us. The brightness of the one should not wholly obscure the other; if it do, it argues the weakness of our sense, the dulness of our spiritual faculty. For every beam of light that delights our eye, for every breath of air that cheers our spirits, for every drop of pleasant liquor that cools our thirst, for every minute of comfortable repose, for every step we safely take, for the happy issue of the least undertaking, for escaping the vengeance due to an idle word or a wanton thought, we owe a hymn of praise to God. But,*

2. We are to render thanks, not only for new and present benefits, but for all we have formerly, all that we may hereafter receive. We find David not only frequently acknowledging the gracious dispensations of providence toward him through the whole course of his life, but looking back in his thankful devotions as far as his very original being, and praising God for favours conferred on him beyond his memory, yea, before his life. *I will praise thee, saith he, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being in-*

perfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. And St. Paul, yet farther reflecting his grateful consideration, blesses God for his favour commenced before the beginning of things. *Blessed, saith he, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world.* SERM.
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Neither doth the memory only of former, and the enjoyment of present, but the hope and foresight also of future blessings, worthily claim our thanks. For, saith St. Peter, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead: to an inheritunce incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for you.* Eph. i. 3, 4.
1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Beasts only, and men not much better than they, are affected with present good turns: but men of honest and generous temper resent indifferently the obligations of all times. Sense doth not confine their gratitude, nor absence remove, nor age wear it out. What once is done, is ever done to them; and what of courtesy is purposed, seems to them performed. But having before discoursed somewhat largely concerning the remembrance of benefits, I leave this point. Furthermore,

3. We should bless God, not only for new, rare, extraordinary accidents of providence, but for the common and daily benefits and indulgences thereof. These favours are usually the greatest and most valuable in their own nature. (For what can be imagined of higher consequence to us, than the preservation of our lives and of our estates, by which they are comfortably maintained; than the continuance of our bodies in good health, and our minds in their right wits; than the knowledge of heavenly truth, the encouragements to virtue and piety, the assistances of divine grace, and the promises of eternal bliss continually exhibited to us?) Shall the commonness and continuance

° Quem vero astrorum ordines, quem dierum noctinumque vicissitudines.
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SERM. IX. of these exceeding favours, that they are not given us once only, and transitorily, but continued, (that is, given us so often as time hath instants,) and with an uninterrupted perseverance renewed unto us; shall this abate and enervate our gratitude, which in all reason should mainly increase and confirm it? But this point I also touched before, and therefore, forbearing to insist thereon, I proceed.

4. We should give thanks, not only for private and particular, but for public benefits also, and for such as befall others. *I exhort therefore*, saith St. Paul, *before all things, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men*: not *prayers* only, for good things to be bestowed on others; but *thanksgivings* also, for the benefits received by others. (And *ὑπὲρ πάντων* in our text, however otherwise commonly interpreted, may well admit this sense also; and be taken indifferently, *pro omnibus, for all persons*, and *propter omnia, for all things*.)

Vid. Chrys.
in 2 Cor.
Or. 2.

We are all citizens of the world, and concerned in its good constitution; and thence obliged thankfully to adore the mighty Upholder and wise Governor thereof, praising him for all the general benefits liberally poured forth upon mankind. We partake in the commodities of civil society; and therefore should heartily thank him, by whose gracious disposal order is maintained, peace continued, justice administered, plenty provided, our lives made safe and sweet to us therein. We are members of a church, and highly interested in the prosperous estate and well-being thereof: when unity therefore is preserved, and charity abounds; when knowledge is increased, and virtue encouraged; when piety flourishes, and truth triumphs therein; we are bound to render all possible thanks to the gracious bestower of those inestimable blessings.

We are much mistaken in our account, if we either determine our own concerns, or measure this duty, by the narrow rule of our private advantage: for subducting either the benefits commonly indulged to mankind, or

quem mensium temperatio, quemque ea quæ nobis gignuntur ad fruendum non gratum esse cogant; hunc hominem omnino numerare qui decet? *Cic. de Leg. ii.*

those which accrue from the welfare of public society, what possibility will remain of subsistence, of safety, of content unto us? what but confusion, want, violence, and disquiet? SERM.
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As we are concerned with our utmost endeavours to promote, to wish and pray for; to delight and rejoice in, the public good of mankind, the peace of our country, the prosperity of Sion; so we are to bless and thank him, by whose gracious help and furtherance they are attained.

If we consult all history, (sacred and civil,) we shall find it to contain hardly any thing else considerable, but the earnest endeavours of good men for public benefit, and their thankful acknowledgments to the divine goodness for it. Moses, David, Nehemiah, St. Paul, all the prophets, and all the Apostles, what other things memorable did they do, but serve God in procuring public good, and bless God for conferring it?

Neither only as we are combined with others in common interest, but without selfish respects, purely out of charity, and humanity, and ingenuous pity, are we obliged to thank God for the benefits he is pleased to impart to others. If upon these accounts we are commanded to *do good to all men*; to *rejoice with those that rejoice*; to *love even those that hate us*, and *bless those that curse us*; 'tis (by fair consequence) surely intended, that we should also bless God for the good issue of our honest endeavours, or of our good wishes for them. Gal. vi. 10.
Ro. xii. 15.
Matt. v. 44.

And verily could we become endowed with this excellent quality of delighting in other's good, and heartily thanking God for it, we needed not to envy the wealth and splendour of the greatest princes, not the wisdom of the profoundest doctors, not the religion of the devoutest anchorites; no, nor the happiness of the highest angels: for upon this supposition, as the glory of all is God's, so the content in all would be ours. All the fruit they can perceive of their happy condition, of what kind soever, is to rejoice in it themselves, and to praise God for it: and this should we then do as well as they. My neighbour's good success is mine, if I equally triumph therein; his riches are mine, if I de-

SERM. light to see him enjoy them : his health is mine, if it refresh
 IX. my spirits : his virtue mine, if I by it am bettered, and have
 hearty complacence therein. By this means a man derives
 a confluence of joy upon himself, and makes himself, as it
 were, the centre of all felicity ; enriches himself with the
 plenty, and satiates himself with the pleasure, of the whole
 world : reserving to God the praise, he enjoys the satisfac-
 tion of all good that happens to any.

Thus we see David frequently thanking God, not for his
 favour only and mercy shewed particularly to himself, but
 for his common munificence toward all ; for (to use his own
 phrases) *his goodness to all, and his tender mercies over all*
 Ps. cxlv. 9. *his works ; for executing judgment in behalf of the oppress-*
 cxlvi. 7, 8, *ed ; for feeding the hungry ; for loosening the prisoners ;*
 9. *for opening the eyes of the blind ; for raising them that are*
bowed down ; for preserving the strangers, and relieving
 Ps. cxlvii. *the fatherless and widow ; for lifting up the meek ; for lov-*
 6. *ing, and caring for, and defending the righteous ; for open-*
 1 Pet. v. 7. *ing his hand, and satisfying the desire of every living thing ;*
 Ps. v. 11. *for giving to the beast his food, and to the young ravens*
 civ. 28. *when they cry unto him : in a word, for his goodness to*
 cxlv. 16. *every particular creature, not excluding the most contempt-*
 cxlvii. 9. *ible nor the most savage of all. And how affectionately*
 doth St. Paul every where thank God for the growth in
 grace and spiritual wisdom, for the patience in affliction and
 perseverance in faith, of those good Christians he writes
 unto ! So should, with an unrestrained exuberance, both
 our charity to men, and our gratitude to God, abound.
 But moreover,

5. We are obliged to give thanks, not only for plea-
 sant and prosperous occurrences of providence, but for
 those also which are adverse to our desire, and distasteful
 unto our natural sense ; for poverty, sickness, disgrace ;
 for all the sorrows and troubles, the disasters and disap-
 pointments, that befall us. We are bound to pay thanks,
 not for our food only, but for our physic also ; (which,
 though ingrateful to our palate, is profitable for our
 health :) we are obliged, in the school of providence, not

only for the good instructions, but for the seasonable corrections also vouchsafed unto us, (whereby, though our senses are offended, our manners are bettered^d.) Whatever proceeds from good purpose, and tends to a happy end, that is graciously designed, and effectually conduces to our good, is a fit subject of thanksgiving: and such may all adversities prove unto us. They proceed usually from love and kind intention toward us: for, *Whom God loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*: and, *I know, O Lord, saith David, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me: in faithfulness*, that is, with a sincere intention of doing me good.

God thoroughly knows our constitution, what is noxious to our health, and what may remedy our distempers; and, therefore, accordingly disposeth to us

—pro jucundis aptissima quæque—;

instead of pleasant honey, he sometimes prescribes wholesome wormwood for us. We are ourselves greatly ignorant of what is conducive to our real good, and, were the choice of our condition wholly permitted to us, should make very foolish, very disadvantageous elections.

We should (be sure) all of us embrace a rich and plentiful estate; when as, God knows, that would make us slothful and luxurious, swell us with pride and haughty thoughts, encumber us with anxious cares, and expose us to dangerous temptations; would render us forgetful of ourselves, and neglectful of him. Therefore he wisely disposeth poverty unto us; poverty, the mother of sobriety, the nurse of industry, the mistress of wisdom; which will make us understand ourselves and our dependence on him, and force us to have recourse unto his help. And is there not reason we should be thankful for the means by which we are delivered from those desperate mischiefs, and obtain these excellent advantages?

^d Τὸν Θεὸν ὁμοίως ἀνυμνεῖν χρὴ, καὶ κολάζοντα, καὶ ἀνίητα κολάσειωσ· ἀμφότερα ἵνα κλέισμοῖσι, ἀμφότερα ἀγαθήτης, &c. *Chrysost. in Psal. cxlviii.*

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We should all (certainly) choose the favour and applause of men : but this, God also knows, would corrupt our minds with vain conceit, would intoxicate our fancies with spurious pleasure, would tempt us to ascribe immoderately to ourselves, and sacrilegiously to deprive God of his due honour. Therefore he advisedly suffers us to incur the disgrace and displeasure, the hatred and contempt of men ; that so we may place our glory only in the hopes of his favour, and may pursue more earnestly the purer delights of a good conscience. And doth not this part of divine providence highly merit our thanks ?

We would all climb into high places, not considering the precipices on which they stand, nor the vertiginousness of our own brains : but God keeps us safe in the humble valleys, allotting to us employments which we are more capable to manage.

We should perhaps insolently abuse power, were it committed to us : we should employ great parts on unwieldy projects, as many do, to the disturbance of others, and their own ruin : vast knowledge would cause us to over-value ourselves, and contemn others : enjoying continual health, we should not perceive the benefit thereof, nor be mindful of him that gave it. A suitable mediocrity therefore of these things the divine goodness alloteth unto us, that we may neither starve for want, nor surfeit with plenty.

In fine, the advantages arising from afflictions are so many, and so great, that (had I time, and were it seasonable to insist largely on this subject) it were easy to demonstrate, that we have great reason, not only to be contented with, but to rejoice in, and to be very thankful for, all the crosses and vexations we meet with : to receive them cheerfully at God's hand, as the medicines of our soul, and the condiments of our fortune ; as the arguments of his good-will, and the instruments of virtue ; as solid grounds of hope, and comfortable presages of future joy unto us.

6. Lastly, we are obliged to thank God, not only for

corporeal and temporal benefits, but also (and that principally) for spiritual and eternal blessings. We are apt, as to desire more vehemently, to rejoice more heartily in the fruition, and more passionately to bewail the loss of temporal good things; so more sincerely and seriously to express our gratitude for the reception of them, than for others relating to our spiritual good, to our everlasting welfare. Wherein we misjudge and misbehave ourselves extremely. For, as much as the reasonable soul (that goodly image of the divine essence, breathed from the mouth of God) doth in dignity of nature, and purity of substance, excel this feculent lump of organized clay, our body; as the blissful ravishments of spirit surpass the dull satisfactions of sense; as the bottomless depth of eternity exceeds that shallow surface of time, which terminates this transitory life; in such proportion should our appetite unto, our complacency in, our gratitude for spiritual blessings transcend the affections (respectively) engaged about these corporeal accommodations.

Consider that injunction of our Saviour to his disciples: *In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* Luke x. 20. *Rejoice not;* that is, be not at all affected with this (although in itself very rare accomplishment, eminent privilege, glorious power of working that indeed greatest of miracles, subjecting devils; that is, baffling the shrewdest craft, and subduing the strongest force in nature) in comparison of that delight, which the consideration of the divine favour, in order to your eternal felicity, doth afford.

We are, 'tis true, greatly indebted to God for our creation, for that he hath extracted us from nothing, and placed us in so lofty a rank among his creatures; for the excellent faculties of soul and body, wherewith he hath endued us; and for many most admirable prerogatives of our outward estate: but much more for our redemption, and the wonderful circumstances of unexpressible love and grace therein declared; for his descending to a conjunction with our nature, and elevating us to a participation of his; for dignifying us with more illustrious titles, and instating us in a

SERM. IX. sure capacity of a much superior happiness. Our daily food deserves well a grace to be said before and after it: but how much more that constant provision of heavenly manna, the evangelical verity; those savoury delicacies of devotion, whereby our souls are nourished to eternal life? 'Tis a laudable custom, when we are demanded concerning our health, to answer, *Well, I thank God*; but much more reason have we to say so, if our conscience can attest concerning that sound constitution of mind, whereby we are disposed vigorously to perform those virtuous functions, due from reasonable nature, and conformable to the divine law. If for the prosperous success of our worldly attempts; for avoiding dangers that threatened corporal pain and damage to us; for defeating the adversaries of our secular quiet, we make *Te Deum laudamus* our ἐπὶ νίκῃ, (our song for victory;) how much more for the happy progress of our spiritual affairs, (affairs of incomparably highest consequence;) for escaping those dreadful hazards of utter ruin, of endless torture; for vanquishing sin and hell, those irreconcilable enemies to our everlasting peace; are we obliged to utter triumphal *anthems* of joy and thankfulness!

Ps. ciii. 1, &c. This is the order observed by the Psalmist: inciting his *soul to bless God for all his benefits*, he begins with the consideration of God's mercy in pardoning his sins; then proceeds to his goodness in bestowing temporal favours. *Who forgiveth all thy sins*, leads the van; *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things*, brings up the rear in the enumeration and acknowledgment of God's benefits. That our minds are illustrated with the knowledge of God and his glorious attributes, of Christ and his blessed Gospel, of that straight path which conducteth to true happiness; that by divine assistance we are enabled to elude the allurements, to withstand the violences of temptation, to assuage immoderate desires, to bridle exorbitant passions, to correct vicious inclinations of mind; requires more our hearty thanks, than for that we were able by our natural wit to penetrate the abstrusest myste-

ries, or to subjugate empires by our bodily strength. The forgiveness of our sins doth more oblige us to a grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodness, than should God enrich us with all the treasures contained in the bowels of the earth, or bottom of the ocean. One glimpse of his favourable countenance should more enflame our affections, than being invested with all the imaginable splendour of worldly glory.

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Of these inestimable benefits, and all the advantageous circumstances wherewith they are attended, we ought to maintain in our hearts constant resentments; to excite our thankfulness, to kindle our love, to quicken our obedience, by the frequent contemplation of them.

Thus have I (though, I confess, much more slightly than so worthy a subject did require) prosecuted the several particulars observable in these words. I should conclude with certain inducements persuasive to the practice of this duty; whereof I have in the tenor both of the former and present discourse insinuated divers, and could propound many more: but (in compliance with the time) I shall content myself briefly to consider only these three very obvious ones.

First therefore, we may consider, that there is no disposition whatever more deeply radicated in the original constitution of all souls endued with any kind of perception or passion, than being sensible of benefits received; being kindly affected with love and respect toward them that exhibit them; being ready with suitable expressions to acknowledge them, and to endeavour competent recompenses for them. The worst of men, the most devoid of all not only piety, but humanity and common ingenuity, the most barbarous and most wicked, (whom neither sense of equity, nor respect to law, no promise of reward or fear of vengeance, can anywise engage to do things just and fitting, or restrain from enormous actions,) retain notwithstanding something of this natural inclination, and are usually sensible of good turns done unto them. Experience teaches us thus much; and so doth that sure oracle of our Saviour. *If, saith he, ye do good* Luke iv.33.

SERM. *to those who do good to you, what thanks is it? for even*
IX. *sinner* (that is, men of apparently lewd and dissolute conversation) *do the same.*

Vid. Gell.
lib. v. c. 14.

Yea even beasts, and those not only the most gentle and sociable of them, (the officious dog, the tractable horse, the docile elephant,) but the wildest also and fiercest of them, (the untameable lion, the cruel tiger, and ravenous bear, as stories tell us, and experience attests,) bear some kindness, shew some grateful affection to those that provide for them.

Neither wild beasts only, but even inanimate creatures seem not altogether insensible of benefits, and lively represent unto us a natural abhorrence of ingratitude. The rivers openly discharge into the sea those waters, which by indiscernible conduits they derived thence; the heavens remit in bountiful showers what from the earth they had exhaled in vapour; and the earth, by a fruitful increase, repays the culture bestowed thereon; if not, (as the Apostle to the Hebrews doth pronounce,) it deserves *cursing* and *reprobation*. So monstrous a thing, and universally abominable to nature, is all ingratitude. And how execrable a prodigy is it then toward God, from whom alone we receive whatever we enjoy, whatever we can expect of good?

II. The second obligation to this duty is most just and equal. For, (as ^a he said well,) *Beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit; He unjustly requires* (much more unjustly receives) *a benefit, who is not minded to requite it.* In all reason we are indebted for what is freely given, as well as for what is lent unto us. For the freeness of the giver, his not exacting security, nor expressing conditions of return, doth not diminish, but rather increase the debt. He that gives, indeed, according to human (or political) law, (which, in order to preservation of public peace, requires only a punctual performance of contracts,) transfers his right, and alienates his possession: but according to that more noble and perfect rule of ingenuity, (the law which God and angels and good men chiefly observe, and govern themselves by,) what is given is but committed to

the faith, deposited in the hand, treasured up in the custody of him that receives it: and what more palpable iniquity is there, than to betray the trust, or to detain the pledge, not of some inconsiderable trifle, but of intestimable good-will? *Excepta Mucedonum gente*, saith Seneca, *non est ulla data adversus ingratum actio: In no nation (excepting the Mucedonians) an action could be preferred against ingrateful persons, as so.* (Though Xenophon, no mean author, reports, that among the Persians also there were judgments assigned, and punishments appointed for ingratitude.) However, in the court of heaven, and at the tribunal of conscience, no offender is more constantly arraigned, none more surely condemned, none more severely punished, than the ingrateful man.

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Καλὸν δὲ
θρησκείῳ
καμίνῃ χά-
ρις.
De Benef.
lib. viii.
cap. 6.
Xen. Cyro.
cap. i.

Since, therefore, we have received all from the divine bounty; if God should, in requital, exact, that we sacrifice our lives to the testimony of his truth; that we employ our utmost pains, expend our whole estate, adventure our health, and prostitute all our earthly contents to his service; since he did but revoke his own, it were great injustice to refuse compliance with his demands: how much more, when he only expects from us and requires some few acknowledgments of our obligation to him, some little portions of our substance, for the relief of them that need, some easy observances of his most reasonable commands?

Thirdly, This is a most sweet and delightful duty. *Praise the Lord*, saith the most experienced Psalmist, *for the Lord is good; sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant: and elsewhere, Praise the Lord, for it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.* The performance of this duty, as it especially proceeds from good humour, and a cheerful disposition of mind; so it feeds and fomenters them; both root and fruit thereof are hugely sweet and sapid. Whence St. James; *If any man be afflicted let him pray; is any merry, let him sing psalms.* (Psalms, the proper matter of which is praise and thanksgiving.)

III.
Ps. cxxxv.
3.
Ps. cxlvii. i.
ix. 1.

Jan. v. 13.

Other duties of devotion have something laborious in

SERM. them, something disgusting to our sense. Prayer minds us
IX. of our wants and imperfections; confession induces a sad remembrance of our misdeeds and bad deserts: but thanksgiving includes nothing uneasy or unpleasant; nothing but the memory and sense of exceeding goodness.

All love is sweet; but that especially which arises, not from a bare apprehension only of the object's worth and dignity, but from a feeling of its singular beneficence and usefulness unto us. And what thought can enter into the heart of man more comfortable and delicious than this, that the great Master of all things, the most wise and mighty King of heaven and earth, hath entertained a gracious regard, hath expressed a real kindness towards us? that we are in capacity to honour, to please, to present an acceptable sacrifice to him, who can render us perfectly happy? that we are admitted to the practice of that wherein the supreme joy of paradise, and the perfection of angelical bliss consists? For praise and thanksgiving are the most delectable business of heaven; and God grant they may be our greatest delight, our most frequent employment upon earth.

To these I might add such farther considerations: That this duty is of all most acceptable to God, and most profitable to us. That gratitude for benefits procures more, disposing God to bestow, and qualifying us to receive them. That the serious performance of this duty efficaciously promotes and facilitates the practice of other duties; since the more we are sensible of our obligations to God, the more ready we shall be to please him, by obedience to his commandments. What St. Chrysostom saith of prayer, It is impossible that he, who with competent promptitude of mind doth constantly apply himself thereto, should ever sin, is most especially true of this part of devotion: for how can we at the same time be sensible of God's goodness to us, and willingly offend him? That the memory of past benefits, and sense of present, confirms our faith, and nourishes our hope of future. That the circumstances of the divine beneficence mightily strengthen the obligation to this duty; especially his absolute freeness

Vid. P^{sal.}
 Ixix. 30, 31.
 I. 13, 14.
 23.

Vid. divi-
 niss. Chrys.
 locum tom.
 v. p. 76.

in giving, and our total unworthiness to receive; our very ingratitude itself affording strong inducements to gratitude. That giving thanks hath *de facto* been always the principal part of all religion, (whether instituted by divine command, or prompted by natural reason, or propagated by general tradition;) the Ethnic devotion consisting (as it were totally) in the praise of their gods, and acknowledgment of their benefits: the Jewish more than half in eucharistical oblations, and in solemn commemorations of providential favours; and that of the ancient Christians so far forth, that bye-standers could hardly discern any other thing in their religious practice than that they sang hymns to Christ, and by mutual sacraments obliged themselves to abstain from all villany. But I will rather wholly omit the prosecution of these pregnant arguments, than be farther offensive to your patience.

SERM.
IX.

Plin. Epist.

Now the blessed Fountain of all goodness and mercy inspire our hearts with his heavenly grace, and thereby enable us rightly to apprehend, diligently to consider, faithfully to remember, worthily to esteem, to be heartily affected with, to render all due acknowledgment, praise, love, and thankful obedience for all his (infinitely great and innumerable many) favours, mercies, and benefits freely conferred upon us: and let us say with David, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen.

^{Ps. lxxii.}
18, 19.

^{Ps. cvi. 48.}

SERMON X.

ON THE KING'S HAPPY RETURN.

1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority.

SERM. X. SAINT PAUL in his preceding discourse having insinuated directions to his scholar and spiritual son, Timothy, concerning the discharge of his office, of instructing men in their duty according to the evangelical doctrine; (the main design whereof he teacheth to consist, not (as some men conceited) in fond stories, or *vain speculations*, but in practice of substantial duties, holding a *sincere faith*, maintaining a *good conscience*, performing offices of *pure and hearty charity*;) in pursuance of such general duty, and as a principal instance thereof, he doth here *first of all exhort*, or, doth *exhort that first of all*, all kinds of devotion should be offered to God, as for *all men* generally, so particularly for *kings* and *magistrates*. From whence we may collect two particulars. 1. That the making of *prayers for kings* is a Christian duty of great importance. (St. Paul judging fit to *exhort* thereto *πρῶτον πάντων*, before all other things; or, to *exhort that before all things* it should be performed.) 2. That it is incumbent on the pastors of the church (such as St. Timothy was,) to take special care that this duty should be performed in the

Παρακαλῶ
ἔν πρώτον
πάντων ποι-
εῖσθαι.

church; both publicly in the congregations, and privately in the retirements of each Christian: according to what the Apostle, after the proposing divers enforcements of this duty, subsumeth in the eighth verse; *I will therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting.* SERM.
X.

The first of these particulars, That it is a duty of great importance to *pray for kings*, I shall insist upon: it being indeed now very fit and seasonable to urge the practice of it, when it is perhaps commonly not much considered, or not well observed; and when there is most need of it, in regard to the effects and consequences which may proceed from the conscionable discharge of it.

My endeavour therefore shall be to press it by divers considerations, discovering our obligation thereto, and serving to induce us to its observance: some whereof shall be general, or common to all times; some particular, or suitable to the present circumstances of things.

I. The Apostle exhorteth Christians to *pray for kings* with all sorts of prayer: with *δεήσεις*, or *deprecations*, for averting evils from them; with *προσευχαι*, or *petitions*, for obtaining good things to them; with *ἐπιτεύξεις*, or *occasional intercessions*, for needful gifts and graces to be collated on them: as, after St. Austin, interpreters, in expounding St. Paul's words, commonly distinguish; how accurately I shall not discuss: it sufficing, that assuredly the Apostle meaneth, under this variety of expression, to comprehend all kinds of prayer. And to this I say we are obliged upon divers accounts.

1. Common charity should dispose us to pray for kings. This Christian disposition inclineth to universal benevolence and beneficence; according to that apostolical precept, *as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men*: it consequently will excite us to pray for all men; seeing this is a way of exerting good-will, and exercising beneficence, which any man, at any time, if he hath the will and heart, may have opportunity and ability to pursue. Gal. vi. 10.

No man indeed otherwise can benefit all: few men

SERM. otherwise can benefit many: some men otherwise can benefit none: but in this way any man is able to benefit all, or unconfinedly to oblige mankind, deriving on any somewhat of God's immense beneficence. By performing this good office, at the expence of a few good wishes addressed to the sovereign Goodness, the poorest may prove benefactors to the richest, the meanest to the highest, the weakest to the mightiest of men: so we may benefit even those who are most remote from us, most strangers and quite unknown to us. Our prayers can reach the utmost ends of the earth; and by them our charity may embrace all the world.

And from them surely kings must not be excluded. For if, because all men are our fellow-creatures, and brethren by the same heavenly Father; because all men are allied to us by cognation and similitude of nature; because all men are the objects of God's particular favour and care: if, because all men are partakers of the common redemption, by the undertakings of him who is the common Mediator and Saviour of all men; and because all men, according to the gracious intent and desire of God, are designed for a consortship in the same blessed inheritance: (which enforcements St. Paul in the context doth intimate :) if, in fine, because all men do need prayers, and are capable of benefit from them, we should be charitably disposed to pray for them: then must we also pray for kings, who, even in their personal capacity, as men, do share in all those conditions. Thus may we conceive St. Paul here to argue: *For all men*, saith he, *for kings*; that is consequently *for kings*, or particularly *for kings*; to pray for whom, at least no less than for other men, universal charity should dispose us.

Indeed, even on this account we may say, especially *for kings*; the law of general charity with peculiar advantage being applicable to them: for that law commonly is expressed with reference to our neighbour, that is, to persons with whom we have to do, who come under our particular notice, who by any intercourse are approximated to us; and such are kings especially. For whereas the greatest part of men (by reason of their distance

1 Tim. ii.
4, 5, 6.

from us, from the obscurity of their condition, or for want of opportunity to converse with them) must needs slip beside us, so that we cannot employ any distinct thought or affection toward them: it is not so with kings, who by their eminent and illustrious station become very observable by us; with whom we have frequent transactions and mutual concerns; who therefore in the strictest acceptation are our neighbours, whom we are charged to love as ourselves; to whom consequently we must perform this most charitable office of praying for them.

2. To impress which consideration, we may reflect, that commonly we have only this way granted us of exercising our charity towards princes; they being situated aloft above the reach of private beneficence^a: so that we cannot enrich them, or relieve them by our alms; we cannot help to exalt or prefer them to a better state; we can hardly come to impart good advice, seasonable consolation, or wholesome reproof to them; we cannot profit or please them by familiar conversation. For as in divers other respects they resemble the Divinity; so in this they are like it, that we may say to them, as the Psalmist to God, *Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee.* Psal. xvi. 2. Yet this case may be reserved, wherein the poorest soul may benefit the greatest prince, imparting the richest and choicest goods to him: he may be indebted for his safety, for the prosperity of his affairs, for God's mercy and favour toward him, to the prayers of his meanest vassal. And thus to oblige princes, methinks, we should be very desirous; we should be glad to use such an advantage, we should be ambitious of such an honour.

3. We are bound to pray for kings out of charity to the public; because their good is a general good, and the communities of men (both church and state) are greatly concerned in the blessings by prayer derived on them.

The safety of a prince is a great part of the common welfare; the commonwealth, as it were, living and breath-

^a Privatorum ista copia est, inter se esse munificos. *Auson. ad Gratian.*

Absit, *Auguste*, et istud sancta divinitas omen avertat, ut tua quoquam mortalium expectes vicem beneficii. *Manerc. ad Julian.*

SERM. ing in him: his fall, like that of a tall cedar, (to which he
X. is compared,) shaking the earth, and discomposing the state;
Isa. ii. 13. putting things out of course, and drawing them into new
 2 Kings i. tried hands, and an uncertain condition. Hence, *Let the*
 25. *king live*, (which our translators render, *God save the king*;)
 2 Kings xi. was an usual form of salutation, or prayer: and, *O king live*
 12. *for ever*, was a customary address to princes, whereto the
 2 Chron. best men did conform, even in application to none of the
 xxiii. 11. best princes; as Nehemiah to king Artaxerxes, and Daniel to
 1 Kings i. king Darius. Hence not only good king David is called *the*
 31. *light of Israel*; (*Thou shalt not*, said Abishai, *any more go*
 Dan. ii. 4. *out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel*;)
 iii. 9. v. 10. but even the wicked and perverse king Zedekiah is by the
 vi. 6. prophet Jeremy himself (who had been so misused by him)
 Neh. ii. 3. styled *the breath of our nostrils*. (*The breath*, saith he, *of*
 Dan. vi. 21. *our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits*.)
 2 Sam. xxi. Hence not only the fall of good king Josiah was so grievously
 17. lamented; but a solemn mourning was due to that of
 2 Kings Saul; and, *Ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep for Saul*, was a
 xxiv. 19. strain becoming the mouth of his great successor king David.
 Jer. xxxii. Hence the primitive Christians, who could not be constrained
 3. to swear by the genius of Cæsar, did not yet, in compli-
 Lam. iv. 20. ance with the usual practice, scruple to swear by their
 Zech. xii. *health*, or *safety*^b: that is, to express their wishing it, with
 11. appeal to God's testimony of their sincerity therein; as Jo-
 2 Chron. seph may be conceived to have sworn *by the life of Pharaoh*.
 xxxv. 24. Hence well might the people tell king David, *Thou art*
 2 Sam. i. *worth ten thousand of us*; seeing the public was so much in-
 12, 24. terested in his safety, and had suffered more in the loss of
 him, than if a myriad of others had miscarried.

Gen. xlii.
 15, 16.
 2 Sam.
 xviii. 3.

This honour likewise of a prince is the glory of his people; seeing it is founded on qualities or deeds tending to their advantage; seeing it can hardly be supposed that he should acquire honour without their aid and concurrence, or that he should retain it without their support and their

^b Sed et juramus, sicut non per genios Cæsarum, ita per salutem eorum, quæ est augustior omnibus, geniis. *Tert. Apol. cap. xxxii.*

satisfaction. And as the chief grace and beauty of a body SERM. X.
 is in the head, and the fairest ornaments of the whole are Prov. iv. 9.
 placed there; so is any commonwealth most dignified and
 beautified by the reputation of its prince.

The wealth and power of a prince are the supports and
 securities of a state; he thereby being enabled to uphold
 and defend its safety, its order, its peace; to protect his Psal. lxxii. 4.
 people from foreign injuries and invasions; to secure them
 from intestine broils and factions; to repress outrages and
 oppressions annoying them.

The prosperity of a prince is inseparable from the pros-
 perity of his people; they ever partaking of his fortunes,
 and thriving or suffering with him. For as when the sun
 shineth brightly, there is a clear day, and fair weather over
 the world; so when a prince is not overclouded with ad-
 versity or disastrous occurrences, the public state must be
 serene, and a pleasant state of things will appear. Then
 is the ship in a good condition, when the pilot in open sea,
 with full sails and a brisk gale, cheerfully steereth on to-
 wards his designed port.

Especially the piety and goodness of a prince is of vast
 consequence, and yieldeth infinite benefit to his country.
 For, *Vita principis censura est*; the life of a prince is a call-
 ing of other men's lives to an account. His example Eccclus. x. 2.
 hath an unspeakable influence on the manners of his peo-
 ple, who are apt in all his garb and every fashion to imi-
 tate him. His practice is more powerful than his com-
 mands, and often doth control them. His authority hath
 the great stroke in encouraging virtue, and checking vice,
 if it bendeth that way; the dispensation of honours and
 rewards, with the infliction of ignominies and corrections,
 being in his hand, and passing from it according to his in-
 clinations. His power is the shield of innocence, the
 fence of right, the shelter of weakness and simplicity against

c Flexibiles in quancunque partem ducimur a principe, atque, ut ita dicam, sequaces sumus. Huic enim chari, huic probati esse cupimus; quod frustra speraverint dissimiles. Eoque obsequii continuatione pervenimus, ut prope omnes homines unius moribus vivamus. *Plin. Paucg.*

Vita principis censura est, eaque perpetua; ad hanc dirigimur, ad hanc convertimur; nec tam imperio nobis opus est quam exemplo. *Ibid.*

SERM. violences and frauds. His very look (a smile or a frown
X. of his countenance) is sufficient to advance goodness, and
Prov. xx. 8. suppress wickedness; according to that of Solomon, *A king sitting in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.* His goodness pleasing God procureth his favour, and therewith deduceth from heaven all kinds of blessings on his people. And if those politic aphorisms
Prov. xiv. 3. of the Wise Man be true, that *righteousness exalteth a nation and establisheth a throne; that when it goeth well*
4. xvi. 12. *with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; and the same by the*
2 Sam. vii. 16. *blessing of the upright is exalted:* then upon his inclinations to virtue the advancement and stability of public welfare do mainly depend. So, for instance, how did piety flourish in the times of David, who loved, favoured, and practised it! and what abundance of prosperity did attend it! What showers of blessings (what peace, what
2 Sam. vii. 9. wealth, what credit and glory) did God then pour down
(Psal. lxxii. 7.) upon Israel! How did the goodness of that prince transmit favours and mercies on his country till a long time
(2 Sam. vii. 16.) after his decease! How often did God profess *for his servant David's sake* to preserve Judah from destruction; so
1 Kings xi. 13. that even in the days of Hezekiah, when the king of Assyria did invade that country, God by the mouth of Isaiah
Jer. xxxiii. 21. declared, *I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake,*
Ps. lxxxix. 29. *and for my servant David's sake.*
cxxxii. 10.) We may indeed observe, that, according to the representation of things in holy Scripture, there is a kind of
Isa. xxxvii. 35. moral connection, or a communication of merit and guilt,
(1 Kings xi. 32, 34.) between prince and people; so that mutually each of them is rewarded for the virtues, each is punished for the vices of the other. As for the iniquities of a people, God withdraweth from their prince the free communications of his grace and of his favour, (suffering him to incur sin, or to fall into misfortune; which was the case of that incomparably good king Josiah, and hath been the fate of divers excellent princes, whom God hath snatched away from
2 Kings xxiii. 25. people unworthy of them, or involved with such a people
Isa. iii. 1, &c. in common calamities; according to the rule propounded
Deut. xxviii. 36. in the Law, of God's dealing with the Israelites in the case

of their disobedience; and according to that of Samuel, **SERM.**
If ye shall do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and X.
your king:) so reciprocally, for the misdemeanors of ^{1 Sam. xii.} 25.
 princes, (or in them, and by them,) God doth chastise their
 people. For what confusions in Israel did the offences of ^{(Prov.} xxviii. 2.)
 Solomon create! What mischiefs did issue thereon from ^{1 Kings} xi. 33.
 Jeroboam's wicked behaviour! How did the sins of Manasseh ^{1 Kings} xv. 30.
 stick to his country, since that, even after that notable ^{2 Kings} xvii. 21.
 reformation wrought by Josiah, it is said, *Notwithstanding* ^{2 Kings} xxiii. 26.
the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, ^{2 Sam. xxi.} 1.
wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of
all the provocations wherewith Manasseh had provoked him!
 And how sorely, by a tedious three years famine, did God
 avenge Saul's cruelty toward the Gibeonites!

Nor are only the sins of bad princes affixed to people ^{(Jer. xxxii.} 32.)
 conspiring with them in impiety; for even of king Heze- ^{2 Chr. xxxii.} 25.
 kiah it is said, *But Hezekiah rendered not again according*
to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up:
therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and
Jerusalem. So the pride and ingratitude of an excellent
 prince were avenged on his subjects. And when good king
 David (God averting his grace from him) did fall into that
 arrogant transgression of counting his forces, that, as Joab
 prudently foretold, became *a cause of trespass to Israel;* ^{1 Chr. xxi.} 3, 7.
 and God, saith the text, *was displeased with this thing;*
therefore he smote Israel.

David indeed seemed to apprehend some iniquity in this
 proceeding, expostulating thus, *Is it not I that commanded* ^{1 Chr. xxi.} 17.
the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned
and done evil indeed: but as for these sheep, what have
they done? But God had no regard to his plea, nor returned
 any answer to it; for indeed God's wrath began with the
 people, and their king's sin was but a judgment executed
 on them; for *the anger,* it is said, *of the Lord was kindled* ^{2 Sam.} xxiv. 1.
against Israel, (by their sin surely, which is the only incen-
 tive of divine wrath,) *and he moved David against them to*
say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

So indeed it is that princes are bad, that they incur

- SERM. great errors, or commit notable trespasses, is commonly im-
 X. putable to the fault of subjects; and is a just judgment by
 divine Providence laid on them, as for other provocations, so
 especially for their want of devotion, and neglecting duly
 to pray for them. For if they constantly, with hearty sin-
 cerity and earnest fervency, would in their behalf sue to God,
 who *fashioneth all the hearts of men*, who especially holdeth
 the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth them whither-
 soever he will; we reasonably might presume, that God by
 his grace, would direct them into the right way, and incline
 their hearts to goodness; that he would accomplish his own
 word in the prophet, *I will make thy officers peace, and
 thine exactors righteousness*; that we might have occasion
 to pay thanksgivings like that of Ezra, *Blessed be the Lord
 God of our fathers, who hath put such things as this in the
 king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in
 Jerusalem.*

We are apt to impute the ill management of things, and
 the bad success waiting on it, unto princes, being in appear-
 ance the immediate agents and instruments of it; but we
 commonly do therein mistake, not considering that ourselves
 are most guilty and blameable for it; that it is an impious
 people which maketh an unhappy prince; that their offences
 do pervert his counsels, and blast his undertakings; that their
 profaneness and indevotion do incense God's displea-
 sure, and cause him to desert princes, withdrawing his gra-
 cious conduct from them, and permitting them to be misled
 by temptation, by ill advice, by their own infirmities, lusts,
 and passions, into courses fit to punish a naughty people. So
 these were the causes of Moses's *speaking unadvisedly with
 his lips*, and that *it went ill with him for their sakes*; of
 Aaron's forming the molten calf; of David's numbering the
 people; of Josiah's unadvised enterprise against Pharaoh Ne-
 co; of Zedekiah's rebellion against the Assyrians, (notwith-
 standing the strong dissuasions of the prophet Jeremy;) con-
 cerning which it is said, *For through the anger of the Lord it
 came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them
 out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king
 of Babylon.*

Ps. xxxiii
 15.
 Prov. xxi.
 1.

Isa. lx. 17.

Ezr. vii. 27.

Ps. cvi. 32,
 33.

Ex. xxxii.

Deut. ix.

2 Kings
 xxiv. 20.

Considering which things it is apparent, that prayer for our prince is a great office of charity to the public; and that in praying for his safety, for his honour, for his wealth, for his prosperity, for his virtue, we do in effect pray for the same benefits respectively to our country; that in praying for his welfare, we do in consequence pray for the good of all our neighbours, our friends, our relations, our families; whose good is wrapped in his welfare, doth flow from it, doth hang upon it.

We are bound, and it is a very noble piece of charity, to love our country, sincerely to desire and earnestly to further its happiness, and therefore to pray for it; according to the advice and practice of the Psalmist: *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.* Ps. cxxii. 6. (cxxviii. 5.) Ps. cxxii. 7.

We are obliged more especially upon the highest accounts, with dearest affection to love the church, (our heavenly commonwealth, the society of our spiritual brethren.) most ardently to tender its good, and seek its advantages; and therefore most urgently to sue for God's favour toward it: being ready to say after David, *Do good, O God, in thy good pleasure to Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Arise, O Lord, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come.* Now these duties we cannot more easily, more compendiously, or more effectually discharge, than by earnestly praying for our prince; seeing that if we do by our prayers procure God's favour to him, we do certainly draw it on the state and the church. If God, moved by our devout importunities, shall please to guard his person from dangers, and to grant him a long life; to endue his heart with grace, with the love and fear of himself, with a zeal of furthering public good, of favouring piety, of discountenancing sin; if God shall vouchsafe to inspire him with wisdom, and to guide his counsels, to bless his proceedings, and to crown his undertakings with good success: then assuredly we have much promoted the public interest; then infallibly, together with these, all other blessings shall descend on us, all good will flourish in our land. This was

SERM. the ancient practice of Christians, and directed to this end.

X.

For, *We*, saith Lactantius to Constantine, *with daily prayers do supplicate God, that he would first of all keep thee, whom he hath willed to be the keeper of things; then that he would inspire into thee a will, whereby thou mayest ever persevere in the love of God's name; which is salutary to all, both to thee for thy happiness, and to us for our quiet*^d.

4. Wherefore consequently our own interest and charity to ourselves should dispose us to pray for our prince. We being nearly concerned in his welfare, as parts of the public, and as enjoying many private advantages thereby; we cannot but partake of his good, we cannot but suffer with him. We cannot live quietly, if our prince is disturbed; we cannot live happily, if he be unfortunate; we

Nescio an plus moribus conferrat princeps, qui bonos esse patitur, quam qui cogit. *Plin. Panegy.*

can hardly live virtuously, if divine grace do not incline him to favour us therein, or at least restrain him from hindering us. This is St. Paul's own consideration: *I exhort you*, saith he, *to make prayers for kings—that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

Upon such an account God did command the Jews to pray 1 Tim. ii.2. for the welfare of that heathen state, under which they Jer. xxix. 7. lived in captivity. *And seek*, said he, *the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.* And for the like cause, the Christians of old deemed themselves bound to pray for the Gentile magistrates, according to that of Tertullian: *We pray for you, because with you the empire is shaken: and the other members of it being shaken, assuredly even we, how far soever we may be thought from troubles, are found in some place of the fall*^e. Farther,

^d Cui nos quotidianis precibus supplicamus, ut te imprimis, quem rerum custodem voluit esse, custodiat; deinde inspiret tibi voluntatem, qua semper in amore divini nominis perseveres; quod est omnibus salutare, et tibi ad felicitatem, et nobis ad quietem. *Lact. vii. 36.*

^e Vobiscum enim concutitur imperium: concussis etiam cæteris membris ejus, utique et nos, licet extranei a turbis æstimemur, in aliquo loco casus invenimur. *Tert. Apol. cap. xxxii.*

5. Let us consider, that subjects are obliged in gratitude and ingenuity, yea in equity and justice, to pray for their princes. For, SERM.
X.

They are most nearly related to us, and allied by the most sacred bands; being constituted by God, in his own room, the parents and guardians of their country; being also avowed and accepted for such by solemn vows, and most holy sacraments of allegiance: whence unto them, as such, we owe an humble piety, a very respectful affection, a most dutiful observance^f; the which we cannot better express or exercise, than in our heartiest prayers for their welfare.

They by God are destined to be the protectors of the church, the patrons of religion, the fosterers and cherishers of truth, of virtue, of piety: for of the church in the evangelical times it was prophesied, *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers; thou shalt suck the breasts of kings; kings shall minister to thee*: wherefore to them, not only as men and citizens, but peculiarly as Christians, we owe the highest duty; and consequently we must pay the best devotion for them.

To them we stand indebted for the greatest benefits of common life: they necessarily do take much care, they undergo great trouble, they are exposed to many hazards for our advantages; that *under their shadow* we may enjoy safety and quiet, we may reap the fruits of our industry, we may possess the comforts and conveniences of our life, with security from rapine, from contention, from solicitude, from the continual fears of wrong and outrage.

To their industry and vigilancy under God, we owe the fair administration of justice, the protection of right and innocence, the preservation of order and peace, the encouragement of goodness, and correction of wickedness:

^f Quem sciens (Christianus) a Deo suo constituti, necesse est, ut et ipsum diligit, et reveretur, et honoret, et salvum velit. Tert, ad Scap. ii

Jurat per Deum, et per Christum, et per Spiritum S. et per majestatem imperatoris, quæ secundum Deum generi humano diligenda est, et colenda. Veget. ii. 5.

SERM. for they, as the Apostle telleth us, are *God's ministers, attending continually on these very things*. They indeed so
 X
 Rom. xiii. 6. attend as to deny themselves, and so forego much of their own ease, their pleasure, their satisfaction; being frequently perplexed with cares, continually enslaved to business, and subject to various inconveniences, rendering their life to considerate spectators very little desirable.

As therefore, according to our Lord's observation, they
 Luke xxii. 25. are usually styled *benefactors*, so they really are; even the worst of them (such as Claudius, or Nero, of whom our apostles speak) in considerable measure; at least in comparison of anarchy, and considering the mischiefs issuing from

Οὐ κολακσία ἐστὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν τοῦ δικαίου γίνεσθαι λόγον. *Chrys.*
 in 1 Tim. ii. 1. want of government. Οὐ κολακσία ἐστὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα. *The matter is not flattery; (saith St. Chrysostom, himself of all men farthest from a flatterer;) but according to the reason of the case we must esteem ourselves much obliged to them for the pains they sustain in our behalf, and for the benefits we receive from them.* For he indeed must be a very bad go-

Acts xxiv. 2, 3. without glozing be accommodated; *Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.*

However, what Seneca saith of philosophers, that *they of all men are most obliged, and most grateful to kings and magistrates, because from their care they enjoy the leisure, quiet, and security of contemplating and practising the best things; upon which account, saith he, they could not but reverence the authors of so great a good as parents* g; that is, or should be, far more true of Christians. *That leisure (to use his own words) which is spent with God, and which rendereth us like to God* h; the liberty of studying divine

g Nulli adversus magistratus ac reges gratiores sunt; nec immerito, nullis enim plus præstant, quam quibus frui tranquillo otio licet. Itaque hi quibus ad propositum bene vivendi confert securitas publica, necesse est auctorem hujus boni ut parentem colant. *Sen. Ep. 73.*

h Quanti æstinamus hoc otium, quod inter Deos agitur, quod Deos facit? *Ibid.*

truth, and of serving God with security and quiet; are inestimable benefits, for the which they are indebted to the protection of magistrates: therefore in all reason a grateful retribution of good will, and of all good offices, particularly of our prayers, is to be paid to them. *Is it not very absurd, saith Chrysostom, that they should labour and venture for us, and we not pray for them?*

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X.

6. Whereas we are by divine command frequently enjoined to fear and reverence, to honour, to obey kings; we should look on prayer for them as a principal branch, and the neglect thereof as a notable breach of those duties. For,

Πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἄτοστον αὐτοῖς, &c.
Chrys. ubi supra.

1 Pet. ii. 13, 17
Rom. xiii. 1.
Tit. iii 1
Prov. xxiv. 21.

As to honour and reverence, it is plain, that no exterior signification, in ceremonious unveiling or cringing to them, can so demonstrate it, as doth the wishing them well in our hearts, and from thence framing particular addresses to the divine Majesty for their welfare. Than which practice there can be no surer argument, that we hold them in great account and consideration. And how indeed can we much honour them, for whom we do not vouchsafe so much as to offer our good wishes, or to mention them in our intercessions unto him, who requireth us to make them for all men; and particularly for those for whom we are concerned? Doth not this omission evidently place them in the lowest rank, beneath the meanest of our friends and relations? doth it not imply a very slender regard had to them?

And as for obedience, prayer for princes is clearly an instance thereof; seeing it may be supposed, that all princes do require it from their subjects. Not only Christian princes, who believe God the sole dispenser of all good things, and the great efficacy of devotion in procuring them from him, may be deemed to exact this beneficial office from us; but even heathens and infidels, from their dim notion of a sovereign Providence, (which hath ever been common in the world,) have made an account of this practice; as we may see by that decree of the Persian king in Ezra, charging his officers to furnish the Jewish elders with sacrifices, *that, said he, they may offer sacrifices of* Ezra vi. 10.

SERM. *sweet savour unto the God of heaven, and pray for the*
X. *life of the king, and of his sons.* And that such was the practice of the Romans even in their heathenish state, doth appear from those words of Pliny: *We have, saith he, been wont to make vows for the eternity of the empire, and for the welfare of the citizens; yea, for the welfare of the princes, and in their behalf for the eternity of the empire*ⁱ.

Not only pious princes with a serious desire will expect this duty from us, but even profane ones in policy will demand it, as a decent testimony of respect to them, and a proper means of upholding their state; that they may seem to have place in the most serious regards and solemn performances of their subjects. So that to neglect this duty is ever a violation of our due obedience, and a kind of disloyalty to them. Again,

Deo vel pri- 7. The praying for princes is a service peculiarly ho-
 vatus, vel nourable, and very acceptable to God; which he will in-
 militans ser- terpret as a great respect done to himself: for that there-
 vit, cum fideliter by we honour his image and character in them, yielding
 eum diligit, in his presence this special respect to them as his repre-
 qui Deo sentatives; for that thereby we avow his government of
 regnat au- the world by them as his ministers and deputies; for that
 tore. *Veget.* thereby we acknowledge all power derived from him,
 ii. 5. and depending on his pleasure; we ascribe to him an au-
 thority paramount above all earthly potentates; we im-
 ply our persuasion, that he alone is absolute sovereign of
 the world, *the King of kings, and lord of lords*, so that
 1 Tim. vi. princes are nothing otherwise than in subordination to
 15. him, can do nothing without his succour, do owe to him
 all their power, their safety, their prosperity, and welfare^k;
 for that, in fine, thereby disclaiming all other confidences
 Psal. cxlvi. *in any son of man*, we signify our entire submission to
 3. cxviii. God's will, and sole confidence in his providence. This
 8, 9.

ⁱ Nuncupare vota et pro æternitate imperii, et pro salute civium, imo pro salute principum, ac propter illos pro æternitate imperii, solebamus. *Plin. Paneg.*

^k Temperans majestatem Cæsaris infra Deum, magis illum commendo Deo. *Tert. Apol. cap. xxxiii.*

service therefore is a very grateful kind of adoring our almighty Lord; and as such St. Paul recommendeth it in the words immediately subjoined to our text, *For this,* saith he, *is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.* SERM.
X.
1 Tim. ii. 3.

8. Let us consider, that whereas wisdom, guiding our piety and charity, will especially incline us to place our devotion there where it will be most needful and useful; we therefore chiefly must pray for kings, because they do most need our prayers.

The office is most high, and hard to discharge well or happily: wherefore they need extraordinary supplies of gifts and graces from the divine bounty.

Their affairs are of greatest weight and importance, requiring answerable skill and strength to steer and wield them: wherefore they need from the fountain of wisdom and power special communications of light, of courage, of ability, to conduct, to support, to fortify them in their managements; they need that God should *uphold them* Psal. li. 12. *πνεύματι ἡγεμονικῶ,* with *that princely spirit,* for which king David prayed.

They often are to deliberate about matters of dark and uncertain consequence; they are to judge in cases of dubious and intricate nature; the which to resolve prudently, or to determine uprightly, no human wisdom sufficiently can enable: wherefore they need *the spirit of counsel,* and *the spirit of judgment,* from the sole dispenser of them, the great *Counsellor* and most *righteous Judge.* The wisest and ablest of them hath reason to pray with Solomon, *Give thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?* That so what the Wise Man saith may be verified, *A divine sentence is in the lips of the king, his mouth transgresseth not in judgment:* and that of the wise woman, *As an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad.* Isa. xi. 2.
xxviii. 6.
Isa. ix. 6.
Psal. vii. 11.
1 Kings iii. 9.
Wisd. ix. 4.
(Psal. lxxii. 1.)
Prov. xvi. 10.)
2 Sam. xiv. 17.

They commonly are engaged in enterprises of greatest difficulty, insuperable by the might or industry of man;

SERM. in regard to which we may say with Hannah, *By strength shall no man prevail*; with the Preacher, *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong*; with the Psalmist, *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host*: wherefore they need aid and succour from the Almighty, to carry them through, and bless their designs with success.

They are most exposed to dangers and disasters; (standing like high towers, most obnoxious to the winds and tempests of fortune;) having usually many envious ill-willers, many disaffected malecontents, many both open enemies and close insidiators; from whose force or treachery no human providence can sufficiently guard them: they do therefore need the protection of the ever-vigilant *Keeper of Israel* to secure them: for, *Except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh but in vain*; except the Lord preserve the king, his guards, his armies surround him to no purpose.

They have the natural infirmities of other men, and far beyond other men are subject to external temptations. The malicious spirit (as in the case of Job, of David, of Ahab, of Joshua the High Priest, is expressed) is ever waiting for occasion, ever craving permission of God to seduce and pervert them; success therein being extremely conducive to his villanous designs. The world continually doth assault them with all its advantages, with all its baits of pleasure, with all its enticements to pride and vanity, to oppression and injustice, to sloth, to luxury, to exorbitant self-will and self-conceit, to every sort of vicious practice. Their eminency of state, their affluence of wealth, their uncontrollable power, their exemption from common restraints, their continual distractions and encumbrances by varieties of care and business, their multitude of obsequious followers, and scarcity of faithful friends to advise or reprove them, their having no obstacles before them to check their wills, to cross their humours, to curb their lusts and passions, are so many dangerous snares unto them: wherefore they do need plentiful measures of grace, and mighty assistances from God, to preserve them

from the worst errors and sins; into which otherwise it is almost a miracle if they are not plunged.

And seeing they are so liable to sin, they must consequently stand often in need of God's mercy to bear with them, and to pardon them.

They therefore, upon so many accounts needing special help and grace from Heaven, do most need prayers to derive it thence for them.

All princes indeed do need them. Good princes need many prayers for God's help, to uphold and confirm them in their virtue: bad princes need deprecations of God's wrath and judgment toward them, for offending his Majesty; together with supplications for God's grace to convert and reform them: the most desperate and incorrigible need prayers, that God would overrule and restrain them from doing mischief to themselves and others. All princes having many avocations and temptations, hindering them to pray enough for themselves, do need supplemental aids from the devotions of others.

Wherefore if we love them, if we love our country, if we love ourselves, if we tender the interests of truth, of piety, of common good, we, considering their case, and manifold need of prayers, will not fail earnestly to sue for them; that God would afford needful assistance to them in the administration of their high office, in the improvement of their great talents, in the conduct and management of their arduous affairs; that he graciously would direct them in their perplexed counsels, would back them in their difficult undertakings, would protect their persons from dangers, would keep their hearts from the prevalency of temptations, would pardon their failings and trespasses. Again,

9. Whereas God hath declared, that he hath special regard to princes. and a more than ordinary care over them, because they have a peculiar relation to him, as his representatives, the *ministers of his kingdom*, the main instruments of his providence, whereby he conveyeth his favours, and dispenseth his justice to men: because also the good of mankind, which he especially tendereth, is

SERM.
X.

Ὁ πλῖστα
πράττων,
πλῖστ' ἁ-
μαρτάνω
βροτῶν.

Wisd. vi. 4.

SERM. mainly concerned in their welfare ; whereas, I say, *it is he*
 X. *that giveth salvation unto kings; that giveth great deliver-*
 Psal. cxliv. *ance to his king, and sheweth mercy to his annointed; that*
 10. xxi. 1. *hath the king's heart and his breath, and all his ways in*
 xviii. 50. *his hand: even upon this account our prayers for them*
 (lxiii. 11.) *are the more required. For it is a method of God, and an*
 2 Sam. xxii. *established rule of divine providence, not to dispense spe-*
 51. *cial blessings without particular conditions, and the con-*
 Prov. xxi. 1. *currence of our duty in observance of what he prescribeth*
 Dan. v. 23. *in respect to them. Seeing then he hath enjoined, that, in*
order to our obtaining those great benefits which issue from
his special care over princes, we should pray for it, and
seek it from his hands; the omission of this duty will in-
tercept it, or bereave us of its advantages; nor in that case
may we expect any blessings of that kind. As without
praying for ourselves we must not expect private favours
from heaven; so without praying for our prince we cannot
well hope for public blessings. For, as a profane person
(who in effect disavoweth God, by not regarding to seek
his favour and aid) is not qualified to receive any good
from him; so a profane nation (which disclaimeth God's
government of the world, by not invoking his benediction
on those who moderate it under him) is not well capable of
common benefits. It is upon all these accounts true which
 Ezr. viii. 22. *Ezra said, The hand of our God is upon all them for good*
 Liv v. 51. *that seek him: but his power and his wrath is against all*
 Hor. Od. *them that forsake him. If therefore we desire that our prince*
 iii. 6. *should not lose God's special regard, if we would not*
forfeit the benefits thereof to ourselves, we must conspire
in hearty prayers for him.

10. To engage and encourage us in which practice, we may farther consider, that such prayers, offered duly, (with frequency and constancy, with sincerity and zeal,) do always turn to good account, and never want good effect: the which, if it be not always easily discernible, yet it is certainly real; if it be not perfect as we may desire, yet it is competent, as expediency requireth, or as the condition of things will bear.

There may be impediments to a full success of the best prayers; they may not ever prevail to render princes completely good, or extremely prosperous: for some concurrence of their own will is requisite to produce their virtue, God rarely working with irresistible power, or fatal efficacy; and the state of things, or capacities of persons, are not always fitly suited for prosperity. Yet are not such prayers ever wholly vain or fruitless; for God never prescribeth means unavailable to the end: he never would have commanded us particularly to pray for kings, if he did not mean to bestow a good issue to that practice.

And, surely, he that hath promised to hear all requests, with faith and sincerity and incessant earnestness presented to him, cannot fail to hear those which are of such consequence, which are so agreeable to his will, which do include so much honesty and charity. In this case, surely, we may have some confidence, according to that of St. John, *This is the confidence we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* 1 Joh. v. 14.

As the good bishop, observing St. Austin's mother, with what constancy and passionateness she did pray for her son, being then engaged in ways of error and vanity, did encourage her, saying, *It is impossible that a son of those devotions should perish*; so may we hopefully presume, and encourage ourselves, that a prince will not miscarry, for whose welfare many good people do earnestly solicit: *Fieri non potest, ut princeps istarum lacrymarum pereat.* Fieri non potest, ut filius istarum lacrymarum pereat. Aug. Conf. iv. 12.

You know, in general, the mighty efficacy of prayer; what pregnant assurances there are, and how wonderful instances thereof occur in holy Scripture, both in relation to public and private blessings: how it is often promised, that *all things, whatsoever we shall ask in prayer believing, we shall receive*; and that *whoever asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened*: how the prayer of Abraham did heal Abimelech and his family of barrenness; how the prayers of Moses did quench the fire, and cure the bitings of the fiery serpents; how the prayer of Joshua did arrest the sun; how the prayer of Hannah did procure Samuel to her, as his

SERM.
X.

Fieri non potest, ut filius istarum lacrymarum pereat. Aug. Conf. iv. 12.

James v. 16.

Matt. xxi. 22.

Matt. vii. 8.

Gen. xx.

17. Num. xi. 2.

xxi. 7.

(1's. cvi. 20. O. T.)

Josh. x. 12. 1 Sam. i. 10.

SERM. name doth import; how Elias's prayers did open and
 X. shut the heavens; how the same holy Prophet's prayer did
 Luke iv. 25. reduce a departed soul, and that of Elisha did effect the
 Jam. v. 17, same, and that of another Prophet did restore Jeroboam's
 1 Kings xvii. withered hand; how the prayers of God's people fre-
 21, 22. quently did *raise them up saviours*, and *when they cried*
 2 Kings iv. 33. *unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivered them out of*
 1 Kings xiii. 6. *their distresses*: how the prayers of ^aAsa discomfited a
 Deut. iv. 29. million of Arabians, and those of Jehoshaphat destroyed a
 Neh. ix. 27. numerous army of his enemies by their own hands, and
 Ps. cvi. 44. those of Hezekiah brought down an angel from heaven to
 cvii. 6, 13, 19, 28. cut off the Assyrians, and those of Manasses restored him
 Jud. iii. 15. to his kingdom, and those of Esther saved her people from
 iv. 3. vi. 7. the brink of ruin, and those of Nehemiah inclined a Pagan
 x. 21. king's heart to favour his pious design for re-edifying Je-
^{a2} Chr. xiv. 11. xx. 3. rusalem, and those of Daniel obtained strange visions and
 xii. 23. discoveries. How ^bNoah, Job, Daniel, Moses, and Sa-
 xxxii. 20, 21. xxxiii. 12, 13. muel are represented as powerful intercessors with God;
 Esth. iv. 16. and consequently it is intimated, that the great things
 Neh. i. xi. ii. 4. achieved by them were chiefly done by the force of their
 Dan. chap. ii. iv. v. vii. viii. ix. x. prayers.
 xi. xii. ^b Ezek. xiv. 14. And seeing prayers in so many cases are so effectual,
 Jer. xv. 1. and work such miracles; what may we hope from them in
 this, wherein God so expressly and particularly directeth
 us to use them? If our prayers can so much avail to our
 personal and private advantage, if they may be very helpful
 to our friends; how much shall the devotions of many good
 men, all levelled at one mark, and aiming at a public most
 considerable good, be prevalent with the divine goodness?
 However, if God be not moved by prayers to convert a
 prince from all sin, to make him do all the good he might,
 to bless him in all matters; yet he may thence be induced
 to restrain him from much evil, to keep him from being
 worse, or from doing worse than otherwise would be; he
 may dispose him to do many things well, or better than of
 himself he would do; he may preserve him from many
 disasters otherwise incident to him; which will be consider-
 able effects of prayer.

11. I shall add but one general consideration more,

which is this, that prayer is the only allowable way of re- SERM.
X.
dressing our case, if we do suffer by or for princes.

Are they bad, or do they misdemean themselves in their administration of government and justice? we may not by any violent or rough way attempt to reclaim them; for they are not accountable to us, or liable to our correction.

Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who shall say to him, What doest thou? was the Preacher's doctrine. Eccles. viii.
4.

Do they oppress us, or abuse us? do they treat us harshly, or cruelly persecute us? we must not kick against them, nor strive to right ourselves by resistance. For, *Against a king, saith the Wise man, there is no rising up;* and, *Who, said David, can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?* and, *They, saith St. Paul, that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.* Prov. xxx.
31.
1 Sam.
xxvi. 9.
Rom. xiii.
2.

We must not so much as ease our stomach, or discharge our passion, by railing or inveighing against them. For, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people,* is a divine law; and, *to blaspheme, or revile, dignities,* is by St. Peter and St. Jude reprehended as a notable crime. Exod. xxii.
28.
Acts xxxiii. 5.
2 Pet. ii. 10.
Jude 8.

We must not be bold or free in taxing their actions. For, *Is it fit, said Elihu, to say to a king, Thou art wicked, and to princes, Ye are ungodly?* and, *to reproach the footsteps of God's anointed,* is implied to be an impious practice. Job xxxiv.
18.
Ps. lxxxix.
51.

We must forbear even complaining and murmuring against them. For murmurers are condemned as no mean sort of offenders; and the Jews in the wilderness were sorely punished for such behaviour. Jude 16.

We must not, (according to the Preacher's advice) so much as *curse them in our thought;* or not entertain ill conceits and ill wishes in our minds toward them. Eccles. x.
20.
(Isa. viii.
21.)

To do these things is not only high presumption in regard to them, (inconsistent with the dutiful affection and respect which we owe to them,) but it is flat impiety toward God, and an invasion of his authority; who alone is *King of kings,* and hath reserved to himself the prerogative

SERM. of judging, of rebuking, of punishing kings, when he find-
X. eth cause.

These were the misdemeanors of those in the late times, who, instead of praying for their sovereign, did clamour and rail at him, did asperse him with foul imputations, did accuse his proceedings, did raise tumults, and levy war against him, pretending by rude force to reduce him to his duty; so usurping on their prince, or rather on God himself; assuming his right, and taking his work out of his hands; discovering also therein great profaneness of mind, and distrust of God's providence; as if God, being implored by prayer, could not, or would not, had it been needful, without such irregular courses, have redressed those evils in Church or State, which they pretended to feel or fear.

Nothing therefore in such cases is left to us for our remedy or ease, but having recourse to God himself, and seeking relief from his hand in his good time, by converting our prince, or directing him into a good course; however comforting ourselves in the conscience of submitting to God's will ^f.

This is the only method St. Paul did prescribe, even when Nero, a most vile, flagitious man, a sorry and naughty governor as could be, a monstrous tyrant, and most bloody persecutor, (the very inventor of persecution,) did sway the empire ^g. He did not advise Christians to stand upon their guard, to contrive plots, to provide arms, to raise mutinies and insurrections against him; but to offer supplications, prayers, and intercessions for him, as the best means of their security and comfort ^h. And this was the course of the primitive Christians, during their

^f Absit enim ut indigne feramus ea nos pati quæ optamus, aut ultionem a nobis aliquam machinemur, quam a Deo expectamus. *Tert. ad Scap. 2.*

^g Qui non dicam regum, sed omnium hominum, et vel bestiarum sordidissimus, dignus exstitit qui persecutionem in Christianos primus inciperet. *Sulp. Ser. ii. 40.*

^h Ita nos magis oramus pro salute imperatoris, ab eo eam postulantes qui præstare potest. Et utique ex disciplina patientiæ divini agere nos, satis manifestum esse vobis potest, cum tanta hominum multitudo, pars pene major civitatis cujusque, in silentio et modestia agimus. *Tert. ad Scap. 2.*

hard condition under the domination of Heathen princes, **SERM.**
 impugners of their religion: *Prayers and tears* were then **X.**
 the only *arms of the church*; whereby they long defended
 it from ruin, and at last advanced it to most glorious pros-
 perity¹.

Indeed, if, not assuming the liberty to find fault with princes, we would practise the duty of seeking God for his blessing on their proceedings; if, forbearing to scan and censure acts of state, we would earnestly implore God's direction of them; if, leaving to conceive disgusts, and vent complaints about the state of things, we would assiduously petition God for the settlement of them in good order; if, instead of being shrewd politicians, or smart judges in such matters, we would be devout orators and humble solicitors at the throne of grace; our endeavours surely would find much better effect toward public advantage: we certainly might do more good in our closets by a few hearty wishes uttered there, than by all our tattling or jangling politics in corners.

There are great contrivances to settle things: every one hath his model of state, or method of policy, to communicate for ordering the state; each is zealous for his own conceit, and apt to be displeas'd with those who dissent from him: but it is, as the fairest and justest, so the surest and likeliest way of reducing things to a firm composure, (without more ado, letting the world alone, to move on its own hinges, and not impertinently troubling ourselves or others with the conduct of it,) simply to request of Almighty God, the sovereign Governor and sole Disposer of things, that he would lead his own vicegerents in the management of the charge by himself committed to them. *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God,* is a rule very applicable to this case. **Phil. iv. 6.**

As God's providence is the only sure ground of our

¹ Fundendo sanguinem, et patiendo magis quam faciendo contumelias, Christi fundata est ecclesia; persecutionibus crevit, &c. *Hier. Ep. 62.*

SERM. confidence or hope for the preservation of Church and
 X. State, or for the restitution of things into a stable quiet ;
 so it is only our hearty prayers, joined with a conscientious observance of God's laws, whereby we can incline Providence to favour us. By them alone we may hope to save things from sinking into disorder, we may assuage the factions, we may defeat the machinations against the public welfare.

12. Seeing then we have so many good arguments and motives inducing to pray for kings, it is no wonder that, to back them, we may also allege the practice of the church, continually in all times performing this duty in its most sacred offices, especially in the celebration of the holy communion.

Const.
 Apost.
 viii. 13. ii.
 57.

1 Tim. ii. St. Paul indeed, when he saith, *I exhort, first of all, that*
 8. *prayers be made*, doth chiefly impose this duty on Timothy,
 Polycarp. ad or supposeth it incumbent on the pastors of the church, to
 Phil. c. 12. take special care, that prayers be made for this purpose, and offered up in the church jointly by all Christians: and accordingly the ancient Christians, as Tertullian doth assure us, did *always pray for the emperors, that God would grant them a long life, a secure reign, a safe family, valiant armies, a faithful senate, a loyal people, a quiet world, and whatever they, as men or as emperors, could wish* ^k. Thus added he, even for their persecutors, and in the very pangs of their sufferings they did not fail to practise. Likewise of the Church in his time St. Chrysostom telleth us, that *all communicants did know how every day, both at even and morning, they did make supplication for all the world, and for the emperor, and for all that are in authority* ^l.

^k Precantes sumus semper pro omnibus imperatoribus vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, quæcunque hominis et Cæsaris vota sunt. *Tert. Apol. cap. 30.*

Hoc agite, boni præsules, extorquete animam Deo supplicantem pro imperatore. *Ibid.*

^l Καὶ τοῦτο ἴσασιν οἱ μύσται, πῶς καὶ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν γίνεται καὶ ἐν ἑσπέρας καὶ ἐν πρωΐᾳ· πῶς ὑπὲρ παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ βασιλείων, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ποιούμεθα τὴν δέσιν. *Chrys. in 1 Tim. ii. 1.*

And in the Greek liturgies (the composure whereof is fathered on St. Chrysostom) there are divers prayers interspersed for the emperors, couched in terms very pregnant and respectful.

If the offices of the Roman Church, and of the churches truckling under it, in latter times, shall seem more defective or sparing in this point of service, the reason may be, for that a superlative regard to the Solar or Pontifical authority (as Pope Innocent III. distinguished) did obscure their devotion for the Lunar or Regal Majesty. But our Church hath been abundantly careful, that we should in most ample manner discharge this duty; having, in each of her holy offices, directed us to pray for our King in expressions most full, hearty, and lively.

She hath indeed been charged as somewhat lavish or over-liberal of her devotions in this case. But it is a good fault, and we little need fear over-doing in observance of a precept so very reasonable, and so important; supposing that we have a due care to join our heart with the Church's words, and to the frequency of prayers for our Prince do confer a suitable fervency. If we be not dead, or merely formal, we can hardly be too copious in this kind of devotion; reiteration of words can do no harm, being accompanied with the renovation of our desires. Our text itself will bear us out in such a practice; the Apostle therein by variety of expression appearing solicitous, that abundance of prayers for kings should be offered in the Church, and no sort of them omitted.

There are so many general inducements to this duty at all times; and there are beside divers particular reasons enforcing it now, in the present state and posture of things.

Times of trouble, of danger, of fear, of darkness and perplexity, of distraction and distress, of guilt and deserved wrath, are most seasonable for recourse to the divine help and mercy in prayerⁿ.

Psal. cxlv.
18. xviii. 6.
lxxvii. 2.
lxxxvi. 7.
cxviii. 5.
cxlii. 1.
cvii. 6.
Jam. v. 13.
2 Chr. vi.
36.

ⁿ *Inops senatus auxiliū humani ad deos populum ac vota vertit.* Liv. iii. 7. y. 16.

SERM. And are not ours such? are they not much like to those
 X of which the Psalmist saith, *They know not, neither will*
 Psal. lxxxii. *they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foun-*
 5. *dations of the earth are out of course?* or like those of which
 Luke xxi. *our Lord spake, when there was upon the earth distress of*
 25, 26. *nations, with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear,*
 (2 Kings *and for looking after those things which were coming on the*
 xix: 3.) *earth?*

Are not the days gloomy, so that no human providence can see far, no wisdom can descry the issue of things?

Is it not a very unsettled world, wherein all the public frames are shaken almost off the hinges, and the minds of men extremely discomposed with various passions; with fear, suspicion, anger, discontent, and impatience? How from dissensions in opinion do violent factions and feuds rage; the hearts of men boiling with fierce animosities, and being exasperated against one another, beyond any hopes or visible means of reconciliation!

Are not the fences of discipline cast down? Is there any conscience made of violating laws? Is not the dread of authority exceedingly abated, and all government overborne by unbridled licentiousness?

Psal. cxxix. How many adversaries are there, *bearing ill will to our*
 5. lxxxiii. 5. *Sion!* How many turbulent, malicious, crafty spirits, eagerly bent, and watching for occasion to subvert the Church, to disturb the State, to introduce confusion in all things! How many Edomites, who say of Jerusalem, (both ecclesiastical and civil,) *Down with it, down with it, even to the ground!*

Ps. cxxxvii. 7. Have we not great reason to be fearful of God's just displeasure, and that heavy judgments will be poured on us for our manifold heinous provocations and crying sins; for the prodigious growth of atheism, infidelity, and profaneness; for the rife practice of all impieties, iniquities, and impurities, with most impudent boldness, or rather with outrageous insolence; for the extreme dissoluteness in manners; the gross neglect or contempt of all duties; the great stupidity and coldness of people ge-

nerally as to all concerns of religion; for the want of religious awe toward God, of charity toward our neighbour, of respect to our superiors, of sobriety in our conversation; for our ingratitude for many great mercies, and incorrigibleness under many sore chastisements, our insensibleness of many plain warnings, loudly calling us to repentance?

Is not all the world about us in combustion, cruel wars raging every where, and Christendom weltering in blood? and although at present, by God's merey, we are free, who knows but that soon, by God's justice, the neighbouring flames may catch our houses?

In fine, is not our case palpably such, that for any good composure or reinstatement of things in good order, for upholding truth and sound doctrine, for reducing charity and peace, for reviving the spirit of piety, and bringing virtue again into request; for preserving State and Church from ruin; we can have no confidence or reasonable hope, but in the good providence and merciful succour of Almighty God; *beside whom there is no Saviour; who alone is the hope of Israel, and Saviour thereof in time of trouble?* we now having great cause to pray with our Lord's disciples in the storm, *Lord, save us, we perish.*

Isa. xliiii. 11.
Hos. xiii. 4.
Jer. xiv. 8.

Matt. viii.
25.

Upon such considerations, and others whereof I suppose you are sufficiently apprehensive, we now especially are obliged earnestly to pray for our King, that God in mercy would preserve his royal person, and inspire his mind with light, and endue his heart with grace, and in all things bless him to us, to be *a repairer of our breaches, and a restorer of paths to dwell in;* so that *under him we may lead a quiet life in all godliness and honesty.*

Isa. lviii. 12.

I have done with the first duty, (*prayer for kings;*) upon which I have the rather so largely insisted, because it is very seasonable to our present condition.

II. The other (*thanksgiving*) I shall but touch, and need not perhaps to do more. For,

I. As to general inducements, they are the same, or very like to those which are for prayer; it being plain, that whatever we are concerned to pray for, when we want it, that we

SERM. are bound to thank God for, when he vouchsafeth to bestow
 X. it. And if common charity should dispose us to resent the
 good of princes with complacence; if their welfare be a public benefit; if ourselves are interested in it, and partake great advantages thereby; if in equity and ingenuity we are bound to seek it; then, surely, we are much engaged to thank God, the bountiful donor of it, for his goodness in conferring it.

2. As for particular motives, suiting the present occasion, I need not by information or impression of them farther to stretch your patience; seeing you cannot be ignorant or insensible of the grand benefits by the divine goodness bestowed on our King, and on ourselves, which this day we are bound with all grateful acknowledgment to commemorate. Wherefore, instead of reciting trite stories, and urging obvious reasons, (which a small recollection will suggest to you,) I shall only request you to join with me in the practice of the duty, and in acclamation of praise to God. Even so

1 Kings i.
48.

Blessed be God, who hath given to us so gracious and benign a prince, (the experiments of whose clemency and goodness no history can parallel,) to sit on the throne of his blessed father, and renowned ancestors.

Psal. xviii.
46. lxxxix.
22, 23.

Blessed be God, who hath protected him in so many encounters, hath saved him from so many dangers and snares, hath delivered him from so great troubles.

Blessed be God, who in so wonderful a manner, by such miraculous trains of providence, did reduce him to his country, and reinstate him in the possession of his rights; thereby vindicating his own just providence, *declaring his salvation, and openly shewing his righteousness in the sight of all people.*

Ps. xcvi. 2.

Blessed be God, who in him and with him did restore to us our ancient good constitution of government, our laws and liberties, our peace and quiet; rescuing us from lawless usurpations and tyrannical yokes, from the insultings of error and iniquity, from horrible distractions and confusions.

Psal. cxvi.
1.

Ever blessed be God, who hath *turned the captivity of*

Sion; hath raised our Church from the dust, and re-established the sound doctrine, the decent order, the wholesome discipline thereof; hath restored true religion with its supports, advantages, and encouragements. SERM.
X.
(Isa. xxx.
20.)

Blessed be the Lord, who hath granted us to continue these sixteen years in the peaceable fruition of those blessings.

Praised be God, who hath not cast out our prayer, nor turned his mercy from us. Psal. lxxvi.
20.

Praised be God, who hath turned our heaviness into joy, hath put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness. Psal. xxx.
11.

Let our mouth speak the praise of the Lord; and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever. Psal. cxlv.
21.

The Lord liveth, and blessed be our rock; and let the God of our salvation be exalted. Psal. xviii.
46.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen. Psal. lxxii.
18, 19.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord. Psal. cvi.
48. xli. 13.
lxxxix. 52.
lxxviii. 34.
1 Chron.
xvi. 8—36.

SERMON XI.

On Nov.
3, 1673.

ON THE GUNPOWDER-TREASON.

PSAL. lxiv. 9, 10.

*And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God ;
for they shall wisely consider of his doing. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him ;
and all the upright in heart shall glory.*

SERM. XI. IF we should search about for a case parallel to that which we do now commemorate, we should, perhaps, hardly find one more patly such, than is that which is implied in this Psalm : and if we would know the duties incumbent on us in reference to such an occasion, we could scarce better learn them otherwise than in our text.

With attention perusing the Psalm, we may therein observe, that its great Author was apprehensive of a desperate plot by a confederacy of wicked and spiteful enemies, with great craft and secrecy, contrived against his safety.

Psal. lxiv.
5.

They, saith he, encourage themselves in an evil matter : they commune of laying snares privily ; they say, Who shall see them ? That for preventing the blow threatened by this design, (whereof he had some glimpse, or some presumption, grounded upon the knowledge of their implacable and active malice,) he doth implore divine protec-

Psal. lxiv. 2.

tion : Hide me, saith he, from the secret counsel of the wicked, from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.

Verse 7.

That he did confide in God's mercy and justice for the seasonable defeating, for the fit avenging their machina-

tion: *God, saith he, shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.* That they should themselves become the detectors of their crime, and the instruments of the exemplary punishment due thereto: *They,* addeth he, *shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.* SERM.
XI.
Verse 8.

Such was the case; the which unto what passage in the history it doth relate, or whether it belongeth to any we have recorded, it may not be easy to determine. Expositors commonly do refer it to the designs of Saul upon David's life. But this seeming purely conjecture, not founded upon any express words, or pregnant intimations in the text, I shall leave that inquiry in its own uncertainty. It sufficeth to make good its pertinency, that there was such a mischievous conspiracy, deeply projected, against David; (a very great personage, in whose safety the public state of God's people was principally concerned; he being then king of Israel, at least in designation, and therefore in the precedent Psalm, endited in Saul's time, is so styled;) from the peril whereof he by the special providence of God was rescued, with the notable disappointment and grievous confusion of those who managed it. The which case (at least in kind, if not in degree) beareth a plain resemblance to that which lieth before us. Psal. lxxiii.
11.

And the duties, which upon that occasion are signified to concern people then, do no less now sort to us; the which, as they lie couched in our text, are these: 1. *Wisely, to consider God's doing;* 2. *To fear;* 3. *To declare God's work;* 4. *To be glad in the Lord;* 5. *To trust in God;* 6. *To glory.* Of which the first three are represented as more generally concerning men; the others as appertaining more peculiarly to righteous and upright persons.

These duties it shall be my endeavour somewhat to explain and press, in a manner applicable to the present case. I call them duties; and to warrant the doing so, it is requisite to consider, that all these particulars may be understood in a double manner; either as declarative of event, or as directive of practice upon such emergencies.

SERM.
 XI.

When God doth so interpose his hand, as signally to check and confound mischievous enterprises, it will be apt to stir up in the minds of men an apprehension of God's special providence, to strike into their hearts a dread of his power and justice, to wring from their mouths suitable declarations and acknowledgments; and particularly then good men will be affected with pious joy; they will be encouraged to confide in God, they will be moved to glory, or to express a triumphant satisfaction in God's proceedings. These events naturally do result from such providential occurrences; for production of these events such occurrences are purposely designed; and accordingly (where men are not by profane opinions or affections much indisposed) they do commonly follow.

But yet they are not proposed simply as events, but also as matters of duty: for men are obliged readily to admit such impressions upon their minds, hearts, and lives, from the special works of Providence; they are bound not to cross those natural tendencies, not to frustrate those wise intents of God, aiming at the production of such good dispositions and good practices: whence if those effects do not arise, as often notoriously they do not in some persons, men thereby do incur much guilt and blame.

It is indeed ordinary to represent matter of duty in this way, expressing those practices consequent in effect, which in obligation should follow, according to God's purpose, and the nature of causes ordered by him. As when, for instance, God in the law had prescribed duty, and threatened sore punishment on the disobedient, it is subjoined, *And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously*: the meaning is, that such exemplary punishment is in its nature apt, and its design tendeth to produce such effects, although not ever, questionless, with due success, so as to prevent all transgression of those laws. So also, *When, saith the Prophet, thy judgments are in the land, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness*: the sense is, that divine judgments in themselves are instructive of duty, it is their drift to inform men therein, and men ought to learn that lesson from

Dent. xvii.
 13. xiii. 11.
 xix. 20.

Isa. xxvi. 9.

them; although in effect divers there be, whom no judgments can make wiser or better; such as those of whom in the same Prophet it is said, *The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them*; and in another, *In vain have I smitten your children, they received no correction.* As therefore, frequently otherwise, so also here this kind of expression may be taken chiefly to import duty. To begin then with the first of these duties.

I. We are upon such occasions obliged *wisely to consider* (or, as the Greek rendereth it, *συνένοιαι*, to understand, or to perceive, as our old translation hath it) *God's doing.* This I put in the first place, as previous in nature, and influential upon the rest: whence (although in the Hebrew it be knit to the rest, as they all are to one another, by the conjunctive particle *ve*, and, yet) we do translate it casually, *For they shall wisely consider, for they shall perceive*; because, indeed, without duly considering and rightly understanding such occurrences to proceed from God, none of the other acts can or will be performed; attentive consideration is needful to beget knowledge and persuasion; these to breed affection and practice.

There are many who, in such cases, are nowise apprehensive of God's special providence, or affected with it; because they do not consider, or do not consider wisely and intelligently.

Some are very inobservant and careless in regard to things of this nature; so drowsy and heedless, as not to attend to whatever passeth, or to mind what God acteth in the world: such as those of whom the Prophet saith, *The harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands*: that is, their minds are so amused by wanton divertisements, their hearts are so immersed in sensual enjoyments, as nowise to observe the most notable occurrences of Providence.

Others (although they do ken and regard what is done, as matter of news, or story, entertaining curiosity and talk; yet) out of sloth or stupidity do little consider it, or study whence it springeth; contenting themselves with

SERM.
XI.

Is. ix. 13.

Jer. ii. 30.
v. 3.

Neh. ix. 29.

ומעשהו
השכילו
συνένοιον τὰ
ποιήματα.

Isa. v. 12.
Ps. xxviii.
5. x. 4.

SERM. none, or with any superficial account which fancy or appearance suggesteth: like beasts they do take in things

XI.

obvious to their sense, and perhaps stand gazing on them; but do not make any careful reflection, or inquiry into their original causes and reasons; taking (as a dog, when he biteth the stone flung at him, or as a child that is angry with the log he falleth on) whatever appeareth next to be the principal cause: such as the Psalmist again toucheth, when

Ps. xcii. 6. he saith, *A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this*: and as he doth acknowledge himself on one occasion to have been; *So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.*

Ps. lxxiii. 22.

Others pretend to consider much, and seem very inquisitive; yet (being misguided by vain prejudices or foul affections) do not consider wisely, or well understand these matters; the result of their care and study about them being to father them on wrong causes, ascribing them to the mere conduct and agency of visible causes, hurried by a necessary swing, or rolling on by a casual fluctuation of things; not desiring God's hand in them, but profanely discarding and disclaiming it: such as those in the

Psalm, who so reflected on Providence as to say, *How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? The Lord doth not see, neither doth the God of Jacob regard it*: such as hath been the brood of Epicurean and profane considerers in all times, who have earnestly plodded, and strained their wits, to exclude God from any inspection or influence upon our affairs.

Psalm. lxxiii. 11. xciv. 7. x 11.

when it was *made bare, raised up, and stretched out* in the achievement of most prodigious works; not to read Providence, when set forth in the largest and fairest print: such as those of whom it is said in the Psalm, *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt*; and those of whom it is observed in the Gospel, *Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not*: such as the

Some indeed there have been so very dull and stupid, or so perverse and profane, as not to discern God's hand,

when it was *made bare, raised up, and stretched out* in the achievement of most prodigious works; not to read Providence, when set forth in the largest and fairest print:

such as those of whom it is said in the Psalm, *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt*; and those of whom it is observed in the Gospel, *Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not*: such as the

mutinous people, who, although they beheld *the earth*

* John xii. 37. ° Num. xvi. 32, 35, 41.

swallowing up Korah with his complices, and a fire from the Lord consuming the men that offered incense; yet presently did fall a charging Moses and Aaron, saying, *Ye have killed the people of the Lord*. No wonder then, if many do not perceive the same hand, when it is wrapped up in a complication with inferior causes, when it is not lifted up so high, or so far extended in miraculous performances.

SERM.
XI.

The special providence of God in events here effected or ordered by him, is indeed commonly not discernible without good judgment and great care; it is not commonly impressed upon events in characters so big and clear, as to be legible to every eye, or to any eye not endued with a sharp perspicacy, not applying an industrious heedfulness: the tracts thereof are too fine and subtile to be descried by a-dim sight, with a transient glance, or upon a gross view: it is seldom so very conspicuous, that persons incredulous, or any-wise indisposed to admit it, can easily be convinced thereof, or constrained to acknowledge it: it is often (upon many accounts, from many causes) very obscure, and not easily discernible to the most sagacious, most watchful, most willing observers. For, the instruments of Providence being free agents, acting with unaccountable variety, nothing can happen which may not be imputed to them, with some colourable pretence. Divine and human influences are so twisted and knit together, that it is hard to sever them. The manner of divine efficacy is so very soft and gentle, that we cannot easily trace its footsteps. God designeth not commonly to exert his hand in a notorious way, but often purposely doth conceal it. Whereas also it is not fit to charge upon God's special hand of providence any event, wherein special ends of wisdom or goodness do not shine; it is often hard to discover such ends, which usually are wrapped in perplexities: because God acteth variously, (according to the circumstances of things, and the disposition, capacity, or state of objects,) so as to do the same thing for different ends, and different things for the same end: because there are different ends, unto which

SERM.
XI. Providence in various order and measure hath regard, which our short and narrow prospect cannot reach : because God, in prosecution of his ends, is not wont to proceed in the most direct and compendious way ; but windeth about in a large circuit, enfolding many concurrent and subordinate designs : because the expediency of things to be permitted or performed doth not consist in single acts or events, but in many conspiring to one common end : because we cannot apprehend the consequences, nor balance the conveniences of things in order to good ends ; because we are apt to measure things by their congruity to our opinions, expectations, and affections : because many proceedings of God depend upon grounds inaccessible to our apprehension ; such as his own secret decrees, the knowledge of men's thoughts, close purposes, clandestine designs, true qualifications and merits ; his prescience of contingent events, and what the result will be from the combination of numberless causes : because sometimes he doth act in methods of wisdom, and by rules of justice, surpassing our capacity to know, either from the finiteness of our nature, or the feebleness of our reason, or the meanness of our state and circumstances here : because all the divine administration of affairs hath no complete determination or final issue here ; that being reserved to the great day of reckoning and judgment. It is farther also expedient that many occurrences should be puzzling to us, to quash our presumption, to exercise our faith, to quicken our industry, to engage us upon adoring that wisdom which we cannot comprehend. Upon such accounts, for such causes, (which time will not give me leave to explain and exemplify,) the special providence of God is often cloudy, is seldom so clear, that without great heed and consideration we can perceive it. But however to do so is plainly our duty ; and therefore possible.

For our reason was not given us to be idle upon so important occasions ; or that we should be as brute spectators of what God doeth. He surely in the governance of his noblest creature here discovereth his being, and displayeth

his attributes: we therefore carefully should observe it. He thereby (and no otherwise in a public way) doth continually *speak*, and signify to us his mind: and fit it is, that we his subjects should hear, should attend to the least intimations of his pleasure. To him thence glory should accrue, the which who but we can render? and that we may render it, we must know the grounds of it. In fine, for the support of God's kingdom, for upholding the reverence due to his administration of justice among us, it is requisite, that by apparent dispensation of recompences duty should be encouraged, and disobedience checked: very foolish therefore we must be, if we regard not such dispensations.

So reason dictateth, and holy Scripture more plainly declareth our obligation to consider and perceive God's doings. To do so is recommended to us as a singular point of wisdom: *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth. Who is wise? and he shall understand these things; prudent? and he shall know them. For the ways of the Lord are right, &c.* We are vehemently provoked thereto: *Understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise? They are reprov'd for neglect and default, who do not regard the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hand. The not discerning Providence is reproach'd as a piece of shameful folly: A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand: and of woful pravity; a O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but how is it that ye cannot discern this time? To contemplate and study Providence is the practice of good men. I will meditate on all thy works, saith the Psalmist, chiefly respecting works of this kind: and, *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* It is a fit matter of devotion, warranted by the practice of good men, to implore God's manifestation of his justice and power this way. *O Lord God, to whom**

SERM.
XI.

Psal. l. 1.
lx. 6. lxii.

11.

Ps. cvii. 43.

Jer. ix. 24.

Hos. xiv. 9.

Ps. xciv. 3.

Psal. xxviii.
5, x. 4.

Isa. v. 12.

Ps. xcii. 6.

(Isa. xxvi.
11.)

Lord, when
thy hand is
lifted up,

they will
not see.

a Luke xii.
56.

Matt. xvi. 3.

Ps. lxxvii.

12. cxliii. 5.

Psal. cxi. 2.

xeiv. 1, 2.

SERM. *vengeance belongeth, shew thyself: lift up thyself; thou*
 XI. *Judge of the earth.* It is God's manner hereby to notify

Psal. ix. 16. himself. *The Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth.* He for this very purpose doth interpose his hand; Psal. cix. 27. *that men may know it is his hand, and that the Lord hath done it; that, as it is in Esay, they may see, and know, and* Isa. xli. 20. *consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord* (Ezek. vii. 27.) *hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.*

^a He manageth things, so that men may be brought to know, may be induced to acknowledge his authority, and his equity in the management thereof; that *they may know* Ps. lix. 13. *that he, whose name is Jehovah, is the most High over all* lxxiii. 18. *the earth: that they may say, Verily there is a reward for* lxvii. 2. *the righteous: verily there is a God that judgeth the earth.* Ps. lviii. 11.

In fine, the knowledge of God's special providence is frequently represented as a mean of nourishing our faith and hope in him, as a ground of thankfulness and praise to him, as an incentive of the best affections (of holy joy, and humble fear, and hearty love) toward him: wherefore we ought to seek it, and we may attain it.

There are consequently some distinctive marks, or characters, by which we may perceive God's hand: and such may these be which follow, (drawn from the special nature, manner, adjuncts, and consequences of events;) upon which may be grounded rules declarative of special providence, such as commonly will hold, although sometimes they may admit exceptions, and should be warily applied.

1. The wonderful strangeness of events, compared with the ordinary course of things, or the natural influence of causes; when effects are performed by no visible means, or by means disproportionate, unsuitable, repugnant to the effect. Sometimes great exploits are achieved, mighty forces are discomfited, huge structures are demolished, designs backed with all advantages of wit and strength are confounded, none knows how, by no considerable means

^a God thereby doth support and encourage good men.

He doth thereby convince and confound ill men. Psal. ix. 19, 20.

He thereby doth instruct all men. Isaiah xxvi. 9.

that appear ; nature rising up in arms against them ; panic fears seizing on the abettors of them, dissensions and treacheries springing up among the actors ; sudden deaths snatching away the principal instruments of them. As, when *the stars in their course fought against Sisera* : when the winds and skies became auxiliaries to Theodosius : when *the Lord thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel* : when *the Lord made the host of Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, of horses, of a great host ;—whence they arose and fled* : when *the children of Ammon and Moub stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them ; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another* : when *the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men ; and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses* : when the mighty power of Antiochus was, as it is said, to be broken without hands : and when, as it is foretold, *a stone cut out of the mountain without hands should break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold*. Such events do speak God to be their cause, by his invisible efficacy supplying the defect of apparent means.

^b So likewise, when by weak forces great feats are accomplished, and impotency triumpheth over might ; when, as the Prophet saith, *the captives of the mighty are taken away, and the prey of the terrible is delivered* : when *one man, as is promised, doth chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight* : when a *stripling furnished only with faith and a pebble, shall knock down a monstrous giant, armed with a helmet of brass and a coat of mail, with a huge target, sword, and spear : when successes arrive like those recorded in Scripture under the conduct of Joshua, Gideon, Jonathan, Asa, Jehosaphat ; wherein very small forces by uncouth means did subdue formidable powers : this doth argue that God doth interpose ; with

Judg. v.20.

Aug.deCiv

Dei, v. 26.

1 Sam. vii.

10.

2 Sam. xxii.

14, 15.

2Kings vii.

6.

Psal. liii. 5.

xlvi. 6.

2 Chr. xx.

23.

2Kings xix

35.

Dan. viii.

25. ii. 45.

Isa. xlix.

25.

Josh. xxiii.

10.

Lev. xxvi.8.

Deut. xxxii.

30.

* 1 Sam.

xvii. 5, 40.

Judg. vii. 7.

1 Sam. xiv.

6.

2 Chron.

xiv. 11. xx.

12, 17.

2 Chron.

xiv. 11.

^b Vid. Artabani Orat. apud Herod. Polyinn. pag. 246. Hem. II. *. ver. 688.

SERM. *whom, as it is said, it is all one to save by many, or by few*

XI. *and those that have no power; whose power is perfected in*

1 Sam. xiv. 6. *weakness; who breaketh the arm of the wicked, and weak-*
 2 Cor. xii 9. *eneth the strength of the mighty, and delivereth the poor*
 Job. xii. 21. *from him that is too strong for him.*
 xxxviii. 15.

Ps. x. 15. ^a Also, when great policy and craft do effect nothing, but
 xxxvii. 17. are blasted of themselves, or baffled by simplicity: when
 xxxv. 10. cunningly-laid designs are soon thwarted and overturned:

(Ps. lxxvi. 5.) when most perspicacious and profound counsellors are so
 * Hom. Od. ψ. ver. 11. blinded, or so infatuated, as to mistake in plain cases, to

2 Sam. xv. 31. oversee things most obvious and palpable: when profane,
 Ruffinus, malicious, subtle, treacherous politicians (such as Abi-
 S. Paul, melech, Achitophel, Haman, Sejanus, Stilico, Borgia, with
 d'Ancre, many like occurring in story) are not only supplanted in
 de Luna, &c. their wicked contrivances, but dismally chastised for them:
 the occurrences do more than insinuate divine wisdom to
 intervene, countermining and confounding such devices.

Isa. xlv. 25. For, he it is, who, as the Scripture telleth us, *maketh the*
 Job v. 12, *diviners mad; turneth wise men backward, and maketh their*
 13. *knowledge foolish; disappointeth the devices of the crafty;*
 (Ps. xxxiii. 10.) *so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise; taketh*
 βουλὴν πολυ- *the wise in their own craftiness, and turneth down the coun-*
 πλόκων ἐξί- *sel of the froward headlong.*
 σήσεν.

Whenever a just cause or honest design, without any support or succour of worldly means, (without authority, power, wit, learning, eloquence,) doth against all opposition of violence and art prevail; this signifieth him to yield a special countenance and aid thereto, who, to depress human pride, and advance his own glory, *hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are: (that are with us in most request and esteem.)*

Again, when plots, with extreme caution and secrecy contrived in darkness, are by improbable means, by unaccountable accidents disclosed and brought to light; *a bird of the air*, as the Wise Man speaketh, *telling the matter;*

the stones in the wall, as it is in the Prophet, crying out SERM.
XI.
 Treason. The King cannot sleep: to divert him the chron- Hab. ii. 11.
 icle is called for; Mordecai's service is there pitched on; an inquiry is made concerning his recompence; honour is
 decreed him; so doth Haman's cruel device come out. Pity
 seizeth on a pitiless heart toward one among a huge num-
 ber of innocents devoted to slaughter: that he may be saved,
 a letter must be sent: in that, words inserted suggesting
 the manner of execution; that carried to the wise King,
 who presently smelleth it out: so this day's plot was dis-
 covered. Such events, whence can they well proceed, but
 from the all-piercing and ever watchful care of him, *whose* (Ps. cxxiv. 4.)
eyes, as Elihu said, are upon the ways of man, and he seeth Job xxxiv.
all his goings? There is no darkness nor shadow of death, 21, 22.
where the workers of iniquity shall hide themselves: for hell Job. xxvi. 6.
is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. Ps. cxxxii.
2, &c.

Also, when ill men by their perverse wilinesss do notably
 befool and ensnare themselves, laying trains to blow up their
 own designs, involving themselves in that ruin and mischief
 into which they studied to draw others; as when Saul, ex-
 posing David's life to hazard, increaseth his honour; when
 the Persian nobles, incensing the king against Daniel, do
 occasion his growth in favour, with their own destruction;
 when Haman, by contriving to destroy God's people, doth
 advance them, and rearing a gallows for Mordecai, doth
 prepare it for himself: when it happeneth according to those
 passages in the Psalms, *the wicked are taken in the devices* Psal. x. 2.
that they imagined; in the net which they hid is their own ix. 15
foot taken: He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into xxxv. 8.
the ditch which he made: His mischief shall return upon cxl. 5.
his own head, and his violent dealings shall come upon his Psal. vii. 15.
own pate: these are pregnant evidences of God's just and lvii. 6.
wise providence; for the Lord is known by the judgment Ps. vii. 16.
that he executeth; the wicked is swayed in the work of his v. 10.
own hand. Psal. ix. 16.

All such occurrences, containing in them somewhat, if
 not downrightly miraculous, yet very admirable, in like
 manner deflecting from the stream of human affairs, as

SERM. XI. miracles do surmount the course of nature, most reasonably may, most justly should, be ascribed to the special operation of him, who *only doeth wonderful things*.

Ps. lxxii. 18.
lxxxvi. 10.

2. Another character of special Providence is, the seasonableness and suddenness of events. When that, which in itself is not ordinary, nor could well be expected, doth fall out happily, in the nick of an exigency, for the relief of innocence, the encouragement of goodness, the support of a good cause, the furtherance of any good purpose; (so that there is occasion to acknowledge with the Prophet, *Thou didst terrible things, that we looked not for;*) this is a shrewd indication, that God's hand is then concerned; not only the event being notable, but the connection thereof with circumstances of need being more admirable.

Thus in time of distress and despondency, when a man is utterly forlorn, and destitute of all visible relief, when, as the Psalmist speaketh, *refuge faileth him, and no man careth for his soul*: if then *ἐπιαιχος βοήθεια*, an *opportune succour* doth arrive; he is then unreasonable and ingrateful, if he doth not avow a special Providence, and thankfully ascribe that event unto him who is *our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble*; ^a *a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat*: ^b *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble*. This is that, for which, in the ^c 107th Psalm, the divine goodness is so magnificently celebrated; this is the burden of that pathetic rapture, wherein we by repeated wishes and exhortations are instigated to bless God; his wonderfully relieving the children of men in their need and distress: this is that, which God himself in the Prophet representeth as a most satisfactory demonstration of his providence. *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys, &c. That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand to-*

Psal. cxlii.

4.

(Psal. xlv.

25.

cviii. 12.)

Heb. iv. 16.

Ps. xlv. 1.

ix. 9. xlv.

24. xxxvii.

39. xxvii. 5.

lxix. 14.

xviii. 6.

^a Is. xxv. 4.

xxxiii. 2.

^b Jer. xiv. 8.

Job xxxiii.

18.

^c Psal. cvii.

8. 13, 21.

31.

Isa. xli. 17.

&c.

gether, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it. SERM.
XI.

So also, when pestilent enterprises, managed by close fraud, or by impetuous violence, are brought to a head, and come near to the point of being executed; the sudden detection or seasonable obstruction of them, do argue the ever vigilant eye and the all-powerful hand to be engaged: God ever doth see those deceitful workers of iniquity, laying their mischief in the dark; he is always present at their cabals and clandestine meetings wherein they brood upon it. He often doth suffer it to grow on to a pitch of maturity, till it be thoroughly formed, till it be ready to be hatched, and break forth in its mischievous effects; then in a trice he snappeth and crusheth it to nothing. God beholdeth violent men setting out in their unjust attempts, he letteth them proceed on in a full career, until they reach the edge of their design, then instantly he checketh, putteth in a spoke, he stoppeth, he tumbleth them down, or turneth them backward. Thus was Haman's plot dashed, when he had procured a royal decree, when he had fixed a time, when he had issued forth letters to destroy God's people. Thus was Pharaoh overwhelmed, when he had just overtaken the children of Israel. Thus were the designs of Abimelech, of Absalom, of Adonijah, of Sanballat, nipped. Thus when Sennacherib with an unmatched host had encamped against Jerusalem, and had to appearance swallowed it, God did put a hook into his nose, and turned him back into his own land. Thus when Antiochus was marching on furiously to accomplish his threat of turning Jerusalem into a charnel, a noisome disease did intercept his progress. Thus when the profane Caligula did mean to discharge his bloody rage on the Jews for refusing to worship him, a domestic sword did presently give vent to his revengeful breath. Thus also, when Julian had by his policy and authority projected to overthrow our religion, his plot soon was quashed, and his life snapped away by an unknown hand. Thus, whenever the enemy doth come in like a flood, (threatening immediately to overflow and overturn all things,) the Spirit of the Lord doth lift up a standard against him; that is, God's

Esth. iii.

Exod. xiv.

2 Kings xix

28.

2 Mac ix. 4.

Joseph.

xviii. 12.

Chrysost.

in Babyl.

Orat. 2.

Naz. Orat.

4.

Isa. lix. 19.

SERM. XI. secret efficacy doth suddenly restrain and repress his outrage. This usually is the method of Divine Providence. (Job xxxviii. 11.) God could prevent the ^cbeginnings of wicked designs; he could supplant them in their first onsets; he could any where sufflaminate and subvert them: but he rather winketh for a time, and suffereth the designers to go on, till they are ^dmounted to the top of confidence, and good people are cast on the brink of ruin; then ^eἀπο μηχανῆς, surprisingly, unexpectedly he striketh in with effectual succour; so declaring how vain the presumption is of impious undertakers; how needful and sure his protection is over innocent people; how much reason the one hath to dread him, and the other to confide in him. Then is God seen, then his care and power will be acknowledged, when he snatcheth us from the jaws of danger, when *our soul doth escape as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.*

Psal. xxiv. 7.

3. Another character of special Providence is, the great utility and beneficialness of occurrences, especially in regard to the public state of things, and to great personages, in whose welfare the public is much concerned. To entitle every petty chance that arriveth to special Providence, may signify lightness; to father on God the mischiefs issuing from our sin and folly, may savour of profaneness: but to ascribe every ^fgrand and beneficial event unto his good hand, hath ever been reputed wisdom and Justice. *It hath been*, saith Balbus in Cicero, *a common opinion among the ancients, that whatever did bring great benefit to mankind, was never done without divine goodness toward men.* And well might they deem it so, seeing to do so is most agreeable to his nature, and appertaining to his charge, and may appear to be so by good argumentation *a priori*. For, that God doth govern our affairs, may be deduced from his essential attributes; and,

^c Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐν προομιῶν, μηδὲ εὐθείας, ἔθος αὐτῶ ποιῶντων, Vid. Chrys. ad Olymp.

^d Ὅταν πορευθῶν, ὅταν ἀδύνηθῶ, &c. Ibid.

^e Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus Inciderit.

^f Magna dii curant, parva negligunt. Cic. ii. de Nat. Deor.

^g Quicquid magnam utilitatem generi adferret humano, id non sine divina bonitate erga homines fieri arbitrabantur. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.

consequently, that he doth in especial manner order these things, which are the most proper and worthy objects of his governance. God indeed doth not disregard any thing; he watcheth over the least things by his general and ordinary providence; so that nothing in nature may deviate from its course, or transgress the bounds prescribed to it. He therefore *clotheth the grass of the field; he provideth for the raven his food, and the young lions seek their meat from him; without his care a sparrow doth not fall to the ground; by it, all the hairs of our head are numbered.* But his more special hand of providence is chiefly employed in managing affairs of great moment and benefit to mankind; and peculiarly those which concern his people, who do profess to worship and serve him; whose welfare he tendereth with more than ordinary care and affection. He therefore hath a main stroke in all revolutions and changes of state: he presideth in all great counsels and undertakings; in the waging of war, in the settlement of peace; in the dispensation of victory and good success. He is peculiarly interested in the protection of princes, the chief ministers of his kingdom; and in preservation of his people, the choice object of his care, from violent invasions, and treacherous surprises; so as to prevent disasters incident, or to deliver from them. *It is he that, as the Psalmist says, doth give salvation unto kings; who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.* It is he that continually keepeth Israel without ever sleeping, or slumbering; who is the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof; who is in the midst of her, that she shall not be moved; who hath declared, that he will help her, and that right early; that he will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance; that no weapon formed against his Church shall prosper; that salvation belongeth to the Lord, and his blessing is upon his people. When, therefore, any remarkable event, highly conducing to the public good of Church and State, (supporting them in a good condition, or rescuing them from imminent danger,) doth appear, it is most reasonable and most just, to ascribe the accomplishment thereof to God's hand. When any pernicious enter-

SERM.
XI.

Matt. vi. 30.
Ps. civ. 14.
cxlvii. 9.

Job xxxviii.
39.
Ps. civ. 21.

^a Matt. x.
29, 30.

Dan. iv. 25.
Psal. lxxv.
7.

Psal. xli.
9.
Prov. xxi.

31.
1 Chron.
xxix. 11
Wisd. vi. 4.

Psal. cxliv.
10.
Eccles. x.
20.

Psal. xviii.
50. xxi. 1.
xxxiii. 16.

Ps. cxxi. 4.
Jer. xiv. 8.
Psal. xlv. 5.

Psal. xciv.
14.

Isa. liv. 17.
Psal. iii. 8

SERM. prise, levelled against the safety of prince and people, is

X1. disappointed, it is fit we should profess and say, *The righteous Lord hath heven the snares of the ungodly in picces.*

(O. T.) 4. Another like mark of special providence is, the righteousness of the case, or the advantage springing from events unto the maintenance of right, the vindication of innocence, the defence of truth, the encouragement of piety and virtue. God naturally is the judge of right, the guardian of innocence, the patron of truth, and

Psal. ix. 9. promoter of goodness. *The Lord is a refuge to the oppressed: He is a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow: He will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor: ^a He executeth righteousness, and judgment for all that are oppressed: He blesseth the righteous, and compasseth him with favour as with a shield: He preserveth the souls of the righteous, and delivereth them out of the hand of the ungodly: All his paths are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

Whenever, therefore, right is oppressed, or perilously invaded; when innocence is grossly abused, or sorely beset; when piety is fiercely opposed, or cunningly undermined; when good men for the profession of truth, or the practice of virtue, are persecuted, or grievously threatened with mischief; then may we presume that God is not unconcerned, nor will prove backward to reach forth his succour. And when accordingly we find that signal aid or deliverance do then arrive; it is most reasonable to suppose, that God particularly hath engaged himself, and exerted his power in their behalf. For, seeing it is his proper and peculiar work, seeing it most becometh and behoveth him to appear in such cases, affording his helpful countenance; when he doeth it, we should be ready to acknowledge it. In such a case, *The hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies,* saith the Prophet.

5. Another character is, the correspondence of events to the prayers and desires of good men. For seeing it is the duty and constant practice of good men, in all exigencies to implore God's help; seeing such prayers have,

Ps. lxi. 13.
cii. 1, 2.
cxi. 6. lx.
l. lvi. 1.

as St. James telleth us, a mighty energy, it being God's property, by them to be moved to impart his powerful assistance; seeing God most plainly and frequently hath declared, and obliged himself by promise, that he will hear them, so as to perform whatever is expedient in their behalf; seeing we have many notable experiments recorded in Scripture (as those of Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, Elias, Daniel, and the like) of prayers bringing down wonderful effects from heaven, with which the testimonies of all times and the daily experience of good men do conspire^h; seeing the presumption of such efficacy is the main ground and encouragement of devotion: we have great reason, whenever events are answerable to such prayers, to ascribe the performance of them to God's hand: great reason we have in such cases to cry out with David, *Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand*: just cause have we, according to his pattern, thankfully to acknowledge God's favour in answering our petitions: *The king*, said he, *shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! For thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the requests of his lips.*

SERM. XI.
 Jam. v. 16.
 Ps. lvi. 9.
 Ps. xxxiv. 15.
 xci. 15.
 cxlv. 18.
 2 Chron. xiv. 11. xx. 9. xxxii. 20.
 2 Kings xix. 15.
 1 Kings xvii. 1, &c.
 Ps. xx. 6.
 Ps. xxi. 1, 2.
 Ps. xxx. 2.
 lxvi. 17.
 cxviii. 5.

6. Again, the proceedings of God (especially in way of judgment, or of dispensing rewards and punishments) discover their original by their kind and countenance, which usually do bear a near resemblance, or some significant correspondence, to the actions upon which they are grounded.

Punishments, saith a Father, *are the forced offsprings of willing faults*: and answerably, rewards are the children of good deeds: and God, who formeth both, doth commonly order it so, that the children in their complexion and features shall resemble their parents. So that the deserts of men shall often be legible in the recompences

Ἐκυσίων κακῶν ἀκυσία ἐκγίναται Damasc.
 Τῆς καλᾶς τῆς ἀμαρτίας τὸν τρόπον μιμεῖται. Chrys. ἀνδρ.

^h Πόσαι μυριάδες ἀνδρῶν καὶ φάλαγγες, ὅσας ἰκετεύοντες μόνον ἡμεῖς, καὶ Θεὸς βουλῆς καταργήσατο; Naz. Orat. 4.

How many myriads and squadrons of men were there, whom we only praying, and God willing, discomfited? saith Nazianzene in reference to the defeating of Julian's design.

SERM. conferred or inflicted on them: not according to the natural result of their practice, but with a comely reference

XL.

thereto; apt to raise in them a sense of God's hand, and to wring from them an acknowledgment of his equity in so dealing with them. So when humble modesty is advanced to honour, and ambitious confidence is thrown into disgrace; when liberality is blessed with increase, and avarice is cursed with decay of estate; when craft incurreth disappointment, and simplicity findeth good success; when haughty might is shattered, and helpless innocence is preserved; when the calumnious tongue is

Ps. xii. 3. blistered, *the flattering lips are cut off*, the blasphemous

Rev. xvi. 6. throat is torn out; when bloody oppressors have *blood given them to drink*, and come to welter in their own gore; (an accident which almost continually doth happen;) when treacherous men by their own confidents, or by themselves, are betrayed; when retaliations of vengeance are ministered, extorting confessions like to that

Judg. i. 7. of Adoni-bezek, *As I have done, so God hath requited me*; deserving such exprobrations as that of Samuel to Agag,

1 Sam. xv. *As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women*; grounding such reflections

2 Macc. ix. 28. as that concerning Antiochus, *Thus the murderer and blasphemer having suffered most grievously, as he entreated other men, so died he a miserable death*; by such occurrences the finger of God doth point out and indicate itself; they speak themselves immediately to come

Luke xiv. 12. from that just God, who doth ἀνταποδίδουσι, render to men answerably to their doings; who payeth men their due,

Rom. xii. 19. sometimes in value, often *in specie*, according to the strictest way of reckoning. *He*, as the Prophet saith, *is*

Jer. xxxii. 19. *great in counsel, and mighty in work: for his eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruits of his doings.*

Ps. lxii. 12. This indeed is a sort of administration most conformable to God's exact justice, and most conducive to his holy designs of instructing and correcting offenders. He therefore hath declared it to be his way. *It is*, (saith the Prophet,

Jer. i. 15. li. 49. directing his speech to the instruments of divine

vengeance upon Babylon,) *the vengeance of the Lord: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.* And *the day of the Lord* (saith another Prophet, concerning the like judgment upon Edom,) *is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.* Thereby doth God mean to declare himself the Judge and Governor of men: For, *I will,* saith he in Ezekiel, *do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them, and they shall know that I am the Lord.* Farther,

SERM.
XI

Obad. 15.
Ezek xxxv.
15.

Ezek. vii.
27.
Job xxxiv.
11.

7. Another argument of special Providence is, the harmonious conspiracy of various accidents to one end or effect. If that one thing should hit advantageously to the production of some considerable event, it may with some plausibility be attributed to fortune, or common providence: yet that divers things, having no dependence or coherence one with the other, in divers places, through several times, should all join their forces to compass it, cannot well otherwise than be ascribed to God's special care wisely directing to his own hand powerfully wielding, those concurrent instruments to one good purpose. For it is beside the nature, it is beyond the reach of fortune, to range various causes in such order. Blind fortune cannot apprehend or catch the seasons and junctures of things, which arise from the motions of causes in their nature indifferent and arbitrary: to it therefore no such event can reasonably be imputed. So to the bringing about our Lord's passion, (that great event, which is so particularly assigned to God's hand,) we may observe the monstrous treachery of Judas, the strange malignity of the Jewish rulers, the prodigious levity of the people, the wonderful easiness of Pilate, with other notable accidents, to have jumped in order thereto. So also that a malicious traitor should conceive kindness toward any, that he should be mistaken in the object of his favour, that he should express his mind in a way subject to deliberate examination, in terms apt to breed suspicion where the plot was laid; that the counsellors should despise it; and

—ἢ κατὰ
τῶν τῷ Θεῷ
μαστίγων
πρωτος ἰφ-
ευος κολα-
σησια, ταῦθ'
ὑπαμεινοντα
δικαιότητα
ψήφου.
Euseb. lib. i.
de Vit.
Const. de
Maximino
sub finem.
Is oculos
qui eruerat
Christianis,
ipse visu
orbatus.

SERM XI. yet not smother it; that the king instantly, by a light darted into his mind, should desery it: these things so happily meeting, may argue God (who mouldeth the hearts, who guideth the hands, who enlighteneth the minds of men) to have been engaged in the detection of this day's black conspiracy.

Such are some characters of special Providence; each of which singly appearing in any concurrence would in a considerate man breed an opinion thereof; each of them being very congruous to the supposition of it; no such appearances being otherwise so clearly and cleverly explicable, as by assigning the divine hand for their principal cause. But the connection of them all in one event (when divers odd accidents do befall at a seasonable time, according to exigency for the public benefit, the preservation of princes, the security of God's people, the protection of right, the maintenance of truth and piety, according to the wishes and prayers of good men, with proper retribution and vengeance upon the wretched designers of mischief; such a complication, I say, of these marks in one event) may thoroughly suffice to raise a firm persuasion, to force a confident acknowledgment concerning God's providence, in any considerate and ingenuous person: it readily will dispose such persons upon any such occasion to say, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

Vid. Med.
Sic. lib. xv
p. 166.

Psal. cxviii.
23.

Εὐμήσημίᾳ
καὶ θαύματα,
ἀλλ' ἰσικότης ση-
μείους παράγ-
ματα, δείγμα-
τα τῆς
τῷ Θεῷ προ-
νοίας, καὶ
ἀντιλήψεις
ἀφ' αὐτοῦ.
Chrys. ad
Olymp.
Ep. i.

Notwithstanding therefore any obscurity or intricacy that sometime may appear in the course of Providence, notwithstanding any general exceptions that may by perverse incredulity be alleged against the conduct of things, there are good marks observable, whereby (if we are not very blockish, drowsy, supine, lazy, or froward; if we will consider wisely, with industrious attention and care, with minds pure from vain prejudices, and corrupt affections) we may discern and understand God's doing. Which to do is the first duty specified in my text: upon which having insisted so largely, I shall (hoping you will favour me with a little patience) briefly touch the rest.

II. It is the duty of us all, upon such remarkable oc-

currences of Providence, to *fear* God: *All men*, it is said, *shall fear*. It is our duty in such cases to be affected with all sorts of fear; with a fear of awful dread, with a fear of hearty reverence, with a fear of sober caution; yea, sometimes with a fear of dejecting consternation. When God doth appear *clad with his robes of vengeance and zeal*, denouncing and discharging judgment; when he representeth himself *fearful in praises, terrible in his doings towards the children of men, working terrible things in righteousness*; it should strike into our hearts a dread of his glorious majesty, of his mighty power, of his severe justice, of *his glorious and fearful name*: it should instil into our minds a reverence of his excellent wisdom, his exceeding goodness, his perfect holiness: it should breed in our souls a solicitous care of displeasing and provoking him: it should cause us in our hearts to shake and tremble before him. 'Tis that of the Psalmist to be put in practice, *Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob*. Such dispensations are in their nature declarative of those divine attributes which do require such affections: they are set before our eyes to cast us into a very serious and solemn frame; to abash and deter us from offending, by observing the danger of incurring punishments like to those which we behold inflicted upon presumptuous transgressors; upon those who do heinously violate right, or furiously impugn truth, or profanely despise piety; who earnestly prosecute wicked enterprizes; who persecute the friends of God with outrageous violence, or treacherous subtilty. Upon infliction of such punishments, *all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously*, saith God himself, declaring the nature and drift of them. They do plainly demonstrate, that there is no presuming to escape being detected in our close machinations by God's all-seeing eye; being defeated in our bold attempts by God's almighty hand; being sorely chastised for our iniquity by God's impartial judgment. Extremely blind and stupid therefore must we be, or mon-

SERM.
XI.Job xxxvii.
22. xiii 11.

Psal lii. 6.

Ixxviii. 35.

Dan. vi. 26.

Isa. lix. 17.

Exod. xv.

11.

Psal. lxxvi.

3, 5. lxxv 5.

(cxxx. 3.)

Deut.

xxviii. 53.

x. 17.

Isa. lxxvi. 2.

Psal. xxxiii.

S. cxiv. 7.

Deut. xvii.

13. xiii 11.

xix. 20.

SERM. XI. strouly sturdy and profane, if such experiments of divine power and justice do not awe us, and fright us from sin.

Hos. xi. 10. *When the lion roareth, who will not fear? When the trumpet is blown in the city, shall not the people be afraid? Shall he, at whom the mountains quake, and the hills melt; whose indignation the nations are not able to abide; at whose wrath the earth doth shake and tremble; at whose reproof the pillars of heaven are astonished; shall he visibly frown, shall his wrath flame out, shall he shake his rod of exemplary vengeance over us, and we stand void of sense or fear? If so, then surely a brutish dotage, or a gigantic stoutness doth possess us.*

Amos iii. 6, 8.
Nah. i. 5.
Jer. x. 10.
Psal. civ. 32. xviii. 7.
lxxvi. 8.
cxliii. 2.
Job xxvi. 11.
(Isa. lxiv. 3.
Ezek. xxi. 10.
Isa. xxv. 3.
lix. 18, 19.)

III. We are in such cases obliged to *declare God's work*; that is, openly to acknowledge and avow, to applaud and celebrate the special providence of God, with his adorable perfections displayed in such events; to the glory of God's name, in expression of our reverence and gratitude toward him, for the common edification of men; for which uses they greatly serve, to which purposes they are designed. We should not view such providential occurrences, like dumb beasts, with a dull or careless silence, as if we did not mind them, or were not concerned in them: we should not suppress or stifle the knowledge of them in our breasts, as if they were barely matters of private consideration and use; we should not let our observation and resentment of them be fruitless, so as to yield no honour to God, no benefit to man. But we should propagate and convey them into others: in so loud a tone, in so lively a strain we should vent them, as thereby to excite the notice, to inflame the affections of all men within the reach of our voice; provoking them to conspire with us in acknowledgment of God's power and wisdom, in acclamation to his justice and goodness. This is the due improvement of our *glory*; that peculiar excellency, wherein chiefly (except in our reason) we do surpass all creatures; that without which our reason itself is more than half unprofitable; that whereby we put our best member to its best use. For this we have the devout Psalmist's pious resolutions, his exemplary performances,

Psal. lvii. 8.

his zealous wishes, his earnest exhortations to guide and **SERM.**
 move us. *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy ma- **XI.**
jesty, and of thy wondrous works. Men shall speak of the Psal. cxlv.
might of thy terrible acts ; and I will declare thy greatness. 5, 6, 11.
They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of (lxxvii. 12.
thy power. So did he signify his resolution. *I have not* ix. 14.)
hid thy righteousness within my heart ; I have declared thy Psal. xl. 10.
faithfulness and thy salvation : I have not concealed thy
loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.
 So his conscience testified of his practice. *O that men would* Psal. cvii.
praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful 8, 15, 21,
works to the children of men : that they would offer the sa- 22, 31.
crifice of thanksgiving, and declare his works with gladness.
 So doth he pour forth his desire. *O clap your hands, all ye* Psal. xlvii. 1.
people ; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. Sing xvii. 2, 3.
unto the Lord, bless his name : shew forth his salvation from cv. 2. lxxvi.
day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his won- 5, 2. (lxxvi.
ders among all people. Come and see the works of God. 16.) cv. 1.
Sing forth the honour of his name, make his praise glorious.
O give thanks unto the Lord ; call upon his name ; make
known his deeds among the people. So doth he summon,
 so doth he urge us to this practice ; and in his deportment
 we may see our duty.*

IV. It is peculiarly the duty and practice of good men upon such occasions to feel and to express religious joy. *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord.* Good men indeed then have great matter, and much cause, on many accounts, to be glad.

It becometh them to rejoice, as having an universal complacency in God's proceedings, as gratefully relishing all dispensations of Providence. They, as pious, are disposed to bless and praise God for all things incident, and cannot therefore but rejoice ; joy being an inseparable companion of gratitude and praise. Hence, *Light is sown for the* Psal. xcvi.
righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Hence, 11.
The voice of salvation and rejoicing is in the tabernacles of Psal. cxviii.
the righteous. Hence, *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous :* 15.
for praise is comely for the upright ; Psal. xxxiii. 1.
 is an exhortation backed with a very good reason.

SERM. They cannot but find satisfaction in observing God's
 XI. providence notably discovered, to the confirmation of
 their faith, and cherishing their hopes; together with
 the conviction of infidelity, and confusion of profaneness.

Ps. xxxiii. 21. *Our heart, saith the Psalmist, shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*

It is to them no small pleasure to behold God's holy perfections illustriously shining forth; and the glory of him (who is the principal object of their love, their reverence, their hope, and confidence,) to be conspicuously advanced. *Rejoice, saith the Psalmist, O ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth.*

It is to them ground of exceeding comfort, to receive so clear pledges of God's love and favour, his truth and fidelity, his bounty and munificence toward them, expressed in such watchful care over them, such protection in dangers, such aid in needs, such deliverance from mischiefs vouchsafed to them. Such benefits they cannot receive from God's hand, without that cheerfulness which always doth adhere to gratitude^a. *I will, saith David, sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me. Because thou hast been my helper, therefore in the shadow of thy wings I will rejoice. My lips shall greatly rejoice in thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them.*

They are also greatly refreshed with apprehension of the

^a Sen. de Benef. ii. 22. Cum accipiendum judicaverimus, hilares accipiamus, profitentes gaudium, &c. *Vid. ib.* 30.

happy fruits sprouting from such dispensations of Providence; such as are the benefit of mankind, the peace and prosperity of the civil state, the preservation, settlement, enlargement, advancement of God's Church, the support of right, the succour of innocency, the maintenance of truth, the encouragement and furtherance of piety; the restraint of violence, the discountenance of error, the correction of vice and impiety. In these things they, as faithful servants of God, and real friends of goodness, as bearing hearty good-will and compassion to mankind, as true lovers of their country, as living and sensible members of the Church, cannot but rejoice. Seeing by these things their own best interest, (which is no other than the advantage of goodness,) their chief honour, (which consists in the promotion of divine glory,) their truest content, (which is placed in the prosperity of Zion,) are highly furthered; how can they look on them springing up, without great delight and complacency? O, saith the Psalmist, *sing unto the Lord—for he hath done marvellous things. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.* And, *Sing, O heavens, crieth the Prophet, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O ye mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted.* And, *When, saith he, ye shall see this, (the comfort of God's people,) your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.*

Ps. cxxii. 6.
(1 Cor. xii.
26.)
Ps. xcvi.
i. 3.

Isa. xlix. 13.
Ps. xcvi.
11, 13.

Isa. lxi. 14.

Even in the frustration of wicked designs, attended with severe execution of vengeance on the contrivers and abettors of them, they may have a pleasant satisfaction; they must then yield a cheerful applause to Divine justice. *The righteous, saith the Psalmist, shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: and, Let the wicked, saith he, perish at the presence of God; but let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea let them exceedingly rejoice.* Whence, at God's infliction of judgment upon Babylon, it is said in Jeremy, *Then the heaven, and the earth, and all that is there-*

Ps. lviii. 10.
Job xxii. 19.
Ps. lxxviii.
2, 3.

Jer. li. 48.

SERM. *in, shall sing for Babylon*; and at the fall of mystical Ba-
 XI. bylon, in the Apocalypse it is likewise said, *Rejoice over*
 Rev. xviii. *her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for*
 20. *God hath avenged you on her.* Farther,

V. The next duty prescribed to good men in such case is to *trust in God*, that is, to have their affiance in God (upon all such like occasions, in all urgencies of need,) settled, improved and corroborated thereby. This indeed is the proper end, immediately regarding us, of God's special providence, disclosing itself in any miraculous, or in any remarkable way; to nourish in well-disposed minds that faith in God, which is the root of all piety, and ground of devotion. Such experiments are sound arguments to persuade good men, that God doth govern and order things for their best advantage; they are powerful incentives, driving them in all exigences to seek God's help; they are most convincing evidences, that God is abundantly able, very willing, and ever ready to succour them. *They*, saith the Psalmist, *that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* And, *I*, saith he, *will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings: for thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.* It is indeed a great aggravation of diffidence in God, that having *tasted and seen that the Lord is good*; having felt so manifest experience of divine goodness; having received so notable pledges of God's favourable inclination to help us; we yet will not rely upon him. As a friend, who by signal instances of kindness hath assured his good will, hath great cause of offence, if he be suspected of unwillingness in a needful season to afford his relief: so may God most justly be displeased, when we, (notwithstanding so palpable demonstrations of his kindness,) by distrusting him, do in effect question the sincerity of his friendship, or the constancy of his goodness toward us.

VI. Good men upon such occasions should *glory*: *All the upright in heart shall glory.* Should *glory*, that is, in contemplation of such providences feeling sprightly

elevations of mind and transports of affection, they should exhibit triumphant demonstrations of satisfaction and alacrity. It becometh them not in such cases to be dumpyish or demure; but jocund and crank in their humour, brisk and gay in their looks, pleasantly flippant and free in their speech, jolly and debonair in their behaviour; every way signifying the extreme complacency they take in God's doing, and the full content they taste in their state. They with solemn exultation should triumph in such events, as in victories achieved by the glorious hand of God in their behalf, in approbation of their cause, in favour toward their persons, for their great benefit and comfort. They may (not as proudly assuming to themselves the glory due to God, but as gratefully sensible of their felicity springing from God's favour) *se juctare, se laudibus effere*, (as the Hebrew word doth signify;) that is, in a sort boast, and commend themselves as very happy in their relation to God, by virtue of his protection and aid. They may (not with a haughty insolence, or wanton arrogance, but with a sober confidence and cheerfulness) insult upon baffled impiety^a, by their expressions and demeanour upbraiding the folly, the baseness, the impotency and wretchedness thereof, in competition with the wisdom, in opposition to the power of God, their friend and patron. For such carriage in such cases we have the practice and the advice of the Psalmist, to warrant and direct us. *In God, saith he, we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; and I will triumph in the works of thy hands. We will rejoice in thy salvation; and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous works. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy name, and to triumph in thy praise.* Such should be the

Ps. cxxvi. 1,
&c.Psal. xlv. 8.
xcii. 4.Ps. xx. 5.
cv. 3, 2.

Psal. cvi. 47.

^a Psal. lii. 6, 7. The righteous shall laugh at him, or, deride him, in this manner; Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength.

SERM. result (upon us) of God's merciful dispensations toward his
 XI. people.

I shall only farther remark, that the word here used is by the Greek rendered, ἐπαινεθήσονται, *they shall be praised*: which sense the original will bear, and the reason of the case may admit. For such dispensations ever do adorn integrity, and yield commendation to good men. They declare the wisdom of such persons, in adhering to God, in reposing upon God's help, in embracing such courses which God doth approve and bless: they plainly tell how dear such persons are to God; how incomparably happy in his favour, how impreguably safe under his protection; as having his infallible wisdom and his invincible power engaged on their side. This cannot but render them admirable, and their state glorious in the eyes of all men; inducing them to profess with the Psalmist, *Happy is the people, which is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.* And of such a people, that declaration from the same mouth is verified, *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day long, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted: for thou art the glory of their strength, and in thy favour their horn shall be exalted.*

Psal. cxxvi.
 3. cxxv. 1.
 &c.
 cxxxviii. 1.
 &c.

Psal. cxliv.
 15. xxxiii.
 12.

Ps. lxxxix.
 16, 17.

Such are the duties suggested in our text, as suiting these occasions, when God in a special manner hath vouchsafed to protect his people, or to rescue them from imminent mischiefs, by violent assault or by fraudulent contrivance levelled against them. I should apply these particulars to the present case solemnized by us: but I shall rather recommend the application to your sagacity, than farther infringe your patience, by spending thereon so many words as it would exact. You do well know the story, which by so many years repetition hath been impressed on your minds: and by reflecting thereon,

You will easily discern, how God, in the seasonable discovery of this execrable plot, (the masterpiece of wicked machinations ever conceived in human brain, or devised on this side hell, since the foundation of things,) in the happy deliverance of our Nation and Church from the desperate mischiefs intended toward them, in the remark-

able protection of right and truth, did signalize his providence. SERM.
XI.

You will be affected with hearty reverence toward the gracious author of our salvation, and with humble dread toward the just awarder of vengeance upon those miscreant wretches, who *digged this pit and fill into it themselves*.

You will be ready with pious acknowledgment and admiration of God's mercy, his justice, his wisdom, to declare and magnify this notable work done by him among us.

You must needs feel devout resentments of joy for the glory arising to God, and the benefits accruing to us, in the preservation of God's anointed, our just Sovereign, with his royal posterity: in the freeing our country from civil broils, disorders, and confusions; from the yokes of usurpation and slavery; from grievous extortions and rapines; from bloody persecutions and trials, with the like spawn of disastrous and tragical consequences, by this design threatened upon it; in upholding our Church (which was so happily settled, and had so long gloriously flourished) from utter ruin: in securing our profession of God's holy truth, the truly catholic faith of Christ, (refined from those drossy alloys, wherewith the rudeness and sloth of blind times, the fraud of ambition and covetous designers, the pravity of sensual and profane men had embased and corrupted it,) together with a pure worship of God, an edifying administration of God's word and sacraments, a comely, wholesome, and moderate discipline, conformable to divine prescription and primitive example; in resetting us from having impious errors, scandalous practices, and superstitious rites, with merciless violence obruded upon us: in continuing therefore to us the most desirable comforts and conveniences of our lives.

You farther considering this signal testimony of divine goodness, will thereby be moved to hope and confide in God for his gracious preservation from the like pernicious attempts against the safety of our Prince and welfare of our country, against our peace, our laws, our religion; especially

SERM. from Romish zeal and bigotry, (that mint of woful factions
XI. and combustions, of treasonable conspiracies, of barbarous
 massacres, of horrid assassinations, of intestine rebellions,
 of foreign invasions, of savage tortures and butcheries, of
holy leagues and *pious frauds*, through Christendom, and
 particularly among us,) which as it without reason damn-
 eth, so it would by any means destroy all that will not
 crouch thereto.

You will, in fine, with joyous festivity, glory and tri-
 umph in this illustrious demonstration of God's favour to-
 ward us; so as heartily to join in those due acclamations of
 blessing and praise.

*Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to
 their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare
 of the fowlers : the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*

Psal. cxxiv.
 6. (lxviii.
 32).

*Allchuiah ; Salvation, and glory, and power unto the
 Lord our God : for true and righteous are his judgments.*

Rev. xix.
 1, 2.

*Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Al-
 mighty ; just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints.*

Rev. xv. 3.

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doth won-
 drous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever :
 and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and
 Amen.*

Psal. lxxii.
 18, 19.

SERMON XII.

A CONSECRATION SERMON.

Henry the
Seventh's
Chapel,
July 4,
1663, at
the Bishop
of Man's
consecra-
tion.

PSAL. cxxxii. 16.

I will also clothe her priests with salvation.

THE context runs thus: *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I WILL ALSO CLOTHE HER PRIESTS WITH SALVATION: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud,* &c. SERM.
XII.

If all, not only inaugurations of persons, but dedications even of inanimate things to some extraordinary use, hath been usually attended with special significations of joy and festival solemnity; with great reason the consecration of a person to so high and sacred a function, as that of a Christian Bishop, (that is, of a prince, or principal pastor in God's Church,) requires most peculiar testimonies of our gratulation and content: the face of things ought then to be serene and cheerful; the thoughts of men benign and favourable; the words comfortable and auspicious.

SERM.
XII.

cious, that are uttered upon such occasion. And that ours at present should be such, the subject as well as the season of our discourse doth require. Words few, but pregnant, and affording ample matter for our best affections to work upon; and which more particularly will engage us, both to a hearty thankfulness for past benefits, and to a confident expectation of future blessings; while they acquaint us with the ancient exhibition of a gracious promise, remind us of the faithful performance thereof hitherto, and assure us of its certain accomplishment for the future. The occasion whereof was this:

King David, moved by a devout inclination to promote God's honour, and benefit the Church, had vowed to build a magnificent temple, imploring God's propitious concurrence with, and approbation of his design. Whereupon Almighty God not only declares his acceptance of that pious resolution, but rewards it with a bountiful promise, consisting of two parts; one conditional, relating to David's children and posterity, that they in an uninterrupted succession should for ever enjoy the royal dignity, in case they did constantly persist in observing his covenant, and the testimonies that he should teach them; the other more absolute, that however, what he chiefly intended concerning God's established worship and the perpetual welfare of the Church, God would have an especial care that it should fully and certainly be accomplished: that he would for ever fix his residence in Sion: that he would protect and prosper it, and all that did belong thereto; especially those that did most need his favour and assistance, the poor, the priests, and the saints, (or *gentle ones*.) This is briefly the importance of the general promise wherein is comprehended that particular one whercon we are to treat; and in which we may observe,

1. The Promiser, *I*.

2. The persons who are especially concerned in the promise, *her Priests*.

3. The thing promised, *clothing with salvation*.

1. I say, the Promiser, *I*; that is, the Lord: the most

true, the most constant, the most powerful God ; most true and sincere in the declaration of his purpose, most constant and immutable in the prosecution, most powerful and uncontrollable in the perfect execution thereof : whose words are right, and all whose works are done in truth : who will not break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips : whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all his pleasure. These glorious attributes and perfections of his, so often celebrated in holy Writ, do ground our reliance upon all God's promises, and do oblige us, notwithstanding the greatest improbabilities or difficulties objected, to believe the infallible performance of this.

SERM.
XII.

Psal. xxxiii.
I. lxxxix.
31.
Isa. lxxvi. 10.

II. The persons whom the promise mainly regards, *her Priests*. *Priests*, that is, persons peculiarly devoted to, and employed in, sacred matters ; distinguished expressly from the *poor*, (that is, other meek and humble persons ;) and from the *saints*, (that is, all other good and religious men.) And, *her Priests* ; that is, the Priests of *Sion* : of that *Sion* which *the Lord hath chosen* ; which *he hath desired for his permanent habitation* ; which he hath resolved to *rest and reside in for ever*. Whence it plainly enough follows, that the Priests and Pastors of the Christian Church are hereby, if not solely, yet principally designed. Which interpretation, because it is in a manner the foundation of our subsequent discourse, and by some it may perhaps not be readily admitted, I shall endeavour farther to confirm by these few arguments.

Contra,
2 Chron.
vii. 21.

I. Because the covenant here mentioned is not, as to the main parts thereof, of a conditional or temporary nature, but absolute and perpetual ; and must therefore be understood to respect the Christian Church : (that of the Jews being long since rejected, their temple demolished, their *Sion* utterly forsaken.) For although one particular contained therein, concerning the continual succession of David's posterity in the regal authority over *Israel*, hath a condition explicitly annexed ; (and, consequently, the effects depending upon the performance of that condition were contingent and mutable ;) yet all the rest of this co-

Vide
2 Chron.
vii. 16.

SERM.
XII.

venant (or promise) is conceived in terms peremptory and expressly importing perpetuity. *This is my rest for ever*, ער ער, that is, as the Greek translators render it, εἰς αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, (*in seculum seculi*,) that is, to the end of this world; as εἰς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων denotes the end of all worlds, or the most perfect sempiternity. And that it doth really in this case denote a proper and unlimited perpetuity, is also evident by those explications thereof in the eighty-ninth Psalm, where the very same covenant is, as to some parts thereof, more largely recorded. *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David: his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me: it shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.* No words can express more fully a perpetual duration, or at least one co-extended with the duration of the world, than those do. And the Prophet Jeremy, referring also to this very covenant, and particularly to this very clause thereof, thus expresses the matter: *Thus saith the Lord; If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.* But farther,

Ver. 35,
36, 37.Jer. xxxiii.
20, 21.
Vide 2 Chr.
vii. 16.

2. The completion of this individual promise is both by the Prophets foretold, and expressed by the Evangelists, to appertain to the times of the Gospel. Ye heard even now the words of Jeremy, which are by him applied to those times, when God would cause *the Branch of righteousness*, that is, Jesus of Nazareth, our blessed Saviour) *to grow up unto David, who should execute judgment and righteousness in the land.* In those days, saith he farther, *shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, (or rather, which he shall be called, as not only the vulgar Latin and the Greek interpreters, but the Chaldee also read it,) THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* Likewise in the fifty-fifth of Isaiah, God thus invites the

Jer. xxxiii.
15.

Verse 16.

Gentiles: *Incline your ear, and come unto me ; hear, and your soul shall live ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David :* that is, SERM. XII. Isa. lv. 3.

I will ratify that everlasting covenant, which, in your behalf, I once made with David, and will confer on you those favours which I faithfully promised him ; relating to this very promise also. For both in Solomon's prayer, (2 Chron. vi.) which in all probability was indited about the same time, and upon the same occasion with this Psalm, and in the eighty-ninth Psalm, the benefits of the same covenant are called *the mercies of David*. *O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed, remember the mercies of David thy servant, saith Solomon : and, My mercy, saith God, will I keep with him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him : and, My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him ; that is, my faithful (or sure) mercy ; τὰ ὅσια πιστὰ, as the LXX. and St. Paul with them in the Acts, render this place of Isaiah. And in the song of Zachary we have one passage of this promise cited, and applied to the times of the Gospel : *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath visited and redeemed his people ; and hath raised up a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David ; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets : viz. by the mouth of this prophetic Psalmist here, where it is said, There will I make the horn of David to bud ; and in the parallel Psalm lxxxix. In my name shall his horn be exalted.* 2 Chron. vi. 42. Ps. lxxxix. 28. Ver. 24. Acts xiii. 34. Luke i. 68, 69, 70. Verse 24.*

To omit those many places where our Saviour, in correspondence to this promise, is affirmed to *possess the throne of his father David, and to rule over the house of Jacob for ever*. Vide Luke i. 32. edit. Curccl. Moreover,

3. That by the Sion here mentioned is not chiefly meant that material mountain in Judea, but rather that mystical Rock of Divine grace and evangelical truth, upon which the Christian Church, the only everlasting temple of God, is immoveably seated, is very probable, (or rather, manifestly certain,) by the Prophets' constant acception thereof in this sense, when they assign the character of perpetual durability thereto. As in Isaiah lx. where he thus prophesies of the Christian Church : *The sons also of* Isa. lx. 14, 15, 16.

SERM. XII. *them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The City of the Lord, The Sion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings, &c.* And the Prophet

Mic. iv. 1. Micah, speaking of the last days, (that is, of the evangelical times, when the mountain of the house of the Lord should be established in the top of the mountains,) saith thus:

Verse 7. *And I will make her that halted a remnant; and her that was cast far off, a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Sion from henceforth even for ever.* And the Prophet Joel, speaking of the same times, (when God would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh,) hath these

Joel ii. 28. words: *So shall ye know, that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Sion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.* All which places no man can reasonably doubt, and all Christians do firmly consent to respect the Christian Church. To which we may add that passage of the author to the Hebrews, (ch. xii. ver. 22.) *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; that is, to the Christian Church.*

4. The manner of this covenant's delivery, and confirmation by the Divine oath, argues the inconditiate, irreversible, and perpetual constitution thereof; for to God's most absolute and immutable decrees this most august and solemn confirmation doth peculiarly agree. So the Apostle to the Hebrews seems to intimate: *Wherewith, saith he, God, willing more abundantly to demonstrate the immutability of his counsel, (ἐπιθέσει τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς) interposed an oath.*

We may therefore, I suppose, upon these grounds, solidly and safely conclude, that this promise doth principally belong, and shall therefore infallibly be made good, to the Christian priesthood; to those who, in the Christian Church, by offering spiritual sacrifices of praise and

thanksgiving, by directing and instructing the people in the knowledge of the evangelical law, by imploring for and pronouncing upon them the divine benedictions, do bear analogy with, and supply the room of, the Jewish priesthood.

From which discourse we may, by the way, deduce this corollary: That the title of *priest*, although it did (as most certainly it doth not) properly and primarily signify a Jewish sacrificer, (or slaughterer of beasts,) doth yet nowise deserve that reproach, which is by some, inconsiderately, (not to say profanely,) upon that mistaken ground, commonly cast upon it; since the Holy Scripture itself, we see, doth here, even in that sense (most obnoxious to exception) ascribe it to the Christian pastors. And so likewise doth the Prophet Isaiah; *And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord*: speaking (as the context plainly declares) of the Gentiles, which should be converted and aggregated to God's Church. And the Prophet Jeremiah: *Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually*. Which prophecy also evidently concerns the same time and state of things, of which the Prophet Malachi thus foretels: *For, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering*. It were desirable, therefore, that men would better consider, before they entertain such groundless offences, or pass so uncharitable censures upon either words, or persons, or things. But I proceed to the

III. Particular, which is the matter of the promise, *clothing with salvation*. Where we may observe,

First, That the usual metaphor of being *clothed* doth in the sacred dialect denote a complete endowment with, a plentiful enjoyment of, or an entire application to, that thing, or quality, with which a person is said to be clothed: So is God himself said to be *clothed with majesty and strength*. And David prays, that they might be *clothed with shame and dishonour, that did magnify themselves against*

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Isa. lxxvi. 21.

Jer. xxxiii. 18.

Mal. i. 11.

Ps. xciii. 1.

Ps. xxxv. 26.

cix. 29.

SERM XII *him.* And in Ezekiel, *the princes of the isles*, being amazed by the ruin of Tyre, are said *to clothe themselves with trembling.* And that bitter adversary of David (in Psalm cix. 18.) did *clothe himself with cursing, as with a garment.*

Ezek. xxvi. 16.

Job xxix. 14. And Job avoucheth of himself, *I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was a robe and a diadem.* And

1 Pet. v. 5. St. Peter advises us *to put on, or to be clothed with, humility.*

Isa. lxi. 10. Finally, Isaiah introduces our Saviour speaking thus: *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.* So that, (as by these instances we may discern,) *to be clothed with salvation,* is to be perfectly endowed therewith; to be invested with it as with a garment, which wholly incloseth and covereth the body, so that no part is left unguarded and unadorned thereby.

Secondly, But now what is that *salvation* with which the *priests* of Sion shall be thus clothed? I answer: *Salvation*, when it is put absolutely, and not conjoined with any particular object, (or term from which,) doth in the Hebrew language properly signify a deliverance from, or remotion of, all sorts of inconvenience; and, consequently, an affluence of all good things; and, in effect, the same which other languages call felicity and prosperity, or design by terms equivalent to those: the Hebrews having hardly any other word so properly correspondent to those, as this word, *salvation.* Whence that title of *Saviour*, and *the God of salvation*, so often attributed to Almighty God, imports as much as, the Dispenser of all good gifts; the great Benefactor, Assister, and Protector of men: and to *save* is promiscuously used for, to relieve the needy, to comfort the sorrowful; to restore the sick to his health, the prisoner to his liberty, the captive to his country; to defend the weak from injury, and the humble from contempt; to deliver the distressed from imminent danger, the innocent from unjust condemnation, the slandered from undeserved reproach: in a word, all the effects of God's

Deus.
Σωτήρ, sœpe
Platoni.

goodness and power, the whole work of the Divine providence and beneficence, are hereby expressed. SERM.
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We will recite one or two of those many places which confirm this notion. Psalm lxxxv. 9. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. His salvation is nigh*; that is, his loving care attends upon them, to assist and preserve them; which in Psalm cxlv. ver. 19. is thus otherwise expressed: *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will save them.* And again, Psalm cxlix. 4. *The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation*: that is, he will, by his good providence, dispose them into a convenient and decent condition of life. And again, Psal. cxliv. 10. *It is he that giveth salvation unto kings*; that is, by whose gracious disposal they prosper, and are preserved in dignity, plenty, and safety.

I will not, by citation of places, labour to confirm so obvious a notion: it may suffice for that purpose, that the supreme accomplishment of all happiness, the enjoyment of perfect bliss in heaven, is, in agreement with this Jewish acceptation of the word, most commonly styled *salvation*. But I must add, that, whereas salvation may relate either to the outward estate of a man's body, life, and fortunes, or to the internal dispositions of the mind; to our present condition in this world, or to our future and eternal estate: it doth seem here (I say not, to exclude the latter altogether, yet) more directly and principally to respect the former, viz. that external and temporal welfare, which is conspicuous and visible in this world. My reason is, because the other parts of this prophetic promise do, in their most natural acception, signify that outward prosperity wherewith God would vouchsafe to bless his Church: that abundant *benediction of her store*, that *satisfying her poor with bread*, that *joyful exultation of her saints*, that *clothing her enemies with shame*, being expressions properly denoting a state of external good weal and comfort; and, in consonance to them, require that we thus likewise understand this phrase; the priests being also

SERM. XII. questionless designed to partake in this glorious felicity of the Church. Which is also confirmed by other prophecies of the same tenor and intention : as particularly that in Jer. xxxi. concerning the recollection of Israel, and redemption of the spiritual Sion, it is said, *I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, &c.*

Verse 14.

Now, although we may adventure safely to interpret the declarations of the Divine favour according to the most comprehensive sense of which the words are capable, where they are conceived : (it being the manner of the immensely good God, to exceed, rather than to be deficient, in the performance of his word ; and to surpass the expectations he hath raised in us, than anywise to disappoint them :) yet, however, the least we can imagine here promised to the *priests of Sion*, will comprehend these three things.

1. A free and safe condition of life : that they be not exposed to continual dangers of ruin ; of miserable sufferance, or remediless injury : that the benefits of peace, and law, and public protection shall particularly appertain to them ; so that their adversaries (if any they happen to have) shall not be incited, by hope of reward or impunity, to hurt their persons, rifle their goods, disturb their quiet ; but that they shall enjoy good degrees of security, liberty, and tranquillity in this world.

2. A provision of competent subsistence for them : that their condition of life be not wholly necessitous, or very penurious, destitute of convenient accommodations, or depending altogether for them upon the arbitrary benevolences of men, which is, at best, but a more plausible kind of beggary ; but that they shall be furnished with such reasonable supplies, as are requisite to encourage them in the cheerful performance of their duty.

3. A suitable degree of respect, and so high a station among men, as may commend them to general esteem, and vindicate them from contempt : that they be not reputed among the dregs and refuse of the people ; that their persons be not base and despicable, their names made

the objects of vulgar obloquy, their functions become prostitute to profane irrision; but that some considerable authority, some more than ordinary regard and veneration accrue unto them from the high relations which they bear, and from the sacred business which they manage.

All this at least (according to the most moderate interpretation of the phrase) that abundant *salvation* doth imply, wherewith God hath promised to *invest the priests of Sion*.

We may therefore presume, or rather not presume, but confidently rely upon, and comfort ourselves in the expectation of God's faithful continuance to fulfil this promise. We may assure ourselves, that neither the secret envy of them who repine at those encouragements which God's providence hath conferred on priests, nor the open malice of those that furiously oppugn their welfare, shall ever prevail to overwhelm them with extreme misery, penury or disgrace; since no endeavour of earth or hell can ever be able to reverse this everlasting decree of Heaven, or to defeat that irresistible power which is engaged to its execution. No inferior force can strip them naked of that salvation, wherewith the Supreme Truth hath promised to clothe them.

Which confidence of ours may be improved, by considering the reasons that might induce Almighty God to resolve, and promise thus favourably in behalf of his priests. (For though we cannot penetrate the incomprehensible depths of the Divine counsel, nor should ever peremptorily conclude concerning the determinate reasons of his actions: yet, when the wisdom of his proceedings doth clearly approve itself to our understandings, we ought readily to acknowledge it, and humbly to praise him for it.) Now the reasons why Divine Providence should undertake to preserve the priesthood in safety, to procure for them liberal maintenance, and to raise them above a state of scorn and infamy, may be especially these three.

1. It concerns God's honour.
2. The good of the Church requires so.
3. Equity and the reason of the case exacts it.

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In prosecuting which heads of discourse, I shall not seem to you, I hope, to transgress the rules of modesty or decency. There be certain seasons, wherein confessedly it is not only excusable, but expedient also, to commend one's self; as when a man is falsely accused, or unjustly afflicted. And with greater reason sometime men are allowed to praise the country where they were born and bred, the family to which they are allied, the society to which they are more especially related. And if at this time I assume the like liberty, the occasion, I hope, will apologize for me. It becomes not me to be an adviser, much less a reprover, in this audience: may I therefore, with your favourable permission, presume to be a commender, or, if you please, a pleader for the welfare of this sacred Order, although myself an unworthy and inconsiderable member thereof. I say therefore,

I. God's honour is concerned in the safe, comfortable, and honourable estate of his priests; and that upon account of those manifold relations, whereby they stand allied, appropriated, and devoted to himself.

Joel ii. 17.
2 Tim. ii.
24.

They are in a peculiar manner his servants. *The servant of the Lord*, saith St. Paul, *must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach.* *The servant of the Lord*; who's that? are not all men God's servants? is not he Lord of all? Yes; but a Christian priest, such as Timothy was, is by way of excellency so styled. All men owe subjection, obedience, and homage to God: but the priests are (his *ὑπηρέται*, his *λειτουργοί*) his ministers, his officers, his immediate attendants, his domestics, as it were, and menial servants; that approach his person, that tread the courts of his house, that wear his proper badges, that are employed in his particular business. And is it then for God's honour, to suffer them to be abused, to want convenient sustenance, to live in a mean and disgraceful condition? Would it not redound to the discredit of an earthly prince, to permit, that the attendants on his person, the officers of his court, the executors of his edicts, should have the least injury offered them, should fare scantily or coarsely, should appear in a sordid garb?

1 Cor. iv.
1.
Rom. xv.
16.

Are they not therefore by especial privileges guarded from such inconveniences? And shall the great King and Lord of all the world be deemed less provident for, less indulgent (not to say less just) unto his servants; servants, I say, and those not of the lowest rank, nor appointed to the vilest drudgeries; but such as are employed in the most honourable charges, and are entrusted with his most especial concerns.

They are his stewards. *A bishop*, saith St. Paul, *must be blameless, as the steward of God.* If the Church be the *οἶκος Θεοῦ*, *God's house*, or *family*, as it is called, and the priests the *οἰκονόμοι*, the stewards of that house, the comptrollers of that family; it is surely no mean station they obtain therein. The distribution of his bread, (the bread of life, his holy word,) and the dispensation of his most precious goods, (the holy mysteries,) are committed to their care and prudence. *Who then*, saith our Saviour, *is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?* Who but the priests, who are therefore styled both *πρόσσωτοι*, *ηγούμενοι*, *κυβερνήταις*, (*presidents, guides, rulers,*) and *ποιμένες*, (*feeders or pastors*) of the Church?

Yea, they are *οικοδόμοι* also, the builders of that house, founding it by initial conversion, rearing it by continued instruction, covering and finishing it by sacramental oblation of divine grace. *As a wise architect*, saith St. Paul, *I have laid the foundation, and another builds upon it.*

They are *συνεργοὶ Θεοῦ*, *co-operators with God*; that manage his business, and drive on his designs: the solicitors of his affairs; the masters of his requests: his heralds, that publish his decrees, denounce his judgments, proclaim his pardons and acts of grace unto his subjects; that blazon his titles, and defend his rightful authority in the world: yea, his ministers of state; the ministers (I say, *absit invidia*,) of his most glorious spiritual kingdom; (which is peculiarly denominated the kingdom of God;) the orderly administration of which, its advancement, its preservation, and its enlargement, are especially commended to their diligence and fidelity.

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2 Cor. v.
20.

They are, lastly, God's ambassadors^a, delegated by him to treat of peace, and solicit a fair correspondence between heaven and earth. *Now then, saith St. Paul, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. As though God did beseech you by us:* see, they manage God's concernments, and in a manner represent his person. At least, if the Apostles were more properly God's ambassadors, the present ministers of religion are his agents, and residents here among men, designed to pursue the same negotiations commenced by them. Now you know by the law of nations, and common consent of all men, all manner of security, good entertainment, and civil respect hath been ever acknowledged due to ambassadors, and public ministers: their employment hath been esteemed honourable, their persons held sacred and inviolable; and whatsoever discourtesy hath been shewed unto, or outrage committed upon them, hath been interpreted done to him from whom they derive their commission, whose person they represent. And so truly the bad usage of God's priests, if not directly and immediately, does yet really and truly, according to moral estimation, terminate on God himself, and reflect on his honour, and prejudice his religion; a due regard to which cannot be maintained without proportionable respect to the ministers thereof. The basest of the people may serve to be priests to Jeroboam's calves, but not become the ministry of the God of Israel.

John xiii.
20. What
you have
done to
these, &c.
Matt. x. 40.
and xxv.
40. He
that re-
ceiveth
you, re-
ceiveth
him that
sent you.

Do we not see the reverence of civil government upheld more by the specious circumstances, than by the real necessity thereof; by the magnificent retinue, and splendid ornaments of princely dignity, than by the eminent benefits of peace and justice springing thence? Shall not (not only the greatest inward worth, but) the highest nobility, if basely attired, badly attended, slenderly accommodated, pass unregarded, yea disregarded by us? men being ge-

^a Vide Mal. ii 7. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

erally either unable to discern, or unwilling to acknowledge excellency divested of sensible lustre. Religion therefore must be well habited, or it will be ill respected: the priests must wear a comely (if not a costly) livery, or God their master's reputation will be impaired in popular fancy.

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Consider David's reasoning; *Lo, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains*; and compare such discourse therewith as this; and judge candidly, whether they have not some parity: *Lo, my attendants are clad with the finest purple, God's ministers are covered with the coarsest sackcloth; my people surfeit with dainties, his servants pine away for scarcity; my courtiers are respectfully saluted, his priests scornfully derided; no man dare offend mine, every one may trample on his officers.*

1 Chron.
xvii. 1.

And lest we should imagine God himself altogether void of such resentments, or such comparisons impertinent, consider that disdainful expression of his: *If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.* The same testimonies of respect that we shew our governors, God, it seems, expects from us in all kinds, and may reasonably much greater.

Mal. i. 8.

Nor is it a matter of slight consideration, how plentiful provision, in the policy devised and constituted by God himself, was made for the priests; how God assumes the immediate patronage of them, and appropriates the matter of their sustenance unto himself. *The priests, saith the Law, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren: the Lord is their inheritance.* So that then, it seems, no man could withhold any part of the priests' maintenance, without sacrilegious encroachment on God's own right, and robbing him of his due: (which is the greatest security of an estate imaginable.) How likewise (next to the

Deu.
xviii. 1, 2.

SERM. prince) the highest dignity and authority was then conferred on the priests: to them the interpretation of law, to them the decision of doubtful cases did appertain; with severe injunctions to comply with their determinations.

XII. Deut. xvii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. See how the business is inculcated. *If there arise a matter too hard for thee, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place, which the Lord shall choose, shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. According to the sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence, which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken to the priest, that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, even that man shall die, and thou shalt put away evil from Israel.* Observe with how eminent a power God then thought fit to endow his priests ^a.

And though we are not in all cases obliged punctually to follow those political prescriptions; yet is the reason of them perpetual, and the example venerable: especially since the custom of all times, and the reason of all the world, doth in a sort conspire to back it.

Gen. xiv. The first priest we meet with in Scripture is Melchizedek; a king also; and such a one, as the patriarch Abraham, (a prince also himself, and, what is somewhat more, just then a conqueror,) in the midst of his triumphal heights, was not ashamed to acknowledge his superior, to honour him with a tribute of his spoils, and to receive a

^a Καὶ γὰρ ἐπόπται πάντων, καὶ δικασταὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητούμενων, καὶ κολασταὶ τῶν κατεγνωσμένων οἱ ἱερεῖς ἔταχθησαν, saith Josephus. The priests were constituted supervisors of all things, and judges of controversies, and punishers of offences. 2. in *Apionem*.

benediction from him. The next (if I mistake not) is Pothipherah, priest of On, whose daughter was not thought by the king of Egypt an unequal match for Joseph, his chief favourite, and the next in dignity to himself in that flourishing kingdom. (Though such an alliance would perhaps be thought derogatory to the worships of our days.) The third is Revel, or Jethro, priest of Midian, the father-in-law likewise of the illustrious Moses; a man as of approved wisdom, so doubtless of considerable dignity too. And the next to him (in order of story) is the venerable Aaron, no meaner a man than the brother of him who was *king in Jeshurun*. Thus all nations, wise and ignorant, civil and barbarous, were by one common instinct (as it were) of natural reason prompted, by conferring extraordinary privileges of honour and convenience on their priests, to express their reverence of the Deity, and their affection to religion ^a.

I will not ransack the closets of antiquity, nor with needless ostentation produce the Egyptian Hierophantæ, the Persian Magi, the Gaulish Druids, the Caliphs, and Mufti's of other nations, to shew what pre-eminences of respect they enjoyed, what powerful sway they bore in their respective countries; how the most weighty affairs, both of peace and war, were commonly directed by their oracular dictates. It shall suffice to observe, that the gallant Romans, (whose devout zeal to religion Polybius himself, no especial friend of theirs, could not forbear to admire and applaud,) I say, that the most wise and valiant Romans did set so high a value upon the priestly order, that if their principal magistrates (the prætors and consuls themselves) did casually meet with one of Vesta's priests, they caused immediately those dreadful rods, the ensigns of their authority, to submit; and they themselves respectfully gave place, as if they meant to confess those priests in a manner their betters ^b. Nor did they among

SERM.
XII.Gen. xli.
45.Deut.
xxxiii. 5.Porph. περι
'Αποζ. lib.
iv. § 16.
Cæs. de
bell. Gall.
lib. vi.

Lib. vi.

^a Vid. Aristot. Pol. vii. 9. Οὔτε γὰρ γεωργὸν, οὔτε βάνανσον ἱερεῖα καταστα-
τίον· ὑπὸ γὰρ τῶν πολιτῶν πρέπει τιμᾶσθαι τοὺς θεοὺς.

^b Πάντα τὰ πράγματα Ῥωμαῖοις εἰς τὸν Θεὸν ἀνήγετο. Plut. in Marcello.
Sen. in Controv.

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them of the most noble extraction, and of the highest dignity in the commonwealth, (even after many glorious exploits achieved by them,) scornfully disdain, but did rather ambitiously affect to be admitted into the college of priests: insomuch that, after the dissolution of the republic, the Emperors thought good to assume the pontifical dignity to themselves, supposing the office too honourable, the title too magnificent for a subject. For they wisely, it seems, and honestly adjudged it no debasement of their quality, no diminution to their personal excellency, to be employed in the service of the immortal gods; whom they acknowledged the patrons of their country, the protectors of their safety: nor that they less deserved of the public, who rightly ordered their religious devotions, than they who prudently advised in the senate, or fought valiantly in the field: for that the good success of public undertakings did as much, or more, depend upon the favourable disposition of Divine Providence, as upon the careful endeavour of human industry.

I cannot forbear to allege that so grave and pertinent speech of Cicero, which is the exordium of his oration *ad Pontifices*: “*Cum multa divinitus, pontifices, a majoribus nostris inventa atque instituta sunt; tum nihil præclarioris, quam quod vos eosdem et religionibus deorum immortalium, et summæ reip. præesse voluerunt: ut amplissimi et clarissimi cives rempubl. bene gerendo, religiones sapienter interpretando, remp. conservarent.*” A wholesome and politic institution he thought it, conducive to the public good and safety, that the civil and sacred authority should be united in the same persons; that it was as well for the interest of the state, as for the credit of religion, that the priests should be men of honour, or (which is all one) honourable men priests.

All which evinces plainly, that it is in no wise the result of a generous heart, (for what nation ever produced so many brave spirits as that?) but rather proceeds from an inconsiderate delicacy of humour, (or from a profane haughtiness of mind,) to loathe, as now men do, and despise that employment, which in its own nature is of all

most noble and most beneficial to mankind. For if to be a courtier in a particular country, is of all others the most honourable relation; and to wait upon a mortal king, is accounted a most worthy function: to be peculiarly God's servant, and in religious addresses immediately to attend on him, must consequently be the most excellent preferment in the world, which is God's kingdom.^a And if to supply a man's bodily needs, to restore his liberty, to save his life, he works of generous beneficence; how much more is it so, by good conduct and instruction of men, to adorn their souls with virtue, to free them from the bondage of sin, to rescue them from eternal ruin?

Our magnanimous ancestors, who erected as well trophies of their invincible courage abroad, as monuments of their incomparable piety at home, and equally by both, did purchase immortal renown to their ingrateful posterity, (for not to imitate good example, is the greatest ingratitude,) they, I say, were otherwise disposed; to whose honest devotion we owe those handsome privileges, and those competent revenues, which the priesthood still enjoys; and which are so malign'd by this untoward age, not less degenerate in spirit, than corrupt in manners: when all wisdom, and virtue, and religion, are almost in most places grown ridiculous: when the serious use of reason is become (in vulgar opinion) the most impertinent and insignificant thing in the world: when innocence is reputed a mere defect of wit, and weakness of judgment: integrity a fond pertinacity of humour; constancy of mind and gravity of demeanour, a kind of sullen morosity or uncouth affectation of singularity; and all strict practice of Christian duty incurs the imputation of some new-found opprobrious name, one or other. No wonder then when religion itself hath so much decayed in its love and esteem, if the priests, its professed guardians, do partake in its fortune. Nor is it to be feared, but that,

^a *Itane plus decet hominis, quam Dei famulum nominari? ac terreni quam celestis Regis officialem, altioris ducitur dignitatis? Qui Clero militiam, forum anteponeit Ecclesie, divinis profecto humana, caelestibus praeferre terrena convincitur.* Bern. Epist. 78.

SERM. XII. when the predominant vanities of the age are somewhat de-cocted, and men grow weary of their own inconvenient fol-lies ; whenever (not a fierce zeal for some whimsical model, or some paradoxical opinion, but) a sober esteem of, and a cordial affection to virtue and genuine piety do begin to re-vive in the breasts of men : the love and reverence of the clergy will return. For it will be ever true, what was once said, (though dictated only from the reason and experience of a heathen,) *Qui bona fide colit Deos, amat et sacerdotes ;* “ He that sincerely worships God, will heartily love his priests.” But not to insist longer on this reason.

Statius, E-pist. Dedic. in v. lib. Sylvarum.

II. The good of the church requires, that the priesthood be well protected, well provided for, and well regarded. That men be converted from iniquity, induced to the sincere practice of virtue, is the chief good of the church, that to which the favour of God is annexed, and upon which the salvation of souls doth rely. And this good mainly depends, partly upon the due execution of the priestly office, partly upon the fit disposition of the people to comply therewith : and to both those effects the comfortable estate of the priesthood is conducive and requisite. The priest must be capable to instruct with advantage, and the people disposed to learn with readiness : he must lead, and they follow cheerfully in the paths of righteousness. Which alacrity how can he be master of, whose mind care and grief, the inseparable companions of a needy estate, do continually distract and discompose ? whose spirit is dejected with constant regret and frequent disappointments ? Can he be free and expedite in the discharge of his duty who is perplexed with the difficulties, and encumbered with the varieties of secular business, such as the exigences of a narrow condition do necessarily induce ? No : few there be that, with Epictetus, can philosophate in slavery ; or, like Cleanthes, can draw water all the day, and study most of the night.

The priests are bound, (for the propagation of truth and right, and for the reclaiming of men from error and sm, that is, for the most important good of the Church,)

as the Apostles are often related to have done, *παρρησιάζεσθαι*, **SERM. XII.**
to speak all out, (or to use an unconfined liberty of speech;) Acts. ix. 27. xiv. 3. xix. 8. Ephes. vi. 19, &c. Luke iv. 32. Tit. ii. 15. Phil. i. 14.
 to exhort to the practice of virtue, as our Saviour did, *μετ' ἐξουσίας*, *with licence and authority*; to deter from vice, as St. Paul enjoins Titus, *μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς*, *with an all-commanding and imperious strain*; and, (as those faithful brethren did, encouraged by St. Paul's example,) *τολμᾶν ἀφῳβῶς λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον*, *to dare undauntedly to utter the word of truth*: they are obliged to deal impartially with all, to flatter no man; to admonish, yea, and (with prudence, seasonably) to reprove the greatest of men: not to respect the persons of the rich, nor to dread the faces of the most terrible among men. And how shall this necessary scourge be engendered, be cherished, be preserved, in the breast of him who grovels upon the ground, and crouches under the depressing loads of want and disgrace?^a What engines are able to raise the spirits of men above the ordinary fountains from which they spring, their fortunes? what props can sustain them at that due pitch, destitute of solid strength, wealth, and respect? With what face shall a pitiful underling encounter the solemn looks of an oppressing grandee? with what hope of success, in his forlorn habit, shall he adventure to check the vicious extravagances of a ruffing gallant? Will he dare to contradict the opinion, or to disallow the practice, of that wealthy or this powerful neighbour, by whose alms, it may be, he is relieved, and supported by his favour?

But admit it possible, a man may be both extremely indigent and sufficiently resolute: (that is, strong without food, and fat by digesting the thin air:) with what regard then shall his free and faithful advice be entertained? Shall not his moderate confidence be accounted impudence; his open sincerity of speech be styled unmannerly

^a ————— plurima sunt quæ

Non audent homines pertusa dicere læna. *Juvén. Sat. v.*

Αἰδώς τοι πρὸς ἀνολβίῃ θάρσος αἰ πρὸς ἔλβῃ. *Ilcs. i. 317.*

Πρὸς ἅπαντα δειλὸς ὁ πίνης ἐστὶ πράγματα,

Καὶ πάντας αὐτοῦ καταφρονεῖν ἵτελλκεύει. *Menand.*

SERM.
XII.

presumption; his minding others of their duty adjudged a forgetfulness of his own condition, or a disorderly transgressing the due limits thereof: if he be not ashamed of the truth, will not the truth be ashamed of him? Shall he not prejudice more by the meanness of his garb, than further by the force of his reason, that good cause which he maintains? Will men respect his words, whose person they despise? Will they be willingly counselled or patiently reprov'd by him, whom they esteem, yea, whom they plainly see, so much their inferior? No: the same words, which proceed from the mouths of men in eminent dignity, are not the same when they are uttered by those of base degree^a. Weak and ineffectual are the most eloquent harangues of beggarly orators; obscure, like themselves, and unobserved, the most notable dictates of poor, mercenary pedants. The authority of the speaker doth usually more incline, than the weight of the matter. It

Eccles. xiii.
22, 23.

was the observation of the wise son of Sirach: *When a rich man slips, he hath many helpers; he speaketh things not to be spoken, and yet men justify him: the poor man miscarried, and they farther rebuked him; he spake discretely, and yet could have no place. When a rich man speaketh, every man holdeth his tongue; and his words they extol to the clouds: but if the poor man speak, they say, Who is this? and if he stumble, they will help to overthrow him.* And Solomon himself notes the same: *The poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.* Not only those that swell with pride and swim in plenty, but even the meanest of the people, will be apt to contemn his instructions, whom they perceive in few or no circumstances of life to excel them. If the preacher's condition be not, as well as his pulpit, somewhat elevated above the lowest station, few will hear him, fewer mind his words, very few obey him. Job's case deserves well to be considered. While he flourished in wealth and reputation, all men attended to his counsel, and admired his discourse.

Κάλλιστα
Μουτῶν
φθίγγεται
πλουτῶν
ἀνὴρ.
Eccles. ix.
16.

^a Τὸ δ' ἄξιωμα, κἄν κακῶς λέγη, τὸ σὸν
Πείσαι· Λόγος γὰρ ἐκ τ' ἀδοξούντων ἴων,

Κἄν τῶν δοκούτων αὐτὸς, οὐ παρὲν σθένει. Eurip. in *Hecuba*.

The princes, saith he, refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth: the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again, and my speech dropped upon them. So officiously attentive were all men to Job in his prosperity. But when the scale was turned, and he became depressed in estate, no man minded either him or his discourse, except it were to despise and scorn both. But now, saith he, they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. I am their song, yea, I am their by-word. They abhor me, they fly far from me, and spare not to spit in my face; because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me^a. If Job, a person who so equally and moderately, yea, so humbly, and courteously, and bountifully used his prosperity, as we find he did, was notwithstanding in his adversity so generally slighted and abhorred, what shall their lot be who never enjoyed those advantages? what regard shall their wholesome advice find? what efficacy their most pathetic exhortations obtain? what passion their faint breath raise in men's benumbed hearts? No more, certainly, than their mean condition shall procure among men either of friendship or esteem.

We see therefore how Almighty God, that he might conciliate credit unto, and infuse a persuasive energy into the words of his Prophets and Apostles, was pleased to dignify them with extraordinary gifts of foretelling future events and doing miraculous works: their doctrine it seems, (though of itself most reasonable and plausible,) being not sufficient to convince the hearers, without some remarkable excellency in the teachers, challenging the people's awful regard, and exciting their attention. Otherwise how pitifully scant a draught those poor fishers of men had caught by the common allurements only of innocent life and ration-

^a Prov. xiv. 20. The poor is hated even of his own neighbour; but the rich hath many friends.

SERM. al discourse, I leave you to imagine. And where such ex-
 XII. traordinary commendations are wanting, is it not reason-
 able that the need of them should be supplied by ordinary
 and probable expedients?

I might farther add, how a necessitous and despicable estate doth commonly not only disturb the minds and deject the spirits of men, but distempereth also their souls and vitiateth their manners; rendering them not only sad and anxious, slavish and timorous, but greedy also and covetous, peevish and mutinous, rude and ignorant; engages them in sordid company, and tempts them to unworthy courses. From which one cause how scandalous effects, and how prejudicial to the Church's both honour and safety, have proceeded, I need not for to say, since woful experience too loudly proclaims it.

I might add, moreover, that the priests do confer to the good of the State; which is secured and advanced by the sincere instruction of men in duties of obedience, justice, and fidelity; and by maintenance of good conscience among men. So that, if things be rightly considered, it will be hard to find a better commonwealth's man, than a good minister.

Seeing therefore the good of the Church, upon various accounts, is so much concerned in the priest's encouragement, welfare, and respect, it is very fitting they should have them. Which consideration I conclude with that serious admonition of the Apostle to the Hebrews, wherein the substance of what hath been spoken on this point is contained: *Obey your rulers, (or guides,) and submit to them: for they watch for your souls, as they that are to give an account; that they may do it with joy, and not with complaint: for this is unprofitable for you.* Ἄλυσίτελές γὰρ ἔστω that is, *for this pays no taxes, quits no scores; turns to no account, is nowise advantageous for you; but rather (for there is a μείωσις in those words,) is hurtful and detrimental to you.* But farther,

III. Common equity, and the reason of the case exacts, that safety, competent subsistence, and fitting respect be allowed to the priests. If you consider their

Heb. xiii.
17.

μὴ στενάζον-
τες.

personal qualities; who, I pray, do [commonly] better deserve those advantages than they? Those qualities, I say, which result from a liberal, a sober, a modest education in the schools of wisdom, and under the influences of good discipline. If birth, (that is, at best, an imaginary relation to the gallantry of an ancestor) entitle men to honour; if the cheap favours of fortune be so highly prized and admired; if riches (that is, the happy results of industry in trivial matters) do easily purchase respect: what may not they pretend to, whose constant (and not always unsuccessful) endeavour it hath been to deserve well, to cultivate their minds, and regulate their manners?

SERM.
XII.

True worth, indeed, is not confined to any particular order of men; yet I should wrong none, by saying it is no where more plentifully to be found than in this. What is it that doth advance men's nature, that adorns their minds, that commends their persons to especial regard? Is it knowledge? *The priests' lips preserve it*; their discourse doth diffuse it. Is it virtue? Whence have more or greater examples thereof proceeded than from them? Is it piety? It is their proper business; it hath been always, in some measure, their care to promote it: that ignorance and barbarity, dissoluteness and irreligion, have not long since, like a deluge, overspread the face of the world, none, I suppose, will be so unjust as to deny, in greatest part, due to their vigilant endeavours. Even those improvements of wit and eloquence, which are employed to their disgrace and disadvantage, must be acknowledged originally derived from them.

Vide Orig.
contra Cels.
l. iii. p. 129.
Mal. ii. 7.

Faults they have had, and will always have; for they are men, and subject to the common imperfections of mortal nature: but that, perhaps, less and fewer than any other distinct sort of men; that as it is their duty, so it hath been their practice, to excel in virtue; and that they have commonly, in effect, made good St. Ambrose's words, *Debet præponderare vita sacerdotis, sicut præponderat gratia*; were not difficult to demonstrate, if seemly to make comparisons, or to insist upon so invidious a subject. Nor, were they greater than ever really they have been, or than ever

Epist. 82.

SERM. malice could misrepresent them, should it be therefore equal,
 XII. that the miscarriages of some should derogate from the reputation or prejudice the welfare of the whole order.

But to wave this plea; consider their employment. Is there any office more laborious, more vexatious than theirs; accompanied with more wearisome toil, more solicitous care, more tedious attendance? They are deservedly called *watchmen*, being constrained to stand always on the guard, to be always wakeful, attentive, and ready to warn the people of approaching dangers: and *shepherds* likewise, being forced to endure the various hardships of that uneasy life, the inconveniencies of all weathers, the nipping frosts and sweltry heats, and all diversities of irksome travail; they must feed, they must guide, they must defend; they must seek the lost, and reduce the straying sheep. What assiduity of study, what earnest contention of soul are they obliged to use, in the continual instruction, exhortation, and reprehension of the people; in rectifying their judgments, satisfying their scruples, removing their prejudices, bearing their infirmities, and sympathizing with their afflictions? It is they that are engaged, with all their might, to withstand the prevailing encroachments of iniquity, to stop the progress of pernicious errors, to detect the false pretences of impostors, to confute the fallacies of sophisters, to repel the assaults of all adversaries to the truth; yea, if need be, to expose, not only their dearest contents of life, but even their lives themselves, in the defence thereof.

Heb. xiii.
17.

Lib. vi.

Eusebius reports thus of Maximinus: Τὸς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἀρχόντας μόνους, ὡς αἰτίους τῆς κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον διδασκαλίας, ἀναιδεύδαι προσάττει. *He commanded that only the governors of the Church, (that is, the bishops) should be slaughtered, as the authors of the growth and prevalence of evangelical doctrine.* Neither was it a singular practice of that bloody tyrant; but, as a thing of course, it constantly follows, that wherever righteousness and truth are violently impugned, the priests are sure to taste deepest of that bitter cup; that their goods be, in the first place, se-

questered and spoiled, their reputation stained, their persons misused, their lives sacrificed to the persecutor's outrageous malice. SERM.
XII.

Is it not reasonable then, and equal, that they, who, for the service of God and benefit of the Church, undergo such difficulties, and are objected to so great hazards, should be sustained, should be refreshed by proportionable encouragements? Is it not barbarous usage, to expect so hard duties from them, to impose such heavy burthens on them, and yet to grudge any suitable comforts, any satisfactory rewards to them? Good King Hezekiah surely was not so minded, of whom it is said, *He commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the Priests and Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord*: that is, that they might be heartened to study, to teach, to perform the duties required of them by the divine law. And St. Paul thus rationally expostulates in the priests' behalf: *Who ever goeth to war at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Is it a great thing?* do you think much of it? If you do, you are unreasonable, you are unjust, you are ungrateful. And elsewhere he thus very emphatically admonishes: *We beseech you, brethren, to ^amind them which labour among you, and ^bpreside over you in the Lord, and that admonish you; and to esteem them more than exceedingly* (ὁππερ ἐξ ἑξῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς) *in ^blove, for their work* (or, *for their office*) *sake*: (so ἐργον frequently signifies in such cases.) And again: *Let the elders* (or *priests, οἱ πρεσβυτέρου.*) *which rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, (or of double recompence*: so τιμὴ also imports.) *Priests, as so, for their office sake, have honour and reward due to them; which, according to the good management of that office, are proportionably to be augmented and multiplied.*

But farther yet, abstracting from both their personal worth and the merit of their service, consider their condition in this world, and see whether it doth not in equity

SERM. challenge some reasonable provision to be made for them.
 XII. Are they not, by the nature of their profession, secluded from all ordinary means of temporal advancement? Be not those usual inlets of wealth, the court, the camp, and the exchange, shut upon them, yea, barred against them, by those insuperable obstacles of law and custom? Can they grow rich by trade, or famous by feats of arms? May they plead for others? It is well if they be allowed to do it for themselves before equal judges. Yet are they not men, endued with human passions and resentments? Are they not citizens, partaking in the common interests of the weal public? Are they not sensible of the inconveniences, and capable of enjoying the benefits of this life? Are they not equally obliged, and would they not be glad, as well as others, to be in a capacity to requite courtesies, to help relations, to gratify friends, to relieve the poor, to express respectively their humanity and their gratitude? Skill they not to use the goods of fortune (or rather the gifts of Providence) with as much discretion, as much sobriety, as much honour as others? Compare things righteously, and let reason judge; let experience be examined; let those eternal monuments of their piety, their charity, their hospitality, declare and testify. Shall, lastly, the fruits of painful study, the improvement of hopeful parts, flower of vigorous age and strength spent in the public service, tend only hither, to put a man into a state of struggling with extreme contempt and penury? If this be not, what, I pray you, is monstrous iniquity?

Since therefore it appears (upon so many several scores) reasonable, that Almighty God should undertake the protection and assert the honour of his priests, we may not only praise the goodness, but approve also the wisdom of this promise, and by the contemplation thereof strengthen our faith in reliance thereon. To which purpose one consideration more may very much conduce, and withal may provoke our gratitude to celebrate his truth and faithfulness in making good, as well as his goodness and wisdom in making, this promise; viz. the considering

how continually hitherto God hath been pleased effectually *to clothe his priests with salvation*, to provide abundantly for their safety, their accommodation, their respect in this world, and to deliver them from the opposite inconveniences. SERM.
XII.

If we reflect our thoughts on the first ages of Christianity, (not more dismal for suffering than glorious for piety,) it is admirable to see how sincerely and passionately the Christian people did then love their priests and pastors; how liberally, out of their slender stock and the shipwrecks of their spoiled fortunes, they contributed to their maintenance; what exceeding veneration they bore them; with what incredible alacrity they submitted to the most severe disciplines enjoined by them; how willingly they followed them, though leading into the jaws of death and cruel torture: so that, although it was then necessary for the Christian priests to undergo the greatest hardships, according to the design of Christian religion, (which was to be propagated, not by terror of power, nor by politic artifice, but by the invincible faith, resolution, and patience, of the professors and teachers thereof;) yet never more may they have seemed to thrive and prosper, than in that juncture of time, when they enjoyed the universal good-will and applause of good people, when they unconstrainedly embraced affliction for righteousness sake, and acquired thereby the certain fruition of a more excellent salvation.

But in the succeeding times, when Christianity, breaking out of the clouds of persecution, began to shine over all with brightest lustre; of the glorious and happy fruits of that illustrious triumph none did partake more fully than they who had sustained the hardest brunts of the foregoing conflict, and had been the principal causes of the success. Then the joyful acclamations of the faithful people resounded in the praise of their victorious champions: then did the emperors themselves, with arms outstretched and hearts enlarged, with affection embrace the authors of their happy conversion: then all laws prejudicial to their welfare were rescinded, and new ones were substituted, abundantly providing for their security, honest

SERM.
XII. livelihood, and due reverence; which in progress of time, not in the Roman empire only, but in all other nations, (that afterwards did entertain Christianity,) were nowise impaired, but were rather amplified and fortified by the pious favour of princes: the barbarous Goths, and Vandals, and Lombards, being no sooner endued with any degree of civility, or any sense of religion, than possessed with a hearty reverence of their bishops and priests.

And ever since, (which is not to be imputed, as some rashly, if not impiously aver, to the prevalence of Antichristian iniquity, but rather to the providence of Divine B^enignity; ever since, I say,) till the late commotions and alterations in Christendom, they have been the guardians of others' safety, not themselves deprived of protection; have abounded with wealth, rather than wanted sustenance; have been the objects of envy, more than of contempt. Princes have loved and cherished them, have relied upon their advice, and entrusted them with their highest concerns. Nobles have not been ashamed to yield them place. The sacerdotal robe hath been often dyed with purple; and the sons of mighty monarchs have not thought themselves degraded by entering into their order. And if, in some particular places (before or since those changes) their condition hath not been so high and plentiful, yet hath it been (almost ever) tolerable; the countenance of authority and the respect of the people being in good degree vouchsafed them. Even in those churches, which till this day groan under the oppression of infidel princes, the priests (by the free permission of those princes) retain their jurisdiction in a manner as great as ever; and withal enjoy a maintenance not altogether inconsiderable.

So favourable hitherto hath God been unto his priests, so faithful to his promise: which doth oblige us to thank him; which may encourage us to hope in him; which may arm us with confidence against the present ill-will of those that wish, and against the practices of those that design our ruin.

It is true, this promise is not affixed to all parts of time,

to all particularities of place, to all determinate circumstances of things. The priests may, now and then, here and there, in this or that, suffer highly; they may be ejected, be plundered, be degraded, as experience hath shewed us. But they may be also soon restored, repossessed, readvanced, and (I had almost said) revenged too, as the like experience doth assure us. It is not impossible, I confess, we may relapse into the same, or into a more calamitous estate; the obstinate disaffections of men threaten it, and our own miscarriages more dangerously: yet the most offensive of these (which many honest men dislike, and most men disclaim against) have been in as bitter terms complained of in almost the first ages. “*Inhiant possessionibus, prædialia excolunt, auro incubant, quæstui per omnia student,*” said a devout writer of ecclesiastical history about 1300 years ago. And so much no man (without extreme uncharitableness and falsehood) can in so general terms impute to the present clergy: notwithstanding which, God did continue to vouchsafe his protection to them. They were sometimes, (by the inundations of barbarous people,) and we may again, (by national concussions,) be severely chastised for our faults: yet were not they, nor shall we be (at least every where and for ever) utterly rejected. God may *visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquity with stripes: nevertheless his loving kindness will he not utterly take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. His covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips.* God may for a time hide his face from us; but he will not for ever turn his back upon us: the honour of the Priesthood may for a while be overclouded in some part of the world; but shall never totally be eclipsed, nor swallowed up in a perpetual night. While God continues his residence in Sion, and defends his Church against *the gates of Hell and powers of darkness*; while religion retains any sway in the hearts of men, and truth possesses any room upon earth; the priests shall not be left destitute and naked, but everlastingly *be clothed*

SERM.
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Sulp. Sev.
lib. i. c. 43.

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Ps. lxxxix.
32, 33, 34.

SERM. *with salvation.* Which that it may (to the glory of God
XII. and good of his Church) more surely come to pass, let us
convert this promise into a prayer, and say with Solo-
2 Chron. vi. mon, *Now therefore arise, O Lord God, thou and the ark*
41. *of thy strength: let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed*
with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. Amen.

SERMON XIII.

NOT TO OFFEND IN WORD AN EVIDENCE OF A
HIGH PITCH OF VIRTUE.

JAMES iii. 2.

If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man.

THIS sentence stands in the head of a discourse concerning the tongue, (that doubtful engine of good and evil,) wherein how excellent benefits, and how grievous mischiefs, it, as rightly or perversely wielded, is apt to produce, how it is both a sweet instrument of all goodness, and a sharp weapon of all iniquity, is positively laid down, and by fit comparisons illustrated. But secluding all relation to the context, the words may well be considered singly by themselves: and as such they instruct us, asserting a certain truth; they direct us, implying a good duty. They assert that man to be perfect, who offends not in speech; and they consequently imply, that we should strive to avoid offending therein: for to *be perfect*, and to *go on to perfection*, are precepts, the observance whereof is incumbent on us. We shall first briefly explain the assertion, and then declare its truth; afterwards we shall press somewhat couched in the duty.

To *offend* originally signifies to *impinge*, that is, to stumble, or hit dangerously upon somewhat lying cross our way, so as thereby to be cast down, or at least to be disordered in our posture, and stopt in our progress:

SERM.
XIII.

Deut. xviii.
13.
Luke vi. 40.
Matt. v. 48.
xix. 21.
2 Cor. xiii.
11.
Heb. vi. 1.
Εἴ τις ἐν λό-
γῳ ἢ πταίει.

SERM. whence it is well transferred to denote our being through
 XIII. any incident temptation brought into sin, whereby a man is
 thrown down, or bowed from his upright state, and interrupted from prosecuting a steady course of piety and virtue. By an usual and apposite manner of speaking, our tenor of life is called *a way*, our conversation *walking*, our actions *steps*, our observing good laws *uprightness*, our transgression of them *tripping, faltering, falling*.

Pa. xxxvii.
23, 24.

By *not offending in word*, we may easily then conceive to be understood such a constant restraint, and such a careful guidance of our tongue, that it doth not transgress the rules prescribed unto it by Divine law, or by good reason; that it thwarteth not the natural ends and proper uses for which it was framed, to which it is fitted; such as chiefly are promoting God's glory, our neighbour's benefit, and our own true welfare.

Jan. i. 4.

By *a perfect man* is meant a person accomplished and complete in goodness, one of singular worth and integrity, a brave and excellent man, who, as to the continual tenor of his life, is free from all notorious defects, and heinous faults; like David, *fulfilling all God's will*, and *having respect to all God's commandments*; like Zachary and Elizabeth, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*. Thus was Noah, thus was Abraham, thus was Job perfect. This is the notion of *perfection* in holy Scripture: not an absolute exemption from all blemish of soul, or blame in life; for such a perfection is inconsistent with the nature and state of man here,

Acts xiii.
22.

Psal. cxix.
6.

Luke i. 6.

Gen. vi. 9.

xvii. 1.

Job i. 1.

Prov. xx. 9.

Job ix. 20.

Eccles. vii.
20.

where none with modesty or with truth can say, *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin*; where every man must confess with Job, *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse*. For, *There is not, as the Preacher assures, a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not*; and, *In many things we offend all*, is our Apostle's assertion, immediately preceding my text; which words may serve to expound these. *In many things*, saith he, *we offend all*; that is, there is no man absolutely perfect:

but *if any man offend not in word*, (that is, if a man constantly govern his tongue well,) *that man is perfect*; perfect in such a kind and degree as human frailty doth admit; he is eminently good; he may be reasonably presumed upright and blameless in all the course of his practice; *able*, as it follows, *to bridle the whole body*, that is, qualified to order all his actions justly and wisely. So that in effect the words import this; that a constant governance of our speech according to duty and reason is a high instance and a special argument of a thoroughly sincere and solid goodness.

The truth of which aphorism may from several considerations appear.

1. A good governance of speech is a strong evidence of a good mind; of a mind pure from vicious desires, calm from disorderly passions, void of dishonest intentions. For since speech is a child of thought, which the mind always travaileth and teemeth with, and which after its birth is wont in features to resemble its parent; since every man naturally is ambitious to propagate his conceits, and without a painful force cannot smother his resentments; since especially bad affections, like stum or poison, are impetuous and turgid, so agitating all the spirits, and so swelling the heart, that it cannot easily compose or contain them; since a distempered constitution of mind, as of body, is wont to weaken the retentive faculty, and to force an evacuation of bad humours; since he that wanteth the principal wisdom of well-ordering his thoughts, and mastering his passions, can hardly be conceived so prudent, as long to refrain, or to regulate their dependence, speech; considering these things, I say, it is scarce possible, that he which commonly thinks ill, should constantly either be well silent, or speak well. To conceal fire, to check lightning, to confine a whirlwind, may perhaps be no less feasible, than to keep within due compass the exorbitant motions of a soul, wherein reason hath lost its command, so that *qua data porta*, where the next passage occurs, they should not rush forth, and vent themselves. A vain mind naturally will bubble forth or fly out in frothy expressions:

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Eccles. xix.
11.
A fool travaileth with a word, as a woman in labour of a child.

SERM. wrath burning in the breast will flame out, or at least
XIII. smoke through the mouth; rancorous imposthumes of spite

Matt. xii.
34.

and malice will at length discharge purulent matter; lust boiling within will soon foam out in lewd discourse. If the fountain itself is polluted, or infected, how can the streams be clear or wholesome? *How can ye, being evil, speak good things?* saith our Lord, *for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, addeth he, out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things: ἐκ τῶν κακῶν τῆς καρδίας, he casteth forth ill things,* as a fountain doth its waters by a natural and necessary ebullition.

It is true, that in some particular cases, or at some times, a foul heart may be disguised by fair words, or covered by demure reservedness: shame, or fear, or crafty design, may often repress the declaration of ill thoughts and purposes. But such fits of dissimulation cannot hold; men cannot abide quiet under so violent constraints; the intestine jars, or unkindly truces, between heart and tongue (those natural friends) cannot be perpetual, or very durable: no man can hold his breath long, or live without evaporating through his mouth those steams of passion which arise from flesh and blood. *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing, the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue,* saith David, expressing the difficulty of obstructing the eruption of our affections into language. Hence

Psal. xxxix.
3.

it is, that speech is commonly judged the truest character of the mind, and the surest test of inward worth; as that which discloseth the *hidden man of the heart*, which unlocketh the closets of the breast, which draws the soul out of her dark recesses into open light and view, which rendereth our thoughts visible, and our intentions palpable. Hence *Loquere, ut te videam*, Speak, that I may see you, or know what kind of man you are, is a saying which all men, at first meeting, do in their hearts direct one to another: neither commonly doth any man require more to ground a judgment upon concerning the worth or ability of another, than opportunity of hearing him to

Ἄνθρωπος χα-
ρακτηρίζεται ἐκ
τῶν λόγων τῆς
στόματός
αὐτοῦ
1 Pet. iii. 4.

discourse for a competent time: yea, often before a man hath spoken ten words, his mind is caught, and a formal sentence is passed upon it. Such a strict affinity and connection do all men suppose between thoughts and words.

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2. From hence, that the use of speech is itself a great ingredient into our practice, and hath a very general influence upon whatever we do, may be inferred, that whoever governeth it well, cannot also but well order his whole life. The extent of speech must needs be vast, since it is nearly commensurate to thought itself, which it ever closely traceth, widely ranging through all the immense variety of objects; so that men almost as often speak in-cogitantly, as they think silently. Speech is indeed the rudder that steereth human affairs, the spring that setteth the wheels of action on going; the hands work, the feet walk, all the members and all the senses act by its direction and impulse; yea, most thoughts are begotten, and most affections stirred up thereby: it is itself most of our employment, and what we do beside it, is however guided and moved by it. It is the profession and trade of many, it is the practice of all men, to be in a manner continually talking. The chief and most considerable sort of men manage all their concernments merely by words; by them princes rule their subjects, generals command their armies, senators deliberate and debate about the great matters of state: by them advocates plead causes, and judges decide them; divines perform their offices, and minister their instructions; merchants strike up their bargains, and drive on all their traffic. Whatever almost great or small is done in the court or in the hall, in the church or at the exchange, in the school or in the shop, it is the tongue alone that doeth it: it is the force of this little machine that turneth all the human world about. It is indeed the use of this strange organ which rendereth human life, beyond the simple life of other creatures, so exceedingly various and compounded; which creates such a multiplicity of business, and which transacts it; while by it we communicate our secret conceptions, transfusing them

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into others ; while therewith we instruct and advise one another ; while we consult about what is to be done, contest about right, dispute about truth ; while the whole business of conversation, of commerce, of government, and administration of justice, of learning, and of religion, is managed thereby ; yea, while it stoppeth the gaps of time, and filleth up the wide intervals of business, our recreations and diversements (the which do constitute a great portion of our life,) mainly consisting therein, so that, in comparison thereof, the execution of what we determine and all other action do take up small room : and even all that usually dependeth upon foregoing speech, which persuadeth, or counselleth, or commandeth it. Whence the province of speech being so very large, it being so universally concerned, either immediately as the matter, or by consequence as the source of our actions, he that constantly governeth it well may justly be esteemed to live very excellently.

3. To govern the tongue well is a matter of exceeding difficulty, requiring not only hearty goodness, but great judgment and art, together with much vigilance and circumspection ; whence the doing it argues a high pitch of virtue. For since the tongue is a very loose and versatile engine, which the least breath of thought doth stir, and set on going any way, it cannot but need much attention to keep it either in a steady rest, or in a right motion. Since numberless swarms of things roving in the fancy, do thence incessantly obtrude themselves upon the tongue, very much application of mind and great judgment are requisite to select out of them those few which are good and fit, rejecting all that is bad, and improper to be spoken. Since continually temptations occur provoking or alluring to miscarriage in this kind, (for beside internal propensions and commotions of soul, every object we behold, every company we are engaged in, every accident befalling us, doth suggest somewhat inviting thereto ; the condition of our neighbour moving us, if high, to flatter, if low, to insult ; our own fortune prompting, if prosperous, to boast, if cross, to murmur ; any action drawing

from us, if it pleaseth us, fond admiration, if it disliketh, harsh censure: since, I say, we are thus at every turn obnoxious to speak amiss,) it must be matter of huge skill and caution, of mighty industry and resolution, to decline it. We for that purpose need to imitate that earnest and watchful care of the holy Psalmist, which he thus expresseth; *I have*, saith he, *purposed that my mouth shall not offend*: and, *I said*, saith he again, *I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.* And thus to maintain a constant guard over his heart and ways, thus in consequence thereof to curb and rule his speech well, must assuredly be the mark of a very good person. Especially considering, that,

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4. Irregular speech hath commonly divers more advantages for it, and fewer checks upon it, than other bad practice hath. A man is apt, I mean, to speak ill with less dissatisfaction and regret from within; he may do it with less control and less hazard from without, than he can act ill. Bad actions are gross and bulky, taking up much time, and having much force spent on them, whence men easily observe and consider them in themselves and others: but ill words are subtle and transient, soon born, and as soon deceased; whence men rashly utter them without much heed before them, or much reflection after them. Bad actions have also usually visible effects immediately consequent on them: but words operate insensibly and at distance; so that men hardly discern what will follow them, or what they have effected. There are also frequent occasions of speaking ill upon presumption of secrecy, and thence of indisturbance and impunity; yea, doing so is often entertained with complacency, and encouraged with applause: the vilest abuses of speech (even blasphemy, treason, and slander themselves) may be safely whispered into ears, which will receive them with pleasure and commendation. Bad language also in most cases is neither strictly prohibited, nor severely chastised by human laws, as bad action is. Whence ordinarily the guilt of this misbehaviour seems little or none; and persons

SERM. much practising it, both in their own conceit, and in the
XIII. opinion of others, do often pass for innocent. Men, indeed, here will hardly discern any rule, or acknowledge any obligation: the tongue they deem is free, and any words may be dispensed with: it is sufficient if they abstain from doing gross wrong or mischief, they have a

Psal. xii. 4. right and liberty to say any thing. *Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* so are men commonly prone to say, with those in the Psalm. Hence whosoever, notwithstanding such encouragements to offend herein, and so few restraints from it, doth yet carefully forbear it, governing his tongue according to rules of duty and reason, may justly be reputed a very good man. Farthermore,

5. Whereas most of the enormities, the mischiefs, and the troubles, whereby the souls of men are defiled, their minds discomposed, and their lives disquieted, are the fruits of ill-governed speech; it being that chiefly which perverteth justice, which soweth dissensions, which raiseth all bad passions and animosities, which embroileth the world in seditions and factions, by which men wrong and abuse, deceive and seduce, defame and disgrace one another, whereby consequently innumerable vexations and disturbances are created among men; he that by well governing his speech preserveth himself from the guilt, disengageth his mind and life from the inconveniences of all such evils, (from the discreet and honest management thereof, enjoying both innocence and peace,) must necessarily be as a very wise and happy, so a very good and worthy person.

6. His tongue also so ruled cannot but produce very good fruits of honour to God, of benefit to our neighbour, of comfort to himself: it will be sweet and pleasant, it will be wholesome and useful; endearing conversation, cementing peaceful society, breeding and nourishing love, instructing and edifying, or cheering and comforting the hearers. *His tongue is health; his mouth is a well and tree of life; his lips disperse knowledge; he shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth; every man shall kiss his lips.* Such, as the Wise Man telleth us, are

Prov. xii.
18. x. 11.
xv. 4. xii.
14. xiii. 2,
3. xv. 23.
xxiv. 26.

the effects of innocent, sober, and well-ordered discourse ; the which do much commend their author, and declare the excellent virtue of that tree from which such fruits do grow.

7. Lastly, the observation how unusual this practice is, in any good degree, may strongly assure the excellency thereof. For the rarer, especially in morals, any good thing is, the more noble and worthy it is ; that rarity arguing somewhat of peculiar difficulty in the attainment or the achievement thereof. Nothing is more obvious to common experience, than that persons, who in the rest of their demeanour and dealings appear blameless, yea, who in regard to other points of duty would seem nice and precise, are extremely peccant in this kind. We may see divers, otherwise much restraining and much denying themselves, who yet indulge themselves a strange licentiousness in speaking whatever their humour or their passion dictates. Many, in other respects, harmless, (who would not for any thing smite or slay folks,) we may observe with their tongue to commit horrible outrages upon any man that comes in their way. Frequently persons very punctual in their dealings are very unjust in their language, cheating and robbing their neighbour of his reputation by envious detraction and hard censure. They who abhor shedding a man's blood will yet, without any scruple or remorse, by calumnious tales and virulent reproaches, assassinate his credit, and murder his good name, although to him perhaps far more dear and precious than his life. Commonly such as are greatly staunch in other enjoyments of pleasure, are enormously intemperate in speaking, and very incontinent of their tongue : men in all other parts of morality rigorously sober, are often in this very wild and dissolute. Yea, not seldom we may observe, that even mighty pretenders to godliness, and zealous practisers of devotion, cannot forbear speaking things plainly repugnant to God's law, and very prejudicial to his honour. Thus it is observable to be now ; and thus we may suppose that it always hath been. So of his time St. Hierome (or rather St. Paulinus, in his ex-

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cellent Epistle to Celantia) testifies: *a Such a lust* (saith he, concerning the ill governance of speech) *of this evil hath invaded the minds of men, that even those who have far receded from other vices, do yet fall into this, as into the last snare of the devil.* So it appears, that among all sorts of good practice, the strict governance of the tongue is least ordinary, and consequently, that it is most admirable and excellent. And this is all I shall say for confirmation of the point asserted.

Now then, as it is our duty to aim at perfection, or to endeavour the attainment of integrity in heart and life, so we should especially labour to govern our tongue, and guard it from offence. To which purpose it is requisite, that we should well understand and consider the nature of those several offences to which speech is liable, together with the special pravity, deformity, and inconvenience of each: for did we know and weigh them, we should not surely either like or dare to incur them.

The offences of speech are many and various in kind; so many as there be of thought and of action, unto which they do run parallel: accordingly they well may be distinguished from the difference of objects which they do specially respect. Whence, 1. some of them are committed against God, and confront piety; 2. others against our neighbour, and violate justice, or charity, or peace; 3. others against ourselves, infringing sobriety, discretion, or modesty; or, 4. some are of a more general and abstracted nature, rambling through all matters, and crossing all the heads of duty. It is true, that in most, or in all offences of speech, there is a complication of impiety, iniquity, and imprudence; for that by all sorts of ill speaking we sin against God, and break his commandment; we injure our neighbour, at least by contagion and bad example; we abuse ourselves, contracting guilt, and exposing ourselves to punishment: also the general

^a Tanta hujus mali libido mentes hominum invasit, ut etiam qui procul ab aliis vitiis recesserunt, in istud tamen, quasi in extremum diaboli laqueum, incidant. *Ad Celant.*

vices of speech (unadvisedness and vanity) do constantly adhere to every bad word: yet commonly each evil speech hath a more direct and immediate aspect upon some one of those objects, (God, our neighbour, or ourselves,) and is peculiarly repugnant to one of those capital virtues (piety, charity, and sobriety) unto which all our duty is reduced. Now according to this distinction, I should, if time would give leave, describe and dissuade particularly all these sorts of offence: but (since I must be respectful to patience, and careful myself not to offend in speech) I shall confine the rest of my present Discourse to the first sort, the offences against piety; and even of them I shall (waving the rest) only touch two or three, insinuating some reasons why we should eschew them. These are,

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I. Speaking blasphemously against God, or reproachfully concerning religion, or to the disgrace of piety, with intent to subvert men's faith in God, or to impair their reverence of him. There hath been a race of men, (and would to God that race were not even till now continued) concerning whom the Psalmist said, *They speak loftily, they set their mouth against the heavens; who, like the proud Sennacherib, lift up their eyes, and exalt their voice against the Holy One of Israel; who, with the profane Antiochus, speak marvellous things against the God of gods.* This of all impieties is the most prodigiously gigantic, the most signal practice of enmity towards God, and downright waging of war against heaven. Of all *weapons formed against God*, the tongue most notoriously doth impugn him; for we cannot reach heaven with our hands, or immediately assault God by our actions: other ill practice indeed obliquely, or by consequence dishonoureth God, and defameth goodness; but profane discourse is directly levelled at them, and doth immediately touch them, as its formal objects. Now doing thus argueth an extremity both of folly and naughtiness: for he that doeth it, either believeth the existence of God, and the truth of religion; or he distrusts them. If he doth believe them, what a desperate

(Ps. lxxviii.
19.

Num. xxi.

5.

Job. xxxiv.
37.)

Ps. lxxiii.
8, 9.

Isa. xxxvii.
23.

2 Chron.

xxxii. 19.

Dan. xi. 36.

Isa. liv. 17.

SERM. XIII. madness is it in him, advisedly to invite certain mischief to his home, and pull down heaviest vengeance on his own head, by opposing the irresistible power, and provoking the inflexible justice of God ! What an abominable villany and baseness is it thus to abuse God's immense goodness and mercy, offering such despite to the Author of his being, and free Donor of all the good he enjoys ! What a monstrous conspiracy is it of stupidity and perverseness in him, thus wilfully to defy his own welfare, to forfeit all capacity of happiness ; to precipitate and plunge himself into a double hell, that of bitter remorse here, that of endless pain hereafter ! But if he that reproacheth God and religion be supposed distrustful of their being and reality, neither so is he excusable from like degrees of folly and pravity : for, beside the wild extravagance of such disbelief, against legions of cogent arguments and pregnant testimonies, against all the voice of nature and faith of history, against the settled judgment of wise and sober persons, who have studied and considered the point, against the current tradition of all ages, and general consent of mankind ; all which to withstand, no less demonstrateth high indiscretion than arrogance ; beside also the palpable silliness which he displays, in causelessly (or for no other cause than soothing a fantastic humour) drawing upon himself the anger and hatred of all men who are concerned for the interests of their religion, thrusting himself into great dangers and mischiefs thence imminent to him both from private zeal and public law ; beside, I say, these evident follies, there is an unsufferable insolence and horrible malice apparent in this practice ; for it is no less than the height of insolence, thus to affront mankind in matters of highest consideration, and deepest resentment with it ; not only thwarting its common notions, but vilifying the chief objects of its highest respect and affection, of its main care and concernment ; so making the fiercest invasion that can be on its credit, and charging it with greatest fondness. Who can endure that He, whom he apprehends to be his grand Parent, his best Friend and Benefactor, his great Patron and Sove-

reign, should in downright terms be defamed or disparaged? Who can patiently bear that, wherein he placeth his utmost hopes and supreme felicity, to be expressly slighted or scorned? Who can take the offering to do this, otherwise than for a most injurious reflection upon his judgment and his practice? If he cannot believe in God, he may let them alone who do: if he will not practise religion, he may forbear to persecute it. He cannot pretend any zeal; it is therefore only pride that moves him to disturb us. So may every man, with all the reason in the world, complain against the profane talker. Seeing also it is most evident, that hearty reverence of God, and a conscientious regard to religion, do produce great benefits to mankind, being indeed the main supports of common honesty and sobriety, the sole curbs, effectually restraining men from unjust fraud and violence, from brutish lusts and passions; since apparently religion prescribeth the best rules, and imposeth the strongest engagements to the performance of those actions, whereby not only men's private welfare is promoted, and ordinary conversation is sweetened, and common life is adorned, but also whereby public order and peace are maintained; since, as Cicero with good reason judged, *piety being removed, it is probable that justice itself* (of all virtues the best guarded and fortified by human power) *could not subsist, no faith could be secured, no society could be preserved among men*; it being manifestly vain to fancy, that assuredly without religious conscience any one will be a good subject, a true friend, or an honest man; or that any other consideration can induce men to prefer duty to their prince, the prosperity of their country, fidelity toward their friends or neighbours, before their own present interests and pleasure: since, I say, the credit of religion is so very beneficial and useful to mankind, it is plain that he must be exceedingly spiteful and malicious, who shall by profane discourse endeavour to supplant or shake it. He that speaketh against God's providence hath assuredly a pique at goodness, and would not have it predominant in the hearts of men. He that disparages religion doth cer-

piety being removed, it is probable that justice itself (of all virtues the best guarded and fortified by human power) *could not subsist, no faith could be secured, no society could be preserved among men*; it being manifestly vain to fancy, that assuredly without religious conscience any one will be a good subject, a true friend, or an honest man; or that any other consideration can induce men to prefer duty to their prince, the prosperity of their country, fidelity toward their friends or neighbours, before their own present interests and pleasure: since, I say, the credit of religion is so very beneficial and useful to mankind, it is plain that he must be exceedingly spiteful and malicious, who shall by profane discourse endeavour to supplant or shake it. He that speaketh against God's providence hath assuredly a pique at goodness, and would not have it predominant in the hearts of men. He that disparages religion doth cer-

Haud scio an, pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam, et societas humani generis, et una excellentissima virtus justitia tollatur. Cic.

SERM. tainly take his aim against virtue, and would not have it
 XIII. practised in the world : his meaning plainly is, to effect, if
 he can, that men should live like beasts in foul impurities,
 or like fiends in mischievous iniquities. Such an one there-
 fore is not to be taken as a simple embracer of error, but as
 a spiteful designer against common good. For indeed,
 were any man assured (as none can upon so much as proba-
 ble grounds think it) that religion had been only devised by
 men, as a supplemental aid to reason and force, (drawing
 them, whom the one could not persuade, nor the other
 compel, to the practice of things conducible to the pub-
 lic weal;) that it were merely an implement of policy, or
 a knack to make people loyal to their prince, upright in
 their dealings, sober in their conversations, moderate in
 their passions, virtuous in all their doings; it were yet a
 most barbarous naughtiness and inhumanity in him to
 assay the overthrow thereof, with the defeating so excel-
 lent purposes : he that should attempt it, justly would de-
 serve to be reputed an enemy to the welfare of mankind, to
 be treated as a pestilent disturber of the world.

Ut quos
 ratio non
 posset, eos
 ad officium
 religio du-
 ceret. Cic.

II. Another like offence against piety is, to speak loosely
 and wantonly about holy things, (things nearly related to
 God or to religion,) to make such things the matter of sport
 and mockery, to play and trifle with them. But of this I
 shall have occasion to speak in another Discourse.

III. Another grand offence against piety is, rash and
 vain swearing in common discourse; an offence which
 now strangely reigns and rages in the world, passing
 about in a specious garb, and under glorious titles, as a
 genteel and graceful quality, a mark of fine breeding, and
 a point of high gallantry. Who, forsooth, now is the
 brave spark and complete gentleman, but he that hath
 the skill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a skill!
 how mad a confidence!) to lard every sentence with an
 oath or a curse; making bold at every turn to salute God,
 fetching him down from heaven to avouch any idle prat-
 tle, to second any giddy passion, to concern himself in
 any trivial affair of his; yea, calling and challenging the

Almighty to damn and destroy him ! But somewhat to re-
 press these fond conceits and vile practices, let us, I pray,
 consider, SERM.
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1. That swearing thus is most expressly and strictly prohibited to us. *I say unto you, Swear not at all: but* Mat. v. 34, 37.
*let your conversation be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for what-
 soever is more than these cometh of evil:* so our Lord for-
 bids it. *But above all things, my brethren, swear not—lest* Jam. v. 12.
you enter into condemnation: so doth St. James warn
 against it. And is it not then prodigious, that in Chris-
 tendom any man should affect to break laws so plain and
 so severe; that it should pass here not only for a tolerable,
 but even for a commendable practice, to violate so manifest
 and so important a duty; that so directly to thwart our
 Lord himself should be a thing not in use only, but in cre-
 dit and request among Christians? What more palpable
 affront could be offered to our religion, and to all that is
 sacred among us? For what respect or force can we ima-
 gine reserved to religion, while a practice so indisputably op-
 posite thereto, in a high degree, is so current and prevalent?

2. Again, according to the very nature and reason of
 things, it is evidently an intolerable profaneness, thus un-
 advisedly to make addresses and appeals to God, invoking
 his testimony, and demanding his judgment about trifles;
 far more such, then it were a high presumption and en-
 croachment upon the majesty of a prince, on every petty
 occasion to break into his presence, and to assail his ears,
 dragging him to hear and determine concerning it.
 Whence the very light of nature condemns this practice,
 and even heathens have loudly declared against it, as dero-
 gatory to the reverence of the duty, and unsuitable to the
 gravity of a worthy man.

3. Swearing indeed is by our holy Oracles worthily re-
 presented to us as an especial piece of worship and devo-
 tion toward God: wherein, duly performed, we piously
 acknowledge his chief attributes and singular preroga-
 tives; (his being every where present, and conscious of all
 we say or do; his goodness and fidelity, in favouring

SERM. truth and protecting right; his justice, in rewarding veracity and equity, in avenging falsehood and iniquity; his being the supreme Lord of all persons, and last judge in all causes; to signify and avow these things to God's glory, swearing was instituted, and naturally serveth :) wherefore, as all other acts of devotion, so this grand one especially should never be performed without all serious consideration and humble reverence; the cause should be certainly just and true; the matter worthy and weighty, the manner grave and solemn, the mind framed to earnest attention, and furnished with devout affections. Those conditions are always carefully to be observed, which the Prophet intimates

Jer. iv. 2. when he chargeth thus: *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.* It is therefore horrible mockery and profanation of a most sacred ordinance, when men presume to use it without any care or consideration, without any respect or awe, upon any slight or vain occasion.

4. The doing so is also very prejudicial to human society; for the decision of right, the security of government, and the preservation of peace, do much depend upon an awful regard to oaths; and therefore, upon their being only used in due manner and season: the same do greatly suffer by the contempt or disregard of them, and consequently by their common and careless use. They are the surest bonds by which the consciences of men are tied to the attestation of truth and observance of faith; the which as by rare and reverent use they are kept firm and fast, so by frequent and negligent application of them (by their prostitution to every light and toyish matter) they are quite dissolved, or much slackened. Whence the public seems much concerned that this enormity should be retrenched. For if oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance signify? If men are wont to dally with swearing every where, can they be expected to be strict and serious therein at the bar, or in the church? Will they regard the testimony of God, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at one time, when as every where continually (upon any,

upon no occasion) they dare to confront and contemn them? SERM.
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5. This way of swearing is also a very uncivil and unmannerly practice. It is not only a gross rudeness toward the main body of men, who justly reverence the name of God, and loathe such abuses thereof; not only an insolent defiance to the common profession and law of our country, which disallows and condemns it; but it is very odious and offensive to any particular society, if, at least, there be one sober person therein: for to any such person (who retains a sense of goodness, or is anywise concerned for God's honour,) no language or behaviour can be more disgustful; nothing can more grate the ears or fret the heart of such an one, than this kind of talk: to give him the lie were a compliment, to spit in his face were an obligation in comparison thereto. Wherefore it is a wonder that any person having in him a spark of ingenuity, or at all pretending to good manners, should find in his heart or deign to use it.

6. This practice also much derogateth from the credit of him that useth it, rendering the truth of whatever he says in reason and justice suspected. For he that is so void of conscience as to swear vainly, what can engage him to speak truly? He that is so loose in one such point of obedience to God and reason, why should we conceive him in regard to another?

7. It can be surely no wrong to distrust him, since he implies himself not to be, even in his own opinion, a credible person; since he judges not his own bare affirmation to deserve belief. For why, if he takes his word to be competently good, doth he back it with such asseverations? why unprovoked calls he God to witness, if he thinks his own honesty sufficient to assure the truth of what he says? An honest man, methinks, should scorn thus to invalidate his own credit, or to detract from the authority of his word, which should stand firm upon itself, and not want an oath to support it.

8. To excuse this, the swearer must be forced to confess another ugly fault in speaking, that is, impertinence, or

Tantus in te sit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putet. Hier.

SERM. using of waste and insignificant words ; to be charged whee-
XIII. with he is indeed, however, unavoidably liable. For oaths, as they pass commonly, are mere excrescences of speech, which do nothing else but encumber and deform it ; they embellish discourse just as a wen or a scab does beautify a face, as a spot or a patch do adorn a garment. For to what purpose, I pray, is God's name haled into our idle talk ? Why should we so often mention him, when we never mean any thing about him ? Into every sentence to foist a dog or a horse, would altogether be as proper and pertinent. These superfluous words signify nothing, but that the speaker little skilleth the use of speech, or the rule of conversation, but meaneth to prate any thing without wit or judgment ; that his fancy is very beggarly, and craves the aid of any impertinency to relieve it. One would think that a man of sense should grutch to lend his ears, or incline his attention, to such putrid stuff ; that without nauseating he should not endure to see men lavish time, and squander breath so frivolously.

Πεὶς ἀνα-
 πλῆρωσιν
 λόγῳ Hier.

9. In fine, this offence is particularly most inexcusable, in that it scarce hath any temptation to it, or bringeth with it any advantage ; so that it is unaccountable what (beside mere vanity or perverseness,) should dispose men thereto. It gratifieth no sense, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour : for the sound of it is not very melodious, nor surely was any man ever preferred for it, or got an estate thereby ; it rather, to any good ear, maketh a horrid and jarring noise ; it rather produceth displeasure, damage, and disgrace. Wherefore of all dealers in sin the swearer is apparently the silliest, and maketh the worst bargains for himself ; for he sinneth gratis, and, like those in the Prophet, *selleth his soul for nothing*. An epicure hath some reason, and an extortioner is a man of wisdom if compared to him ; for they enjoy some pleasure, or acquire some gain here, in lieu of their salvation hereafter. But he offends heaven, and abandons happiness, he knows not why, nor for what ; a fond humour possesses him, he inconsiderately follows a herd of fops, he affects to play the ape ; that is all he can say

Ysa. lii. 3.

for himself. Let me be pardoned, if just indignation against a wickedness so contemptible, so heinous, and so senseless, and withal so notorious, and so rife among us, doth extort from me language somewhat tart and vehement.

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If men would then but a little consider things, surely this scurvy fashion would be soon discarded, much fitter for the scum of the people than for the flower of the gentry; yea rather, much below any man endued with a scrap of reason not to say with a grain of religion. Could we bethink ourselves, certainly modest, sober, and pertinent discourse would appear far more generous and manly, than such wild hectoring God Almighty, such rude insulting over the received laws, such ruffianly swaggering against sobriety and goodness. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their ancestors, (that gallant courage, that solid wisdom, that noble courtesy, which first advanced their families, and severed them from the vulgar,) this degenerate wantonness and dirtiness of speech would return to the dunghill, or rather (which God grant) would be quite banished from the world.

Finally, as to this whole point, about not offending in our speech against piety, we should consider, that as we ourselves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly designed and framed to serve and glorify our Maker; (it being withal the greatest perfection of our nature, and the noblest privilege thereof so to do;) so especially our tongue and speaking faculty were given us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to express our love and gratitude toward him, to celebrate his praises, to acknowledge his benefits, to promote his honour and service. This consequently is the most proper and worthy use thereof; from this it becomes in effect what the Psalmist so often terms it, our *glory*, and the best member we have; as that whereby we far excel all creatures here below; that whereby we consort with the blessed angels above, in distinct utterance of praise to our Creator. Wherefore applying it to any impious discourse, (tending anywise to the dishonour of God, or disparagement of religion,) is a most unnatural abuse thereof, and a vile in-

Ps. xvi. 9.
xxx. 12.
lvii. 8.
cviii. 1.

SERM. gratitude toward him that gave it to us. From which,
XIII. and from all other offences, God in his mercy preserve us
all, through Jesus Christ our Lord, unto whom for ever,
with heart and tongue, let us strive to render all glory and
praise. *Amen.*

SERMON XIV.

——
AGAINST FOOLISH TALKING AND JESTING.
——

EPHES. v. 4.

—*Nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.*

MORAL and political aphorisms are seldom couched in such terms, that they should be taken as they sound precisely, or according to the widest extent of signification; but do commonly need exposition, and admit exception: otherwise frequently they would not only clash with reason and experience, but interfere, thwart, and supplant one another. The best masters of such wisdom are wont to interdict things, apt by unseasonable or excessive use to be perverted, in general forms of speech, leaving the restrictions, which the case may require or bear, to be made by the hearer's or interpreter's discretion; whence many seemingly formal prohibitions are to be received only as sober cautions. This observation may be particularly supposed applicable to this precept of St. Paul, which seemeth universally to forbid a practice commended (in some cases and degrees) by philosophers as virtuous, not disallowed by reason, commonly affected by men, often used by wise and good persons; from which consequently if our religion did wholly debar us, it would seem chargeable with somewhat too uncouth austerity and sourness: from imputations of which kind, as in its temper and frame it is really most free, (it never quenching natural

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SERM. light, or cancelling the dictates of sound reason, but con-
 XIV. firming and improving them;) so it carefully declineth

Οἱ μὴ τὸ εἰ-
 πόντες μηδὲν
 γελῶσιν, τοῖς
 τε λίγῃσι
 δυσχεραίνον-
 τες, ἀγαροί
 καὶ σκληροὶ
 ὀκοῦσιν εἶναι.
 Arist. Eth.
 iv. 8.

^a Phil. iv. 8.

them, enjoining us, that ^a *if there be any things* *πρῶσοφιῶν,*
 (lovely, or grateful to men,) *any things* *εὖφημα,* (of good
 report and repute,) *if there be any virtue and any praise,*
 (any thing in the common apprehensions of men held
 worthy and laudable,) we should *mind those things,* that
 is, should yield them a regard answerable to the esteem
 they carry among rational and sober persons.

Whence it may seem requisite so to interpret and deter-
 mine St. Paul's meaning here concerning *εὐτραπελία,*
 (that is, facetious speech or raillery, by our translators
 rendered *jesting,*) that he may consist with himself, and be
 reconciled to Aristotle, who placeth this practice in the
 rank of virtues; or that religion and reason may well ac-
 cord in the case; supposing, that if there be any kind of
 facetiousness innocent and reasonable, conformable to good
 manners, (regulated by common sense, and consistent with
 the tenor of Christian duty, that is, not transgressing the
 bounds of piety, charity, and sobriety,) St. Paul did not
 intend to discountenance or prohibit that kind.

For thus expounding and limiting his intent, we have
 some warrant from himself, some fair intimations in the
 words here. For first, what sort of facetious speech he
 aimeth at, he doth imply by the fellow he coupleth
 therewith; *μωρολογία,* saith he, ἢ *εὐτραπελία,* *foolish talking,*
 or *facetiousness*: such facetiousness, therefore, he toucheth
 as doth include folly, in the matter or manner thereof.
 Then he farther determineth it, by adjoining a peculiar
 quality thereof, unprofitableness or impertinency; *τὰ μὴ*
ἀνήκοντα, *which are not pertinent,* or conducible to any
 good purpose: whence may be collected, that it is a
 frivolous and idle sort of facetiousness which he con-
 demneth.

But however manifest it is, that some kind thereof he
 doth earnestly forbid: whence, in order to the guidance
 of our practice, it is needful to distinguish the kinds,
 severing that which is allowable from that which is un-

lawful; that so we may be satisfied in the case, and not on the one hand ignorantly transgress our duty, nor on the other trouble ourselves with scruples, others with censures, upon the use of warrantable liberty therein.

And such a resolution seemeth indeed especially needful in this our age, (this pleasant and jocular age,) which is so infinitely addicted to this sort of speaking, that it scarce doth affect or prize any thing near so much; all reputation appearing now to veil and stoop to that of being a wit: to be learned, to be wise, to be good, are nothing in comparison thereto; even to be noble and rich are inferior things, and afford no such glory. Many at least, to purchase this glory, to be deemed considerable in this faculty, and enrolled among the wits, do not only *make shipwreck of conscience*, abandon virtue, and forfeit all pretences to wisdom; but neglect their estates, and prostitute their honour: so to the private damage of many particular persons, and with no small prejudice to the public, are our times possessed and transported with this humour. To repress the excess and extravagance whereof, nothing in way of discourse can serve better, than a plain declaration when and how such a practice is allowable or tolerable; when it is wicked and vain, unworthy of a man endued with reason, and pretending to honesty or honour.

This I shall in some measure endeavour to perform.

But first it may be demanded what the thing we speak of is, or what this facetiousness doth import? To which question I might reply, as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, *It is that which we all see and know*: any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, than I can inform him by description. It is indeed a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of

SERM. a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale : sometimes
 XIV. it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the
 ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound :

Eadem

quæ, si im-
 prudenti-
 bus exci-
 dunt, stul-
 ta sunt, si
 simulamus,
 venusta
 creduntur.

Quint. vi. 3.

sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression :
 sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude : sometimes it
 is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish
 reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting, or
 cleverly retorting an objection : sometimes it is couched in
 a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyper-
 bole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of
 contradictions, or in acute nonsense : sometimes a scenical
 representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a
 mimical look or gesture passeth for it : sometimes an affect-
 ed simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth
 it being : sometimes it riseth from a lucky hitting upon
 what is strange, sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious
 matter to the purpose : often it consisteth in one knows not
 what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways
 are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the
 numberless roving of fancy and windings of language. It
 is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and
 plain way, (such as reason teacheth and proveth things
 by,) which by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit
 or expression doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in
 it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto. It
 raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of ap-
 prehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of
 spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar : it seeming to
 argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in re-
 mote conceits applicable ; a notable skill, that he can
 dexterously accommodate them to the purpose before
 him ; together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt
 to damp those sportful flashes of imagination. (Whence
 in Aristotle such persons are termed ἐπιδόξιοι, dexterous
 men ; and εὐτροποί, men of facile or versatile manners,
 who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all
 things to themselves.) It also procureth delight, by gra-
 tifying curiosity with its rareness or semblance of diffi-

Et huc le
 omnis false
 dicendi ra-
 tio in eo
 est, ut ali-
 ter quam
 est rectum
 verumque
 dica:

Quint. vi. 3.

Lib. iv. 8.

Ἐπιδόξιοι
 λέγονται ὁ
 ποικίλοι, ὁ
 παντοῦχοι,

culty ; (as monsters, not for their beauty, but their rarity ; as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure ;) by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts ; by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirit ; by provoking to such dispositions of spirit in way of emulation or complaisance ; and by seasoning matters, otherwise distasteful or insipid, with an unusual, and thence grateful tang.

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ὁ ἄσματος, ὁ
εὐκόλος, ὁ
πάντα γι-
νόμενος.
Chris. in
Eph. Or.
17.

But saying no more concerning what it is, and leaving it to your imagination and experience to supply the defect of such explication, I shall address myself to shew, first, when and how such a manner of speaking may be allowed ; then, in what matters and ways it should be condemned.

I. Such facetiousness is not absolutely unreasonable or unlawful, which ministereth harmless divertisement and delight to conversation : (harmless, I say, that is, not trenching upon piety, not infringing charity or justice, not disturbing peace.) For Christianity is not so tetical, so harsh, so envious, as to bar us continually from innocent, much less from wholesome and useful pleasure, such as human life doth need or require. And if joecular discourse may serve to good purposes of this kind ; if it may be apt to raise our drooping spirits, to allay our irksome cares, to whet our blunted industry, to recreate our minds, being tired and cloyed with graver occupations ; if it may breed alacrity, or maintain good humour among us ; if it may conduce to sweeten conversation and endear society ; then is it not inconvenient or unprofitable. If for those ends we may use other recreations, employing on them our ears and eyes, our hands and feet, our other instruments of sense and motion ; why may we not as well to them accommodate our organs of speech and interior sense ? Why should those games which excite our wits and fancies be less reasonable, than those whereby our grosser parts and faculties are exercised ? Yea, why are not those more reasonable, since they are performed in a manly way, and have in them a smack of reason ; seeing also they may be so managed, as not only to divert and please, but to improve and profit the

Δοκεῖ δὲ ἢ
ἀνάσταυσις
καὶ ἢ παιδιὰ
ἐν τῷ βίῳ
εἶναι ἀναγκ-
κασίον.
Arist. Eth.
iv. 8.

Danda est
remissio
animis ;
meliores
acrioresque
requieti
surgent, &c.
Sen. de
Tranq. 15.

SERM. mind, rousing and quickening it, yea, sometimes enlighten-
 XIV. ing and instructing it, by good sense conveyed in jocular
 —riden- expression?
 tem dicere

verum
 Quid vetat?

Θύς ταις
 χάρισι.
 ita Plato
 Xenocra-
 tem moro-
 siorem mo-
 nuit.

It would surely be hard, that we should be tied ever to knit the brow and squeeze the brain, (to be always sadly dumpish, or seriously pensive,) that all divertisement of mirth and pleasantness should be shut out of conversation : and how can we better relieve our minds, or relax our thoughts, how can we be more ingenuously cheerful, in what more kindly way can we exhilarate ourselves and others, than by thus *sacrificing to the graces*, as the ancients called it? Are not some persons always, and all persons sometimes, uncapable otherwise to divert themselves, than by such discourse? Shall we, I say, have no recreation? or must our recreations be ever clownish or childish, consisting merely in rustical efforts, or in petty sleights of bodily strength and activity? Were we, in fine, obliged ever to talk like philosophers, assigning dry reasons for every thing, and dropping grave sentences upon all occasions, would it not much deaden human life, and make ordinary conversation exceedingly to languish? Facetiousness therefore in such cases, and to such purposes, may be allowable.

2. Facetiousness is allowable, when it is the most proper instrument of exposing things apparently base and vile to due contempt. It is many times expedient, that things really ridiculous should appear such, that they may be sufficiently loathed and shunned; and to render them such is the part of a facetious wit, and usually can only be compassed thereby. When to impugn them with downright reason, or to check them by serious discourse, would signify nothing; then representing them in a shape strangely ugly to the fancy, and thereby raising derision at them, may effectually discountenance them. Thus did the prophet Elias expose the wicked superstition of those who worshipped Baal: *Elias*, saith the text, *mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.* By which one pregnant

instance it appeareth, that reasoning pleasantly-abusive in some cases may be useful. The holy Scripture doth not indeed use it frequently; (it not suiting the Divine simplicity and stately gravity thereof to do so;) yet its condescension thereto at any time sufficiently doth authorize a cautious use thereof. When sarcastical twitches are needful to pierce the thick skins of men, to correct their lethargic stupidity, to rouse them out of their drowsy negligence; then may they well be applied: when plain declarations will not enlighten people, to discern the truth and weight of things, and blunt arguments will not penetrate, to convince or persuade them to their duty; then doth reason freely resign its place to wit, allowing it to undertake its work of instruction and reproof.

3. Facetious discourse particularly may be commodious for reproving some vices and reclaiming some persons; (as salt for cleansing and curing some sores.) It commonly procureth a more easy access to the ears of men, and worketh a stronger impression on their hearts, than other discourse could do. Many who will not stand a direct reproof, and cannot abide to be plainly admonished of their fault, will yet endure to be pleasantly rubbed, and will patiently bear a jocund wipe; though they abominate all language purely bitter or sour, yet they can relish discourse having in it a pleasant tartness: you must not chide them as their master, but you may gibe with them as their companion; if you do that, they will take you for pragmatistical and haughty; this they may interpret friendship and freedom. Most men are of that temper; and particularly the genius of divers persons, whose opinions and practices we should strive to correct, doth require not a grave and severe, but a free and merry way of treating them. For what can be more unsuitable and unpromising, than to seem serious with those who are not so themselves, or demure with the scornful? If we design either to please or vex them into better manners, we must be as sportful in a manner, or as contemptuous as themselves. If we mean to be heard by them, we must talk in their own fashion, with humour and jollity: if we will

SERM. instruct them, we must withal somewhat divert them : we
 XIV. must seem to play with them, if we think to convey any sober thoughts into them. They scorn to be formally advised or taught ; but they may perhaps be slyly laughed and lured into a better mind. If by such complaisance we can inveigle those dotterels to hearken to us, we may induce them to consider farther, and give reason some competent scope, some fair play with them. Good reason may be apparelled in the garb of wit, and therein will securely pass, whither in its native homeliness it could never arrive : and being come thither, it with especial advantage may impress good advice ; making an offender more clearly to see, and more deeply to feel his miscarriage ; being represented to his fancy in a strain somewhat rare and remarkable, yet not so fierce and frightful. The severity of reproof is tempered, and the reprover's anger disguised thereby. The guilty person cannot but observe, that he who thus reprehends him is not disturbed or out of humour, and that he rather pitieth than hateth him ; which breedeth a veneration to him, and imparteth no small efficacy to his wholesome suggestions. Such a reprehension, while it forceth a smile without, doth work remorse within ; while it seemeth to tickle the ear, doth sting the heart. In fine, many whose foreheads are brazed and hearts steeled against all blame, are yet not of proof against derision ; divers, who never will be reasoned, may be rallied into better order : in which cases raillery, as an instrument of so important good, as a servant of the best charity, may be allowed.

4. Some errors likewise in this way may be most properly and most successfully confuted ; such as deserve not, and hardly can bear a serious and solid confutation. He that will contest things apparently decided by sense and experience, or who disavows clear principles of reason, approved by general consent, and the common sense of men, what other hopeful way is there of proceeding with him, than pleasantly to explode his conceits ? To dispute seriously with him were trifling ; to trifle with him is the proper course : since he rejecteth the grounds of rea-

soning, it is vain to be in earnest : what then remains but to jest with him ? To deal seriously, were to yield too much respect to such a baffler, and too much weight to his fancies : to raise the man too high in his courage and conceit ; to make his pretences seem worthy the considering and cavassing. Briefly, perverse obstinacy is more easily quelled, petulant impudence is sooner dashed, sophistical captiousness is more safely eluded, sceptical wantonness is more surely confounded in this, than in the simple way of discourse.

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5. This way is also commonly the best way of defence against unjust reproach and obloquy. To yield to a slanderous reviler a serious reply, or to make a formal plea against his charge, doth seem to imply, that we much consider or deeply resent it ; whereas by pleasant reflection on it, we signify, the matter only deserves contempt, and that we take ourselves unconcerned therein. So easily without care or trouble may the brunts of malice be declined or repelled.

6. This way may be allowed in way of counterbalancing and in compliance to the fashion of others. It would be a disadvantage unto truth and virtue, if their defenders were barred from the use of this weapon ; since it is that especially whereby the patrons of error and vice do maintain and propagate them. They being destitute of good reason, do usually recommend their absurd and pestilent notions by a pleasantness of conceit and expression, bewitching the fancies of shallow hearers, and inveigling heedless persons to a liking of them : and if, for reclaiming such people, the folly of those seducers may in like manner be displayed as ridiculous and odious, why should that advantage be refused ? It is wit that wageth the war against reason, against virtue, against religion ; wit alone it is that perverteth so many, and so greatly corrupteth the world : it may therefore be needful, in our warfare for those dearest concerns, to sort the manner of our fighting with that of our adversaries, and with the same kind of arms to protect goodness, whereby they do assail it. If wit may happily serve under the ban-

SERM. ner of truth and virtue, we may impress it for that service ;
XIV. and good it were to rescue so worthy a faculty from so vile abuse. It is the right of reason and piety to command that and all other endowments ; folly and impiety do only usurp them : just and fit therefore it is, to wrest them out of so bad hands to revoke them to their right use and duty.

It doth especially seem requisite to do it in this age, wherein plain reason is deemed a dull and heavy thing. When the mental appetite of men is become like the corporeal, and cannot relish any food without some piquant sauce, so that people will rather starve than live on solid fare ; when substantial and sound discourse findeth small attention or acceptance ; in such a time, he that can, may in complaisance, and for fashion's sake, vouchsafe to be facetious : an ingenious vein, coupled with an honest mind, may be a good talent : he shall employ wit commendably, who by it can further the interests of goodness, alluring men first to listen, then inducing them to consent unto its wholesome dictates and precepts.

Since men are so irreclaimably disposed to mirth and laughter, it may be well to set them in the right pin, to divert their humour into the proper channel, that they may please themselves in deriding things which deserve it, ceasing to laugh at that which requireth reverence or horror.

It may also be expedient to put the world out of conceit, that all sober and good men are a sort of such lumpy or sour people, that they can utter nothing but flat and drowsy stuff ; by shewing them that such persons, when they see cause, in condescension, can be as brisk and smart as themselves ; when they please, can speak pleasantly and wittily as well as gravely and judiciously. This way at least, in respect to the various palates of men, may for variety sake be sometimes attempted, when other means do fail : when many strict and subtile arguings, many zealous declamations, many wholesome serious discourses have been spent, without effecting the extirpation of bad principles, or conversion of those who abet them ;

this course may be tried, and some perhaps may be re-claimed thereby.

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7. Farthermore, the warrantableness of this practice in some cases may be inferred from [a parity of reason in this manner: If it be lawful, (as by the best authorities it plainly doth appear to be,) in using rhetorical schemes, poetical strains, involutions of sense in allegories, fables, parables, and riddles, to discoast from the plain and simple way of speech; why may not facetiousness, issuing from the same principles, directed to the same ends, serving to like purposes, be likewise used blamelessly? If those exorbitancies of speech may be accomodated to instil good doctrine into the head, to excite good passions in the heart, to illustrate and adorn the truth, in a delightful and taking way; and facetious discourse be sometime notoriously conducive to the same ends; why, they being retained, should it be rejected? especially considering how difficult often it may be, to distinguish those forms of discourse from this, or exactly to define the limits which sever rhetoric and railery. Some elegant figures and tropes of rhetoric (biting sarcasms, sly ironies, strong metaphors, lofty hyperboles, paronomasies, oxymorons, and the like, frequently used by the best speakers, and not seldom even by sacred writers) do lie very near upon the confines of jocularity, and are not easily differenced from those sallies of wit, wherein the lepid way doth consist: so that were this wholly culpable, it would be matter of scruple, whether one hath committed a fault or no, when he meant only to play the orator or the poet; and hard surely it would be to find a judge, who could precisely set out the difference between a jest and a flourish.

8. I shall only add, that of old even the sagest and gravest persons, (persons of most rigid and severe virtue) did much affect this kind of discourse, and did apply it to noble purposes. The great introducer of moral wisdom among the Pagans did practice it so much, (by it repressing the windy pride and fallacious vanity of sophisters in his time.) that he thereby got the name of *ὁ εἰρων*, *the*

SERM.
XIV.Cic. de
Orat. ii.

droll; and the rest of those who pursued his design, do by numberless stories and apophthegms recorded of them appear well skilled, and much delighted in this way. Many great princes, (as Augustus Cesar for one, many of whose jests are extant in Macrobius,) many grave statesmen, (as Cicero particularly, who composed several books of jests,) many famous captains, (as Fabius, M. Cato the Censor, Scipio Africanus, Epaminondas, Themistocles, Phocion, and many others, whose witty sayings, together with their martial exploits are reported by historians,) have pleased themselves herein, and made it a condiment of their weighty businesses. ^a So that practising thus, within certain rule and compass, we cannot err without great patterns, and mighty patrons.

9. In fine, since it cannot be shewn that such a sportfulness of wit and fancy doth contain an intrinsic and inseparable turpitude; since it may be so cleanly, handsomely, and innocently used, as not to defile or discompose the mind of the speaker, not to wrong or harm the hearer, not to derogate from any worthy subject of discourse, not to infringe decency, to disturb peace, to violate any of the grand duties incumbent on us, (piety, charity, justice, sobriety,) but rather sometimes may yield advantage in those respects; it cannot well absolutely and universally be condemned: and when not used upon improper matter, in an unfit manner, with excessive measure, at undue season, to evil purpose, it may be allowed. It is bad objects, or bad adjuncts, which do

Τὸ γελᾶν, ἔ-
ἀπειτὰ λέγειν,
οὐ δοκεῖ μὲν
ἀμολογητέ-
ων ἀμέσθη-
μα εἶναι,
ἀγχι δὲ, &c.
Chrys.
Ἀνδρέϊ.

Ο εὐτραπέ-
λειυόμενος
κατήγορος
ἔσται παχέ-
ως. Chrys.

spoil its indifference and innocence: it is the abuse thereof, to which (as all pleasant things are dangerous, and apt to degenerate into baits of intemperance and excess) it is very liable, that corrupteth it; and seemeth to be the ground, why in so general terms it is prohibited by the Apostle. Which prohibition to what cases, or what sorts of jesting it extendeth, we come now to declare.

^a The two greatest men and gravest divines of their time, (S. Greg. Naz. and S. Basil.) could entertain one another with facetious epistles. (Greg. Naz. Ep. vii. ad Basil. Σὺ σιωπᾷτε καὶ διάσωρε, &c. Et. Ep. viii.)

II. 1. All profane jesting, all speaking loosely and wantonly about holy things, (things nearly related to God and religion,) making such things the matters of sport and mockery, playing and trifling with them, is certainly prohibited, as an intolerably vain and wicked practice. It is an infallible sign of a vain and light spirit, which considereth little, and cannot distinguish things, to talk slightly concerning persons of high dignity, to whom especial respect is due; or about matters of great importance, which deserve very serious consideration. No man speaketh, or should speak, of his prince that which he hath not weighed, whether it will consist with that veneration which should be preserved inviolate to him: and is not the same, is not much greater care to be used in regard to the incomparably great and glorious Majesty of heaven? Yes, surely: as we should not without great awe think of him; so we should not presume to mention his name, his word, his institutions, any thing immediately belonging to him, without profoundest reverence and dread. It is the most enormous sauciness that can be imagined, to speak petulantly or perty concerning him; especially considering, that whatever we do say about him, we do utter it in his presence, and to his very face. *For there is not, as the holy Psalmist considered, a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.* No man also hath the heart to droll, or thinks raillery convenient in cases nearly touching his life, his health, his estate, or his fame: and are the true life and health of our soul, are interest in God's favour and mercy, are everlasting glory and bliss, affairs of less moment? Are the treasures and joys of paradise, or the damages and torments in hell, more jesting matters? No certainly, no: in all reason, therefore, it becometh us, and it infinitely concerneth us, whenever we think of these things, to be in best earnest, always to speak of them in most sober sadness.

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Psal.
cxxxix. 4.

The proper objects of common mirth and sportful divertisement are mean and petty matters; any thing at best is by playing therewith made such: great things are

SERM. thereby diminished and debased; especially sacred things
 XIV. do grievously suffer thence, being with extreme indecency
 and indignity depressed beneath themselves, when they
 become the subjects of flashy wit, or the entertainments of
 frothy merriment: to sacrifice their honour to our vain plea-
 sure, being like the ridiculous fondness of that people, which,
 as Ælian reporteth, worshipping a fly, did offer up an ox
 thereto. These things were by God instituted, and pro-
 posed to us for purposes quite different; to compose our
 hearts, and settle our fancies in a most serious frame; to
 breed inward satisfaction, and joy purely spiritual; to ex-
 ercise our most solemn thoughts, and employ our gravest
 discourses: all our speech, therefore, about them should be
 Tim. vi. 3. *wholesome*, apt to afford good instruction, or to excite good
 Eph. iv. 29. *affections; good*, as St. Paul speaketh, *for the use of edi-
 fying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

If we must be facetious and merry, the field is wide
 and spacious; there are matters enough in the world be-
 side these most august and dreadful things, to try our fa-
 culties, and please our humour with; every where light
 and ludicrous things occur: it, therefore, doth argue a
 marvellous poverty of wit, and barrenness of invention,
 no less than a strange defect of goodness, and want of
 discretion, in those who can devise no other subjects to
 frolic upon beside these, of all most improper and peril-
 ous; who cannot seem ingenious under the charge of so
 highly trespassing upon decency, disclaiming wisdom,
 wounding the ears of others, and their own consciences.
 Seem ingenious, I say; for seldom those persons really
 are such, or are capable to discover any wit in a wise and
 manly way. It is not the excellency of their fancies,
 which in themselves usually are sorry and insipid enough,
 but the uncouthness of their presumption; not their ex-
 traordinary wit, but their prodigious rashness, which is to
 be admired. They are gazed on, as the doers of bold
 tricks, who dare perform that which no sober man will
 attempt: they do indeed rather deserve themselves to be
 laughed at, than their conceits. For what can be more

ridiculous than we do make ourselves, when we do thus fiddle and fool with our own souls; when, to make vain people merry, we incense God's earnest displeasure; when, to raise a fit of present laughter, we expose ourselves to endless wailing and woe; when, to be reckoned wits, we prove ourselves stark wild? Surely to this case we may accommodate that of a truly great wit, King Solomon; *I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?* SERM. XIV. Eccles. ii. 2.

2. All injurious, abusive, scurrilous jesting, which causelessly or needlessly tendeth to the disgrace, damage, vexation, or prejudice in any kind of our neighbour, (provoking his displeasure, grating on his modesty, stirring passion in him,) is also prohibited. When men, to raise an admiration of their wit, to please themselves, or gratify the humour of other men, do expose their neighbour to scorn and contempt, making ignominious reflections upon his person or his actions, taunting his real imperfections, or fastening imaginary ones upon him, they transgress their duty, and abuse their wits; it is not urbanity, or genuine facetiousness, but uncivil rudeness, or vile malignity. To do thus, as it is the office of mean and base spirits, unfit for any worthy or weighty employments, so it is full of inhumanity, of iniquity, of indecency and folly. For the weaknesses of men, of what kind soever, (natural or moral, in quality or in act,) considering whence they spring, and how much we are all subject to them, and do need excuse for them, do in equity challenge compassion to be had of them; not complacency to be taken in them, or mirth drawn from them; they, in respect to common humanity, should rather be studiously connived at and concealed, or mildly excused, than wilfully laid open, and wantonly desecated upon; they rather are to be deplored secretly, than openly derided.

The reputation of men is too noble a sacrifice to be offered up to vain glory, fond pleasure, or ill humour; it is a good far more dear and precious, than to be prostituted for idle sport and divertisement. It becometh us not to trifle with that, which in common estimation is of

—solutos
Qui captat
rius homi-
num, fam-
manque
dicacis, Hic
niger est.
Hor. Sat.
4.

Ὁ δὲ βωμο-
λόχος ἤσπων
ἐστὶ τοῦ γρι-
λοῦ, καὶ οὔτε
ἑαυτοῦ οὔτε
τῶν ἄλλων
ἀπεχόμενος,
εἰ γίλωτα
ποιήσει.
Arist. Eth.
iv. 8.

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Vitrea fa-
ma. Hor.

so great moment ; to play rudely with a thing so very brittle, yet of so vast price ; which being once broken or cracked, it is very hard, and scarce possible, to repair. A small transient pleasure, a tickling the ears, wagging the lungs, forming the face into a smile, a giggle, or a hum, are not to be purchased with the grievous distaste and smart, perhaps with the real damage and mischief of our neighbour, which attend upon contempt ^b. This is not jesting surely, but bad earnest : it is wild mirth, which is the mother of grief to those whom we should tenderly love ; it is unnatural sport, which breedeth displeasure in them whose delight it should promote, whose liking it should procure : it crosseth the nature and design of this way of speaking ; which is to cement and ingratiate society, to render conversation pleasant and sprightly, for mutual satisfaction and comfort.

True festivity is called *salt* ; and such it should be, giving a smart, but savoury relish to discourse ; exciting an appetite, not irritating disgust ; cleansing sometime, but never creating a sore : and, *ἐὰν μωρανθῆ, ἴφ ἰτ βεκοε θυς* *insipid*, or unsavoury, *it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men*. Such jesting which doth not season wholesome or harmless discourse, but giveth a haut-gout to putrid and poisonous stuff, gratifying distempered palates and corrupt stomachs, is indeed odious and despicable folly, *to be cast out with loathing, to be trodden under foot with contempt*. If a

Matt. v. 13.
Nimium ri-
sus pretium
est, si pro-
bitatis im-
pendio cen-
stat. Quint.

Εἰ καλὸν τὸ
πρῶτον γὰρ τί
τοῖς μίμοις
ἀφίσταται ; ἔ-
ξ ἀπισχύνῃ ;
Chryss.

man offends in this sort to please himself, it is scurvy malignity ; if to delight others, it is base servility and flattery : upon the first score he is a buffoon to himself ; upon the last, a fool to others. And well in common speech are such practisers so termed, the grounds of that practice being so vain, and the effect so unhappy. *The heart of fools*, saith the Wise Man, *is in the house of mirth* ; meaning, it seems, especially such hurtfully-wanton mirth :

Eccles. vii.
4.

^b Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. As a mad man, who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death ; so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport ?

Οἱ ἐσθραίουντες τοὺς φίλους.—LXX.

for it is, as he farther tells us, the property of fools to delight in doing harm: *It is a sport to a fool to do mischief*: ^c Is it not in earnest most palpable folly for so mean ends to do so great harm; to disoblige men in sport; to lose friends, and get enemies, for a conceit; out of a light humour to provoke fierce wrath, and breed tough hatred; to engage oneself consequently very far in strife, danger, and trouble? No way certainly is more apt to produce such effects than this; nothing more speedily enflameth, or more thoroughly engageth men, or sticketh longer in men's hearts and memories, than bitter taunts and scoffs: whence this honey soon turns into gall; these jolly comedies do commonly terminate in woful tragedies.

Especially this scurrilous and scoffing way is then most detestable, when it not only exposeth the blemishes and infirmities of men, but abuseth piety and virtue themselves; flouting persons for their constancy in devotion, or their strict adherence to a conscientious practice of duty; aiming to effect that which Job complaineth of, *The just upright man is laughed to scorn*; resembling those whom the Psalmist thus describeth, *Who whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the perfect*; serving good men as Jeremy was served, *The word of the Lord, saith he, was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily*.

This practice doth evidently, in the highest degree, tend to the disparagement and discouragement of goodness; aiming to expose it, and to render men ashamed thereof; and it manifestly proceedeth from a desperate corruption of mind, from a mind hardened and emboldened, sold and enslaved to wickedness: whence they who deal therein are in holy Scripture represented as egregious sinners, or

^c Fools make a mock of sin. Prov. xiv. 9.

Potius amicum quam dictum perdidit.

———— dummodo risum

Executiat sibi, non hic cuiquam pareat amico. Hor. Sat. i. 4.

———— dicax idem, et Tiberium acerbis facetiis irridere solitus, quorum apud præpotentes in longum memoria est. Tac. v. Ann. p. 181.

SERM. persons superlatively wicked, under the name of *scorners* ;

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(*λοιμοὺς, pests*, or pestilent men, the Greek translators call them, properly enough in regard to the effects of their practice ;) concerning whom the Wise Man, signifying how God

Prov. iii. 34. will meet with them in their own way, saith, *Surely the*

2 Pet. iii. 3. *Lord scorneth the scorners.* Ἐμπαίκτης, *scoffers* (or *mockers*,) St. Peter termeth them, *who walk according to their own lusts* ; who not being willing to practise, are ready to deride virtue ; thereby striving to seduce others into their pernicious courses.

This offence also proportionably groweth more criminal, as it presumeth to reach persons eminent in dignity or worth, unto whom special veneration is appropriate. This adjoineth sauciness to scurrility, and advanceth the wrong thereof into a kind of sacrilege. It is not only injustice, but profaneness, to *abuse the gods*. Their station is a sanctuary from all irreverence and reproach ; they are seated on high, that we may only look up to them with respect ; their defects are not to be seen, or not to be touched by malicious or wanton wits, by spiteful or scornful tongues : the diminution of their credit is a public mischief, and the State itself doth suffer in their becoming objects of scorn ; not only themselves are vilified and degraded, but the great affairs they manage are obstructed, the justice they administer is disparaged thereby.

Exod. xxii.
38.

In fine, no jesting is allowable, which is not thoroughly innocent : it is an unworthy perverting of wit to employ it in biting and scratching ; in working prejudice to any man's reputation or interest ; in needlessly incensing any man's anger or sorrow ; in raising animosities, dissensions, and feuds among any.

Whence it is somewhat strange, that any men, from so mean and silly a practice, should expect commendation, or that any should afford regard thereto ; the which it is so far from meriting, that indeed contempt and abhorrence

a Πόβω δὲ τῶτο Χρῆσιανῶ, τὸ κωμῶδειν. *Chrys. in Eph. Or. 17.*

Γλώσσαν ἔχεις, ἕχ' ἵνα ἔτιρον κωμῶδῆσαι, ἀλλ' ἵνα εὐχαιρῆσαι τῷ Θεῷ. *Idem.*

are due to it. Men do truly more render themselves despicable than others, when, without just ground, or reasonable occasion, they do attack others in this way. That such a practice doth ever find any encouragement or acceptance, whence can it proceed, but from the bad nature and small judgment of some persons? For to any man who is endued with any sense of goodness, and hath a competence of true wit, or a right knowledge of good manners, (who knows—*inurbamum lepido seponere dicto*,) it cannot but be unsavoury ^{Hor.} and loathsome. The repute it obtaineth is in all respects unjust. So would it appear, not only were the cause to be decided in the court of morality, because it consists not with virtue and wisdom; but even before any competent judges of wit itself. For he overthrowes his own pretence, and cannot reasonably claim any interest in wit, who doth thus behave himself: he prejudgeth himself to want wit, who cannot descry fit matter to divert himself or others; he discovereth a great straitness and sterility of good invention, who cannot in all the wide field of things find better subjects of discourse; who knows not how to be ingenious within reasonable compass, but to pick up a sorry conceit is forced to make excursions beyond the bounds of honesty and decency.

Neither is it any argument of considerable ability in him that haps to please this way; a slender faculty will serve the turn. The sharpness of his speech cometh not from wit so much as from choler, which furnisheth the lowest inventions with a kind of pungent expression, and giveth an edge to every spiteful word^e: so that any dull wretch doth seem to scold eloquently and ingeniously. Commonly also satirical taunts do owe their seeming piquancy, not to the speaker or his words, but to the subject, and the hearers; the matter conspiring with the bad nature or the vanity of men, who love to laugh at any rate, and to be pleased at the expence of other men's re-

^e Obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur: quippe adulationi fœdum crimen servitutis, malignitati falsa species libertatis inest. *Tac. Hist. l. init.*

SERM. pute; conceiting themselves extolled by the depression of
XIV. their neighbour, and hoping to gain by his loss. Such
 customers they are that maintain the bitter wits, who
 otherwise would want trade, and might go a-begging.
 For commonly they who seem to excel this way are miser-
 ably flat in other discourse, and most dully serious: they
 have a particular unaptness to describe any good thing, or
 commend any worthy person; being destitute of right ideas,
 and proper terms answerable to such purposes: their repre-
 sentations of that kind are absurd and unhandsome; their
 elogies (to use their own way of speaking) are in ef-
 fect satires, and they can hardly more abuse a man than by
 attempting to commend him; like those in the Prophet,

Jer. iv. 22. who were *wise to do ill, but to do well had no knowledge.*

3. I pass by, that it is very culpable to be facetious in ob-
 scene and smutty matters. Such things are not to be dis-
 coursed on either in jest or in earnest; they must not, as
 Eph. v. 3. St. Paul saith, be *so much as named among Christians*: to
 meddle with them is not to disport, but to defile one-self
 and others. There is indeed no more certain sign of a mind
 utterly debauched from piety and virtue, than affecting such
 talk. But farther,

4. All unseasonable jesting is blanceable. As there are
 some proper seasons of relaxation, when we may *desipere in*
loco; so there are other some times and circumstances of
 things, wherein it concerneth and becometh men to be se-
 rious in mind, grave in demeanour, and plain in discourse;
 when to sport in this way is to do indecently, or uncivilly,
 to be impertinent, or troublesome f.

It comporteth not well with the presence of superiors,
 before whom it becometh us to be composed and modest:
 much less with the performance of sacred offices, which
 require an earnest attention, and most serious frame of
 mind.

In deliberations and debates about affairs of great im-

f Vitandum ne petulans, ne superbum, ne loco, ne tempori alienum, ne præ-
 paratum et domo allatum videatur. *Quint.*

portance, the simple manner of speaking to the point is the proper, easy, clear, and compendious way: facetious speech there serves only to obstruct and entangle business, to lose time, and protract the result⁵. The shop and exchange will scarce endure jesting in their lower transactions: the senate, the court of justice, the church, do much more exclude it from their more weighty consultations. Whenever it justleth out, or hindereth the dispatch of other serious business, taking up the room, or swallowing the time due to it, or indisposing the minds of the audience to attend it, then it is unseasonable and pestilent Παιζειν, ἵνα σπουδάξης, Arist. Eth. *to play, that we may be seriously busy*, is the good rule of Anacharsis, implying the subordination of sport to business, as a condiment and furtherance, not an impediment or clog thereto. He that for his sport neglects his business, deserves indeed to be reckoned among children; and children's fortune will attend him, to be pleased with toys, and to fail of substantial profit.

It is, again, improper (because indeed uncivil and inhuman,) to jest with persons that are in a sad or afflicted condition^h, as arguing want of due considering or due commiserating their case: it appears a kind of insulting upon their misfortune, and is apt to foment their grief. Even in our own case, upon any disastrous occurrence to ourselves, it would not be seemly to frolic it thus; it would signify want of due regard to the frowns of God, and the strokes of his hand; it would cross the Wise Man's advice, *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider*.¹⁴

It is also not seasonable or civil to be jocund in this way with those who desire to be serious, and like not the humour. Jocularities should not be forcibly obtruded, but by a kindly conspiracy, or tacit compact, slip into conversation: consent and complaisance give all the life thereto. Its design is to sweeten and ease society; when to the

⁵ Μή μοι τὰ κόμψ', ἀλλ' ὡν πόλει διῷ. Eurip. Arist. Pol. ii. 4.

^h Adversus miscros inhumanus est jocus. Quint.

SERM. XIV. contrary, it breedeth offence or incumbrance, it is worse than vain and unprofitable. From these instances we may collect when in other like cases it is unseasonable, and therefore culpable. Farther,

5. To affect, admire, or highly to value this way of speaking, either absolutely in itself, or in comparison to the serious and plain way of speech, and thence to be drawn into an immoderate use thereof, is blameable. A man of ripe age and sound judgment, for refreshment to himself, or in complaisance to others, may sometimes condescend to play in this or in any other harmless way: but to be fond of it, to prosecute it with a careful or painful eagerness, to doat and dwell upon it, to reckon it a brave or a fine thing, a singular matter of commendation, a transcendent accomplishment, anywise preferable to rational endowments, or comparable to the moral excellencies of our mind, (to solid knowledge, or sound wisdom, or true virtue and goodness,) this is extremely childish or brutish, and far below a man. What can be more absurd than to make a business of play, to be studious and laborious in toys, to make a profession or drive a trade of impertinency?ⁱ what more plain nonsense can there be than to be earnest in jest, to be continual in divertisement, or constant in pastime; to make extravagance all our way, and sauce all our diet? Is not this plainly the life of a child, that is ever busy, yet never hath any thing to do? or the life of that mimical brute, which is always active in playing uncouth and unlucky tricks; which, could it speak, might surely pass well for a professed wit?

The proper work of man, the grand drift of human life, is to follow reason, (that noble spark kindled in us from heaven; that princely and powerful faculty, which is able to reach so lofty objects, and to achieve so mighty works;) not to sooth fancy, that brutish, shallow, and giddy power, able to perform nothing worthy much regard.

ⁱ Σπαράζειν καὶ ποιεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν, ἡλίθιον φαίνεται, καὶ λίαν παιδικόν. *Arist. Eth.* x. 6.

We are not, even Cicero could tell us, born for play and jesting; but for severity, and the study of graver and greater affairs^k. Yes, we were purposely designed, and fitly framed, to understand and contemplate, to affect and delight in, to undertake and pursue most noble and worthy things; to be employed in business considerably profitable to ourselves, and beneficial to others: we do therefore strangely debase ourselves, when we do strongly bend our minds to, or set our affections upon such toys.

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Especially to do so is unworthy of a Christian; that is of a person who is advanced to so high a rank, and so glorious relations; who hath so excellent objects of his mind and affections presented before him, and so excellent rewards for his care and pains proposed to him; who is engaged in affairs of so worthy nature, and so immense consequence: for him to be zealous about quibbles, for him to be ravished with puny conceits and expressions, it is a wondrous oversight, and an enormous indecency.

He, indeed, that prefers any faculty to reason, disclaims the privilege of being a man, and understands not the worth of his own nature; he that prizes any quality beyond virtue and goodness, renounces the title of a Christian, and knows not how to value the dignity of his profession. It is these two, reason and virtue, in conjunction, which produce all that is considerably good and great in the world. Fancy can do little; doeth never any thing well, except as directed and wielded by them. Do pretty conceits or humorous talk carry on any business, or perform any work? No; they are ineffectual and fruitless; often they disturb, but they never dispatch any thing with good success. It is simple reason, as dull and dry as it seemeth, which expediteth all the grand affairs, which accomplisheth all the mighty works that we see done in the world. In truth, therefore, as one diamond is worth numberless bits of glass: so one solid reason is worth innumerable fancies: one grain of true science and sound

^k Neque enim ita generati a natura sumus, ut ad ludum jocumque facti videamur; sed ad severitatem potius, et ad quædam studia graviora atque majora. *Cic. Off. i.*

SERM. wisdom in real worth and use doth outweigh loads, if any
XIV. loads can be, of freakish wit. To rate things otherwise doth argue great weakness of judgment, and fondness of mind. So to conceit of this way signifieth a weak mind; and much to delight therein rendereth it so: nothing more debaseth the spirit of a man, or more rendereth it light and trifling¹.

Hence if we must be venting pleasant conceits, we should do it *as if we did it not*, carelessly and unconcernedly; not standing upon it, or valuing ourselves for it; we should do it with measure and moderation; not giving up ourselves thereto, so as to mind it, or delight in it more than in any other thing: we should not be so intent upon it as to become remiss in affairs more proper or needful for us; so as to nauseate serious business, or disrelish the more worthy entertainments of our minds. This is the great danger of it, which we daily see men to incur; they are so bewitched with a humour of being witty themselves, or of hearkening to the fancies of others, that it is this only which they can like or savour, which they can endure to think or talk of. It is a great pity, that men who would seem to have so much wit, should so little understand themselves. But farther,

6. Vain-glorious ostentation this way is very blameable. All ambition, all vanity, all conceitedness, upon whatever ground they are founded, are absolutely unreasonable and silly: but yet those, being grounded on some real ability, or some useful skill, are wise and manly in comparison to this, which standeth on a foundation so manifestly slight and weak. The old philosophers by a severe father were called *animalia gloriæ*, *animals of glory*; and by a sati-

Tertul.

¹ Ὅτι μὴ συμβαίνειν κατὰ ταυτὴν ψυχῆς νῆψιν, καὶ εὐτραπείας διάχυσιν. *Bas. Const. Mon.* 12.

Πολλοὺς συμβαίνει τοὺς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀσχολημένους, τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου διαμαρτάνειν, τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς γελῶϊα μὲν διαχρεομένης, καὶ τὸ τῆς φρονήσεως σύννεον ἐπιπικνωμένον καταλύσης. *Ibid.*

Jocorum frequens usus omne animis pondus, omnemque vim eripiet, *Sen. de Tranq.* c. xv.

Ἡ εὐτραπεία μαλακὴν ποιεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν, ῥαθυμὸν, ἀναπεπτακωκυῖαν. *Clerys. in Eph.* 17.

rical poet they were termed *bladders of vanity*: but they at least did catch at praise from praiseworthy knowledge; they were puffed up with a wind which blowed some good to mankind; they sought glory from that which deserved glory, if they had not sought it; it was a substantial and solid credit which they did affect, resulting from successful enterprises of strong reason and stout industry: but these *animalcula gloriæ*, these flies, these insects of glory, these not bladders, but bubbles of vanity, would be admired and praised for that which is nowise admirable or laudable; for the casual hits and emergencies of roving fancy; for stumbling on an odd conceit or phrase, which signifieth nothing, and is as superficial as the smile, as hollow as the noise it causeth. Nothing certainly in nature is more ridiculous than a self-conceited wit, who deemeth himself somebody, and greatly pretendeth to commendation from so pitiful and worthless a thing as a knack of trifling.

7. Lastly, it is our duty never so far to engage ourselves in this way, as thereby to lose or to impair that habitual seriousness, modesty, and sobriety of mind, that steady composedness, gravity and constancy of demeanour, which become Christians. We should continually keep our minds intent upon our *high calling*, and grand interests; ever well tuned, and ready for the performance of holy devotions, and the practice of most serious duties with earnest attention and fervent affection: wherefore we should never suffer them to be dissolved into levity, or disordered into a wanton frame, indisposing us for religious thoughts and actions. We ought always in our behaviour to maintain not only τὸ πρέπον, a fitting *decency*, Phil. iv. 8. but also τὸ σεμνόν, a stately *gravity*, a kind of venerable majesty, suitable to that high rank which we bear of God's friends and children, adorning our holy profession, Tit. ii. 10. and guarding us from all impressions of sinful vanity. Dictum potius aliquid quando perdet, quam minuet auctoritatem. Quint. vi. 3.

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Strad. In-
fam. Fami-
ani.

sin will easily attempt and encroach upon us. So the old Spanish gentleman may be interpreted to have been wise, who, when his son, upon a voyage to the Indies, took his leave of him, gave him this odd advice; *My son, in the first place keep thy gravity, in the next place fear God*: intimating, that a man must first be serious before he can be pious.

To conclude, as we need not be demure, so must we not be impudent; as we should not be sour, so ought we not to be fond; as we may be free, so we should not be vain; as we may well stoop to friendly complaisance, so we should take heed of falling into contemptible levity. If without wronging others, or derogating from ourselves, we can be facetious; if we can use our wits in jesting innocently and conveniently; we may sometimes do it: but let us, in compliance with St. Paul's direction, beware of *foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient*.

Heb. xiii.
20, 21.

Now the God of grace and peace make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XV.

—◆—
AGAINST RASH AND VAIN SWEARING.
—◆—

JAMES v. 12.

But above all things my brethren, swear not.

AMONG other precepts of good life (directing the practice of virtue and abstinence from sin) St. James doth insert this about swearing, couched in expression denoting his great earnestness, and apt to excite our special attention. Therein he doth not mean universally to interdict the use of oaths; (for that in some cases is not only lawful, but very expedient, yea needful, and required from us as a duty;) but that swearing which our Lord had expressly prohibited to his disciples, and which thence, questionless, the *brethren* to whom St. James did write did well understand themselves obliged to forbear, having learnt so in the first catechisms of Christian institution; that is, needless and heedless swearing in ordinary conversation: a practice then frequented in the world, both among Jews and Gentiles; the which also, to the shame of our age, is now so much in fashion, and with some men in vogue; the invoking God's name, appealing to his testimony, and provoking his judgment, upon any slight occasion, in common talk, with vain incogitancy, or profane boldness. From such practice the holy Apostle dehortheth in terms importing his great concernedness, and implying the matter to be of highest importance:

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SERM. for, *Πρὸ πάντων*, saith he, *Before all things, my brethren, do*
 XV. *not swear*; as if he did apprehend this sin of all other to be
 one of the most heinous and pernicious. Could he have
 said more? would he have said so much, if he had not con-
 ceived the matter to be of exceeding weight and conse-
 quence? And that it is so, I mean now, by God's help, to
 shew you, by proposing some considerations, whereby the
 heinous wickedness, together with the monstrous folly, of
 such rash and vain swearing will appear; the which being
 laid to heart will, I hope, effectually dissuade and deter
 from it.

I. Let us consider the nature of an oath, and what we
 do when we adventure to swear.

It is (as it is phrased in the Decalogue, and otherwhere
 in holy Scripture) an *assuming the name of our God*, and
 Exod. xx. 7. applying it to our purpose, to countenance and confirm
 Prov. xxx. 9. what we say a.

It is an invocation of God as a most faithful witness con-
 Gen. xxxi. 50. cerning the truth of our words, or the sincerity of our
 Judg xi. 10. meaning.
 1 Sam. ii. 5.

It is an appeal to God as a most upright Judge, whether
 Jer. xlii. 5. we do prevaricate in asserting what we do not believe true,
 Job. xvi. 19. or in promising what we are not firmly resolved to perform.
 Mal. iii. 5. 1 Joh. v. 9.

It is a formal engagement of God to be the Avenger of
 Gen. xxxi. 53. our trespassing in violation of truth or faith.

It is a *binding our souls* ^b with a most strict and solemn
 xxiv. 15. obligation, to answer before God, and to undergo the
 1 Kings viii. 31, 32. issue of his judgment about what we affirm or under-
 ii. 23. xix. 2. xx. 10. Neh. v. 12, take.

Such an oath is represented to us in holy Scripture.

Whence we may collect, that swearing doth require
 Ruth i. 17. great modesty and composedness of spirit, very serious
 2 Kings vi. 31. consideration and solicitous care, that we be not rude and
 2 Sam. iii. 9, 35. xix. 13. saucy with God, *in taking up his name*, and prostituting
 1 Sam. xiv. 44. iii. 17. xx. 13.

^a Plurima firmantur jurejurando—diis immortalibus interpositis tum judi-
 cibus, tum testibus. Cic. de Leg. ii. p. 326.

^b Num xxx. 2. Πᾶς ὄρκος εἰς κατάρου τελευτῆ τῆς ἐπισημίας, Plut. in Capit. Rom. p. 491.

it to vile or mean uses; that we do not abuse or debase his authority, by citing it to aver falsehoods or impertinences; that we do not slight his venerable justice, by rashly provoking it against us; that we do not precipitantly throw our souls into most dangerous snares and intricacies.

For, let us reflect and consider: what a presumption is it without due regard and reverence to lay hold on God's name; with unhallowed breath to vent and toss that *great and glorious*, that most *holy*, that *reverend*, that *fearful* and *terrible name* of the Lord our God, the great Creator, the mighty Sovereign, the dreadful Judge of all the world; that name which all heaven with profoundest submission doth adore; which the angelical powers, the brightest and purest seraphim, without *hiding their faces*, and reverential horror, cannot utter or hear; the very thought whereof should strike awe through our hearts, the mention whereof would make any sober man to tremble; Πῶς γὰρ ὄν ἀτόπον, *For how*, saith St. Chrysostom, *is it not absurd, that a servant should not dare to call his master by name, or bluntly and ordinarily to mention him; yet that we slightly and contemptuously should in our mouth toss about the Lord of angels?*

How is it not absurd, if we have a garment better than the rest, that we forbear to use it continually; but in the most slight and common way do wear the name of God.

How grievous indecency is it, at every turn to summon our Maker, and call down Almighty God from heaven to attend our leisure, to vouch our idle prattle, to second our giddy passions, to concern his truth, his justice, his power, in our trivial affairs?

What a wildness is it to dally with that judgment upon which the eternal doom of all creatures dependeth, at which *the pillars of heaven are astonished*, which hurled down legions of angels from the top of heaven and happiness into the bottomless dungeon; the which, as grievous sinners, of all things we have most reason to dread; and about which no sober man can otherwise think, than did that great king, the holy Psalmist, who said,

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Psal. xcix.

3. cxi. 9.

cxlviii. 13.

Deut.

xxviii. 58.

Isa. vi. 2.

Chrys.

Avd̄. ζ.

Id. Avd̄. ζ.

p. 514.

Id. Avd̄. ζ.

p. 525.

Job xxvi.

11.

SERM. *My flesh trembleth for thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.*
 XV.

Psal. cxix.
 120.

How prodigious a madness is it, without any constraint or needful cause, to incur so horrible danger, to rush upon a curse; to defy that vengeance, the least touch or breath whereof can dash us to nothing, or thrust us down into extreme and endless woe?

Who can express the wretchedness of that folly which so entangleth us with inextricable knots, and enchaineth our souls so rashly with desperate obligations?

Wherefore he that would but a little mind what he doeth when he dareth to swear, what it is to meddle with the adorable name, the venerable testimony, the formidable judgment, the terrible vengeance of the Divine Majesty, into what a case he putteth himself, how extreme hazard he runneth thereby, would assuredly have little heart to swear, without greatest reason, and most urgent need; hardly without trembling would he undertake the most necessary and solemn oath; much cause would he see *σέβεισθαι ὄρκον, to adore, to fear an oath*: which to do, the divine Preacher maketh the character of a good man; *As, saith he, is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.*

Eccles. ix. 2

In fine, even a heathen philosopher, considering the nature of an oath, did conclude the unlawfulness thereof in such cases. For, *Seeing, saith he, an oath doth call God for witness, and proposeth him for umpire and voucher of the things it saith; therefore to induce God so upon occasion of human affairs, or, which is all one, upon small and slight accounts, doth imply contempt of him: wherefore we ought wholly to shun swearing, except upon occasions of highest necessity*^c.

II. We may consider, that swearing (agreeably to its nature, or natural aptitude and tendency,) is represented in holy Scripture as a special part of religious worship, or

^c Ὁ γὰρ ὄρκος μάρτυρα τὸν Θεὸν καλεῖ, καὶ μεσίτην αὐτὸν καὶ ἐγγυητὴν ἐφ' οὗ λέγει προΐσχυται· τὸ γοῦν ἐπὶ ἀνθρώποις πράγμασι (ταυτὸν δὲ εἶπεν μικροῖς καὶ εὐτελεῖσι) τὸν Θεὸν παράγειν, καταφρόνησιν τινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ὑπογράφει· διὸ χρὴ παροκτιῖσθαι τὸν ὄρκον, &c. *Simpl. in Epict. cap. xlv.*

devotion toward God ; in the due performance whereof we do avow him for the true God and Governor of the world ; we piously do acknowledge his principal attributes and special prerogatives ; (his omnipresence and omniscience, extending itself to our most inward thoughts, our secretest purposes, our closest retirements ; his watchful providence over all our actions, affairs, and concerns ; his faithful goodness, in favouring truth and protecting right ; his exact justice, in patronising sincerity, and chastising perfidiousness ;) his being supreme Lord over all persons, and Judge paramount in all causes ; his readiness in our need, upon our humble imploration and reference, to undertake the arbitration of matters controverted, and the care of administering justice, for the maintenance of truth and right, of loyalty and fidelity, of order and peace among men. Swearing doth also intimate a pious trust and confidence in God ; as Aristotle observeth ^d.

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Such things a serious oath doth imply, to such purposes swearing naturally serveth : and therefore to signify or effectuate them, divine institution hath devoted it.

God, in goodness, to such ends, hath pleased to lend us his great name ; allowing us to cite him for a witness, to have recourse to his bar, to engage his justice and power, whenever the case deserveth and requireth it, or when we cannot by other means well assure the sincerity of our meaning, or secure the constancy of our resolutions.

Yea in such exigences he doth exact this practice from us, as an instance of our religious confidence in him, and as a service conducive to his glory : for it is a precept in his law, of moral nature, and eternal obligation, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God ; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and shall swear by his name.* It is the character of a religious man to swear with due reverence and upright conscience. For, *The king*, saith the Psalmist, *shall rejoice in God ; every one that sweareth by*

Dent. x. 20.
vi. 13.

Ps. lxxiii. 11.

^d Εὐσεβὲς τὸ θέλειν τοῖς θεοῖς ἰσχυρίζεσθαι. It is a pious thing willingly to commend our case or controversy to God. *Arist. Rhct. i. 48.*

SERM. *him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies*
 XV. *shall be stopped.* It is a distinctive mark of God's people,
 Jer. xii. 16. according to that of the Prophet Jeremy, *And it shall*
come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my
people, to swear by my name—then shall they be built in
the midst of my people. It is predicted concerning the
 Isa. xlv. 23. evangelical times, *Unto me every knee shall bow, every*
 lxxv. 16. *tongue shall swear: and, That he who blesseth himself in*
the earth, shall bless himself by the God of truth; and he
that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth.

As therefore all other acts of devotion, wherein immediate application is made to the Divine Majesty, should never be performed without most hearty intention, most serious consideration, most lowly reverence; so neither should this grand one, wherein God is so nearly touched, and his chief attributes so much concerned: the which indeed doth involve both prayer and praise, doth require the most devotional acts of faith and fear.

Matt. xv. 8. We therefore should so perform it as not to incur that
 Isa. xxix. 13. reproof: *This people draweth nigh unto me with their*
mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is
far from me.

When we seem most formally to avow God, to confess his omniscience, to confide in his justice; we should not really disregard him, and in effect signify, that we do not think he doth know what we say, or mind what we do.

If we do presume to offer this service, we should do it in the manner appointed by himself, according to the conditions prescribed in the Prophet, *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness: in truth,* taking heed that our meaning be conformable to the sense of our words, and our words to the verity of things; *in judgment,* having with careful deliberation examined and weighed that which we assert or promise; *in righteousness,* being satisfied in conscience, that we do not therein infringe any rule of piety toward God, of equity toward men, of sobriety and discretion in regard to ourselves.

The cause of our swearing must be needful, or very expedient; the design of it must be honest and useful to considerable purposes; (tending to God's honour, our neighbour's benefit, our own welfare;) the matter of it should be not only just and lawful, but worthy and weighty; the manner ought to be grave and solemn, our mind being framed to earnest attention, and endued with pious affections suitable to the occasion.

Otherwise, if we do venture to swear, without due advice and care, without much respect and awe, upon any slight or vain (not to say bad or unlawful) occasion; we then desecrate swearing, and are guilty of profaning a most sacred ordinance; the doing so doth imply base hypocrisy, or lewd mockery, or abominable wantonness and folly; in boldly invading, and vainly trifling with the most august duties of religion. Such swearing therefore is very dishonourable and injurious to God, very prejudicial to religion, very repugnant to piety. Matt. xx. 7, 8.

III. We may consider that the swearing prohibited is very noxious to human society.

The great prop of society (which upholdeth the safety, peace, and welfare thereof, in observing laws, dispensing justice, discharging trusts, keeping contracts, and holding good correspondence mutually) is conscience, or a sense of duty toward God, obliging to perform what is right and equal; quickened by hope of rewards, and fear of punishments from him: secluding which principle, no worldly consideration is strong enough to hold men fast; or can farther dispose many to do right, or observe faith, or hold peace, than appetite, or interest, or humour, (things very slippery and uncertain) do sway them.

That men should live honestly, quietly, and comfortably together, it is needful that they should live under a sense of God's will, and in awe of the divine power, hoping to please God, and fearing to offend him, by their behaviour respectively.

That justice should be administered between men, it is necessary that testimonies of fact be alleged; and that witnesses should apprehend themselves greatly obliged to

SERM XV. discover the truth, according to their conscience, in dark and doubtful cases.

That men should uprightly discharge offices serviceable to public good, it doth behove that they be firmly engaged to perform the trusts reposed in them.

That in affairs of very considerable importance, men should deal with one another with satisfaction of mind and mutual confidence, they must receive competent assurances concerning the integrity, fidelity, and constancy each of other.

That the safety of governors may be preserved, and the obedience due to them maintained secure from attempts to which they are liable, (by the treachery, levity, perverseness, timorousness, ambition, all such lusts and ill humours of men,) it is expedient that men should be tied with the strictest bands of allegiance.

That controversies emergent about the interests of men should be determined, and an end put to strife by peremptory and satisfactory means, is plainly necessary for common quiet.

Wherefore for the public interest and benefit of human society, it is requisite that the highest obligations possible should be laid upon the consciences of men.

And such are those of oaths, engaging them to fidelity and constancy in all such cases, out of regard to Almighty God, as the infallible Patron of truth and right, the unavoidable Chastiser of perfidiousness and improbity.

To such purposes therefore oaths have ever been applied, as the most effectual instruments of working them; not only among the followers of true and perfect religion, but even among all those who had any glimmering notions concerning a Divine power and providence; who have deemed an oath the fastest tie of conscience, and held the violation of it for the most detestable impiety and iniquity. So that what Cicero saith of the Romans, that *e* *their ancestors had no band to constrain faith more*

e Nullum enim vinculum ad adstringendam fidem jurejurando majores arc-
tius esse voluerunt. *Cic. de Off. iii.*

strait than an oath, is true of all other nations; common reason not being able to devise any engagement more obliging than it; it being in the nature of things *τελευταία πίστις*, and *ὀχυροῦτατον ἀληθείας ἐπέχρησον*, the utmost assurance, the last resort of human faith, the surest pledge that any man can yield of his trustiness. Hence ever in transactions of highest moment this hath been used to bind the faith of men.

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Dion. Ha-
lic. Procop.
Diod. Sic.

Hereby nations have been wont to ratify leagues of peace and amity between each other: (which therefore the Greeks called *ὄρκια*.)

Πρὸς ἃς εἰσὶν ἡμῶν ὄρκοι, καὶ φιλία. Polyb.

Hereby princes have obliged their subjects to loyalty: and it hath ever been the strongest argument to press that duty, which the Preacher useth: *I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.*

Eccles. viii.
2.

Hereby generals have engaged their soldiers to stick close to them, in bearing hardships and encountering dangers.

Veget. ii.

Hereby the nuptial league hath been confirmed; the solemnization whereof in temples before God is in effect a most sacred oath.

Hereon the decision of the greatest causes concerning the lives, estates, and reputations of men have depended; so that, as the Apostle saith, *an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*

Heb. vi. 16.

Indeed such hath the need hereof been ever apprehended, that we may observe, in cases of great importance, no other obligation hath been admitted for sufficient to bind the fidelity and constancy of the most credible persons; so that even the best men hardly could trust the best men without it. For instance,

When Abimelech would assure to himself the friendship of Abraham, although he knew him to be a very pious and righteous person, whose word might be as well taken as any man's, yet, for entire satisfaction, he thus spake to him; *God is with thee in all that thou doest: now therefore swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me.*

Gen. xxi.
22, 23.

SERM. Abraham, though he did much confide in the honesty
 XV. of his servant Eliezer, having entrusted him with all his

Gen. xv. 3. estate, yet in the affair concerning the marriage of his son,
 xxiv. 2. he could not but thus oblige him: *Put, saith he, I pray*
 xxiv. 2, 3. *thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear*
by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth,
that thou wilt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters
of the Canaanites.

Laban had good experience of Jacob's fidelity; yet that
 Gen. xxxi would not satisfy, but, *The Lord*, said he, *watch between*
 49, 50, 53. *me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou*
shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives
beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is wit-
ness between thee and me. The God of Abraham, and the
God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us.

Gen. i. 5. So did *Jacob make Joseph swear*, that he would bury
 i. 25. *him in Canaan: and Joseph caused the children of Israel*
to swear, that they would translate his bones. So did
 1 Sam. xx. *Jonathan cause his beloved friend David to swear*, that he
 14, 15, 17. would *shew kindness to him, and to his house for ever.*

The prudence of which course the event sheweth, the
 total excision of Jonathan's family being thereby pre-
 2 Sam. xxi. vented; for, *The King*, it is said, *spared Mephibosheth the*
 7. *son of Jonathan, because of the Lord's oath that was be-*
tween them.

(1 Kings i. These instances declare, that there is no security which
 51. men can yield comparable to that of an oath; the ob-
 Ezr. x. 5. ligation whereof no man wilfully can infringe, without
 Neh. v. 14. renouncing the fear of God, and any pretence to his fa-
 xiii. 25.) vour.

Wherefore human society will be extremely wronged and
 damnified by the dissolving or slackening these most sacred
 bands of conscience: and consequently by their common
 and careless use; which soon will breed a contempt of them,
 and render them insignificant, either to bind the swearers,
 or to ground a trust on their oaths.

As by the rare and reverent use of oaths their dignity
 is upheld, and their obligation kept fast: so by the fre-

quent and negligent application of them, by the prostituting them to every mean and toyish purpose, their respect will be quite lost, their strength will be loosed, they will prove unserviceable to public use.

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If oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance signify? If men are wont to play with swearing anywhere, can we expect they should be serious and strict therein at the bar, or in the church? Will they regard God's testimony, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at one time, when every where upon any, upon no occasion they dare to confront and condemn them? Who then will be the more trusted for swearing? What satisfaction will any man have from it? The riseness of this practice, as it is the sign, so it will be the cause of a general diffidence among men.

Incredible therefore is the mischief which this vain practice will bring in to the public; depriving princes of their best security, exposing the estates of private men to uncertainty, shaking all the confidence men can have in the faith of one another.

For which detriments accruing from this abuse to the public, every vain swearer is responsible; and he would do well to consider, that he will never be able to make reparation for them. And the public is much concerned that this enormity be retrenched.

IV. Let us consider, that rash and vain swearing is very apt often to bring the practiser of it into that most horrible sin of perjury. For *false swearing*, as the Hebrew Wise Man saith, *naturally springeth out of much swearing*: and, *Hee*, saith Chrysostom, *that sweareth continual-*

φύεται ἐκ πολυσορκίας ψευδορκία. Philo in Decal. Ne quisquam facili juratione etiam ad perjurium decidisset, et in Ecclesia populo predicabat, et suos instituerat, ne quis juraret nec ac modicum quidem. Posid. in Vit. S. Aug. cap. xxv.

** Ὁ δεινικῶς ὀμνῶν, &c. Chrys. Ἄνθρ. ιδ'. p. 553.*

Μη εἰς ὑπόκρισιν πείσῃτε, quidam legunt, Jac. v. 12 Vid. Grot.

Ὅπως ἴσιν ἀμειλομένῃν καὶ ὀλίγον, ὅτι τιν πολύσορον ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐπίσορον εἶναι. Ibid Ἀμύχανον γὰρ, ἀμύχανον, σήμε μωμελετηκὸς ἡμῖν, μη συνεχῶς ἱστορεῖν. Chrys. Ἄνθρ. ιδ'. p. 559.

SERM. *ly, both willingly and unwillingly, both ignorantly and*
XV *knowingly, both in earnest and in sport, being often trans-*
ported by anger and many other things, will frequently
forswear. It is confessed and manifest, that it is neces-
sary for him that sweareth much, to be perjurious. Ἀμηχαν-
ον γὰρ, ἀμήχανον, For, saith he again, it is impossible, it
is impossible for a mouth addicted to swearing, not fre-
quently to forswear. He that sweareth at random, as
blind passion moveth, or wanton fancy prompteth, or the
tempter suggesteth, often will hit upon asserting that which
is false, or promising that which is impossible: that want
of conscience and of consideration which do suffer him to
violate God's law in swearing, will betray him to the vent-
ing of lies, which backed with oaths become perjuries. If
sometime what he sweareth doth happen to be true and per-
formable, it doth not free him of guilt; it being his fortune,
rather than his care or conscience, which keepeth him from
perjury.

V. Such swearing commonly will induce a man to bind himself by oath to unlawful practices; and consequently will entangle him in a woful necessity, either of breaking his oath, or of doing worse, and committing wickedness: so that ^hswearing, as St. Chrysostom saith, *hath this misery attending it, that, both transgressed and observed, it plagueth those who are guilty of it.*

Of this perplexity the holy Scripture affordeth two notable instances: the one of Saul, forced to break his rash oaths; the other of Herod, being engaged thereby to commit a most horrid murder.

(1 Sam. xxv. 22. David.)

Διὰ τοὺς ὄρκους.

Matt. xiv. 9.

Vid. Chrys.

ἰδ' Ἄνδρ.

1 Sam. xiv.

45.

Had Saul observed his oaths, what injury had he done, what mischief had he produced, in slaughtering his most worthy and most innocent son, the prop and glory of his family, the bulwark of his country, and the grand instrument of salvation to it; in forcing the people to violate their cross oath, and for prevention of one, causing many perjuries? He was therefore fain to desist, and lie under the guilt of breaking his oaths.

^h Τοῦτο τὸ δεινὸν ἔχει ὁ ὄρκος, ὅτι καὶ παραβαινόμενος καὶ φυλασσόμενος καλᾶζει τοὺς ἀλισκομένους. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. ἰδ'. p. 553.

And for Herod, the excellent Father thus presseth the consideration of his case: ⁱ *Take*, saith he, *I beseech you, the chopped-off head of St. John, and his warm blood yet trickling down; each of you bear it home with you, and conceive that before your eyes you hear it uttering speech, and saying, Embrace the murderer of me, an oath. That which reproof did not, this an oath did do; that which the tyrant's wrath could not, this the necessity of keeping an oath did effect. For when the tyrant was reprehended publicly in the audience of all men, he bravely did bear the rebuke; but when he had cast himself into the necessity of oaths, then did he cut off that blessed head.* SERM. XV.

VI. Likewise the use of rash swearing will often engage a man in undertakings very inconvenient and detrimental to himself. A man is bound to *perform his vows to the Lord*, whatever they be, whatever damage or trouble thence may accrue to him, if they be not unlawful. It is the law, *That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform.* It is the property of a good man, that *he sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.* Wherefore it is the part of a sober man, to be well advised what he doth swear or vow religiously; that he do not put himself into the inextricable strait of committing great sin, or undergoing great inconvenience; that he do not rush into that snare of which the Wise man speaketh, *It is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy,* (or to swallow a sacred obligation,) *and after vows to make inquiry* ^k, seeking how he may disengage himself: the doing which is a folly offensive to God, as the Preacher telleth us; *When, saith he, thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.* God will not admit our folly in vowing, as a plea or an excuse for non-performance; he will exact it from us both as a due debt, and as a proper punishment of our impious folly. Deut. xxiii. 21.
Matt. v. 32.
Psal. lxvi. 13, 14.
Deut. xxiii. 23.
Ps. xv. 4.
Prov. xx. 25.
Eccles. v. 4.

ⁱ Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου λαβόντας.— Ἀνδρ. ἰδ'. p. 352.

^k Ὡσπερ τῶν παγίδι κατεχόμενοι, καὶ δισμοῖς ἀλύτοι: συνδιδραμένοι, &c. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. ζ.

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Chrys.
'Avδρ. ιδ.

For instance, into what loss and mischief, what sorrow, what regret and repentance, did the unadvised vow of Jephtha throw him? the performance whereof, as St. Chrysostom remarketh, God did permit, and order to be commemorated with solemn lamentation, that all posterity might be admonished thereby, and deterred from such precipitant swearing.

VII. Let us consider, that swearing is a sin of all others peculiarly clamorous, and provocative of Divine judgment. God is hardly so much concerned, or in a manner constrained, to punish any other sin as this. He is bound in honour and interest to vindicate his name from the abuse, his authority from the contempt, his holy ordinance from the profanation, which it doth infer. He is concerned to take care that his providence be not questioned, that the dread of his majesty be not voided, that all religion be not overthrown by the outrageous commission thereof with impunity.

It immediately toucheth his name, it expressly calleth upon him to mind it, to judge it, to shew himself in avenging it. He may seem deaf or unconcerned, if, being so called and provoked, he doth not declare himself.

There is understood to be a kind of formal compact between him and mankind, obliging him to interpose, to take the matter into his cognizance, being specially addressed to him.

The bold swearer doth importune him to hear, doth rouse him to mark, doth brave him to judge and punish his wickedness.

Zech. v.
2, &c.
Chrys.

'Avδρ. θ'. p.
525. ιι'. p.
565. ιθ'. p.
591.

Hence no wonder that *the flying roll*, a quick and inevitable *curse*, doth surprise the *swearer*, and *cut him off*, as it is in the Prophet. No wonder that so many remarkable instances do occur in history, of signal vengeance inflicted on persons notably guilty of this crime. No wonder that a common practice thereof doth fetch down public judgments; and that, as the Prophets of old did proclaim, *because of swearing the land mourneth*.

Jer. xxiii.
10.
Hos. iv. 3.

VIII. Farther, (passing over the special laws against it,

the mischievous consequences of it, the sore punishments appointed to it,) we may consider, that to common sense vain swearing is a very unreasonable and ill-favoured practice, greatly misbecoming any sober, worthy, or honest person; but especially most absurd and incongruous to a Christian.

For in ordinary conversation what needful or reasonable occasion can intervene of violating this command? If there come under discourse a matter of reason, which is evidently true and certain, then what need can there be of an oath to affirm it, it sufficing to expose it to light, or to propose the evidences for it? If an obscure or doubtful point come to be debated, it will not bear an oath; it will be a strange madness to dare, a great folly to hope the persuading it thereby. What were more ridiculous than to swear the truth of a demonstrable theorem? What more vain than so to assert a disputable problem? Oaths, like wagers, are in such cases no arguments, except of silliness in the users of them.

If a matter of history be started, then if a man be taken for honest, his word will pass for attestation without farther assurance: but if his veracity or probity be doubted, his oath will not be relied on, especially when he doth obtrude it. For it was no less truly than acutely said by the old poet, *Οὐκ ἄνδρος ἔρκος πίστις, ἀλλ' ἔρκων ἀνὴρ*, *The man doth not get credit from an oath, but an oath from the man*: and a greater author, *An oath, saith St. Chrysostom, doth not make a man credible, but the testimony of his life, and the exactness of his conversation, and a good repute. Many often have burst with swearing, and persuaded no man; others only nodding have deserved more belief than those who have swore so mightily.* Wherefore oaths, as they are frivolous coming from a person of little worth or conscience, so they are superfluous in the mouth of an honest and

¹ Οὐκ ὅρκος ἀξιοπιστον ποιῆι, ἀλλὰ βίου μαρτυρία, καὶ πολιτείας ἀκρίβεια, καὶ ὑπόληψις ἀγαθή. πολλοὶ πολλὰκις διεπράχθησαν ὁμύοντες, καὶ οὐδὲνα ἔπεισαν ἕτεροι οἱ ἐπειθύναντες μόνον, ἀξιοπιστότεροι τῶν τοσαῦτα ὁμομακρότων ἠφάνθησαν. *Chrys.*
Αἰδὸς ζ. p. 511.

SERM. XV. worthy person; yea, as they do not increase the credit of the former, so they may impair that of the latter.

A good man, as Socrates did say, *should apparently so demean himself, that his word may be deemed more credible than an oath*^m; the constant tenor of his practice vouching for it, and giving it such weight that no asseveration can farther corroborate it.

Clem. Alex.
Strom. vii.
p. 524.

He should τοῖς ἔργοις εὐορκεῖν, *swear by his good deeds*, and exhibit βίον ἀξιόπιστον, *a life deserving belief*, as Clemens Alexandrinus saith: so that no man should desire more from him than his bare assertion; but willingly should yield him the privilege which the Athenians granted to Xenocrates, that he should testify without swearingⁿ.

He should be like the Essenes, of whom Josephus saith, that every thing spoken by them was more valid than an oath; whence they declined swearing^o.

He should so much confide in his own veracity and fidelity, and so much stand upon them, that he should not deign to offer any pledge for them, implying them to want confirmation.

He should, as St. Hierome saith, *so love truth, that he should suppose himself to have sworn whatsoever he hath said*^p; and therefore should not be apt to heap another oath on his words.

Upon such accounts common reason directed even Pagan wise men wholly to interdict swearing in ordinary conversation, or about petty matters, as an irrational and immoral practice, unworthy of sober and discreet persons.

^m Δεῖ τοὺς ἀγαθούς ἀνδρας πρόπον ὀρκου πιστότερον φαίνεσθαι παρεχομένους. *Socr. apud Max. Serm. lxxxv.*

^o Ὁ τοῦ σκυθῶν λόγος ὄρκος ἔσω βίβαιος, ἀκλινής, ἀψευδίστατος. *Philo.*

Colendo fidem jurant (Scythæ; *apud Curt. vii. 8.*)

ⁿ Ἴν δὲ καὶ ἀξιόπιστος σφόδρα ὡς μὴ ἔξω ἀνόμοτον μαρτυρεῖν, ταῦτα μόνον συνεχώρου Ἀθηναῖοι. *Diog. Laert. in Xenocr.*

^o Πᾶν τὸ ῥηθῆν ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἰσχυρότερον ὀρκου, τὸ δὲ ἀμύνειν αὐτοῖς περιτίσεται. *Joseph.*

^p Tantus in te sit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes. *Hier. Ep. xiv.*

Forbear swearing about any matter, said Plato, cited by SERM.
XV.
Clem. Alex. 9. Avoid swearing, if you can, wholly, said
Epictetus †. For money swear by no god, though you swear
truly, said Isocrates ‡. And divers the like precepts occur
in other heathens; the mention whereof may well serve
to strike shame into many loose and vain people, bearing
the name of Christians.

Indeed, for a true and real Christian, this practice doth
especially in a far higher degree misbecome him, upon consi-
derations peculiar to his high calling and holy profession.

Plutarch telleth us, that among the Romans the Fla-
men of Jupiter was not permitted to swear: of which
law among other reasons he assigneth this; *Because it is
not handsome, that he, to whom divine and greatest things
are entrusted, should be distrusted about small matters* †.
The which reason may well be applied to excuse every
Christian from it, who is a priest to the most High God,
and hath the most celestial and important matters con-
credited to him; in comparison to which all other mat-
ters are very mean and inconsiderable. The dignity of his
rank should render his word *verbum honoris*, passable
without any farther engagement. He hath opinions of
things, he hath undertaken practices inconsistent with
swearing. For he that firmly doth believe that God is
ever present with him, an auditor and witness of all his
discourse; he that is persuaded that a severe judgment
shall pass on him, wherein he must *give an account for* Matt. xii.
36.
every idle word which slippeth from him, and wherein,
among other offenders, assuredly *liars* will be condemned Rev. xxi. 8.
xxii. 15.
to the burning lake; he that in a great sacrament (once
most solemnly taken, and frequently renewed) hath en-
gaged and sworn, together with all other Divine com-

† "Ὁρκος περὶ πάντων ἀπίστω. Plato apud Clem. Alex. Str. v. p. 433.

‡ "Ὁρκον παραίτησον, εἰ μὴν θεῶν τι, εἰς ἅπαν. Epict. Ench. cap. xliv.

§ "Ἐνεκεν χρημάτων μηδὲνα θεῶν ὁμόσῃς, μηδὲ ἂν εὐροκτεῖν μίλλῃς. Isocr. ad Demon.

† Διαπρὶ τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Διὸς, οὐκ ἔξιςιν ὁμόσαι; ἢ ὅτι περὶ μικρῶν ἀπιστεῖσθαι τὸν
τε θεῖα καὶ μίγνισα πιστευστέριον οὐκ εἰκος ἐστίν; Plut. in Qu. Rom. p. 421.

SERM. XV. mandments, to observe those which most expressly do charge him to be exactly just, faithful, and veracious in all his words and deeds; who therefore should be ready to say with David, *I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteous judgments*; to him ^uevery word hath the force of an oath; every lie, every breach of promise, every violation of faith, doth involve perjury: for him to swear, is false heraldry, an impertinent accumulation of one oath upon another: he of all men should disdain to allow that his words are not perfectly credible, that his promise is not secure, without being assured by an oath.

Col. iii. 9
Eph. iv. 25.
1 Pet. ii. 1.
Ps. cxix.
106.

IX. Indeed the practice of swearing greatly disparageth him that useth it, and derogateth from his credit upon divers accounts.

It signifieth, (if it signifieth any thing,) that he doth not confide in his own reputation, and judgeth his own bare word not to deserve credit: for why, if he taketh his word to be good, doth he back it with asseverations? why, if he deemeth his own honesty to bear proof, doth he cite Heaven to warrant it?

It is, saith St. Basil, a very foul and silly thing for a man to accuse himself as unworthy of belief, and to proffer an oath for security ^x.

By so doing a man doth authorize others to distrust him: for it can be no wrong to distrust him, who doth not pretend to be a credible person, or that his saying alone may safely be taken; who, by suspecting that others are not satisfied with his simple assertion, implieth a reason known to himself for it.

It rendereth whatever he saith to be in reason suspicious, as discovering him void of conscience and discretion: for he that flatly, against the rules of duty and reason, will swear vainly, what can engage him to speak truly? He that is so loose in so clear and so considera-

^u Omnis sermo fidelis pro jurejurando est. *Hier. in Matt. v.*

^x Δισχερόν παντελῶς καὶ ἀνόητον, ἑαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖν ὡς ἀνάξιου πίστεως, καὶ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἀσφάλειαν ἐπιφέρεισθαι. *Bas. in Psal. xiv.*

^y Ἦδη γὰρ ὁ γινόμενος εἰς ἀπίστην ὑπονοεῖται. *Philo.*

ble a point of obedience to God, how can he be supposed staunch in regard to any other? *It being, as Aristotle hath it, the part of the same men to do ill things, and not to regard forswearing*^z. It will at least constrain any man to suspect all his discourse of vanity and unadvisedness, seeing he plainly hath no care to bridle his tongue from so gross an offence.

SERM.
XV.

It is strange therefore, that any man of honour or honesty should not scorn, by such a practice, to shake his own credit, or to detract from the validity of his word; which should stand firm on itself, and not want any attestation to support it. It is a privilege of honourable persons, that they are excused from swearing, and that their *verbum honoris* passeth in lieu of an oath: is it not then strange, that when others dispense with them, they should not dispense with themselves; but voluntarily degrade themselves, and with sin forfeit so noble a privilege?

X. To excuse these faults, the swearer will be forced to confess, that his oaths are no more than waste and insignificant words; deprecating being taken for serious, or to be understood that he meaneth any thing by them; but only that he useth them as expletive phrases, *πρὸς ἀναπλήρωσιν λόγου*, to plump his speech, and fill up sentences. But such pleas do no more than suggest other faults of swearing, and good arguments against it; its impertinence, its abuse of speech, its disgracing the practiser of it in point of judgment and capacity. For so it is, oaths as they commonly pass are mere excrescences of speech, which do nothing but encumber and deform it; they so embellish discourse, as a wen or a scab do beautify a face, as a patch or a spot do adorn a garment.

Hierocl.
Philo.

To what purpose, I pray, is God's name hooked and haled into our idle talk? why should we so often mention him, when we do not mean any thing about him? would it not, into every sentence to foist a dog or a horse,

^z Τῶν αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπων τὰ πονηρὰ πράττειν, καὶ μὴ φροντίζειν ἐπισημαίνοντας.
Arist. Rhet. ad Alex. cap. xviii.

SERM. (to intrude Turkish, or any barbarous gibberish,) be altogether as proper and pertinent?

XV.

What do these superfluities signify, but that the venter of them doth little skill the use of speech, or the rule of conversation, but meaneth to sputter and prate any thing without judgment or wit; that his invention is very barren, his fancy beggarly, craving the aid of any stuff to relieve it? One would think a man of sense should grutch to lend his ear, or incline his attention to such motley ragged discourse; that without nauseating he scarce should endure to observe men lavishing time, and squandering their breath so frivolously. It is an affront to good company to pester it with such talk.

XI. But farther, upon higher accounts this is a very uncivil and unmannerly practice.

Some vain persons take it for a genteel and graceful thing, a special accomplishment, a mark of fine breeding, a point of high gallantry: for who, forsooth, is the brave spark, the complete gentleman, the man of conversation and address, but he that hath the skill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a skill! how mad a confidence!) to lard every sentence with an oath or a curse; making bold at every turn to salute his Maker, or to summon him in attestation of his tattle; not to say, calling and challenging the Almighty to damn and destroy him? Such a conceit, I say, too many have of swearing, because a custom thereof, together with divers other fond and base qualities, hath prevailed among some people, bearing the name and garb of gentlemen.

But in truth there is no practice more crossing the genuine nature of genteelness, or misbecoming persons well born and well bred; who should excel the rude vulgar in goodness, in courtesy, in nobleness of heart, in unwillingness to offend, and readiness to oblige those with whom they converse, in steady composedness of mind and manners, in disdaining to say or do any unworthy, any unhandsome things.

For this practice is not only a gross rudeness toward the main body of men, who justly reverence the name of

God, and detest such an abuse thereof; not only, farther, an insolent defiance of the common profession, the religion, the law of our country, which disalloweth and condemneth it; but it is very odious and offensive to any particular society or company, at least wherein there is any sober person, any who retaineth a sense of goodness, or is any wise concerned for God's honour: for to any such person no language can be more disgustful; nothing can more grate his ears, or fret his heart, than to hear the sovereign object of his love and esteem so mocked and slighted; to see the law of his Prince so disloyally infringed, so contemptuously trampled on; to find his best Friend and Benefactor so outrageously abused. To give him the lie were a compliment, to spit in his face were an obligation, in comparison to this usage.

Wherefore it is a wonder, that any person of rank, any that hath in him a spark of ingenuity, or doth at all pretend to good manners, should find in his heart or deign to comply with so scurvy a fashion; a fashion much more befitting the scum of the people, than the flower of the gentry; yea, rather much below any man endued with a scrap of reason, or a grain of goodness. Would we bethink ourselves, modest, sober, and pertinent discourse would appear far more generous and masculine, than such mad hectoring the Almighty, such boisterous insulting over the received laws and general notions of mankind, such ruffianly swaggering against sobriety and goodness. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their ancestors, the founders of their quality; that gallant courage, that solid wisdom, that noble courtesy, which advanced their families, and severed them from the vulgar; this degenerate wantonness and sordidness of language would return to the dunghill, or rather, which God grant, be quite banished from the world; the vulgar following their example.

XII. Farther, the words of our Lord, when he forbad this practice, do suggest another consideration against it, deducible from the causes and sources of it; from whence it cometh, that men are so inclined or addicted

SERM. thereto: *Let, saith he, your communication be, Yea, yea ;*
 XV. *Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

Mat. v. 37. The roots of it he assureth us are evil, and therefore the fruit cannot be good : it is no grape which groweth from thorns, or fig from thistles. Consult experience, and observe whence it doth proceed.

Sometimes it ariseth from exorbitant heats of spirit, or transports of unbridled passion. When a man is keenly peevish, or fiercely angry, or eagerly contentious, then he blustereth, and dischargeth his choler in most tragical strains ; then he would fright the objects of his displeasure by the most violent expressions thereof. This is sometime alleged in excuse of rash swearing ; *I was provoked*, the swearer will say, *I was in passion* : but it is strange, that a bad cause should justify a bad effect ; that one crime should warrant another ; that what would spoil a good action should excuse a bad one.

Sometimes it proceedeth from arrogant conceit, and a tyrannical humour ; when a man fondly admireth his own opinion, and affecting to impose it on others, is thence moved to thwack it on with lusty asseverations.

^{Ἐλαφρία.}
2 Cor. i. 17. Sometimes it issueth from wantonness and levity of mind, disposing a man to sport with any thing, how serious, how grave, how sacred and venerable soever.

Sometimes its rise is from stupid inadvertency, or heady precipitancy ; when the man doth not heed what he saith, or consider the nature and consequence of his words, but snatcheth any expression which cometh next, or which his roving fancy doth offer ; for want of that caution of the Psalmist, *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue : I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*

Ps. xxxix.
 l. cxli. 3.

Sometimes (alas ! how often in this miserable age !) it doth spring from profane boldness ; when men design to put affronts on religion, and to display their scorn and spite against conscience ; affecting the reputation of stout blades, of gallant hectors, of resolute giants, who dare do any thing, who are not afraid to defy heaven, and brave God Almighty himself.

Sometimes it is derived from apish imitation, or a humour to comply with a fashion current among vain and dissolute persons. SERM.
XV.
(Ps. xxvi. 4.)

It always doth come from a great defect of conscience, of reverence to God, of love to goodness, of discretion and sober regard to the welfare of a man's soul.

From such evidently vicious and unworthy sources it proceedeth, and therefore must needs be very culpable. No good, no wise man can like actions drawn from such principles. Farther, Matt. vii.
16.

XIII. This offence may be particularly aggravated by considering, that it hath no strong temptation alluring to it; that it yieldeth no sensible advantage; that it most easily may be avoided or corrected.

Every sin, saith St. Chrysostom, hath not the same punishment; but those things which may easily be reformed do bring on us greater punishments: and what can be more easy than to reform this fault? *Tell me, saith he, what difficulty, what sweat, what art, what hazard, what more doth it require, beside a little care^b, to abstain wholly from it? It is but willing, or resolving on it, and it is instantly done: for there is not any natural inclination disposing to it, any strong appetite to detain us under its power.*

It gratifieth no sense, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour; for the sound of it is not very melodious, and no man surely did ever get an estate by it, or was preferred to dignity for it. It rather to any good ear maketh a horrid and jarring noise; it rather with the best part of the world produceth displeasure, damage, and disgrace. What, therefore, beside monstrous vanity, and unaccountable perverseness, should hold men so devoted thereto?

Surely, of all dealers in sin the swearer is palpably the silliest, and maketh the worst bargains for himself; for he sinneth gratis, and, like those in the Prophet, *selleth* Isa. lii. 3.

^a Οὐ γὰρ δὴ πᾶν ἀμάρτημα τὴν αὐτὴν φέρει κόλασιν ἀλλὰ τὰ εὐκατόρθευτα μείζονα ἢν ἐπάγει τὴν τιμωρίαν. *Chrys. 'Ανθρ. ἰ. p. 531.*

^b Εἶπε μοι πρῶτον δυσκολίαν, &c. *Chrys. 'Ανθρ. ἰδ'. p. 594. ἰ. p. 499. ὄ. p. 489.*

SERM. *his soul for nothing.* An epicure hath some reason to allege, an extortioner is a man of wisdom, and acteth prudently in comparison to him; for they enjoy some pleasure, or acquire some gain here, in lieu of their salvation hereafter: but this fondling offendeth Heaven, and abandoneth happiness, he knoweth not why or for what. He hath not so much as the common plea of human infirmity to excuse him; he can hardly say that he was tempted thereto by any bait c.

A fantastic humour possesseth him of spurning at piety and soberness; he inconsiderately followeth a herd of wild fops; he affecteth to play the ape. What more than this can he say for himself?

XIV. Finally, let us consider, that as we ourselves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly designed and framed to glorify our Maker; (the which to do is indeed the greatest perfection and noblest privilege of our nature;) so our tongue and speaking faculty were given to us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to exhibit our due love and gratitude toward him, to profess our trust and confidence in him, to celebrate his praises, to avow his benefits, to address our supplications to him, to maintain all kinds of devotional intercourse with him, to propagate our knowledge, fear, love, and obedience to him, in all such ways to promote his honour and service. This is the most proper, worthy, and due use of our tongue, for which it was created, to which it is dedicated, from whence it becometh, as it is so often styled, our *glory*, and the best member that we have; that whereby we excel all creatures here below, and whereby we are no less discriminated from them than by our reason; that whereby we consort with the blessed angels above in the distinct utterance of praise, and communication of glory to our Creator d. Wherefore, ap-

Ps. xvi. 9.
xxx. 12.
Ivii. 8. cviii.
1.

c Οὗτος δὲ, οὐδεμίας ἀνάγκης αὐτὸν βιαζομένως, ὑπὸ ἀνοίας μόνως εἰς τὸ βάρβαρον καταπίπτει τῆς ἀμαρτίας. Chrys. Ἐνδρ. i. p 531. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτοί τινα πρόφασιν ἔχουσι προσευλίσσθαι, ἀλλὰ καταφρόνησιν μόνον. Ibid.

d Hoc enim uno præstamus vel maxime feris, quod colloquimur inter nos, et quod exprimere dicendo sensa possumus. Cic. de Orat. i.

plying this to any impious discourse, with this to profane God's blessed name, with this to violate his holy commands, with this to unhallow his sacred ordinance, with this to offer dishonour and indignity to him, is a most unnatural abuse, a horrid ingratitude toward him.

It is that indeed whereby we render this noble organ incapable of any good use. For how, (as the excellent Father doth often urge) can we pray to God for mercies, or praise God for his benefits, or heartily confess our sins, or cheerfully partake of the holy mysteries, with a mouth defiled by impious oaths, with a heart guilty of so heinous disobedience?

Likewise, whereas a secondary, very worthy use of our speech is, to promote the good of our neighbour, and especially to edify him in piety, according to that wholesome precept of the Apostle, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers*; the practice of swearing is an abuse very contrary to that good purpose, serving to corrupt our neighbour, and to instil into him a contempt of religion; or, however, grievously to scandalize him.

XV. I shall add but two words more. One is, that we would seriously consider, that our blessed Saviour, who loved us so dearly, who did and suffered so much for us, who redeemed us by his blood, who said unto us, *If ye love me, keep my commandments*, he thus positively hath enjoined, *But I say unto you, Swear not at all*: and how then can we find in our heart directly to thwart his word?

The other is, that we would lay to heart the reason whereby St. James doth enforce the point, and the sting in the close of our text, wherewith I conclude; *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall into condemnation, or, lest ye fall under damnation*. From the which infinite mischief, and from all sin that may cause it, God in mercy deliver us through our blessed Redeemer Jesus, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.

SERM.
XV.

Πῶς ἐγγί-
μι.—
Chrys.
'Ανδρ. ιδ'. p.
559. α'. p.
538.

Eph. iv. 29.

Matt. v. 34.

Jam. v. 12.

^a μὴ ὑπὸ κεί-
σιν ᾤστυλι.

SERMON XVI.

OF EVIL-SPEAKING IN GENERAL.

TITUS. iii. 2.

—*To speak evil of no man.*

SFPM. **T**HESSE words do imply a double duty ; one incumbent
XVI. on teachers, another on the people who are to be instructed
by them.

Ἐπομίμνη-
στε αὐτούς.

The teacher's duty appeareth from reflecting on the words of the context, which govern these, and make them up an entire sentence ; *Put them in mind*, or, rub up their memory to do thus. It is St. Paul's injunction to Titus, a bishop and pastor of the church, that he should admonish the people committed to his care and instruction, as of other great duties, (of yielding obedience to magistrates, of behaving themselves peaceably, of practising meekness and equity toward all men, of being *readily* disposed to *every good work*,) so particularly of this, *μηδένα βλασφημεῖν*, to revile, or *speak evil of no man*.

Whence it is apparent, that this is one of the principal duties that preachers are obliged to mind people of, and to press upon them. And if this were needful then, when charity, kindled by such instructions and examples, was so lively ; when Christians, by their sufferings, were so inured to meekness and patience ; even every one, for the honour of his religion, and the safety of his person, was concerned in all respects to demean himself innocently

and inoffensively ; then is it now especially requisite, when (such engagements and restraints being taken off, love being cooled, persecution being extinct, the tongue being set loose from all extraordinary curbs) the transgression of this duty is grown so prevalent and rife, that evil-speaking is almost as common as speaking, ordinary conversation extremely abounding therewith, that ministers should discharge their office in dehorting and dissuading from it.

Well indeed it were, if by their example of using mild and moderate discourse, of abstaining from virulent invectives, tauntings and scoffings, good for little but to inflame anger, and infuse ill-will, they would lead men to good practice of this sort : for no examples can be so wholesome, or so mischievous to this purpose, as those which come down from the pulpit, the place of edification, backed with special authority and advantage.

However, it is to preachers a ground of assurance, and matter of satisfaction, that in pressing this duty they shall perform their duty : their text being not so much of their own choosing, as given them by St. Paul ; they can surely scarce find a better to discourse upon : it cannot be a matter of small moment or use, which this great master and guide so expressly directeth us to insist upon. And to the observance of his precept, so far as concerneth me, I shall immediately apply myself.

It is then the duty of all Christian people, (to be taught, and pressed on them,) *not to reproach, or speak evil of any man*. The which duty, for your instruction, I shall first endeavour somewhat to explain, declaring its import and extent ; then, for your farther edification, I shall inculcate it, proposing several inducements persuasive to the observance of it.

I. For explication, we may first consider the object of it, *no man* ; then the act itself, which is prohibited, *to blaspheme*, that is, to reproach, to revile, or, as we have it rendered, *to speak evil*.

No man. St. Paul questionless did especially mean hereby to hinder the Christians at that time from reproaching

SERM. the Jews and the Pagans among whom they lived, men in
XVI. their lives very wicked and corrupt, men in opinion extremely dissenting from them, men who greatly did hate, and cruelly did persecute them; of whom therefore they had mighty provocations and temptations to speak ill; their judgment of the persons, and their resentment of injuries, making it difficult to abstain from doing so. Whence by a manifest analogy may be inferred, that the object of this duty is very large, indeed universal and unlimited: that we must forbear reproach not only against pious and virtuous persons, against persons of our own judgment or party, against those who never did harm or offend us, against our relations, our friends, our benefactors; in respect of whom there is no ground or temptation of ill-speaking; but even against the most unworthy and wicked persons, against those who most discoat in opinion and practice from us, against those who never did oblige us, yea those who have most disobliged us, even against our most bitter and spiteful enemies. There is no exception or excuse to be admitted from the quality, state, relation, or demeanour of men: the duty (according to the proper sense, or due qualifications and limits of the act) doth extend to all men: for, *Speak evil of no man.*

As for the act it may be inquired what the word *βλασφημεῖν*, *to blaspheme*, doth import. I answer, that it is to vent words concerning any person which do signify in us ill opinion, or contempt, anger, hatred, enmity conceived in our minds toward him; which are apt in him to kindle wrath, and breed ill blood toward us; which tend to beget in others that hear ill conceit, or ill-will toward him; which are much destructive of his reputation, prejudicial to his interests, productive of damage or mischief

to him. It is otherwise in Scripture termed *λοιδορεῖν*, *to rail*
 2 Pet. ii. 11. or *revile*, (to use bitter and ignominious language;) *ὕβριζεν*,
 Jude 9. *to speak contumeliously*; *φέρειν βλάσφημον κρίσιν*, *to bring rail-*
 Jam. iv. 11. *ing accusation*, (or reproachful censure;) *καπαλαλεῖν*, to use
 Rom. xii. 14. *obloquy*, or *obtrcetation*; *καταρῆσθαι*, *to curse*, that is, to
 Luke vi. 28. speak words importing that we do wish ill to a person.
 (2 Sam. xvi. 10.)

Such is the language we are prohibited to use. To which purpose we may observe, that whereas in our conversation and commerce with men, there do frequently occur occasions to speak of men, and to men, words apparently disadvantageous to them, expressing our dissent in opinion from them, or a dislike in us of their proceedings, we may do this in different ways and terms; some of them gentle and moderate, signifying no ill mind or disaffection toward them; others harsh and sharp, arguing height of disdain, disgust, or despite, whereby we bid them defiance, and shew that we mean to exasperate them. Thus, telling a man that we differ in judgment from him, or conceive him not to be in the right, and calling him a liar, a deceiver, a fool; saying that he doeth amiss, taketh a wrong course, transgresseth the rule, and calling him dishonest, unjust, wicked; (to omit more odious and provoking names, unbecoming this place, and not deserving our notice;) are several ways of expressing the same things: whereof the latter, in relating passages concerning our neighbour, or in debating cases with him, is prohibited: for thus the words *reproaching*, (Acts xxiii. *reviling*, *railing*, *cursing*, and the like, do signify; and ^{3, 4, 5.}) thus our Lord himself doth explain them, in his divine sermon, wherein he doth enact this law; *Whosoever*, saith he, *shall say to his brother, Raca*, (that is, vain man, or liar,) *shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*; that is, he rendereth himself liable to a strict account, and to severe condemnation before God, who useth contemptuous and contumelious expressions toward his neighbour, in proportion to the malignity of such expressions.

The reason of things also doth help to explain those words, and to shew why they are prohibited: because those harsh terms are needless; mild words serving as well to express the same things: because they are commonly unjust, loading men with greater defect or blame than they can be proved to deserve, or their actions do import: (for every man that speaketh falsehood is not therefore a liar, every man that erreth is not thence a

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fool, every man that doeth amiss is not consequently dishonest or wicked; the secret intentions and the habitual dispositions of men not being always to be collected from their outward actions :) because they are uncharitable, signifying that we entertain the worst opinions of men, and make the worst construction of their doings, and are disposed to shew them no favour or kindness: because also they produce mischievous effects, such as spring from the worst passions raised by them.

This in gross is the meaning of the precept. But since there are some other precepts seeming to clash with this; since there are cases wherein we are allowed to use the harsher sort of terms, there are great examples in appearance thwarting this rule; therefore it may be requisite for determining the limits of our duty, and distinguishing it from transgression, that such exceptions or restrictions should be somewhat declared.

1. First then, we may observe, that it may be allowable to persons anywise concerned in the prosecution or administration of justice, to speak words which in private intercourse would be reproachful. A witness may impeach of crimes hurtful to justice, or public tranquillity; a judge may challenge, may rebuke, may condemn an offender in proper terms, (or forms of speech prescribed by law,) although most disgraceful and distasteful to the guilty: for it belongeth to the majesty of public justice to be bold, blunt, severe; little regarding the concerns or passions of particular persons, in comparison to the public welfare.

A testimony, therefore, or sentence against a criminal, which materially is a reproach, and morally would be such in a private mouth, is not yet formally so according to the intent of this rule. For practices of this kind, which serve the exigencies of justice, are not to be interpreted as proceeding from anger, hatred, revenge, any bad passion or humour; but in way of needful discipline for God's service, and common benefit of men. It is not indeed so much the minister of justice, as God himself, our absolute Lord, as the Sovereign, God's representative,

acting in the public behalf, as the commonwealth itself, who by his mouth do rebuke the obnoxious person.

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2. God's ministers in religious affairs, to whom the care of men's instruction and edification is committed, are enabled to inveigh against sin and vice, whoever consequentially may be touched thereby; yea sometimes it is their duty, with severity and sharpness to reprove particular persons, not only privately, but publicly, in order to their correction, and edification of others.

Thus St. Paul directeth Timothy; *Them that sin* (notoriously and scandalously he meaneth) *rebuke before all, that others may fear*: that is in a manner apt to make impression on the minds of the hearers, so as to scare them from like offences. And to Titus he writes, *Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.* And, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins,* saith the Lord to the Prophet. Such are the charges and commissions laid on and granted to his messengers.

Thus may we observe that God's Prophets of old, St. John the Baptist, our Lord himself, the holy Apostles did in terms most vehement and biting reprove the age in which they lived, and some particular persons in them. The Prophets are full of declamations and invectives against the general corruption of their times, and against the particular manners of some persons in them. *Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men; and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their means. As troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent, and commit lewdness.* Such is their style commonly. St. John the Baptist calleth the Scribes and Pharisees *a generation of vipers.* Our Saviour speaketh of them in the same terms; calleth

SERM. them an *evil and adulterous generation, serpents, and chil-*
 XVI. *dren of vipers; hypocrites, painted sepulchres, obscure*
 Matt. xvi. 4. *graves, (μνημεία ἁδῶντα.) blind guides, fools and blind, chil-*
 xii. 34, 39. *dren of the devil.* St. Paul likewise calleth the schismatical and heretical teachers, *a dogs, false apostles, evil and deceitful workers, men of corrupt minds, reprobates and abominable.* With the like colours do St. Peter, St. Jude, and other the Apostles, paint them. Which sort of speeches are to be supposed to proceed, not from private passion or design, but out of holy zeal for God's honour, and from earnest charity toward men, for to work their amendment and common edification. They were uttered also by special wisdom and peculiar order; from God's authority and in his name: so that as God by them is said to preach, to entreat, to warn, and to exhort; so by them also he may be said to reprehend and reproach.

3. Even private persons in due season, with discretion and temper, may reprove others, whom they observe to commit sin, or follow bad courses, out of charitable design, and with hope to reclaim them. This was an office of charity imposed anciently even upon the Jews; much more doth it lie upon Christians, who are obliged more earnestly to tender the spiritual good of those who by the stricter and more holy bands of brotherhood are allied to them. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him,* was a precept of the old law: and, *νομιεῖν ἀτάκτους,* *to admonish the disorderly,* is an evangelical rule. Such persons we are enjoined to shun and decline: but first we must endeavour by sober advice and admonition to reclaim them; we must not thus reject them till they appear contumacious and incorrigible, refusing to hear us, or becoming deaf to reproof. This, although it necessarily doth include setting out their faults, and charging blame on them, (answerable to their offences,) is not the culpable reproach here meant, it being needful toward a wholesome effect, and proceeding from charitable intention.

4. Some vehemency (some smartness and sharpness) of

speech may sometimes be used in defence of truth, and impugning errors of bad consequence; especially when it concerneth the interest of truth, that the reputation and authority of its adversaries should somewhat be abased or abated. If by a partial opinion or reverence toward them, however begotten in the minds of men, they strive to overbear or discountenance a good cause, their faults so far as truth permitteth and need requireth, may be detected and displayed. For this cause particularly may we presume our Lord (otherwise so meek in his temper, and mild in his carriage toward all men) did characterize the Jewish Scribes in such terms, that their authority (being then so prevalent with the people) might not prejudice the truth, and hinder the efficacy of his doctrine. This is part of that *ἐταρωμιζέσθε δαιμονίων ἰσχυροί*, that duty of *contending earnestly for the faith*, which is incumbent on us. SERM. XVI.

5. It may be excusable upon particular emergent occasions, with some heat of language to express dislike of notorious wickedness. As our Lord doth against the perverse incredulity and stupidity in the Pharisees, their profane misconstruction of his words and actions, their malicious opposing truth, and obstructing his endeavours in God's service. As St. Peter did to Simon Magus, telling him, that he *was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*. As St. Paul to Elymas the sorcerer, when he *withstood him, and desired to turn away the deputy, Sergius, from the faith*; O, said he, stirred with a holy zeal and indignation, *thou full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* The same spirit, which enabled him to inflict a sore punishment on that wicked wretch, did prompt him to use that sharp language toward him; unquestionably deserved, and seasonably pronounced. As also, when the High Priest commanded him illegally and unjustly to be misused, that speech from a mind justly sensible of such outrage broke forth, *God shall smite thee, thou whitewall*. So, when St. Peter presumptuously would have ^{3.}

SERM. XVI. dissuaded our Lord from compliance with God's will, in undergoing those crosses which were appointed to him by God's decree, our Lord calleth him Satan;—"Ἦπαγε, *Saravā, Avaunt, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that are of men.*

Matt. xvi. 23.

These sort of speeches, issuing from just and honest indignation, are sometimes excusable, oftentimes commendable; especially when they come from persons eminent in authority, of notable integrity, endued with special measures of divine grace, of wisdom, of goodness; such as cannot be suspected of intemperate anger, of ill nature, of ill will, of ill design.

In such cases as are above mentioned, a sort of *evil-speaking* about our neighbour may be allowable or excusable. But for fear of overdoing, great caution and temper is to be used; and we should never apply any such limitations as cloaks to palliate unjust or uncharitable dealing. Generally it is more advisable to suppress such eruptions of passion, than to vent it; for seldom passion hath not inordinate motions joined with it, or tendeth to good ends. And, however, it will do well to reflect on those cases, and to remark some particulars about them.

First, we may observe, that in all these cases all possible moderation, equity, and candour are to be used; so that no ill-speaking be practised beyond what is needful or convenient. Even in prosecution of offences, the bounds of truth, of equity, of humanity and clemency are not to be transgressed. A judge must not lay on the most criminal person more blame, or contumely, than the case will bear, or than serveth the designs of justice. However our neighbour doth incur the calamities of sin and of punishment, we must not be insolent or contemptuous toward him. So we may learn by that law of Moses, backed with a notable reason: *And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him,*

Deut. xxv. 2, 3.

and not exceed; lest if he should exceed, and beat him above those stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee. Whence appears, that we should be careful of not vilifying an offender beyond measure. And how mildly governors should proceed in the administration of justice, the example of Joshua may teach us, who thus examineth Achan, the cause of so great mischief to the public; *My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me. My son; what compellation could be more benign and kind? I pray thee; what language could be more courteous and gentle? Give glory to God, and make confession; what words could be more inoffensively pertinent? And when he sentenced that great malefactor, the cause of so much mischief, this was all he said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord will trouble thee; words void of contumely or insulting, containing only a close intimation of the cause, and a simple declaration of the event he was to undergo.*

Secondly, Likewise ministers, in the taxing sin and sinners, are to proceed with great discretion and caution, with much gentleness and meekness; signifying a tender pity of their infirmities, charitable desires of their good, the best opinion of them, and the best hopes for them, that may consist with any reason; according to those apostolical rules: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted: and, We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves: and more expressly, A servant of the Lord must not fight, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. Thus did St. Peter temper his reproof of Simon Magus with this wholesome and comfortable advice; Repent therefore from this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

Thirdly, As for fraternal correction, and reproof of faults, when it is just and expedient to use it, ordinarily

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the calmest and mildest way is the most proper, and most likely to obtain good success: it commonly doth^b in a more kindly manner convey the sense thereof into the heart, and therein more powerfully worketh remorse, than the fierce and harsh way. Clearly to shew a man his fault, with the reason proving it such, so that he becometh thoroughly convinced of it, is sufficient to breed in him regret, and to shame him before his own mind: to do more, (in way of aggravation, of insulting on him, or inveighing against him,) as it doth often not well consist with humanity, so it is seldom consonant to discretion, if we do, as we ought, seek his health and amendment^c. Humanity requireth, that when we undertake to reform our neighbour, we should take care not to deform him; (not to discourage or displease him more than is necessary;) when we would correct his manners, that we should also consider his modesty, and consult his reputation; *Curam agentes*, as Seneca speaketh, *non tantum salutis, sed et honestæ cicatricis*^d: *having care not only to heal the wound, but to leave a comely scar behind.* Be, adviseth St. Austin, *so displeas'd with iniquity, as to consider and consult humanity*^e: for, *Zeal void of humanity is not*, saith St. Chrysostom, *zeal, but rather animosity; and reproof not mix'd with good will, appeareth a kind of malignity*^f. We should so rebuke those who, by frailty or folly incident to mankind, have fallen into misdemeanours, that they may perceive we do sincerely pity their ill case, and tender their good; that we mean not to upbraid their weakness, or insult upon their misfortune; that we delight not to inflict on them more grief than is plainly needful and un-

^a Reprehensio contumelia vacare debet. Neque monitio aspera sit, nec ob-
jurgatio contumeliosa. *Ambros. de Offic. iii. 16.*

^b Prov. xvii. 10. A reproof entereth more into a wise man, than a hundred stripes into a fool.

^c Ὁ ὀδηγός, ὅταν λαβῆ τινὰ πλανώμενον, ἡγαγεν ἐπὶ ὄδον τὴν δέουσαν ἔχι κατα-
γελάσας ἢ λοιδορησάμενος ἀπὸ ἡλθῆς· ἔ σὺ δεῖξον αὐτῷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ὄψει ὅτι
ἀκολουθεῖ, &c. *Epiet. ii. 12.*

^d Sen. de Clem. i. 7. Vide Chrys. in Matt. ix. 8. Or. 29.

^e Ita succense iniquitati, ut consulere memincris humanitati. *Aug.*

^f Ζῆλος φιλονεικησίας κενός, οὐ ζῆλος, &c.

avoidable; that we are conscious and sensible of our own SERM. XVI. obnoxiousness to the like slips or falls, and do *consider that* Gal. vi. 1. *we also may be tempted*, and being tempted may be overcome. This they cannot perceive, or be persuaded of, except we temper our speech with benignity and mildness. Such speech & prudence also dictateth, as most useful and hopeful for producing the good ends honest reprehension doth aim at; it mollifieth and it melteth a stubborn heart, it subdueth and winneth a perverse will, it healeth distempered affections. Whereas roughly handling is apt to defeat or obstruct the cure; rubbing the sore doth tend to exasperate and inflame it. Harsh speech rendereth advice odious and unsavoury; driveth from it, and depriveth it of efficacy: it turneth regret for a fault into displeasure and disdain against the reprove: it looks not like the dealing of a kind friend, but like the persecution of a spiteful enemy; it seemeth rather an ebullition of gall, or a defluxion from rancour, than an expression of good will: the offender will take it for a needless and pitiless tormenting, or for a proud and tyrannical domineering over him. He that can bear a friendly touch, will not endure to be lashed with angry and reproachful words. In fine, all reproof ought to be seasoned with discretion, with candour, with moderation and meekness.

Fourthly, Likewise in defence of truth, and maintenance of a good cause, we may observe, that commonly the fairest language is most proper and advantageous, and that reproachful or foul terms are most improper and prejudicial. A calm and meek way of discoursing doth much advantage a good cause, as arguing the patron thereof to have confidence in the cause itself, and to rely upon his strength; that he is in a temper fit to apprehend it himself, and to maintain it; that he propoundeth it as a friend, wishing the hearer for his own good to follow it,

⁶ Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. Prov. xvi. 24.

A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger. Prov. xv. 1.

2 Thes. iii.
15.
Μὴ ὡς ἐχθροὺ ἠγγισθεῖτε, ἀλλὰ νοθεύετε ὡς ἀδελφοί.

SERM. leaving him the liberty to judge and choose for himself. But
XVI. rude speech, and contemptuous reflections on persons, as they do signify nothing to the question, so they commonly bring much disadvantage and damage to the cause, creating mighty prejudices against it^h: they argue much impotency in the advocate, and consequently little strength in what he maintains; that he is little able to judge well, and altogether unapt to teach others: they intimate a diffidence in himself concerning his cause, and that, despairing to maintain it by reason, he seeks to uphold it by passion; that, not being able to convince by fair means, he would bear down by noise and clamour; that, not skilling to get his suit quietly, he would extort it by force, obtruding his conceits violently as an enemy, or imposing them arbitrarily as a tyrant. Thus doth he really disparage and slur his cause, however good and defensible in itselfⁱ.

A modest and friendly style doth suit truth; it, like its author, doth usually reside (not in the rumbling *wind*, nor in the shaking *earthquake*, nor in the raging *fire*, but) in the *small still voice*: sounding in this, it is most audible, most penetrant, and most effectual: thus propounded, it is willingly hearkened to; for men have no aversation from hearing those who seem to love them, and wish them well. It is easily conceived; no prejudice or passion clouding the apprehensive faculties: it is readily embraced; no animosity withstanding or obstructing it. It is the *sweetness of the lips*, which, as the Wise Man telleth us, *increaseth learning*; disposing a man to hear lessons of good doctrine, rendering him capable to understand them, insinuating and impressing them upon the mind: the affec-

I Kings
xix. 11, 12

Prov. xvi.
21.

^h Qui, dum dicit, malus videtur, utique male dicit. *Quint.* vi. 2.

Nisi quod imperitos etiam animosos atque iracundos esse manifestum est, dum per inopiam consilii et sermonis ad iracundiam facile vertuntur. *Firmil. apud Cyp.* Ep. 75.

ⁱ ——— et inhumanum est, et ipsi qui dicit inutile: tum causæ contrarium, quia plane et adversarii, fiunt et inimici; et quantulumcunque his virium est, contumelia augetur. *Quint.* xii. 9.

tions being thereby unlocked, the passage becomes open to the reason *k*. SERM.
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But it is plainly a very preposterous method of instructing, of deciding controversies, of begetting peace, to vex and anger those concerned by ill-language¹. Nothing surely doth more hinder the efficacy of discourse, and prevent conviction, than doth this course, upon many obvious accounts. It doth first put in a strong bar to attention: for no man willingly doth afford an ear to him, whom he conceiveth disaffected toward him; which opinion harsh words infallibly will produce; no man can expect to hear truth from him, whom he apprehendeth disordered in his own mind, whom he seeth rude in his proceedings, whom he taketh to be unjust in his dealing; as men certainly will take those to be, who presume to revile others for using their own judgment freely, and dissenting from them in opinion. Again, this course doth blind the hearer's mind, so that he cannot discern what he that pretends to instruct him doth mean, or how he doth assert his doctrine. Truth will not be discerned through the smoke of wrathful expressions; right being defaced by foul language will not appear; passion being excited will not suffer a man to perceive the sense, or the force of an argument. The will also thereby is hardened and hindered from submitting to truth. In such a case, *non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris*: although you stop his mouth, you cannot subdue his heart; although he can no longer fight, yet he never will yield: animosity raised by such usage rendereth him invincibly obstinate in his conceits and courses. Briefly, from this proceeding men become

^k Δεῖ γὰρ τὸν μέλλοντά τι τῶν χρησίμων μαθεῖν, πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἡδέως ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν διδάσκοντα.—ἡδέως δὲ ἕκ ἄν τις σχοίη πρὸς τὸν θρασυμένον καὶ τὸν ὑβρίζοντα. *Chrys.* in 2 *Tim* Or. 6.

¹ *Ὁν ἴσως ἐκείδησας ἂν τῆ χρηστότητι, τοῦτον ἀπολλύεις τῆ θρασύτητι. *Greg.* *Naz.* Or. 26.

Οὐ γὰρ ἀπαιδύτως παιδύομεν, οὐδὲ παις ὑβρῆσι βάλλομεν, ὅπῃ πάσχεσιν οἱ πολλοί, μὴ τῶ λόγῳ μαχόμενοι, τοῖς δὲ λεγῆσι, καὶ τὴν ἀσθιναίαν ἴσιν ὅτι τῶν λογισμῶν παις ὑβρῆσι συγκαλύπτοντες. *Naz.* Or. 32.

Ὅταν πρὸς τινα ἀηδῶς ἔχομεν, καὶν ὑγίης τι λέγῃ, οὐ προθύμως οὐδὲ μιθ' ἡδονῆς ἀχόμεθα τὰ λεγόμενα. *Chrys.* *Tom.* 5. Or. 59.

SERM. XVI. unwilling to mark, unfit to apprehend, indisposed to embrace any good instruction or advice: it maketh them indocile and intractable, averse from better instruction, pertinacious in their opinions, and refractory in their ways.

Prov. xxiv. 26. *Every man, saith the Wise Man, shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer:* but no man surely will be ready to kiss those lips which are embittered with reproach, or defiled with dirty language.

It is said of Pericles, that *with thundering and lightning he put Greece into confusion*^m: such discourse may serve to confound things, it seldom tendeth to compose them. If reason will not pierce, rage will scarce avail to drive it inⁿ. Satirical virulency may vex men sorely, but it hardly ever soundly converts them. *Few become wiser or better by ill words.* Children may be frighted into compliance by loud and severe increpations; but men are to be allured by rational persuasion backed with courteous usage: they may be sweetly drawn, they cannot be violently driven to change their judgment and practice. Whence that advice of the apostle, *With meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, doth no less savour of wisdom than of goodness.*

2 Tim. ii. 25.

Fifthly, As for the examples of extraordinary persons, which in some cases do seem to authorize the practice of evil-speaking, we may consider, that as they had especial commission enabling them to do some things beyond ordinary standing rules, wherein they are not to be imitated; as they had especial illumination and direction, which preserved them from swerving in particular cases from truth and equity; so the tenor of their life did evidence, that it was the glory of God, the good of men, the necessity of the case, which moved them to it^o. And

^m Βροντῶν καὶ ἀσφάπτων ἐκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

ⁿ *Chrys. in 2 Tim. ii. 24.* Ὁ γὰρ σφοδρὸς ἔλεγχος, ὅταν μὴ ἐπιεικείας γίνηται, οὕτως ἐστὶν ὁ μάλιστα δακνῖν δυνάμενος· ἐνέσι γὰρ, ἐνέσι μετὰ πρᾶότητος καδάψασθαι μᾶλλον, ἢ μετὰ θρασύτητος ἐντρέψαι.

^o This case is like the other cases, wherein the practice of good and great men, although excusable, is not yet exemplary; as the heroic acts of Da-

of them also we may observe, that in divers occasions, yea SERM. X
generally, whenever only their private credit or interest were
concerned, although grievously provoked, they did out of
meekness, patience, and charity, wholly forbear reproach-
ful speech. Our Saviour, who sometimes upon special rea-
son in his discourses used such harsh words, yet, when he
was most spitefully accused, reproached, and persecuted,
did not open his mouth, or return one angry word: *Being*
reviled, he did not, as St. Peter, proposing his example to I Pet. ii.
us, telleth us, *revile again; suffering, he did not threaten*.
He used the softest language to Judas, to the soldiers, to
Pilate and Herod, to the priests, &c. And the apostles,
who sometimes inveigh so zealously against the opposers and
perverters of truth, did in their private conversation and de-
meanour strictly observe their own rules of abstinence from
reproach: *Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we suf-* I Cor. iv.
fer it; so doth St. Paul represent their practice. And in 12.
reason we should rather follow them in this their ordinary Rom. ii.
course, than in their extraordinary sallies of practice. 14.

In fine, however in some cases and circumstances the
matter may admit such exceptions, so that all language dis-
graceful to our neighbour is not ever culpable; yet the
cases are so few and rare in comparison, the practice com-
monly so dangerous and ticklish, that worthily forbearing
to reproach doth bear the style of a general rule: and par-
ticularly, for clearer direction, we are in the following
cases obliged carefully to shun it; or in speaking about our
neighbour we must observe these cautions.

1. We should never in severe terms inveigh against any
man without reasonable warrant, or presuming upon a
good call and commission thereto. As every man should
not assume to himself the power of administering justice,
(of trying, sentencing, and punishing offenders,) so must
not every man take upon him to speak against those who
seem to do ill; which is a sort of punishment, including the

vid, of Sampson, of Ehud, of Phineas, of Elias, of Moses; David's duel,
Sampson's suicide, Moses's slaying the Egyptian, Ehud's stabbing the king of
Moab, Elias's calling for fire, by extraordinary and peculiar instinct.

SERM. infliction of smart and damage upon the persons concerned.

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Every man hath indeed a commission, in due place and season, with discretion and moderation to admonish his neighbour offending; but otherwise to speak ill of him, no private man hath just right or authority: and therefore in presuming to do it he is disorderly and irregular, trespassing beyond his bounds, usurping an undue power to himself.

2. We should never speak ill of any man without apparent just cause. It must be just: we must not reproach men for things innocent or indifferent; for not concurring in disputable opinions with us, for not complying with our humour, for not serving our interest, for not doing any thing to which they are not obliged, or for using their liberty in any case: it must be at least some considerable fault, which we can so much as tax. It must also be clear and certain, notorious and palpable; for to speak ill upon slender conjectures, or doubtful suspicions, is full of iniquity." "Ὅσα ὧκ αἰῶνας, βλασφημοῦσι, *they rail at things which they know not*, is part of those wicked men's character, whom St. Jude doth so severely reprehend. If indeed, these conditions being wanting, we presume to reproach any man, we do therein no less than slander him; which to do is unlawful in any case, is in truth a most diabolical and detestable crime. To impose odious names and characters on any person, which he deserveth not, or without ground of truth, is to play the devil; and hell itself scarce will own a fouler practice.

Jude 10.

Prov. x. 12.

1 Pet. iv. 8.

1 Cor. xiii.

4.

3. We should not cast reproach upon any man without some necessary reason. In charity (that *charity* which *covereth all sins*, which *covereth a multitude of sins*,) we are bound to connive at the defects, and to conceal the faults of our brethren; to extenuate and excuse them, when apparent, so far as we may in truth and equity. We must not therefore ever produce them to light, or prosecute them with severity, except very needful occasion urgeth: such as is the glory and service of God, the maintenance of truth, the vindication of innocence, the

preservation of public justice and peace, the amendment of our neighbour himself, or securing others from contagion. Barring such reasons, (really being, not affectedly pretended,) we are bound not so much as to disclose, as to touch our neighbour's faults; much more, not to blaze them about, not to exaggerate them by vehement invectives.

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4. We should never speak ill of any man beyond measure: be the cause never so just, the occasion never so necessary, we should yet nowise be immoderate therein, exceeding the bounds prescribed by truth, equity, and humanity. We should never speak worse of any man whatever than he certainly deserveth, according to the most favourable construction of his doings; never more than the cause absolutely requireth. We should rather be careful to fall short of what in rigorous truth might be said against him, than in the least to pass beyond it. The best cause had better seem to suffer a little by our reservedness in its defence, than any man be wronged by our aspersing him; for God, the patron of truth and right, is ever able to secure them without the succour of our unjust and uncharitable dealing. The contrary practice hath indeed within it a spice of slander, that is, of the worst iniquity.

5. We must never speak ill of any man out of bad principles, or for bad ends.

No sudden or rash anger should instigate us thereto. For, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice,* Eph. iv. 31. Col. iii. 8. is the apostolical precept: they are all associates and kindred, which are to be cast away together. Such anger itself is culpable, as a work of the flesh, and therefore to be suppressed; and all its brood therefore is also to be smothered: the daughter of such a mother cannot be legitimate. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* Jam. i. 20.

We must not speak ill out of inveterate hatred or ill-will. For this murderous, this viperous disposition should

SERM. itself be rooted out of our hearts : whatever issueth from it
XVI. cannot be otherwise than very bad ; it must be a poisonous
 breath that exaleth from that foul source.

We must not be provoked thereto by any revengeful disposition, or rancorous spleen, in regard to any injuries or discourtesies received. For, as we must not revenge ourselves, or render evil in any other way ; so particularly not in this, which is commonly the special instance expressly prohibited. *Render not evil for evil*, saith St. Peter, *nor railing for railing ; but contrariwise bless*, or speak well : and, *Bless them*, saith our Lord, *which curse you ; Bless*, saith St. Paul, *and curse not*.

1Pet. iii. 9. We must not also do it out of contempt : for we are not to slight our brethren in our hearts. No man really (considering what he is, whence he came, how he is related, what he is capable of) can be despicable. Extreme naughtiness is indeed contemptible ; but the unhappy person that is engaged therein is rather to be pitied than despised. However, charity bindeth us to stifle contemptuous motions of heart, and not to vent them in vilifying expression. Particularly, it is a barbarous practice out of contempt to reproach persons for natural imperfections, for meanness of condition, for unlucky disasters, for any involuntary defects : this being indeed to reproach mankind, unto which such things are incident ; to reproach Providence, from the disposal whereof they do proceed. *Whoso mocketh the poor, despiseth his Maker*, saith the Wise Man : and the same may be said of him that reproachfully mocketh him that is dull in parts, deformed in body, weak in health or strength, or defective in any such way.

Likewise we must not speak ill out of envy ; because others do excel us in any good quality, or exceed us in fortune. To harbour this base and ugly disposition in our minds is unworthy of a man, who should delight in all good springing up anywhere, and befalling any man, naturally allied unto him ; it is most unworthy of a Christian, who should tender his brother's good as his own,

He that is
 void of wis-
 dom de-
 spiseth his
 neighbour.
Prov. xi. 12.

and rejoice with those that rejoice. From thence to be drawn to cast reproach upon any man is horrible and heinous wickedness.

SERM.

XVI.

Rom. xii.

15.

Neither should we ever use reproach as a means of compassing any design we do affect or aim at : it is an unwarrantable engine of raising us to wealth, dignity, or repute. To grow by the diminution, to rise by the depression, to shine by the eclipse of others, to build a fortune upon the ruins of our neighbour's reputation, is that which no honourable mind can affect, no honest man will endeavour. Our own wit, courage, and industry, managed with God's assistance and blessing, are sufficient, and only lawful instruments of prosecuting honest enterprises ; we need not, we must not instead of them employ our neighbour's disgrace : no worldly good is worth purchasing at such a rate, no project worth achieving by such foul ways.

Neither should we out of malignity, to cherish or gratify ill humour, use this practice. It is observable of some persons, that not out of any formed displeasure, grudge, or particular disaffection, nor out of any particular design, but merely out of a *κακότης διαιτα*, an ill disposition, springing up from nature, or contracted by use, they are apt to carp at any action, and with sharp reproach to bite any man that comes in their way, thereby feeding and soothing that evil inclination. But as this inhuman and currish humour should be corrected and extirpated from our hearts, so should the issues thereof at our mouths be stopped : the bespattering our neighbour's good name should never afford any satisfaction or delight unto us.

Nor out of wantonness should we speak ill, for our divertimento or sport. For our neighbour's reputation is too great and precious a thing to be played with, or offered up to sport ; we are very foolish in so devaluing it, very naughty in so misusing it. Our wits are very barren, our brains are ill-furnished with store of knowledge, if we can find no other matter of conversation.

Nor out of negligence and inadvertency should we sputter out reproachful speech ; shooting ill words at

SERM. rovers, or not regarding who stands in our way. Among
XVI. all temerities this is one of the most noxious, and therefore
 very culpable.

In fine, we should never speak concerning our neighbour from any other principle than charity, or to any other intent but what is charitable; such as tendeth to his good, or at least is consistent therewith. *Let all your things*, saith St. Paul, *be done in charity*: and words are most of the *things* we do concerning our neighbour, wherein we may express charity. In all our speeches therefore touching him, we should plainly show that we have a care of his reputation, that we tender his interest, that we even desire his content and repose. Even when reason and need do so require, that we should disclose and reprehend his faults, we may, we should, by the manner and scope of our speech, signify thus much. Which rule, were it observed, if we should never speak ill otherwise than out of charity, surely most ill-speaking would be cut off; most, I fear, of our tattling about others, much of our gossipping would be marred.

Indeed, so far from bitter or sour our language should be, that it ought to be sweet and pleasant; so far from rough and harsh, that it should be courteous and obliging; so far from signifying wrath, ill-will, contempt, or animosity, that it should express tender affection, good esteem, sincere respect toward our brethren; and be apt to produce the like in them toward us; the sense of them should be grateful to the heart; the very sound and accent of them should be delightful to the ear. *Every one* should *please his neighbour for his good to edification*. Our words should always be *ἐν χάριτι*, with grace, seasoned with salt; they should have the grace of courtesy, they should be seasoned with the salt of discretion, so as to be sweet and savoury to the hearers^P. Commonly ill language is a certain sign of inward enmity and ill-will. Good-will is wont to shew itself in good terms; it clotheth even its

1 Cor. xvi.
14.

Prov. xv.
26. xvi. 24.

Rom. xv. 2.
1 Cor. x. 33.
Col. iv. 6.

^P Charitas—cum arguit mitis est, cum blanditur simplex est: pie solet sævire, sine dolo mulcere; patienter novit irasci, humiliter indignari. S. Bern. Ep. ii.

grief handsomely, and its displeasure carrieth favour in its face; its rigour is civil and gentle, tempered with pity for the faults and errors which it disliketh, with the desire of their amendment and recovery whom it reprehendeth. It would inflict no more evil than is necessary; it would cure its neighbour's disease without exasperating his patience, troubling his modesty, or impairing his credit. As it always judgeth candidly, so it never condemneth extremely.

II. But so much for the explication of this precept, and the directive part of our discourse. I shall now briefly propound some inducements to the observance thereof.

1. Let us consider, that nothing more than railing and reviling is opposite to the nature, and inconsistent with the tenor of our religion; the which, as even a heathen did observe of it, *nil nisi justum suadet, et lenè; doth recommend nothing but what is very just and mild*: which propoundeth the practices of charity, meekness, patience, peaceableness, moderation, equity, alacrity or good humour, as its principal laws, and declareth them the chief fruits of the divine Spirit and grace: which chargeth us to curb and compose all our passions; more particularly to restrain and repress anger, animosity, envy, malice, and such like dispositions, as the fruits of carnality and corrupt lust: which consequently drieth up all the sources, or dammeth up the sluices of bad language. As it doth *above all things* oblige us to bear no ill-will in our hearts, so it chargeth us to vent none with our mouths.

Ammian.
Marcell.

I Pet. iv. 8.

2. It is therefore often expressly condemned and prohibited as evil. It is the property of the wicked, a character of those who *work iniquity, to whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*

Psal. lxxiv. 3.

⁹ Lingua Christum confessa non sit maledica, non turbulenta, non convitiis et litibus perstrepens audiatur. *Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.*

Convitiis et maledictis quæso vos abstinete; quia neque maledici regnum Dei consequentur; et lingua quæ Christum confessa est, incolumis et pura cum suo honore servanda est. *Cypr. Ep. vii.*

SERM. 3. No practice hath more severe punishments denounced
 X^vI. to it than this. The railer (and it is indeed a very proper
 and fit punishment for him, he being exceedingly bad com-
 1 Cor.v. 11. pany) is to be banished out of all good society; thereto
 St. Paul adjudgeth him: *I have, saith he, now written unto
 you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother
 be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or
 a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one not to eat.*
 Ye see what company the railer hath in the text, and with
 what a crew of people he is coupled: but no good company
 he is allowed elsewhere; every good Christian should
 avoid him as a blot, and a pest of conversation: and finally
 he is sure to be excluded from the blessed society above in
 1 Cor.vi.10. heaven^r; for *neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards,
 nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of
 Rev. xxii. 15. God*: and, *Without* (without the heavenly city) *are dogs,*
 saith St. John in his Revelation, that is, those chiefly who
 out of currish spite or malignity do frowardly bark at their
 neighbours, or cruelly bite them with reproachful lan-
 guage.

4. If we look upon such language in its own nature, what
 is it but a symptom of a foul, a weak, a disordered and dis-
 tempered mind? It is the smoke of inward rage and ma-
 lice: it is a stream that cannot issue from a sweet spring:
 it is a storm that cannot bluster out of a calm region.
 Prov.xv.26. *The words of the pure are pleasant words,* as the Wise
 Man saith.

5. This practice doth plainly signify low spirit, ill
 breeding, and bad manners; and thence misbecometh any
 wise, any honest, any honourable person. It agreeth to
 children, who are unapt and unaccustomed to deal in
 matters considerable, to squabble; to women of meanest
 rank, (apt by nature, or custom, to be transported with
 passion,) to scold. In our modern languages it is termed

^r Hinc intelligere possumus quam gravis sit et perniciosa maledictio, quando, etiamsi alia bona adfuerint, sola excludit a cælo. *Salv. de Guber. Dei*, lib. iii.

villany, as being proper for rustic boors, or men of coarsest education and employment: who, having their minds debased by being conversant in meanest affairs, do vent their sorry passions, and bicker about their petty concerns, in such strains; who also, being not capable of a fair reputation, or sensible of disgrace to themselves, do little value the credit of others, or care for aspersing it. But such language is unworthy of those persons, and cannot easily be drawn from them, who are wont to exercise their thoughts about nobler matters, who are versed in affairs manageable only by calm deliberation and fair persuasion, not by impetuous and provocative rudeness; the which do never work otherwise upon masculine souls, than so as to procure disdain and resistance. Such persons, knowing the benefit of a good name, being wont to possess a good repute, prizing their own credit as a considerable good, will never be prone to bereave others of the like by opprobrious speech. A noble enemy will never speak of his enemy in bad terms ^s.

We may farther consider, that all wise, all honest, all ingenuous persons have an aversion from ill speaking, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence; that only ill-natured, unworthy, and naughty people are its willing auditors, or do abet it with applause. The good man, in the fifteenth Psalm, *non accipit opprobrium, doth not take up, or accept a reproach against his neighbour*: but *A wicked doer, saith the Wise Man, giveth heed to false lips, and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue*. And what reasonable man will do that which is disgustful to the wise and good, is grateful only to the foolish and baser sort of men^t? I premit, that using this sort of language doth incapacitate a man for to benefit his neighbour, and defeateth his endeavours for his edification, disparaging a good cause, prejudicing the de-

Psal. xv. 3.

Prov. xvii.

4.

^s In quo admirari soleo gravitatem et justitiam et sapientiam Cæsaris, qui nunquam nisi honorificentissime Pompeium appellat. Cic. *Epist.* tom. vi. 6.

^t It is always taken as an argument of ill-will. *Maledicus a malefico non distat, nisi occasione.* Quint. xii. 9.

SERM. fence of truth, obstructing the effects of good instruction
XVI. and wholesome reproof; as we did before remark and declare. Farther,

6. He that useth this kind of speech doth, as harm and trouble others, so create many great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself thereby. Nothing so inflameth the wrath of men, so provoketh their enmity, so breedeth lasting hatred and spite, as do contumelious words. They are often called *swords* and *arrows*; ^u and as such they pierce deeply, and cause most grievous smart; which men feeling are enraged, and accordingly will strive to ^x requite them in the like manner, and in all other obvious ways of revenge. Hence strife, clamour and tumult, care, suspicion and fear, danger and trouble, sorrow and regret, do seize on the reviler; and he is sufficiently punished for this dealing. No man can otherwise than live in perpetual fear of reciprocal like usage from him, whom he is conscious of having so abused. Whence, if not justice or charity toward others, yet love and pity of ourselves should persuade us to forbear it as disquietful, incommodious, and mischievous to us.

We should indeed certainly enjoy much love, much concord, much quiet, we should live in great safety and security, we should be exempted from much care and fear, if we would restrain ourselves from abusing and offending our neighbour in this kind: being conscious of so just and innocent demeanour toward him, we should converse with him in a pleasant freedom and confidence, not suspecting any bad language or ill usage from him.

7. Hence with evidently good reason is he that useth such language called a *fool*: and he that abstaineth from it is commended as wise. *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. He that refraineth his tongue is wise. In the tongue of the*

Prov. xviii. 6, 7.
 Prov. x. 19.
 Prov. xii. 18.

^u The scourge of the tongue, Job v. 21. Prov. xii. 18. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword. Psal. lvii. 4. lix. 7. lxiv. 3. Psal. lii. 2. Sharp razor. Prov. xxx. 14. Knives.

^x The forward tongue shall be cut out. Prov. x. 31.

wise is health. *He that keepeth his lips keepeth his life :* SERM. XVI.
but he that openeth wide his mouth (that is, in evil-speaking, gaping with clamour and vehemency,) *shall have destruction.* Prov. xiii.3. Eccles. x. 2.
The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious : *but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.* Prov. xviii. 21.
Death and life are in the power of the tongue ; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof ; that is, of the one or the other, answerably to the kind of speech they choose.

In fine, very remarkable is that advice, or resolution of the grand point concerning the best way of living happily, in the Psalmist: *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.* Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13. Abstinence from ill-speaking he seemeth to propose as the first step towards the fruition of a durably-happy life.

8. Lastly, we may consider that it is a grievous perverting the design of speech, (that excellent faculty, which so much distinguisheth us from, so highly advanceth us above, other creatures,) to use it to the defaming and disquieting our neighbour. It was given us as an instrument of beneficial commerce, and delectable conversation ; that with it we might assist and advise, might cheer and comfort one another : we therefore in employing it to the disgrace, vexation, damage or prejudice in any kind, of our neighbour, do foully abuse it ; and so doing, render ourselves indeed worse than dumb beasts : for better far it were that we could say nothing, than that we should speak ill *y*.

Now the God of grace and peace make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

y Mutos nasci, et egere omni ratione satius fuisset, quam providentiæ munera in mutuam perniciem convertere. *Quint. xii. 1.*

SERMON XVII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. X. 18.

He that uttereth slander is a fool.

SERM. XVII. **G**ENERAL declamations against vice and sin are indeed excellently useful, as rousing men to consider and look about them : but they do often want effect, because they only raise confused apprehensions of things, and indeterminate propensions to action ; the which, usually, before men thoroughly perceive or resolve what they should practise, do decay and vanish. As he that cries out fire doth stir up people, and inspireth them with a kind of hovering tendency every way, yet no man thence to purpose moveth, until he be distinctly informed where the mischief is ; then do they, who apprehend themselves concerned, run hastily to oppose it : so, till we particularly discern where our offences lie, (till we distinctly know the heinous nature and the mischievous consequences of them,) we scarce will effectually apply ourselves to correct them. Whence it is requisite, that men should be particularly acquainted with their sins, and by proper arguments be dissuaded from them.

In order whereto I have now selected one sin to describe, and to dissuade from, being in nature as vile, and in practice as common, as any other whatever that hath prevailed among men. It is slander, a sin which in all

times and places hath been epidemical and rife ; but which especially doth seem to reign and rage in our age and country. SERM.
XVII.

There are principles innate to men, which ever have, and ever will incline them to this offence. Eager appetites to secular and sensual goods ; violent passions, urging the prosecution of what men effect ; wrath and displeasure against those who stand in the way of compassing their desires ; emulation and envy toward those who hap to succeed better, or to attain a greater share in such things ; excessive self-love ; unaccountable malignity and vanity, are in some degrees connatural to all men, and ever prompt them to this dealing, as appearing the most efficacious, compendious, and easy way of satisfying such appetites, of promoting such designs, of discharging such passions. Slander thence hath always been a principal engine, whereby covetous, ambitious, envious, ill-natured, and vain persons have strove to supplant their competitors, and advance themselves ; meaning thereby to procure, what they chiefly prize and like, wealth, or dignity, or reputation, favour and power in the court, respect and interest with the people.

But from especial causes our age peculiarly doth abound in this practice : for, besides the common dispositions inclining thereto, there are conceits newly coined, and greedily entertained by many, which seem purposely levelled at the disparagement of piety, charity, and justice, substituting interest in the room of conscience, authorizing and commending, for good and wise, all ways serving to private advantage. There are implacable dissensions, fierce animosities, and bitter zeals sprung up ; there is an extreme curiosity, niceness, and delicacy of judgment ; there is a mighty affectation of seeming wise and witty by any means ; there is a great unsettlement of mind, and corruption of manners, generally diffused over people : from which sources it is no wonder that this flood hath so overflown, that no banks can restrain it, no fences are able to resist it ; so that ordinary conversation is full with it, and no demeanour can be secure from it.

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If we do mark what is done in many (might I not say, in most) companies, what is it, but one telling malicious stories of, or fastening odious characters upon another? What do men commonly please themselves in so much, as in carping and harshly censuring, in defaming and abusing their neighbours? Is it not the sport and divertisement of many, to cast dirt in the faces of all they meet with; to bespatter any man with foul imputations? Doth not in every corner a Momus lurk, from the venom of whose spiteful or petulant tongue no eminency of rank, dignity of place, or sacredness of office, no innocence or integrity of life, no wisdom or circumspection in behaviour, no good nature, or benignity in dealing and carriage, can protect any person? Do not men assume to themselves a liberty of telling romances, and framing characters concerning their neighbour, as freely as a poet does about Hector or Turnus, Thersites or Draucus? Do they not usurp a power of playing with, of tossing about, of tearing in pieces their neighbour's good name, as if it were the veriest toy in the world? Do not many, *having a form of godliness*, (some of them demurely, others confidently, both without any sense of, or remorse for what they do,) backbite their brethren? Is it not grown so common a thing to asperse causelessly, that no man wonders at it, that few dislike, that scarce any detest it? that most notorious calumniators are heard, not only with patience, but with pleasure; yea are even held in vogue and reverence, as men of a notable talent, and very serviceable to their party; so that slander seemeth to have lost its nature, and not to be now an odious sin, but a fashionable humour, a way of pleasing entertainment, a fine knack, or curious feat of policy; so that no man at least taketh himself or others to be accountable for what is said in this way? Is not, in fine, the case become such, that whoever hath in him any love of truth, any sense of justice or honesty, any spark of charity toward his brethren, shall hardly be able to satisfy himself in the conversations he meeteth; but will be tempted, with the holy Prophet, to wish himself sequestered from society,

and cast into solitude: repeating those words of his, *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they are—an assembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies?* This he wished in an age so resembling ours, that I fear the description with equal patness may suit both: *Take ye heed* (said he then; and may we not advise the like now?) *every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. They will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.*

Such being the state of things, obvious to experience, no discourse may seem more needful or useful, than that which serveth to correct or check this practice: the which I shall endeavour to do, 1. by describing the nature, 2. by declaring the folly of it; or shewing it to be very true which the Wise Man here asserteth, *He that uttereth slander is a fool.* The which particulars I hope so to prosecute, that any man shall be able easily to discern, and ready heartily to detest this practice.

I. For explication of its nature, we may describe slander to be the uttering false (or equivalent to false, morally false) speech against our neighbour, in prejudice to his fame, his safety, his welfare, or concernment in any kind, out of malignity, vanity, rashness, ill-nature, or bad design. That which is in holy Scripture forbidden and reprov'd under several names and notions; of ^a *bearing false witness*, ^b *false accusation*, ^c *railing censure*, ^d *sycophantry*, ^e *tale-bearing*, ^f *whispering*, ^g *backbiting*, ^h *supplanting*, ⁱ *taking up reproach*: which terms some of them do signify the nature, others denote the special kinds, others imply the manners, others suggest the ends of this practice. But it seemeth most fully intelligible by observing the several kinds and degrees thereof; as also by reflecting on the divers ways and manners of practising it.

The principal kinds thereof I observe to be these:—

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Jer. ix. 2, 3.
vi. 28.

Ezek. xxii.
9.

Jer. ix. 4, 5.

^a Exod. xx.
16.

^b Ps. xxxv.
11.

^c Jude 9.

^d 2 Pet. ii. 11.

^e Luke iii.

14. xix. 8.

^f Levit. xix.

16 Prov.

xviii. 8.

xxvi. 20.

^g Prov. xvi.

28. Rom i.

29. 2 Cor.

xii. 20.

^h Psal. xv. 3.

Rom. i. 30.

ⁱ Jer. ix. 4.

1 Pe. xv. 3.

SERM.
XVII.

1 Kings
xxi. 13.
Psal. xxxv.
11.

1. The grossest kind of slander is that which in the Decalogue is called *bearing false testimony against our neighbour*; that is, flatly charging him with facts the which he never committed, and is nowise guilty of. As in the case of Naboth, when men were suborned to say, *Naboth did blaspheme God and the king*: and as was David's case, when he thus complained, *False witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not of*. This kind in the highest way (that is, in judicial proceedings) is more rare; and of all men, they who are detected to practise it are held most vile and infamous; as being plainly the most pernicious and perilous instruments of injustice, the most desperate enemies of all men's right and safety that can be. But also out of the court there are many knights-errant of the post, whose business it is to run about scattering false reports; sometimes loudly proclaiming them in open companies, sometimes closely whispering them in dark corners; thus infecting conversation with their poisonous breath: these no less notoriously are guilty of this kind, as bearing always the same malice, and sometimes breeding as ill effects.

Num. xvi.
3, 13, 14.
John xix.
7, 21.
Matt. xxvi.
65. ix. 3.
xii. 24. xi.
19.
Luke xxiii.
2, 5, 14.
John xix.
12.
Luke xxiii.
2.
Acts xvii
6. xxiv. 5.

2. Another kind is, affixing scandalous names, injurious epithets, and odious characters upon persons, which they deserve not. As when Corah and his complices did accuse Moses of being ambitious, unjust and tyrannical: when the Pharisees called our Lord an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a glutton and wine-bibber, an incendiary and perverter of the people, one that *spake against Cæsar, and forbad to give tribute*: when the Apostles were charged of being ^a pestilent, turbulent, factious and seditious fellows. This sort being very common, and thence in ordinary repute not so bad, yet in just estimation may be judged even worse than the former; as doing to our neighbour more heavy and more irreparable wrong. For it imposeth on him really more blame, and that such which he can hardly shake off: because the charge signifieth habit of evil, and includeth many acts; then, being general and indefinite, can scarce be dis-

proved. He, for instance, that calleth a sober man drunkard, doth impute to him many acts of such intemperance; some really past, others probably future; and no particular time or place being specified, how can a man clear himself of that imputation, especially with those who are not thoroughly acquainted with his conversation? So he that calleth a man unjust, proud, perverse, hypocritical, doth load him with most grievous faults, which it is not possible that the most innocent person should discharge himself from.

3. Like to that kind is this, aspersing a man's actions with harsh censures and foul terms, importing that they proceed from ill principles, or tend to bad ends; so as it doth not or cannot appear. ^a Thus when we say of him that is generously hospitable, that he is profuse; of him that is prudently frugal, that he is niggardly; of him that is cheerful and free in his conversation, that he is vain or loose; of him that is serious and resolute in a good way, that he is sullen or morose; of him that is conspicuous and brisk in virtuous practice, that it is ambition or ostentation which acts him; of him that is close and bashful in the like good way, that it is sneaking stupidity, or want of spirit; of him that is reserved, that it is craft; of him that is open, that it is simplicity in him: when we ascribe a man's liberality and charity to vain-glory or popularity; his strictness of life and constancy in devotion, to superstition or hypocrisy: when, I say, we pass such censures, or impose such characters, on the laudable or innocent practice of our neighbours, we are indeed slanderers, imitating therein the great calumniator, who thus did slander even God himself, imputing his prohibition of the fruit unto envy toward men; (*God, said Gen. iii. 5.* he, doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and

^a At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque
Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare. Probus quis
Nobiscum vivit? multum est demissus homo. Illi
Tardo cognonem pinguis damus. &c.

Hor. Serm. i. 3. Vid. Sidon. Apoll.

SERM. *evil* ;) who thus did ascribe the steady piety of Job, not
 XVII. to a conscientious love and fear of God, but to policy and
 selfish design ; *Doth Job fear God for nought ?*

Job. i. 9.
 ii. 4.

Whoever indeed pronounceth concerning his neighbour's intentions otherwise than as they are evidently expressed by words, or signified by overt actions, is a slanderer ; because he pretendeth to know, and dareth to aver, that which he no-ways possibly can tell whether it be true ; because the heart is exempt from all jurisdiction here, is only subject to the government and trial of another world ; because no man can judge concerning the truth of such accusations ; because no man can exempt or defend himself from them : so that apparently such practice doth thwart all course of justice and equity.

Jer. xxiii.
 36.

4. Another kind is, perverting a man's words or actions disadvantageously by affected misconstruction. All words are ambiguous, and capable of different senses, (some fair, some more foul ;) all actions have two handles, one that candour and charity will, another that disingenuity and spite may, lay hold on : and in such cases, to misapprehend is a calumnious procedure, arguing malignant disposition and mischievous design. Thus when two men

Πᾶν πρῶτον
 ἔχει δύο λα-
 βᾶς. *Epicr.*

Matt. xxvi.
 60, 61.
 John ii. 19.

did witness that our Lord affirmed, he *could demolish the temple, and rear it again in three days* ; although he did indeed speak words to that purpose, meaning them in a figurative sense, discernible enough to those who would candidly have minded his drift and way of speaking ; yet they who crudely alleged them against him are called false witnesses. *At last*, saith the Gospel, *came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple, &c.* Thus also when some certified of St. Stephen, as having said, that *Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs that Moses delivered* ; although probably he did speak words near to that purpose, yet are those men called false witnesses : *And*, saith St. Luke, *they set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words, &c.* Which instances plainly do shew, if we would avoid the guilt of slander, how careful we should be to interpret fairly and

P.s. lvi. 5.
 Every day
 they wrest
 my words.
 Matt. ubi
 supra.
 Acts vi. 13,
 14.

favourably the words and the actions of our neighbour. SERM.
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5. Another sort of this practice is, partial and lame representation of men's discourse, or their practice; suppressing some part of the truth in them, or concealing some circumstances about them, which might serve to explain, to excuse, or to extenuate them. In such a manner easily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievously calumniate. Thus suppose that a man speaketh a thing upon supposition, or with exception, or in way of objection, or merely for disputation sake, in order to the discussion or clearing of truth; he that should report him asserting it absolutely, unlimitedly, positively, and peremptorily, as his own settled judgment, would notoriously calumniate. If one should be inveigled by fraud, or driven by violence, or slip by chance into a bad place, or bad company; he that should so represent the gross of that accident as to breed an opinion of that person, that out of pure disposition and design he did put himself there, doth slanderously abuse that innocent person. The reporter in such cases must not think to defend himself by pretending that he spake nothing false; for such propositions, however true in logic, may justly be deemed lies in morality, being uttered with a malicious and deceitful (that is, with a calumnious) mind, being apt to impress false conceits, and to produce hurtful effects concerning our neighbour. There are slanderous truths, as well as slanderous falsehoods: when truth is uttered with a deceitful heart, and to a base end, it becomes a lie. *He that speaketh truth, saith the Wise Man, sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.* Prov. xii. 17. Deceiving is the proper work of slander: and truth abused to that end putteth on its nature, and will engage into like guilt ^b.

6. Another kind of calumny is, by instilling sly suggestions; which although they do not downrightly assert falsehoods, yet they breed sinister opinions in the hearers;

^b Vid. *Herm. Pastor.* Where the Pastor observes, that the Devil doth in his temptations intersperse some truths, serving to render his delusions passable.

SERM. especially in those who, from weakness or credulity, from
 XVII. jealousy or prejudice, from negligence or inadvertency, are prone to entertain them. This is done many ways; by propounding wily suppositions, shrewd insinuations, crafty questions, and specious comparisons, intimating a possibility, or inferring some likelihood of, and thence inducing to believe the fact. Doth not, saith this kind of slanderer, his temper incline him to do thus? may not his interest have swayed him thereto? had he not fair opportunity and strong temptation to it? hath he not acted so in like cases? Judge you therefore whether he did it not. Thus the close slanderer argueth; and a weak or prejudiced person is thereby so caught, that he presently is ready thence to conclude the thing done. Again; he doeth well, saith the sycophant, it is true; but why, and to what end? Is it not, as most men do, out of ill design? may he not dissemble now? may he not recoil hereafter? have not others made as fair a shew? yet we know what came of it. Thus do calumnious tongues pervert the judgments of men to think ill of the most innocent, and meanly of the worthiest actions. Even commendation itself is often used calumniously, with intent to breed dislike and ill-will toward a person commended in envious or jealous ears; or so as to give passage to dispraises, and render the accusations following more credible. It is an artifice commonly observed to be much in use there, where the finest tricks of supplanting are practised with greatest effect; so that, *pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes*; there is no more pestilent enemy, than a malevolent praiser^c. All these kinds of dealing, as they issue from the principles of slander, and perform its work, so they deservedly bear the guilt thereof.

7. A like kind is that of oblique and covert reflections: when a man doth not directly or expressly charge his neighbour with faults, but yet so speaketh, that he is understood, or reasonably presumed to do it. This is a very

^c Excusando exprobraret. Tac. Ann. i. p. 10.

Καίνος τις εἴρηται τρόπος οὗτος τῆς διαβολῆς, τὸ μὴ ψήγοντας, ἀλλ' ἱπαινοῦντας λυμίνεσθαι τοὺς πείλας. Polyb. lib. iv.

cunning and very mischievous way of slandering; for there-
in the skulking calumniator keepeth a reserve for himself,
and cutteth off from the person concerned the means of de-
fence. If he goeth to clear himself from the matter of such
aspersions; What need, saith this insidious speaker, of
that? must I needs mean you? did I name you? why do
you then assume it to yourself? do you not prejudge your-
self guilty? I did not, but your own conscience it seemeth
doth accuse you. You are so jealous and suspicious, as
persons over-wise or guilty use to be. So meaneth this ser-
pent out of the hedge securely and unavoidably to bite his
neighbour; and is in that respect more base and more hurt-
ful than the most flat and positive slanderer.

8. Another kind is that of magnifying and aggravating
the faults of others; raising any small miscarriage into a
heinous crime, any slender defect into an odious vice, and
any common infirmity into a strange enormity; turning a
small *mote in the eye* of our neighbour into a huge *beam*,
a little dimple in his face into a monstrous wen. This is
plainly slander, at least in degree, and according to the sur-
plusage whereby the censure doth exceed the fault. As
he that, upon the score of a small debt, doth extort a great
sum, is no less a thief, in regard to what amounts beyond
his due, than if without any pretence he had violently or
fraudulently seized on it: so is he a slanderer, that, by
heightening faults or imperfections, doth charge his neigh-
bour with greater blame, or loads him with more disgrace
than he deserves. It is not only slander to pick a hole
where there is none, but to make that wider which is, so
that it appeareth more ugly, and cannot so easily be mend-
ed. For charity is wont to extenuate faults, justice doth
never exaggerate them. As no man is exempt from some
defects, or can live free from some misdemeanours; so by
this practice every man may be rendered very odious and
infamous.

Matt. vii. 3.

9. Another kind of slander is, imputing to our neigh-
bour's practice, judgment or profession, evil consequences
(apt to render him odious, or despicable,) which have no

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dependence on them, or connection with them. There do in every age occur disorders and mishaps, springing from various complications of causes, working some of them in a more open and discernible, others in a more secret and subtile way; (especially from divine judgment and providence checking or chastizing sin :) from such occurrences it is common to snatch occasion and matter of calumny. Those who are disposed this way are ready peremptorily to charge them upon whomever they dislike or dissent from, although without any apparent cause, or upon most frivolous and senseless pretences; yea, often, when reason sheweth the quite contrary, and they who are so charged are in just esteem of all men the least obnoxious to such accusations. So usually the best friends of mankind, those who most heartily wish the peace and prosperity of the world, and most earnestly to their power strive to promote them, have all the disturbances and disasters happening charged on them by those fiery *vixions*, who (in pursuance of their base designs, or gratification of their wild passions,) really do themselves embroil things, and raise miserable combustions in the world. So it is, that they who have the conscience to do mischief, will have the confidence also to disavow the blame and the iniquity, to lay the burden of it on those who are most innocent. Thus, whereas nothing more disposeth men to live orderly and peaceably, nothing more conduceth to the settlement and safety of the public, nothing so much draweth blessings down from heaven upon the common-weal, as true Religion; yet nothing hath been more ordinary, than to attribute all the miscarriages and mischiefs that happened unto it; even those are laid at its door, which plainly do arise from the contempt or neglect of it; being the natural fruits, or the just punishments of irreligion. King Ahab by *forsaking God's commandments*, and following wicked superstitions, had *troubled Israel*, drawing sore judgments and calamities thereon; yet had he the heart and the face to charge those events on the great assertor of piety, Elias: *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* The Jews by provocation of divine justice had set themselves in a fair way to-

1 Kings
xviii. 17,
18.

ward desolation and ruin; this event to come they had the presumption to lay upon the faith of our Lord's doctrine: SERM. XVII.
If, said they, we let him alone, all men will believe on him, Joh. xi. 48.
and the Romans shall come, and take away our place and nation: whenas, in truth, a compliance with his directions and admonitions had been the only means to prevent those presaged mischiefs. And, *Si Tiberis ascenderit in mœnia,* Tertull. Apol.
 if any public calamity did appear, then *Christianos ad leones,* Christians must be charged and persecuted as the causes thereof. To them it was that Julian and other Pagans did impute all the concussions, confusions, and devastations falling upon the Roman empire. The †sacking of Rome by the Goths they cast upon Christianity: for the vindication of it from which reproach St. Austin did write those renowned Books *de Civitate Dei*. So liable are the best and most innocent sort of men to be calumniously accused in this manner.

Another practice (worthily bearing the guilt of slander,) is, being aiding and accessory thereto, by any-wise furthering, cherishing, abetting it. He that by crafty significations of ill-will doth prompt the slanderer to vent his poison; he that by a willing audience and attention doth readily suck it up, or who greedily swalloweth it down by credulous approbation and assent; he that pleasingly relisheth and smacketh at it, or expresseth a delightful complacence therein; as he is a partner in the fact, so he is a sharer in the guilt.^u There are not only slanderous throats, but slanderous ears also; not only wicked inventions, which engender and brood lies, but wicked assents,

† Christianis temporibus detrahunt, et mala, quæ illa civitas pertulit, Christo imputant. *De Civ. Dei*, i. 1. iii. 31. They (saith that great father) detract from the Christian times, and impute the evils, which that city suffered, unto Christ.

^u David, Psal. cv. 5. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off; *τῦτον ἐξεδίωξον*, him have I driven away, say the LXX.

Neque vero illa justa est excusatio, Referentibus aliis injuriam facere non possum. Nemo invito auditori libenter refert. Sagitta in lapidem nunquam figitur; interdum resiliens percutit dirigentem. Discat detractor, dum te videt non libenter audire, non facile detrahere. *Hier. ad Nepot. Ep. ii.*

SERM. which hatch and foster them. Not only the spiteful mother
 XVII. which conceiveth such spurious brats, but the midwife
 that helpeth to bring them forth, the nurse that feedeth
 them, the guardian that traineth them up to maturity,
 and setteth them forth to live in the world; as they do
 really contribute to their subsistence, so deservedly they
 partake in the blame due to them, and must be responsible
 for the mischief they do. For indeed were it not for such
 free entertainers, such nourishers, such encouragers of
 them, slanders commonly would die in the womb, or
 prove still-born, or presently entering into the cold air
 would expire, or for want of nourishment soon would
 starve. It is such friends and patrons of them who are
 the causes that they are so rife; they it is who set ill-
 natured, base, and designing people upon devising, search-
 ing after, and picking up malicious and idle stories. Were
 it not for such customers, the trade of calumniating would
 fall.^x Many pursue it merely out of servility and flattery,
 to tickle the ears, to sooth the humour, to gratify the ma-
 lignant disposition or ill-will of others; who upon the
 least discouragement would give over the practice. If
 therefore we would exempt ourselves from all guilt of
 slander, we must not only abstain from venting it, but
 forbear to regard or countenance it: for *He is* (saith the
 Prov. xvii. *Wise Man*) *a wicked doer, who giveth heed to false lips;*
 4. *and a liar, who giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* Yea, if
 we thoroughly would be clear from it, we must shew an
 aversation from hearing it, an unwillingness to believe it;

^x Posidonius relateth of St. Austin, that he had upon his table written these two verses,

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,

Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi :

(He that loveth by ill speech to gnaw the life of those who are absent, let him know himself unworthy to sit at this table; or, that this table is unfit for him :) And if any there did use detraction, he was offended, and minded them of those verses, threatening also to leave the table, and withdraw to his chamber. *Posid.* cap. 22.

^y Οὐ παραδέξῃ ἀκρόν ματαίαν, Thou shalt not receive (or, take up) a false report, saith the Law, *Exod.* xxiii. 1.

an indignation against it; so either stifling it in the birth, or condemning it to death being uttered^z. This is the sure way to destroy it, and to prevent its mischief. If we would stop our ears, we should stop the slanderer's mouth; if we would resist the calumniator, he would fly from us: if we would reprove him, we should repel him. For, as *the north wind driveth away rain, so (the Wise Man telleth us) doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*

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Hedge thy ears with thorns, &c. Ecclus. xxviii. 24. ita legit Cypri. Ep. 55

These are the chief and most common kinds of slander; and there are several ways of practising them worthy our observing, that we may avoid them; namely these.

1. The most notoriously heinous way is, forging and immediately venting ill stories. As it is said of Doeg, *Thy tongue deviseth mischief*; and of another like companion, *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit*: and as our Lord saith of the Devil, *When he speaketh a lie, ἐξ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.* This palpably is the supreme pitch of calumny, incapable of any qualification or excuse: hell cannot go beyond this; the cursed fiend himself cannot worse employ his wit, than in minting wrongful falsehoods.

Psal. lii. 2.

Psal. i. 19. Joh. viii. 44. (Isa. xxxii. 7.)

2. Another way is, receiving from others, and venting such stories, which they who do it certainly know, or may reasonably presume, to be false; the becoming hucksters of counterfeit wares, or factors in this vile trade. There is no false coiner, who hath not some complices and emissaries ready to take from his hand, and put off his money: and such slanderers at second hand are scarce less guilty than the first authors. He that breweth lies may have more wit and skill; but the broacher sheweth the like malice and wickedness. In this there is no great difference between

^z Beatus est, qui ita se contra hoc vitium armavit, ut apud eum detrahere nemo audeat. Hier. ad Celantiam.

^a Prov. xxv. 23. "Αν μάθωσιν οἱ κακήγοροι ὅτι τῶν διαβάλλομένων μᾶλλον ἡμῖς αὐτῶν; ἀποσφραγίδια, παύσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ τότε τῆς πονηρᾶς ταύτης συνηθείας, καὶ διορθώσονται τὸ ἁμάρτημα, καὶ ἵπταινίσονται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτῶν, ὡς σωτῆρας αὐτῶν γενόμενος, καὶ ἱερογέτας ἀνακηρύξουσιν. Chrys. Ἐλδο. γ'.

SERM. XVII. the great Devil, that frameth scandalous reports, and the little imps, that run about and disperse them.

Τὶ διαπορεύ-
μεις τὸν
λόγον; &c.
Chrys. in
Heb. xi. 3.
Δίον συσκιά-
ζειν καὶ συγ-
κρύπτειν τὰ
ἰλαττώμα-
τα τῶν πλη-
σων· οὐ δὲ
ἰκπομπεύεις,
&c. Ibid.

Levit. xix.
16.

Prov. xviii.
8. xxvi. 22.

Psal. xv. 3.

3. Another way is, when one without competent examination, due weighing, and just reason, doth admit and spread tales prejudicial to his neighbour's welfare; relying for his warrant (as to the truth of them) upon any slight or slender authority. This is a very common and current practice: men presume it lawful enough to say over whatever they hear; to report any thing, if they can quote an author for it. It is not, say they, my invention; I tell it as I heard it: *sit fides penes authorem*; let him that informed me undergo the blame, if it prove false. So do they conceive themselves excusable for being the instruments of injurious disgrace and damage to their neighbours. But they greatly mistake therein: for as this practice commonly doth arise from the same wicked principles, at least in some degree, and produceth altogether the like mischievous effects, as the wilful devising and conveying slander: so it no less thwarteth the rules of duty, and laws of equity; God hath prohibited it, and reason doth condemn it. *Thou shalt not* (saith God in the Law) *go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people*: as a tale-bearer, (as *Rachil*, that is,) as a merchant or trader in ill reports and stories concerning our neighbour, to his prejudice. Not only the framing them, but the dealing in them beyond reason or necessity, is interdicted. And it is part of a good man's character in the fifteenth Psalm, *Non accipit opprobrium, He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbour*; that is, he doth not easily entertain it, much less doth he effectually propagate it: and in our text, *He*, it is said, *that uttereth slander* (not only he that conceiveth it) *is a fool*.

And in reason, before exact trial and cognizance, to meddle with the fame and interest of another, is evidently a practice full of iniquity, such as no man can allow in his own case, or brook being used toward himself, without judging himself to be extremely abused by such reporters. In all reason and equity, (yea in all discretion,) before we

yield credence to any report concerning our neighbour, or adventure to relate it, many things are carefully to be weighed and scanned. We should concerning our author consider whether he be not a particular enemy, or disaffected to him; whether he be not ill-humoured, or a delighter in telling bad stories; whether he be not dishonest, or unregardful of justice in his dealings and discourse; whether he be not vain, or careless of what he saith; whether he be not light and credulous, or apt to be imposed upon by any small appearance; whether at least in the present case he be not negligent, or too forward and rash in speaking. We should also, concerning the matter reported, mind, whether it be possible or probable; whether suitable to the disposition of our neighbour, to his principles, to the constant tenor of his practice: whether the action imputed to him be not liable to misapprehension, or his words to misconstruction. All reason and equity do, I say, exact from us, diligently to consider such things, before we do either embrace ourselves, or transmit unto others, any story concerning our neighbour; lest unadvisedly we do him irreparable wrong and mischief. Briefly, we should take his case for our own, and consider whether we ourselves should be content, that upon like grounds or testimonies any man should believe or report disgraceful things concerning us. If we fail to do thus, we do (vainly, or rashly, or maliciously) conspire with the slanderer to the wrong of our innocent neighbour; and that in the Psalmist (by a parity of reason) may be transferred to us, *Thou hast consented Ps. l. 18.*
unto the liar, and hast partaken with the author of calumny.

4. Of kin to this way is the assenting to popular rumours, and thence affirming matters of obloquy to our neighbour. Every one by experience knows how easily false news do rise, and how nimbly they scatter themselves; how often they are raised from nothing, how soon they from small sparks grow into a great blaze, how easily from one thing they are transformed into another: especially news of this kind, which do suit and feed the bad humour of the vulgar. 'Tis obvious to any man how

SERM. true that is of Tacitus, how ^b void of consideration, of judgment, of equity, the busy and talking part of mankind is.

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Whoever therefore gives heed to flying tales, and thrusts himself into the herd of those who spread them, is either strangely injudicious, or very malignantly disposed. If he want not judgment, he cannot but know, that when he complieth with popular fame, it is mere chance that he doth not slander, or rather it is odds that he shall do so: he consequently sheweth himself to be indifferent whether he doth it or no, or rather that he doth incline to do it: whence, not caring to be otherwise, or loving to be a slanderer, he in effect and just esteem is such; having at least a slanderous heart and inclination. He that puts it to the venture whether he lieth or no, doth *eo ipso* lie morally, as declaring no care or love of truth. *Thou shalt not* (saith the Law) *follow a multitude to do evil*: and with like reason we should not follow the multitude in speaking evil of our neighbour.

Exod. xxiii.

2.

5. Another slanderous course is, to build censures and reproaches upon slender conjectures, or uncertain suspicions, (those *ὑπόνοιαι πονηραὶ*, *evil surmises*, which St. Paul condemneth.) Of these occasion can never be wanting to them who seek them, or are ready to embrace them; no innocence, no wisdom can any-wise prevent them; and if they may be admitted as grounds of defamation, no man's good name can be secure. But he that upon such accounts dareth to asperse his neighbour is in moral computation no less a slanderer, than if he did the like out of pure invention, or without any ground at all: for doubtful and false in this case differ little; to devise, and to divine, in matters of this nature, do import near the same. He that will judge or speak ill of others, ought to be well assured of what he thinks or says: he that asserteth that which he doth not know to be true, doth as well lie, as he that

1 Tim. vi. 4.

Matt. ix. 4.

Ziba.

2 Sam. xvi.

3. xix. 27.

^b Plebi non judicium, non veritas. Tac. Ann. xvi.

Non est consilium in vulgo, non ratio, non discrimen, non diligentia—ex opinione plurima, ex veritate pauca judicat. Cic. pro Plancio.

Δαῶν μὴ πίστευε· πολύτροπος ἐστὶν ὁμιλος. Phocyl.

Prov. xiv. 15. The simple believeth every word.

affirmeth that which he knoweth to be false; (for he deceiveth the hearers, begetting in them an opinion that he is assured of what he affirms;) especially in dealing with the concernments of others, whose right and repute justice doth oblige us to beware of infringing, charity should dispose us to regard and tender as our own. It is not every possibility, every seeming, every faint shew or glimmering appearance, which sufficeth to ground bad opinion or reproachful discourse concerning our brother: the matter should be clear, notorious, and palpable, before we admit a disadvantageous conceit into our head, a distasteful resentment into our heart, a harsh word into our mouth about him. Men may fancy themselves sagacious and shrewd, (persons of deep judgment and fine wit they may be taken for,) when they can dive into others hearts, and sound their intentions; when through thick mists or at remote distances they can descry faults in them; when they collect ill of them by long trains, and subtle fetches of discourse: but in truth they do thereby rather bewray in themselves small love of truth, care of justice, or sense of charity, together with little wisdom and discretion: for truth is only seen in a clear light; justice requireth strict proof: *charity thinketh no evil*, and *believeth all things* for the best; wisdom is not forward to pronounce before full evidence. (*He*, saith the Wise Man, *that answereth matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*) In fine, they who proceed thus, as it is usual that they speak falsely, as it is casual that they ever speak truly, as they affect to speak ill, true or false; so worthily they are to be reckoned among slanderers.

6. Another like way of slandering is, impetuous or negligent sputtering out of words, without minding what truth or consequence there is in them, how they may touch or hurt our neighbour. To avoid this sin, we must not only be free from intending mischief, but wary of effecting it; not only careful of not wronging one distinct person, but of harming any promiscuously; not only abstinent from aiming directly, but provident not to hit casually any person with obloquy. For as he that dis-

¹ Cor. xiii.
5, 7.

Prov. xviii.
13.

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chargeth shot into a crowd, or so as not to look about regarding who may stand in the way, is no less guilty of doing mischief, and bound to make satisfaction to them he woundeth, than if he had aimed at some one person: so if we fling our bad words at random, which may light unluckily, and defame somebody, we become slanderers unawares, and before we think on it. This practice hath not ever all the malice of the worst slander, but it worketh often the effects thereof, and therefore doth incur its guilt and its punishment; especially it being commonly derived from ill temper, or from bad habit, which we are bound to watch over, to curb, and to correct. The tongue is a sharp and parlous weapon, which we are bound to keep up in the sheath, or never to draw forth but advisedly, and upon just occasion; it must ever be wielded with caution and care: to brandish it wantonly, to lay about with it blindly and furiously, to slash and smite therewith any that happeneth to come in our way, doth argue malice or madness.

7. It is an ordinary way of proceeding to calumniate, for men, reflecting upon some bad disposition in themselves, (although resulting from their own particular temper, from their bad principles, or from their ill custom,) to charge it presently upon others; presuming others to be like themselves: like the wicked person in the Psalm, Psal. l. 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* This is to slander mankind first in the gross; then in retail, as occasion serveth, to asperse any man: this is the way of half-witted Machiavelians, and of desperate reprobates in wickedness, who, having prostituted their consciences to vice, for their own defence and solace, would shrowd themselves from blame under the shelter of common pravity and infirmity; accusing all men of that whereof they know themselves guilty. But surely there can be no greater iniquity than this, that one man should undergo blame for the ill conscience of another.

^d Remedium pœnæ suæ arbitrantur, si nemo sit sanctus, si omnibus detrahatur, si turba sit perœuntium, &c. *Hier. ad Asellam*, Ep. xcix.

These seem to be the chief kinds of slander, and most common ways of practising it. In which description the folly thereof doth, I suppose, so clearly shine, that no man can look thereon without loathing and despising it, as not only a very ugly, but a most foolish practice. No man surely can be wise, who will suffer himself to be defiled therewith. But to render its folly more apparent, we shall display it; declaring it to be extremely foolish upon several accounts. But the doing this, in regard to your patience, we shall forbear at present

SERMON XVIII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. X. 18.

He that uttereth slander is a fool.

SERM. XVIII. I HAVE formerly in this place, discoursing upon this text, explained the nature of the sin here condemned, with its several kinds and ways of practising.

II. I shall now proceed to declare the folly of it; and to make good by divers reasons the assertion of the Wise Man, that *He who uttereth slander is a fool.*

1. Slandering is foolish, as sinful and wicked.

All sin is foolish upon many accounts; as proceeding from ignorance, error, inconsiderateness, vanity; as implying weak judgment and irrational choice; as thwarting the dictates of reason and best rules of wisdom; as producing very mischievous effects to ourselves, bereaving us of the chief goods, and exposing us to the worst evils. What can be more egregiously absurd, than to dissent in our opinion and discord in our choice from infinite wisdom; to provoke by our actions sovereign justice and immutable severity; to oppose almighty power, and offend immense goodness; to render ourselves unlike, and contrary in our doings, our disposition, our state, to absolute perfection and felicity? What can be more desperately wild, than to disoblige our best friend, to forfeit his love and favour, to render him our enemy, who is our Lord

and our Judge, upon whose mere will and disposal all our subsistence, all our welfare does absolutely depend? What greater madness can be conceived, than to deprive our minds of all true content here, and to separate our souls from eternal bliss hereafter; to gall our consciences now with sore remorse, and to engage ourselves for ever in remediless miseries? Such folly doth all sin include: whence in Scripture style worthily goodness and wisdom are terms equivalent: sin and folly do signify the same thing.

If thence this practice be proved extremely sinful, it will thence sufficiently be demonstrated no less foolish. And that it is extremely sinful, may easily be shewed. It is the character of the superlatively wicked man; *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit: thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.* It is indeed plainly the blackest and most hellish sin that can be; that which giveth the grand fiend his names, and most expresseth his nature. He is ὁ Διάβολος, *the slanderer, satan*, the spiteful adversary; the old snake, or dragon, hissing out lies, and spitting forth venom of calumnious accusation; *the accuser of the brethren*, a murderous, envious, malicious calumniator; *the father of lies*; the grand defamer of God to man, of man to God, of one man to another. And highly wicked surely must that practice be, whereby we grow namesakes to him, conspire in proceeding with him, resemble his disposition and nature. It is a complication, a comprisal, a collection and sum of all wickedness; opposite to all the principal virtues, (to veracity and sincerity, to charity and justice,) transgressing all the great commandments, violating immediately and directly all the duties concerning our neighbour.

To lie simply is a great fault, being a deviation from that good rule which prescribeth truth in all our words; rendering us unlike and disagreeable to God, who is *the God of truth*; (who loveth truth, and practiseth it in all his doings, who abominateth all falsehood;) including a treacherous breach of faith toward mankind; (we being all in order to

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Ps. l. 19, 20.

Apoc. xii.
10.

Joh. viii. 44.

Eph. iv. 25.

1 Pet. ii. 1.

Ps. xxxi. 5.

xxxv. 10.

lxxxvi. 15.

lxxxix. 14.

cxlvi. 6.

Prov. xii.
22. vi. 17.

SERM. XVIII. the maintenance of society, by an implicit compact, obliged by speech to declare our mind, to inform truly, and not to impose upon our neighbour;) arguing pusillanimous timorousness and impotency of mind, a distrust in God's help, and diffidence in all good means to compass our designs; begetting deception and error, a foul and ill-favoured brood: lying, I say, is upon such accounts a sinful and blamable thing: and of all lies those certainly are the worst, which proceed from malice, or from vanity, or from both, and which work mischief such as slanders are.

Again, to bear any hatred or ill-will, to exercise enmity toward any man, to design or procure any mischief to our neighbour, whom even Jews were commanded to *love as themselves*, whose good, by many laws, and upon divers scores, we are obliged to tender as our own, is a heinous fault: and of this apparently the slanderer is most guilty in the highest degree. For evidently true it is which the Wise Man affirmeth, *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted with it*; there is no surer argument of extreme hatred; nothing but the height of ill-will can suggest this practice. The slanderer is an enemy, as the most fierce and outrageous, so the most base and unworthy that can be: he fighteth with the most perilous and most unlawful weapon, in the most furious and foul way that can be. His weapon is an envenomed arrow, *full of deadly poison*, which *he shooteth suddenly, and feareth not*; a weapon which by no force can be resisted, by no art declined, whose impression is altogether inevitable and unsustainable. It is a most insidious, most treacherous and cowardly way of fighting; wherein manifestly the weakest and basest spirits have extreme advantage, and may easily prevail against the bravest and worthiest: for no man of honour or honesty can, in way of resistance or requital, deign to use it, but must infallibly without repugnance be borne down thereby. By it the vile practiser achieveth the greatest mischief that can be. His words are, as the Psalmist saith of Doeg, *devouring words*, (*Thou lovest all devouring words*, *O thou deceitful tongue*;) and, *A man,*

Levit. xix. 18.

Prov. xxvi. 28.

Jam. iii. 8
Psal. lxxiv. 3, 4. lxxvii. 4.

Psal. lii. 4

saith the Wise Man, *that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow*; that is, he is a complicated instrument of all mischiefs: he smiteth and bruiseeth like a *maul*, he cutteth and pierceth like a *sword*, he thus doth hurt near at hand; and at distance he woundeth like a *sharp arrow*, it is hard any where to evade him, or to get out of his reach. *Many*, saith another wise man, the imitator of Solomon, *have fallen by the edge of the sword: but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the venom thereof; who hath not drawn the yoke thereof; nor hath been bound in its bands. For the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of brass. The death thereof is an evil death, the grave were better than it.* Incurable are the wounds which the slanderer inflicteth, irreparable the damages which he causeth, indelible the marks which he leaveth. *No balsam can heal the biting of a sycophant*; no thread can stitch up a good name torn by calumnious defamation; no soap is able to cleanse from the stains aspersed by a foul mouth. *Aliquid adhærebit*; somewhat always of suspicion and ill opinion will stick in the minds of those who have given ear to slander. So extremely opposite is this practice unto the queen of virtues, *charity*. Its property indeed is, to *believe all things*, that is, all things for the best, and to the advantage of our neighbour; not so much as to suspect any evil of him, without unavoidably manifest cause: how much more not to devise any falsehood against him? It *covereth* all things, studiously conniving at real defects, and concealing assured miscarriages: how much more not divulging imaginary or false scandals? It disposeth to seek and further any the least good concerning him: how much more will it hinder committing grievous outrage upon his dearest good name?

Again, all injustice is abominable: to do any sort of wrong is a heinous crime; that crime, which of all most immediately tendeth to the dissolution of society and disturbance of human life; which God therefore doth most loathe, and men have reason especially to detest. And of this the slan-

SERM.
XVIII.Prov. xxv.
18 xii. 6.An ungodly
man dig-
geth up
evil, and in
his lips
there is a
burning
fire.Prov. xvi.
27. Eccles.
xxviii. 18,
&c.Adversus
sycophantæ
morsum
nullum est
remedium.1 Cor. xiii.
7.Prov. xvii.
9.

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Prov. xix.
28.

derer is most deeply guilty. *A witness of Belial scorneth judgment, and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity,* saith the Wise Man. He is indeed, according to just estimation, guilty of all kinds whatever of injury, breaking all the second table of commands respecting our neighbour. Most formally and directly he *bearth false witness against his neighbour*: he doth *covet his neighbour's goods*; for 'tis constantly out of such an irregular desire, for his own presumed advantage, to dispossess his neighbour of some good, and transfer it on himself, that the slanderer uttereth his tale: he is ever a thief and robber of his good name, a deflowerer and defiler of his reputation, an assassin and murderer of his honour. So doth he violate all the rules of justice, and perpetrateth all sorts of wrong against his neighbour.

He may indeed perhaps conceive it no great matter that he committeth; because he doth not act in so boisterous and bloody a way, but only by words, which are subtle, slim, and transient things; upon his neighbour's credit only, which is no substantial or visible matter. He draweth, thinks he, no blood, nor breaketh any bones, nor impresseth any remarkable scar: 'tis only the soft air he breaketh with his tongue, 'tis only a slight character that he stampeth on the fancy, 'tis only an imaginary stain that he daubeth his neighbour with: therefore he supposeth no great wrong done, and seemeth to himself innocent, or very excusable. But these conceits arise from great inconsiderateness, or mistake; nor can they excuse the slanderer from grievous injustice. For in dealing with our neighbour, and meddling with his property, we are not to value things according to our fancy, but according to the price set on them by the owner: we must not reckon that a trifle, which he prizeth as a jewel. Since then all men (especially men of honour and honesty) do, from a necessary instinct of nature, estimate their good name beyond any of their goods, yea do commonly hold it more

^c Dei Episcopus linguæ gladio jugulâstis, fundentes sanguinem non corporis, sed honoris. *Op.* lib. ii. Woe be to them who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Isa. v. 23.

dear and precious than their very lives; we, by violently or fraudulently bereaving them of it, do them no less wrong, than if we should rob or cozen them of their substance, yea than if we should maim their body, or spill their blood, or even stop their breath. If they as grievously feel it, and resent it as deeply, as they do any other outrage, the injury is really as great to them. Even the slanderer's own judgment and conscience might tell him so much: for they who most slight another's fame, are usually very tender of their own, and can with no patience endure that others should touch it: which demonstrates the inconsiderateness of their judgment, and the iniquity of their practice. It is an injustice not to be corrected or cured. Thefts may be restored, wounds may be cured: but there is no restitution or cure of a lost good name: it is therefore an irreparable injury.

Nor is the thing itself, in true judgment, contemptible; but in itself really very considerable. *A good name, saith Solomon himself, (no fool,) is rather to be chosen than great riches; and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*

Prov. xxii.
1. xv. 30.
Eccles. vii.
1.

In its consequences it is much more so; the chief interests of a man, the success of his affairs, his ability to do good, (for himself, his friends, his neighbour,) his safety, the best comforts and conveniences of his life, sometimes his life itself, depending thereon: so that whoever doth snatch or filch it from him, doth not only according to his opinion, and in moral value, but in real effect, commonly rob, sometimes murder, ever exceedingly wrong his neighbour. It is often the sole reward of a man's virtue and all the fruit of his industry; so that by depriving him of that, he is robbed of all his estate, and left stark naked of all, excepting a good conscience, which is beyond the reach of the world, and which no malice or misfortune can divest him of. Full then of iniquity, full of uncharitableness, full of all wickedness is this practice; and consequently full it is of folly. No man, one would think, of any tolerable sense, should dare, or deign to incur the guilt of a practice so vile and base, so indeed diabolical and detestable. But farther more particularly,

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2. The slanderer is plainly a fool; because he maketh wrong judgments and valuations of things, and accordingly driveth on silly bargains for himself, in result whereof he proveth a great loser. He means by his calumnious stories either to vent some passion boiling in him, or to compass some design which he affects, or to please some humour that he is possessed with: but is any of these things worth purchasing at so dear a rate? Can there be any valuable exchange for our honesty? Is it not more advisable to suppress our passion, or to let it evaporate otherwise than to discharge it in so foul a way? Is it not better to let go a petty interest, than to further it by committing so notorious and heinous a sin; to let an ambitious project sink, than to buoy it up by such base means? Is it not wisdom rather to smother, or curb our humour, than by satisfying it thus to forfeit our innocence? Can any thing in the world be so considerable, that for its sake we should defile our souls by so foul a practice, making shipwreck of a good conscience, abandoning honour and honesty, incurring all the guilt and all the punishment due to so enormous a crime? Is it not far more wisdom, contentedly to see our neighbour to enjoy credit and success, to flourish and thrive in the world, than by such base courses to sully his reputation, to rifle him of his goods, to supplant or cross him in his affairs? We do really, when we think thus to depress him, and to climb up to wealth or credit by the ruins of his honour, but debase ourselves. Whatever comes of it, (whether he succeeds, or is disappointed therein,) assuredly he that useth such courses will himself be the greatest loser and deepest sufferer. 'Tis true which the Wise Man saith, *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.* And, *Woe unto them,* saith the Prophet, *that draw iniquity with cords of vanity;* that is, who by falsehood endeavour to compass unjust designs.

Prov. xxi.
6.

Isa. v. 18.

But it is not, perhaps he will pretend, for to assuage a private passion, or to promote his particular concernment, that he makes so bold with his neighbour, or deals so harshly with him: but for the sake of orthodox doctrine,

for advantage of the true church, for the advancement of public good, he judgeth it expedient to asperse him. This indeed is the covert of innumerable slanders: zeal for some opinion, or some party, beareth out men of sectarian and factious spirits in such practices; they may do, they may say any thing for those fine ends. What is a little truth, what is any man's reputation, in comparison to the carrying on such brave designs? But (to omit that men do usually prevaricate in these cases; that it is not commonly for love of truth, but of themselves, not so much for the benefit of their sect, but for their own interest, that they calumniate) this plea will nowise justify such practice. For truth and sincerity, equity and candour, meekness and charity, are inviolably to be observed, not only toward dissenters in opinion, but even toward declared enemies of truth itself; we are to *bless them*, (that is, to speak well of them, and to wish well to them,) *not to curse them*, (that is, not to reproach them, or to wish them ill, much less to belie them.) Truth also, as it cannot ever need, so doth it always loathe and scorn the patronage and the succour of lies; it is able to support and protect itself by fair means; it will not be killed upon a pretence of saving it, or thrive by its own ruin. Nor indeed can any party be so much strengthened and underpropt, as it will be weakened and undermined, by such courses: no cause can stand firm upon a bottom so loose and slippery, as falsehood is: all the good a slanderer can do is to disparage what he would maintain. In truth, no heresy can be worse than that would be, which should allow to play the devil in any case. He that can dispense with himself to slander a Jew or a Turk, doth in so doing render himself worse than either of them by profession are: for even they, and even Pagans themselves, disallow the practice of inhumanity and iniquity. All men by light of nature avow truth to be honourable, and faith to be indispensably observed. He doth not understand what it is to be a Christian, or careth not to practise according thereto, who can find in his heart, in any case, upon any pretence, to calumniate. In fine, to prostitute our con-

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SERM. science, or sacrifice our honesty, for any cause, to any inter-
 XVIII. rest whatever, can never be warrantable or wise. Farther,

3. The slanderer is a fool, because he useth improper means and preposterous methods of effecting his purposes. As there is no design worth the carrying on by ways of falsehood and iniquity; so is there scarce any (no good or lawful one at least) which may not more surely, more safely, more cleverly, be achieved by means of truth and justice. Is not always the straight way more short than the oblique and crooked? Is not the plain way more easy than the rough and cragged? Is not the fair way more pleasant and passable than the foul? Is it not better to walk in paths that are open and allowed, than in those that are shut up and prohibited? than to clamber over walls, to break through fences, to trespass upon en-

Prov. x. 9. closures? Surely yes: *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.* Using strict veracity and integrity, candour and equity, is the best method of accomplishing good designs. Our own industry, good use of the parts and faculties God hath given us, embracing fair opportunities, God's blessing and providence, are sufficient means to rely upon for procuring, in an honest way, whatever is convenient for us. These are ways approved, and amiable to all men; they procure the best friends, and fewest enemies; they afford to the practiser a cheerful courage, and good hope; they meet with less disappointment, and have no regret or shame attending them. He that hath recourse to the other base means, and *maketh lies his refuge*, as he renounceth all just and honest means, as he disclaimeth all hope in God's assistance, and forfeiteth all pretence to his blessing; so he cannot reasonably expect good success, or be satisfied in any undertaking. The supplanting way indeed seems the most curt and compendious way of bringing about dishonest or dishonourable designs: but as a good design is certainly dishonoured thereby, so is it apt thence to be defeated; it raising up enemies and obstacles, yielding advantages to whoever is disposed to cross us. As in trade it is notorious, that the best course to

Isa. xxviii.
 15, 17.
 Jer. xxvii.
 15.

thrive is by dealing squarely and truly ; any fraud or co- SERM.
zenage appearing there doth overthrow a man's credit, XVII.
and drive away custom from him ; so in all other trans-
actions, as he that dealeth justly and fairly will have his
affairs proceed roundly, and shall find men ready to com-
ply with him ; so he that is observed to practise false-
hood, will be declined by some, opposed by others, dis-
liked by all : no man scarce willingly will have to do with
him ; he is commonly forced to stand out in business, as
one that plays foul play.

4. Lastly, The slanderer is a very fool, as bringing many
great inconveniences, troubles, and mischiefs on himself.

First, *A fool's mouth*, saith the Wise Man, *is his destruc-* Prov. xviii.
tion, his lips are the snare of his soul : and if any kind of 7. xiii. 3.
speech is destructive and dangerous, then is this certainly xviii. 21.
most of all ; for by no means can a man inflame so fierce
anger, impress so stiff hatred, raise so deadly enmity against
himself, and consequently so endanger his safety, ease, and
welfare, as by this practice. Men can more easily endure,
and sooner will forgive, any sort of abuse than this ; they
will rather pardon a robber of their goods, than a defamer
of their good name.

Secondly, Such an one indeed is not only odious to the
person immediately concerned, but generally to all men
that observe his practice, every man presently will be
sensible how easily it may be his own case, how liable he
may be to be thus abused, in a way against which there is
no guard or defence. The slanderer therefore is appre-
hended a common enemy, dangerous to all men ; and
thence rendereth all men averse from him, and ready to
cross him.^d Love and peace, tranquillity and security,
can only be maintained by innocent and true dealing : so
the Psalmist hath well taught us ; *What man is he that* Ps. xxxiv,
desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good ? 12, 13.

^d ——— equid

Ad te post paulo ventura pericula sentis ?

Hor. Lib. i. Ep. 18.

—— sibi quisque timet, quanquam est intactus et odit. *Idem.*

SERM. *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking*
 XVIII. *guile.*

Thirdly, All wise, all noble, all ingenuous and honest persons have an aversion from this practice, and cannot
 Prov. xiii. 5. entertain it with any acceptance or complacence. *A righteous man hateth lying*, saith the Wise Man. It is only ill-natured and ill-nurtured, unworthy and naughty people,
 Prov. xvii. 4. that are willing auditors or encouragers thereof. *A wicked doer*, saith the Wise Man again, *giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* All love of truth, and regard to justice, and sense of humanity, all generosity and ingenuity, all charity and good-will to men, must be extinct in those who can with delight, or indeed with patience, lend an ear, or give any countenance to a slanderer: and is not he a very fool, who chooseth to displease the best, only soothing the worst of men?

Fourthly, The slanderer indeed doth banish himself from all conversation and company, or, intruding into it, becomes very disgustful thereto: for he worthily is not only looked upon as an enemy to those whom he slandereth, but to those also upon whom he obtrudeth his calumnious discourse. He not only wrongeth the former by the injury, but he mocketh the latter by the falsehood of his stories; implicitly charging his hearers with weakness and credulity, or with injustice and pravity.

Fifthly, He also derogateth wholly from his own credit, in all matters of discourse. For he that dareth thus to injure his neighbour, who can trust him in any thing he speaks? What will not he say to please his vile humour, or further his base interest? What (thinks any man) will he scruple or boggle at, who hath the heart in thus doing wrong and mischief to imitate the Devil? Farther,

Sixthly, This practice is perpetually haunted with most troublesome companions, inward regret and self-condemnation, fear and disquiet: the conscience of dealing so

° Ὁ κακῶς εἰπὼν ἠαργῶνιος λοιπὸν ἐστίν, ὑποπτεύει τε, καὶ δέδοικε, καὶ μετανουῖ, ἔκατασθίει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γλῶτταν, δεδεικῶς, καὶ τρέμων, μήποτε εἰς ἑτέρους ἕξενεχθῆι.

unworthily doth smite and rack him; he is ever in danger, and thence in fear to be discovered, and requited for it. Of these passions the manner of his behaviour is a manifest indication: for men do seldom vent their slanderous reports openly and loudly, to the face, or in the ear of those who are concerned in them; but do utter them in a low voice, in dark corners, out of sight and hearing, where they conceit themselves at present safe from being called to an account. *Sycorils*, saith the Psalmist of such persons, *are in their lips; Who, say they, doth hear? And, Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off,* saith David again, intimating the common manner of this practice. Calumny is like *the plague, that walketh in darkness.* Hence oppositely are the practisers thereof termed whisperers and backbiters: their heart suffers them not openly to avow, their conscience tells them they cannot fairly defend their practice. Again,

Seventhly, The consequent of this practice is commonly shameful disgrace, with an obligation to retract, and render satisfaction: for seldom doth calumny pass long without being detected and confuted.^f *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known:* and, *The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying lip is but for a moment,* saith the great observer of things.^g And when the slander is disclosed, the slanderer is obliged to excuse, (that is, to palliate one lie with another, if he can do it,) or forced to recant, with much disgrace and extreme displeasure to himself: he is also many times constrained, with his loss and pain, to repair the mischief he hath done.

τὸ ῥῆμα μέγαν ἐπαγάγη τὸν κίνδυνον, καὶ περιστῆν ἔχθραν καὶ ἀνόνητον ἐργάσθηται.
τοῖς εἰρηκόσι, &c. Chrys 'Ανθρ. γ'.

^f Psal. lxxiii. 11. The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

^g Prov. xii. 19. (Prov. xxvi. 26.)—Refrain your tongue from backbiting; for there is no word so secret that shall go for nought: and the mouth that slandereth, slayeth the soul. Wisd. i. 11.

Et delator habet quod dedit exitium. Vide Tac. An. i. p. 45.

SERM. XVIII. Eighthly, To this in likelihood the concernments of men, and the powers which guard justice, will forcibly bring him: and certainly his conscience will bind him thereto; God will indispensably exact it from him. He can never have any sound quiet in his mind, he can never exact pardon from Heaven, without acknowledging his fault, repairing the wrong he hath done, restoring that good name of which he dispossessed his neighbour: for in this no less than in other cases, conscience cannot be satisfied, remission will not be granted, except due restitution be performed: and of all restitutions this surely is the most difficult, most laborious, and most troublesome. It is nowise so hard to restore goods stolen or extorted, as to recover a good opinion lost, to wipe off aspersions cast on a man's name, to cure a wounded reputation: the most earnest and diligent endeavour can hardly ever affect this, or spread the plaster so far as the sore hath reached. The slanderer therefore doth engage himself into great straits, incurring an obligation to repair an almost irreparable mischief.

Ninthly, This practice doth also certainly revenge itself, imposing on its actor a perfect retaliation; *a tooth for a tooth*; an irrevocable infamy to himself, for the infamy he causeth to others. Who will regard his fame, who will be concerned to excuse his faults, who so outrageously abuseth the reputation of others? He suffereth justly, he is paid in his own coin, will any man think, who doth hear him reproached.^h

Tenthly, In fine, the slanderer (if he doth not by serious and sore repentance retract his practice,) doth banish himself from heaven and happiness, doth expose himself

^h He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him. Prov. xi. 27. xxvi. 27.

It was the punishment of slanderers in the Law.—Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother. Deut. xix. 19.

A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that telleth lies shall not escape. Prov. xix. 5.

God shall destroy thee for ever, thou false tongue. Psal. lii. 4, 5.

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight. Prov. xii. 22.

to endless miseries and sorrows. For if none that *maketh* SERM. XVIII.
u lie shall enter into the heavenly city; if *without* those Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 15.
mansions of joy and bliss every one must eternally abide
that loveth or maketh a lie; if *πῶσι τῶς ἑξουσίας*, to all liars
their portion is assigned in the lake which burneth with fire
*and brimstone*¹; then assuredly the capital liar, the slan-
 derer, (who lieth most injuriously and mischievously,) shall
 be far excluded from felicity, and thrust down into the
 depth of that miserable place. If, as St. Paul saith, no
railer, or evil-speaker, shall inherit the kingdom of God; 1 Cor. vi. 10. v. 11.
 how far thence shall they be removed, who without any
 truth or justice do speak ill of and reproach their neigh-
 bour? If for every *ἀσφύλον ῥῆμα*, *idle, or vain, word* we must
render a strict account; how much more shall we be severe-
 ly reckoned with for this sort of words, so empty of truth
 and void of equity; words that are not only negatively
 vain, or useless, but positively vain, as false, and spoken to
 bad purpose? If slander perhaps here may evade detec-
 tion, or scape deserved punishment; yet infallibly hereafter,
 at the dreadful day, it shall be disclosed, irreversibly con-
 demned, inevitably persecuted with condign reward of ut-
 ter shame and sorrow.

Is not he then, he who, out of malignity, or vanity, to
 serve any design, or sooth any humour in himself or others,
 doth by committing this sin involve himself into all these
 great evils, both here and hereafter, a most desperate and
 deplorable fool?

Having thus described the nature of this sin, and declar-
 ed the folly thereof, we need, I suppose, to say no more
 for dissuading it; especially to persons of a generous and
 honest mind, who cannot but scorn to debase and defile
 themselves by so mean and vile a practice; or to those who
 seriously do profess Christianity, that is, the religion which
 peculiarly above all others prescribeth constant truth,
 strictest justice, and highest charity.

I shall only add, that since our faculty of speech (where-
 in we do excel all other creatures,) was given us, as in the

¹ Rev. xxi. 8. It is one of those things which God especially doth abomi-
 nate. Prov. vi. 19. xii. 22. A false witness shall perish. Prov. xxi. 28

SERM. first place to praise and glorify our Maker, so in the next
XVIII. to benefit and help our neighbour; as an instrument of mutual succour and delectation, of friendly commerce and pleasant converse together; for instructing and advising, comforting and cheering one another; it is an unnatural perverting, and an irrational abuse thereof, to employ it to the damage, disgrace, vexation, or wrong in any kind of our brother. Better indeed had we been as brutes without its use, than we are, if so worse than brutishly we abuse it.

Finally, All these things being considered, we may, I think, reasonably conclude it most evidently true, that *he which uttereth slander is a fool.*

SERMON XIX.

—
AGAINST DETRACTION.
—

JAMES IV. 11.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren.

ONE half of our religion consisteth in charity toward our neighbour; and of that charity much the greater part seemeth exercised in speech; for as speaking doth take up the greatest part of our life, (our quick and active mind continually venting its thoughts, and discharging its passions thereby; all our conversation and commerce passing through it, having a large influence upon all our practice,) so speech commonly having our neighbour and his concerns for its objects, it is necessary, that either most of our charity will be employed therein, or that by it we shall most offend against that great duty, together with its associates, justice and peace.

And all offences of this kind (which transgress charity, violate justice, or infringe peace) may perhaps be forbidden in this apostolical precept; for the word *καταλαλεῖν*, according to its origination, and according to some use, doth signify all kind of obloquy, and so may comprise slander, harsh censure, reviling, scoffing, and the like kinds of speaking against our neighbour; but in stricter acceptation, and according to peculiar use, it denoteth that particular sort of obloquy, which is called *detraction*, or *backbiting*: so therefore we may be

SERM.
XIX
Μὴ κατα-
λαλεῖτε
ἀλλήλους,
ἀδελφοί

SERM. allowed to understand it here ; and accordingly I now mean
 XIX. to describe it, and to dissuade from its practice.

There is between this and the other chief sorts of obloquy (slander, censuring and reviling) much affinity, yet there is some difference ; for slander involveth an imputation of falsehood ; reviling includeth bitter and foul language ; but detraction may be couched in truth, and clothed in fair language ; it is a poison often infused in sweet liquor, and ministered in a golden cup. It is of nearer kin to censuring, and accordingly St. James here coupleth it thereto : *He that detracteth from a brother, and he that censureth his brother, backbiteth the law, and censureth the law* : yet may these two be distinguished ; for censuring seemeth to be of more general purport, extending indifferently to all kinds of persons, qualities, and actions, which it unduly taxeth ; but detraction especially respecteth worthy persons, good qualities, and laudable actions, the reputation of which it aimeth to destroy, or to impair.

This sort of ill practice, so rife in use, so base in its nature, so mischievous in its effects, it shall be my endeavour to describe, that we may know it ; and to dissuade, that we may shun it.

It is the fault (opposite to that part of charity and goodness, which is called ingenuity or candour) which, out of naughty disposition or design, striveth to disgrace worthy persons, or to disparage good actions, looking for blemishes and defects in them, using care and artifice to pervert or misrepresent things to that purpose.

An honest and charitable mind disposeth us, when we see any man endued with good qualities, and pursuing a tenor of good practice, to esteem such a person, to commend him, to interpret what he doeth to the best, not to suspect any ill of him, or to seek any exception against him ; it inclineth us, when we see any action materially good, to yield it simply due approbation and praise, without searching for, or surmising any defect in the cause or principle, whence it cometh, in the design or end to which it tendeth, in the way or manner of performing it. A

good man would be sorry to have any good thing spoiled ; **SERM.**
 as to find a crack in a fair building, a flaw in a fine jewel, **XIX.**
 a canker in a goodly flower, is grievous to any indifferent
 man ; so would it be displeasing to him to observe defects
 in a worthy person, or commendable action ; he therefore
 will not easily entertain a suspicion of any such, he never
 will hunt for any. But, on the contrary, it is the proper-
 ty of a detractor, when he seeth a worthy person, whom he
 doth not affect, or whom he is concerned to wrong, to sur-
 vey him throughly, and to sift all his actions, with intent
 to descry some failing, or any semblance of a fault, by which
 he may disparage him ; when he vieweth any good action,
 he peereth into it, labouring to espy some pretence to de-
 rogate from the commendation apparently belonging to it.
 This in general is the nature of this fault. But we may
 get a fuller understanding of it, by considering more dis-
 tinctly some particualar acts, wherein it is commonly exer-
 cised, or the several paths in which the detracting spirit
 treadeth ; such are these following.

I. A detractor is wont to represent persons and actions
 under the most disadvantageous circumstances he can, set-
 ting out those which may cause them to appear odious
 or despicable, slipping over those which may commend or
 excuse them. There is no person so excellent, who is not
 by his circumstances forced to omit some things, which
 would become him to do, if he were able ; to perform
 some things lamely, and otherwise than he would do, if
 he could reach it ; no action so worthy, but may have
 some defect in matter, or manner, incapable of redress ;
 and he that representeth such person or action, leaving
 out those excusing circumstances, doth tend to beget a
 bad or mean opinion of them, robbing them of their due
 value and commendation ; thus to charge a man of not
 having done a good work, when he had not the power or
 opportunity to perform it, or is by coss accidents hinder-
 ed from doing it according to his desire ; to suggest the ac-
 tion was not done exactly, in the best season, in the rightest
 mode, in the most proper place, with expressions, looks, or

Πολύ τὸ αὐτὸ
 ὑπακῶν, ἢ
 διζήμενον τὸ
 εἶ. Theoph.

SERM. gestures most convenient, these are tricks of a detractor :
XIX. who when he cannot deny the metal to be good, and the stamp true, he clippeth it, and so would reject it from being current.

2. He is wont to misconstrue ambiguous words, or to misinterpret doubtful appearances of things : let a man speak never so well, or act never so fairly, yet a detractor will say his words may bear this ill sense, his actions may tend to that bad purpose ; we may therefore suspect his meaning, and cannot yield him a full approbation.

3. He is wont to misname the qualities of persons or things, assigning bad appellations or epithets to good or indifferent qualities : the names of virtue and vice do so nearly border in signification, that it is easy to transfer them from one to another, and to give the best quality a bad name^a. Thus by calling a sober man sour, a cheerful man vain, a conscientious man morose, a devout man superstitious, a free man prodigal, a frugal man sordid, an open man simple, a reserved man crafty, one that standeth upon his honour and honesty proud, a kind man ambitiously popular, a modest man sullen, timorous, or stupid, is a very easy way to detract, and no man thereby can scape being disparaged.

4. He doth imperfectly characterize persons, so as studiously to veil or faintly to disclose their virtues and good qualities, but carefully to expose, and fully to aggravate or amplify any defects or failings in them. The detractor will pretend to give a character of his neighbour, but in so doing he stifflerh what may commend him, and blazoneth what may disgrace him ; like an envious painter he hideth, or in dusky colours shadoweth, all the graceful parts and goodly features, but setteth out all blemishes in the briskest light, and most open view. Every face hath in it some mole, spot, or wrinkle ; there is no man that

^a At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare. Probus quis Nobiscum vivit ? multum est demissus homo. Illi Tardo cognomen pinguis damus, &c.

hath not, as they speak, some blind place, some blemishes in his nature or temper, some faults contracted by education or custom, somewhat amiss proceeding from ignorance or misapprehension of things: these (although they be in themselves small and inconsiderable, although they are some of them involuntary, and thence inculpable, although they be much corrected or restrained by virtuous discipline, although they are compensated by greater virtues, yet these) the detractor snatcheth, mouldeth, and out of them frameth an idea of his neighbour, apt to breed hatred or contempt of him in an unwary spectator; whereas were charity, were equity, were humanity to draw the person, it, representing his qualities with just advantage, would render him lovely and venerable.

5. He is wont not to commend or allow any thing absolutely and clearly, but always interposing some exception, to which he would have it seem liable: the man indeed, saith he, doth seem to have this or that laudable quality; the action hath a fair appearance, but then if he can, he blurteth out some spiteful objection; if he can find nothing colourable to say against it, yet he will seem to know and to suppress somewhat; but, saith he, I know what I know, I know more than I'll say;—so (adding perhaps a crafty nod or shrug, a malicious sneer or smile) he thinks to blast the fairest performance ^b.

6. He is ready to suggest ill causes and principles, latent in the heart, of practices apparently good; ascribing what is well done to bad disposition, or bad purpose: so to say of a liberal man, that he is so from an ambitious temper, or out of a vain-glorious design; of a religious man, that his constant exercises of devotion proceed not from a conscientious love and fear of God, or out of intention to please God and work out his salvation; but from hypocrisy, from affectation to gain the favour and good opinion of men, from design to

^b Non audes repetere, qui tacendo amplius criminaris: et quia non habes quod objicias, simulas verecundiam; ut lector te putet mihi parcere, qui mentiens nec tuæ animæ pepercisti. *Hier. in Ruff. iii. 6.*

SERM. promote worldly interests; this is the way of detraction.
 XIX. He doeth well, saith the detractor, it cannot be denied; but for what reason doeth he so? Is it not plainly his interest to do so? Doth he not mean to get applause or preferment thereby? *Doth Job serve God for nought?* So said the father of detracting spirits.

7. He derogateth from good actions by pretending to correct them, or to shew better that might have been done in their room: it is, saith he, done in some respect well, or tolerably; but it might have been done better, with as small trouble and cost; he was overseen in choosing this way, or proceeding in this manner. Thus did Judas blame the good woman, who anointed our Lord's
 John xii. 5. feet; *Why, said he, was not this ointment sold, and given to the poor?* So did his covetous baseness prompt him to detract from that performance, of which our Saviour's
 Matt. xxvi. goodness did pronounce, that it was a *good work*, which
 10, 13. should perpetually *through the whole world* pass for *memorable*.

8. A detractor not regarding the general course and constant tenor of a man's conversation, which is conspicuously and clearly good, will attack some part of it, the goodness whereof is less discernible, or more subject to contest and blame; as if in a body admirably handsome, one overlooking that curious harmony, that delicate complexion, those fine lineaments and goodly features, which, running through the whole, do conspire to render it a lovely spectacle, should pitch on an eye or a nose to carp at; or as if in a town, otherwhere begirt with impregnable defences, one should search for the weakest place, to form a battery against it.

9. In fine, the detractor injecteth suggestions of every thing anywise plausible or possible, that can serve to diminish the worth of a person, or value of an action, which he would discountenance; he pryeth into every nook, he bolteth every circumstance, he improveth every pretence, he allegeth any report or rumour, he useth all the tricks imaginable to that end. Such is the nature and way of

detraction; in enlarging upon which I am the more sparing, because the arts and methods of detraction being in great part common with those of slander and censure, I have otherwhile in treating upon those offences more fully declared them. SERM.
XIX.

Now for dissuading from its practice, I shall propound to your consideration the causes whence it proceedeth, the irregularities and pravities which it involveth, the effects which it produceth; the which will appear so base and ugly, that whoever shall consider them cannot, I suppose, but loathe the daughter of such parents, the subject of such qualities, and the mother of such children.

I. The causes of detraction are,

1. Ill nature, and bad humour: as good nature and ingenuous disposition incline men to observe, like, and commend what appeareth best in our neighbour; so malignity of temper and heart prompteth to espy and catch at the worst: one, as a bee, gathereth honey out of any herb; the other, as a spider, sucketh poison out of the sweetest flower.

2. Pride, ambition, and inordinate self-love; the detractor would engross praise, and derive all glory to himself; he would be the chief, the only excellent person; therefore he would juggle another's worth out of the way, that it may not endanger standing in competition with his, or lessening it by a partnership; that it may not outshine his reputation, or dim it by the lustre thereof. Expedit vobis neminem videri bonum, quasi aliena virtus exprobratio vestrorum delictorum sit. Sen. de Vit. B. xix.

3. Envy: a detractor liketh not to see another thrive, and flourish in the good esteem of men, therefore he would gladly blast his worth and virtue; his *eye* is *evil* and sore, therefore would he quench, or cloud the light that dazzleth it.

4. Malicious revenge and spite: his neighbour's good practice condemneth his bad life; his neighbour's worth disparageth his unworthiness; this he conceiveth highly prejudicial to him; hence in revenge he will labour to vilify the worth and good works of his neighbour.

SERM.

XIX.

Οἱ ἐπιλείπει
 ἃ ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν
 μὴ δυνάμενοι
 φαίνεσθαι, ἐκ
 τῆ ψίγειν
 τοὺς ἑαυτῶν
 κρείττους
 δείκνυσθαι
 βούλονται.
Socr. Hist.
Eccl. vi. 13.

5. Sense of weakness, want of courage, or despondency of his own ability: he that in any kind deemeth himself able, or confideth in his own strength and industry, will allow to others the commendation beseeming their ability; for he thinking himself in capacity to deserve the same, and as he would not lose the fruits of his own deserts, so he taketh it for equitable that another should enjoy them; to deprive another of them he seeth were in consequence to prejudice his own capacity and hope: but he that feeleth himself destitute of worth, and despair-eth to arrive to the credit of others, is thence tempted to disparage and defame such persons: this course he taketh as the best allay of his contemptibleness, the only solace for his defects that he can hope for; being he cannot arise to another's pitch, he would bring down that other to his; he cannot directly get any praise, therefore he would indirectly find excuse, by shrouding his unworthiness under the blame of others. Hence detraction is a sign of the weakest and basest spirit; it is an impotent and groveling serpent, that lurketh in the hedge, waiting opportunity to bite the heel of any nobler creature that passeth by.

Remedium
 poenæ suæ
 arbitrantur,
 si nemo sit
 sanctus, si
 omnibus
 detrahatur,
 si turba sit
 pereuntium,
 si multitudine
 peccantium.
Hier. ad
Asellam.
Ep. 99.

6. Evil conscience: a man that is conscious to himself of a solid worth and virtue, of having honest intentions, of having performed good deeds, is satisfied with the fruits of inward comfort and outward approbation, which they do yield; he therefore will scorn to seek the bettering himself by the discredit of others; he will not by so mean a practice adulterate that worth, in which he feeleth sufficient complacence; he rather doth like that others should enjoy their due commendation, as justifying his own claim thereto; he willingly payeth it, because he may justly demand it; and because withholding it from another may prejudice his own right thereto: but he that is sensible of no good qualities in himself, that is conscious of no worthy actions that he hath done, to breed a satisfaction of mind, or build a reputation upon, would please himself in making others as little better than himself as

he can, would ground a kind of credit upon the ruins and rubbish of another's fame. When he knoweth he cannot shine by his own light, he would seem less obscure by eclipsing the brightness of others, and shutting out the day from about him; conceiving that all things look alike in the dark, and that bad appeareth not bad where no good is near.

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As also a good man liketh worth and virtue, because they resemble what he discerneth in himself: so evil men hate them, because they do not find themselves masters of them; they are like the fox, who said the grapes were sour, because he could not reach them; and that the hare was dry meat, because he could not catch her. A detractor, therefore, is always a bad man, and wanteth those good qualities which he would disparage.

7. Bad, selfish design: detraction is a common engine, whereby naughty men strive to compass their ends; when by fair means, by their own wit, industry, courage, worthy behaviour, they cannot promote their interests, they cannot drive on their ambitious or covetous projects, they cannot attain that preferment or that gain which they affect, then they betake themselves to this crooked and foul way of supplanting, by detracting those whom they conceit to stand in the way of their designs. It was the first piece of wicked policy that ever was practised in the world; the Devil, by detracting from the goodness and veracity of God, (misrepresenting his intentions, and misconstruing his commands,) strove to achieve his mischievous design of seducing our forefathers; and in his footsteps his serpentine progeny (the race of malicious, envious, ambitious, covetous, and crafty politicians) do tread. It is observed to be a fault that usually haunteth courts, wherein there is competition for the favour of a prince, and the consequences thereof, (for dignity, power, wealth, repute,) to get which to themselves they strive to dispossess or prevent others by this instrument of detraction. It is also rife among scholars, that is, among competitors for wit, learning, industry, and the rewards

SERM. of them, reputation or preferment. From such principles
 XIX. and causes usually doth this practice spring.

II. It doth involve these kinds of irregularity and pravity.

1. Injustice : a detractor careth not how he dealeth with his neighbour, what wrong he doeth him. Justice obligeth to render every man his due ; *honour to whom honour is due*, and praise to him that deserveth praise. There can be no greater injury done a man, than to spoil his best good, his virtue ; than to rob him of the best reward of his pains and cares, which is a fair reputation ; (I speak of rewards which lie in the reach of men.) No man prizes any thing comparably to his honesty and honour ; who therefore by any means blurreth them, is most injurious. *Woe unto them—who take the righteousness of the righteous from him.* Isa. v. 23.

Prov. xvii.
15.

Injurious indeed he is not only to the virtuous person, but to virtue itself ; for commendation is a debt we owe to it, wherever it is found ; which conduceth to its encouragement and advancement ; and to wrong goodness itself is the most heinous injustice.

1 Cor. xiii.

2. Uncharitableness : it is evident that the detractor doth not love his neighbour ; for charity maketh the best of every thing : *Charity believeth every thing, hopeth every thing* to the advantage of its object ; charity delighteth to see the beloved to prosper and flourish ; and will therefore contribute its endeavour to the procuring it to do so : the detractor therefore (who would defile the best, and display the worst in his neighbour,) can have no charity ; he indeed manifesteth the greatest hatred, seeing he striveth to do the greatest mischief, to cause the greatest vexation to his neighbour, in bereaving him of his most precious and dear enjoyments.

3. Impiety : he that loveth and reverenceth God, will acknowledge and approve his goodness, in bestowing excellent gifts and graces to his brethren ; when such appear, he will be afraid to disavow or disgrace them, that he may not rob God himself of the glory thence due to

his favour and mercy, or through his neighbour's side wound the divine benignity: he will be ready to bless and praise God for all such emanations of his goodness: as those did, in the Gospel, who, beholding our Saviour's miraculous works of grace, did *glorify God who had given such gifts unto men*: but the detractor careth not for that; he feareth not to bereave God of the honour of dispensing good gifts, that his brother may not have the honour of receiving them; he will rather deny God to be good, than allow a man to be so by his grace and blessing: so is he no less a detractor from God, than from his neighbour.

Hence, of all offences, detraction certainly must be most odious to God. He is the God of truth, and therefore detesteth lying, of which detraction ever, especially in moral esteem, hath a spice: he is the God of justice, and therefore especially doth abhor wronging the best persons and actions: he is the God of love, and therefore cannot but loathe this capital violation of charity: he is jealous of his glory, and cannot therefore endure it to be abused by slurring his good gifts and graces; he cannot but hate that offence, which approacheth to that most heinous and unpardonable sin, that consisteth in defaming the excellent works performed by divine power and goodness, ascribing them to Matt. xii bad causes.

4. Detraction involveth degenerate baseness, meanness of spirit, and want of good manners. All men affect to seem generous, and will say they scorn to be base; but generosity is in nothing more seen, than in a candid estimation of other men's virtues and good qualities: to this generosity of nature, generosity of education, generosity of principles and judgment, do all conspiringly dispose: it is the noblest kind of courtesy, to tender and further the reputation of others; to be liberal in bestowing commendation on deserving persons; it obligeth men more than any other benefit can do, procuring them commonly real advantage, always cheering and satisfying their mind; for in nothing more do they please themselves, than in reaping this fruit of their good intention and honest industry,

SERM. XIX. the approbation of worthy men ; it is therefore a most gentle thing thus to oblige men. But, on the other side, nothing more plainly argueth a degenerate and ignoble heart, ill-breeding and ill-formed manners, a sorry mind and poor judgment, than to disesteem or disparage worth and virtue in others : it is the most savage rudeness, the most sordid illiberality, the most ugly clownishness that can be ; of all men therefore it most doth misbecome those who pretend to be gentlemen.

5. In consequence to these things, detraction includeth folly ; for every unjust, every uncharitable, every impious, every base person is, as such, a fool : none of those qualities are consistent with wisdom ; but the folly of it will particularly appear, together with its pravity, by the bad and hurtful effects which it produceth, both in regard to others, and to him that practiseth it ; some of which are these :

III. 1. The practice thereof is a great discouragement and obstruction to the common practice of goodness : for many, seeing the best men thus disparaged, and the best actions vilified, are disheartened and deterred from practising virtue, especially in a conspicuous and eminent degree. Why, will many a man say, shall I be strictly good, seeing goodness is so liable to be misused, seeing thereby I shall provoke the detracting tongue, seeing my reward shall be to have a severe inquisition pass upon me, to have my life defaced, and my name bespattered ? Had not I better be contented with a mediocrity and obscurity of goodness, than, by a glaring lustre thereof, to draw the envious eye, and kindle raging obloquy upon me ? Thus men of a weaker spirit, or a bashful temper (who are not stiff and resolute in their way, who have not the heart or the face to bear up against rude assaults of their reputation) will be scared and daunted by detraction ; so as consequently to be induced,

Hor.

—— placare invidiam virtute relicta.

And when thus the credit of virtue is blasted in its practisers, many will be diverted from it ; so will it grow out

of request, and the world will be corrupted by these agents of the *evil one*. SERM.
XIX.

It were indeed, upon this consideration, advisable and just, not to seem ever to detract; even not then when we are well assured that by speaking ill we shall not really do it; if we should discover any man to seem worthy, or to be so reputed, whom yet we discern, by standing in a nearer light, not to be truly such, having had opportunity to know his bad qualities, bad purposes, or bad deeds; yet wisdom would commonly dictate, and goodness dispose not to mar his repute. If we should observe, without danger of mistake, any plausible action to be performed out of bad inclinations, principles, or designs; yet ordinarily in discretion and honesty we should let it pass with such commendation as its appearance may procure, rather than to slur it by venting our disadvantageous apprehensions about it: for it is no great harm that any man should enjoy undeserved commendation, or that a counterfeit worth should find a dissembled respect; it is but being over-just, which if it be ever a fault, can hardly be so in this case, wherein we do not expend any cost, or suffer any damage: but it may do mischief to blemish an appearance of virtue; it may be a wrong thereto to deface its very image; the very disclosing hypocrisy doth inflict a wound on goodness, and exposeth it to scandal; for bad men thence will be prone to infer, that all virtue proceedeth from the like bad principles: so the disgrace cast on that which is spurious will redound to the prejudice of that which is most genuine: and if it be good to forbear detracting from that which is certainly false, much more is it so in regard to that which is possibly true; and far more still is it so in respect to that which is clear and sure.

2. Hence detraction is very noxious and baneful to all society; for all society is maintained in welfare by encouragement of honesty and industry; the which, when disparagement is cast upon them, will be in danger to languish and decay: whence a detractor is the worst member that

SERM. can be of a society; he is a very moth, a very canker
XIX. therein.

3. Detraction worketh real damage and mischief to our neighbour; it bereaveth him of that goodly reputation which is the proper reward of virtue, and a main support to the practice of it; it often really obstructeth and disappointeth his undertakings, estranging those from him, or setting them against him, who do credulously entertain it.

4. The detractor abuseth those into whose ears he instilleth his poisonous suggestions, engaging them to partake in the injuries done to worth and virtue; causing them to entertain unjust and uncharitable conceits, to practise unseemly and unworthy behaviour toward good men.

5. The detractor produceth great inconveniencies and mischiefs to himself.

He raiseth against himself fierce animosity and wrath: for men that are conscious to themselves of their own honest meaning and blameless proceedings, cannot endure to be abused by unjust disparagement; hence are they stirred to boil with passion, and to discharge revenge upon the detractor.

He exposeth himself to general hatred; all good men loathe him as a base and mischievous person, and a particular enemy of theirs, always ready to wrong them; every man is apt to say, he that doth thus abuse another will be ready to serve me in like manner if I chance to come in his way, vilifying the best thing I can do: even the worst men will dislike him; for even such affect to do somewhat laudable or plausible, and would be glad to enjoy approbation for it; and cannot therefore brook those who lie in wait to rob them of the fruit of their good endeavours: so do all men worthily detest and shun the detractor, as a common enemy to goodness first, and then unto men. Farther,

6. The detractor yieldeth occasion to others, and a kind of right to return the same measure upon him. If he

hath in him a show of any thing laudable, men will not allow him any commendation from it: for why, conceive they, shall he receive that which he will not suffer others to enjoy? How can any man admit him to have any real worth or virtue in himself who doth not like it or treat it well in another? Hence, if a detractor hath any good in him, he much injureth himself, depriving himself of all the respect belonging thereto.

7. Again, the detractor, esteeming things according to moral possibility, will assuredly be defeated in his aims; his detraction in the close will avail nothing, but to bring trouble and shame upon himself; for God hath a particular care over innocence and goodness, so as not to let them finally to suffer: the *good man's righteousness he will bring forth as the light, and his judgment as the noon day.* Wisdom 6. Psal. xxxvii. 6. Wise men easily will discern the foul play, and will scorn it; good men ever will be ready to clear and vindicate the truth; worth, however clouded for a time, will break through all mists, and gloriously expand itself, to the confusion of its most sly opposers.

Such are the natural and obvious effects of this practice; the consideration whereof (together with the causes producing it, and the essential adjuncts which it did involve,) will I should think, suffice to deter us from it.

I shall only adjoin one consideration, which our text suggesteth: *Speak not evil of one another, brethren,* saith the Apostle: *brethren*; that appellation doth imply a strong argument enforcing the precept: brethren, with especial tenderness of affection, should love one another, and delight in each others good; they should tender the interest and honour of each other as their own; they should therefore by all means cherish and countenance virtue in one another, as that which promoteth the common welfare, which adorneth and illustrateth the dignity of their family. We should rejoice in the good qualities and worthy deeds of any Christian, as glorifying our common Father, as gracing our common profession, as edifying the common body, whereof we are members. *Members we are one of another,* and as such should find compla-

SERM. cence in the health and vigour of any part, from whence
XIX. the whole doth receive benefit and comfort : for one brother to repine at the welfare, to malign the prosperity, to decry the merit, to destroy the reputation of another, is very unnatural ; for one Christian anywise to wrong or prejudice another is highly impious.

To conclude : it is our duty, (which equity, which ingenuity, which charity, which piety do all concurrently oblige us to,) whenever we do see any good person, or worthy deed, to yield hearty esteem, to pay due respect, gladly to congratulate the person, and willingly to commend the work ; rendering withal thanks and praise for them to the *donor of all good gifts* : unto whom, for all the good things bestowed upon us, and upon all his creatures, be for ever all glory and praise. Amen.

SERMON XX.

—◆—
AGAINST RASH CENSURING AND JUDGING.
—◆—

MATTH. vii. 1.

Judge not.

THESE words, being part of our Saviour's most divine Sermon upon the Mount, contain a very short precept, but of vast use and consequence ; the observance whereof would much conduce to the good of the world, and to the private quiet of each man ; it interdicting a practice, which commonly produceth very mischievous and troublesome effects ; a practice never rare among men, but now very rife ; when, with the general causes, which ever did and ever will in some measure dispose men thereto, some special ones do concur, that powerfully incline to it. SERM.
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There are innate to men an unjust pride, emboldening them to take upon them beyond what belongeth to them, or doth become them ; an excessive self-love, prompting them as to flatter themselves in their own conceit, so to undervalue others, and from vilifying their neighbours, to seek commendation to themselves ; an envious malignity, which ever lusteth to be pampered with finding or making faults ; many corrupt affections, springing from fleshly nature, which draw or drive men to this practice ; so that in all ages it hath been very common, and never any profession hath been so much invaded as that of the judge.

But divers peculiar causes have such an influence upon

SERM. our age, as more strongly to sway men thereto : there is a
 XX. wonderful affectation to seem hugely wise and witty ; and
 how can we seem such more, than in putting on the garb
 and countenance of judges ; scanning and passing sentence
 upon all persons, and all things incident ? There is an ex-
 treme niceness and delicacy of conceit, which maketh us apt
 to relish few things, and to distaste any thing ; there are
 dissensions in opinion, and addictedness to parties, which do
 tempt us, and seem to authorize us in condemning all that dif-
 fer from us ; there is a deep corruption of mind and manners,
 which engageth men in their own defence to censure others,
 diverting the blame from home, and shrouding their own
 under the covert of other men's faults^a ; there are new prin-
 ciples of morality and policy become current with great
 vogue, which allow to do or say any thing subservient to
 our interests or designs ; which also do represent all men so
 bad, that, admitting them true, nothing hardly can be said
 ill of any man beyond truth and justice.

Hence is the world become so extremely critical and
 censorious, that in many places the chief employment of
 men, and the main body of conversation is, if we mark it,
 taken up in judging : every gossiping is, as it were, a
 court of justice ; every seat becometh a tribunal ; at every
 table standeth a bar, whereto all men are cited, whereto
 every man, as it happeneth, is arraigned and sentenced :
 no sublimity or sacredness of dignity, no integrity or in-
 nocence of life, no prudence or circumspection of de-
 meanour can exempt any person from it : not one escapeth
 being taxed under some scandalous name, or odious cha-
 racter, one or other. Not only the outward actions and
 visible practices of men are judged ; but their retired sen-
 timents are brought under trial, their inward dispositions
 have a verdict past on them, their final states are deter-

^a *Expedit vobis neminem videri bonum ; quasi aliena virtus exprobratio vestrorum delictorum sit. Sen. de Vit. B. xix.*

^b *Eis ta twn allalon polupragmonein kai katadikazein dapanwntai hmin apas o bios ; kai edena an eurous tachews, e biwtikon andra, e monaxon tautes elythesron tēs amorstias, kaitoige tosautes apitelēs ksimēnēs autō. Chrys. ad den. t. vi. Orat. 43.*

ruined. Whole bodies of men are thus judged at once, and nothing it is in one breath to damn whole churches, at one push to throw down whole nations into the bottomless pit. All mankind in a lump is severely censured, as void of any real goodness or true virtue; so fatally depraved as not to be corrigible by any good discipline, not to be recoverable even by the grace of God: yea God himself is hardly spared, his providence coming under the bold obloquy of those, who, as the Psalmist speaketh of some in his time, whose race doth yet survive, *speak loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens.*

Psal. lxxiii.
8, 9.

This being too apparently the present state of things, and obvious practice of men, it were desirable that, in order to their being reclaimed, men commonly did well understand the nature of this practice, with the heinous guilt, and consequently the deadly hazard, they do incur thereby: at this purpose my discourse shall aim, wherein I shall endeavour both to describe the nature of the practice forbidden in my text, and to declare the pravity, iniquity, and folly of it.

Judge not. As to the word, we may observe, that it being in itself according to its primitive sense of a middle and indifferent signification, is yet frequently in the Scripture used in the worst sense; so as to import those acts, or those effects of judgment, which pass to the disadvantage of the persons subjected thereto; for condemnation, and for infliction of punishment: and this sense here surely the word doth principally respect, yet not so precisely as to exclude somewhat contained in the larger sense: we are so prohibited the condemning and punishing our neighbour in his good name, that withal some acts antecedent, or concomitant to those, are glanced at in the prohibition: undue application thereto, unjust proceeding therein, are also signified unlawful; for the meaning of the word and the reason of the case may be so far extended.

But for the fuller and clearer understanding of the matter, we must observe, that there are divers sorts of judging, or acts resembling judgment, which do not belong to this

SERM. precept; which it is requisite to distinguish from this judg-
 XX. ing prohibited.

1. That exercising public judgment, or administering justice, is not here prohibited, I need not to insist, that is necessary; human society could not subsist, right could not be maintained, nor peace preserved without it; God thereby governeth the world, earthly judges being his instruments and substitutes; such judgment is not so much the act of men, as of God himself, by whose authority, in whose name, for whose service it is ministered. As Moses told Deut. i. 17. the judges in his time, *You shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.* And in numberless places of Scripture this judgment is allowed and authorized; it therefore is not touched here.

2. That trial and censure, although out of court, and without formal process, which any kind of superiors do exercise upon their inferiors, committed to their inspection and care; such as of parents over children, masters over servants, pastors over their flock, any governors over their charge, their admonitions, reprehensions, and corrections are to be excepted hence, as being in themselves needful and warranted, yea enjoined by God.

3. Neither are fraternal correction or friendly reproof, proceeding out of charitable design, upon clear ground, in fit season, within reasonable compass, concerned in this prohibition; this being a wholesome practice, and a duty incumbent on us: *Thou shalt, saith the Law, not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* Levit. xix. 17. 1 Thess. v. 14.

4. All observing and reflecting upon our neighbour's actions, all framing an opinion about them, and expressing our minds concerning them are not forbidden. For we are not bound perpetually to shut our eyes, or go about hood-winked: nor to stop our ears and make ourselves deaf: and how can we forbear to think according to plain evidence? how can we resist the impressions of sense upon our minds? how can we contest notorious experience? how also, barring such apprehensions of obvious and ap-

parent things, could we bear testimony concerning them? SERM.
how could we signify our approbation or dislike of them? XX.
how could we for his amendment admonish or reprove our
neighbour, as in some cases we are obliged to do?

5. We are not hence obliged to think so well of all men, as without competent knowledge always to rely upon their pretences, or to intrust our interests in their hands; for common experience acquainteth us that we may be deceived in trusting men, prudence biddeth us in matters of importance not to confide in uncertainties; wherefore we shall not be culpable for being wary in such cases: this indeed is not a positive judgment, but only a waving to declare in favour, when sufficient ground of doing so doth not appear; it is only a reasonable suspecting the possibility of miscarriage in some persons, not a downright asserting ill concerning any one man: wherefore to do it as it suiteth discretion, so it doth not thwart justice or charity; and cannot therefore be prohibited here.

6. We are also not hence obliged, in contradiction to plain sense, to judge well of men; accounting him for a saint, or a good man, whom we see living disorderly, or committing scandalous offences, plainly repugnant to the rules of piety, justice, or sobriety.

In fine, there are some special cases and circumstances, wherein good men excusably may in severe terms declare their resentment of manifest wickedness, especially such as is prejudicial to God's honour and public good. Of this there are divers instances, which yet hardly can be reduced to common rules, or proposed for general example; the matter being ticklish, and men being apt to pervert any liberty or pretence of this kind, by indulging to their own bad humours and passions.

These sorts of allowable judgments being excepted, it is then private, affected, needless, groundless, rash, and harsh censuring the persons or actions of our brethren; such as doth resemble not the acting of a lawful superior, of a needful witness, of a faithful friend, but of a judge acting without competent right, upon no good grounds,

SERM. or in undue manner, which is here interdicted: the word
 XX. *judging* doth well imply the nature of this fault, the man-
 ner of our proceeding therein, the grounds of its unlawfulness; neither perhaps can we better understand our duty in this matter, than by expending what are the properties and obligations of a judge, and comparing our practice thereto; for thence it may plainly appear how unqualified we are to bear this office, and how unduly we execute it.

1. No judge should intrude himself into the office, or assume a judicial power without competent authority; that is, by delegation from superior powers, or by voluntary reference of the parties concerned. This condition we fail in, whenever without warrant from God, or special reason exacting it from us, we do pry into, scan, and tax the actions of our neighbour. When, I say, we are pragmatically inquisitive into the purposes and proceedings of our superiors, of our equals, of those who are not subject to our charge and care, when we narrowly examine them, when we peremptorily blame them, then do we unduly exalt ourselves above them, and exercise an unwarrantable jurisdiction over them. What sense doth offer, we may receive in; what judgment reason doth extort, we may follow; what testimony public benefit requireth, we may yield; what expression charity doth call for toward our neighbour's edification, we may seasonably vent: but if we proceed farther in this way, the party concerned may appeal from us as incompetent and unlawful judges of his actions or his state; we are arrogant and injurious in presuming to exercise that office. God is the master and judge of men, and without authority from him, we must not presume to judge his servants and subjects: so we are taught by St. Paul. *Who, saith he, art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth:* and St. James in like manner, upon the same ground, expostulateth with the censurer; *There is, saith he, one Lawgiver, who is able to save, or to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?* Our Lord himself for this reason declined intermeddling in the affairs of

1 Pet. iv. 15.
 1 Thess. iv.
 11.
 Prov. xxvii.
 16.
 1 Tim. v.
 13.

Quid in potestatem alienam irruis? quid temerarius Dei tribunal ascendis? *Opt. lib. 2.*

Rom. xiv. 4.

Jam. iv. 11.

men; *Who*, said he, *made me a judge or divider over you?* SERM. XX.
 And shall we constitute ourselves in the office, shall we Luke xii. 11.
 seat ourselves on the tribunal, without any commission from
 God, or call from men? How many judges, if this proviso
 were observed, would have their quietus! how many cen-
 surers would be voided hence!

2. A judge should be free from all prejudices, and all Levit. xix. 15.
 partial affections; especially from those which are disadvan-
 tageous to the party in danger to suffer; such as tempt or
 incline to condemn him; from ill-opinion and ill-will, from
 anger, envy, revengefulness, contempt, and the like: for he
 that is possessed with these, is no-wise qualified to be a
 judge; his eyes are blinded, or distorted, or infected with
 bad tinctures, so that he cannot discern what is right, or
 that he seeth things represented in the wrong place, and
 under false colours: his mind is discomposed and disturbed,
 so that he cannot calmly and steadily apprehend or consider
 the just state of the case; his will is biassed, and strongly
 propendeth one way, so that he cannot proceed uprightly in
 a straight and even course: being not indifferently affected, Jam. ii. 1.
 but concerned on one side, he is become a party, or an ad- Matt. xxii. 16.
 versary, and thence unfit to be a judge; he hath determined 1 Tim. v. 21.
 the cause with himself beforehand, so that no place is left
 to farther discussion or defence; wherefore before such a
 judge the best cause will fall, the clearest innocence shall
 not preserve from condemnation. He therefore that will
 undertake this office must first divest himself of all preju-
 dices, must rid himself of all passions, must purify himself
 from all corrupt inclinations, taking care not to come with a
 condemning mind, or a lust to punish the obnoxious party;
 otherwise a just exception lieth against him, and reasonably
 his jurisdiction may be declined.

If this rule were put in practice, there would be little
 censuring; for few come to it with a free and pure mind;
 few blame their neighbours without some pre-occupation of
 judgment, or some disaffection toward them.

3. A judge should never proceed in judgment, without
 careful examination of the cause, so as well to understand Deut. i. 16.

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it. Even those, who out of indispensable duty, or by a just power, may call others to account, are yet obliged to be wary, and never to pass sentence without due cognizance of the cause; otherwise they will judge blindly and rashly; they will either decide wrongly, or so truly, that doing it must be imputed not to their virtue, but to their fortune; often they will be mistaken, and it is luck that they are not so always: and what plainer iniquity can there be, than that the reputation or real interest of any man should be put to the arbitrement of chance; that he should be defamed, or damnified, not for a certain fault, but from an unhappy lot? As things viewed at a distance appear much different in bigness, shape, and colour, from what they are in nature and reality; so if we do not look nearly and narrowly, we shall greatly misapprehend the nature, the degrees, the right characters of things and of persons: then be our pretence to judge never so fair, yet our proceeding is unjust; then if we do unduly invade the place, it will be a great aggravation of our misdemeanour: if of our own head and pleasure we will constitute ourselves judges, yet at least we should act the judge's part, in patiently attending to, and heedfully sifting the cause: if we have not a stomach to hear, if we will not afford the care to mind what may be alleged in favour of the party concerned; if we cannot, or will not scan every point and circumstance which may serve to acquit him, or to excuse and extenuate his guilt, why do we undertake to be his judges? why do we engage ourselves into the commission of so palpable injustice? yea, of so disgraceful folly: for, *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is,* saith the Wise Man, *a folly and shame unto him.* This caution excludeth rash judgment, from which if men would abstain, there would be little censuring: for nothing is more ordinary, than for men to do like those of whom St. Jude saith, "Ὅσα ἐκ οἴδασι βλασφημῶσι, *they rail at what they know not; they censure persons with whom they are not thoroughly acquainted, they condemn actions whereof they do not clearly ken the reasons; they little weigh the causes and circum-*

Prov. xviii.
13.

Jude 10.

stances which urge or force men to do things ; they stand at great distance, and yet with great assurance and peremptoriness determine how things are, as if they did see through them, and knew them most exactly. SERM.
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4. A judge should never pronounce final sentence, but *ex allegatis et probatis*, upon good grounds, after certain proof, and upon full conviction. Not any slight conjecture, or thin surmise ; any idle report, or weak pretence, is sufficient to ground a condemnation upon ; the case should be irrefragably clear and sure before we determine on the worst side ^a : *Judge not*, saith our Lord, *according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* John vii. 24. The Jews, seeing our Lord cure an infirm person upon the Sabbath day, presently upon that semblance condemned him of violating the Law ; not considering either the sense of the Law, or the nature of his performance ; and this he termeth unrighteous judgment. Every accusation should be deemed null, until, both as to matter of fact, and in point of right, it be firmly proved true ^b ; it sufficeth not to presume it may be so ; to say, it seemeth thus, doth not sound like the voice of a judge ; otherwise seeing there never is wanting some colour of accusation, every action being liable to some suspicion, or sinister construction, no innocence could be secure, no person could escape condemnation ; the reputation and interest of all men living would continually stand exposed to inevitable danger. It is a rule of equity and humanity, built upon plain reason, that rather a nocent person should be permitted to escape, than an innocent should be constrained to suffer : for the impunity of the one is but an inconvenience, the suffering of the other is wrong ; the punishment of the guilty yieldeth only a remote probable benefit ; the affliction of the blameless involveth a near certain mischief : wherefore it is more prudent and more righteous to absolve a

^a μή πρότερον τὰς ψήφους ἐκφέρειν, πρὶν ἂν ἴναργεῖς ἀποδείξεις γίνωνται.
Chrys. in Gen. Hom. 42.

^b Quod probari non potest, mihi infectum est. Bern.

De occultis cordis alieni temere judicare iniquum est, et cum ejus non videntur opera nisi bona, peccatum est ex suspicione reprehendere. Joh. iii. 1. Ep. 1.

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man, of whose guilt there are probable arguments, than to condemn any man upon bare suspicions. And remarkable it is how God in the law did prescribe the manner of trial and judgment, even in the highest case, and most nearly touching himself, that of *idolatry*; *If*, saith the Law, Deut. xvii. 4. *it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing certain, that such an abomination is wrought in Israel; then shalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman, and shalt stone them.* See what great caution is prescribed, what pregnant evidence is required in such cases; it is not enough that it be reported, or come to our ear; diligent inquiry must be made, it must be found true, it must appear certain, before we may proceed to condemn, or execute; it is indeed not fair judgment, but mere calumny, to condemn a man before he doth, by sufficient proof, appear guilty.

If this rule were regarded, how many censures would be prevented! For do not men catch at any shadow of a fault? Are they not ready upon the least presumption to condemn their neighbour? Doth not any, even the weakest and vainest testimony, any wandering hearsay, or vulgar rumour, serve to ground the most heavy sentences?

5. From hence is plainly consequent, that there are divers causes wholly exempted from our judgment, and which in no case we must pretend to meddle with; such as are the secret thoughts, affections, and purposes of men, not expressed by plain words, nor declared by overt acts; for a capacity of judging doth ever suppose a power of cognizance; and it being impossible for us to reach the knowledge of those things, we cannot therefore pretend to judge of them. As it is the property of God to search the hearts and try the reins, so it is his prerogative to judge concerning the secret motions in them; the which we attempting to do, no less vainly and foolishly, than presumptuously and profanely, do encroach upon.

This point also being regarded, would prevent innumerable rash judgments; for men commonly do no less dive into the thoughts, and reprehend the inward dispositions

and designs of their neighbour, than they do his most apparent and avowed actions; it is almost as ordinary to blame men for the invisible workings of their mind, as for their most visible deportment in conversation.

6. Hence also it is not commonly allowable to judge concerning the state, either present or final, of our neighbour in regard to God; so as to take him for a wicked man, or to denounce reprobation upon him: for the state of men is not so much determined by single actions, as by a body of practice, or by a long course and tenor of life, compounded and complicated of actions in number and kind unconceivably various: it dependeth not only upon external visible behaviour, but upon the practice of close retirements, and occult motions of soul; upon the results of natural temper, upon the influence of fortuitous circumstances; upon many things indiscernible, inscrutable, and unaccountable to us; the which God alone can perceive and estimate throughly: *God seeth not*, as he did himself tell Samuel, *as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart: he searcheth our hearts, and understandeth our thoughts afar off: he compasseth our path, and is acquainted with all our ways: he weigheth our spirits; he knoweth our frame; he numbereth our steps; he seanneth our designs, and poiseth all our circumstances exactly; he doth penetrate and consider many things transcending our reach, upon which the true worth of persons and real merit of actions do depend: he therefore only can well judge of men's state.* As a spacious outside doth often cover inward hollowness and foulness, so under an unpromising appearance much solidity and sincerity of goodness may lodge; a dirty ground doth often contain good seeds within it: our judgment therefore in such cases is likely, at least in degree, to be fallacious and unjust; and therefore it is fit to supersede it, according to the advice and discourse of St. Paul; *He that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every*

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Πολλά δὲ οὐ
σεαφέναι, ἔ-
πεισιν, πρὶν
ἀλλὰ κατα-
γνῶναι οὐσ-
σίθειαν.
Greg. Naz.
Or. 26.

Ps. cxxxix.
6.
1 Sam. xvi.
7.
Isa. xi. 3.
Ps. cxxxix.
2, 3.

Prov. xvi. 2.
1 Sam. ii. 3.
Is. ciii. 14.
Job xiv. 16.

1 Cor. iv. 5.

SERM. *man have praise* (that is, a right estimate of his person and
 XX. *deeds) from God.*

If this were duly considered, many hard thoughts and many harsh words would be spared; men would not be so apt to damn those whom they have no skill to try.

7. Farther: a judge should not undertake to proceed against any man, without warning and citing him to appear, or without affording him competent liberty and opportunity to defend and justify himself. Judgment should not be administered clancularly, in dark corners, but in open court; not suspiciously, in a muttering or whispering way; but frankly, with a clear and audible voice: not upon surprise, but with allowance of leisure and advice, that the party may be able to apprehend his case and manage his plea for his best defence: for it may justly be presumed, that as he is most concerned, so he is best acquainted with his own proceedings, and may allege reasons for them, which no man can so well perceive as himself; it is therefore fit that he should be heard before he is condemned, that he may not suffer wrong; at least that he may be convinced that he doth not, and that our proceeding may be cleared from misprision; that also the world may be satisfied of justice being done; and that likewise false accusers may be liable to due shame and chastisement. The manner of proceeding used by the Romans, and reported by Festus in St. Paul's case, was full of reason and equity: *It is not, said that governor, the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he, which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him.* Otherwise indeed any innocence may easily be oppressed irrecoverably, without any defence, and consequently without any means of evasion or redress. We should never yield both ears to the accuser, but reserve one for the accused. The end of justice, we

Acts xxv.
16.

^c Χρὴ τοὺς ἐνόμους δικάζοντας τῷ κατηγορουμένῳ διατίθων ταῖν ἀκοαῖν ἀπεριεῖν φουλάξαι, &c. Theod. Ep. 91.

^d God himself, as some of the Fathers observe, hath shewed us an example of this equity, *Descendam igitur et videbo, &c.* Gen. xviii. 21.

may consider, is not to condemn, nor to work mischief to any one, but rather, so far as may be, to acquit and prevent evil to all; at least it aimeth to clear the truth, and state the case indifferently; wherefore it is just, that all advantage that well can be, should be afforded to the obnoxious party for his justification and deliverance; at least that he be not denied equal advantage with his prosecutors; humanity would allow him some favour; the most rigorous justice cannot refuse him leave to contest his cause upon equal terms: wherefore it is fit that he should be acquainted with his case, that competent time and means should be afforded him to prepare for his defence, that his plea should receive, if not a favourable, yet a free audience: the contrary practice is indeed rather backbiting, whispering, supplanting, or sycophantry, than fair and lawful judging.

The observation of this rule would also cut off many censures; for seldom it is that our censurers do charge men to their faces, but rather take all possible care, that what they say may never come to the ears of those whom they accuse; they fear nothing more than being confronted and detected; they decline the shame and the requital due to their sycophantic practice; which is a manifest argument of their foul dealing; and they no less in reality do thence condemn themselves than they would seem to condemn others.

S. Moreover, a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the settled rules of judgment, so as never to condemn any man for acting that which is enjoined, or approved, or permitted by them; he must not pronounce according to his private fancy, or particular affection, but according to the standing laws: which as they are the only certain rules of moral action, the only grounds of obligation, the only standards of guilt and innocence; so in reason they should be the sole measures of

Καίτοι σαφῶς ἦδει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκείνων τὴν πονηρίαν. Ἄλλ' ὁμῶς ἔφη καταεὶς ἔψομαι, διδάσκων ἡμᾶς ἀναμίνειν τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν πείραν. *Theod. Ep.* 119.
P. Pelagius ad Eliam.

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Rom. xiv.
1 Cor. viii.
8.
Col. ii. 16.

judging: he that proceedeth otherwise is an arbitrary and a slippery judge; he encroacheth upon the right and liberty of those with whom he meddles, pronouncing them guilty whom God and reason do proclaim blameless. This is that which St. Paul doth reprove in the 14th to the Romans, and elsewhere. The case was this: some were of opinion, that abstaining from some kinds of meat, and observing some festival times, were matters of duty required by God; others thought it free to eat any thing, and to use any times alike: these, according to such their private opinions, did censure the practices of each other; one party condemned the other as transgressing duty, the other contemned them as weak in judgment: but the Apostle reproveth both as irregular in their behaviour, in taxing one another for matters which on both hands were indifferent; the divine Law having clearly neither enjoined those observances, nor prohibited them; so that each man had a liberty to do, or to abstain, as he thought good, or most agreeable to his duty, and conducive to his salvation. So is it culpable in us to blame any man for doing that which is not repugnant to God's express command, or to the plain dictates of reason.

The observing this condition would smother many censures: for do we not commonly reprehend our neighbours for practices wholly blameless, perhaps commendable? Do we not sometimes grievously reproach them for not complying with our desires, for not serving our interests, for not jumping with our humours, for not dancing after our pipe; for dissenting from us in any conceit, although dubious or false; for discosting from our practice, although bad or inconvenient? Say we not ordinarily, he is morose, peevish, singular, rude, because he would not *run with us into the same excess of riot*; he is weak, nice, superstitious, because he constantly and strictly adhereth to his duty; he is negligent, loose, profane, because he useth his liberty in some matters indifferent? Bar such matters of obloquy, into how narrow a compass would it be restrained!

9. Hence farther it is to be supposed, that a judge

should be a person of good knowledge and ability; well versed and skilful in the laws concerning matters under debate; endued with good measure of reason, enabling him as to sift and canvass matters of fact, so to compare them accurately with the rules of right: for nothing is more absurd than an ignorant and unskilful judge. Men therefore of weak capacity, of mean education, of small experience, are qualified to judge in few cases, most things being placed above their reach; such never should presume to censure actions, the worth or moral quality whereof depend upon the stating and resolution of abstruse, intricate, or subtle questions. It is not therefore for mechanics or rustics to judge about difficulties of science, about controversies in religion, about mysteries of policy, or reasons of state; or to censure those who deal in them: in so doing they hugely trespass beyond their calling and sphere; they do strangely misbecome the bench, and will very untowardly misbehave themselves thereon; the decision of such matters is to be reserved to those, who by study and experience have attained peculiar faculties to do it respectively.

Observing this point would draw many down from their usurped seats of judicature, and stop numberless vain sentences; we should have very few judges left, if all men would be so modest and so wise as not to meddle beyond their skill and ability.

10. Again: it is proper for a judge not to make himself an accuser; not to seek for misdemeanours, not to draw more causes under his cognizance than are in course presented before him: he should rather judge as out of constraint, than of choice; rather as sorry to find a necessity, than glad to snatch an occasion of condemning offenders. So should we rather decline than seek the office of censuring our brethren, rather conniving at and concealing their faults, than being forward to expose them; absolute reason only should induce or indispensable necessity force us thereto.

This also greatly would diminish the trade of censuring; for if we should never censure without great rea-

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Εκαστος κρί-
νει καλῶς ἃ
γινώσκει, καὶ
τούτων ἐστὶν
ἀγάλτος κρι-
τής. *Arist.*
Eth. lib. iii.

Sine dubio
in omnibus
statim ac-
cusationibus
hoc agen-
dum est,
ne ad eas
libenter
descendisse
videamur.
Quint. xi. 1.

SERM. son or necessity, how seldom should we do it? Do we not
 XX. rather affect to do it causelessly and needlessly? Do we not eagerly search after and greedily embrace all occasions to do it? Is it not a pleasant entertainment to us, to be carping and cavilling at any body we meet, at any thing we see done? Farther,

11. He that pretendeth to judge others should himself be innocent; under no indictment, and not liable to condemnation. Is it not very improper for a criminal, for one who is not only in truth and in his own conscience guilty, but who standeth actually convicted of heinous offences, to sit upon the bench, determining about the deeds and the states of others? It is the case of us all, we are all notoriously guilty of heinous crimes, before God, we all do lie under the sentence of his law; we do all stand in need of pardon from our Judge, his mercy is our only hope and refuge: and shall we then pretend to be judges, or be passing sentence on our brethren? If only those who are free and guiltless should judge, who could undertake it? There would surely be no more than there appeared then, when in the case of the woman taken in adultery our Lord propounded the like condition; 'Ο ἀναμάρτητος ἑμῶν, *he that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her*: upon which proposition the sequel was; *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst*; so infallibly should no man be allowed to judge, who were not himself void of like guilt, would every man escape censure.

12. Lastly: it is the property of a good judge to proceed with great moderation, equity, candour, and mildness; as a general friend, a friend to justice, to the public, to mankind, to the party impeached. As a friend to justice, he should be careful that the defendant receive no wrong in his credit or interest; as a lover of the public, he should wish that no offences or scandals be found; out of humanity he should desire that no man may incur the blemish of guilt, or pain of suffering; he should tender

Cum ipse sis reus, in al-
 terum au-
 des ferre
 sententiam?
 Opt. 2.

Ps. cxliii. 2.

John viii.
 7. 9.

the party's case as compassionable, and desire that he may be delivered from the evil threatening him: this should render him willing to acquit and free the party, apt to apprehend and interpret all things favourably, ready to excuse and mollify the business what he can; far from picking faults out of obscure surmises or slender pretences, from aggravating the miscarriages that are detected, from stretching the blame farther than it will reach of itself, or making the case worse than it needs must be, from pronouncing a harsh or heavy sentence thereon. He should always be of council to the defendant, pleading his cause as far as truth and equity will permit; putting himself in his case, and thence nowise dealing with him more rigorously than he, according to impartial judgment, should in the like case deem it equal that himself should be dealt with: in fine, however the matter in the result appear to stand, he should avoid rigour and extremity, he should exercise clemency and mercy.

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If this course were observed, innumerable causes, which now are severely judged, would never be mentioned, or come under trial, but would presently be cast out; many would soon, after small discussion, be voided; few would pass that extremity of censure, which now, by the cruel asperity of men, they are forced to undergo: for do we not accuse men for things that are no faults? Do we not exaggerate the guilt of petty faults? Do we not insult over great miscarriages with too unmerciful severity, as if they were incorrigible and unpardonable?

Seeing then few of us, according to those reasonable qualifications and conditions, are capable of being judges; seeing, if those equal rules were observed, most censures would be discarded; seeing hard it is for any man, either warrantably to undertake, or uprightly to discharge this office; great reason there is for this precept, most fit it is that we should be forbidden to judge.

So much for the part explicative and directive; now for the persuasive; and for inducing us to eschew this practice, let us briefly declare the pravity and vanity of it; the performing which will, I suppose, be sufficient to dissuade and

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deter us from it. Be pleased only first to note, that some considerations which we shall propound will be applicable to some kind of bad censure, some to another, according to the several defects and incapacities we have to judge lawfully, upon the grounds already touched.

1. Censuring is an impious practice in regard to God.

By taking upon ourselves to judge unduly, without authority, or beyond it, we do invade God's office, setting up ourselves as judges in his room; we usurp his right, exercising jurisdiction over his subjects, without order and license from him: it is St. Paul's argument, *Who art thou that judgest another's servant?* that is, how intolerably bold and arrogant, how sacrilegiously injurious and profane art thou, to climb up into God's tribunal, and thence to pronounce doom upon his subjects?

Rom. xiv.
4.

By rash judgment in matters not subject to our cognizance, (as when we pronounce concerning the secret thoughts and intentions of men,) we proudly and perversely do arrogate to ourselves the incommunicable perfections of God, who alone can know such things, and determine rightly in such cases; who therefore hath reserved them to himself, commanding

1 Cor. iv. 5. us to *judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.*

By passing sentence about the state of our neighbour, we do anticipate God's judgment, and by prejudging strive to frustrate it. We take upon us to *purge his floor*, to sever the chaff from the corn, and the tares from the wheat, to discriminate the goats from the sheep; which to perform will be the work of God's infinite wisdom and justice at *the great day*.

By censuring our brethren causelessly, for not complying with our conceits, humours, or practices, we lay hold upon and appropriate to ourselves God's legislative power; we subject his law to our fancy and pleasure; we in effect

* Matt. iii. 12, 13. xxv. 32. *Quantus arrogantiae tumor est, quanta humilitatis ac lenitatis oblivio, arrogantiae suae quanta jactatio, ut quis aut aud'at aut facere se posse credat, quod nec Apostolis concessit Dominus, ut zizania a frumento putet se posse discernere, aut quasi ipsi paleam auferre, et arcam purgare concessum sit, paleas conetur a tritico separare?* *Cypr. Ep. 52.*

condemn his law of error and imperfection ; we do at least SERM. XX.
 make ourselves sharers with him in the enacting laws, and Jam. iv. 11.
 dispensing justice. *He, saith St. James, that speaketh*
against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh
against the law, and judgeth the law ; that is, he opprobriously doth imply the law to be defective, until he doth complete or correct it ; making it a guilt not to satisfy his will or conceit, beside the plain intent of the law ; the dispensation of justice is not sufficient, unless he partake therein, taxing whom and why he pleaseth ; God without him is not a perfect lawgiver or judge.

We are also very ingrateful in not being favourable towards our brethren in judgment ; when as God is in his judgment so benign, patient, and merciful toward us, who *is not extreme to mark what we do amiss ; is not forward to seek or find faults, but rather waiteth to be gracious, hideth his face from our sins, and passeth by our transgressions ;* doth not aggravate our offences, but rather doth excuse them, *remembering that we are flesh ;* is not glad of occasion to punish, but *delighteth in mercy,* and *doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men ;* is not severe, but *punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve, and in his wrath remembereth mercy.* And are we not impious if we do so ill requite him, and so little resemble him, in being rigorous and harsh toward our brethren, when they offend, or seem to do so ?

In fine, censuring is impious, as involving the violation of those great commandments, of exercising, in all our demeanour and dealing, humility, meekness, pity and mercy toward our brethren ; of pursuing and promoting peace among them.

2. Censuring, in respect to our neighbour, is an unjust practice. It is unjust to meddle in affairs with which we have nothing to do ; to draw those persons under our jurisdiction who are not subject to it, but are liable to render their account at another bar ; to punish those in their reputation or interest, over whom we have no just authority, *who have their own master, to whom they must stand or fall.*

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It is most unjust to judge any man without competent means of knowing, or skill to determine his case; to condemn him without diligent trial, without certain proof, without full conviction of his fault; to punish him without just cause, or beyond due measure.

It is very unjust to usurp an interest in the goods which are to our neighbour most proper and dear, his credit and concerns depend thereon, disposing of them as we please, to his disadvantage and prejudice.

It is also very unjust, when as we do need the candid judgment, the forbearance and pardon of others for many things faulty and offensive that we commit, to refuse the like to others^f.

3. Censuring is also a very uncharitable practice, and so contrary to the principal duty of our religion: it is so eminently in all cases wherein it is unjust; for charity doth virtually contain justice, and transcendeth it; it is so peculiarly whenever it is harsh or rigorous, when it is affected, when it is needless or unprofitable; for charity disposeth us to be gentle, meek, patient, and merciful in all our dealings; it engages us to hide and smother, to diminish and excuse, to pass by and pardon offences:

1 Cor. xiii. *Charity seeketh no evil, it covereth all things, it beareth all things; it teudereth our neighbour's good and advantage of all kinds, (his credit, his interest, his convenience, and pleasure;) it therefore will inflict no more evil than reason and necessity shall indispensably requireg.*

A censurer is indeed unjust and uncharitable, not only toward those whom he censureth, but also toward those into whom thereby he doth infuse ill opinion, and ill will toward their neighbour; he is guilty of their injustice and uncharitableness, a mischief more irreparable than his own.

^f — æquum est

Peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus.

Hor. Ser. i. 3.

Det ille veniam facile, cui venia est opus. Sen. Tr.

^g Οὕτως ἔχω ἐν τοῖς ἀμφιβόλοις, νέεν χρῆναι πρὸς τὸ Φιλάνθρωπον, καὶ ἀπογι-
νίσκειν ἄλλον, ἢ καταγιγνώσκειν τῶν ὑπαίτιων. Naz. Or. 21.

4. Censuring is a very foolish and vain practice in manifold respects; as arguing great ignorance and inconsiderateness, as producing grievous inconveniencies and mischiefs, especially to the practiser of it.

It signifieth that we do not well understand or not well consider the natural impotency and frailty of mankind; how liable others are to mistake and slip, and how prone we ourselves are thereto; how, as St. James saith, *in many things we offend all*; did we observe, or would weigh this, we should not be so forward to censure, or so vehement and bitter in it; we should see failing and tripping in many things to be a common case, rather demanding commiseration than censure.

It implieth also, that we little consider how our escaping any faults, which our neighbour slippeth into, is nowise imputable to any worth or virtue in us, so much as the good providence and merciful grace of God, guarding or rescuing us from them; if we did apprehend and reflect on this, it would appear our duty rather to bless God for our being protected from miscarriages, than censoriously to insult over those who seem to fall into them. It signifieth we have no sight or sense of our own defects; for did we clearly see, did we humbly resent them, that would damp our heat and earnestness to censure. It declares a fond self-conceit, that we deem ourselves superior to our neighbour in wisdom, and less obnoxious to blame, and therefore fit to be his judges; whereas, according to a sober esteem of ourselves, we should appear more fit to stand at the bar than to sit upon the bench; and should thence more dread the one than affect the other.

It sheweth likewise, that we do not rightly conceive the nature, or worthily esteem the consequences of this practice: we know not, or regard not, the value of our neighbour's reputation, which by censure we do mean to ruin or impair: we perhaps by no means would rob him of his substance, or of his life; yet we scruple not by grievous censure to bereave him of his good name; which he, the best prizer of his own goods, may esteem beyond his estate or his life itself. we think

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Est proprium stultitiam aliorum vitia cernere, oblivisci suorum.

Cic. Tusc. 1.

Jam. iii. 2.

SERM. it nothing, or a slight matter to carp at him ; but he feeleth
 XX. it very painful, and deeply resenteth it.

It argueth in us an untamed fierceness of mind and discomposedness of passion, which can never consist or cohabit with wisdom ; for a well-ordered, calm, and free mind will be slow in conceiving offence or dislike, moderate in estimating things, reserved in expressing its sentiments, not easily transported into extremity or excess ; it consequently hardly will suffer a man to break forth into rash or harsh censure. So many signs and arguments of incogitancy and blindness this practice doth involve.

5. Farthermore, this practice will produce many great inconveniencies and mischiefs to us.

1. We do thereby provoke, and in a sort authorize others to requite us in the same kindⁱ: for nothing more doth excite the indignation, doth inflame the anger, doth engender the hatred of men toward us, than being pragmatrical in finding fault, and hasty to censure their doings causelessly or immoderately ; nothing seeming to them a more certain argument that we bear them ill-will, or do contemn them ; and if we so vex them, they will in requital be as ready, by finding or making faults in us, to vex and trouble us ; it engageth their care, and quickeneth their industry, and whetteth their invention to observe or devise matter of recrimination. Men think it not only lawful, but even needful for them, in their own defence, to disparage the censurer, that his judgment may have the less weight to their prejudice : so that it will infallibly come upon us, as our Lord warneth, using it as an argument to dissuade us from this practice, that, *with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged ; and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.*

Matt. vii. 2.
 Luke vi.
 37, 38.

^h Prov. xii. 16. A fool's wrath is presently known ; but a prudent man covereth shame.

Prov. xxix. 11. A fool uttereth all his mind ; but a wise man keepeth it till afterwards.

ⁱ —at tibi contra

Evenit, inquirant vitia ut tua rursus et illi.

Hor. Serm. i. 3.

Men take it for allowable to retaliate in this way to the height, and stoutly to load the censorious man with censure. SERM. XX.

2. We do by this practice not only expose ourselves to censure, but implicitly, and according to ready consequence, do pass it upon ourselves, seeing we seldom, in kind or equivalently, are ourselves clear of that which we charge upon others; with our own weapon of sharp censure, we through another's side do imprudently wound ourselves; and often, as David did in his parley with Natan, adjudge ourselves to capital punishment; so that to any censorious person it may be said, in St. Paul's words, *Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.* Vid Chrys. in Matt. Or. 36. p. 219. 2 Sam. xii. Rom. ii. 1.

3. We do by censuring others aggravate our own faults, and deprive them of excuse, and render ourselves incapable of mercy and pardon: ^k for of all men, he that is forward and prone to censure, who is rigorous and severe in judging others, deserveth no favour, nor can reasonably pretend thereto. ^l *Inexcusable*, saith St. Paul, *art thou, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest; for, thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?* Rom. ii. 1. 3. and, *Μη σενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων.* *Do not*, saith St. James, *moanfully complain one against another, lest you be condemned; and, He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy,* in his judgment, saith the same Apostle ^m. Which passages imply, that to be unmerciful in this kind, will expose us to the severity of judgment Jam. v. 9. ii. 13.

^k Ὁ πικρῶς πὰ ἀλλότρια ἰξετάζων ἐν τοῖς κατ' ἑαυτὸν πλημμελίμασιν οὐδὲμιᾶς ἀπολαύσεται συγγνώμης ποτὶ. Chrys. Ἄνθρ. γ.

^l ——— ἀνθρώπων οἱ πλείους βραδείς μὲν εἰσὶν τῶν ἰδίων κοῖται, ταχεῖς δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτριῶν ἰξετασαί. Naz. Or. 26.

Ὅτι τῶν μὲν ἐπίφοιτος ἀμαρτανομένων πικροὶ καθήμιθα δικασαί, τὰς δὲ ἑαυτῶν δοκοὺς παροσῶμεν. Chrys. ad Demet. tom. vi. Or. 52.

^m Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως τῶν πειπλημμελημένων ἡμῖν μόνον, ἀλλὰ ἔκ ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς σῆς περὶ ἐπίφοιτος οἴσει τὴν ψῆφον ὁ Θεός. Chrys. *ibid.*

ⁿ Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ φιλένθρωπος, ἔ ἡμερος, ἔ συγγνωμονικός ὑποτίμνεται τὸν πλείονα τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ἔργον, οὕτως ὁ πικρὸς, ἔ ὄμνος, ἔ ἀπαρσίπτος πολὺ τοῖς οἰκτιροῦ ἀμαρτήμασι προστίθεισι μίσητος. *Ibid.*

SERM. in regard to our offences; or, that if we deal harshly with
 XX. our brethren now, God will then proceed the more severely toward us, when our great cause doth come under trial.

4. Indeed censuring others is an argument that we do little mind our own case, or consider to what a dreadful judgment we do stand obnoxious: did we think of that, we should see cause rather to employ our leisure and care in stating our own accounts, than in examining those of others; more advisable it would appear to mind our own case, than to busy ourselves in canvassing and determining the state of our neighbour, finding what great need our actions will have in that day of favourable construction and merciful allowance, we should become candid and mild in reflecting upon the actions of others; we should not be forward to carp at any thing; we should scarce have the heart to condemn any man; this St. Paul seemeth to imply, when he thus argueth: *Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ:* that is, why do any of us judge others, seeing we must all be judged ourselves? It is not seemly, it is not expedient for those, who soon must be arraigned, and put to answer for themselves, to be busy in questioning and judging others; but rather to spend their care and pains in preparing for their own account.

5. Nothing indeed more causeth us to neglect our own case, nothing more engageth us to leave our own faults unobserved and uncorrected, than this humourⁿ. It is easy to observe, that as they who are most sparing and gentle in censure are usually most exempt from blame, (for that carefully reflecting upon their own infirmities and defects, spending their heat and activity of spirit upon amending their own errors and faults, they have

Rom. xiv.
10.

Τὰ ἡμέτερα
ἐξετάζομεν,
καὶ ἄδυνα ἰσοῦ-
μεν κακῶς.
Chrys. in 2
Tim. Or. 2.

ⁿ Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἄιθροπον κατηγοροῦντα καὶ τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους πολυσταθμονοῦντα βίους τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιμιληθῆναι ποτε ζωῆς. Τῆς γὰρ σπουδῆς ἀπάσης αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ἐπί-
 ρων πολυσταθμοσύνην ἀναλισκαμένης, ἀνάγκη τὰ αὐτῶν πάντα ἀπλῶς κείσθαι κα-
 ῖμιλημένης. Chrys. Ἄνθ. γ'.

less time, less concernment, less mind to search out and scan the imperfections and misdemeanours of others; they do find less reason also, and therefore have less will to be fierce or severe toward them,) so the most censorious are usually the most stupid in discerning, and most careless in retrenching their own faults. And needs it must be so, for the actions of other men devour their leisure, take up the intention of their spirits, employ the keenness of their passions upon them, so that they cannot and will not attend to themselves; they are so much abroad, they are so very busy elsewhere, that they little know or care what is done at home; while they are *spying* and pulling out *notes from their brother's eye*, they *consider not the beam that is in their own eye*, although never so gross and obvious ^o.

SERM.
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Vid Chrys.
fom. ii. Or.
12. Sen. de
Vit. B. 27.
Βραδὺ εἰς ὑ-
πόνοιαν κακῆ
τὸ πρὸς κα-
κίαν οὐκί-
νητον. Naz.
Orat. 8.

Matt. vii.
3, 4.

6. Hence, I say, it is that commonly the best men are the most candid and gentle, and they are most apt to blame others who deserve worse themselves; that the sharpest tongues and foulest lives do usually go together; that they who are the strictest judges of their own are the fairest interpreters of other men's actions; and they who will least pardon others do most excuse themselves; that they who are strangely acute in descrying other men's faults are stark blind in discerning their own. Our Saviour therefore chargeth such persons with hypocrisy; *Thou hypocrite; first cast the beam out of thine own eye*; implying, that they do but falsely pretend a respect for goodness and zeal against sin, seeing in their own practice they indulge it; that it is indeed rather pride, peevishness, idleness, spleen, or selfish design that acteth them.

7. In fine, the censorious humour, as it argueth ill nature to be predominant, (a vulturous nature, which easily smelleth out, and hastily flieth toward, and greedily feed-

^o Τὸ κακίας ἐλευθέρην, ἢ ὑφορᾶσθαι κακίαν ἀλλότριον. Naz. Ep. 27.

Ὁ μὲν γὰρ κακὸς τάχιστα ἂν καταγνοίῃ ἢ τῆ ἀγαθῆ, ὁ ἀγαθὸς δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦ κακοῦ ἐαλίω. Naz. Orat. 21.

Ego mi ignosco, Mænius inquit,
Stultus et improbus hic amor est, dignusque notari.

Hor. Serm. 1. 3.

SERM. eth on carrion,) as it signifieth bad conscience ; for he that
XX. knoweth evil of himself is most prone to suspect, and most quick to pronounce ill concerning others, so it breedeth and fostereth such ill dispositions ; it debaucheth the minds of men, rendering them dim and doltish in apprehending their own faults, negligent and heedless in regard to their own hearts and ways ; apt to please and comfort themselves in the evils, real or imaginary, of their neighbours ; which to do is a very barbarous and brutish practice.

These considerations may, I hope, suffice to persuade the observance of this precept, by the help of God's grace, to which I commend you, and conclude.

Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXI.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business. Chrys. in. 2 Cor. Or. 19.

As frequently between neighbouring states there do rise dissensions and contests about the just limits of their territories, so doth it frequently happen between virtue and vice, right and wrong, duty and miscarriage in practice; for although the extreme degrees, and even the middle regions of these things are very distant, yet the borders of them do lie very close together, and are in a manner contiguous; a certain ridge of separation running between them, which commonly, being very narrow, thin, and obscure, it is not easy to discern. So it particularly falleth out in the matter before us, wherein our text is concerned. Duty and offence do nearly confine, and almost indistinguishably differ one from the other; for there are about this case precepts which seem to contradict; there are duties appearing to thwart one another.

St. Paul here biddeth us to be studious or ambitious of quiet; otherwise he enjoineth us to be earnestly active, (to be *σπουδῆ μὴ ἄνεργοι*, *not slothful in business*;) here he would have us to mind our own affairs; otherwhere he prescribeth, that we should *not look every man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others.* Rom. xii. 11. Phil. ii. 4.

According to the general drift of Scripture, and the tenor of our religion, we are in charity obliged to con-

SERM. cern ourselves heartily for the good of our neighbour, and
 XXI. to strive earnestly in promoting it; we are enjoined so far

to interpose and meddle in the affairs of others, as to watch over them for their good; to instruct and advise them; to admonish and excite them, to check and reprove them upon occasion; to offer and yield them succour, to compose

Κατανανώμευ
 ἀλλήλους.

Heb. x. 24.

Rem. xiv.

19. xv. 2.

1 Thess. v.

11, 14.

differences between them; to promote their edification and peace. *Let us*, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, *consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works.* *Let us*, saith St. Paul to the Romans, *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another; and, Exhort yourselves together, and edify one another;—warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak*, saith he to the Thessalonians in this Epistle.

To be zealous and earnest in the maintenance and propagation of truth, of virtue, of piety, is a duty incumbent on us, which implieth care and activity concerning others; that we offer to instruct them; that we enter into contest with them; that we examine their words and actions; that we presume to tax and oppose them.

Tit. i. 11.

In fine, our religion doth seem, by the bands of mutual relation, and obligations of charity, so to unite us together, so to endear us to one another, and to all men, that all things belonging to our brethren do nearly touch us, and should answerably affect us; so that by intermeddling with any thing relating to their welfare, we can hardly be said to meddle with what doth not concern us.

The condition of things also may seem to require, that we so intermeddle: for the duties and affairs of men are so entangled or interwoven, that we can hardly prosecute any concerns of our own, without being engaged in the matters of others: in discharging all offices of society, in pursuance of any traffic or commerce, in all intercourse and conversation, while we transact our own business, we cannot avoid the furthering or obstructing the business of others, who are engaged in the same or contrary designs. Society doth subsist by combinations of care and pain, regarding common interests, so that it

seemeth impossible so to mind our own business, as not to meddle with the business of others. SERM.
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Yet notwithstanding St. Paul enjoineth us so to affect quiet, as simply to mind our own business, or not to be meddlesome in the concernments of others; for that *doing our own business* is meant exclusively to meddling with the affairs of others, is plain enough by the importance of *τὰ ἴδια*, which is emphatical, and signifieth only our own, or our proper business; and because it is joined with *being quiet*, which respecteth others, and importeth not stirring beyond our own bounds; to be so meddlesome, being also a practice expressly condemned by St. Peter, in that prohibition, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or a malefactor, or as a busy-body in other men's matters*: where pragmatcalness is, we see, not only forbidden, but is coupled with the most heinous offences. 1 Pet. iv. 15.

How then shall we reconcile these things? How shall we in the case sever between the bounds of duty and blame? It is indeed somewhat difficult to do it precisely, and with distinctions which shall reach all cases. But somewhat I shall endeavour toward it, by propounding some rules and directions, which should commonly be observed in our dealing and intercourse with others: but first let us a little reflect upon the terms in which the precept is couched.

Study to be quiet. *Study*; the word is *φιλοτιμῆσθαι*, which signifieth to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with the like vehemency of desire and care, as men are wont to pursue reputation, dignity, and power, the objects of ambition: the expression containeth a remarkable emphasis, or a grave acumen; for whereas ambition commonly doth prompt men to be restlessly busy, and engageth them in the concernments proper to others, St. Paul biddeth them to be ambitious the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abstinence from other affairs beside their own.

To be quiet: This doth signify not a physical, but a moral rest; not a total forbearance of action; not a fasti-

SERM. XXI. dious or drowsy listlessness to do any thing; not a senseless indifferency concerning the matters of others; not an absolute sequestering ourselves from common affairs: this is not quiet or tranquillity, the τὸ ἡσυχάζειν here, but a naughty sloth, stupidity, or savageness: the quiet here meant is opposed to disorderly motion, to turbulency, to contention, to pragmatical curiosity, to all such exorbitant behaviour, whereby the right of others is infringed, their peace disturbed, their just interest or welfare any wise prejudiced. This quiet is a calm, steady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and measures prescribed by reason, justice and charity, modesty and sobriety: such a motion as the heavenly bodies do keep, which so move that they seem ever to stand still, and never disturb one another: in fine, what a quiet is meant, the subsequent words and the context do shew: it followeth,

And πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *to do our own business*, or to act things proper and pertinent to us; things which suit to our condition, our station, our vocation; whereby we may discharge our own duties, and supply our own needs; may work benefit to others, or however avoid being anywise burdensome or troublesome to them; an instance of which practice is immediately subjoined; *to work with our own hands—that we may have lack of nothing*; in another place St. Paul calleth it μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργάζεσθαι, *to work with quiet*, opposing it to περιεργάζεσθαι, being over-busy, or pragmatically curious, and to walking disorderly; that is, beyond the bounds of our calling, or the rules of our duty; so as to encroach upon the rights, or molest the quiet of others.

The words then, as they do imply an obligation lying upon us to be industrious in our own business, so they chiefly design to prohibit our meddling with the concerns of others; but how to settle the limits between this quiet minding our own business, and a culpable neglect of the duties concerning others; how to distinguish between meddling innocently, from being blameably meddlesome, *hic labor, hoc opus est*; this is that hard task which I am to undertake, but cannot hope

² Thess. iii. 12.

thoroughly to perform. However, the method toward it, SERM.
XXI. which I shall observe, is this: First, I shall touch some cases, in which it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others: then I shall propound some general rules, according to which some meddlesomeness is commonly blameable: in the next place, I shall assign some directions proper to some chief and most obvious kinds of meddling: and lastly, offer some considerations to dissuade men from this pragmatistical humour.

1. Superiors may intermeddle with the business of their inferiors, (that is, of such as are subject to their care and charge,) in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office. Magistrates may inspect the carriage, may examine the doings, may reprehend and punish the offences of their subjects: parents may advise, rebuke, and correct their children: spiritual guides and pastors may admonish and reprove their flock. These things while, with due prudence, equity, and moderation, they perform, they do indeed *πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια*, *do their own business*; it is their proper work, to which God hath designed them, and which reason exacteth of them; they are appointed, to use St. Paul's expression, *to attend continually upon this very thing*; their proceedings, therefore, are not to be charged with culpable pragmatisticalness. Rom. xiii,
6.

2. In any case, wherein the honour and interest of God is much concerned, we may interpose in vindication and maintenance of them. If any man dareth to blaspheme God's name, we may and ought to stand up in its defence; if any man disparageth religion, we should strive to clear its repute; if any man impugne any divine truth of moment, we should endeavour to assert it; if any man notoriously transgresseth God's law, we may discountenance his presumption, and reprove him for it: every man in such cases, as God's subject, hath not only a commission, but an obligation; is indeed by his allegiance bound to serve God, in maintaining the honour and interest of his empire; it is foul disloyalty, it is pitiful base-

SERM. XXI. ness to forbear meddling in such cases ^a. Thus have good men, without fear or shame, defended religion and truth, against the mightiest powers and most dangerous oppositions that could be; thus *stood up Phineas, and executed judgment*, not only checking, but avenging that heinous scandal: thus *Elias maintained the true worship of God against all the corrupters of it, the kings and whole nation of Israel*: thus the *Prophets did not forbear to tax the wicked manners of the princes, the priests, and the people in their times*: thus *St. John Baptist did not stick to reprove king Herod for his unlawful practice*: so our Saviour censured the superstitious and hypocritical scribes, and he chastised the profaners of God's house: so, in fine, the holy Apostles resolutely did assert God's truth against all the world.

3. When the public weal and safety are manifestly concerned, we may also intermeddle to support or secure them: so may we rebuke him that slandereth or reproacheth our prince; we may check him that would break the peace, we may impeach him that violateth the laws, conducing to public welfare: every man is a soldier against traitors and enemies of his country; every man is born with a commission to defend the public against those which plot its ruin or harm; every man is a party for his prince against rebels, for the church against schismatics, for the law against lawless transgressors, for common peace against those who outrageously disturb it: duty to our superiors, justice and charity to mankind, just regard to our own welfare, allow and oblige us to such meddling.

4. We may also meddle for the succour of right against palpable wrong and outrage: we may help an honest man against a thief assaulting him; we may guard the

^a Κοινόν ἐστὶ τὸ ἔγκλημα, δημόσιον τὸ ἀδίκημα· ἕξις ἐκαστῶ τῶν βελομένων κατηγορεῖν. *Chrys.* Ἄνδρ. α.

Καὶν ἀκώσης τινὸς ἐν ἀμφόδοι, ἢ ἐν ἀγορᾷ μίση βλασφημῆντος τὸν θεόν, πρόσελθε, ἐπιτίμησον· καὶν πλιγαὺς ἐπιθεῖναι δέη, μὴ παραιτήσης; ῥάπισσον αὐτοῦ τὴν ὄψιν, σύτρεψον αὐτῆ τὸ σῶμα, ἐγείρασον αὐτὴν τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς πλιγαῖς, &c. *Chrys.* *ibid.*

life of any man against an assassin; we may vindicate the reputation of an innocent person aspersed by a slanderous tongue; as Moses,—*seeing one of his brethren suffer wrong, defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian*; as the penitent thief rebuked his companion, unjustly railing upon our Saviour. The common interest of justice and charity do not only excuse, but commend meddling in such cases.

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Acts vii. 24.

Luke xxiii.
40.

5. We may likewise meddle with the proceedings of others, when our own just defence requireth it; we may repel those who attack our safety or peace, who invade or rifle our goods, who traduce our good name; we may endeavour to defeat their plots, and to restrain their violence. This is indeed doing our own business; for to preserve our life with its conveniences and comforts, to maintain our right and just interest, to keep our honour and reputation clear from scandal, is incumbent upon us; we are naturally the patrons, advocates, and guards of those considerable goods assigned or entrusted to us by Providence.

Cum moderamine inculpatae tutelæ.

6. When the life or welfare, either spiritual or temporal, of our neighbour is deeply concerned, and cannot otherwise than by our aid be supported or relieved, we may lawfully interpose to yield it; if we see him exposing his life to any great hazard, or engaging his soul into any great sin, we may, in any fair way, (by admonition, advice, reproof, politic device, harmless force,) without any invitation or licence, with or against his will, presume to reclaim or restrain him. We may stop him in his career to ruin or grievous mischief, we may withhold him from running into a snare, or tumbling down a precipice, or drinking in poison; we may, as St. Jude speaketh, *snatch him out of the fire*. In such cases we may reasonably suppose, that our neighbour, being himself, will allow us to meddle, or will not be displeas'd therewith; if he hath not his wits about him, we may supply him with ours in such exigence; his present consent and approbation are not then requisite, he not being in condition to yield them; he needeth guardians, and opportu-

Jude 23.

ἐκ τοῦ πυρός ἀπαλλάξουσιν.

Invito non tribuitur quodcumque pro eo præstat. Reg. J.

SERM.
XXI.Furiosis
nulla vo-
luntas est.
R. J.
Gen. iv. 9.

nity constituteth us in that office; extreme and evident need will not only excuse the liberty we shall assume, but it obligeth us to use our power to save him; in case of neglect, that surly answer, *Am I my brother's keeper?* will not serve our turn^b. We may, we should, it is not only innocent, but just and laudable, for us to be watchful over our neighbour's concernment and deportment, if we do it out of pure charity, in a discreet, quiet, and gentle manner.

7. In fine, if any signal opportunity of doing our neighbour considerable good, especially to his soul, doth offer itself, we may lawfully, we should in charity embrace it; we may then even obtrude upon him our direction and succour; if he be so blind as not to discern our goodwill, so peevish as to dislike our proceeding, so ingrateful as not to thank us for our pains, yet our good intent will justify us before God, and at the bar of reason; and we have, to countenance us therein, the common example of good men, who, for doing thus, have worthily been accounted the friends and benefactors of mankind.

In these and the like cases we may, without offending, intermeddle; in doing so we may indeed truly be said to be quiet, and to do our own business; because there is no exorbitancy or disorder in such proceeding, because God's law and sound reason have appropriated these things to us, and made them our concernment. There is no business more proper or pertinent to us, than that wherein we labour to promote the glory of God, or to procure the good of men; this is the principal design of our being, and therefore employment therein cannot misbecome us; but we must however in such cases take heed that our pretences are real and well grounded, that our proceedings are regular and fair; we must not take or use such liberty maliciously; we must never, out of hypocritical pretence to the maintenance of God's honour,

^b Μή μοι λέγε τὸ ψυχρὸν πῦρο ῥῆμα. Τί δέ μοι μέλει; εἰδὲν ἔχω κοινὸν πρὸς αὐτὸν, &c. Vid. *Chrys.* 'Ανθρ. 1. tom. ii. Or. 59. in *Mat.* Orat. 77, 78. in *Joh.* Or. 15. in *Eph.* Or. 19. *Chrys.* in *Tit.* Or. 5. in *Hebr.* Or. 30.

of public good, of justice, truth, or peace, be irregularly pragmatical or turbulent; this is to be doubly bad, adding to the irregularity of offence, the wickedness of fraud and malice.

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1. We should never, out of ambition, covetous desire, or self-conceit, so meddle as to invade any man's office, or to assume the exercise of it. A private man should not presume to act the prince or the statesman, offering to control those who are not under him, to deliberate, debate, determine, or pass censure about political affairs or occurrences. A layman should not intrude himself to administer the sacred functions of authoritative teaching, of dispensing the sacraments, of exercising spiritual censures, of defining theological controversies, which are committed to the guides and pastors of the church. No man should set himself upon the tribunal to judge, or undertake, without licence or invitation, to arbitrate the causes of others; doing thus is to encroach upon God, and to usurp upon man: we encroach upon God, assuming to ourselves powers not derived from his order, and deserting the station assigned us by his providence; we usurp upon man, exercising authority over him, which he is not bound to stoop unto.

2. We should not, without call or allowance, meddle with our superiors, so as to advise them, to reprehend them, to blame or inveigh against their proceedings; for this is to confound the right order of things, to trespass beyond the bounds of our calling and station, to do wrong, not only to them, but to the public, which is concerned in the upholding their power and respect: it is indeed a worse fault than assuming the ensigus of their dignity, or counterfeiting their stamps; for that is but to borrow the semblance, this is to enjoy the substance of their authority.

Nothing in this busy and licentious age is more usual, than for private men to invade the office, to exercise the duties, to canvass and control the actions of their superiors; discussing what they ought to do, and prescribing laws to them; taxing what is done by them; murmuring

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at their decrees, and inveighing against their proceedings; every one is finding holes in the state, and picking quarrels with the conduct of political affairs; every one is reforming and settling the public according to models framed in his own conceit. Things, saith one, are out of order, the constitution is very defective, and ought to be corrected; such a law in all reason should be repealed, and such an one enacted; here our statesmen were out of their politics, and there our lawgivers failed in point of equity or prudence. No, clamours another no less eagerly, all things stand as well as can be; nothing can be amended, or ought to be altered; our establishment in all respects is more perfect than Plato's commonwealth, or the state of Utopia. Thus doth each man appoint himself counsellor of state, and turns legislator without any call from the king, or choice of the country: every one snatcheth at the sceptre, and invests himself with the senator's robe; every one acteth a prince and a bishop, or indeed is rather a censor and controller of both orders; not considering the wrong he committeth, nor the arrogance he practiseth, nor the mischiefs which naturally ensue upon such demeanour; for to direct or to check governors, is in effect to exauctorate or depose them, substituting ourselves in their room; and what greater injury can we do them or the public? To fix or reverse laws belongeth to the highest authority and deepest wisdom, which it is enormous presumption for us to arrogate to ourselves: by attempting such things we confound the ranks of men, and course of things: we ruffle the world, we supplant public tranquillity; and what greater mischief than this can we do among men?

It is the business and duty of those whom God hath constituted his representatives and ministers, to deliberate and conclude what is to be done; and for the due performance of their charge they are accountable to their Master, not to us; *Nobis obsequii gloria relicta est*^c; our

^c Tibi summum rerum judicium dñi dedere: nobis obsequii gloria relicta est. *M. Terent. apud. Tac. Ann. V. C.*

duty and our privilege (for so it is, if we could understand it, it being far more easy and safe) it is to submit and obey with quiet and patience; if we do more, we are therein irregular, and no less undutiful to God than to our superiors; we forget those divine rules and precepts; *Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to him, What dost thou? Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.* We consider not what judgments are denounced upon those whose character it is *to despise government, to be presumptuous and self-willed, not to be afraid to speak evil of dignities.*

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Eccles. viii.
Pet. ii. 13,
18.
Phil. ii. 14.

2 Pet. ii. 10.

We do not weigh the nature of the things we meddle with, nor the advantages of the persons whom we tax, nor our own incapacity to judge rightly about them. There is a kind of sacredness in the mysteries of state: as the mysteries of faith do surpass natural reason, so do those of state transcend vulgar capacity: as priests by special grace are qualified best to understand the one, so are princes by like peculiar assistance enabled to penetrate the former. He that employeth them in that great work of governing the world, and maketh them instruments of his providence, is not wanting in affording to them direction and aid needful for the discharge of their duty; whence their judgments of things are somewhat more than human, and their words may with us pass for oracular; *A divine sentence, the wise King said, is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.* According to the ordinary reason of things, they are best able to judge of such things, being, by reason of their eminent station, able to discern more and farther than others, having by experience and constant practice acquired a truer insight into things, and a better skill to manage them: whereas we being placed beneath in a valley, can have no good prospect upon the grounds and causes of their resolutions and proceedings: we, for want of sufficient use and exercise, cannot skill to balance the contrary weights and reasons of things; to surmount the difficulties and rubs, to unfold the knots and intrigues,

Prov. xvi.
10.

SERM. which occur in affairs of that kind ; we cannot expect those
 XXI. special influences of light and strength from heaven toward
 judging of affairs, which do not properly concern us: where-
 fore we are altogether incompetent judges, and impertinent
 dealers about those things ; it is great odds, that in doing so
 we shall mistake and misbehave ourselves ; we consequently
 do vainly and naughtily to meddle with them. If the love of
 public good doth transport us, let us restrain ourselves.

3. We should not indeed so much as meddle with the
 affairs of our equals, (those I mean not who do equal us in
 dignity or worth, but all such who are not subject to our
 command or charge, however otherwise inferior to us : those,
 I say, we should not meddle with,) so as to control or cross
 them ; to direct, or check, or censure their proceedings
 against their will, or without special reason engaging us
 thereto : for this is also to usurp an undue authority, this
 argueth self-conceit, this containeth immodesty and arro-
 gance.

4. We should not, without the desire or leave of par-
 ties concerned, intermeddle in the smaller temporal inte-
 rests of others, upon pretence to further them, or with
 design to cross them ; for every man should be left to
 himself to choose and to manage his own business, prose-
 cuting it in the method he best liketh, (consistent with
 law and justice toward others,) without interruption or
 control : every man hath a right to do so, every man de-
 sireth it, every man commonly hath a capacity sufficient
 for it ; for each man is apt to study his own business, to
 weigh his case, to poise his abilities with the circum-
 stances in which he standeth ; and thence is likely to get
 righter notions concerning the state of his affairs, to de-
 cry better ways of accomplishing them, than others less
 regarding them can do : every man is best acquainted
 with his own humour and temper, and thence can pick
 his business, and wind the management of it, so that it
 shall comply with them, or not grate upon them. How-
 ever, as every man in point of interest and honour is most
 concerned in the success, and suffereth most by frustration

of his endeavours, so it is equal that a free choice of his proceedings should be allowed him, without impediment or disturbance; which enjoying, he will more contentedly bear any disappointment that shall happen. This especially we say, in respect to matters of lesser consequence, (such as most worldly interests are,) by the ill success whereof our neighbour is not extremely damaged or hurt; for, in such cases the immodesty and arrogancy of meddling, with the vexation and trouble it is apt to work, do commonly much outweigh any benefit we can presume by our meddling to procure.

5. We should not indeed ever in matters of indifferent and innocent nature so far meddle, as, without considerable reason or need, to infringe any man's liberty, to cross his humour, to obstruct his pleasure, however discordant these may be to our judgment and palate. Every man hath a particular gust for diet, for garb, for divertisements and disports, (arising from particular complexion, or other unaccountable causes,) and fit it is that he should satisfy it; it is enough that what he doeth seemeth good, and relisheth to himself: if we check him therein, we shall seem impertinent and troublesome, and therefore we shall really be so; for it is not our office to be tasters, to be dressers, to be masters of the sports to all men: we in such matters would please our own fancy, and therefore we should not about them offend others; it is incivility, it is injustice to do it.

6. We should never offer to put a force upon any man's inclination, or strive to bend it unto a compliance with ours; in attempting that we shall commonly be disappointed, and we shall never come fairly off: for some are so tough, they will never yield to us; none will comply against the grain, without regret and displeasure: if you extort a compliance with your desire, you thereby do lose their good opinion and good will; for no man liketh to be overborne with violence or importunity.

7. We should not in conversation meddle so as to impose our opinions and conceits upon others: in conversation with our equals, we have a liberty to propound our

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judgment, and declare our reasons for it; but if our judgment doth not take, nor our reasons persuade, we should have done; to press farther is rude, to be displeas'd for it is vain, to be angry or violent is unjust; for by the law of conversation every man taketh himself to have an absolute right to use and follow his own reason; and he that affects to deprive any man thereof, will pass for a petty tyrant, a clown, or an idiot. To retain the satisfaction which our own persuasion affordeth, is enough to content a just and sober mind, without triumphing over the understandings of others.

8. We should not ordinarily in converse affect or undertake to teach; for this implies a pretence to a kind of superiority, and a preferring ourselves to others in wisdom; which argueth vanity, and is offensive to those with whom we converse, who care not to be dealt with as disciples or underlings. We may with our equals modestly dispute the case upon even ground, as fellow-students of knowledge, or advocates of truth; but we must not peremptorily dictate, or pronounce with authority, like masters or judges.

Nec quid
agatur in
alia domus
alia per te
noverit.
Hier. Ep.
2.

9. We should indeed be cautious of interrupting any man's discourse, or of taking his words out of his mouth: for this is a rude way of dispossessing men of that which by common law of society they suppose themselves to enjoy, speaking their mind through, and perfecting their discourse; it is an implicit accusation of impertinency or weakness in their speech; it is an argument that we deem ourselves wiser than they, or able to speak more to the purpose: it is therefore an unsociable and distasteful practice.

10. We should be careful of intrenching upon any man's modesty in any way, either of commendation or dispraise, so as to put him to the blush, or to expose him unto scorn. Sober men care not to be the subjects of talk; no man can endure to be the object of sport: we should not therefore thrust any man upon the stage; it is vexatious, and therefore always discourteous, sometimes very injurious.

11. It is good to be very staunch and cautious of talk-

ing about other men and their concernments, in way of passing characters on them, or descanting upon their proceedings for want of other discourse: this is the common refuge of idleness, and the practice of fiddling gossips, who because they will do nothing themselves, must be reflecting upon the doings of others; and that they may not say nothing, will talk impertinently: *φλυβάζου και περιεργου*, St. Paul well coupleth together, that is, frivolous *tattlers and busybodies*; and *withal*, saith he of such gossiping women, 1 Tim. v. 13. *they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* To affect talking about others is indeed a great temptation to speaking things which we ought not to speak, words of unjust and uncharitable obloquy.

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Vide Chrys.
in Heb.
xxi. 3.
Orat. 21.

12. Further; we should not be inquisitive into the designs of men; for this, beside the vain curiosity and impertinency of so doing, is to assail their modesty, and an adventure to vex both them and ourselves: thy neighbour, perhaps, as most advised men are, is desirous to keep his purpose close to himself; then by inquiry thou either forcest him unwillingly to disclose what he would not, or to give thee a repulse, which he liketh not to do; and which whenever he doth, he is displeas'd: what is pumped out comes up against nature, and bringeth regret with it; and if we cannot get any thing out, we yet cause disturbance within; and ourselves are not well satisfied in the disappointment.

Percontationem fugito.

Φιλοπευσία
τῶν ἐν ἅπο-
κρύψει.

13. We should not press into the retirements of men; to do so is not only immodest and rude, but unjust: it is immodest to desire to know from any man what he is ashamed or unwilling to shew: it is rude to disturb any man in the enjoyment of his lawful freedom, to interrupt him in his conversation with himself, to obstruct his private satisfactions: it is unjust to bereave a man of that leisure and opportunity which he possesseth, of doing that which he best liketh, and perhaps is greatly concerned in; of enjoying his own thoughts, of meditating upon his concerns, of examining his ways, of composing his pas-

Arcanum neque tu scrutaberis ullius unquam, Commis- sunque teges, et vino tortus et ira.

SERM. sions, of studying truth, of devotion and intercourse with
XXI. his God, of contriving and carrying on in any wise the welfare of his own soul. Why doth he retire, but to shun diversion, or that he may be master of his time and thoughts? Why then are we so unkind, or so unjust, as to deprive him of those contents and advantages?

14. We should not pry or peep into men's secrets; it is a practice upon many accounts blameable.

It is commonly impertinent curiosity; for men hide things, because they do not think others concerned to know them; the concealment argueth their opinion to be such, and consequently that he is fondly curious who would search into them: *Why*, said he well to one, who, seeing him carry a basket covered, did ask what was in it, *dost thou seek to know, when thou seest it covered, that thou mayest not know*^d?

It is foully discourteous, because offensively depriving men of the satisfaction they take in concealing their matters; encroaching upon the innocent freedoms which they would enjoy, without rendering account to any; trespassing upon their bashfulness, or frustrating their discretion; for therefore men choose to keep things close, because they like not, or judge it not expedient, to declare them. *Take*
 Eccles. vii. 21. *no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.*

It is also grossly injurious to deal thus; for it is a robbery of what is most dear to men; which they with more care reserve and guard, than they do their gold or their jewels: so that to break open the closet of a man's breast, to ransack his mind, to pilfer away his thoughts, his affections, his purposes, may well be deemed a worse sort of burglary or theft, than to break open doors, to rifle trunks, or to pick pockets.

It is a practice in the common opinion of men worthily esteemed very dishonest and treacherous; for men generally do suppose each other to be under a tacit, but well-

^d Τὸ τοῦ Αἰγυπτίᾳ χάριν πρὸς τὸν ἐρωτῶντα τὸ φέρεי συγκικαλυμμένον, διὰ τούτου συγκικάλυπται. *Plut. περὶ πολυσε.*

understood compact, obliged mutually (as they tender greatly the retaining their own secrets, so) to abstain from attempting to discover the secrets of others; to do otherwise is therefore taken for an act of perfidious enmity, and a violation of mutual confidence.

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In fine, to peep into chinks, to listen at doors or windows, to mind whispers, to dive into letters and papers, and the like practices, are the practices of insidious eves-droppers, spies, and sycophants, which common humanity will not endure.

Yea, if the knowledge of what our neighbour would conceal doth casually arrive to us, it is advisable to smother it, it is inhumanity to reveal it to his prejudice. *To reveal secrets*, is a practice condemned in Scripture as odious and base. *He that goeth about as a tale-bearer, revealeth secrets. A tale-bearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.*

Prov. xx.
19.
Prov. xi. 13.

Not to take up, or scatter reports prejudicial. *Ecclus. xix. 7, 10.*

Μηδέποτε
διυτερώσης
λόγον—
Ακρίκοις λό-
γον; συναπο-
θανίτω σοι.

A wise man would not willingly anywise know the secrets of others, but gladly would shun them, although offering themselves to his knowledge; that he may be freed from the burden of keeping them, and the danger of venting them, to the distaste, wrong, or prejudice of others: and he is commended for his discretion, who, to a prince asking him, *What of his he should impart to him?* replied, *Whatever you please, except your secrets*^e. Them he well thought unsafe to keep, and dangerous to utter. How foolish then is it voluntarily to intrude, or carefully to search into them!

15. We should not lie in wait to surprise or catch any man at advantage, to overthrow him when he trips, to insult upon his mistake or his disaster; to do thus is always ill manners, it is sometimes barbarous inhumanity. Goodness in such cases would dispose a man to support, relieve, and comfort another, if he demandeth, or his case needeth such meddling.

^e Philippides apud Plut. in Apoph. ad Lysimach. Τινός σοι, εἴπεις, τῶν ἐμῶν μεταδῶ; κακίως, ὅς βάλει πλὴν τῶν ἀπορίτων.

SERM. 16. Lastly; we should never, at least with much earnest-
 XXI. ness, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to
 others, and which we do not, or may not handsomely pretend to understand so well as others: such are affairs beside our profession, which, if we understand not, it is a folly, in a peremptory manner, to treat of them; if we do understand them, it is yet undecent to contest or dictate about them, in the presence at least of those who profess them: thus should private men beware, at least in that magisterial or eager way, to meddle with political affairs, illiterate men with scholastic, laymen with theological, unexperienced men with any such matters, the comprehension whereof dependeth upon skill and exercise: no man should be forward to meddle with things extraneous to his way and calling: doing so is wont to create much offence, it hath usually much immodesty and much folly in it; often it containeth much injustice.

These are some more general rules concerning the matter in hand: I should now, if time did permit, insist upon some particular kinds of meddling, *advice, reproof, interposing in contests*; but, in regard to your patience, I shall proceed no farther at present.

SERMON XXII.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.

IN a former discourse upon these words, I have already shewed, SERM.
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I. In what cases it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others.

II. Next, I propounded some general rules concerning this matter, according to which we may discern in what cases meddling with the affairs of others is commonly blameable. Thus far I have proceeded.

III. I shall now give some directions concerning particular kinds of meddling. And because they are many, I shall at present only insist upon three; (referring others to other occasions:) they are *advice, reproof, interposing in contests*, and contentions.

I. As to meddling in *advice*, we may do well to observe these directions.

1. Advise not (except upon call) a superior, or one more eminent than thyself in authority, in dignity, or in age: for he that offereth to advise, doth thereby claim to himself a kind of superiority, or excellence, above another; and it is not well consistent with the reverence and respect due to our betters to seem to do so. They should be wiser than we; at least it becometh us not to declare

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we think they are not. If they ask advice, we may without presumption give it, supposing it to be not so much their defect of knowledge as prudent caution, which maketh them willing to hear what any man can say to the case: but to obtrude it on them argueth we think them to need it, and ourselves able to direct them; which is presumption, and will pass for arrogance.

2. We should not indeed, with any violence or importunity, thrust advice upon our equals, or upon any man not subject to our charge, who is unwilling to receive it; for this is also an exalting ourselves in skill and wisdom above him, and implieth a contemptuous opinion concerning his knowledge; that he is so weak as to need advice, and yet more weak in not seeking it when needful from us; which practice consisteth not with modesty, and needs must breed offence: it is indeed unjust; for every man of right is to be allowed to act by his own advice, and to choose his own counsellors.

3. Be not obstinate in pressing advice: if he that asketh thy counsel do not like it, desist from urging farther, and rest content. If thou hast performed the part of a faithful friend, of a good man, of a charitable Christian, in advising what seemeth best to thee, that may abundantly satisfy thee; for the rest, *ipse viderit*, it is his concernment more than thine: if thou pretendest that he must follow thy advice, or art displeased because he doth not so, thou makest thyself a commander, not a counsellor; the which to appoint thee was beside his intention; he meant to seek thy help, not to forfeit his own liberty; and thou art not just in pretending to so much.

4. Affect not to be a counsellor, nor let any considerations, except of friendship, humanity, or charity, easily dispose thee to accept the office: it is not worth the while to undertake it as a matter of reputation, or because it seemeth to argue a good opinion concerning thy skill and ability; for it is a critical and dangerous thing to advise, because if the business succeedeth well according to thy advice, the principal usually carrieth away the profit

and the praise; his judgment, his industry, his fortune are applauded; little commendation or benefit accrueh to the counsellor: but if it prosper not, the main weight of blame is surely laid upon him that advised the course. If you, saith the party, and say the lookers on, had not thus directed, it had not thus fallen out.

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5. Wherefore it is commonly expedient not to advise otherwise than with reservation and diffidence; it is, we may say, the most probable course I know, but I question whether it will succeed; I hope well of it, but do not thoroughly confide therein. This modest and discreet way, whatever the event shall be, will shelter thee from blame; yea, will advance the reputation of thy sagacity; for if it fail, thy reason to suspect will be approved; if it prosper, the goodness of thy judgment will be applauded; whereas the confident director, if success crosseth his advice, is exclaimed upon for his rashness; if success favour-eth, he is not yet admired for his wisdom, because he seem-
ed to be sure; it being more admirable to guess the best among doubtful things, than to determine that which is cer-
tain. So much for meddling about *advice*.

II. For *reproof*, (which is necessary, and a duty upon some occasions,) we may do well to follow these directions.

1. Reprove not a superior; for it is exercising a power over him, and a punishing him; we thereby therefore do soar above our pitch, we confound ranks, and pervert the order settled among men; the practice containeth irreverence and presumption, it seemeth injurious, and is ever odious. What the ministers of God, or spiritual pastors, do in this kind, they do it by special commission, or instinct, (as the prophets in reprehending princes and priests, as St. John Baptist in reprov-
ing Herod;) or as ordinary superiors in the case of spiritual guidance, being set over us for that purpose, and watching for our souls, for which they must render an account: yet they must do it with great moderation and discretion: *Προσούτερον μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς, Rebuke not an elder, (or one more aged than thyself) but* *1 Tim. v. 1. entreat him as a father, (that is, advise him in the most*

Levit. xix.
17.
Ephes. v.
11.

Heb. xiii.
17.

1 Tim. v. 1.

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respectful and gentle manner,) is the charge of St. Paul to B. Timothy. In case of grievance or scandal, it becometh inferiors not proudly or peremptorily to criminate and tax, but humbly to remonstrate and supplicate for redress.

2. Reprove not rashly, and without certain cognizance of the fact ; for to reprove for things not done, or, which in moral reckoning is the same, for things not apparent, is both unjust, and argueth a malignant disposition ; it is unjust to punish so much as the modesty of any man, without clear evidence and proof ; it is malignity to suspect a man of ill, it is calumny to charge blame on him upon slender pretences, or doubtful surmises.

3. Reprove not also rashly as to the point of right, or without being able to convince the matter to be assuredly culpable : to reprove for things not bad, or not unquestionably such, (for things that are, or perhaps may be indifferent and innocent,) is also unjust, and signifieth a tyrannical disposition : it is unjust anywise to punish a man without clear warrant of law ; it is tyrannical to impose upon men our conceit, or to persecute them for using their liberty, following their judgment, or enjoying their humour ; which in effect we do when we reprove them for that which we cannot prove blameable ; it is, St. James saith, *a judging the law*, or charging it with defect, when we condemn

Jam. iv. 11. persons for things not prohibited by it : *He*, saith the Apostle, *that speaketh against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law.*

Both these kinds of rash reproof are very inconvenient, as breeding needless offence and endless contention ; for whoever is thus taxed will certainly take it ill, and will contend in his own defence : no man patiently, for no sufficient cause or sure ground, will lie under the stroke of reproof, which always smarteth, but then enrageth when it is supposed to be inflicted unjustly or maliciously ; even those who contentedly will bear friendly reproof, can worse brook to be causelessly taxed.

4. Reprove not for slight matters ; for such faults or de-

fects as proceed from natural frailty, from inadvertency, from mistake in matters of small consequence; for it is hard to be just in such reproof; or so to temper it as not to exceed the measure of blame due to such faults: they occur so often, that we should never cease to be carping, if we do it upon such occasions; it is not worth the while, it is not handsome to seem displeas'd with such little things; it is spending our artillery upon a game not worth the killing. Reproof is too grave and stately a thing to be prostituted upon so mean things; to use it upon small cause derogateth from its weight, when there is considerable reason for it; friendship, charity, and humanity should cover such offences. In fine, it is unseemly to reprove men for such things as all men, as themselves, are so continually subject unto: it is therefore better to let such things pass without any mark of displeasure or dislike.

5. Reprove not unseasonably; not when a person is indisposed to bear reproof, or unfit to profit thereby; not when there is likely to be no good effect come from it: when thou shalt only thereby conjure up an evil spirit of displeasure and enmity against thyself. Reproof is a thing of itself not good or pleasant, but sometimes needful, because wholesome and good in order to the end; it should therefore be administered as physic, then only when the patient is fit to receive it, and it may serve to correct his distemper; otherwise you will only make him more sick, and very angry.

It is ever almost unseasonable to reprove some persons, as scorers, impudent, incorrigibly profligate persons, who will hate the reprovee without regarding the reproof: *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.* To be malign'd, to be derided, to be aspersed with reproach and slander, is all one shall get by reprov'g such persons; it is both prostituting good advice, and exposing oneself to mischief, as our Saviour intimateth in that prohibition: *Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls*

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Mitem animam, et mores modicis erroribus æquos.
Juv. Sat. 14.

Prov. ix. 7,
8. xv. 12.

Matt. vii. 6.

SERM. XXII. *before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*

As such men ever, so most men in some seasons are incapable of reproof; so are men in calamity, who are discomposed by grief, the which is rather to be mitigated by comfort than increased and exasperated by blame; so are men in a passion, who have no ears to hear, no reason to judge, no will to comply with advice: reproof is apt to produce rather anger and ill-blood, than any contrition or kindly remorse in persons so affected.

It is also usually not seasonable to reprove men publicly, when their modesty is highly put to it, and their reputation grievously suffereth; for this is an extreme sort of punishment, and is taken for needless; it is extreme, because men had rather suffer any way than in their honour; it is deemed needless, because it may be ministered privately.

6. Reprove mildly and sweetly, in the calmest manner, in the gentlest terms; not in a haughty or imperious way, not hastily or fiercely; not with sour looks, or in bitter language; for these ways do beget all the evil, and hinder the best effects of reproof: they do certainly inflame and disturb the person reproved; they breed wrath, disdain, and hatred against the reprover; but do not so well enlighten the man to see his error, or affect him with kindly sense of his miscarriage, or dispose him to correct his fault: such reproofs look rather like the wounds and persecutions of enmity, than as remedies ministered by a friendly hand; they harden men with stomach and scorn to mend upon such occasion. If reproof doth not savour of humanity, it signifieth nothing; it must be like a bitter pill wrapped in gold, and tempered with sugar, otherwise it will not go down, or work effectually.

7. Affect not to be reprehensive; seem not willingly to undertake the place of a reprover; appear to be merely drawn thereto by sense of duty, or exigency of friendship, or constraint of charity and good-will. For to affect reproofing is a sign of ill-nature and arrogance, that we delight to observe the faults, that we love to insult upon

the infirmities and infelicities of other men; which is the part of a domineering and cruel humour. A truly good man indeed would be glad to be excused from the office; it is the most unpleasant thing he can do to be raking in men's sores, and causing smart to his neighbours; far more gladly would he be commending their good deeds, and cherishing their virtue. Nothing therefore but conscience and charity can put him on this employment. But so much for meddling in reproof.

III. Another kind of meddling is, *interposing in the contests* and contentions of others. As to this, we may, briefly, do well to observe these directions.

1. We should never meddle, so as to raise dissensions, or to do such things as breed them: we should by no means create misunderstandings, or distastes, between our neighbours: we should not instil jealousies, or surmises: we should not misconstrue words or actions to an offensive sense or consequence: we should not convey spiteful tales: we should not disclose the secrets of one to another. These practices engender enmity and strife among men; and are therefore inhuman, or rather diabolical; for the Devil is the great makebate in the world.

2. We should not foment dissensions already commenced, blowing up the coals that are kindled, by abetting the strife, or aggravating the causes thereof; it is not good to strengthen the quarrel, by siding with one part, except that part be notoriously oppressed or abused: in such a case indeed, when justice calleth for them, we may lend our advice and assistance; and may bear the inconvenience of being engaged, as Moses honestly and generously did, when he succoured his brother that suffered wrong; otherwise it is adviseable to keep ourselves out of the fray, that we do not encourage it by our taking part, and involve ourselves in the mischiefs of it.

3. Especially we should not make ourselves parties in any faction, where both sides are eager and passionate; for then even they who have the juster cause are wont to do unjust things, in which it is hard for any man engaged not to have share, at least not to undergo the imputation of

SERM. them: it is wisdom therefore in such cases to hold off, and
 XXII. to retain a kind of indifferency; to meddle with them is,
 Prov. xxvi. as the Wise Man saith, to *take a dog by the ears*; which
 17. he that doth, can hardly take care enough of his fingers.

4. We should not interpose ourselves (without invitation) to be arbitrators in points of difference: we may cautiously meditate, perhaps, or advise to agreement; but not pretend as judges with authority to decide the controversy: this savoureth of arrogance, this will work trouble to us, and bring the displeasure of both sides upon us; it is hard, in doing so, to avoid becoming parties, and offending one side. Our Lord therefore did, we see, wave this office, and put off the invitation with a *Who made me a divider, or a judge between you?*

Οἱ ἐν μέσῳ
 ὄντες ὡθύνου-
 σαι ἀπ' ἑμ-
 φροσίων.
Arist.

5. If we would at all meddle in these cases, it should be only in endeavouring, by the most fair and prudent means, to renew peace, and reconcile the dissenters; if we can by exhortation and persuasion to peace, by removing misprisions, by representing things handsomely, by mitigating their passions, bring them to good terms, this is a laudable meddling, this is a blessed practice. So I leave this particular, and finish the directive part of my discourse.

IV. I shall now farther only briefly propose some considerations inducing to quietness, and dissuasive from pragmatism; such as arise from the nature, properties, causes, and effects of each; serving to commend the one, and disparage the other.

1. Consider that quietness is just and equal, pragmatism is injurious. When we contain ourselves quiet, and mind only our own business, we allow every man his right, we harm no man's repute; we keep ourselves within our bounds, and trespass not on the place or interest of our neighbour; we disturb not the right order and course of things: but in being pragmatism we do wrongfully deprive others of their right and liberty to manage their business; we prejudice their credit, implicitly charging them with weakness and incapacity to dis-

patch their affairs without our direction; we therefore, upon our own unequal and partial judgment, do prefer and advance ourselves above them; we assume to ourselves in many respects more than our due, withdrawing it from others. In fine, no man loveth that others should invade his office, or intrude into his business; therefore in justice every man should forbear doing so toward others.

2. Quietness signifieth humility, modesty, and sobriety of mind; that we conceit not ourselves more wise than our neighbour; that we allow every man his share of discretion; that we take others for able and skilful enough to understand and manage their own affairs: but pragmatikness argueth much overweening and arrogance; that we take ourselves for the only men of wisdom, at least for more wise than those, into whose business we thrust ourselves.

3. Quietness is beneficial to the world, preserving the general order of things, disposing men to keep within their rank and station, and within the sphere of their power and ability, regularly attending to the work and business proper to them; whereby as themselves do well, so the public doth thrive: but pragmatikness disturbeth the world, confounding things, removing the distinction between superior, inferior, and equal, rendering each man's business uncertain; while some undertake that which belongeth not to them: one busy-body often, as we find by experience, is able to disturb and pester a whole society.

4. Quietness preserveth concord and amity: for no man is thereby provoked, being suffered undisturbedly to proceed in his course, according to his mind and pleasure: but pragmatikness breedeth dissensions and feuds: for all men are ready to quarrel with those who offer to control them, or cross them in their way; every man will be zealous in maintaining his privilege of choosing, and acting according to his choice; and cannot but oppose those who attempt to bereave him of it; whence between the busy-body assailing, and others defending their liberty, combustions must arise

SERM. 5. Quietness, to the person endued with it, or practising
 XXII. it, begetteth tranquillity and peace; for he that letteth

others alone, and cometh in no man's way, no man will be apt to disquiet or cross him; he keepeth himself out of broils and factions: but the busy-body createth vexation and trouble to himself; others will be ready to molest him in his proceedings, because he disturbeth them in theirs: he that will have a sickle in another's corn, or an oar in every man's boat, no wonder if his fingers be rapped; men do not more naturally brush off flies, which buz about their ears, sit upon their faces or hands, and sting or tickle them, than they strive to drive away clamorous and en-

1Pet. iv. 15. croaching busy-bodies. *Let, saith St. Peter, none of you suffer as a busy-body in other men's matters; it is, he intimateth, a practice whereby a man becometh liable to suffer, or which men are apt to punish soundly: and so the Wise Man, implying the fondness and danger of it, He, saith he, that passeth by, and meddleth with strife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears; that is, without any probable good effect, he provoketh a creature that will snarl at him and bite him.*

Prov. xxvi.
17.

6. Quietness is a decent and lovely thing, as signifying good disposition, and producing good effects; but pragmatism is ugly and odious. Every man gladly would be a neighbour to a quiet person, as who by the steady calmness and smoothness of his humour, the inoffensive stillness and sweetness of his demeanour, doth afford all the pleasure of conversation, without any cross or trouble. But no man willingly would dwell by him, who is apt ever to be infesting him by his turbulent humour, his obstreperous talk, his tumultuous and furious carriage; who, upon all occasions, without invitation or consent, will be thrusting in his eyes, his tongue, his hand; prying into all that is done, dictating this or that course, taxing all proceeding, usurping a kind of jurisdiction over him and his actions: no man will like, or can well endure such a neighbour. It is commonly observed, that pride is not only abominable to God, but loathsome to man;

and of all prides, this is the most offensive and odious: for the pride which keepeth at home, within a man's heart or fancy, not issuing forth to trouble others, may indeed well be despised, as hugely silly and vain; but that which breaketh out to the disturbance and vexation of others, is hated as molestful and mischievous. SERM. XXII.

7. Quietness adorneth any profession, bringing credit, respect, and love thereto; but pragmaticalness is scandalous, and procureth odium to any party or cause: men usually do cloak their pragmatical behaviour with pretences of zeal for public good, or of kindness to some party, which they have espoused; but thereby they do really cast reproach, and draw prejudice upon their side: if it be a good cause, they do thereby wrong it, making it to partake of the blame incident to such carriage, as if it did produce or allow disorder; if it be a bad cause, they wrong themselves, aggravating the guilt of their adherence thereto; for it is a less fault to be calm and reniss in an ill way, than busy or violent in promoting it. Nothing hath wrought more prejudice to religion, or hath brought more disparagement upon truth, than boisterous and unseasonable zeal; pretending in ways of passion, of fierceness, of rudeness to advance them: a quiet sectary doth to most men's fancy appear more lovely, than he that is furiously and factiously orthodox: the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is, saith St. Peter, *in God's sight, of great price*; and it is also very estimable in the opinion of men. 1 Pet. iii. 4.

8. Quiet is a safe practice, keeping men not only from needless incumbrances of business, but from the hazards of it, or being charged with its bad success: but pragmaticalness is dangerous; for if things go ill, the meddler surely will be loaded with the blame; the profit and commendation of prosperities will accrue to the persons immediately concerned; but the disaster and damage will be imputed to those who meddled in the business; to excuse or ease themselves, men will cast the disgrace on those who did project or further the undertaking: he

Τῶ ὄντι φαίνεται ὁ κατὰ τὴν ἡσυχίαν βίος ἀκίνδυνόν τι καὶ ἀσφαλές ἔχεν. Chrys. apud Plut.

SERM. therefore that would be secure, let him be quiet; he that
 XXII. loveth peril and trouble, let him be pragmatistical.

9. It is consequently a great point of discretion to be quiet, it yielding a man peace and safety without any trouble; and it is a manifest folly to be pragmatistical, it being only with care, pains, and trouble, to seek dissatisfaction to others, and danger to himself; it being also to affect many not only inconveniences, but impossibilities.

Is it possible for any man to grasp or compass an infinity of business? Yet this the pragmatistical man seemeth to drive at; for the businesses of other men are infinite, and into that abyss he plungeth himself, who passeth beyond his own bounds; by the same reason that he meddleth with any beside his own, he may undertake all the affairs in the world; so he is sure to have work enough, but fruit surely little enough of his pains.

Is it imaginable that we can easily bring others to our bent, or induce men to submit their business to our judgment and humour? Will not he that attempteth such things assuredly expose himself to disappointment and regret? Is it not therefore wisdom to let every man have his own way, and pursue his concernments without any check or control from us?

10. We may also consider, that every man hath business of his own sufficient to employ him; to exercise his mind, to exhaust his care and pains, to take up all his time and leisure. To study his own near concernments, to provide for the necessities and conveniences of his life, to look to the interests of his soul, to be diligent in his calling, to discharge faithfully and carefully all his duties relating to God and man, will abundantly employ a man; well it is if some of them do not encumber and distract him: he that will set himself with all his might to perform these things, will find enough to do; he need not seek farther for work, he need not draw more trouble on him.

Seeing then every man hath burden enough on his shoulders, imposed by God and nature, it is vain to take

Ο πλείστα
 πρῶτων
 πλείσθ'
 ἁμαρτάνει
 βροτῶν.
Eurip.

Ἀπρόγμω-
 νας εἶναι ἐκ-
 κλίνειν γὰρ
 τὸ καθήκον.
*Zenon. apud
 Laert.
 Chrysost.
 tom. ii.
 Eth. 64.*

on him more load, by engaging himself in the affairs of others; he will thence be forced, either to shake off his own business, or to become over-burdened and oppressed with more than he can bear. It is indeed hence observable, and it needs must happen, that those who meddle with the business of others are wont to neglect their own; they that are much abroad can seldom be at home; they that know others most are least acquainted with themselves: and the wise Hebrew, *The wisdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leisure*, (*σοφία σοφιστῶν ἐν ἐλευθερίᾳ σχολῆς*), and *he that hath little business shall be wise*; (*ὁ ἐλασσόμενος πρᾶξι αὐτῷ σοφισθήσεται*.) Whence it is scarce possible that a pragmatistical man should be a good man; that is, such an one who honestly and carefully performeth the duties incumbent on him.

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Eccelus.
xxxviii. 26.

Philosophers therefore generally have advised men to shun needless occupations, as the certain impediments of a good and happy life; they bid us endeavour *ἀπλῶς ἑαυτοῦς*, to simplify ourselves, or to get into a condition requiring of us the least that can be to do. St. Paul intended the same when he advised us, *μη ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τῷ βίῳ πραγματείαις*, not to be entangled in the negotiations of life: and our Saviour, when he touched Martha for being troubled about many things. So far therefore we should be from taking in hand the affairs of other men, that we should labour to contract our own, and reduce them to the fewest that we can; otherwise we shall hardly attain wisdom, or be able to perform our duty^a.

Luke x. 41.
τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν περὶ πολλὰ.

11. But suppose us to have much spare time, and to want business, so that we are to seek for divertisement, and must for relief fly to curiosity; yet it is not adviseable to meddle with the affairs of other men; there are divers other ways more innocent, more safe, more pleasant, more advantageous to divert ourselves, and satisfy curiosity^b.

Tacitus
saith of the
Stoicks sect,
—quæ tur-
bidos et ne-
gotiorum
appetentes
facit.

^a Ὁ σοφὸς, ἰδιοπράγμων, καὶ ἀπράγμων. Democ. Sen. Ep. 72, 22. Tertullian calleth Stoicism, Quietis magisterium. De Pall. v.

^b Omnium occupatorum conditio misera est, eorum tamen miserrima, qui ne suis quidem occupationibus laborant. Sen. de Brev. Vita, xix.

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Nature offereth herself, and her inexhaustible store of appearances to our contemplation; we may, without any harm, and with much delight, survey her rich varieties, examine her proceedings, pierce into her secrets. Every kind of animals, of plants, of minerals, of meteors, presenteth matter, wherewith innocently, pleasantly, and profitably to entertain our minds. There are many noble sciences, by applying our minds to the study whereof, we may not only divert them, but improve and cultivate them: the histories of ages past, or relations concerning foreign countries, wherein the manners of men are described, and their actions reported, may afford us useful pleasure and pastime; thereby we may learn as much, and understand the world as well, as by the most curious inquiry into the present actions of men; there we may observe, we may scan, we may tax the proceedings of whom we please, without any danger or offence: there are extant numberless books, wherein the wisest and most ingenious of men have laid open their hearts, and exposed their most secret cogitations unto us; in pursuing them we may sufficiently busy ourselves, and let our idle hours pass gratefully; we may meddle with ourselves, studying our own dispositions, examining our principles and purposes, reflecting on our thoughts, words, and actions; striving thoroughly to understand ourselves; to do this we have an unquestionable right, and by it we shall obtain vast benefit, much greater than we can hope to get by puddering in the designs or doings of others. Pragmaticalness then, as it is very dangerous and troublesome, so it is perfectly needless; it is a kind of idleness, but of all idleness the most unreasonable^c: it is at least worse than idleness, in St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion. For, *I had rather*, said he, *be idle more than I should, than over-busy*^d. Other considerations might be added; but these, I hope, may be sufficient to restrain this practice,

^c Ἄνδρϊ Λυδῶ πράγματα οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐξελθὼν ἐπρίετο. *Adag. apud Suidam.*

^d Ἀργὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον τῷ δέοντος, ἢ περιέργως δέχομαι. *Greg. Naz. Or. 26.*

so unprofitable and uneasy to ourselves, and, for the most part, so injurious and troublesome to others. SERM.
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*Now the God of peace make us perfect in every good word and work, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever.
Amen.*

SERMON XXIII.



OF THE LOVE OF GOD.



MATTH. xxii. 37.

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
with all thy heart.*

SERM.
XXIII.

Deut. vi. 5.
x. 12.
πειράζων
αὐτὸν
πρώτη ἐντο-
λή.
Luke x. 27.

THIS text is produced by our Saviour out of Moses's law, in answer to a question, wherewith a learned Pharisee thought to pose or puzzle him: the question was, *Which was the great and first commandment in the Law?* a question which, it seems, had been examined and determined among the doctors, in the schools of those days, (for in St. Luke, to the like question intimated by our Saviour, another lawyer readily yields the same answer, and is therefore commended by our Saviour, with a *recte respondisti, thou hast answered rightly*;) so that had our Saviour answered otherwise, he had, we may suppose, been taxed of ignorance and unskilfulness, perhaps also of error and heterodoxy; to convict him of which seems to have been the design of this Jewish trier or tempter (for he is said to ask *πειράζων αὐτὸν, trying, or tempting, him.*) But our Saviour defeats his captious intent, by answering, not only according to truth and the reason of the thing, but agreeably to the doctrine then current, and as the lawyer himself, out of his memory and learning, would have resolved it: and no wonder, since common sense dictates, that the law enjoining sincere and entire love toward God is necessarily the first and chief, or the most fundamental law of all religion; for that whosoever doth believe the

being of God, according to the most common notion that name bears, must needs discern himself obliged first and chiefly to perform those acts of mind and will toward him, which most true and earnest love do imply: different expressions of love may be prescribed, peculiar grounds of love may be declared in several ways of religion; but in the general and main substance of the duty all will conspire, all will acknowledge readily, that it is love we chiefly owe to God; the duty which he may most justly require of us, and which will be most acceptable to him. It was then indeed the great commandment of the old (or rather of the young and less perfect) religion of the Jews, and it is no less of the more adult and improved religion which the Son of God did institute and teach: the difference only is, that Christianity declares more fully how we should exercise it; and more highly engages us to observe it; requires more proper and more substantial expressions thereof; extends our obligation as to the matter, and intends it as to the degree thereof; for as it represents almighty God in his nature and in his doings more lovely than any other way of religion, either natural or instituted, hath done, or could do; so it proportionably raises our obligation to love him: it is, as St. Paul speaketh, τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας, *the last drift*, or the I Tim. i. 5. supreme pitch of *the evangelical profession*, and institution, to love; to love God first, and then our neighbour *out of a* Coloss. iii. *pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned*: it is 14. *the bond*, or knot of that *perfection* which the Gospel enjoins Matt. v. 48. us to aspire to: it is the first and principal of those godly *fruits*, which *the Holy Spirit* of Christ produceth in good Gal. v. 22. Christians. It is therefore plainly with us also the great commandment and chief duty: chiefly great in its extent, in its worth, in its efficacy, and influence: most great it is, in that it doth (eminently at least, or virtually) contain all other laws and duties of piety; they being all as branches making up its body, or growing out of it as their root. St. Paul saith of the love toward our neighbour, that it is Rom. xiii. *πλήρωμα τῶ νόμου*, *a full performance of the laws* concerning 9, 10. him; and that *all commandments*. *ἀπαρταλάσσονται*, *are re-* Gal. v. 14.

SERM. capitulated, or summed up in this one saying, *Thou shalt*
 XXIII. *love thy neighbour as thyself*: and by like, or greater reason are all the duties of piety comprized in the love of God; which is the chief of those two hinges, upon which, as our Saviour here subjoins, *the whole law and the prophets do hang*. So great is this duty in extent; and it is no less in proper worth; both as it immediately respects the most excellent and most necessary performances of duty, (employing our highest faculties in their best operations,) and as it imparts virtue and value to all other acts of duty: for no sacrifice is acceptable, which is not kindled by this heavenly fire; no offering sweet and pure, which is not seasoned by this holy salt; no action is truly good or commendable, which is not conjoined with, or doth not proceed from the love of God; that is not performed with a design to please God, or, at least, with an opinion that we shall do so thereby. If a man perform any good work not out of love to God, but from any other principle, or for any other design, (to please himself or others, to get honour or gain thereby,) how can it be acceptable to God, to whom it hath not any due regard? And what action hath it for its principle, or its ingredient, becomes sanctified thereby, in great measure pleasing and acceptable to God; such is the worth and value thereof. It is also the great commandment for efficacy and influence, being naturally productive of obedience to all other commandments; especially of the most genuine and sincere obedience; no other principle being in force and activity comparable thereto: (fear may drive to a compliance with some, and hope may draw to an observance of others; but it is love, that with a kind of willing constraint and kindly violence carries on cheerfully, vigorously, and swiftly to the performance of all God's commandments: *If any man loves me*, saith our Saviour, *he will keep my word*: to keep his word is a natural and necessary result of love to him: *This is the love of God*, saith St. John, *that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*; it is the nature of that love to beget a free and delightful obedience:) such then is the subject of our

Matt. xxii.
40.

Lev. ii. 13.
ix. 24. xx. 1.

2Cor. v. 14.

1John ii. 5.

Joh. xiv. 23.

1 Joh. v. 3.

discourse; even the sum, the soul, the spring of all our religion and duty. And because it is requisite, both for our direction how to do, and the examination of ourselves whether we do as we ought, that we should understand what we are so far obliged to; that we may be able to perform it, and that we be effectually disposed thereto, I shall use this method; I will first endeavour to explain the nature of this love commanded us; then, to shew some means of attaining it; lastly, to propound some inducements to the purchase and practice thereof.

I. For the first part; we may describe love in general (for it seems not so easy to define it exactly) to be an affection or inclination of the soul toward an object, proceeding from an apprehension and esteem of some excellency or some conveniency therein, (its beauty, worth, or usefulness,) producing thereupon, if the object be absent or wanting, a proportionable desire, and consequently an endeavour to obtain such a propriety therein, such a possession thereof, such an approximation or union thereto, as the thing is capable of; also a regret and displeasure in the failing so to obtain it; or in the want, absence, and loss thereof; likewise begetting a complacency, satisfaction, and delight in its presence, possession, or enjoyment; which is moreover attended with a good-will thereto, suitable to its nature; that is, with a desire that it should arrive unto, and continue in its best state; with a delight to perceive it so to thrive and flourish; with a displeasure to see it suffer or decay in any wise; with a consequent endeavour to advance it in all good, and preserve it from all evil. Which description containing the chief properties of love in common, do in some sort (not to insist upon abstracted notions, or in examples remote from our purpose) all of them well agree to that love which we owe to God, according to the tenor of this law, and in the degree therein expressed; that is, in the best manner and highest degree; for even of this divine love the chief properties (prerequisite thereto, or intimately conjoined therewith, or naturally resulting from it) I conceive are these.

SERM. / 1. A right apprehension and firm persuasion concerning
 XXIII. God, and consequently a high esteem of him as most excellent in himself and most beneficial to us: for such is the frame of our soul, that the perceptive part doth always go before the appetitive, that affection follows opinion, that no object otherwise moves our desire, than as represented by reason, or by fancy, good unto us: what effect will the goodliest beauty, or the sweetest harmony have upon him, who wants sense to discern, or judgment to prize them? This is our natural way of acting; and according to it, that we may in due measure love God, he must appear proportionably amiable, and desirable to us; we must entertain worthy thoughts of him, as full of all perfection in himself; as the fountain of all good; as the sole author of all that happiness we can hope for or receive: as he, in possession of whom we shall possess all things desirable; in effect and virtue, all riches, all honours, all pleasure, all good that we are capable of; and without whom we can enjoy no real good or true content: which esteem of him, how can it otherwise than beget affection toward him? If the faint resemblances, or the slender participations of such excellencies (of that incomprehensible wisdom, that uncontrollable power, that unconfined bounty, that unblemished purity, which are united in him, and shine from him with a perfect lustre; If, I say, the very faint resemblances, and imperfect participations of these excellencies) discerned in other things, are apt to raise our admiration, and allure our affection toward them; if the glimmering of some small inconsiderable benefit, the shadow of real profit discovered in these inferior empty things, is able so strongly to attract our eyes, and fix our hearts upon them, why should not from a like, but so much greater cause, the like effect proceed? whence can it be that the apprehension of an object so infinitely lovely, so incomparably beneficial (if not passing cursorily through our fancy, but deeply impressed upon our mind) should not proportionably affect and incline us toward him with all that desire.

that delight, that good-will which are proper to love? If we think, as the Psalmist did, that *there is none in heaven or in earth comparable to God*, (comparable in essential perfection, comparable in beneficial influence,) why should we not be disposed also to say with him; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee*. Such a reverent esteem is the proper foundation upon which true love is built, and which upholds it: whence, as the love of God doth commonly denote all the duties of religion; so doth fear (or reverence to him) likewise in scripture style comprehend and express them all; it being the root from whence love doth sprout, and by which it is nourished; it being the beginning of that true wisdom by which we embrace and fasten our affection upon the sovereign good. Hence we may observe, that those devout persons, whose hearts were fullest of this love, their minds were most employed in meditation upon the divine excellencies, and upon the beneficial emanations from them in bounty and mercy upon the creatures; their tongues being tuned by their thoughts, and their inward esteem breaking forth into praise. *Every day, all the day long, at all times did they bless God, praise his name, speak of his righteousness, shew forth his salvation*, as the Psalmist expresses his practice, arising from love enlivened by the esteem of God, and the apprehension of his excellent goodness: from whence also that strong faith, that constant hope, that cheerful confidence they reposed in him; that hearty approbation of all his counsels and purposes; that full acquiescence of mind in his proceedings; that entire submission of their understanding to his discipline, and resignation of their will to his good pleasure; that yielding up themselves (their souls and bodies, their lives and goods) to his disposal, with all the like high effects and pregnant signs of love did flow: but,

2. Another property of this love is an earnest desire of obtaining a propriety in God; of possessing him, in a manner, and enjoying him; of approaching him, and being, so far as may be, united to him. When we stand upon

SERM.
XXIII.

Ps. lxxxix.

6.

Ps. lxxiii.

25.

Comp. Ps.

cxiii. 17, 18.

Ps. xxxi. 23.

xxxiv. 9.

cxlv. 19, 20.

Ps. cxlvi. 7.

civ. 33.

xxxiv. 4.

lxxi. 15.

cxlv. 2.

xxxv. 28.

lxxi. 8.

SERM. XXIII. such terms with any person, that we have a free access unto and a familiar intercourse with him; that his conversation is profitable and delightful to us; that we can upon all occasions have his advice and assistance; that he is always ready in our needs, and at our desire, to employ what is in him of ability for our good and advantage, we may be said to own such a person, to possess and enjoy him; to be tied, as it were, and joined to him (as it is said *1 Sam. xviii. 1.* *the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, so that he loved him as his own soul.*) And such a propriety in, such a possession of, such an alliance and conjunction to himself, God vouchsafes to them, who are duly qualified *Heb. xi. 16.* for so great a good. *He was not ashamed,* saith the Apostle concerning the faithful Patriarchs, *to be called their God;* to be appropriated in a manner unto them; and *1 Joh. ii. 23.* *He that acknowledgeth the Son,* saith St. John concerning *Ps. cxix. 2.* good Christians, *καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει,* *hath* (or possesseth) *the* *Deut. xi. 22.* *Father also:* and *to seek;* *to find;* *to draw near to;* *to* *Josh. xxiii. 8.* *cleave unto;* *to abide with,* *to abide in;* and such other *1 Cor. vi. 17.* phrases frequently do occur in Scripture, denoting that *Acts xi. 23.* near relation which good men stand in toward God; implying *Joh. xv. 4.* that he affords them a continual liberty of access and *xvii. 21.* coming into his especial presence, that he admits them to a kind of converse and communion with himself, full of spiritual benefit and delight; that bearing an especial good-will and favour toward them, he is disposed to exert his infinite wisdom and power in their behalf; is ready to impart all needful and convenient good unto them (help in their needs, supply in wants, protection in dangers; the direction, assistance, and comfort of his Holy Spirit; pardon of sins and peace of conscience; all the blessings of grace here, and all the felicities of glory hereafter;) such an interest, as it were, in God and a title unto him, such a possession and enjoyment of him we are capable of obtaining: and as that enjoyment is in itself infinitely above all things desirable; so, if we love God, we cannot surely but be earnestly desirous thereof: a cold indifferency about it, a faint wishing for it, a slothful tendency after it, are much on this side love; it will inflame

our heart, it will transport our mind, it will heget a vigorous and lively motion of soul toward it: for love, you know, is commonly resembled unto, yea even assumes the name of fire; for that it warms the breast, agitates the spirits, quickens all the powers of soul, and sets them on work in desire and pursuance of the beloved object: you may imagine as well fire without heat or activity, as love without some ardency of desire. *Longing and thirsting of soul; fainting for, and panting after; crying out, and stretching forth the hands toward God;* such are the expressions signifying the good Psalmist's love; by so apt and so pathological resemblances doth he set out the vehemency of his desire to enjoy God. I need not add concerning endeavour; for that by plain consequence doth necessarily follow desire: the thirsty soul will never be at rest till it have found out its convenient refreshment: if we, as David did, do *long after God*, we shall also with him *earnestly seek God*; nor ever be at rest till we have found him. Coherent with this is a

3. Third property of this love, that is, a great complacence, satisfaction, and delight in the enjoyment of God: in the sense of having such a propriety in him; in the partaking those emanations of favour and beneficence from him; and consequently in the instruments conveying, in the means conducing to such enjoyment: for joy and content are the natural fruits of obtaining what we love, what we much value, what we earnestly desire. Yea, what we chiefly love, if we become possessed thereof, we easily rest satisfied therewith, although all other comforts be wanting to us. The covetous person for instance, who dotes upon his wealth, let him be pinched with the want of conveniences; let his body be wearied with toil; let his mind be distracted with care; let him be surrounded with obloquy and disgrace—*at mihi pluuulo ipse domi*; he nevertheless enjoys himself in beholding his beloved pelf: the ambitious man likewise, although his state be full of trouble and disquiet; though he be the mark of common envy and hatred; though he be exposed to many crosses and dangers; yet while he stands in

SERM. XXIII. power and dignity, among all those thorns of care and fear, his heart enjoys much rest and pleasure. In like manner we may observe those pious men, whose hearts were endued with this love, by the present sense, or assured hope of enjoying God, supporting themselves under all wants and distresses; *rejoicing, yea, boasting and exulting* in their afflictions; and no wonder, while they conceived themselves secure in the possession of their hearts' wish; of that which they incomparably valued and desired above all things; which by experience they have found so comfortable and delicious: *O taste and see*, exclaims the Psalmist, inspired with this passion, *O taste and see, that the Lord is good: How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! They* (they who enjoy it) *shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures: A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness:* so did those devout practisers of this duty express the satisfaction they felt in God, and in those things whereby he did impart the enjoyment of himself unto them. So did *the light of God's countenance cheer their heart; so did his loving-kindness appear better than life itself unto them.* Hence do they so frequently enjoin and exhort us *to be glad; to delight ourselves; to glory; to rejoice continually in the Lord;* in the sense of his goodness, in the hope of his favour; the doing so being an inseparable property of love; to which we adjoin another.

Luke vi. 23.
1 Pet. iv. 13.
Rom. v. 3.
Col. i. 24.

Psal. xxxiv.
8. xxxvi. 7.

Psal. lxxxiv.
1, 10. lxxiii.
5.

Neh. ix. 25.
Psal. iv. 6.
lxxiii. 3.
xxxiii. 1.
xxxii. 11.
cv. 3. cvii.
12. xxxvii.
4.

4. The feeling much displeasure and regret in being deprived of such enjoyment; in the absence or distance as it were of God from us; the loss or lessening of his favour; the subtraction of his gracious influences from us: for surely answerable to the love we bear unto any thing will be our grief for the want or loss thereof: it was a shrewd argument which the poet used to prove that men loved their monies better than their friends, because—*majorum tumultu plorantur nummi, quam funera*—they more lamented the loss of those than the death of these: indeed, that which a man principally affects, if he is be-

reaved thereof, be his condition otherwise how prosperous and comfortable soever, he cannot be contented; all other enjoyments become unsavoury and unsatisfactory to him. And so it is in our case, when God, although only for trial, according to his wisdom and good pleasure, hides his face, and withdraws his hand; leaving the soul in a kind of desolation and darkness; not finding that ready aid in distress, not feeling that cheerful vivacity in obedience, not tasting that sweet relish of devotion, which have been usually afforded thereto: if love reside in the heart, it will surely dispose it to a sensible grief; it will inspire such exclamations as those of the Psalmist: *How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy face? Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble: Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies: Draw nigh unto my soul and redeem it.* Even our Saviour himself in such a case, when God seemed for a time to withdraw the light of his countenance, and the protection of his helpful hand from him, (or to frown and lay his heavy hand upon him) had his soul *περίσπαστον ἕως θανάτου, extremely grieved and full of deadly anguish*; neither surely was it any other cause than excess of love, which made that temporary desertion so grievous and bitter to him, extorting from his most meek and patient heart that woful complaint, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* But especially, when our iniquities have, as the Prophet expresseth it, *separated between our God and us*; and our sins have hid his face from us: when that thick cloud hath eclipsed the light of his countenance, and intercepted his gracious influences; when by wilfully offending we have, as the Israelites are said to have done, *rejected our God, cast him off, and driven him from us*; so depriving ourselves of propriety in him, and the possession of his favour; then if any love be alive in us, it will prompt us, with those good men in their penitential agonies, to be grievously sensible of, and sorely to bewail that our wretched condition; there will not, if we so heartily love God, and value his favour as they did, be any soundness in our flesh, or rest in our bones;

SERM.
XXIII.

Psal.
lxxxix. 46.
lxix. 16.
xxx. 7.
xlii. 3.

Matt. xxvi.
38. xxvii.
46.

Isa. lix. 2.
Jer. v. 25.
Isa. xlii. 26.

1 Sam. viii.
7. x. 9.

Psal. vi.
xxxv.
xxxviii. li.
cii. cxxx.
cxliii.

SERM. *our spirit will be overwhelmed within us, and our heart*
 XXIII. *within us desolate. Our heart will be smitten and withered*

Ps. xxxviii.

3. cxliiii. 4.

cii. 4.

like grass, upon the consideration and sense of so inestimable a loss. Love will render such a condition very sad and uneasy to us; will make all other delights insipid and distasteful; all our life will become bitter and burthensome to us; neither, if it in any measure abides in us, shall we receive content, till by humble deprecation we have regained some glimpse of God's favour, some hope of being reinstated in our possession of him. Farther yet,

Psal. vi. 4.

xxxviii. 21.

li. 11. cii. 2.

cxliiii. 7.

5. Another property of this love is, to bear the highest good-will toward God; so as to wish heartily and effectually, according to our power, to procure all good to him, and to delight in it; so as to endeavour to prevent and to remove all evil, if I may so speak, that may befall him, and to be heartily displeased therewith. Although no such benefit or advantage can accrue to God which may increase his essential and indefectible happiness; no

Psal. xvi. 2.

Job xxii. 3.

harm or damage can arrive that may impair it, (for he can be neither really more or less rich, or glorious, or joyful than he is: neither have our desire or our fear, our delight or our grief, our designs or our endeavours any object, any ground in those respects;) yet hath he declared, that

Jer. ix. 24.

there be certain interests and concernments which, out of his abundant goodness and condescension, he doth tender and prosecute as his own: as if he did really receive advantage by the good, and prejudice by the bad success, respectively belonging to them; that he earnestly desires, and is greatly delighted with some things; very much dislikes, and is grievously displeased with other things: for instance, that he bears a fatherly affection toward his creatures, and earnestly desires their welfare; and delights to see them enjoy the good he designed them; as also dislikes the contrary events; doth commiserate and condole their misery; that he is consequently well pleased, when piety and justice, peace and order (the chief means conducing to our welfare) do flourish; and displeas'd, when impiety and iniquity, dissension and disorder (those

certain sources of mischief to us) do prevail; that he is well satisfied with our rendering to him that obedience, honour, and respect, which are due to him; and highly offended with our injurious and disrespectful behaviour toward him, in the commission of sin and violation of his most just and holy commandments: so that there wants not sufficient matter of our exercising good-will both in affection and action toward God; we are capable both of wishing, and (in a manner, as he will interpret and accept it) of doing good to him, by our concurrence with him, in promoting those things which he approves and delights in, and in removing the contrary. And so surely shall we do, if we truly love God: for love, as it would have the object to be its own, as it intends to enjoy it, so it would have it in its best state, and would put it thereinto, and would conserve it therein; and would thence contribute all it is able to the welfare, to the ornament, to the pleasure and content thereof. *What is it, saith Cicero, to love, but to will or desire, that the person loved should receive the greatest good that can be?* Love also doth reconcile, conform, and unite the inclinations and affections of him who loves, to the inclinations and affections of him who is beloved; *eadem velle, et eadem nolle, to consent in liking and disliking of things*, if it be not the cause, if it be not the formal reason or essence, as some have made it, it is at least a certain effect of love. If then we truly love God, we shall desire that all his designs prosper, that his pleasure be fulfilled, that all duty be performed, all glory rendered to him: we shall be grieved at the wrong, the dishonour, the disappointment he receives: especially we shall endeavour in our own practice, with holy David, to perform πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ, *all that God wills, desires, or delights in; to eschew whatever offends him. Our desire, our delight, our endeavour will conspire with and be subordinate to his; for it would be a strange kind of love that were consistent with the voluntary doing of that which is hurtful, injurious, or offensive to that we love; such actions being the proper effects, the natural signs of hatred and enmity: If any man say I love God, and*

SERM.
XXIII.

Quid est
amare, nisi
velle bonis
aliquem
affici quam
maximis?
Cic. de Fin.
2.

Acts xiii.
22.

SERM. XXIII. *hateth his brother, he is a liar, saith St. John; and, If any man seeth his brother need, and shutteth his bowels toward him, how doth the love of God abide in him? He that in his affections is so unlike, so contrary unto God; he that is unwilling to comply with God's will in so reasonable a performance; he that, in a matter wherein God hath declared himself so much concerned, and so affected therewith, doth not care to cross him, to displease and disappoint him; how can he, with any shew of truth, or with any modesty, pretend to love God? Hence it is, that keeping of God's commandments is commonly represented to us as the most proper expression, as the surest argument of our love to God:*

Exod. xx. 6. *shewing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments; they are joined together as terms equivalent, or as inseparable companions in effect: He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: Ye are my friends, (that is, not only objects of my affection, but actively friends, bearing affection unto me,) if ye do whatsoever I command you, saith our Saviour: and,*

1 John iv. 12. *Whoso keepeth his word, in him is the love of God truly perfected: (he hath the truth and sincerity; he hath the integrity and consummation of love; without it love is wholly false and counterfeit, or very lame and imperfect; so the loving and beloved Disciple teaches us.) For by doing thus, as we signify our esteem of God's wisdom which directeth us, our dread of his power and justice that can punish us, our hope in his goodness and fidelity to reward us, our regard to his majesty and authority over us; so especially thereby (if our obedience at least be free and cheerful) we express our good will toward him; shewing thereby, that we are disposed to do him all the good, and gratify him all we can; that his interests, his honour, his content,*

Ps. lxxxvi. 11. *are dear and precious to us. And were indeed our hearts knit unto God with this bond of perfection, we could not in our wills, and consequently in our practice, be so severed from him; we should also love heartily all virtue and goodness, the nearest resemblances of him, and which he chiefly loves; we should do what David so oft pro-*

fesses himself to do, *love his law, and greatly delight in his commandments.* With our Saviour, we should *delight to perform his will*; it would (as it was to him) *be our meat and our drink to do it*; his *yoke would be easy* indeed, and his *burden light* unto us; his yoke so easy, that we should wear it rather as a jewel about our necks than as a yoke; his burthen so light, that we should not feel it as a burthen, but esteem it our privilege. We should not be so dull in apprehending, or so slack in performing duty; for this sharp-sighted affection would presently discern, would readily suggest it to us; by the least intimation it would perceive what pleaseth God, and would snatch opportunity of doing it: we should not need any arguments to persuade us, nor any force to compel us, love would inspire us with sufficient vigour and alacrity; it would urge and stimulate us forward not only *to walk in*, but even, as the Psalmist expresseth it, to *run the ways of God's commandments.*

But let thus much serve for explication of the nature of this duty; in order, as was before said, to the direction of our practice, and examination thereof: the particular duties mentioned being comprehended in, or appertaining to the love of God, if we perceive that we practise them, we may to our satisfaction and comfort infer, that proportionably we are endued with this grace; if not, we have reason (such as should beget remorse and pious sorrow in us) to suspect we abide in a state of disaffection or of indifferency toward him. If we find the former good disposition, we should strive to cherish and improve it; if the second bad one, we should (as we tender our own welfare and happiness, as we would avoid utter ruin and misery) endeavour to remove it.

II. To the effecting of which purposes I shall next propound some means conducible; some in way of removing obstacles, others by immediately promoting the duty.

Of the first kind are these ensuing:

1. The destroying of all loves opposite to the love of God, extinguishing all affection to things odious and of-

SERM.

XXIII.

Psal. xi. 7.

Psal. cxix.

163, 165.

113, 16, 35,

70, 47, 24,

77.

Psal. i. 2.

cxii. 1. xl.

8.

Heb. x. 7.

John iv. 34.

John iv. 34.

v. 30.

Prov. iii. 22.

Psal. cxix.

32.

SERM. fensive to God: mortifying all corrupt and perverse, all
XXIII. unrighteous and unholy desires^a. It agrees with souls no

^a 1st sal. xcvii.
10.

Ye that love
the Lord,
hate evil.

less than with bodies, that they cannot at once move or tend
contrary wise; upward and downward, backward and for-
ward at one time: it is not possible we should together truly
esteem, earnestly desire, bear sincere good-will to things in
nature and inclination quite repugnant each to other. No
man ever took him for his real friend, who maintains cor-
respondency, secret or open, who joins in acts of hostility
with his professed enemies: at least we cannot, as we ought,
love God with our whole heart, if with any part thereof we
affect his enemies; those, which are mortally and irrecon-
cileably so; as are all iniquity and impurity, all inordinate
lusts, both of flesh and spirit: *the carnal mind* (the mind-
ing or affecting of the flesh) *is*, St. Paul tells us, *enmity to-
ward God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can*

τὸ φρόνημα
τῆς σαρκός.
Rom. viii. 7.

be; it is an enemy, even the worst of enemies, an incorri-
gibly obstinate rebel against God; and can we then retaining
any love to God or peace with him, comply and conspire
therewith? And, *the friendship of the world* (that is, I sup-
pose, of those corrupt principles, and those vicious customs
which usually prevail in the world) *is also*, St. James tells us,
enmity with God; so that, he adds, *if any man be a friend
to the world, he is thereby constituted* (he immediately *ipso
facto* becomes) *an enemy to God*. St. John affirms the same;

Jam. iv. 4.

καθίσταται.

1 John ii.
15.

*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in
him*; explaining himself, that by the world he means those
things which are most generally embraced and practised
therein; *the lust, or desire, of the flesh*, (that is, sensuality
and intemperance,) *the lust of the eyes*, (that is, envy, co-
vetousness, vain curiosity, and the like,) *the ostentation, or
boasting, of life*, (that is, pride, ambition, vain-glory, arro-
gance,) qualities as irreconcilably opposite to the holy nature
and will of God, so altogether inconsistent with the love of
him; begetting in us an aversion and antipathy towards
him; rendering his holiness distasteful to our affections,
and his justice dreadful to our consciences; and himself

ἐπιθυμία τῆς
σαρκός, ἐπι-
θυμία τῶν
ὀφθαλμῶν,
ἢ ἀλαζονία
τοῦ βίου.

consequently, his will, his law, his presence hateful to us : SERM.
XXIII.
 while we take him to be our enemy and to hate us, we shall certainly in like manner stand affected toward him : this indeed is the main obstacle, the removal of which will much facilitate the introduction of divine love ; it being a great step to reconciliation and friendship, to be disengaged from the adverse party : we should then easily discern the beauty of divine goodness and sanctity, when the mists of ignorance, of error, of corrupt prejudice, arising from those gross carnal affections, were dissipated ; we should better relish the sweet and savoury graces of God, when the palate of our mind were purged from vicious tinctures ; we should be more ready to hope for peace and favour in his eyes, when our consciences were freed from the sense of such provocations and defilements. But

2. If we would obtain this excellent grace, we must restrain our affections toward all other things, however in their nature innocent and indifferent. The young gentleman in the Gospel had, it seems, arrived to the former pitch ; having through the course of his life abstained from grosser iniquities and impurities ; so far, that our Saviour, in regard to that attainment of his, conceived an affection for him, (he loved him, it is said,) yet was not he sufficiently disposed to love God ; being *in one thing deficient*, that he retained an immoderate affection to his wealth and worldly conveniencies ; with which sort of affections the love of God cannot consist : for we much undervalue God, and cannot therefore duly love him, if we deem any thing comparable to him, or considerable in worth or usefulness when he comes in competition : if we deem, that the possession of any other thing beside him can confer to our happiness, or the want thereof can prejudice it, and make us miserable : no other love should bear any proportion to the love of him ; no other object should appear (as indeed none really is) simply good, desirable, or amiable to us. What value St. Paul had of his legal qualifications and privileges, the same should we have concerning all other things in appearance pleasant or convenient to us ; they ought, in regard

ἔλαχον.
Matt. xix.
20.

Mark x. 21.

ἡγάσθη
αὐτόν.
Luke xviii.
22.

Phil. iii. 8.

SERM. to God, to *scem damage and dung*; not only mean and
 XXIII. despicable, but even sordid and loathsome to us; not only
 ξημία, οξύ-
 βάλω. unworthy of our regard and desire, but deserving our hat-
 red and abhorreny; we should, I say, even hate the best
 of them; so our Saviour expresseth it: *If any man doth*
 Luke xiv. *not hate his father and his mother, his wife and his children,*
 26. *his brothers and sisters, and even his own soul, (or his own*
life) he cannot be my disciple; that is, if any man retain in
 his heart any affection not infinitely, as it were, less than
 that which he bears to God; if any thing be in comparison
 dear and precious to him, he is not disposed to entertain the
 main point of Christ's discipline, the sincere and entire love
 of God. To *love him*, as he requires, *with all our heart*,
 implies, that our heart be filled with his love, so that no room
 be left for any other passion to enter or dwell there. And
 indeed such, if we observe it, is the nature of our soul, we
 can hardly together harbour earnest or serious affections
 toward different objects; one of them will prevail and
 predominate; and so doing will not suffer the other to
 remain, but will extrude or extinguish it: no heart of man
 can correspond with two rivals, but, as our Saviour
 Matt. vi. 24. teacheth us, *it will hate and despise one, will love and stick*
to the other; whence he infers, that *we cannot serve* (that
 is, affectionately adhere to) *both God and mammon*. If we
 Psal. lxiii. have, according to the Psalmist's phrase, *set our hearts*
 10. *upon wealth, and will be rich*; (are resolved to be, as St.
 1 Tim. vi. Paul expresseth it;) if we eagerly aspire to power and ho-
 9, 17. nour, with the Pharisees, *preferring the applause of men*
 John xii. *before the favour of God*: if any worldly or bodily pleasure,
 43. or any curiosity how plausible soever, hath seized upon
 our spirits and captivated our affections; if any inferior
 2 Tim. iv. object whatever, with its apparent splendour, sweetness,
 10. goodliness, conveniencē hath so inveigled our fancy, that
 we have an exceeding esteem thereof, and a greedy appe-
 tite thereto; that we enjoy it with huge content, and
 cannot part from it without much regret; that thing
 doth at present take up God's place within us; so that
 our heart is uncapable, at least in due measure, of divine

love: but if we be indifferently affected toward all such things, and are unconcerned in the presence or absence of them; esteeming them as they are, mean and vain; loving them as they deserve, as inferior and trivial; if, according to St. Paul's direction, *we use them as if we used them not*; 1 Cor. vii. 31. it is another good step toward the love of God: the divine light will shine more brightly into so calm and serene a medium: a soul void of other affections will not be only more capable to receive, but apt to suck in that heavenly one; being insensible, in any considerable degree, of all other comforts and complacences, we shall be apt to search after, and reach out at that, which alone can satisfy our understanding and satiate our desires; especially if we add hereto,

3. The freeing of our hearts also from immoderate affection to ourselves; (I mean not from a sober desire or an earnest regard to our own true good; for this as nature enforces to, so all reason allows, and even God's command obligeth us to; nor can it be excessive; but a high conceit of ourselves as worthy or able, a high confidence in any thing we have within us or about us;) for this is a very strong bar against the entrance, as of all other charity, so especially of this; for as the love of an external object doth thrust, as it were, our soul outwards towards it; so the love of ourselves detains it within, or draws it inwards; and consequently these inclinations crossing each other cannot both have effect, but one will subdue and destroy the other. If our mind be—*ipsa suis contenta bonis*—*satisfied with her own* (taking them for her own) endowments, abilities, or fancied perfections; if we imagine ourselves wise enough to perceive, good enough to choose, resolute enough to undertake, strong enough to achieve, constant enough to pursue whatever is conducive to our real happiness and best content; we shall not care to go farther; we will not be at the trouble to search abroad for that which, in our opinion, we can so readily find, so easily enjoy at home. If we so admire and dote upon ourselves, we thereby put our-

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Τῶν γὰρ ὄντων
ὃ ἴξ' αὐτῶ τῆς
ἔχει περισ-
σοῦς, ἔ μά-
ταιος παρ'
ἄλλω λαμ-
βάνων.
Epict i 9.

SERM.
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Gal. vi. 3.

selves into God's stead, and usurp the throne due to him in our hearts; comparing ourselves to God, and in effect preferring ourselves before him; thereby consequently shutting out that unparalleled esteem, that predominant affection we owe to him; while we are busy in dressing and decking, in courting and worshipping this idol of our fancy, we shall be estranged from the true object of our devotion; both we shall willingly neglect him, and he in just indignation will desert us. But if as all other things, so even ourselves do appear exceedingly vile and contemptible, foul and ugly in comparison to God; if we *take ourselves* to be (as truly we are) mere *nothings*, or somethings worse; not only destitute of all considerable perfections, but full of great defects; blind and fond in our conceits, crooked and perverse in our wills, infirm and unstable in all our powers, unable to discern, unwilling to embrace, backward to set upon, inconstant in prosecuting those things which are truly good and advantageous to us; if we have, I say, this right opinion and judgment of ourselves, seeing within us nothing lovely or desirable, no proper object there of our esteem or affection, no bottom to rest our mind upon, no ground of solid comfort at home, we shall then be apt to look abroad, to direct our eyes, and settle our affections upon somewhat more excellent in itself, or more beneficial to us, that seems better to deserve our regard, and more able to supply our defects. And if all other things about us appear alike deformed and deficient, unworthy our affection and unable to satisfy our desires; then may we be disposed to seek, to find, to fasten and repose our soul upon the only proper object of our love; in whom we shall obtain all that we need, infallible wisdom to guide us, omnipotent strength to help us, infinite goodness for us to admire and enjoy.

These are the chief obstacles, the removing of which conduce to the begetting and increasing the love of God in us. A soul so cleansed from love to bad and filthy things, so emptied of affection to vain and unprofitable

things, so opened and dilated by excluding all conceit of, all confidence in itself, is a vessel proper for the divine love to be infused into; into so large and pure a vacuity (as finer substances are apt to flow of themselves into spaces void of grosser matter) that free and moveable Spirit of divine grace will be ready to succeed, and therein to disperse itself. As all other things in nature, the clogs being removed which hinder them, do presently tend with all their force to the place of their rest and well-being; so would, it seems, our souls, being loosed from baser affections obstructing them, willingly incline toward God, the natural centre, as it were, and bosom of their affection; would resume, as Origen speaks, that *natural philtre* (that intrinsic spring, or incentive of love) *which all creatures have toward their Creator*; especially, if to these we add those positive instruments, which are more immediately and directly subservient to the production of this love; they are these:

SERM.
XXIII.

Φίλτρον
ἀναλαμβάνειν
φυσικὸν
τὸ πρὸς τὸν
κτίσαντα.
Orig. in
Cels. p. 135.

1. Attentive consideration of the divine perfections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehension of them.

2. The consideration of God's works and actions; his works and actions of nature, of providence, of grace.

3. Serious regard and reflection upon the peculiar benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed to ourselves.

4. An earnest resolution and endeavour to perform God's commandments, although upon inferior considerations of reason; upon hope, fear, desire to attain the benefits of obedience, to shun the mischiefs from sin.

5. Assiduous prayer to Almighty God, that he in mercy would please to bestow his love upon us, and by his grace to work it in us.

But I must forbear the prosecution of these things, rather than farther trespass upon your patience. Let us conclude all with a good Collect, sometimes used by our Church.

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without

SERM. *charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour*
XXIII. *into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very*
bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever
liveth is counted dead before thee ; grant this for thine only
Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATT. xxii. 37.

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
with all thy heart.*

WHICH is the great commandment? was the question in answer whereto our Saviour returns this text; and that with highest reason, (discernible by every man,) for that of necessity the love of God is the principal duty we owe unto him; the great duty indeed, as being largest in extent, and comprehending in a manner all other duties of piety; as that which exceeds in proper worth and dignity, (employing the noblest faculties of our souls in their best operations upon the most excellent object,) as that which communicates virtue unto, and hath a special influence upon all other duties; in fine, as that, which is the sum, the soul, the spring, of all other duties; in discoursing whereupon, I did formerly propound this method; first, to declare the nature thereof; then, to shew some means apt to beget and improve that excellent virtue in us; lastly, to propose some inducements to the practice thereof.

The first part I endeavoured to perform, by describing it according to its essential properties (common to love in general, and more particularly to this) of duly esteeming God, of desiring, according as we are capable, to possess and enjoy him, of receiving delight and satisfaction in the enjoyment of him, of feeling displeasure in being deprived

SERM.
XXIV.

SERM. hereof, of bearing good-will unto him, expressed by en-
XXIV. deavours to please him, by delighting in the advancement
of his glory, by grieving when he is disserved or dis-
honoured.

The next part I also entered upon, and offered to con-
sideration those means, which serve chiefly to remove the
impediments of our love to God ; which were,

1. The suppressing all affections opposite to this ; all
perverse and corrupt, all unrighteous and unholy desires.

2. The restraining or keeping within bounds of modera-
tion our affections toward other things, even in their nature
innocent or indifferent.

3. The freeing of our hearts from immoderate affection
toward ourselves ; from all conceit of, and confidence in,
any qualities or abilities of our own ; the diligent use of
which means I did suppose would conduce much to the
production and increase of divine love within us.

To them I shall now proceed to subjoin other instru-
ments more immediately and directly subservient to the
same purpose : whereof the first is,

1. Attentive consideration upon the divine perfections,
with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehension
of them : as counterfeit worth and beauty receive advan-
tage by distance and darkness ; so real excellency,—*si pro-*
pius stes, te capiet magis—the greater light you view it in,
the nearer you approach it, the more strictly you examine
it, the more you will approve and like it : so the more
we think of God, the better we know him, the fuller
and clearer conceptions we have of him, the more we
shall be apt to esteem and desire him ; the more excellent
in himself, the more beneficial to us he will appear.
Hence is the knowledge of God represented in holy writ
not only as a main instrument of religion, but as an essen-
tial character thereof : as equivalent to the being well
affected toward God : *O continue*, saith the Psalmist, *thy*
loving-kindness unto them that know thee ; that is, to all
religious people. And, *This*, saith our Saviour, *is life*
eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ

Καθόλου μὲν
ἢ τῶν παθῶν
κακία διὰ
τὴν ἀπορροήν
ἀγνωσίαν, ἢ
ἀδόκιμον
γνώσιν ἐγγί-
νεται. Basil.
de Jud. Dei.
tom. ii. p.
261.

2 Pet. ii. 20.
Psal. xxxvi.
10. ix. 10.
Isa. v. 13.
xi. 9
Hos. ii. 10.
John xvii. 3.

whom thou hast sent; knowledge of them implying all good affections toward them: as on the other side, ignorance of God denotes disaffection or want of affection toward God. Now the sons of Eli, it is said, were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord: and, He that loveth not, saith St. John, doth not know God; the want of love to God is an evident sign, a natural effect of ignorance concerning him: Indeed, considering the nature of our mind, and its ordinary method of operation, it seems impossible that such perfection, discerned, should not beget answerable reverence and affection thereto: If beautiful spectacles, harmonious sounds, fragrant odours, delicate savours, do necessarily and certainly please the respective senses, why should not with the like sure efficacy the proper objects of our mind affect it, if duly represented and conveyed thereto? If the wit of the most ingenious artists, the cunning of the deepest politicians, the wisdom of the sagest philosophers, are but mere blindness and stupidity in comparison to the wisdom of God, the lowest instance or expression of whose wisdom (his τὸ μωρὸν, his folly, as St. Paul speaks) is wiser than men, doth excel the results of man's highest wisdom; yet them we admire and commend in men, why then do we not much more adore the divine wisdom? If the abilities of them who dexterously manage great business, or achieve prosperously great exploits, are, indeed, mere impotency in regard to God's power, whose weakness (that is, the smallest effects of whose power) is, as St. Paul again tells us, stronger than men, surpasses the utmost results of human endeavours; yet those things in men we extol and celebrate, how can we then forbear to reverence the divine power? If the dispensers of freest and largest bounty among men, the noblest patriots, the most munificent benefactors, the most tenderly affectionate friends be in respect of God unworthy to be counted or called good, (as our Saviour tells us; *If ye, being bad, know to give good things*; and, *There is none good but God*;) yet such persons are much beloved and applauded: how then can we abstain from paying the like measure of affection and respect to the divine good-

SERM.
XXIV.Jer. xxii.
16. xxiv.

xxxii. 34.

2 Cor. x. 5.
Isa. 1. 3.Jer. xix. 3.
6. x. 25.1 Thess. iv.
5.1 Sam. ii.
12.1 John iv.
8.

1 Cor. i. 25.

Matt. vii.
11.

Luke xi. 13.

Mat. xix.
17.

SERM. XXIV. ness? If good qualities so inferior and defective obtain so much from us, whence comes it that the infinitely superior and most perfect excellencies of God do not beget in their proportion a suitable regard and veneration in us toward him? whence, if not either from our not firmly believing them, or not rightly apprehending them, or not attentively considering them? Our belief of them in gross and at large, we may suppose as connected with the belief of God's existence, and included in the very notion of God; the defect therefore must proceed from the remaining causes, want of a right apprehension, or neglect of attentive consideration about them: As to the first of these, it is common for men to have confused, imperfect, and wrong conceptions about the divine attributes, especially in the recesses of their mind; which although they spare to utter with their mouths, yet they vent in their practice. If we, for instance, imagine that we can comprehend the extent of God's designs, or fathom the depth of his counsels; if we measure and model his reasons of proceeding according to our fancy, (*as if his thoughts were as our thoughts, and his ways as our ways; or, as if he did see as man sees;*) if we can *bless ourselves in following our own imaginations*, counsels and devices, although repugnant to the resolutions of divine wisdom; taking these not to besit, or not to concern us, as we find many in the Scripture reproved for doing; we greatly mistake and undervalue that glorious attribute of God, his wisdom; and no wonder then, if we do not upon account thereof duly reverence and love God: likewise, if we concerning the divine power conceit, that, notwithstanding it, we shall be able to accomplish our unlawful designs; that *we may, as it is in Job, harden our hearts against him and prosper:* that we can anywise either withstand or evade his power, (as also many are intimated to do, in Scripture; even generally all those who dare presumptuously to offend God,) we also misconceive of that excellent attribute; and the contempt of God, rather than love of him, will thence arise. If, concerning the divine goodness and holiness, we imagine that God is disaffected toward his creatures, (au-

Isa. lv. 8.

1 Sam. xvi.

7.

Deut. xxix.

19.

Psal. lxxxi.

12. cvii. 11.

Isa. lxxv. 2.

liii. 6.

Jer. xviii.

12.

Hos. x. 12.

viii. 12.

Psal. lxxiii.

11. x. 11.

xciv. 7.

Job ix. 4.

Isa. xlv. 9.

x. 15. liv.

17.

1 Cor. x.

22.

Deut.

xxxiii. 8.

Dan. v. 23.

Amos ix. 2.

Isa. ii. 19.

Jer. xvi. 16.

Deut.

x cviii. 29.

tedently to all demerits, or bad qualifications in them,) yea indifferent in affection toward them, inclinable to do them harm, or not propense to do them good; if we deem him apt to be harsh and rigorous in his proceedings, to exact performances unsuitable to the strength he hath given us, to impose burthens intolerable upon us; will not such thoughts be apt to breed in us toward God (as they would toward any other person so disposed) rather a servile dread, (little different from downright hatred,) or an hostile aversion, than a genuine reverence, or a kindly affection toward him? If we fancy him, like to pettish man, apt to be displeas'd without cause, or beyond measure, for our doing somewhat innocent, (neither bad in itself, nor prejudicial to public or private good,) or for our omitting that, which no law, no good reason plainly requires of us; what will such thoughts but sour our spirits toward him, make us fearful and suspicious of him; which sort of dispositions are inconsistent with true love? If, on the other side, we judge him fond and partial in his affections, or slack and easy, as it were, in his proceedings, apt to favour us although we neglect him, to indulge us in our sins, or connive at our miscarriages; will not such thoughts rather incline us in our hearts to slight him, and in our actions insolently to dally with him, than heartily and humbly to love him? If we conceit his favour procur'd, or his anger appeas'd by petty observances, perhaps without any good rule or reason affected by ourselves; when we neglect duties of greater worth and consequence, *the more weighty matters of the Law*; what is this but, instead of God, to reverence an idol of our own fancy; to yield unto him (who is only pleas'd with holy dispositions of mind, with real effects of goodness) not duties of humble love, but acts of presumption and flattery? But if, contrariwise, we truly conceive of God's wisdom, that his counsels are always throughly good, and that we are concern'd both in duty and interest to follow them, although exceeding the reach of our understanding, or contrary to the suggestions of our fancy; concerning his power, that it will certainly interpose itself

SERM:
XXIV.

Num. xiv.
41.

2 Chron.
xiii. 12.

Τὸν γὰρ Θεὸν
ὁ ἰσχυρότερον
ἔσθαι τοῦ ἄνθρωπου,
ὅτι αὐτὸς
ἔσθαι ἰσχυρότερος
ἡμῶν. Plat.
de Leg. x.

SERM.
XXIV.

to the hindrance of our bad projects, that it will be in vain to contest therewith, that we must submit unto, or shall be crushed by his hand; concerning his goodness, that as he is infinitely good and benign, so he is also perfectly holy and pure; as he wisheth us all good, and is ready to promote it, so he detesteth our sins, nor will suffer us to do himself, ourselves, and our neighbour any wrong; as most bountiful in dispensing his favours, so not prodigal of them, or apt to cast them away on such as little value them, and do not endeavour to answer them; as a faithful rewarder of all true virtue and piety, so a severe chastiser of all iniquity and profaneness; as full of mercy and pity toward them, who are sensible of their unworthiness, and penitent for their faults, so an implacable avenger of obstinate and incorrigible wickedness: in fine, as a true friend to us, if we be not wilful enemies to him, and desirous of our welfare, if we do not perversely render ourselves incapable thereof; so withal jealous of his own honour, resolute to maintain and vindicate his just authority, careful to uphold the interests of right and truth, and to shew the distinction he makes between good and evil; if we have, I say, such conceptions of God, (agreeable to what his word and his doings represent him to us,) how can we otherwise than bear a most high respect, a most great affection unto him? A prince surely endued with such qualities; wise and powerful, good and just together; tendering the good of his people, yet preserving the force of his laws; designing always what is best, and constantly pursuing his good intentions; tempering bounty and clemency with needful justice and severity; we should all commend and extol as worthy of most affectionate veneration; how much more then shall we be so affected toward him, in whom we apprehend all those excellencies to concur without any imperfection or allay? especially if by attention we impress those conceptions upon our hearts; for how true and proper soever, if they be only slight and transient, they may not suffice to this intent; if they pass away as a flash, they will not be able to kindle in us any strong affection.

Isa. v. 4.
Hab. i. 13.
Psal. v. 4.
xi. 5, &c.

But if such abstracted consideration of the divine perfections will not alone wholly avail, let us add hereto as a farther help toward the production and increase of this divine grace in us, SERM. XXIV.

2. The consideration of God's works and actions; his works of nature, his acts of providence, his works and acts of grace; the careful meditating upon these will be apt to breed, to nourish, to improve, and augment this affection. Even the contemplation of the lower works of nature, of this visible frame of things, (upon which indeed many perspicuous characters of divine perfection, of immense power, of admirable wisdom, of abundant goodness are engraven,) hath in many minds excited a very high degree of reverence and good affection toward God: the devoutest persons (the holy Psalmist particularly) we may observe frequent in this practice, inflaming their hearts with love, and elevating them in reverence toward God, by surveying the common works of God, by viewing and considering the magnificent vastness and variety, the goodly order and beauty, the constant duration and stability of those things we see; in remarking the general bounty and munificence with which this great *Paterfamilias* hath provided for the necessary sustenance, for the convenience, for the defence, for the relief, for the delight and satisfaction of his creatures: even in the contemplation of these things being ravished with admiration and affection, how often do they thus exclaim: *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy! Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite: All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord;* with such reflections, I say, upon those common, yet admirable and excellent works of God (which we perhaps with a regardless eye unprofitably pass over) did those good men kindle and foment pious affections toward God. The same effect may also the considering the very common proceedings of divine providence beget in us; such as are discernible to every attentive mind both from history and daily experience;

*Psal. viii.
xix cxlv.
civ. cxlvii.*

*Psal. xxxiii.
5. cxix. 61.
cxlv. 10.
cxlvii. 4,
&c.*

SERM. considering God's admirable condescension in regarding and
 XXIV. ordering human affairs both for common benefit, and for relief

of particular necessities, his supplying the general needs of men, relieving the poor, succouring the weak and helpless, protecting and vindicating the oppressed, his reasonable encouraging and rewarding the good, restraining and chastising the bad: even such observations are productive of love to God in those, who, according to that duty intimated by the prophet, *do regard the works of the Lord, and consider the operations of his hands: They who are wise, and will observe these things, they, as the Psalmist tells, shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord*; understand it practically, so as to be duly affected thereby; and so accordingly we find the consideration of these things applied by the great guides and patterns of our devotion. But especially the study and contemplation of those more high and rare proceedings of God, in managing his gracious design of our redemption from sin and misery, wherein a wisdom so unsearchable and a goodness so astonishing declare themselves, are most proper and effectual means of begetting divine love: if the consideration of God's eternal care for our welfare, of his descending to the lowest condition for our sake, of his willingly undertaking and patiently undergoing all kinds of inconvenience, of disgrace, of bitter pain and sorrow for us; of his freely offering us mercy, and earnestly wooing us to receive it, even when offenders, when enemies, when rebels against him; of his bearing with exceeding patience all our neglects of him, all our injuries towards him; of his preparing a treasure of perfect and endless bliss, and using all means possible to bring us unto the possession thereof; if, I say, considering those wonderful strains of goodness will not affect us, what can do it? How miserably cold and damp must our affections be, if all those powerful rays (so full of heavenly light and heat) shining through our minds cannot inflame them? how desperately hard and tough must our hearts be, if such incentives cannot soften and melt them? Is it not an apathy more than stoical,

Isa. v. 12
 Psal. xxviii.
 5. cvii 43.
 Ixiv. 9. cxi.
 2. lxxvii.
 11. cxliiii. 5.

more than stony, which can stand immoveable before so mighty inducements to passion? Is it not a horridly prodigious insensibility to think upon such expressions of kindness without feeling affection reciprocal? But if the consideration of God's general and public beneficence will not touch us sufficiently, let us farther hereto adjoin,

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3. Serious reflections upon the peculiar (personal or private) benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed unto ourselves. There is, I suppose, scarce any man, who may not, if he be not very stupid and regardless, have observed, beside the common effects of God's universal care and bounty wherein he partakes, even some particular expressions and testimonies of divine favour dispensed unto him by God's hand, (apt to convince him of God's especial providence, care, and good-will to him particularly, and thereby to draw him unto God,) both in relation to his temporal and to his spiritual state; in preventing and preserving him from mischiefs imminent, in opportune relief, when he was pressed with want, or surprised by danger; in directing him to good, and diverting him from evil. Every man's experience, I say and suppose, will inform him that he hath received many such benefits from a hand, invisible indeed to sense, yet easily discernible, if he do attend to the circumstances wherein, to the seasons when they come; it is natural to every man being in distress, from which he cannot by any present or visible means extricate himself, to stretch forth his hand, and lift up his voice toward heaven, making his recourse to divine help; and it is as natural for God to regard the needs, to hearken to the cries, to satisfy the desires of such persons; (for, *The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him; he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing: He will be a refuge to the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble: He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness: They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing: Look at the generations of old and see; did ever any trust in the Lord and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise that called upon him?* *This poor man* (this, and that, any poor man,) *cried, and*

Psal. cxlv.
16. 18. cvii.
8. xxxiv. 6,
10. ix. 9.

Ecclus. ii.
10.

SERM. *the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles ;*)

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since then no man in all likelihood hath not some occasion of God's especial favour and assistance, and God is always so ready to afford them, we may reasonably presume that every man doth sometimes receive them, and is thereby obliged to return a grateful affection to him, not only as to a common benefactor, but as to his particular friend and patron. However, there is none of us who may not perceive himself singularly indebted to God's patience in forbearing to punish him, to his mercy in pardoning and passing over innumerable offences committed against him : the renowned penitent in the Gospel did *love much, because much was forgiven her* ; and who is there of us, that hath not the same reason to love much ? Who is there that, at least according to God's inclination and intention, hath not had much forgiven him ? Whom have not *the riches of divine goodness and long-suffering attended upon in order to his repentance* ? Who hath not been in so great degree ungrateful, unfruitful, and unprofitable, that he hath not abundant reason to acknowledge God's especial grace in bearing with him, and to confess with Jacob, that he is *less than the least of all God's mercies* ? If any such there were, he should have no less cause to be affected with the abundance of that grace, which so preserved him from sins and provocations. For if we stand, it is he that *upholdeth us* ; if we fall, it is he that *raiseth us* ; it is his especial favour that either we avoid sin, or sinning escape punishment. Now then God having by many real evidences declared such particular affection toward us, can we, considering thereon, do otherwise than say to ourselves, after St. John, *Nos ergo diligamus Deum, quoniam prior dilexit nos* ; *Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us* : surely in all ingenuity, according to all equity, we are bound to do so ; the reason and nature of things doth require it of us : all other loves, even those of the baser sort, are able to propagate themselves ; (to continue and enlarge their kind ;) are commonly fruitful and effectual in producing their like : how strangely then unnatural and monstrous is it, that this love only

Luke vii.
47.

Rom. ii. 4.

Luke xvii.
10.

Ps. cxxx. 3.

Gen. xxxii.
10.

Ps. xxxvii.
23. cxlvi 8.

1 John iv.
19.

² Εστὶ χάρις
γαρ τὴν χά-
ριν τῆς θεοῦ
ἀί. Soph.

this so vigorous and perfect love should be barren and impotent as it were? *If you love those that love you*, saith our Saviour, *what reward have you?* (what reward can you pretend to for so common, so necessary a performance?) *do not even the publicans do the same?* (the publicans, men not usually of the best natures, or tenderest hearts, yet they do thus.) And, again saith he, *If you love those who love you*, *what think is it? for even sinners love those that love them;* (sinners, men not led by conscience of duty, or regard to reason, but hurried with a kind of blind and violent force, by instinct of nature, do so much, go so far.) If thus men, both by nature and custom most untractable, the least guided by rules of right, of reason, of ingenuity; yea, not only the most barbarous men, but even the most savage beasts are sensible of courtesies, return a kind of affection unto them who make much of them, and do them good; what temper are we of, if all that bounty we experience cannot move us; if God's daily *loading us with his benefits*, if his *crowning us with loving-kindness and tender mercies*, if all those *showers of blessings*, which he continually poureth down upon our heads, do not produce some good degree of correspondent affection in us? It cannot surely proceed altogether from a wretched baseness of disposition, that we are so cold and indifferent in our affection toward God, or are sometimes so averse from loving him; it must rather in great part come from our not observing carefully, not frequently calling to mind, not earnestly considering what God hath done for us, how exceedingly we stand obliged to his goodness, from our following that untoward generation of men, who were not, it is said, *mindful of the wonders which God did among them; who remembered not his hand, nor the day that he delivered them;* rather following, I say, such careless and *heartless people*, (so they are termed,) than imitating that excellent person's discretion, who constantly did *set God's loving-kindness before his eyes*, who frequently did thus raise his mind, and rouse up his affections; *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.* Bless

SERM.
XXIV.
Matt. v. 46.

Luke vi. 32.

Psal. lxxviii.
19. ciii. 14.
Ezek.
xxxiv. 26.

Nch. ix. 17.
Ps. lxxviii.
10, 42.

Deut. v. 29.
xxix. 4.

Ps. xxvi. 3.

Psal. ciii.

SERM. *the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who*
 XXIV. *forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases,*
 &c. It is not for want of the like experience, or the like obligation, but for want of the same wisdom, of the same care, of the same honest consideration and diligence, that we do not the like.

To these means I add that,

4. A special help to breed in us this holy disposition of soul will be the setting ourselves in good earnest, with a strong and constant resolution, to endeavour the performance of all our duty toward God, and keeping his commandments although upon inferior considerations of reason, such as we are capable of applying to this purpose; regards of fear, of hope, of desire to avoid the mischiefs arising from sin, or attaining the benefits ensuing upon virtue. If we cannot immediately raise our hearts to that higher pitch of acting from that nobler principle of love, let us however apply that we can reach unto practice, striving as we are able to perform what God requires of us; exercising ourselves, as to material acts, in keeping a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; the doing which, as it may in time discover the excellency of goodness to our mind, so it will by degrees reconcile our affections thereto; then, by God's blessing, (who graciously regards

1sa. xlii. 1. the meanest endeavour toward good; who *despiset*h not the
 Zech. iv. 10. *day of small things*; who will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed,) from doing good out of a sober regard to our own welfare, we shall come to like it in itself, and consequently to love him, unto whose nature, and to whose will, it renders us conformable: for as doing ill breeds a dislike to goodness, and an aversion from him who himself is full thereof, and who rigorously exacts it of us; as a bad conscience removes expectation of good from God, and begets a suspicion of evil from him, consequently stifling all kindness toward him; so, doing well, we shall become acquainted with it, and friends thereto; a hearty approbation, esteem, and good-liking thereof will ensue; finding by experience, that indeed the ways of wisdom, vir-

tue, and piety are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; that the fruits of conscientious practice are health to our body and to our soul, security to our estate and to our reputation, rest in our mind, and comfort in our conscience: goodness will become precious in our eyes, and he who commends it to us, being himself essential goodness, will appear most venerable and most amiable, we shall then become disposed to render him, what we perceive he best deserves, entire reverence and affection.

5. But I commend farther, as a most necessary mean of attaining this disposition, assiduous earnest prayer unto God, that he would in mercy bestow it on us, and by his grace work it in us: which practice is indeed doubly conducive to this purpose; both in way of impetration, and by real efficacy: it will not fail to obtain it as a gift from God; it will help to produce it as an instrument of God's grace.

Upon the first account it is absolutely necessary; for it is from God's free representation of himself as lovely to our minds, and drawing our hearts unto him, (although ordinarily in the use of the means already mentioned, or some like to them,) that this affection is kindled; our bare consideration is too cold, our rational discourse too faint: we cannot sufficiently recollect our wandering thoughts, we cannot strongly enough impress those proper incentives of love upon our hearts, (our hearts so damped with sensual desires, so clogged and pestered with earthly inclinations,) so as to kindle in our souls this holy flame; it can only be effected by a light shining from God, by a fire coming from heaven: as all others, so more especially this queen of graces must proceed from the Father of lights, and Giver of all good gifts: he alone, who is love, can be the parent of so goodly an offspring, can beget this lively image of himself within us: it is the principal *fruit of* Gal. v. 22. *God's Holy Spirit*, nor can it grow from any other root than from it: it is called the *love of the Spirit*, as its most Rom. xv. signal and peculiar effect: in fine, *the love of God*, as St. ^{30.} Paul expressly teaches us, *is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us; given, but that not without*

SERM. asking, without seeking; a grace so excellent, God, we may
XXIV. be assured, will not dispense, a gift so precious he will not
 bestow on them, who do not care to look after it, who will
 not vouchsafe to beg it: if we are not willing to acknow-
 ledge our want thereof; if we refuse to express our desire
 of it; if we will not shew that we regard and value it; if,
 when God freely offers it, and invites us to receive it, (he
 doth so by offering his Holy Spirit, the fountain thereof,
 unto us,) we will not decently apply ourselves to him for it,
 how can we expect to obtain it? God hath propounded this
 condition, (and it is surely no hard, no grievous condition,)
 Luke xi. 9, *if we ask we shall receive*; he hath expressly promised that
 13. *he will give his Spirit* (his Spirit of love,) *to them who ask*
 Matt. xxi. *it*: we may be therefore sure, performing the condition
 22. vii. 7. *duly*, to obtain it; and as sure, neglecting that, we deserve
 1 Chron. *to go without*.
 xxviii. 9.
 2 Chron. xv. 2.

Prayer then is upon this account a needful means; and
 it is a very profitable one upon the score of its own imme-
 diate energy or virtue: for as by familiar converse (together
 with the delights and advantages attending thereon,) other
 friendships are begot and nourished, so even by that ac-
 quaintance, as it were, with God, which devotion begets, by
 experience therein how sweet and good he is, this affection is
 produced and strengthened. As want of intercourse weakens
 and dissolves friendship; so if we seldom come at God, or
 little converse with him, it is not only a sign, but will be a
 cause of estrangement and disaffection toward him: accord-
 ing to the nature of the thing, prayer hath peculiar advan-
 tages above other acts of piety, to this effect: therein not
 only as in contemplation the eye of our mind (our intellec-
 tual part) is directed toward God; but our affections also
 (the hand of our soul by which we embrace good, the feet
 hereof by which we pursue it,) are drawn out and fixed
 upon him; we not only therein behold his excellencies, but
 in a manner feel them and enjoy them; our hearts also
 being thereby softened and warmed by desire become more
 susceptible of love. We do in the performance of this duty
 approach nearer to God, and consequently God draws

Πολλὰς μὲν
 φίλας ἀ-
 προσήγορας
 ἐπέλυσεν.

nearer to us, (as St. James assures; *Draw near*, saith he, *unto God, and he will draw near to you,*) and thereby we partake more fully and strongly of his gracious influences; therein indeed he most freely communicates his grace, therein he makes us most sensible of his love to us, and thereby disposeth us to love him again. I add, that true (fervent and hearty) prayer doth include and suppose some acts of love, or some near tendencies thereto; whence, as every habit is corroborated by acts of its kind, so by this practice divine love will be confirmed and increased. These are the means, which my meditation did suggest as conducing to the production and growth of this most excellent grace in our souls.

III. I should lastly propound some inducements apt to stir us up to the endeavour of procuring it, and to the exercise thereof, by representing to your consideration the blessed fruits and benefits (both by way of natural causality and of reward) accruing from it; as also the woful consequences and mischiefs springing from the want thereof. How being endued with it perfects and advances our nature, rendering it in a manner and degree divine, by resemblance to God, (who is full thereof, so full that he is called love,) by approximation, adherence, and union, in a sort, unto him; how it ennobles us with the most glorious alliance possible, rendering us the friends and favourites of the sovereign King and Lord of all, brethren of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; enriches us with a right and title to the most inestimable treasures, (those which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath prepared for them that love him,*) a sure possession of the supreme good of all that God is able to bestow, all whose wisdom and power, whose counsel and care it eternally engageth for our benefit; how all security and welfare, all rest and peace, all joy and happiness attend upon it; for that *the Lord preserveth all them that love him, preserveth them in the enjoyment of all good, in safety from all danger and mischief,*) and that *to those who love God, all things co-operate for their good*: how incom-

SERM.
XXIV.
Jan. iv. 8.

1 Cor. ii. 9.

Psal. cxlv.

20.

Rom. viii.

28.

SERM. XXIV. parable a sweetness and delight accompany the practice thereof, far surpassing all other pleasures; perfectly able to content our minds, to sustain and comfort us even in the want of all other satisfactions, yea under the pressure of whatever most grievous afflictions can befall us. How contrariwise the want thereof will depress us into a state of greatest imperfection and baseness, setting us at the greatest distance from God in all respects, both in similitude of nature, and as to all favourable regard, or beneficial communication from him; casting us into a wretched and disgraceful consortship with the most degenerate creatures, the accursed fiends, who, for disaffection and enmity toward God, are banished from all happiness; how it extremely impoverisheth and beggareth us, divesting us of all right to any good thing, rendering us incapable of any portion, but that of utter darkness; how it excludeth us from any safety, any rest, any true comfort or joy, and exposeth us to all mischief and misery imaginable; all that being deprived of the divine protection, presence, and favour, being made objects of the divine anger, hatred, and severe justice, being abandoned to the malice of hell, being driven into utter darkness and eternal fire doth import or can produce. I should also have commended this love to you by comparing it with other loves, and shewing how far in its nature, in its causes, in its properties, in its effects, it excelleth them: even so far as the object thereof in excellency doth transcend all other objects of our affection; how this is grounded upon the highest and surest reason; others upon accounts very low and mean, commonly upon fond humour and mistake; this produceth, real, certain, immutable goods; others at best terminate only in goods apparent, unstable, and transitory; this is most worthy of us, employing all our faculties in their noblest manner of operation upon the best object; others misbeseem us, so that in pursuing them we disgrace our understanding, misapply our desires, dis Temper our affections, mispend our endeavours. I should have enlarged upon these considerations; and should have adjoined some particular advantages of this grace; as, for

instance, that the procuring thereof is the most sure, the most easy, the most compendious way of attaining all others; of sweetening and ingratiating all obedience to us; of making the hardest yoke easy, and the heaviest burden light unto us. In fine, I should have wished you to consider, that its practice is not only a mean and way to happiness, but our very formal happiness itself; the real enjoyment of the best good we are capable of; that in which alone heaven itself (the felicity of saints and angels,) doth consist; which more than comprehends in itself all the benefits of highest dignity, richest plenty, and sweetest pleasure. But I shall forbear entering upon so ample and fruitful subjects of meditation, and conclude with that good Collect of our Church:

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O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





XVII.
XVIII.
XIX.
XX.
XXI.
XXII.

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