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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions.

2. It then goes on to describe the various methods used to collect and analyze data.

3. The next section details the results of the study, showing a clear trend towards increased efficiency.

4. Finally, the document concludes with a series of recommendations for future research and implementation.

5. The overall findings suggest that the proposed system is a viable and effective solution.

6. Further studies should be conducted to explore the long-term impact of these changes.

7. The data collected over the course of the study is presented in the following table.

8. The table shows a steady increase in the number of transactions processed over time.

9. This increase is consistent with the theoretical model proposed in the introduction.

10. The results of the study are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

11. The data indicates that the system is capable of handling a significant volume of work.

12. The overall performance of the system is highly satisfactory.

13. The study has provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the proposed system.

14. The findings of this study are discussed in the following sections.

15. The data shows a clear correlation between the variables studied.



THE
THEOLOGICAL
WORKS
OF
ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING
TWENTY-SEVEN SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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TO

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KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, &c.

Prov. iv. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, &c.

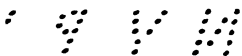
BEFORE we do apply ourselves to inculcate this SERM. XLIV. precept, it is requisite that we should somewhat explain the terms, and settle the meaning thereof; in doing that, we begin with the last words, which qualify the action enjoined as to its degree or extent; *with all diligence*: the words (מְדַלֵּג־מִשְׂמֶרֶת) answering to these in the Hebrew, do, according to the various use or force of the particle מְ, admit a threefold acception. They may (1.) denote absolutely the intenseness in degree, or extension in kind, of the performance required in this precept: *πάση φυλακῇ τήρει σὴν καρδίαν, Omni custodia serva cor tuum*; keep thy heart with all custody; that is, with all sorts or with all degrees of care and diligence; so the LXX. interpreters, and the vulgar Latin following them, render those words. They may, (2.) taking the particle for a *Mem excellentiæ*, as they call it, signifying comparatively, *præ omni custodia serva cor tuum*; keep thy heart above all keeping; that is, especially and more than thou keepest any other thing; so doth Pagnin understand them, not without cause, both for the reason subjoined here, *because from it are the issues of life*;

SERM. that is, because it is the principal part and fountain
XLIV. of all vital operations, and therefore deserveth the

best custody; as also for that in what follows, and in other places of scripture frequently, we are enjoined to keep our tongues from bad discourse, our eyes from wandering after bad objects, our feet from declining to bad courses; and therefore probably in comparison to these, although needful and inferior custodies, we are admonished to this most especially incumbent custody of our hearts. They may also, (3.) and that probably enough, be taken so as to denote the universality of the object, or matter of this keeping, or the adequate term and bound thereof; keep thy heart, ἀπὸ παντὸς φυλάγματος, *ab omni re custodienda*, from every thing which it should be kept from; that is, from every thing offensive or hurtful to it: so did Aquila and Theodotion translate the words. These senses are all of them good, and each may fairly pretend to find place in the meaning of the words; which of them with most likelihood I shall not discuss, meaning only to insist upon the substance of the precept; the nature of which being duly considered, will infer that it is to be observed according to the manner and measure prescribed, understood according to any of those senses, or according to all of them conjointly.

As for the meaning of the words, *Keep thy heart*, two inquiries may be made: 1. What the heart is, which Solomon adviseth us to keep: 2. What to keep it doth import.

To the first I answer, that in the style of scripture the heart doth commonly import the whole inward man, the ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, *the man within us*, as St. Paul speaketh, the ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος,



the hidden man of the heart, as St. Peter calleth it, SERM. XLIV.
comprehending all the thoughts and imaginations, 1 Pet. iii. 4.
all the inclinations and dispositions, all the judgments and opinions, all the passions and affections, all the resolutions and purposes formed within us; in short, all interior, whether tendencies to move, or actual motions of human soul. For the scripture (by the way we may observe it) seemeth to favour that anciently most common and current opinion, (embraced by Aristotle himself, even as true in strict philosophy, although rejected by most of the latter schools,) that the heart, that material part and principal entrail of our body, is the chief seat of the soul, and immediate instrument of its noblest operations. However, because the heart in a man's breast is most inwardly seated, most secluded from sight, guarded from access, fenced from danger, thence whatever is inmost, most invisible, most inaccessible in any thing, is called the heart thereof; and all a man's secret thoughts, inclinations, opinions, affections, designs, are involved in this name; sometimes all, or divers of them conjunctly, are called his heart; sometimes any one of them singly (as there is subject or occasion of using the word) is so termed: instances in every kind are innumerable many, and very obvious; and therefore I shall not spend time in producing any; but shall suppose that here the word may be understood in its utmost extent, so as to comprehend all the particulars intimated; there being no apparent reason for preferring or excluding any; all of them being capable of moral quality, both simply and immediately in themselves, and consequentially as they may be the principles of good or bad actions; and because all of them may be, need

4 *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence.*

SERM. to be, ought to be, the objects of the keeping here
XLIV. enjoined.

But then what is this *keeping*? I answer, that the word, as applied to this matter, is especially capable of three senses, each of which may be exemplified.

1. It may imply to observe, that is, to keep it under a constant view, as it were; to mark or attend unto, to inquire into and study our heart. So, Prov. xxiii. 26. *My son, saith the Wise Man, give me thy heart, and let thine eyes keep (or observe) my ways:* the same word which here, is there used, both in the Hebrew and Greek, and can there well signify no other custody but that of attending unto; it being the office of the eye only to look and observe. Likewise, Deut. xii. 28. *Observe, saith God in the Law, and hear all these words which I command thee;* that is, hear them very attentively: and so in divers other places.

2. It may also denote the governance or good management of our hearts, keeping all the motions thereof in due order, within fit compass, applying them to good, and restraining them from bad things: so the Psalmist useth the word, when he saith, Psal. xxxix. 1. *I will keep my mouth with a bridle;* that is, I will so rule and curb it, that no evil language shall issue from it: so when the Wise Man adviseth to keep Eccl. v. 1. *our foot when we go to the house of God;* by keeping it, he means rightly to guide and order our proceedings, or well to dispose ourselves when we address ourselves to religious performances: so again, Prov. xxvii. 18. *He, saith he, that keepeth the fig-tree, shall eat the fruit thereof;* he that keepeth it, that is, he that dresseth and ordereth it to advantage for bearing fruit.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence. 5

3. Again, keeping may be taken for preserving, SERM. XLIV.
guarding, securing from mischief or damage; which indeed is the most common use of the word, and therefore we need no instancing to countenance it.

Now any of these senses may be intended here, or all of them together; and they indeed are in the nature of the thing so coherent, or so mutually dependent one on the other, that any one of them can hardly be practised without the rest: for without heedfully observing our heart, we cannot well govern it; and an ill governed heart cannot easily be attended to; and without both watchful observation and skilful management of it, we cannot guard it from evil; and reciprocally, without guarding it, we cannot well rule it, or duly mind it: such a complication there is in practice of these three custodies.

I shall at present only discourse concerning the first of them, which seems in the nature of things, and according to our method of acting, to precede. According to this exposition, when it is said, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, we may understand it as if each of us were thus advised: With a most constant and wary care observe all the interior propensions and motions of thy soul; whatever is done or designed within thee, whither thy desires lean, what thy affections are stirred by, to what thy judgment of things doth lead thee; with greatest attention and assiduity mark and ponder it.

It is a peculiar excellency of human nature, which seemeth more to distinguish a man from any inferior rank of creatures than bare reason itself, that he can reflect upon all that is done within him, can discern the tendencies of his soul, is acquainted with his own purposes. Some shadows of other rational

6 *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence.*

SERM.
XLIV. operations are discoverable in beasts; and it is not easy to convince them, who, from plausible experiments, do affirm them sometimes to syllogize: but no good reason or experience can, I suppose, make it probable, that they partake of this reflexive faculty; that they do ever regard or remark upon their own imaginations; they seem always to march directly forward with a blind impetuosity toward some pleasing object, without attending to the fancy that guides them, or the appetite which excites them: neither indeed do they seem to need any such power in order to the preservation of their life, or gratifying of their sense, which are the main ends they were designed and fitted for. But man being designed by his Maker, disposed by the frame of his nature, and obliged by a law imposed on him, not to follow casual impulses from exterior objects, nor the bare conduct of his imagination, nor the sway of his natural propensities; but to regulate as well the internal workings of his soul, as his external actions, according to certain laws or rules prescribed him, to settle his thoughts upon due objects, to bend his inclinations into a right frame, to constrain his affections within due bounds, to rectify his judgments of things, to ground his purposes upon honest reasons, and direct them unto lawful matters: it is needful that he should have this power of discerning whatever moveth or passeth within him, what he thinks upon, whither he inclines, how he judgeth, whence he is affected, wherefore he doth resolve; without this power he could not be a moral agent, not able to perform any duty, not properly subject to any law, not liable to render an account of his doings: did he not perceive his own thoughts, how could he

dispel them, when they are bad or vain? might he not observe his own inclinations, how could he strive to restrain them or to reform them, when they draw to unlawful practices? were he not sensible of his affections, how could he endeavour to reduce or compose them, when they become exorbitant or tumultuous? were he not conscious of his own opinions, how could he weigh and examine them? how could he conform his actions to them, or practise according to the dictates of his conscience? It is therefore plainly needful that man should be endued with this power, for that without it he can neither perform the duty required of him, nor enjoy the benefits he is capacitated and designed for: our Maker therefore hath conferred it upon us, our duty consists in its right use, our advantage ariseth from the constant and careful exercise of this excellent faculty: constant and careful, I say: *constant*, for observation implies so much; for, if ever we shut our eyes or turn our heads aside, what we look to may be gone; much therefore will pass away undiscerned and unobserved by us, especially such quick and fleeting things as are the interior motions of our soul will escape; wherefore a continual vigilancy is requisite to a keeper of the heart: it must also be *careful*; as the keeper of a thing so nimble and slippery must not sleep, so he must not slumber; he must not be oscillant, but very intent upon his charge; superficial glances upon the outward face, as it were, of the soul, will not suffice: to *observe*, is with earnest care to look through the matter, to discern whatever lurketh therein, to pierce into the very depth and bottom of it, to spy through every nook and corner therein; otherwise it is but slightly viewed rather

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SERM. than truly observed: especially so subtile, so intricate, so obscure a thing as a man's heart is, requireth an extraordinary application of mind in observing it with judgment and fruit.

XLIV. This is then our duty, recommended by the Wise Man: to be continually, with extreme diligence, looking inward upon ourselves, observing what thoughts spring up within us; what imaginations find most welcome harbour in our breasts; what objects most affect us with delight or displeasure; (what it is that we love and readily embrace; what we distaste and presently reject;) what prejudices do possess our minds; wherefore we propose to ourselves such undertakings, conversing with ourselves, and, as it were, discoursing in this manner: What is it that I think upon? are my thoughts serious, seasonable, and pure? Whither do I propend? are my inclinations compliant to God's law and good reason? What judgments do I make of things? are my apprehensions clear, solid, sure, built upon no corrupt prejudice? What doth most easily stir me, and how is my heart moved? are my affections calm, and orderly, and well placed? What plots do I contrive, what projects am I driving on? are my designs good, are my intentions upright and sincere? Let me thoroughly inquire into these points, let me be fully satisfied in them: thus should we continually be doing. The holy scripture doth often bid us to judge ourselves; to examine our works; to search and try; to weigh, to heed, to watch over our ways: *If*, saith St. Paul, *we would judge* (discern, or distinguish) *ourselves, we should not be judged*; that is, we should avoid those miscarriages which bring the divine judgments upon us: and, *Let us,*

1 Cor. xi.
31.
Εἰ ἑαυτοὺς
ἰναισθησώμεν.
Gal. vi. 4.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence. 9

saith the prophet Jeremy, *search and try our ways*, SERM. XLIV. *and turn unto the Lord*; and, *I said, I will take heed to my ways*, saith the Psalmist; and, *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established*, is the Wise Man's advice. Search our ways, and ponder our paths; this implies that we first do examine and weigh our hearts, for there our ways begin, thence is motion derived to our feet and to our hands also; all our actions depend as effects of them, all do receive their moral quality thence: whatever in our doings is good or bad, *ἔσωθεν ἐκπορεύεται*, doth, as our Lord expresses it, issue from within us; our actions are but streams, sweet or bitter, clear or foul, according to the tincture they receive at those inward sources of good or evil inclinations, of true or false judgments, of pure or corrupt intention: there consequently we are principally obliged to exercise the scrutiny and trial required of us.

Socrates is reported to have much admired that verse in Homer,

Ὅτι τοι ἐν μεγάροιςι κακόντ' ἀγαθόντε τέτυκται
affirming, that in it the sum of all wisdom is comprised; the sense and drift thereof being this, as he took it: Seek and study what good or bad is at home, within thy house; see how all goes in thy breast; employ thy chief inquiry upon the affairs of thy soul; there confining thy curiosity and care.

Such is the duty; and the practice thereof is of huge profit and use, bringing many great benefits and advantages with it; the neglect of it is attended with many grievous inconveniences and mischiefs: and for persuading to the one, dissuading from the other, I shall propound some of them, such

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SERM. as are most obvious, and offer themselves to my
XLIV. meditation.

The most general and most immediate advantage arising hence is this, that, by such a constant and careful inspection, or study upon our hearts, we may arrive to a competent knowledge of, and a true acquaintance with ourselves, (a most useful knowledge, a most beneficial acquaintance,) neither of
Jer. xvii. 9. them being otherwise attainable. *The heart*, as you know the prophet says, *is deceitful above all things*; and *who*, adds he, *can know it*? Who can know it? None, it seems, but God that made it, and the man that hath it: he that hath it must, I say, be able competently to know it: even in regard to him the question may intimate some difficulty, but it doth not denote an absolute impossibility. Hard it may be for us to know the heart, by reason of its deceitfulness; but the sliest imposture, if narrowly looked into, may be detected: it is a very subtle and abstruse, a very various and mutable thing; the multiplicity of objects it doth converse with, the divers alterations it is subject to from bodily temper, custom, company, example, other unaccountable causes; especially its proneness to comply with, and to suit its judgments of things unto present circumstances without, and present appetites within, do render it such; wherefore it is not indeed easy to know it; but yet possible it is; for under severe penalties we are obliged not to be deceived by it, or, which is all one, not to suffer it to be deceived: *Let no man*, saith St. Paul, *deceive himself*: See that ye be not deceived, saith our Saviour: *Take heed*, saith Moses, *to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived*. Such precepts

1 Cor. iii.

18.

Luke xxi. 8.

Deut. xi. 16.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence. 11

there are many, obliging us to know our hearts, SERM. XLIV. and to discover the fallacies put on them, or upon us by them; carrying with them directions how to compass it; that is, by looking about us, and taking heed, by careful circumspection and caution. It is therefore a feasible thing to avoid being imposed upon, and well to understand ourselves: but as other abstruse pieces of knowledge, so this especially cannot be attained without industrious applications of our mind, and constant observations, to find the corners wherein the deceit lurks; we must pursue its secret windings and intrigues; we must trace it step by step, as hunters do wild beasts, into the utmost recesses of its first desires and most deeply radicated prejudices; we must do as David did, when he strove to free himself from distrust and impatience in his straits: *I communed with my own heart*, saith he, *and my spirit made diligent search*: by which practice he found, as he further acquaints us, that it was *his infirmity*, which moved him to doubt of God's mercy and benignity toward him. Cicero, having somewhere commended philosophy as the most excellent gift by Heaven bestowed upon man, assigns this reason: *because it teaches us, as all other things, so especially this of all most difficult thing, to know ourselves*^a. But he, with his favour, doth seem to promise for his friend more than she is able to perform; the main part of this knowledge doth lie beyond the reach of any particular method; the empiric seems to have more to do here than the doctor. Philosophy

^a Hæc enim una nos cum cæteras res omnes, tum quod est difficillimum docuit, ut nosmetipsos nosceremus. *Cic. de Leg.* 1.

SERM. may perhaps afford us some plausible notions concerning the nature of our soul, its state, its power, its manners of acting; it may prescribe some wide directions about proceeding in the discovery of ourselves; but the particular knowledge (and therein the chief difficulty lieth) of ourselves, how our souls stand inclined and disposed, that only our particular earnest study and assiduous observation can yield unto us; and it is an inestimable advantage to obtain it. All men are very curious and inquisitive after knowledge; the being endued therewith passeth for a goodly ornament, a rich possession, a matter of great satisfaction, and much use: men are commonly ashamed of nothing so much as ignorance; but if any knowledge meriteth esteem for its worth and usefulness, this, next to that concerning Almighty God, may surely best pretend thereto; if any ignorance deserveth blame, this certainly is most liable thereto: to be studious in contemplating natural effects, and the causes whence they proceed; to be versed in the writings and stories of other men's doings; to be pragmatistical observers of what is said or done without us, (that which perchance may little concern, little profit us to know,) and in the mean while to be strangers at home, to overlook what passeth in our own breasts, to be ignorant of our most near and proper concernments, is a folly, if any, to be derided, or rather greatly to be pitied, as the source of many great inconveniences to us. For it is from ignorance of ourselves that we mistake ourselves for other persons than we really are; and accordingly we behave ourselves toward ourselves with great indecency and injustice; we assume and attribute to ourselves that

which doth not anywise belong unto us, or become SERM. XLIV.
us: as put case we are ignorant of the persons we
converse with, as to their quality, their merit, their
humour; we shall be apt to miscall and mistake
them; to misbehave ourselves in our demeanour to-
ward them; to yield them more or less respect than
befits them; to cross them rudely, or unhandsomely
to humour them: in like manner, if we be strangers
to our hearts, shall we carry ourselves toward our
own selves; we shall hence, like men in a phrensy,
take ourselves for extraordinary people, rich, and
noble, and mighty, when indeed, our condition be-
ing duly estimated, we are wretchedly mean and
beggarly. We do frequently hug ourselves, (or ra-Rev. iii. 17.
ther shadows in our room,) admiring ourselves for
qualities not really being in us; applauding our-
selves for actions nothing worth, such as proceed
from ill principles, and aim at bad ends; whenas,
did we turn our thoughts inwards, and regard what
we find in our hearts, by what inclinations we are
moved, upon what grounds we proceed, we should
be ashamed, and see cause rather to bemoan than
to bless ourselves: descending into ourselves, we Ut nemo in
sece tentat
descendere,
nemo.
might perchance discern that most of our gallant
performances (such as not considering our hearts
we presume them to be) are derived from self-love
or pride; from desire of honour, or love of gain;
from fear of damage or discredit in the world, ra-
ther than out of love, reverence, and gratitude to-
ward God, of charity, compassion, and good-will
toward our brethren, of sober regard to our own
true welfare and happiness; which are the only
commendable principles and grounds of action. St. Luke xviii.
Luke telleth us of certain men, who *persuaded*⁷.

14 *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence.*

SERM. *themselves that they were righteous, and despised*
 XLIV. *others;* upon occasion of whom our Saviour dictated

the parable of the Pharisee and Publican. Whence, think we, came that fond confidence in themselves, and proud contempt of others? From ignorance surely of themselves, or from not observing those bad dispositions, those wrong opinions, those corrupt fountains within, from whence their supposed righteous deeds did flow^a. *If any man*, saith St.

Gal. vi. 3.

Paul, giving an account of such presumptions, *thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, εαυτὸν φρεναπατᾶ, he cheats himself in his mind; but let every man examine his work, and then he shall*

Πρὸς ἑαυτὸν
 μένει.

have rejoicing in himself alone, (or privately with himself;) some, he implieth, do impose upon and delude themselves, imagining themselves somebodies; (endued forsooth with admirable qualities, or to have achieved very worthy deeds;) whenas, if they would inquire into themselves, they should find no such matter; that themselves were no such men, and their works no such wonders: but if, saith he, a man doth, *δοκιμάζειν ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ἔργον*, explore and examine what he doeth, and in result thereof doth clearly perceive, that he acteth upon good reasons, and with honest intentions, then may he indeed enjoy a solid interior satisfaction, (a true *καύχημα*, or exultation of mind,) whatever others, not acquainted with those inward springs of his motion, do please to judge of him and his proceedings. No man indeed can truly value himself, or well approve of his own doings, so as to find any perfect comfort

^a Ἔβριστον ἑαυτὸν ἀπατᾶν, καὶ οἶσθαι εἶναι τι οὐδὲν ὄντα, ὑπὸ τῆς κενῆς δόξης φυσιοῦμενον. Nazianz. Orat. 27.

in himself, or in them, who doth not by studying SERM.
himself discover whence and why he acts: one may XLIV.
be a flatterer, but cannot be a true friend to him-
self, who doth not thoroughly acquaint himself with
his own inward state, who doth not frequently con-
sult and converse with himself: a friend to himself,
I said; and to be so is one of the greatest benefits
that human life can enjoy; that which will most
sweeten and solace our life to us: friendship with
others (with persons honest and intelligent) is a
great accommodation, helping much to allay the
troubles, and ease the burdens of life; but friend-
ship with ourselves is much more necessary to our
wellbeing; for we have continual opportunities and
obligations to converse with ourselves; we do ever
need assistance, advice, and comfort at home^b: and
as commonly it is long acquaintance and familiar
intercourse together, which doth conciliate one man
to another, begetting mutual dearness and confi-
dence, so it is toward one's self: as no man can be
a friend to a mere stranger, or to one whose temper,
whose humour, whose designs he is ignorant of; so
cannot he be a friend to himself, if he be unac-
quainted with his own disposition and meaning^c;
he cannot in such a case rely upon his own advice
or aid when need is, but will suspect and distrust
himself; he cannot be pleasant company to himself,
but shall be ready to cross and fall out with him-

^b — patriæ quis exul se quoque fugit?

Λίτος σεαυτῷ χρῆ συμβούλῃ, καὶ τῷ θεῷ. Naz. Epist. 60.

^c Ἐνιοὶ τὸν ἴδιον βίω ὡς ἀτερπείστατον θέμα προσιδεῖν οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, οὐδ' ἀνακλάσαι τὸν λογισμὸν ὡς φῶς ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς καὶ περιαγαγεῖν· ἀλλ' ἡ ψυχὴ γέμουσα κακῶν παντοδαπῶν, καὶ φρίττουσα, καὶ φοβουμένη τὰ ἔνδον, ἐκπηδᾷ θύραζε, &c. Plut. de Curios. p. 916.

16 *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence.*

SERM. self; he cannot administer consolation to his own
XLIV. griefs and distresses; his privacy will become a de-
sertion, his retirement a mere solitude. But pass-
ing over this general advantage, I shall with some
more minuteness of distinction consider divers par-
ticular advantages accruing from the practice of
this duty, together with the opposite inconveniences,
which are consequent upon the neglect thereof, in
the following discourse.

S E R M O N XLV.

KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, &c.

Prov. iv. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, &c.

I PROCEED to the particular advantages of the SERM.
practice of this duty, and the inconveniences of the XLV.
neglect of it.

1. The constant and careful observation of our hearts will serve to prevent immoderate self-love and self-conceit; to render us sober and modest in our opinions concerning, and in our affections toward ourselves; qualifying us to comply with the apostolical precept, *μη φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν*, that is, not to Rom. xii. 3. overween, or overvalue ourselves, and our own things: for he that, by serious inspection upon his own heart, shall discern how many fond, impure, and ugly thoughts do swarm within him; how averse his inclinations are from good, and how prone to evil; how much his affections are misplaced and distempered, (while he vehemently delights in the possession, and impotently frets for the want of trifles, having small content in the fruition, and but slender displeasure for the absence of the greatest goods; while empty hopes exalt him, and idle fears deject him; while other various passions, like so many tempests, drive and toss him all about;) who shall observe, how clouds of darkness, error, and doubt do hover upon

SERM. the face of his soul; so that he quickly taketh up
XLV. opinions, and soon layeth them down, and often
 turneth from one mistake unto another; how un-
 settled his resolutions are, especially in the pursuance
 of the best goods, and what corrupt mixtures cleave
 to his best purposes; who taketh notice how back-
 ward he is unto, and how cold in, devotions toward
 God; how little sensible of his goodness, or fearful
 of his displeasure, or zealous for his honour, or care-
 ful of performing his duty toward him; how little
 also it is that he desireth or delighteth in the good,
 that he pitieth and grieveth at the evil of his neigh-
 bour; how sluggish also and remiss he is in the pur-
 suance of his own best affairs and highest concern-
 ments; he that doth, I say, frequently with heed-
 fulness regard these imperfections and obliquities in
 his own heart, how can he be ravished with self-love?
 How can he be much taken with himself? Can any
 man dote upon such deformity, admire such weak-
 ness and naughtiness? No surely: that men are so
 amorous of themselves, so haughty and arrogant in
 their conceits, doth constantly arise from not reflect-
 ing on their own hearts; not beholding themselves
 wistly enough in that mirror; not considering, ac-
 cording to just representation there, how little lovely
 or worthy they are: if they did practise that, they
 would see reason, and thence become inclinable,
 rather to despise, to loathe, to pity themselves:

2. Upon that advantage is consequent, that this
 practice will dispose us with equanimity and patience
 to bear all crosses and grievances befalling us; so
 producing not only an excellent virtue, but a consi-
 derable solace to us; for the being conscious of so
 much unworthiness, which observation of our heart

Leniter ex
 merito
 quicquid
 patiare fe-
 rendum est.
 Ovid. Ep. 5.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence. 19

will necessarily discover, will not only justify the SERM.
providence, (so removing all just cause of complaint,) XLV.
but will commend the benignity of God unto us, (so
administering good matter of thanks.) It will prompt
us heartily to confess with those in Ezra, that *our* Ezra ix. 13.
punishments are less than our deservings; to join
an acknowledgment with the Psalmist, that *God* Ps. ciii. 10.
hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded
us according to our iniquities; to say with Jeremy,
It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, Lam. iii. 22.
because his compassions fail not; with Jacob, *I am* Gen. xxxii.
less than any of thy mercies. 10.

3. Particularly this practice will fence us against
immoderate displeasure occasionable by men's hard
opinions, or harsh censures passed on us: for he, that
by inquiry into himself perceives so many defects in
himself, will not so easily nor so greatly be offended,
if some of them (or some like to them) be objected
to him; since he finds himself truly liable to many
more, and greater. Epictetus's advice is, when you
are told that any man speaks ill of you, that you
should not apologize, but answer only, that he was
ignorant of many other faults of yours, or he would
not only have mentioned those. To be disposed,
without dissembling or affection, to follow his counsel,
would argue a man very intelligent of himself, and
well prepared to endure happily and handsomely en-
counters of this kind, which every man shall be sure
to meet with. None indeed can so contentedly brook
reproach, or blame, as he that by intimate acquaint-
ance with his own heart doth know the censure
passed on him to be in effect mild and favourable;
as finding himself a witness of more faults, than any
adversary can accuse him of; as being a stricter ex-

SERM. XLV. aminer and severer judge of himself, than the most envious eye or disaffected mind can be. It is also some comfort, that, if censures be very outrageous, a man by knowledge of himself (by knowing his own dispositions, if his person be disfigured by a very ill character; by knowing his own purposes, if his actions be grievously aspersed) is certain they are such; that he can be as well a faithful witness, and just judge for himself, as against himself.

4. Likewise this practice will defend us, as from the discomforts of harsh censure, so from the mistakes and miscarriages to which the more favourable opinions of men, or their flattering expressions, (those luscious poisons,) may expose us^a.

—Nihil est quod credere de se
Non possit, cum laudatur.—

It is not only true of great men, but even of all men: the common nature of men disposeth them to be credulous when they are commended, or receive any signification of esteem from others: every ear is tickled with this ἡδίστον ἄκουσμα, this sweet music of applause: but we are not to rely upon others' imperfect and ill-grounded judgment, so much as upon our own more certain knowledge concerning ourselves:

— ne cui de te plus quam tibi credas.

Take no man's word before thine own sense, in what concerns thine own case and character, is an advice deserving our regard and practice: for that a man in questions of this kind is able to be a skilful and indifferent umpire between himself and others; that he is neither elevated nor depressed in mind by ex-

^a Index ipse sui se totum explorat ad unguem,
Quid proceres, vanique ferat quid opinio vulgi,
Securus—

ternal weights, but keepeth himself equally poised SERM. XLV.
in a just consistence by his own well-informed con-
science; that neither his heart is exasperated with
the bitterest gall of reproach, nor his head intoxicated
with the sweetest wine of flattery, is an invaluable
convenience of life; or rather, it is a virtue arguing
a most strong and healthful constitution of soul.
*How great a levity of mind, how great a vanity is
it, saith a good father, setting aside a man's own
conscience, to follow other men's opinion, (and even
that feigned and forged,) to be snatched away by
the wind of false praise, to rejoice in being circum-
vented, and to receive being mocked for a benefit^b!*
From being thus abused, this practice alone can se-
cure us: if we know ourselves well, we cannot so
easily be deluded by the mistakes of others concern-
ing us, on either hand.

5. Likewise, further upon the same, this practice
will conduce to qualify our opinions, and moderate
our passions toward others; so that without intem-
perate anger, or bitterness, we may bear the faults,
errors, and infirmities of our brethren; that we shall
be benign in our carriage, and gentle in our censures
even toward them who do not behave themselves so
well and wisely as they should do. St. Paul thus
admonisheth the Galatians: *Brethren, if a man be* Gal. vi. 1.
overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual (the more
spiritual, whether in truth, or in our own esteem, the
more especially are we obliged hereto) *restore such*

^b Quæ hæc tanta levitas est animi, quæ tanta vanitas relicta
propria conscientia alienam opinionem sequi, et quidem fictam
atque simulatam; rabi vento falsæ laudationis, gaudere ad circum-
ventionem suam, et illusionem pro beneficio accipere? *Hier.* (vel
Paulinus) *ad Celant.*

SERM. *an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou may be also tempted: σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν,*
 XLV.

looking upon, or spying into thyself; such considering ourselves, taking notice of our own infirmity within, perceiving how subject we are to the impressions of temptation, and that hence it may be our own case to fall and falter, if occasion concur

Marc. Ant.
xi. 18.

with our weakness; discerning this, I say, as it will be a reason obliging, so it may be an instrument conducing to a mitigation of spirit toward those, whom we see overtaken with mistake, or overborne

Matt. vii. 2.

by frailty. *Why dost thou see a mote in thy brother's eye, but dost not consider the beam in thine own eye?* is our Saviour's question. Why a man should do so, there cannot, as he implies, any good reason be assigned; it is a very unreasonable and inexcusable miscarriage: but whence a man doeth so is obvious and plain; it is because he curiously pries into other men's doings, and carelessly neglecteth the observation of his own heart. Did we reflect our sight inwards, we should be more apt to mark our own faults, and less ready to discover those of others; or, however, we should be more gently affected in regard to them: for he that knows himself a beggarly wretch, will he reproach poverty to another? he that consulting the glass doth find himself ill-favoured, will he upbraid another for want of grace or beauty? he that perceives that the dart will rebound, and thereby wound himself, will he not be careful of flinging it? will a man be forward in pronouncing a heavy sentence against another, who considers himself by plain consequence involved in the condemnation thereof? Should a man do so, he doth at least render himself incapable

of apology or excuse: so we are told by St. Paul: **SERM. Every censurer** (*πᾶς ὁ κρίνων*) **is, saith he, inexcusable; XLV.** **for that in arraigning another he condemns himself:** guilty he is of inexcusable folly, or impudence; of folly and blindness, if he see not; of extreme impudence, if, seeing his own obnoxiousness, he will not abstain from judging others for that, of which himself is guilty in the same kind, or equivalently in some other. You know how David was ^{2 Sam. xii.} caught by Nathan, and unwarily adjudged himself to death: and so may every man expose himself, that is rigorous in censure toward others, without reflecting upon himself, and considering his own heart; wherein he shall find so much ground and matter of being angry with, and judging himself. If we will be fierce and keen, it is reason we should be so first, and chiefly there, where our greatest enemies do abide, whence most mischief ariseth to us; where there is fittest matter, and justest cause of passion: thus is this practice a most proper and effectual remedy for those baneful vices of pride and peevishness in ourselves, of malignity and fury toward others. But further,

6. The observation of our heart yieldeth great advantage, in being very conducive to render men truly wise and prudent, in those things especially, which most nearly concern them; giving them to see before them, and to understand what they do; and to proceed without security; as contrarily the neglect thereof rendereth men unadvised and un-

^c Si volumus æqui rerum omnium iudices esse, hoc primum nobis suadeamus, neminem esse nostrum sine culpa. *Sen. de Ir.*

Συγγράμην ἔφη δίδουαι πᾶσι τοῖς ἀμαρτάνουσι, πλὴν ἑαυτοῦ. Cato Maj. Plut. p. 624.

24 *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence.*

SERM. certain in their doings. A main point of prudence
XLV.

consisteth in suiting a man's undertakings to his powers and capacities; in not attempting things surpassing his ability or fitness; and in not declining such useful or beneficial attempts as he may well compass. Some are overbold and rash in setting upon things beyond their strength to accomplish, or skill to manage; whence commonly with shame and sorrow they are defeated in their enterprises; others are overbackward and diffident, so as not to adventure upon what they may with good advantage, or perhaps ought to perform; thence depriving themselves of the benefits they might obtain, or omitting the duties which they are obliged to; both which inconveniences usually do proceed from the not looking into and studying the heart; for the most and greatest impediments of action do lie there; being grounded upon inward indispositions, or disagreeableness of men's temper, capacity, inclination to the matters, to which they apply themselves. A tender foot will be galled and lamed, if you set it going in rugged paths; a weak head will turn, if you place it high, or upon the brink of a precipice; a soft spirit cannot well comport with boisterous employment; he that naturally affects calm and quiet must not hope to come off well, if he engage himself upon affairs exposed to abundance of care and tumult; nor will he, if he be well studied this way, and rightly understand himself, adventure thereupon. It was as well according to wisdom as modesty that

Ps. cxlii. 1. *David could say, My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.* In every undertaking two things occur to be consider-

ed : what of difficulty is found therein, and what of temptation ; whether it can be done, and whether it should be done. It is a folly to spend our care and pains upon that which is too hard for us to effect ; and it is worse than so to adventure upon that which most probably will bring us into sin, and hurt our souls ; only the study of ourselves, weighing our power, and trying our temper, will prevent both : he that doeth this may commonly foresee what, the case being put, he shall do ; that if such a temptation doth assault him in such circumstances, his inclinations will be apt to comply therewith, and he shall scarce be able to resist ; that, for instance, he shall wax haughty in a state of dignity, become luxurious in abundance of wealth, be distracted with care in a busy employment ; and therefore he will not be so forward to engage himself upon such occasions, danger and mischief being so vividly pre-represented to his sight. But he that pondereth not his own heart is ready to presume, that, be the business what it will, he shall come off well ; and so unadvisedly rusheth into the snare : he assumes unwieldy burdens upon his shoulders, which he soon feeleth sorely to oppress and pain him ; which he can neither bear with ease, nor put off with convenience. When, for instance, the prophet told Hazael what cruelties and rapines should, when he got power and opportunity, be committed by him ; you see how he was startled at the report : *Am I a dog?* ^{2 Kings xii.} saith he ; that is, Can I be so vile and base ? Yes, ^{8.} he might himself have perceived that he should in likelihood be so ; the probability of his doing as the prophet said, had been no great news to him, if he had observed his own inclinations. Good Agur on

SERM. the other side did better understand himself, when
 XLV. he prayed, *Give me neither poverty nor riches, but*

Prov. xxx. *feed me with food convenient for me.* He was con-
 8.

scious of natural infirmity, and therefore afraid of being in a condition that might prevail upon it; of great wealth, lest it should tempt him to forgetfulness and neglect of God; (*lest, saith he, I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?*) of extreme want, lest it should put him upon unjust, dishonest, and impious courses to maintain his life, (*lest, adds he, I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*) He saw, by looking into himself, that self-love (the root of pride and injustice) was potent in him, and formidable, when occasion should favour it, and therefore, by imploring divine aid, he strove to decline the advantages and occasions of it. It was good counsel which Xenophon tells us the oracle gave Cræsus, consulting about the success of his attempt against Cy-

rus, *Σαυτὸν γινώσκων εὐδαιμόνῳ Κροῖσε περήσει.* *Knowing thyself, thou shalt pass on happily,* (in the course of thy life and undertakings.) Had he, considering his own ability, in relation to the dubious event of things, (that as he could not promise himself good fortune, so he did not know how he should comport with bad; being not sure that he should overcome either his enemies or himself)—thus, I say, had he complied with the oracle's advice, he might have escaped the loss and sorrow which befell him. So is it with us: if we know not the burden of our vessel, we shall either put more sail to it than it can bear, or less than will suffice to carry it on; it will be overladen, or want fit ballast. If we are ignorant of our capacities, we shall either soar too high with

De Cyri In-
 stit. 7.

a dangerous confidence, or grovel below in a slug-
gish listlessness: studying ourselves will help to pre-
serve us in a middle pitch, will direct us in a mode-
rate course, wherein we may proceed with sufficient
courage and alacrity; with a prudent foresight, or
at least with a comfortable hope of good success.

SERM.
XLV.

7. Near to that lies another considerable benefit, attending this practice, which is, that it will help to render us expedite in our resolutions, and constant to them; consistent with ourselves, and uniform in our proceedings; whence will arise both great convenience to ourselves and satisfaction to others with whom we deal or converse: as on the contrary side, from the neglect thereof, we shall become slow in deliberation, doubtful in resolution, and unstable in performance. When any occasion of acting is presented, we shall be ready to close with what is agreeable to our inclination, and not repugnant to our judgment, if by due study and experience we are acquainted with them: that acquaintance is a certain preparation to a speedy choice; and we shall upon the same grounds constantly adhere to our choice, standing upon so firm a base; and so shall neither discompose ourselves, nor disappoint others by our irresolution and inconstancy. But he that skills not his own heart, first will dwell long upon consultation, (not feeling perfectly whither his inward bias doth draw him;) and when he seems, upon some superficial reason, to have determined on one side, some discordance to his own inclination, or some latent prejudice soon discovering itself, he wavers, and at length falls off; finding that he hath promised to himself, or others, what he is unable or unwilling to perform; so, like

SERM. XLV. **St. James's two-souled man, he is unsteady in all his ways. The hard student of himself is like a man that hath his estate in numerato, in ready cash, all in his hand, or at his command; he can presently tell what he can do, and satisfy those he hath to do with. Go to him, you may know where to have him, even just where you left him, or where he uses to be; you may expect a sudden despatch, and you may rely upon his word; for he knows beforehand what he doeth, and shall continue to like; why he determines so or so; and cannot be removed from his well-grounded purpose, (that which is by the philosopher termed *ratio nec dissidens, nec hæsitans*, a reason that doth not strive, nor stick, he is master of.) But he that neglects this practice, what he hath any title to, lieth dispersed, and laid up in corners unknown to himself, so that himself cannot come readily by it; you can hardly tell where to find him; you must wait his resolution; and when it is told you, you cannot be assured thereof, nor anywise satisfied that he will stick to his word, or his mind: he knows not thoroughly what he would have himself; can you then hope for a certain answer from him? He cannot well trust himself; can you then rely upon him? He will find himself mistaken and crossed in his own choice; can you expect less? *Quid est sapientia? semper idem velle, atque idem nolle*: Constancy to a man's self is, saith he, the very being of wisdom: however, nothing more beseems a man, more commends him to society, and suits him to business, is more pleasant and grateful to those who have to do with him, than such a clear, uniform, steady disposition of mind; such a smooth and even**

Jam. i. 8.

Sen. de Vit.
B. 8.

Sen. Ep.
20.

tenor of action ; nothing renders conversation and commerce more unpleasant, than a fickle lubricity of humour, and unaccountable deformity of behaviour : that study therefore is very useful, which conduceth to breed and maintain the one, and which removeth the other. SERM.
XLV.

8. Again, another valuable convenience of this practice is, that it disposeth unto and preserveth a man's mind in a sober temper, agreeable to his state, and to the circumstances into which he is cast ; such a temper I mean as that which the Wise Man prescribes, where he saith, *In the day of prosperity be joyful ; but in the day of adversity consider.* Eccles. vii
14. It is apt to beget either a comfortable joy, or a wholesome regret, according as the interior condition of his soul (that wherein the chief cause of the one or of the other affection is grounded) doth seasonably and justly require. To be transported with mirth and jollity in a state of grievous misery, when reason itself demands sorrow and pity ; to be sad and dumpish when all things flow prosperously ; either of those will seem marvellously incongruous, and argue a kind of stupidity in him that so behaves himself. Now there is not in truth any calamity so disastrous as that which befalls us within ourselves, no prosperity so worthily delightful as the good proceeding of affairs in our souls : it is the most excellent pleasure a man is capable of, that which doth spring from the being conscious, that his mind doth *εὐδοῦσθαι*, as St. John speaks, that 3 John i. 2. is, go well forward in a happy course, that good thoughts freely do spring up, that good inclinations are strong and prevalent, that good habits of mind wax vigorous, that the love of goodness is improved,

SERM. that he generally doth thrive in health and strength
XLV. spiritual. No increase of treasure can affect the covetous, no rising in power and dignity can satisfy the ambitious, no enjoyment of sensual entertainments can ravish the voluptuous man with so true or great content, as the sensible proficiency in virtuous and pious dispositions of soul, growing *richer unto God*, and stronger in the hopes of his favour, do produce in him that doth affect it, and can perceive it: it is a joy in all respects incomparable; only wise and reasonable, pure and innocent, firm and durable. As on the other hand if it be so that we discern, that within our hearts bad thoughts do swarm and multiply, bad appetites do sway, bad customs do encroach upon us; that desire of and delight in good things decay; that we become more dark, dull, unsettled in our spiritual apprehensions, more feeble and languid in our prosecutions of virtue, it is a great benefit to have a timely remorse prompting and urging us to endeavour a deliverance from so unhappy a condition: but no man can well either enjoy that comfortable delight, or be affected with this profitable sorrow, who doth not with a careful attention view his heart, and descry how things go there. This consideration mindeth of a further and more general advantage accruing from this practice; which is this, that,

9. A serious inspection into our hearts doth much avail toward the reformation of our hearts and lives; curing the distempers and correcting the vices of them. For to the curing any disease it is requisite to know the complexion and temper of the patient, and the part affected, and the next causes thereof. As the most grievous of bodily diseases are seated

in, or do proceed from, the entrails; but not all of SERM. XLV. them from the same one of them; and the same disease depends upon the distemper sometimes of one, sometimes of another among them: so do all vices (as our Saviour expressly teacheth) issue from Matt. xv. 18. the heart, or interior man; some from one, some from another part or region thereof; and the same from different parts: sometimes natural temper, sometimes false opinion, sometimes evil custom is the root of the same kind of disease; and it is expedient we should know distinctly which of them in particular cases is the root, that accordingly we may understand what method of cure to use, whence to fetch the remedy, where to apply it; for unskillfulness in these points may frustrate our endeavours of amendment. If the mischief proceed from natural inclination, we must not hope ever utterly to subdue it, nor to free ourselves suddenly from the incursions thereof; nor is bare reasoning a proper weapon against it, it being grounded in the original constitution of the soul, either immediately, or as linked to the body; which by no operation of our mind can be soon altered; for, *No wisdom, as Seneca speaketh well, can remove the natural vices of body or mind; what is infix'd and inbred may be allay'd by art, not subdued*^b. Reason alone and directly is not able to grapple therewith; she will break her teeth upon so tough and knotty matter: it will weary her arms in vain to swim against the rapid current of natural propension; the violent eruptions thereof may indeed somewhat be restrain-

^b Nulla sapientia naturalia corporis aut animi vitia ponuntur: quicquid infixum et ingenitum est lenitur arte, non vincitur. *Sen. Ep. 11.*

SERM. ed; occasions of complying therewith may often be
 XLV. declined; it may in time, and by degrees, be weak-

ened by subtracting the food and incentives there-
 of: but especially devils of this kind must, as our
 Saviour instructeth us, be ejected by humble, earnest,
 and frequent invocation of divine assistance; with-
 out which other means commonly will prove inef-
 fectual. But if the vice proceed only from ill habit,
 or the prevalence of bad custom, we are to oppose

Τὶ φθίσει τὸ
 ἦθος; ἕνα-
 ντίον ἦθος.
 Epict.

a contrary custom thereto, presently disusing that
 practice, and acting otherwise, so shall we easily
 remove and extirpate it: if neither of these causes
 are discernible, we may presume our indisposition is
 derived from ill opinion; and that consequently our
 best course of redressing it, is to examine the reason
 of the thing; to get clear and right apprehensions
 concerning it. For example, if we observe ourselves
 apt to be frequently transported with anger, let us
 look into our hearts, and take notice whether the
 root of that distemper be a choleric complexion, or
 whether it arise from an habitual indulgence to our-
 selves of being moved upon slight causes, whereby
 a peevish humour is grown upon us; or whether it
 cometh from vain conceits of ourselves, as of per-
 sons unto whom extraordinary deference and ob-
 servance is due, so that no man should presume to
 dissent from our opinion, or contravene our desire;
 and as we find, so we must respectively proceed in
 repressing the causes of this disease; praying, if it
 arise from nature, to the Omnipotent, (the only
 Lord and Commander of nature,) that he would by
 his grace free us from that inflammable temper, and
 enable us to govern our passion; withal shunning
 occasions of being provoked; abstaining from such

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diet, such business, such company, as naturally do
kindle or ferment that humour: if the malady
grow from custom, using ourselves to bear patiently
harsh words, unkind dealings, cross accidents; if
our opinion dispose us thereto, reasoning ourselves
into moderate conceits about ourselves, considering
the reasons that may acquit or excuse others to us
upon occasion of offence: using all, or some of these
means, or the like, such as the observation of our
heart shall discover to us to be most proper and
suitable to the nature or to the cause of this dis-
temper infesting us, we shall wholly, or in good
part, rid ourselves from it. Again, (to adjoin an-
other example, the matter seeming to deserve our
heed,) suppose we experience ourselves inclining to
covetousness, eager in getting, solicitous in keeping,
unwilling to part with our goods upon reasonable
occasion, (for the maintenance of our convenient re-
spect in the world, or for relieving the needs of our
brethren, or for serving the public, or for promoting
the interests of piety and virtue;) let us then look,
and see whether this ariseth from a natural strait-
ness, hardness, suspiciousness, or diffidence of heart,
(some such dispositions may be observed in men,)
or from being, by our education, or manner of life,
inured to such a love of getting, or of sparing, or of
tenacity; or whether it springs from conceits about
the worth or the necessity of wealth, (that, without
being furnished with heaps of treasure, we shall
come into danger of want or disgrace; we shall not
be able to maintain our life, or uphold our credit;
we shall not enjoy any thing, or be any bodies
among men;) let us, I say, by examining our hearts,
find out from which of these springs this sordid dis-

SERM.
XLV.

SERM. position floweth, and accordingly strive to correct
XLV. it; either praying to Almighty God, that he would enlarge and supple our heart, if it be natural to us; or addicting ourselves upon reasonable occasion to liberality and free expense, if custom hath therein prevailed upon us; or if vain surmises have seduced us, rectifying our judgments; as by other good discourses, proper against that brutish vice, so especially by considering that God is most good and bountiful, and tender of our being overwhelmed with need; that he continually watcheth over us, so that he cannot but see, and will regard what we want; and that he faithfully hath promised, if we endeavour to please him, and use a moderate diligence in honest ways to maintain ourselves, that he will yield his blessing, and never will leave us destitute. So in all cases we may proceed discreetly in the cure of our spiritual, and in withstanding the temptations to sin, that assault us, if we do but search into our hearts, and learn thence, whence they flow, and by what they are nourished.

10. This practice further doth particularly serve to regulate our devotions, and performances more immediately spiritual, by shewing us what we need to pray for, what we are obliged to give thanks for, what it becomes us to confess and deprecate; for want thereof we shall be apt not only to neglect, but indecently to confound, yea miserably to pervert these duties; to confound them by praying for what is already given us, is put into our hand, or lies within our reach; for which therefore we are not to pray, but to render thanks; also by giving thanks formally for that which perhaps we are far from possessing, and do most want; so, I say, we shall be

apt to confound and misplace, to render vain and chimerical in a sort our spiritual addresses, as wanting due ground and object; yea to pervert them by asking for things really prejudicial and hurtful to us, (in the circumstances we stand,) and thanking God for what in anger and judgment he dispenseth to us, (so indeed are many appearing goods, grateful to present sense,) as also deprecating things most beneficial and useful, and healthful to our souls; neglecting to return thanks for what God disposeth in mercy, (so are many things at present bitter and unsavoury to our carnal appetite and fancy;) thus from ignorance of ourselves, and what we truly need, are we apt to pervert our devotions, not only defeating ourselves of the advantages they might yield us, but (if God be not more gracious than to hearken to us, and to grant our wishes^e) bringing lamentable mischief on ourselves. Many examples of these confusions and perverse misapplications of devotion both scripture affords, and experience will suggest, if we observe them. You know the comparison in the Gospel between the devotions of the Pharisee and the Publican, with the different acceptance they found: the one was prompt enough to give thanks for the graces he had received, and the advantages he conceived that he had in his qualities, and in his performances above others; but not having duly studied himself, did not perceive that he was rather bound to ask pardon for the pride of his heart, and the vanity that adhered to his performances, which rendered his thanksgiving very improper and unseasonable. The other being conscious

SERM.
XLV.

Psal. lxxiii.
18.
Heb. xii.
11.

Luke xviii.

^e Evertère domos totas optantibus ipsis
Dii faciles, &c. *Juv. Sat.* 10.

SERM. of his demerits and wants, with a manner suitable
 XLV. to his condition, in words few, but full and fit, did

confess his unworthiness, (which to do did best be-
 seem him,) and implored mercy, (which was the
 thing he chiefly needed;) so was his discreet prayer
 better accepted, than the other's impertinent thanks-
 giving: *I tell you, saith our Saviour, this man went*

Luke xviii.
 14.

down to his house justified rather than the other.

The two sons of Zebedee, conceiting that our Lord
 would shortly become a great prince, and affecting
 to become favourites then, did confidently sue for
 the next place of dignity about him; our Lord re-
 pressed their fond ambition by downright telling
 them first, that *they knew not what they asked:*

Matt. xx.
 21.

then by demanding of them whether they were able
 to undergo the trials they should meet with; imply-
 ing what they should rather have requested, that
 they more needed humility and patience, than pomp
 and pleasure: and it was the same two persons,
 whose intemperate zeal he elsewhere checked with

Luke xi. 55.

αν ουκ οιδατε οίου πνεύματος, Ye know not of what spirit
ye are: and no wonder, if they, who knew not
 what they were, did ask they knew not what; that,
 being ignorant of their own hearts, they should en-
 dite absurd petitions; that in such a case they
 should desire things not only incongruous and in-
 convenient, but dangerous and destructive to them-
 selves. For to make a right distinction of these
 duties; to be able discreetly and pertinently, if I
 may so speak, to converse with God, it is requisite
 to look into our hearts, and from them to take fit
 matter, due measure, right season of request, and of
 acknowledgment respectively; things commonly not
 being as they appear to our present sense, or to our

gross conceit, in themselves, or in their degree, good SERM.
or bad; but according to the disposition of our XLV.
hearts, and the effects they work upon them. That
is not good which pleaseth our sense and fancy;
nor that bad which disgusts them; but that is good,
which rendereth our heart wiser and better, which
correcteth our inclinations, composeth our affections,
informeth our judgments rightly, and purifieth our
intentions; that is bad, which hath contrary effects
within us. We, it is likely, should pray with great-
est seriousness and earnestness for the removal of
those infirmities, for ease from those afflictions;
which we see the holy apostles (being better in-Jam. i. 2.
structed in things, being more acquainted with Rom. v. 3.
themselves) did rejoice, did glory in, did give thanks 2 Cor. xii.
for; as finding the wholesome operation they had Gal. vi. 14.
upon their hearts; that by them their virtues were 1 Pet. i. 6.
exercised and improved, their faith tried, their pa-
tience increased, their hope confirmed; that, to use
the apostle's words, they did *in the sequel return* Heb. xii.
the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who 11.
were exercised by them: but leaving this point,
though deserving perhaps further consideration, I
proceed, and say further, that,

11. The continual visitation of our inward parts
doth not only yield much advantage, (as in some
measure hath been shewed,) at the long-run, by in-
fluence at the spring-head upon the principles and
causes of action, but doth immediately conduce to
good practice, preventing and stifling in the very
birth many sinful and vain practices: that so many
indiscreet and impertinent, so many irregular and
unsavoury, so many unjust and uncharitable speeches
do issue from our mouths, it is especially because we

SERM XLV. are not then employed upon this duty; are not

watching over our hearts, and observing those inward fountains, (levity and wantonness of thought, precipitancy and disorder of passion) from whence they overflow: were we intent there, we should perhaps endeavour to stop the current, and contain these inward bad motions from venting themselves. The like we may say concerning many unwarrantable actions, into which we inconsiderately plunge ourselves, not heeding whence they spring: did we regard that such actions were arising from ambitious, covetous, froward dispositions, or from certain ill-grounded prejudices lurking in our minds, we should often surely forbear them: but while we keep none, or bad sentinels; while in the custody of our hearts we sleep, or are drowsy; while we neglect to examine and weigh our actions what they are, and whence they come, they (although very bad and hurtful) do steal by us, and pass as friends, and we hear no more of them, but in their woful consequences. What efficacy the consideration of God's omnipresent eye, beholding all our doings, hath, and how all wise men do press it as a powerful means to contain us from bad action, you cannot but well know; as likewise that some of them, in order to the same purpose, direct us to conceive ourselves always under the inspection of some person especially venerable for his worth, or for his relation to us, whom we should be afraid or ashamed to displease: and surely were the faith concerning God's presence, or the fancy concerning the presence of a Cato, or a Lælius, strong enough, they could not but have great effect: however, did we but live, even in our own presence, under the eye of our own judgment

Sen. Ep. xi.
25.

and conscience; regarding not only the matter and SERM.
body, but the reason and ground, that is the soul, of XLV.
our actings; even that would do much; the love
and reverence of ourselves would somewhat check
and control us; we should fear to offend, we should
be ashamed to vilify even ourselves by fond or foul
proceedings; it would, in the philosopher's esteem, Sen. Ep. 25.
supply the room of any other keeper or monitor, if
we could thus keep ourselves; *If, saith he, we have* Cum jam
so far profited, as to have got a reverence of our- profeceris
selves, we may then well let go a tutor, or peda- tantum, ut
gogue. sit tibi
etiam tui
reverentia,
licebit
dimittas
pæda-
gogum.
Ibid.

12. This practice doth much conduce to the
knowledge of human nature, and the general dispo-
sitions of mankind, which is an excellent and most
useful part of wisdom: for the principal inclinations
and first motions of the soul are like in all men;
whence he that by diligent study of himself hath
observed them in his own soul, may thence collect
them to be in others; he hath at least a great ad-
vantage of easily tracing them, of soon descrying
them, of clearly perceiving them in those he con-
verseth with; the which knowledge is of great use,
as directing us how to accommodate ourselves in
our behaviour and dealing with others.

No man indeed can be a good instructor or ad-
viser in moral affairs, who hath not attained this
skill, and doth not well understand the nature of
man: his precepts and rules will certainly be falla-
cious, or misapplied without it: this is that, which
rendered the dictates of the Stoics and other such
philosophers so extravagant and unpracticable, be-
cause they framed them not according to the real
nature of man, such as is existent in the world, but

SERM. according to an idea formed in their own imagina-
XLV. tions.

Some caution indeed is in this matter to be used, that those motions of soul, which proceed from particular temper and complexion, from supervenient principles or habits, may be distinguished from those which are natural and common unto all: which distinction to make is of great use and benefit, in order to the governing, restraining, or correcting them.

If there be any in us, which are not observable in any other men; or in other men, which are not in us, those do not arise from common nature, but from the particular disposition of one or other respectively.

13. I add lastly, that universally this practice is requisite and necessary for the well governing of our heart. Politicians inculcate much, that to the well governing of a people, squaring fit laws for it, and keeping it in good order, the nature and humour of that people should be chiefly heeded and well understood; for that the grave Romans, and light Greeks; the soft Persians, and stout Germans; the subtle Africans, and gross Scythians, would not be well managed in the same manner. So to govern any man's heart, (since the hearts of men, as their faces, and as their voices, differ according to diversities of complexion, of age, of education, of custom and manner of living,) it conduceth to know how it is disposed from any of those, or the like causes. But how we are to guide and govern our hearts, and what particular influence this practice hath thereupon, I reserve for other meditations; when we shall endeavour more distinctly to shew how we may apply our thoughts to due objects; how curb and correct our inclinations; how order our passions;

Vid. Naz.
Orat. 1.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence. 41

how rectify our opinions; how purify our intentions: SERM.
now I conclude with the good Psalmist's requests to XLV.
God Almighty: *Teach us thy way, O Lord; unite* ^{Ps. lxxxvi.}
our hearts to fear thy name. Give us understand- ^{Psal. cxix.}
ing, and we shall keep thy law; yea, we shall ob- ³⁴
serve it with our whole heart. Search us, O God, ^{Ps. cxxxix.}
and know our hearts; try us, and know our ²³
thoughts; see if there be any wicked way in us,
and lead us in the way everlasting. Amen.

SERMON XLVI.

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

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XLVI.

THIS Psalm is upon several peculiar accounts very remarkable; for its antiquity, in which it perhaps doth not yield to any parcel of scripture; for the eminency of its author, Moses, the man of God, the greatest of the ancient prophets, (most in favour, and, as it were, most intimate with God :) it is also remarkable for the form and matter thereof, both affording much useful instruction. In it we have a great prince, the governor of a numerous people, sequestering his mind from the management of public affairs to private meditations; from beholding the present outward appearances, to considering the real nature and secret causes of things; in the midst of all the splendour and pomp, of all the stir and tumult about him, he observes the frailty of human condition, he discerns the providence of God justly ordering all; this he does not only in way of wise consideration, but of serious devotion, moulding his observations into pious acknowledgments and earnest prayers to God: thus while he casts one eye upon

earth viewing the occurrences there, lifting up the other to heaven, there seeing God's all-governing hand, thence seeking his gracious favour and mercy. Thus doth here that great and good man teach us all (more particularly men of high estate and much business) to find opportunities of withdrawing their thoughts from those things which commonly amuse them, (the cares, the glories, the pleasures of this world,) and fixing them upon matters more improveable to devotion; the transitoriness of their condition; and their subjection to God's just providence; joining also to these meditations suitable acts of religion, due acknowledgments to God, and humble prayers. This was his practice among the greatest encumbrances that any man could have; and it should also be ours. Of those his devotions, addressed to God, the words are part, which I have chosen for the subject of my meditation and present discourse; concerning the meaning of which I shall first touch somewhat; then propound that observable in them, which I design to insist upon.

The prophet David hath in the 39th Psalm a prayer very near in words, and of kin, it seems, in sense to this here; *Lord, prays he, make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am:* concerning the drift of which place, as well as of this here, it were obvious to conceive that both these prophets do request of God, that he would discover to them the definite term of their life, (which by his decree he had fixed, or however by his universal prescience he did discern; concerning which we have these words in Job, *Seeing man's days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast ap-*

SERM.
XLVI.

Ps. xxxix.

Job xiv. 5.

SERM. *pointed his bounds, that he cannot pass;*) we might,
XLVI. I say, at first hearing, be apt to imagine, that their prayer unto God is, (for the comfort of their mind burdened with afflictions, or for their better direction in the management of their remaining time of life,) that God would reveal unto them the determinate length of their life. But this sense, which the words seem so naturally to hold forth, is by many of the Fathers rejected, for that the knowledge of our lives' determinate measure is not a fit matter of prayer to God; that being a secret reserved by God to himself, which to inquire into savours of presumptuous curiosity: the universal validity of which reason I will not debate; but shall defer so much to their judgment, as to suppose that the numbering of our days (according to their sense) doth here only imply a confused indefinite computation of our days' number, or the length of our life; such as, upon which it may appear, that necessarily our life cannot be long, (not, according to the account mentioned in this Psalm, the same with that of Solon in Herodotus; above 70 or 80 years, especially as to purposes of health, strength, content;) will probably, by reason of various accidents, to which it is exposed, be much shorter, (7 or 10 years, according to a moderate esteem;) may possibly, from surprises undiscoverable, be very near to its period; by few instants removed from death, (a year, a month, a day, it may be somewhat less.) This I shall allow to be the arithmetic that Moses here desires to learn; whence it will follow, that teaching (or making to know, so it is in the Hebrew) doth import here (as it doth elsewhere frequently in scripture) God's affording the grace to know practically, or with serious regard

to consider this state and measure of our life, (for in speculation no man can be ignorant of human life's brevity and uncertainty; but most men are so negligent and stupid, as not to regard it sufficiently, not to employ this knowledge to any good purpose^a.) This interpretation I choose, being in itself plausible enough, and countenanced by so good authority; yet the former might well enough (by good consequence, if not so immediately) serve my design; or be a ground able to support the discourse I intend to build upon the words; the subject whereof briefly will be this, that the consideration of our lives' certain and necessary brevity and frailty, is a mean proper and apt to dispose us toward the wise conduct of our remaining life; to which purpose such a consideration seems alike available, as the knowledge of its punctual or definite measure; or more than it, upon the same or greater reasons.

As for the latter clause, *that we may apply our hearts to wisdom*; it is according to the Hebrew, *and we shall bring the heart to wisdom*; implying, the application of our hearts to wisdom to be consequent upon the skill and practice (bestowed by God) of thus computing our days. As for wisdom, that may denote either sapience, a habit of knowing what is true; or prudence, a disposition of choosing what is good: we may here understand both, especially the latter; for, as Tully saith of philosophy, *Omnis summa philosophiæ ad beate vivendum refertur*, the sum or whole of philosophy refers to

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^a Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ φρένας ἔχοντος ἀνθρώπου ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι ἀνθρώπος ζῶν ἐστὶ θνητὸν, οὐδ' ὅτι γέγονεν εἰς τὸ ἀποθανεῖν. Plut. ad Apoll. p. 202.

Quis est tam stultus, quamvis sit adolescens, cui sit exploratum se vel ad vesperum esse victurum? Cic. de Sen.

SERM. living happily ; so all divine wisdom doth respect
XLVI. good practice. The word also comprehends all the

Natura de-
dit usuram
vitæ, tan-
quam pecu-
niæ, nulla
præstituta
dic. *Tusc.*
Quæst. i.
p. 326.

consequences and adjuncts of such wisdom ; (for so commonly such words are wont by way of metonymy to denote, together with the things primarily signified, all that naturally flows from, or that usually are conjoined with them :) in brief, (to cease from more explaining that which is in itself conspicuous enough,)

I so understand the text, as if the prophet had thus expressed himself: Since, O Lord, all things are in thy hand and sovereign disposal ; since it appears that man's life is so short and frail, so vexatious and miserable, so exposed to the just effects of thy displeasure ; we humbly beseech thee, so to instruct us by thy wisdom, so to dispose us by thy grace, that we may effectually know, that we may seriously consider the brevity and uncertainty of our lives' duration ; whence we may be induced to understand, regard, and choose those things which good reason dictates best for us ; which, according to true wisdom, it most concerns us to know and perform. From which sense of the words we might infer many useful documents, and draw matter of much wholesome discourse ; but passing over all the rest, I shall only insist upon that one point, which I before intimated, viz. that the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a proper instrument conducive to the bringing our hearts to wisdom, to the making us to discern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such things as are truly best for us ; that it is available to the prudent conduct and management of our life ; the truth of which proposition is grounded upon the divine prophet's opinion : he apprehended such a knowledge or consideration

to be a profitable means of inducing his heart to wisdom ; wherefore he prays God to grant it him in order to that end, supposing that effect would proceed from this cause. And that it is so in way of reasonable influence, I shall endeavour to shew by some following reasons.

I. The serious consideration of our lives' frailty and shortness will confer to our right valuation (or esteem) of things, and consequently to our well placing, and our duly moderating our cares, affections, and endeavours about them. For as we value things, so are we used to affect them, to spend our thought upon them, to be earnest in pursuance or avoiding of them. There be two sorts of things we converse about, good and bad; the former, according to the degree of their appearance so to us, (that is, according to our estimation of them,) we naturally love, delight in, desire, and pursue; the other likewise, in proportion to our opinion concerning them, we do more or less loathe and shun. Our actions therefore being all thus directed and grounded, to esteem things aright both in kind and degree, (*ἐκάστην ἀποδίδοναι τὴν ἀξίαν*, to assign every thing its due price, as Epictetus speaks; *quanti quidque sit judicare*, to judge what each thing is worth, as Seneca^b;) is in order the first, in degree a main part of wisdom; and as so is frequently by wise men commended. Now among qualities that commend or vilify things unto us, duration and certainty have a chief place; they often alone suffice to render things valuable or

^b Primum est, ut quanti quidque sit judices; secundum, ut impetum ad illa capias ordinatum temperatumque; tertium, ut inter impetum tuum, actionemque conveniat, ut in omnibus istis tibi ipsi consentias. *Sen. Ep. 89.*

SERM. contemptible. Why is gold more precious than glass
 XLVI. or crystal? Why prefer we a ruby before a rose or

a gilliflower? It is not because those are more serviceable, more beautiful, more grateful to our senses, than these, (it is plainly otherwise;) but because these are brittle and fading, those solid and permanent: these we cannot hope to retain the use or pleasure of long; those we may promise ourselves to enjoy so long as we please. Whence on the other side is it, that we little fear or shun any thing, how painful, how offensive soever, being assured of its soon passing over, the biting of a flea, or the prick in letting blood? The reason is evident; and that in general nothing can on either hand be considerable (either to value or disesteem) which is of a short continuance. Upon this ground, therefore, let us tax the things concerning us, whether good or bad, relating to this life, or to our future state; and first the good things relating to this life; thence we shall be disposed to judge truly concerning them, what their just price is, how much of affection, care, and endeavour they deserve to have expended on them. In general, and in the lump concerning them all, St.

1 Cor. vii.
31.

Paul tells us, that τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου παράγει, *the shape or fashion* (all that is apparent or sensible) *in this present world doth flit, and soon gives us the go-by*: we gaze a while upon these things, as *in transitu*, or *intra conspectum*, as they pass by us^c, and keep a while in sight; but they are presently gone from us, or we from them. They are but like objects represented in a glass; which having viewed

^c — πάντα παρέρχεται ἡμῶς,

Εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ πάντα παρερχόμεθα. Gr. Epig. Anthol.

a while, we must shortly turn our backs, or shut our eyes upon them, then all vanishes, and disappears unto us. Whence he well infers an indifferency of affection toward them; a slackness in the enjoyment of them to be required of us; a *using this world, as if we used it not*; a *buying, as if we were not to possess*; a *weeping, as if we wept not*; and a *rejoicing, as if we rejoiced not*; a kind of negligence and unconcernedness about these things. *The world*, saith St. John, *passeth away, and the desire thereof*; what ever seemeth most lovely and desirable in the world is very flitting; however, our desire and our enjoyment thereof must suddenly cease. Imagine a man therefore possessed of all worldly goods, armed with power, flourishing in credit, flowing with plenty, swimming in all delight, (such as were sometime Priamus, Polycrates, Cræsus, Pompey;) yet since he is withal supposed a man, and mortal, subject both to fortune and death, none of those things can he reasonably confide or much satisfy himself in; they may be violently divorced from him by fortune, they must naturally be loosed from him by death; the closest union here cannot last longer than till death us depart: wherefore no man upon such account can truly call or (if he consider well) heartily esteem himself happy; a *man cannot* hence (as the most able judge and trusty voucher of the commodities doth pronounce) *receive profit or content from any labour he taketh* (upon these transitory things) *under the sun*. Why then, let me inquire, do we so cumber our heads with care, so rack our hearts with passion, so waste our spirits with incessant toil about these transitory things? Why do we so highly value, so ardently desire, so eagerly pursue, so fondly

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^t John ii.
^{17.} *Ἐὰρ οὐκ αἰσθάνεται αὐτοῦ.*

Eccl. i. 3,
&c.

SERM. delight in, so impatiently want, or lose, so passionately contend for and emulate one another in regard
 XLVI. to these bubbles; forfeiting and foregoing our homebred most precious goods, tranquillity and repose, either of mind or body, for them? Why erect we such mighty fabrics of expectation and confidence upon such unsteady sands? Why dress we up these our inns, as if they were our homes, and are as careful about a few nights' lodging here, as if we designed an everlasting abode? we that are but *sojourners and pilgrims* here, and have *no fixed habitation* upon earth; who *come forth like a flower, and are soon cut down; flee like a shadow, and continue not; are winds passing away, and coming not again; who fade all like a leaf; whose life is a vapour appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away; whose days are a handbreadth, and age is nothing; whose days are consumed like smoke, and years are spent as a tale; who wither like the grass, upon which we feed, and crumble as the dust*, of which we are compacted; for thus the scripture by apposite comparisons represents our condition;) yet we build, like the men of Agrigentum, as if we were to dwell here for ever; and hoard up, as if we were to enjoy after many ages; and inquire, as if we would never have done knowing. The citizens of Croton, a town in Italy, had a manner, it is said, of inviting to feasts a year before the time, that the guests in appetite and garb might come well prepared to them. Do we not usually resemble them in this ridiculous solicitude and curiosity; *spes inchoando longas*, commencing designs, driving on projects, which a longer time than our life would not suffice to accomplish? How

Commo-
 randi natu-
 ra nobis di-
 versorium
 dedit, non
 habitandi
 locum.

Cic. de Sen.
 1 Pet. ii.

11, 1.

Heb. xiii.

11. xi. 15.

1 Chron.

xxix. 15.

Job xiv. 1.

Ps. lxxviii.

39.

Jam. iv. 14.

Is. lxiv. 6.

Psal. cii. 3.

xc. 5, 9.

ciii. 15.

xxxix. 5.

cxliv. 4.

cxix. 19.

Ps. ciii. 15.

Is. xl. 6.

deeply do we concern ourselves in all that is said or done; when the morrow all will be done away and forgotten; when (excepting what our duty to God and charity towards men requires of us, and that which concerns our future eternal state) what is done in the world, who gets or loses, which of the spokes in fortune's wheel is up, and which down, is of very little consequence to us! But the more to abstract our minds from, and temper our affections about these secular matters, let us examine particularly by this standard, whether the most valued things in this world deserve that estimate which they bear in the common market, or which popular opinion assigns them.

SERM.
XLVI.

1. To begin then with that which takes chief place, which the world most dotes on, which seems most great and eminent among men; secular state and grandeur, might and prowess, honour and reputation, favour and applause of men, all the objects of human pride and ambition: of this kind, St. Peter thus pronounces, *πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου, All the glory of men is as the flower of the grass; the grass is dried up, and the flower thereof doth fall off*; it is as the flower of the grass, how specious soever, yet the most fading and failing part thereof; the grass itself will soon wither, and the flower doth commonly fall off before that. We cannot hold this flower of worldly glory beyond our short time of life; and we may easily much sooner be deprived of it: many tempests of fortune may beat it down, many violent hands may crop it; it is apt of itself to fade upon the stalk; however the sun (the influence of age and time) will assuredly burn and dry it up, with our life that upholds it. *Surely*, saith *Psal. lxxii. 9.*

SERM. the Psalmist, *men of low degree are vanity, and*
 XLVI. *men of high degree are a lie* : men of high degree ;

the mighty princes, the famous captains, the subtle statesmen, the grave senators ; they who turn and toss about the world at their pleasure ; who, in the
 Is. xiv. 17. prophet's language, *make the earth tremble, and shake kingdoms* : even these, they are a lie, (said he, who himself was none of the least considerable among them, and by experience well knew their condition, the greatest and most glorious man of his time, king David.) They are a lie ; that is, their state presents something of brave and admirable to the eye of men ; but it is only *deceptio visus* ; a show without a substance ; it doth but delude the careless spectators with false appearance ; it hath nothing under it solid or stable ; being laid in the balance, (the royal prophet there subjoins ; that is, being weighed in the scales of right judgment, being thoroughly considered,) it will prove lighter than vanity itself ; it is less valuable than mere emptiness, and nothing itself. That saying sounds like an hyperbole ; but it may be true in a strict sense, seeing that the care and pains in maintaining it, the fear and jealousy of losing it, the envy, obloquy, and danger that surround it, the snares it hath in it, and temptations inclining men to be puffed up with pride, to be insolent and injurious, to be corrupted with pleasure, (with other bad concomitants thereof,) do more than countervail whatever either of imaginary worth or real convenience may be in it. Perhaps, could it, without much care, trouble, and hazard, continue for ever, or for a long time, it might be thought somewhat considerable : but since its du-
 Psal. lxxxii. ration is uncertain and short ; since *man in honour*
 6.

abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish ; that SERM. XLVI.
they who look so like gods, and are called so, and
are worshipped as so, yet must die like men, like Psal. xlix. 12, &c.
men, yea like sheep shall be laid in the grave ;
since, as it is said of the king of Babylon in Isaiah,
their pomp must be brought down to the grave, and Is. xiv. 11.
the noise of their viols ; the worm shall be spread
under them, and the worm shall cover them ; seeing
that a moment of time shall extinguish all their
lustre, and still all that tumult about them ; that
they must be disrobed of their purple, and be clothed
with corruption ; that their so spacious and splendid
palaces must soon be exchanged for close darksome
coffins ; that both their own breath, and the breath
of them who now applaud them, must be stopped ;
that they who now bow to them, may presently
trample on them ; and they, who to-day trembled at
their presence, may the morrow scornfully insult
upon their memory : Is this the man (will they say, Is. xiv. 16.
as they did of that great king) who made the earth
to tremble ; that did shake kingdoms ; that made
the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the king-
doms thereof ? Since this is the fate of the greatest
and most glorious among men, what reason can
there be to admire their condition, to prize such
vain and shortlived preeminences ? For who can
account it a great happiness to be styled and re-
spected as a prince, to enjoy all the powers and pre-
rogatives of highest dignity for a day or two ; then
being obliged to descend into a sordid and despicable
estate ? Who values the fortune of him that is
brought forth upon the stage to act the part of a
prince ; though he be attired there, and attended as
such, hath all the garb and ceremony, the ensigns

SERM. and appertenances of majesty about him; speaks and
 XLVI. behaves himself imperiously, is flattered and wor-
 shipped accordingly; yet who in his heart doth
 adore this idol, doth admire this mockery of great-
 ness? Why not? Because after an hour or two the
 play is over, and this man's reign is done. And
 what great difference is there between this and the
 greatest worldly state? between Alexander in the
 history, and Alexander on the stage? Are not (in
 Psal. xc. the Psalmist's account) *all our years spent as a tale
 that is told*, or as a fable that is acted? This in
 comparison of that, what is it at most, but telling
 the same story, acting the same part a few times
 over? What are a few years more than a few hours
 repeated not very often? not so often as to make
 any considerable difference: so a great emperor re-
 flected; τί διαφέρει τριήμερος τριγεργηπίου; *What*, said
 Anton. iv. he, *doth the age of an infant, dying within three
 50. days, differ from that of Nestor, who lived three
 ages of men?* since both shall be past and ended;
 Sen. Ep. both then meet, and thereby become equal; since,
 xcix. 24. considering the immense time that runs on, and how
 little a part thereof any of us takes up, (*juvenes et
 senes in æquo sumus*,) we are all alike young and
 old, as a drop and a pint bottle in compare to the
 ocean are in a sort equal, that is, both altogether in-
 considerable^d. *Quid enim diu est, ubi finis est?*
 saith St. Austin: *what can be long that shall be
 ended?* which coming to that pass is as if it never
 had been? Since then upon this account (upon
 worldly accounts I speak all this; and excepting that
 dignity and power may be talents bestowed by God,

^d Mihi ne diuturnum quidem quidquam videtur, in quo est ali-
 quid extremum, &c. *Cic. de Senect.*

or advantages to serve God, and promote the good of men; excepting also the relation persons justly instated in them bear to God, as his deputies and ministers; in which respects much reverence is due to their persons, much value to their places; even the more, by how much less their present outward estate is considerable, and because at present they receive so slender a reward for all their cares and pains employed in the discharge of their offices; this I interpose to prevent mistake, lest our discourse should seem to disparage or detract from the reverence due to persons in eminent place. But since, under this caution) all worldly power and glory appear so little valuable, the consideration hereof may avail to moderate our affections about them, to quell all ambitious desires of them, and all vain complacencies in them. For why should we so eagerly seek and pursue such empty shadows, which if we catch, we in effect catch nothing; and whatever it is, doth presently slip out of our hands? Why do we please ourselves in such evanid dreams? Is it not much better to rest quiet and content in any station wherein God hath placed us, than to trouble ourselves and others in climbing higher to a precipice, where we can hardly stand upright, and whence we shall certainly tumble down into the grave? This consideration is also a remedy proper to remove all regret and envy grounded upon such regards. For why, though suppose men of small worth or virtue should flourish in honour and power, shall we repine thereat? Is it not as if one should envy to a butterfly its gaudy wings, to a tulip its beautiful colours, to the grass its pleasant verdure; that grass, to which in this Psalm we are compared;

SERM. *which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up,*
 XLVI. *in the evening is cut down and withereth?* I may

Ps. xc. 6. say of this discourse with the philosopher, ἰδιωτικὸν
 Ant. iv. μὲν, ὅμως δὲ ἀντικὸν βοήθημα, it is a homely remedy,
 §. 50. (there may be divers better ones,) yet hath its effi-
 cacy; for David himself made use thereof more than

Ps. xlix. 16. once: *Be not, saith he, afraid, or troubled, when
 one is made rich, when the glory of his house is in-
 creased; for when he dieth, he shall carry nothing
 away; his glory shall not descend with him. I*

Paul. lxxiii. *was, saith he again, envious at the foolish, when
 3, 17. I saw the prosperity of the wicked; but I went
 xxxvii. 1. into the sanctuary, then understood I their end;
 surely thou didst set them in slippery places—how
 are they brought into desolation as in a moment!*

Thus considering the lubricity and transitoriness of
 that prosperity, which foolish and wicked men en-
 joyed, did serve to cure that envious distemper which
 began to affect the good man's heart.

2. But let us descend from dignity and power
 (that is, from names and shows) to somewhat seeming
 more real and substantial, to riches; that great and
 general idol, the most devoutly adored that ever
 any hath been in the world; which hath a temple
 almost in every house, an altar in every heart; to
 the gaining of which most of the thoughts, most of
 the labours of men immediately tend; in the pos-
 session of which men commonly deem the greatest
 happiness doth consist. But this consideration we
 discourse about will easily discover, that even this,

1 Cor. viii. as all other idols, is *nothing in the world*, nothing
 4 true and solid; will, I say, justify that advice, and

Prov. xxiii. verify that assertion of the Wise Man: *Labour not
 5 for riches; wilt thou set thy heart upon that which*

is not? it, well applied, will pluck down the high places reared to this great idol of clay in men's hearts; will confute the common conceits and phrases, which so beatify wealth; shewing that whoever dotes thereon is more truly and properly styled a miserable man, than a happy or blessed one: for is he not indeed miserable, who *makes lies his refuge*, who confides in that which will deceive and disappoint him? The prophet assures us so: *Woe*, saith the prophet Habakkuk, *woe be to him who coveteth an evil covetousness to his house; that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil.* Men, he implies, imagine by getting riches, they have secured and raised themselves above the reach of all mischief: but ye see it was in the prophet's judgment a woful mistake. St. Paul doth warn men, very emphatically, *not to hope ἐπὶ πλούτου ἀδηλόγητι*, in the uncertainty, or obscurity, of riches; intimating, that to trust in them, is to trust in darkness itself; in that wherein we can discern nothing; in we know not what. They are, we cannot but observe, subject to an infinity of chances, many of them obvious and notorious; more of them secret and unaccountable. *They make*, the Wise Man tells us, *themselves wings*, (they need, it seems, no help for that,) *and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven*, (quite out of sight, and beyond our reach, they of their own accord do swiftly fly away:) however, should they be disposed to stay with us, we must fly from them; were they inseparably affixed to this life, yet must they together with that be severed from us; as we came naked of them into this world, so naked shall we return: *As he came*, saith the Preacher, *so shall he go; and what profit* (then)

SERM.
XLVI.

^{ὄλαβος,}
Beatus, &c.
pro divite.
Hab. ii. 9.

^{1 Tim. vi.}

^{19.}

^{Prov. xxiii.}

^{5.}

^{Job i. 21.}

^{xxvii. 19.}

^{1 Tim. vi. 7.}

^{Ecccl. v. 21.}

SERM. *hath he that laboureth for the wind?* from hence,
 XLVI. that we must so soon part with riches, he infers them

to be but wind; a thing not anywise to be fixed or settled; which it is vain to think we can appropriate or retain; and vain therefore greedily to covet, or pursue: so the Psalmist also reasons it: *Surely every man, saith he, walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.* Men, in his account, that troubled themselves in accumulating wealth, did but idly delude themselves, fancying to receive content from such things, which they must themselves soon be separated from; and leave at uncertainties, to be disposed of they know not how: that which in his wise son's esteem was sufficient to

Ps. xxxix.
6.

Eccl. ii. 18. *make a man hate all his labour under the sun: Because, saith he, I shall leave it to the man that shall be after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet he shall have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun:* all, it seems, that we are so wise and so industrious about, that we so beat our heads about, and spend our spirits upon, is at most but *gaudium hæredis, the joy of an heir*, and that an uncertain one, (for your son, your kinsman, your friend, may, for all you can know, die before you, or soon after you;) ^eit is but a being at great pains and charges in tilling the land, and sowing and dressing it; whence we are sure not to reap any benefit to ourselves, and cannot know who shall do it.

Jam. i. 11. *The rich man, St. James tells us, as the flower of*

^e In his elaborant, quæ sciunt nihil omnino ad se pertinere; serunt arbores, quæ alteri sæculo prosint. *Cic. de Senect.*

the grass shall he pass away; for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion thereof perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade in his ways. All the comfort (we see by the apostle's discourse) and the convenience, all the grace and ornament, that riches are supposed to yield, will certainly wither and decay, either before or with us; whenever the sun (that is, either some extreme mischance in life, or the certain destiny of death) doth arise, and make impression on them. But our Saviour hath best set out the nature and condition of these things, in that parable concerning the man, who, having had a plentiful crop of corn, and having projected for the disposal of it, resolved then *to bless himself*, and entertain his mind with pleasing discourses, that having in readiness and security so copious accommodations, he might now enjoy himself with full satisfaction and delight; not considering, that, though his barns were full, his life was not sure; that God's pleasure might soon interrupt his pastime; that the fearful sentence might presently be pronounced: *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee; and what thou hast prepared, to whom shall it fall?* Euripides calls riches *φιλόψυχον χρῆμα*, a thing which much endears life, or makes men greatly love it; but they do not at all enable to keep it: there is no *ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς*, no price or ransom equivalent to life: all that a man hath, he would give to redeem it; but it is a purchase too dear for all the riches in the world to compass. So the Psalmist tells us: *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them*

SERM. XLVI.
Luke xii. 20.
Tim i. 6.

SERM. *can by any means redeem his brother, nor give*
 XLVI. *to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of*

their soul is precious. They cannot redeem their brother's soul or life, nor therefore their own; for all souls are of the same value, all greatly surpass the price of gold and silver. Life was not given us

Luke xii.
20.

for perpetuity, but lent, or deposited with us; and without delay or evasion it must be resigned into the hand of its just owner, when he shall please to demand it; and although righteousness may, *yet*

Prov. xi. 4. *riches, as the Wise Man tells us, cannot deliver from death, nor at all profit us in the day of wrath.*

Could we probably retain our possessions for ever in our hands; nay, could we certainly foresee some considerably long definite time, in which we might enjoy our stores, it were perhaps somewhat excusable to scrape and hoard, it might look like rational providence, it might yield some valuable satisfaction; but since, *Rape, congere, aufer, posside, statim re-*

Prov. xxvii.
24.

linquendum est; since, as Solomon tells us, *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to every generation;* yea, since they must be left very soon, nor is there any certainty of keeping them any time; that one day may consume them, one night may dispossess us of them and our life together with them, there can be no reason why we should be solicitous about them; no account given of our setting so high a rate upon them. For who would much regard the having custody of a rich treasure for a day or two, then to be stripped of all, and left bare? to be to-day invested in large domains, and to-morrow to be dispossessed of them?

Sen. Ep. 98. No man surely would be so fond, as much to affect the condition. Yet this is our case; whatever we

call ours, we are but guardians thereof for a few days. SERM. XLVI.
This consideration therefore may serve to repress
or moderate in us all covetous desires, proud conceits, vain confidences and satisfactions in respect to worldly wealth; to induce us, in Job's language, *not to make gold our hope, nor to say to the fine gold,*^{Job xxxi. 24.}
Thou art my confidence; not to rejoice because our wealth is great, and because our hand hath gotten much; to extirpate from our hearts that root of all evil, the love of money. For if, as the Preacher thought, the greatest pleasure or benefit accruing from them, is but looking upon them for a while, (*what good, saith he, is there to the owners thereof,*^{Eccl. v. 11.} *saving the beholding of them with their eyes?*) if a little will, nay must suffice our natural appetites, and our present necessities; if more than needs is but, as the scripture teaches us, *a trouble,*^{Eccl. v. 12.} disquieting our minds with care; *a dangerous snare,*^{1Tim. vi. 9.} drawing us into mischief and sorrow; if this, I say, be their present quality; and were it better, yet could it last for any certain, or any long continuance; is it not evidently better to enjoy that pittance God hath allotted us with ease and contentation of mind; or if we want a necessary supply, to employ only a moderate diligence in getting thereof by the fairest means, which, with God's blessing promised thereto, will never fail to procure a competence, and with this to rest content; than with those in Amos, *to pant after the dust of the earth; to lade ourselves with thick clay;* to thirst insatiably after floods of gold, to heap up mountains of treasure, to extend unmeasurably our possessions, (*joining house to house, and laying field to field, till there be no place, that we may be placed alone in the midst of*^{Simplici cura constant necessaria, in delicias laboratur. Sen. Ep. 89. Matt. vi. Heb. xiii. 15. 1Tim. vi. 8. Psal. lv. 26. Amos ii. 6. Hab. ii. 6. Is. v. 8.}

SERM. *the earth*, as the prophet Isaiah doth excellently describe the covetous man's humour;) than, I say,

XLVI.

thus incessantly to toil for the maintenance of this frail body, this flitting breath of ours? If divine bounty hath freely imparted a plentiful estate upon

Luke xvi.9.

us, we should indeed bless God for it; *making ourselves friends* thereby, as our Saviour advises us, employing it to God's praise and service; to the relief and comfort of our brethren that need: but to seek it earnestly, to set our heart upon it, to rely thereon, to be greatly pleased or elevated in mind thereby, as it argues much infidelity and profaneness of heart, so it signifies much inconsiderateness and folly, the ignorance of its nature, the forgetfulness of our own condition, upon the grounds discoursed upon.

3. Now in the next place; for pleasure, that great witch, which so enchants the world, and which by its mischievous baits so allures mankind into sin and misery; although this consideration be not altogether necessary to disparage it, (its own nature sufficing to that; for it is more transitory than the shortest life, it dies in the very enjoyment,) yet it may conduce to our wise and good practice in respect thereto, by tempering the sweetness thereof, yea souring its relish to us; minding us of its insufficiency and unserviceableness to the felicity of a mortal creature; yea, its extremely dangerous consequences to a soul that must survive the short enjoyment thereof. Some persons indeed, ignorant or incredulous of a future state; presuming of no sense remaining after death, nor regarding any account to be rendered of this life's actions, have encouraged themselves and others in the free enjoyment of pre-

sent sensualities, upon the score of our life's short-^{SERM.}
ness and uncertainty; inculcating such maxims as XLVI.
these :

—Brevis est hic fructus homullis; Lucr.
—post mortem nulla voluptas:

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die; ^{1 Cor. xv.}
because our life is short, let us make the most ad-^{32.}
vantageous use thereof we can^f; because death is
uncertain, let us prevent its surprisal, and be
aforehand with it, enjoying somewhat, before it
snatches all from us. The author of Wisdom ob-^{Sap. ii. 1.}
served, and thus represents these men's discourse:^{&c.}

*Our life is short and tedious; and in the death of
a man there is no remedy; neither was there any
man known to have returned from the grave:—
Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things
that are present; let us speedily use the creatures
like as in youth; let us fill ourselves with costly
wine and ointments; and let no flower of the
spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with
rosebuds before they be withered; let none of us
go without his part of voluptuousness—for this is
our portion, and our lot is this. Thus, and no
wonder, have some men, conceiving themselves
beasts, resolved to live as such; renouncing all sober
care becoming men, and drowning their reason in
brutish sensualities; yet no question, the very same
reflection, that this life would soon pass away, and
that death might speedily attack them, did not a
little quash their mirth, and damp their pleasure.
To think, that this perhaps might be the last ban-*

^f Quem sors dierum cunque dabit, lucro
Appone; nec dulces amores
Sperne puer, &c. *Hor. i. 9.*

SERM. **XLVI.** quiet they should taste of; that they should themselves shortly become the feast of worms and serpents, could not but somewhat spoil the gust of their highest delicacies, and disturb the sport of their loudest jovialties; but in Job's expression,

Job xx. 14. *make the meat in their bowels to turn, and be us the gall of asps within them.* Those customary enjoyments did so enamour them of sensual delight, that they could not without pungent regret imagine a necessity of soon for ever parting with them; and so their very pleasure was by this thought made distasteful and imbittered to them. So did the Wise Man observe: *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions; unto the man that hath nothing to vex him; and that hath prosperity in all things; Yea, adds he, unto him, that is yet able to receive meat!* And how bitter then must the remembrance thereof be to him, who walloweth in all kind of corporal satisfaction and delight; that placeth all his happiness in sensual enjoyment! However, as to us, who are better instructed and affected; who know and believe a future state; the consideration, that the time of enjoying these delights will soon be over;

Eccles. vii. 6. that this world's jollity is but like *the crackling of thorns under a pot*, (which yields a brisk sound, and a cheerful blaze, but heats little, and instantly passes away;) that they leave no good fruits behind them, but do only corrupt and enervate our minds; war against and hurt our souls; tempt us to sin, and involve us in guilt; that therefore Solomon was surely in the right, when he said of *laughter, that it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it?* (that is, that the highest of these delights are very

Eccles. ii. 2.

irrational impertinences;) and of intemperance, that, **SERM**
at the last, *it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth* **XLVI.**
like an adder; with us, I say, who reflect thus, **Prov. xxiii.**
that (πρόσκαιρος ἀμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσις) *enjoyment of* **Heb. xi. 25.**
sinful pleasure for a season cannot obtain much
esteem and love; but will rather, I hope, be despised
and abhorred by us. I will add only,

4. Concerning secular wisdom and knowledge; **Δοκίμ γούν ἡ**
the which men do also commonly with great ear- **σοφία θαυ-**
nestness and ambition seek after, as the most spe- **μαστός ἠδε-**
cious ornament, and pure content of their mind; **νά; ἵχτιν**
this consideration doth also detect the just value **καθαρίσθητι,**
thereof; so as to allay intemperate ardour toward **καὶ τῷ βί-**
it, pride and conceitedness upon the having or seem- **βαίῳ. Arist.**
ing to have it, envy and emulation about it. For **Eth. x. 7.**
imagine, if you please, a man accomplished with all
varieties of learning commendable, able to recount
all the stories that have been ever written, or the
deeds acted, since the world's beginning; to under-
stand, or with the most delightful fluency and ele-
gancy to speak all the languages, that have at any
time been in use among the sons of men; skilful in
twisting and untwisting all kinds of subtilties;
versed in all sorts of natural experiments, and ready
to assign plausible conjectures about the causes of
them; studied in all books whatever, and in all
monuments of antiquity; deeply knowing in all the
mysteries of art, or science, or policy, such as have
ever been devised by human wit, or study, or ob-
servation; yet all this, such is the pity, he must be
forced presently to abandon; all the use he could
make of all his notions, the pleasure he might find
in them, the reputation accruing to him from them,
must at that fatal minute vanish; *his breath goeth* **Ps. cxlvi. 4.**

SERM. *forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day*
 XLVI. *his thoughts perish. There is no work, nor de-*

Eccl. ix. 10. *vice, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave,*

Psal. xlix. 10. *whither he goeth. It is seen, saith the Psalm-*

ist, seen indeed every day, and observed by all,
that wise men die, likewise the fool and brutish

Eccl. ii. 14, 16, &c. *person perisheth; one event happeneth to them*

both; there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; (both die alike, both alike are forgotten;) as the wisest man himself did (not without some distaste) observe and complain. All our subtile conceits and nice criticisms, all our fine inventions and goodly speculations, shall be swallowed up either in the utter darkness, or in the clearer light, of the future state. One potion of that Lethean cup (which we must all take down upon

Ps. lxxxviii. 12. *our entrance into that land of forgetfulness) will probably drown the memory, deface the shape of all those ideas, with which we have here stuffed our minds^s: however they are not like to be of use to us in that new, so different, state; where none of our languages are spoken; none of our experience will suit; where all things have quite another face unknown, unthought of by us; where Aristotle and Varro shall appear mere idiots; Demosthenes and Cicero shall become very infants; the wisest and eloquentest Greeks will prove senseless and dumb barbarians; where all our authors shall have no authority; where we must all go fresh to school again; must unlearn, perhaps, what in these misty regions we thought ourselves best to know, and begin to*

^s Τὴν δ' Ἰσοκράτους διατριβὴν ἐπισκώπτων, γηρῆν φησι παρ' αὐτῷ τοὺς μαθητὰς, ὡς ἐν ᾧδου χρησομένους ταῖς τέχναις, καὶ δίκας ἐροῦντας. Cato Sen. apud Plut. p. 641. edit. Steph.

learn what we not once ever dreamed of. Doth SERM.
therefore, I pray you, so transitory and fruitless a XLVI.
good (for itself I mean, and excepting our duty to
God, or the reasonable diligence we are bound to
use in our calling) deserve such anxious desire, or
so restless toil; so careful attention of mind, or as-
siduous pain of body about it? doth it become us to
contend, or emulate so much about it? Above all,
do we not most unreasonably, and against the na-
ture of the thing itself we pretend to, (that is, igno-
rantly and foolishly,) if we are proud and conceited,
much value ourselves or contemn others, in respect
thereto? Solomon, the most experienced in this
matter, and best able to judge thereof, (he that gave
his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concern-
ing all things that had been done under heaven,
and this with extreme success; even he,) passeth
the same sentence of vanity, vexation, and unpro-
fitableness, upon this, as upon all other subcelestial
things. True, he commends wisdom as an excellent
and useful thing comparatively; *exceeding folly, so* Διαλοῦν ἰσῶ-
far as light exceedeth darkness; but since light σιν οἱ μαθόν-
itself is not permanent, but must give way to dark- τες γράμ-
ness, the difference soon vanished, and his opinion ματα.
thereof abated; considering, that as it happened to Eccl. ii. 15.
the fool, so it happened to him, he breaks into that
expostulation; *And why then was I more wise?*
to what purpose was such a distinction made, that
signified in effect so little? And indeed the testi-
mony of this great personage may serve for a good
epilogue to all this discourse, discovering sufficiently
the slender worth of all earthly things: seeing he,
that had given himself industriously to experiment
the worth of all things here below, to sound the

SERM. depth of their utmost perfection and use; who had
XLVI. all the advantages imaginable of performing it; who flourished in the greatest magnificences of worldly pomp and power; who enjoyed an incredible affluence of all riches; who tasted all varieties of most exquisite pleasure; whose heart was (by God's special gift, and by his own industrious care) enlarged with all kind of knowledge (furnished with notions many as *the sand upon the sea-shore*) above all that were before him; who had possessed and enjoyed all that fancy could conceive, or heart could wish, and had arrived to the top of secular happiness; yet even *he* with pathetic reiteration pronounces all to be *vanity and vexation of spirit*; altogether unprofitable and unsatisfactory to the mind of man. And so therefore we may justly conclude them to be; so finishing the first grand advantage this present consideration affordeth us in order to that wisdom, to which we should apply our hearts.

¹ Kings iv.
29.

I should proceed to gather other good fruits, which it is apt to produce, and contribute to the same purpose; but since my thoughts have taken so large scope upon that former head, so that I have already too much, I fear, exercised your patience, I shall only mention the rest. As this consideration doth, as we have seen, first, dispose us rightly to value these temporal goods, and moderate our affections about them; so it doth, secondly, in like manner, conduce to the right estimation of temporal evils; and thereby to the well tempering our passions in the resentment of them; to the begetting of patience and contentedness in our minds. Also, thirdly, it may help us to value, and excite us to

regard those things, good or evil, which relate to our future state; being the things only of a permanent nature, and of an everlasting consequence to us. Fourthly, it will engage us to husband carefully and well employ this short time of our present life: not to defer or procrastinate our endeavours to live well; not to be lazy and loitering in the despatch of our only considerable business, relating to eternity; to embrace all opportunities, and improve all means, and follow the best compendiums of good practice leading to eternal bliss. Fifthly, it will be apt to confer much toward the begetting and preserving sincerity in our thoughts, words, and actions; causing us to decline all oblique designs upon present mean interests, or base regards to the opinions or affections of men; bearing single respects to our conscience and duty in our actions; teaching us to speak as we mean, and be what we would seem; to be in our hearts and in our closets, what we appear in our outward expressions and conversations with men. For considering, that within a very short time all the thoughts of our hearts shall be disclosed, and all the actions of our lives exposed to public view, (being strictly to be examined at the great bar of divine judgment before angels and men,) we cannot but perceive it to be the greatest folly in the world, for this short present time to disguise ourselves; to conceal our intentions, or smother our actions. What hath occurred, upon these important subjects, to my meditation, I must at present, in regard to your patience, omit. I shall close all with that good collect of our church.

Almighty God, give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the

70 *The Consideration of our latter End.*

SERM. *armour of light, now in the time of this mortal*
XLVI. *life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit*
us in great humility; that in the last day, when
he shall come again in his glorious majesty to
judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise
to the life immortal, through him who liveth and
reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and
ever. Amen.

SERMON XLVII.

THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR LATTER END.

PSALM XC. 12.

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our
hearts unto wisdom.*

IN discoursing formerly upon these words, (ex-
pounded according to the most common and pass-
able interpretation,) that which I chiefly observed
was this: That the serious consideration of the
shortness and frailty of our life is a fit mean or ra-
tional instrument subservient to the bringing our
hearts to wisdom; that is, to the making us dis-
cern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such
things, as according to the dictates of right reason
are truly best for us.

1. The truth of which observation I largely de-
clared from hence, that the said consideration dis-
poseth us to judge rightly about those goods, (which
ordinarily court and tempt us, viz. worldly glory
and honour; riches, pleasure, knowledge; to which
I might have added wit, strength, and beauty,) what
their just worth and value is; and consequently to
moderate our affections, our cares, our endeavours
about them; for that if all those goods be uncertain
and transitory, there can be no great reason to prize

SERM.
XLVII.

Job xiv. 14.
All the days
of my ap-
pointed
time will I
wait, till
my change
come.

SERM. them much, or to affect them vehemently, or to
 XLVII. spend much care and pains about them.

2. I shall next in the same scales weigh our temporal evils; and say, that also the consideration of our lives' brevity and frailty doth avail to the passing a true judgment of, and consequently to the governing our passions, and ordering our behaviour in respect to all those temporal evils, which either according to the law of our nature, or the fortuitous course of things, or the particular dispensation of Providence do befall us. Upon the declaration of which point I need not insist much, since what was before discoursed concerning the opposite goods doth plainly enough infer it; more immediately indeed in regard to the *mala damni, or privationis*, (the evils which consist only in the want or loss of temporal goods,) but sufficiently also by a manifest parity of reason in respect to the *mala sensus*, the real pains, crosses, and inconveniences that assail us in this life. For if worldly glory do hence appear to be no more than a transient blaze, a fading show, a hollow sound, a piece of theatrical pageantry, the want thereof cannot be very considerable to us. Obscurity of condition (living in a valley beneath that dangerous height, and deceitful lustre) cannot in reason be deemed a very sad or pitiful thing, which should displease or discompose us: if we may thence learn that abundant wealth is rather a needless clog, or a perilous snare, than any great convenience to us, we cannot well esteem to be poor a great infelicity, or to undergo losses a grievous calamity; but rather a benefit to be free from the distractions that attend it; to have little to keep for others, little to care for ourselves. If these present

ures be discerned hence to be only wild fugitive SERM.
ums; out of which being soon roused we shall XLVII
r find bitter regrets to abide; why should not
wanting opportunities of enjoying them be ra-
accounted a happy advantage, than any part of
ery to us? If it seem, that the greatest perfec-
of curious knowledge, of what use or ornament
er, after it is hardly purchased, must soon be
ed with; to be simple or ignorant will be no
it matter of lamentation: as those will appear
solid goods, so these consequently must be only
ire malorum, phantasms, or shadows of evil, Sen. Ep. 89.
er than truly or substantially so; (evils created
fancy, and subsisting thereby; which reason
ald, and time will surely remove;) that in being
atient or disconsolate for them, we are but like
dren, that fret and wail for the want of petty
s. And for the more real or positive evils, such
violently assault nature, whose impressions no
on can so withstand, as to extinguish all dis-
e or afflictive sense of them; yet this considera-
will aid to abate and assuage them; affording
ertain hope and prospect of approaching redress.
s often seen at sea, that men (from unacquaint-
e with such agitations, or from brackish steams
ing from the salt water) are heartily sick, and
over themselves to be so by apparently grievous
ptoms; yet no man hardly there doth mind or
r them, because the malady is not supposed dan-
ous, and within a while will probably of itself
s over; or that however the remedy is not far
the sight of land, a taste of the fresh air will
eve them: it is near our case: we passing over
troublesome sea of life; from unexperience,

SERM.
XLVII.

joined with the tenderness of our constitution, we cannot well endure the changes and crosses of fortune; to be tossed up and down; to suck in the sharp vapours of penury, disgrace, sickness, and the like, doth beget a qualm in our stomachs; make us nauseate all things, and appear sorely distempered; yet is not our condition so dismal as it seems; we may grow hardier, and wear out our sense of affliction; however, the land is not far off, and by disembarking hence we shall suddenly be discharged of all our molestations. It is a common solace of grief, approved by wise men, *si gravis, brevis est; si longus, levis*; if it be very grievous and acute, it cannot continue long without intermission or respite; if it abide long, it is supportable^a; intolerable pain is like lightning, it destroys us, or is itself instantly destroyed. However, death at length (which never is far off) will free us; be we never so much tossed with storms of misfortune, that is a sure haven; be we persecuted with never so many enemies, that is a safe refuge; let what pains or diseases soever infest us, that is an assured anodynon, and infallible remedy for them all; however we be wearied with the labours of the day, the night will come and ease us; the grave will become a bed of rest unto us. ^b Shall I die? I shall then cease to

^a Θάρσει· πόνου γὰρ ἄκρον οὐκ ἔχει χρόνον. Æschyl. apud Plutarch. de Aud. Poet. sub finem.

Τὸ μὲν ἀφόρητον ἐξάγει· τὸ δὲ χρονίζον φορητόν. Ant. vii. §. 33.

Summi doloris intentio invenit finem: nemo potest valde dolere et diu: sic nos amantissima nostri natura disposuit, ut dolorem aut tolerabilem, aut brevem faceret. *Sen. Ep.* 74.

^b Dolore percussi mortem imploramus, eamque unam, ut miseriarum malorumque terminum exoptamus. *Cic. Consolat.*

Moriar? hoc dicis; desinam ægrotare posse, &c. *Sen. Ep.* 24.

be sick ; I shall be exempted from disgrace ; I shall SERM.
be enlarged from prison ; I shall be no more pinched XLVII.
with want ; no more tormented with pain. Death
is a winter, that as it withers the rose and lily, so
it kills the nettle and thistle ; as it stifles all worldly
joy and pleasure, so it suppresses all care and grief ;
as it hushes the voice of mirth and melody, so it
stills the clamours and the sighs of misery ; as it
defaces all the world's glory, so it covers all dis-
grace, wipes off all tears, silences all complaint,
buries all disquiet and discontent. King Philip of
Macedon once threatened the Spartans to vex them
sorely, and bring them into great straits ; but, an-
swered they, *can he hinder us from dying*^c? that
indeed is a way of evading which no enemy can
obstruct, no tyrant can debar men from ; they who
can deprive of life, and its conveniences, cannot
take away death from them. There is a place, Job Job iii. 17.
tells us, *where the wicked cease from troubling,*
and where the weary be at rest : where the pri-
soners rest together ; they hear not the voice of the
oppressor : the small and great are there ; and the
servant is free from his master. It is therefore
but holding out a while, and a deliverance from the
worst this world can molest us with shall of its own
accord arrive unto us ; in the mean-time it is better^{ο μίλλυς}
that we at present owe the benefit of our comfort ^{εἰς χρόνον}
to reason, than afterward to time ; by rational con- ^{χαρῆς ἰσθῆαι,}
sideration to work patience and contentment in our- ^{ταῦτο εἰς}
selves ; and to use the shortness of our life as an ^{λόγον χαρῆ-}
argument to sustain us in our affliction, than to find ^{σαι. Plat.}
^{ad Apol.}
^{p. 195.}

^c Ἄδην ἔχων βοηθὸν, οὐ τρέμω σκιάς.

Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest ; at nemo mortem.
Sen. Trag.

SERM. the end thereof only a natural and necessary means
XLVII. of our rescue from it. The contemplation of this

cannot fail to yield something of courage and solace to us in the greatest pressures; these transient and shortlived evils, if we consider them as so, cannot appear such horrid bugbears, as much to affright or dismay us; if we remember how short they are, we cannot esteem them so great, or so intolerable.

Omnia bre-
 via tolera-
 billia esse
 debent, eti-
 amsi mag-
 na sint.
*Cic. Læli.
 ad fin.*

There be, I must confess, divers more noble considerations, proper and available to cure discontent and impatience. The considering, that all these evils proceed from God's just will, and wise providence; unto which it is fit, and we upon all accounts are obliged, readily to submit; that they do ordinarily come from God's goodness and gracious design towards us; that they are medicines (although ungrateful, yet wholesome) administered by the Divine Wisdom to prevent, remove, or abate our distempers of soul, (to allay the tumours of pride, to cool the fevers of intemperate desire, to rouse us from the lethargy of sloth, to stop the gangrene of bad conscience;) that they are fatherly corrections, intended to reclaim us from sin, and excite us to duty; that they serve as instruments or occasions to exercise, to try, to refine our virtue; to beget in us the hope, to qualify us for the reception of better rewards: such discourses indeed are of a better nature, and have a more excellent kind of efficacy; yet no fit help, no good art, no just weapon is to be quite neglected in the combat against our spiritual foes. A pebble-stone hath been sometimes found more convenient than a sword or a spear to slay a giant. Baser remedies (by reason of the patient's constitution, or circumstances) do sometime

produce good effect, when others in their own nature more rich and potent want efficacy. And surely frequent reflections upon our mortality, and living under the sense of our lives' frailty, cannot but conduce somewhat to the begetting in us an indifferency of mind toward all these temporal occurrents; to extenuate both the goods and the evils we here meet with; consequently therefore to compose and calm our passions about them.

3. But I proceed to another use of that consideration we speak of emergent from the former, but so as to improve it to higher purposes. For since it is useful to the diminishing our admiration of these worldly things, to the withdrawing our affections from them, to the slackening our endeavours about them; it will follow that it must conduce also to beget an esteem, a desire, a prosecution of things conducing to our future welfare; both by removing the obstacles of doing so, and by engaging us to consider the importance of those things in comparison with these. By removing obstacles, I say; for while our hearts are possessed with regard and passion toward these present things, there can be no room left in them for respect and affection toward things future. It is in our soul as in the rest of nature; there can be no penetration of objects, as it were, in our hearts, nor any vacuity in them: our mind no more than our body can be in several places, or tend several ways, or abide in perfect rest; yet somewhere it will always be; somewhither it will always go; somewhat it will ever be doing. If we *have a treasure* here, (somewhat we greatly like Mat. vi. 21. and much confide in,) *our hearts will be here* with it; and if here, they cannot be elsewhere; they

SERM. will be taken up, they will rest satisfied, they
 XLVII. will not care to seek further. If we affect worldly
 John v. 44. glory, and delight in the applause of men, we shall
 xii. 43. not be so careful to please God, and seek his favour.

Mat. vi. 24. If we admire and repose confidence in riches, it will
 make us neglectful of God, and distrustful of his
 Rom. viii. 5. providence: if our mind thirsts after, and sucks in
 greedily sensual pleasures, we shall not relish spi-
 ritual delights, attending the practice of virtue and
 piety, or arising from good conscience: adhering to,
 attending upon masters of so different, so opposite
 a quality is inconsistent; they cannot abide peace-
 ably together, they cannot both rule in our narrow
 breasts; we shall love and hold to the one, hate and
 despise the other. *If any man love the world, the
 love of the Father is not in him*; the love of the
 world, as the present guest, so occupies and fills the
 room, that it will not admit, cannot hold the love
 of God. But when the heart is discharged and
 emptied of these things; when we begin to despise
 them as base and vain; to distaste them as insipid
 and unsavoury; then naturally will succeed a desire
 after other things promising a more solid content;
 and desire will breed endeavour; and endeavour
 (furthered by God's assistance always ready to back
 it) will yield such a glimpse and taste of those
 things, as will so comfort and satisfy our minds,
 that thereby they will be drawn and engaged into
 a more earnest prosecution of them. When, I say,
 driving on ambitious projects, heaping up wealth,
 providing for the flesh, (by our reflecting on the
 shortness and frailty of our life,) become so insipid
 to us, that we find little appetite to them, or relish
 in them; our restless minds will begin to hunger

1 John ii.
 15.

and thirst after righteousness, desiring some satisfaction thence: discerning these secular and carnal fruitions to be mere husks, (the proper food of swine,) we shall bethink ourselves of that better nourishment (of rational or spiritual comfort) which our Father's house doth afford to his children and servants. Being somewhat disentangled from the care of our farms and our trafficks; from yoking our oxen, and being married to our present delights; we may be at leisure, and in disposition to comply with divine invitations to entertainments spiritual. Experiencing that our trade about these petty commodities turns to small account, and that in the end we shall be nothing richer thereby; reason will induce us, with the merchant in the Gospel, to *sell all that we have* (to forego our present interests and designs) for the purchasing that *rich pearl* of God's kingdom, which will yield so exceeding profit; the gain of present comfort to our conscience, and eternal happiness to our souls. In fine, when we consider seriously, that *we have here no abiding city*, but are only *sojourners and pilgrims upon earth*; that all our care and pain here do regard only an uncertain and transitory state; and will therefore suddenly as to all fruit and benefit be lost unto us; this will suggest unto us, with the good patriarchs, *κρείττονος ὀρέγεσθαι πατρίδος*, to *long after a better country*; a more assured and lasting state of life; where we may enjoy some certain and durable repose; to tend homeward, in our desires and hopes, toward those eternal mansions of joy and rest prepared for God's faithful servants in heaven. Thus will this consideration help toward the bringing us to inquire after and regard the things

SERM.
XLVII.

Luke xv.
16.

Mat. xxii. 5.

Mat. xiii.
46.

Heb. xiii.

1⁴
1 Pet. ii. 11.

Heb. xi. 16.

SERM. concerning our future state; and in the result will
XLVII engage us to compare them with these present things, as to our concernment in them and the consequence of them to our advantage or damage, whence a right judgment and a congruous practice will naturally follow. There be four ways of comparing the things relating to this present life with those which respect our future state: comparing the goods of this with the goods of that; the evils of this with the evils of that; the goods of this with the evils of that; the evils of this with the goods of that. All these comparisons we may find often made in scripture; in order to the informing our judgment about the respective value of both sorts; the present consideration intervening, as a standard to measure and try them by.

First, then; comparing the present goods with those which concern our future state, since the transitoriness and uncertainty of temporal goods detract from their worth, and render them in great degree contemptible; but the durability and certainty of spiritual goods doth increase their rate, and make them exceedingly valuable; it is evident hence, that spiritual goods are infinitely to be preferred in our opinion, to be more willingly embraced, to be more zealously pursued, than temporal goods; that, in case of competition, when both cannot be enjoyed, we are in reason obliged readily to part with all these, rather than to forfeit our title unto, or hazard our hope of those. Thus in the scripture it is often

1 John ii.
17.

discourged: *The world, saith St. John, passeth away, and the desire thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* The world, and all that is desirable therein, is transient; but obe-

dience to God's commandments is of an everlasting consequence; whence he infers, that we should *not love the world*; that is, not entertain such an affection thereto, as may any way prejudice the love of God, or hinder the obedience springing thence, or suitable thereto. SERM.
XLVII.

All flesh is grass, saith St. Peter, *and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever*: all worldly glory is frail and fading, but the word of God is eternally firm and permanent; that is, the good things by God promised to them, who faithfully serve him, shall infallibly be conferred on them to their everlasting benefit; whence it follows, that, as he exhorts, we are bound to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and hope to the end; to proceed and persist constantly in faithful obedience to God. 1 Pet. i. 24.

Charge those, saith St. Paul, *who are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future; that they may attain everlasting life*. Since, argues he, present riches are of uncertain and short continuance; but faith and obedience to God, exercised in our charity and mercy toward men, are a certain stock improvable to our eternal interest; therefore be not proud of, nor rely upon those, but regard especially, and employ yourselves upon these. Our Saviour himself doth often insist upon and inculcate this comparison: *Treasure not unto yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt*, 1 Tim. vi.
17—19.

SERM. *and where thieves break through and steal; but*
 XLVII. *treasure up to yourselves treasures in heaven,*

where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where
 Matt. vi. 25. *thieves do not break through and steal. Do not*
take care for your soul, what ye shall eat, and
what ye shall drink; nor for your body, what ye
shall put on; but seek first the kingdom of God.

John vi. 27. *Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for the*

Luke xii. *food that abideth to eternal life; sell your sub-*

stance, and give alms; provide yourselves bags
 33.
 Θυσιαστίων *that wax not old; an indefectible treasure in the*
 ἀρίστην *heavens. Thus doth the holy scripture, setting forth*

the uncertainty and transitoriness of the present, the
certainty and permanency of future goods, declare
the excellency of these above those; advising there-
upon, with highest reason, that we willingly reject
those (in real effect, if need be, however always in
ready disposition of mind) in order to the procuring
or securing of these. It also, for our example and
encouragement, commends to us the wisdom and
virtue of those persons, who have effectually prac-
tised this duty: of Abraham, our father, who, in

Heb. xi. 10. *expectation of that well-founded city, made and*
built by God, did readily desert his country and
kindred, with all present accommodations of life: of

Heb. xi. 23. *Moses, who disregarded the splendours and delights*
of a great court; rejected the alliance of a great
princess, and refused to be called the son of Pha-
raoh's daughter, in respect to the μισθαποδοσία, that
future distribution of reward; a share wherein shall
assuredly fall to them, who above all other consider-
ations regard the performance of their duty to God:

Matt. xix.

27.

Luke xviii.

28.

of the apostles, who forsook all, parents, brethren,
lands, houses, trades, receipts of custom, to follow

Christ; him at present poor, and naked of all secular SERM. honour, power, wealth, and delight; in hope only to XLVII. receive from him divine benefits, and future preferences in his kingdom: of Mary, who neglecting Luke x. 39. present affairs, and seating herself at Jesus's feet, attending to his discipline, is commended for her wisdom, in minding the *only necessary thing*; in choosing *the better part, which could never be taken from her*: of St. Paul, who accounted all his gains Phil. iii. 7, (all his worldly interests and privileges) *to be damage*,^{8.} to be *dung in respect to Christ, and the excellent knowledge of him*, with the benefits thence accruing to him. On the contrary there we have Esau con- Heb. xii: demned and stigmatized for a *profane* and a vain^{16.} *person*, who (*ἀρτὶ μᾶς βρώσεως*) *for one little eating-bout*, one mess of pottage, (for a little present satisfaction of sense, or for the sustenance of this frail life,) did withgo his birthright, that emblem of spiritual blessings and privileges. We have again re-Mark x. 17. presented to us that unhappy young gentleman; who, though he had good qualities, rendering him amiable even to our Saviour, and had been trained up in the observance of God's commandments, yet not being content to part with his large possessions, in lieu of the treasure by Christ offered in heaven, was reputed deficient; could find no acceptance with God, nor admission into his kingdom; for a petty temporal commodity forfeiting an infinite eternal advantage. For, saith our Saviour, *He that loveth* Matt. x. 37. *father or mother above me; he that doth not hate* Luke xiv. 26. *father and mother, wife and children, brothers and* Mark x. 29. *sisters, yea his own life, for me and the Gospel, is not worthy of me, nor can be my disciple.* He that in his esteem or affection doth prefer any temporal

SERM. XLVII. advantages before the benefits tendered by our Saviour, (yea doth not in comparison despise, renounce, and reject his dearest contents of life, and the very capacity of enjoying them, his life itself,) doth not deserve to be reckoned among the disciples of Christ; to be so much as a pretender to eternal joy, or a candidate of immortality. Our Saviour rejects all such unwise and perverse traders, who will not exchange brittle glass for solid gold; counterfeit glittering stones for genuine most precious jewels; a garland of fading flowers for an incorruptible crown of glory; a small temporary pension for a vastly rich freehold; *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens.* Thus doth the holy scripture teach us to compare these sorts of good things;

1 Pet. i. 4.

And secondly, so also doth it to compare the evils of both states; for that seeing, as the soon ceasing of temporal mischiefs should (in reasonable proceeding) diminish the fear of them, and mitigate the grief for them; so the incessant continuance of spiritual evils doth, according to just estimation, render them hugely grievous and formidable; it is plain, that we should much more dislike, abominate, and shun spiritual evils, than temporal; that we should make no question rather to endure these paroxysms of momentary pain, than incur those chronical, and indeed incurable, maladies; that we should run willingly into these shallow plashes of present inconvenience, rather than plunge ourselves into those unfathomable depths of eternal misery. There is, I suppose, no man, who would not account it a very great calamity (such as hardly greater could befall him here) to have *his right eye plucked out, and his*

Matt. v. 29.
xviii. 8.

right hand cut off, and his foot taken from him; to be deformed and maimed, so that he can do nothing, or stir any whither: yet our Lord represents these to us as inconsiderable evils, yea as things very eligible and advantageous in comparison of those mischiefs, which the voluntary not embracing them, in case we cannot otherwise than by so doing avoid sin, will bring on us: *συμφέρει σοι, it is, saith he, profitable for thee that one of thy members be lost, rather than that thy whole body be cast into hell: καλόν σοι ἐστὶ, it is good, it is excellent for thee to enter into life lame and maimed, and one-eyed, rather than having two hands, and two feet, and two eyes, (in all integrity and beauty of this temporal, or corporal state,) to be cast into eternal fire.* To be banished from one's native soil, secluded from all comforts of friendly acquaintance, divested irrecoverably of great estate and dignity; becoming a vagrant and a servant in vile employment, in a strange country, every man would be apt to deem a wretched condition: yet Moses, we see, freely chose it, rather than by enjoying unlawful pleasures at home, in Pharaoh's court, to incur God's displeasure and vengeance: *συνγκατοχεῖσθαι μᾶλλον ἐλόμενος, choosing rather to undergo evil together with God's people, than to have πρόσκαιρον ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν, a temporary fruition of sinful delight, dangerous to the welfare of his soul.* Death is commonly esteemed the most extreme and terrible of evils incident to man; yet our Saviour bids us not to regard or fear it, in comparison of that deadly ruin, which we adventure on by offending God: *I say unto you, my friends, saith he, (he intended it for the most friendly advice,) be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no-*

SERM.
XLVII.

Heb. xi. 25.

Luke xii. 4.
Matt. x. 28.
Ἀποκτείναι
δύναται,
βλάψαι δ' οὐ.

SERM. *thing further to do: but I will shew you whom ye*
XLVII. *shall fear; Fear him, who, after he hath killed,*
hath power to cast into hell, to cast both body and
soul into hell, and destroy them therein; yea, I say
unto you, (so he inculcates and impresses it upon
them,) Fear him.

But thirdly, considering the good things of this life together with the evils of that which is to come; since enjoying these goods in comparison with enduring those evils, is but rejoicing for a moment in respect of mourning to eternity; if upon the seeming sweetness of these enjoyments to our carnal appetite be consequent a remediless distempering of our soul; so that what tastes like honey proves gall in the digestion, gripes our bowels, gnaws our heart, and stings our conscience for ever; if present mirth and jollity have a tendency to that dreadful weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth threatened in the gospel; if, for the praise and favour of a few giddy men here, we venture eternal shame and confusion before God and angels and all good men hereafter; if, for attaining or preserving a small stock of uncertain riches in this world, we shall reduce ourselves into a state of most uncomfortable nakedness and penury in the other; it is clear as the sun that we are downright fools and madmen, if we do not upon these accounts rather willingly reject all these good things, than hazard incurring any of those evils; for, saith truth itself, *What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world* (καὶ ζημιωθῆ τὴν ψυχὴν) *and be endamaged as to his soul, or lose his soul as a mulct? It is a very disadvantageous bargain, for all the conveniences this world can afford to be deprived of the comforts of our immortal state. But,*

Mark viii.

36.

Luke ix. 25.

Lastly, comparing the evils of this life with the benefits of the future; since the worst tempests of this life will be soon blown over, the bitterest crosses must expire (if not before, however) with our breath; but the good things of the future state are immutable and perpetual; it is in evident consequence most reasonable, that we freely, if need be, undertake, and patiently endure these for the sake of those, that in hope of that *incorruptible inheritance, laid up* 1 Pet. i. 4. *for us in heaven*, we not only support and comfort ourselves, but even rejoice and exult in all the afflictions by God's wise and just dispensation imposed on us here; as they in St. Peter, wherein, saith he, *ye* 1 Pet. i. 6. *greatly rejoice, (or exult,) being for a little while* Ἀγαλλιάσθητε ὀλίγον ἔρως. *as in heaviness through manifold afflictions or trials. Accounting it all joy, saith St. James, when* Πυρασμοῖς. *ye fall into divers temptations,* Jam. i. 2. (that is, afflictions or trials,) *knowing that the trial of your faith perfecteth patience*; that is, seeing the sufferance of these present evils conduceth to the furtherance of your spiritual and eternal welfare. And, *We glory* Rom. v. 8. *in tribulation*, saith St. Paul, rendering the same account, because it tended to their soul's advantage. St. Paul, than whom no man perhaps ever more deeply tasted of the cup of affliction, and that tempered with all the most bitter ingredients which this world can produce; whose life was spent in continual agitation and unsettledness, in all hardships of travel and labour and care, in extreme sufferance Ἐν ἀναστροφαις. of all pains both of body and mind; in all imaginable dangers and difficulties and distresses, that nature exposes man unto, or human malice can bring upon him; in all wants of natural comfort, (food, sleep, shelter, liberty, health;) in all kinds of dis-

- SERM. XLVII. grace and contumely; as you may see in those large inventories of his sufferings, registered by himself, in the 6th and 11th chapters of his second Epistle to the Corinthians; yet all this, considering the good things he expected afterward to enjoy, he accounted very slight and tolerable: *For*, saith he, *our lightness of affliction, that is for a little while here, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that when our earthly house of this tabernacle (of this unsteady transitory abode) is dissolved, we are to have a tabernacle from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I reckon*, saith he again, that is, having made a due comparison and computation, I find, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy* (that is, are not considerable, come under no rate or proportion) *in respect of the glory which shall be revealed* (or openly conferred) *upon us.* The like opinion had those faithful Christians, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of whom it is said, that *being exposed to public scorn as in a theatre, with reproaches and afflictions, they did with gladness accept the spoiling* (or rapine) *of their goods; knowing that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance.* But the principal example (most obliging our imitation) of this wise choice, is that of our Lord himself; who, in contemplation of the future great satisfaction and reward of patient submission to the divine will, did willingly undergo the greatest of temporal sorrows and ignominies; *who*, saith the apostle to the He-
- 2 Cor. xi. 23. vi. 5.
- 2 Cor. iv. 17. v. 1. *Τὸ γὰρ σαρξ-αυτῆς ἰλασθῆναι τῆς θλίψεως.*
- Rom. viii. 18.
- Heb. x. 34. *Θιατριζόμενοι. Δεσπαζάν.*
- Heb. xii. 2.

brews, propounding his example to us, *for the joy* SERM.
that was set before him, endured the cross, despising XLVII.
the shame, and is set down at the right hand
of God.

Thus immediately, or by an easy inference, doth the consideration of this life's shortness and uncertainty confer to that main part of wisdom, rightly to value the things about which we are conversant; disposing us consequently to moderate our affections, and rightly to guide our actions about them; fitting us therefore for the performance of those duties so often enjoined us; of not caring for, not trusting in, not minding (unduly that is, and immoderately) things below; of dying to this world, and taking up our cross, or contentedly suffering, in submission to God's will, all loss and inconvenience; as also to the placing our meditation and care, our love and desire, our hope and confidence, our joy and satisfaction, our most earnest pains and endeavours, upon things divine, spiritual, and eternal.

IV. I proceed to another general benefit of that general consideration; which is, that it may engage us to a good improvement of our time; the doing which is a very considerable piece of wisdom. For if time be, as Theophrastus called it truly, *a thing* πελουρίδι-
στατον ἀνά-
λωμα.
of most precious value, (or expense,) as it were a great folly to lavish it away unprofitably; so to be frugal thereof, and careful to lay it out for the best advantage, especially every man having so little store thereof, must be a special point of prudence. *To be covetous of time* (Seneca tells us) *is a com-* Nulla nisi
temporis
honestata est
avaritia.
Sen.
mendable avarice; it being necessary for the accomplishment of any worthy enterprise; there being nothing excellent, that can soon or easily be effected.

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Surely he that hath much and great business to despatch, and but a little time allowed for it, is concerned to husband it well; not to lose it wholly in idleness; not to trifle it away in unnecessary diversements; not to put himself upon other impertinent affairs; above all, not to create obstacles to himself, by pursuing matters of a tendency quite contrary to the success of his main undertakings. It is our case; we are obliged here to negotiate in business of infinite price and consequence to us; no less than the salvation of our souls, and eternal happiness: and we see, that our time to drive it on and bring it to a happy issue is very scant and short; short in itself, and very short in respect to the nature of those affairs; the great variety and the great difficulty of them. The great father of physicians did quicken the students of that faculty to diligence, by admonishing them (in the first place, setting it in the front of his famous aphorisms) that *life is short, and art is long*. And how much more so is the art of living well, (that most excellent and most necessary art: for indeed virtue is not a gift of nature, but a work of art; an effect of labour and study:) this, I say, most needful and useful art of living virtuously and piously; this art of spiritual physic, (of preserving and recovering our soul's health,) how much longer is it? how many rules are to be learnt? how many precepts to be observed in order thereto? We are bound to furnish our minds with needful knowledge of God's will and our duty; we are to bend our unwilling wills to a ready compliance with them; we are to adorn our souls with dispositions suitable to the future state, (such as may qualify us for the presence of God, and conversation with the

Non enim
dat natura
virtutem;
ars est bo-
num fieri.
Sen. Ep. 89.

blessed spirits above;) it is incumbent on us to mortify corrupt desires, to restrain inordinate passions, to subdue natural propensities, to extirpate vicious habits; in order to the effecting these things, to use all fit means; devotion toward God, study of his law, reflection upon our actions, with all such spiritual instruments; the performing which duties, as it doth require great care and pains, so it needs much time; all this is not *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; a few spare minutes will not suffice to accomplish it. Natural inclination, that wild beast within us, will not so presently be tamed, and made tractable by us. Ill habits cannot be removed without much exercise and attendance; as they were begot, so they must be destroyed, by a constant succession, and frequency of acts. Fleshly lust is not to be killed with a stab or two; it will fight stoutly, and rebel often, and hold out long, before with our utmost endeavour we can obtain an entire victory over it. No virtue is acquired in an instant, but by degrees, step by step; from the seeds of right instruction and good resolution it springs up, and grows forward by a continual progress of customary practice; it is a child of patience, a fruit of perseverance, that *ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ*, *enduring in doing well*, St. Paul speaks of, and consequently a work of time; for enduring implies a good space of time. Having therefore so much to do, and of so great concernment, and so little a portion of time for it, it behoves us to be careful in the improvement of what time is allowed us; to embrace all opportunities and advantages offered; to go the nearest way, to use the best compendiums in the transaction of our business; not to be slothful and negligent, but active and in-

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Τί φθαίσει
ἴθες; ἵνα
ἴθες.
Epict.

St. Rom. ii. 7.

SERM. tent about it ; (for as time is diminished, and in
 XLVII. part lost by sloth or slackness ; so it is enlarged,
 and, as it were, multiplied by industry ; my day is
 two in respect of his, who doeth but half my work :)
 not, also, to consume our time in fruitless pastimes,
 and curious entertainments of fancy ; being idly
 busy about impertinences and trifles ; (we call it
 sport, but It is a serious damage to us ;) not to im-
 merse ourselves in multiplicities of needless care
 about secular matters, which may distract us, and
 bereave us of fit leisure for our great employment ;
 Luke x. 40. that which our Saviour calls *τυρβάζεσθαι περὶ πολλὰ*,
to keep a great deal of do and stir (to be jumbled
 about as it were, and confounded) *about many*
things ; and, *περισπᾶσθαι περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν*, *to be dis-*
tracted and perplexed about much cumbersome ser-
 1 Tim. ii. *vice* ; which St. Paul calls *περιπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου*
 4. *πραγματείαις*, *to be implicated and entangled, as in a*
net, with the negotiations of this present life ; so
 that we shall not be expedite, or free to bestir our-
 selves about our more weighty affairs. The spend-
 ing much time about those things doth steal it from
 these ; yea doth more than so, by discomposing our
 minds so that we cannot well employ what time re-
 mains upon our spiritual concernments. But espe-
 cially we should not prostitute our time upon vi-
 cious projects and practices ; doing which is not
 only a prodigality of the present time, but an
 abridgment of the future ; it not only doth not pro-
 mote or set forward our business, but brings it back-
 ward, and makes us more work than we had before ;
 it is a going in a way directly contrary to our jour-
 ney's end. The scripture aptly resembles our life to
 a wayfaring, a condition of travel and pilgrimage :

now he that hath a long journey to make, and but a SERM.
little time of day to pass it in, must in reason strive XLVII.
to set out soon, and then to make good speed ; must
proceed on directly, making no stops or deflections,
(not calling in at every sign that invites him, not
standing to gaze at every object seeming new or
strange to him ; not staying to talk with every pas-
senger that meets him ; but rather avoiding all oc-
casions of diversion and delay,) lest he be surprised
by the night, be left to wander in the dark, be ex-
cluded finally from the place whither he tends : so
must we, in our course toward heaven and happi-
ness, take care that we set out soon, (procrastinating
no time, but beginning instantly to insist in the
ways of piety and virtue,) then proceed on speedily,
and persist constantly ; nowhere staying or loitering,
shunning all impediments and avocations from our
progress, lest we never arrive near, or come too late
unto the gate of heaven. St. Peter tells us, that the
end of all things doth approach, and thereupon ad-
vises us *to be sober, and to watch unto prayer* ; for 1 Pet. iv. 7.
that the less our time is, the more intent and indus-
trious it concerns us to be. And St. Paul enjoins us
to redeem the time, because the days are evil ; that Eph. v. 15.
is, since we can enjoy no true quiet or comfort here,
we should improve our time to the best advantage
for the future : he might have also adjoined, with
the patriarch Jacob, the paucity of the days to their
badness ; because *the days of our life are few and* Gen. xlvii.
evil, let us redeem the time ; *man that is born of a* Job xiv. 1.
woman is of few days, and full of trouble : so few
indeed they are, that it is fit we should lose none of
them, but use them all in preparation toward that
great change we are to make : that fatal passage

94 *The Consideration of our latter End.*

SERM. out of this strait time into that boundless eternity.

XLVII. So, it seems, we have Job's example of doing ; *All*

Job xiv. 14. *the days, says he, of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.* I end this point with that so

Luke xxi. 34. comprehensive warning of our Saviour : *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray, that ye may be counted worthy to escape—and to stand before the Son of man.*

V. I shall adjoin but one use more, to which this consideration may be subservient, which is, that it may help to beget and maintain in us (that which is the very heart and soul of all goodness) sincerity : sincerity in all kinds, in our thoughts, words, and actions. To keep us from harbouring in our breasts such thoughts, as we would be afraid or ashamed to own ; from speaking otherwise than we mean, than we intend to do, than we are ready any where openly to avow ; from endeavouring to seem what we are not ; from being one thing in our expressions and conversations with men ; another in our hearts, or in our closets : from acting with oblique respects to private interests or passions, to human favour or censure ; (in matters, I mean, where duty doth intervene, and where pure conscience ought to guide and govern us ;) from making professions and ostentations, (void of substance, of truth, of knowledge, of good purpose,) great semblances of peculiar sanctimony, integrity, scrupulosity, spirituality, refinedness, like those Pharisees so often therefore taxed in the gospel ; as also from palliating, as those men did, designs of ambition, avarice, envy, animosity,

revenge, perverse humour, with pretences of zeal SERM.
 and conscience. We should indeed strive to be good XLVII.
 (and that in all real strictness, aiming at utmost per-
 fection) in outward act and appearance, as well as
 in heart and reality, for the glory of God and ex-
 ample of men, (*providing things honest in the sight of* Rom. xii.
all men;) but we must not shine with a false lustre, ^{17.}
 nor care to seem better than we are, nor intend to
 serve ourselves in seeming to serve God; bartering
 spiritual commodities for our own glory or gain.
 For since the day approaches when *God will judge* Rom. ii. 16.
 (*τὰ κρυπτά ἀνθρώπων*) *the things men do so studiously*
conceal; when God shall bring every work into Ecccl. xii.
judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be ^{14.}
good or whether it be evil; since we must all ap- 2 Cor. v.
pear (or rather be all made apparent, be manifested ^{10.}
 and discovered) *at the tribunal of Christ: since* οὐ γὰρ κρυ-
 ψασθήσονται
 ἡμᾶς ἀπλῶς
 δι, ἀλλὰ
 καὶ φανερω-
 θήσονται.
there is nothing covered, which shall not be re-
vealed, nor hid, that shall not be known; so that
whatever is spoken in the ear in closets shall be
proclaimed on the housetops: since at length, and ^{2, 3.}
 that within a very short time, (no man knows how
 soon,) the whispers of every mouth (the closest mur-
 murs of detraction, slander, and sycophantry) shall
 become audible to every ear; the abstrusest thoughts
 of all hearts (the closest malice and envy) shall be
 disclosed in the most public theatre before innumera-
 ble spectators; the truth of all pretences shall be
 thoroughly examined; the just merit of every per-
 son and every cause shall with a most exact scrutiny
 be scanned openly in the face of all the world; to
 what purpose can it be to juggle and baffle for a
 time; for a few days (perhaps for a few minutes) to
 abuse or to amuse those about us with crafty dissi-

SERM. mulation or deceit? Is it worth the pains to devise
XLVII. plausible shifts, which shall instantly, we know, be detected and defeated; to bedaub foul designs with a fair varnish, which death will presently wipe off; to be dark and cloudy in our proceedings, whenas a clear day (that will certainly dispel all darkness and scatter all mists) is breaking in upon us; to make vizors for our faces, and cloaks for our actions, whenas we must very shortly be exposed, perfectly naked and undisguised, in our true colours, to the general view of angels and men? Heaven sees at present what we think and do, and our conscience cannot be wholly ignorant or insensible; nor can earth itself be long unacquainted therewith. Is it not much better, and more easy (since it requires no pains or study) to act ourselves, than to accommodate ourselves to other unbecoming and undue parts; to be upright in our intentions, consistent in our discourses, plain in our dealings, following the single and uniform guidance of our reason and conscience, than to shuffle and shift, wandering after the various, uncertain, and inconstant opinions or humours of men? What matter is it, what clothes we wear, what garb we appear in, during this posture of travel and sojourning here; what for the present we go for; how men esteem us, what they think of our actions? St. Paul at least did not much stand upon it; for, 1 Cor. iv. 3. *with me*, said he, *it is a very small thing* (ἐλάχιστον, the least thing that can come under consideration) *to be judged of you, or of human day*, (that is, of this present transitory, fallible, reversible judgment of men.) If we mean well and do righteously, our conscience will at present satisfy us, and the divine (unerring and impartial) sentence will hereafter ac-

quit us; no unjust or uncharitable censure shall pre- SERM.
 judice us: if we entertain base designs, and deal XLVII.
 unrighteously, as our conscience will accuse and vex
 us here, so God will shortly condemn and punish us;
 neither shall the most favourable conceit of men
 stand us in stead. *Every man's work shall become* 1 Cor. iii.
manifest, for the day shall declare it; because it 13.
shall be revealed by fire; and the fire (that is, a
 severe and strict inquiry) *shall try every man's*
work, of what sort it is. I cannot insist more on
 this point; I shall only say, that, considering the
 brevity and uncertainty of our present state, the
 greatest simplicity may justly be deemed the truest
 wisdom; that who deceives others, doth cozen him-
 self most; that the deepest policy, used to compass
 or to conceal bad designs, will in the end appear the
 most downright folly.

I might add to the precedent discourses, that phi- Τῶνο ἔχου
 ἡ σιλικίσης
 τοῦ ἄθους τὸ
 σῶσαν ἡμί-
 ραν ὡς σιλυ-
 ταιαν διζέ-
 γιν. Anton.
 lib. vii.
 losophy itself hath commended this consideration as
 a proper and powerful instrument of virtue, reckon-
 ing the practice thereof a main part of wisdom; the
 greatest proficient therein in common esteem, So-
 crates, having defined philosophy, or the study of
 wisdom, to be nothing else but *μελέτη θανάτου*, *the*
study of death; intimating also, (in Plato's Phæ-
 don,) that this study, the meditation of death, and
 preparation of his mind to leave this world, had been
 the constant and chief employment of his life: that
 likewise, according to experience, nothing more avails
 to render the minds of men sober and well composed,
 than such spectacles of mortality, as do impress this
 consideration upon them. For whom doth not the
 sight of a coffin, or of a grave gaping to receive a
 friend, perhaps, or an ancient acquaintance; how-

SERM. ever, a man in nature and state altogether like our-
XLVII. selves; of the mournful looks and habits, of all the
sad pomps and solemnities attending man unto his
long home, by minding him of his own frail con-
dition, affect with some serious, some honest, some
wise thoughts? And if we be reasonable men, we
may every day supply the need of such occasions,
by representing to ourselves the necessity of our
soon returning to the dust; dressing in thought our
own hearses, and celebrating our own funerals; by
living under the continual apprehension and sense
of our transitory and uncertain condition; dying
daily, or becoming already dead unto this world.
The doing which effectually being the gift of God,
and an especial work of his grace, let us of him
humbly implore it, saying after the holy prophet,
*Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we
may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Amen.

S E R M O N XLVIII.

THE DANGER AND MISCHIEF OF DELAYING REPENTANCE.

PSALM CXIX. 60.

I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

THIS Psalm (no less excellent in virtue than large SERM. XLVIII. in bulk) containeth manifold reflections upon the nature, the properties, the adjuncts and effects of God's law ; many sprightly ejaculations about it, (conceived in different forms of speech ; some in way of petition, some of thanksgiving, some of resolution, some of assertion or aphorism ;) many useful directions, many zealous exhortations to the observance of it ; the which are not ranged in any strict order, but (like a variety of fair flowers and wholesome herbs in a wide field) do with a grateful confusion lie dispersed as they freely did spring up in the heart, or were suggested by the devout spirit of him who indited the Psalm ; whence no coherence of sentences being designed, we may consider any one of them absolutely, or singly by itself.

Among them, that which I have picked out for the subject of my discourse, implieth an excellent rule of practice, authorized by the Psalmist's example : it is propounded in way of devotion or immediate address to God ; unto whose infallible knowledge his conscience maketh an appeal concerning his practice ; not as boasting thereof, but as praising God for it, unto whose gracious instruction and suc-

SERM. XLVIII. but he frequently doth ascribe all his performances :
 but the manner of propounding I shall not insist upon; the rule itself is, that speedily, without any procrastination or delay, we should apply ourselves to the observance of God's commandments; the practice of which rule it shall be my endeavour to recommend and press.

Victuros
 agimus
 semper, nec
 vivimus
 unquam.
Manil. 4.

It is a common practice of men that are engaged in bad courses, which their own conscience discerneth and disapproveth, to adjourn the reformation of their lives to a further time, so indulging themselves in the present commission of sin, that yet they would seem to purpose and promise themselves hereafter to repent and take up^a: few resolve to persist finally in an evil way, or despair of being one day reclaimed; but immediately and effectually to set upon it, many deem unseasonable or needless; it will, they presume, be soon enough to begin to-morrow, or next day, a month or a year hence, when they shall find more commodious opportunity, or shall prove better disposed thereto: in the mean-time with Solomon's sluggard,
Prov. vi. 10. *Yet, say they, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands:* let us but neglect this duty, let us but satisfy this appetite, let us but enjoy this bout of pleasure; hereafter, God willing, we mean to be more careful, we hope that we shall become more sober: so, like bad debtors, when our conscience dunneth us, we always mean, we always promise to pay; if she will stay a while, she shall, we tell her, be satisfied; or, like vain spendthrifts, we see our estate fly, yet presume that it will hold out, and at length we shall reserve enough for our use. **Ei;**

^a *Recognosce singulos, considera universos, nullius non vita spectat in crastinum; non enim vivunt, sed victuri sunt. Sen. Ep. 45.*

αὔριον τὰ σπουδαῖα, *Let serious business stay till the* SERM. XLVIII.
morrow, was a saying that cost dear to him who said it; yet we in our greatest concerns follow him.

But how fallacious, how dangerous, and how mischievous this manner of proceeding is; how much better and more advisable it is, after the example propounded in our text, speedily to betake ourselves unto the discharge of our debt and duty to God, the following considerations will plainly declare.

1. We may consider, that the observance of God's commandments (an observance of them proceeding from an habitual disposition of mind, in a constant tenor of practice) is our indispensable duty, our main concernment, our only way to happiness; the necessary condition of our attaining salvation; that alone which can procure God's love and favour toward us; that unto which all real blessings here, and all bliss hereafter, are inseparably annexed: *Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man*; (the whole duty, the whole design, the whole perfection, the sum of our wisdom, and our happiness.) *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright: God will render to every man according to his works*: these are oracles indubitably clear, and infallibly certain; these are immovable terms of justice between God and man, which never will, never can be relaxed; being grounded on the immutable nature of God, and eternal reason of things: if God had not decreed, if he had not said these things, they would yet assuredly be true; for it is a foul contradiction to reason, that a man ever should please God without obeying him; it is a gross absurdity in nature,

Plut. in Pe-
lop.

Non est,
crede mihi,
sapientis di-
cere, vivam.
Mart. i. 16.

Ecc. xii. 13.

Matt. xix.

Psal. xi. 7.

Prov. xv. 9.

Rom. ii. 6.

Matt. v. 18.

Luke xvi.

17.

Ps. cxix.

15.

SERM. that a man should be happy without being good ;
XLVIII. wherefore all the wit in the world cannot devise a way, all the authority upon earth (yea, I dare say, even in heaven itself) cannot establish a condition, beside faithful observance of God's law, that can save, or make us happy : from it there can be no valid dispensation, without it there can be no effectual absolution, for it there can be no acceptable commutation ; nor, in defect thereof, will any faith, any profession, any trick or pretence whatever, avail or signify any thing : whatever expedient to supply its room superstition, mistake, craft, or presumption may recommend, we shall, relying thereon, be certainly deluded. If therefore we mean to be saved, (and are we so wild as not to mean it?) if we do not renounce felicity, (and do we not then renounce our wits?) to become virtuous, to proceed in a course of obedience, is a work that necessarily must be performed: and why then should we not instantly undertake it? wherefore do we demur or stick at it? how can we at all rest quiet, while an affair of so vast importance lieth upon our hands, or until our mind be freed of all uncertainty and suspense about it? Were a probable way suggested to us of acquiring great wealth, honour, or pleasure, should we not quickly run about it? could we contentedly sleep, till we had brought the business to a sure or hopeful issue? and why with less expedition or urgency should we pursue the certain means of our present security and comfort, of our final salvation and happiness? In doing so, are we not strangely inconsistent with ourselves?

Again, disobedience is the certain road to perdition ; that which involveth us in guilt and condem-

nation, that which provoketh God's wrath and ha- SERM.
 tred against us, that which assuredly will throw us XLVIII.
 into a state of eternal sorrow and wretchedness:
The foolish shall not stand in God's sight; he Psal. v. 5.
hateth all the workers of iniquity: If ye do not Luke xiii.
repent, ye shall perish: The wicked shall be turned Psal. ix. 17.
into hell, and all the people that forget God:
The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of 1 Cor. vi. 9.
God; The wicked shall go into everlasting punish- Matt. xxv.
ment: these are denunciations no less sure than 46. vii. 21.
 severe, from that mouth, which is never opened in
 vain; from the execution whereof there can be no
 shelter or refuge. And what wise man, what man
 in his right senses, would for one minute stand ob-
 noxious to them? Who, that anywise tendereth his
 own welfare, would move one step forward in so
 perilous and destructive a course? the further in
 which he proceedeth, the more he discosteth from
 happiness, the nearer he approacheth to ruin.

In other cases common sense prompteth men to
 proceed otherwise; for who, having rendered one
 his enemy that far overmatcheth him, and at whose
 mercy he standeth, will not instantly sue to be re-
 conciled? Who, being seized by a pernicious disease,
 will not haste to seek a cure? Who, being fallen
 into the jaws of a terrible danger, will not nimbly
 leap out thence? And such plainly is our case:
 while we persist in sin, we live in enmity and de-
 fiance with the Almighty, who can at his pleasure
 crush us; we lie under a fatal plague, which, if we
 do not seasonably repent, will certainly destroy us;
 we incur the most dreadful of all hazards, abiding
 in the confines of death and destruction; God frown-
 ing at us, guilt holding us, hell gaping for us: every

SERM. sinner is, according to the Wise Man's expression,
 XLVIII. *as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as*

Prov. xxiii. *he that lieth upon the top of a mast.* And he that
 34.

is in such a case, is he not mad or senseless, if he will not forthwith labour to swim out thence, or make all speed to get down into a safer place? Can any man with comfort lodge in a condition so dismally ticklish?

2. We may consider, that, in order to our final welfare, we have much work to despatch, the which requireth as earnest care and painful industry, so a competent long time; which, if we do not presently fall on, may be wanting, and thence our work be left undone, or imperfect. To conquer and correct bad inclinations, to render our sensual appetites obsequious to reason, to compose our passions into a right and steady order, to cleanse our souls from vanity, from perverseness, from sloth, from all vicious distempers, and in their room to implant firm habits of virtue; to get a clear knowledge of our duty, with a ready disposition to perform it; in fine, to season our minds with holy affections, qualifying us for the presence of God, and conversation with the blessed spirits above; these are things that must be done, but cannot be done in a trice; it is not

Rom. ii. 7. *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; but *ἰσχυρὴν ἔργου ἀγασθῶν*, a patient continuance in well-doing, is needful to achieve it; for it no time can be redundant; the longest life can hardly be sufficient: *Art is long, and life is short*, may be an aphorism in divinity as well as in physic; the art of living well, of preserving our soul's health, and curing its distempers, requireth no less time to compass it than any other art or science.

Virtue is not a mushroom, that springeth up of itself in one night when we are asleep, or regard it not; but a delicate plant, that groweth slowly and tenderly, needing much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much time to mature it, in our untoward soil, in this world's unkindly weather: happiness is a thing too precious to be purchased at an easy rate; heaven is too high to be come at without much climbing; the crown of bliss is a prize too noble to be won without a long and a tough conflict. Neither is vice a spirit that will be conjured down by a charm, or with a presto driven away; it is not an adversary that can be knocked down at a blow, or despatched with a stab. Whoever shall pretend that at any time, easily, with a celerity, by a kind of legerdemain, or by any mysterious knack, a man may be settled in virtue, or converted from vice, common experience abundantly will confute him; which sheweth, that a habit otherwise (setting miracles aside) cannot be produced or destroyed, than by a constant exercise of acts suitable or opposite thereto; and that such acts cannot be exercised without voiding all impediments, and framing all principles of action, (such as temper of body, judgment of mind, influence of custom,) to a compliance; that who by temper is peevish or choleric, cannot, without mastering that temper, become patient or meek; that who from vain opinions is proud, cannot, without considering away those opinions, prove humble; that who by custom is grown intemperate, cannot, without weaning himself from that custom, come to be sober; that who, from the concurrence of a sorry nature, fond conceits, mean breeding, and scurvy usage, is covetous, cannot, without draining

SERM.
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Οὐ καθύδου-
σιν ἡμῶν χερ-
σὶν γὰρ βοήθει-
αν ἰ Θεός,
ἀλλὰ ποσει-
μίων.
Chrys. ad
Eph. λεγ.
καί.

O quam
istud pa-
rum pu-
tant, quibus
tam facile
videtur!
Quint. xii.

SERM. all those sources of his fault, be turned into liberal.

XLVIII. The change of our mind is one of the greatest alterations in nature, which cannot be compassed in any way or within any time we please; but it must proceed on leisurely and regularly, in such order, by such steps, as the nature of things doth permit; it must be wrought by a resolute and laborious perseverance; by a watchful application of mind, in voiding prejudices, in waiting for advantages, in attending to all we do; by forcible wresting our nature from its bent, and swimming against the current of impetuous desires; by a patient disentangling ourselves from practices most agreeable and familiar to us; by a wary fencing with temptations, by long struggling with manifold oppositions and difficulties; whence the holy scripture termeth our practice a warfare, wherein we are to fight many a bloody battle with most redoubtable foes; a combat, which must be managed with our best skill and utmost might: a race, which we must pass through with incessant activity and swiftness.

If therefore we mean to be good or to be happy, it behoveth us to lose no time; to be presently up at our great task; to snatch all occasions, to embrace all means incident of reforming our hearts and lives. As those, who have a long journey to go, do take care to set out early, and in their way make good speed, lest the night overtake them before they reach their home^b; so it being a great way from hence to heaven, seeing we must pass over so many obstacles, through so many paths of duty, before we arrive thither, it is expedient to set forward as soon

^b 'AAA' ερε πω ερα. δι γαρ μαχθαι μαλιστα

ερα, δευρ ταχα τα κρι εραμα λεγει ερα. Hom. Od .P.

as can be, and to proceed with all expedition; the SERM. longer we stay, the more time we shall need, and XLVIII. the less we shall have.

3. We may consider, that no future time which we can fix upon will be more convenient than the present is for our reformation. Let us pitch on what time we please, we shall be as unwilling and unfit to begin as we are now; we shall find in ourselves the same indispositions, the same averseness, or the same listlessness toward it, as now: there will occur the like hardships to deter us, and the like pleasures to allure us from our duty; objects will then be as present, and will strike as smartly upon our senses; the case will appear just the same, and the same pretences for delay will obtrude themselves; so that we shall be as apt then as now to prorogue the business. We shall say then, to-morrow I will mend; and when that morrow cometh, it will be still to-morrow, and so the morrow will prove endless^c. If, like the simple rustic, (who stayed by the river-side waiting till it had done running, so that he might pass dry-foot over the channel,) we do conceit that the sources of sin (bad inclinations within, and strong temptations abroad) will of themselves be spent, or fail, we shall find ourselves deluded^d. If ever we come to take up, we must have a beginning with some difficulty and trouble; we must courageously break through the present with all its enchantments; we must undauntedly plunge

^c *Cras hoc fiet; idem cras fiet, &c. Pers. Sat. v.*

Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

Ovid. de Rom. i. Epict. iv. 12.

^d ———qui recte vivendi prorogat horant,

Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille

Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum. Hor. Ep. i. 2.

SERM. into the cold stream ; we must rouse ourselves from
XLVIII. our bed of sloth ; we must shake off that brutish
 improvidence, which detaineth us ; and why should
 we not assay it now ? There is the same reason now
 that ever we can have ; yea, far more reason now ;
 for if that we now begin, hereafter at any determi-
 nate time, some of the work will be done, what re-
 maineth will be shorter and easier to us^e. Nay,
 further,

4. We may consider, that the more we defer, the
 more difficult and painful our work must needs
 prove ; every day will both enlarge our task and di-
 minish our ability to perform it^f. Sin is never at a
 stay ; if we do not retreat from it, we shall advance
 in it ; and the further on we go, the more we have
 to come back ; every step we take forward (even
 before we can return hither, into the state wherein
 we are at present) must be repeated ; all the web
 we spin must be unravelled ; we must vomit up all
 we take in : which to do we shall find very tedious
 and grievous.

Vice, as it groweth in age, so it improveth in sta-
 ture and strength ; from a puny child it soon wax-
 eth a lusty stripling, then riseth to be a sturdy
 man, and after a while becometh a massy giant,
 whom we shall scarce dare to encounter, whom we
 shall be very hardly able to vanquish ; especially see-
 ing that as it groweth taller and stouter, so we shall

^e Εἰ μὲν λυσιτελής ἡ ὑπέρθεσίς ἐστιν, ἡ παντελής, ἀπίστασις αὐτῆς ἐστὶ
 λυσιτελέστερα. Epict. iv. 12.

For the same reason we put it off, we should put it away. If
 it be good at all, it is good at present.

^f Παρὰ τὸ σήμερον ἀμαρτηθὲν εἰς τᾶλλα χειρὸν ἀνάγκη σοι τὰ πράγ-
 ματα ἔχειν. Epict. iv. 12.

dwindle and prove more impotent; for it feedeth upon our vitals, and thriveth by our decay; it waxeth mighty by stripping us of our best forces, by enfeebling our reason, by perverting our will, by corrupting our temper, by debasing our courage, by seducing all our appetites and passions to a treacherous compliance with itself: every day our mind groweth more blind, our will more resty, our spirit more faint, our appetites more fierce, our passions more headstrong and untameable^s; the power and empire of sin do strangely by degrees encroach, and continually get ground upon us, till it hath quite subdued and enthralled us. First we learn to bear it; then we come to like it; by and by we contract a friendship with it; then we dote upon it; at last we become enslaved to it in a bondage, which we shall hardly be able or willing to shake off; when not only our necks are fitted to the yoke, our hands are manacled, and our feet shackled thereby; but our heads and hearts do conspire in a base submission thereto: when vice hath made such impression on us, when this pernicious weed hath taken so deep root in our mind, will, and affections, it will demand an extremely toilsome labour to extirpate it.

Indeed, by continuance in sin, the chief means (afforded by nature, or by grace) of restraining or reducing us from it, are either cut off, or enervated and rendered ineffectual.

Natural modesty, while it lasteth, is a curb from doing ill; men in their first deflexions from virtue are bashful and shy^h; out of regard to other men's

^s *Falsis opinionibus tanto quisque inseritur, quanto magis in eis familiaris volutatur. Aug. Ep. 117.*

^h *Μέγιστον πρὸς ἀρετὴν βοήθημα ἡ αἰδώς. Greg. Naz. Or. 26.*

SERM. opinion, and tenderness of their own honour, they
 XLVIII. are afraid or ashamed to transgress plain rules of
 duty : but in process this disposition weareth out ;
 by little and little they arrive to that character of
 the degenerate Jews, whom the prophets call *im-*
 pudent children, having a brow of brass, and faces
 harder than a rock ; so that they commit sin with
 open face, and in broad day, without any mask,
 without a blush ; they despise their own reputation,
 and defy all censure of others ; they outface and
 outbrave the world, till at length, with prodigious
 insolence, they come to boast of wickedness, and
 glory in their shame, as an instance of high courage
 and special gallantry.

Conscience is a check to beginners in sin, reclaim-
 ing them from it, and rating them for it : but this in
 long standers becometh useless, either failing to dis-
 charge its office, or assaying it to no purpose ; having
 often been slighted, it will be weary of chiding ; or,
 if it be not wholly dumb, we shall be deaf to its re-
 proofⁱ : as those, who live by cataracts or downfalls
 of water, are, by continual noise, so deafened, as not
 to hear or mind it ; so shall we in time grow sense-
 less, not regarding the loudest peals and rattlings of
 our conscience.

The heart of a raw novice in impiety is some-
 what tender and soft, so that remorse can pierce and
 sting it ; his neck is yielding and sensible, so that
 the yoke of sin doth gall it : but in stout proficients

—————nam quis

Peccandi finem posuit sibi, quando recepit

Ejectum semel attrita de fronte ruborem. *Juv. Sat. 18.*

ⁱ Ψυχὴ ἄπαξ ἁμαρτίας γευσάμενη καὶ ἀναλήγτως διατεθεῖσα πολλὴν
 παρέχει τῷ νοσήματι τὴν προσθήκην, &c. *Chrys. tom. 5. Orat. 64.*

the heart becometh hard and stony, the neck stiff and brawny; (*an iron sinew*, as the prophet termeth it;) so that they do not feel or resent any thing; but are like those of whom St. Paul speaketh, *οἵτινες ἀπηλγηκότες*, who being past feeling all sorrow or smart, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

SERM.
XLVIII.

Isa. xlviii.

4.

Quo quis
pejus se ha-
bet, minus
sentit. Sen.

Ep. 53.
Eph. iv. 19.

When first we nibble at the bait, or enter into bad courses, our reason doth contest and remonstrate against it, faithfully representing to us the folly, the ugliness, the baseness, the manifold ill consequences of sinning; but that, by continuance, is muffled, so as not to discern, or muzzled, so as not to declare; yea, often is so debauched as to excuse, to avow, and maintain, yea, to applaud and extol our miscarriages.

For a time a man retaineth some courage, and a hope that he may repent; but progress in sin dispiriteth and casteth into despair, whether God be placable, whether himself be corrigible: an apprehension concerning the length of the way, or the difficulty of the work, discourageth; and despondency rendereth him heartless and careless to attempt it. There is no man that hath heard of God, who hath not at first some dread of offending him, and some dissatisfaction in transgressing his will; it appearing to his mind, not yet utterly blinded and depraved, a desperate thing to brave his irresistible power, an absurd thing to thwart his infallible wisdom, a detestable thing to abuse his immense goodness: but obstinacy in sin doth quash this conscientious awe; so that at length *God is not in all his thoughts, the fear of God is not before his eyes;* the wrath of the Almighty seemeth a bugbear, the

Psal. x. 4.
xxxvi. 1.

**SERM. fiercest menaces of religion sound but as rattles to
XLVIII. him.**

As for the gentle whispers and touches of divine grace, the monitory dispensations of Providence, the good advices and wholesome reproofs of friends, with the like means of reclaiming sinners; these to per-

sons *settled on their lees*, or fixed in bad custom, are but as gusts of wind brushing an old oak, or as waves dashing on a rock, without at all shaking or stirring it.

Now when any person is come to this pass, it must be hugely difficult to reduce him; to retrieve a defloured modesty, to quicken a jaded conscience, to supple a callous heart, to resettle a baffled reason, to rear a dejected courage, to recover a soul miserably benumbed and broken, to its former vigour and integrity, can be no easy matter.

The diseases of our soul, no less than those of our body, when once they are inveterate, they are become near incurable; the longer we forbear to apply due remedy, the more hard their cure will prove: if we let them proceed far, we must, ere we can be rid of them, undergo a course of physic very tedious and offensive to us; many a rough purge, many a sore phlebotomy, many an irksome sweat we must endure^k. Yea, further,

5. We may consider, that by delaying to amend, to do it may become quite impossible; it may be so in the nature of the thing, it may be so by the will of God: the thing may become naturally impossible;

^k —frustra medicina paratur,

Cum mala per longas invaluere moras. *Ovid.*

Ῥᾶν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μὴ ἐνδοῦναι κακίᾳ, καὶ προσιούσαν διαφυγεῖν, ἢ προβαιούσαν ἀνακίψαι. *Greg. Naz. Orat. 26.*

for vice by custom may pass into nature, and prove SERM. XLVIII.
 so congenial, as if it were born with us; so that we shall propend to it, as a stone falleth down, or as a spark flieth upward: by soaking in voluptuousness we may be so transformed into brutes, by steeping in malice so converted into fiends, that we necessarily shall act like creatures of that kind, into which we are degenerated; and then nowise, without a downright miracle, are we capable of being reformed¹. *How long, saith Solomon, wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?* We may be so often called on; and it is not easy to awaken us, when we are got into a spiritual slumber; but when we are *dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 1. Apoc. iii. 1. 1 Tim. v. 6. so that all breath of holy affection is stopped, and no spiritual pulse from our heart doth appear; that all sense of duty is lost, all appetite to good doth fail, no strength or activity to move in a good course doth exert itself, that our good complexion is dissolved, and all our finer spirits are dissipated, that our mind is quite crazed, and all its powers are shattered or spoiled; when thus, I say, we are spiritually dead, how can we raise ourselves, what beneath omnipotency can effect it? As a stick, when once it is dry and stiff, you may break it, but you can never bend it into a straighter posture; so doth the man become incorrigible, who is settled and stiffened in vice. The stain of habitual sin may sink in so deep, Frangas citius quam corrigas que in peccatum induerunt. Quintil. i. 3. and so thoroughly tincture all our soul, that we may be like those people of whom the prophet saith, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard* Jer. xliii. 23.

¹ Ἐπειδὴν εἰς φρενίτιν ἐκπεσόντες λακτίζωσι καὶ δάκνωσι τοὺς βουλομένους ἀπαλλάξαι τῆς ἀβηυστίας αὐτοῦ, τότε νοσοῦσιν ἀνάτα. Chrys. in Babyl. Orat. 2.

SERM. *his spots? Then may ye do good, that are accus-*
 XLVIII. *tomed to do evil.* Such an impossibility may arise
 from nature; one greater and more insuperable may
 come from God.

To an effectual repentance, the succour of divine
 grace is necessary; but that is arbitrarily dispensed;
 John iii. 8. *the Spirit bloweth where it listeth;* yet it listeth
 wisely, with regard both to the past behaviour and
 present capacities of men; so that to such who have
 abused it, and to such who will not treat it well,
 it shall not be imparted. And can we be well as-
 sured, can we reasonably hope, that after we by our
 presumptuous delays have put off God, and dallied
 with his grace; after that he long in vain *hath*
waited to be gracious; after that he hath endured
 so many neglects, and so many repulses from us;
 after that we frequently have slighted his open in-
 vitations, and smothered his kindly motions in us;
 in short, after we so unworthily have misused his
 goodness and patience, that he further will vouch-
 safe his grace to us; when we have forfeited it,
 when we have rejected it, when we have spurned
 and driven it away, can we hope to recover it?

Τὸ πνεῦμα
 τῆς χάριτος
 ἰνυβρίσας.
 Heb. x. 29.
 Ἄδύνατον.
 Heb. vi. 4.

Luke xix. There is a time, a season, a day, allotted to us;
 42, 44.
 2 Cor. vi. 2. *our day, it is termed, a day of salvation, the sea-*
 Heb. iii. 13. *son of our visitation, an acceptable time;* wherein
 John ix. 4. God freely doth exhibit grace, and presenteth his
 Luke xix. mercy to us: if we let this day slip, *the night com-*
 42. *eth, when no man can work;* when *the things be-*
 longing to our peace will be hidden from our eyes;
 Isa. lix. 10. when (as the prophet expresseth it) we shall *grope*
for the wall like the blind, and stumble at noon-
day as in the night, and be in desolate places as
dead men: after that day is spent, and that com-

fortable light is set, a dismal night of darkness, of SERM.
 cold, of disconsolateness, will succeed; when God XLVIII.
 being *wearry of bearing* with men, doth utterly de-
 sert them, and *delivereth them over to a reprobate* Jer. xv. 6.
mind; when subtracting his gracious direction and Mal. ii. 17.
 assistance, *he giveth them over to their own heart's* Isa. i. 14.
lusts, and to walk in their own counsels; when Rom. i. 24.
 they are brought to complain with those in the pro- xxvi. 28.
 phet, *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from* Psal. lxxxi.
thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? 12.
 when, like Pharaoh, they survive only as objects of Rom. ix. 17.
 God's justice, or occasions to glorify his power;
 when, like Esau, they cannot find a place of re-
 pentance, *although they seek it carefully with* Heb. xii.
tears; when, as to the foolish loitering virgins, *the* 17.
door of mercy is shut upon them; when the *master* Matt. xxv.
of the house doth rise and shut the door, &c. when Luke xiii.
 that menace of divine wisdom cometh to be exe- 10.
 cuted; *They shall call upon me, but I will not* 25.
answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall
not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and
did not choose the fear of the Lord. And if, neg-
 lecting our season and present means, we once fall
 into this state, then is our case most deplorable; we
 are dead men irreversibly doomed, and only for a
 few moments reprieved from the stroke of final ven-
 geance; *we are vessels of wrath fitted (or made up)* Rom. ix.
for destruction; by a fatal blindness and obduration 22.
 sealed up to ruin; we are like the *terra damnata,* Κατηρημί-
that earth (in the apostle) *which drinking up the* να τις άπό-
rain that cometh oft upon it, and bearing thorns λειαν.
and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, Heb. vi. 7.
 and *whose end is to be burned.* Wherefore, ac- 8.
 cording to the advice of the prophet, *Seek ye the* Isa. lv. 6.

SERM. *Lord when he may be found, call ye upon him*
 XLVIII. *while he is near.*

It is true, that God is ever ready, upon our true conversion, to receive us into favour; that his arms are always open to embrace a sincere penitent; that

Ezek. xviii. he hath declared, *whenever a wicked man turneth*
 27. *from his wickedness, and doeth that which is right,*
 Isa. i. 16, *he shall save his soul alive; that if we do wash*
 18. *ourselves, make us clean, put away the evil of our doings, and cease to do evil, then, although our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool;*

Joel ii. 13. *that if we rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord, he is gracious and merciful, and will re-*
 pent of the evil; that God is good and ready to

Ps. lxxxvi. *forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call*
 5. *upon him; that whenever a prodigal son, with humble confession and hearty contrition for his sin, doth arise and go to his father, he will embrace him tenderly, and entertain him kindly; that even a profane apostate, and a bloody oppressor, (as Man-*

Luke xv. *nasses,) a lewd strumpet, (as Magdalene,) a notable*
 18. *thief, (as he upon the cross,) a timorous renouncer, (as St. Peter,) a furious persecutor, (as St. Paul,) a stupid idolater, (as all the heathen world, when the gospel came to them, was,) the most heinous sinner that ever hath been, or can be imagined to be, if he be disposed to repent, is capable of mercy: those declarations and promises are infallibly true; those instances peremptorily do evince, that repentance is never superannuated; that if we can turn at all, we shall not turn too late; that *pœnitentia nunquam sera, modo seria*, is an irrefragable rule. Yet nevertheless delay is very unsafe; for what*

Vid. Chrys. ad Theod. ii. Judas (saith he there) was capable of pardon.

assurance can we have, that God hereafter will enable us to perform those conditions of bewailing our sins, and forsaking them? Have we not cause rather to fear that he will chastise our presumption by withholding his grace? For although God faileth not to yield competent aids to persons who have not *despised his goodness and longsuffering, that leadeth them to repentance*; yet he that wilfully or wantonly loitereth away the time, and squandereth the means allowed him; who refuseth to come when God calleth, yea wooeth and courteth him to repentance, how can he pretend to find such favour?

SERM.
XLVIII.

Rom. ii. 4.

We might add, that supposing God in superabundance of mercy might be presumed never to withhold his grace; yet seeing his grace doth not work by irresistible compulsion; seeing the worse qualified we are, the more apt we shall be to cross and defeat its operation; seeing that we cannot hope that hereafter we shall be more fit than now to comply with it; yea seeing we may be sure, that, after our hearts are hardened by perseverance in sin, we shall be more indisposed thereto; we by delay of repentance do not only venture the forfeiture of divine grace, but the danger of abusing it, which heinously will aggravate our guilt, and hugely augment our punishment.

We should do well therefore most seriously to regard the apostle's admonition; *Exhort one another to-day, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.* Now that we find ourselves invited to repent; now that we apprehend so much reason for it; now that we feel our hearts somewhat inclined thereto; now that

Heb. iii. 13.

SERM. XLVIII. we have time in our hands, and are not barred from hopes of mercy; now that it is not extremely difficult, or not absolutely impossible, let us in God's name lay hold on the occasion, let us speedily and earnestly set upon the work. Further yet,

6. We should consider, that we are mortal and frail, and thence any designs of future reformation may be clipt off, or intercepted by death; which is always creeping toward us, and may, for all we can tell, be very near at hand. You say you will repent to-morrow: but are you sure you shall have a morrow to repent in^m? Have you an hour in your hand, or one minute at your disposal? Have you a lease to shew for any term of life? Can you claim or reckon upon the least portion of time without his leave, who bestoweth life, and dealeth out time, and ordereth all things as he pleaseth? Can you any-

wise descry the just *measure of your days*, or the *bounds of your appointed time*, without a special revelation from him, *in whose hands is your breath*; and *with whom alone the number of your months is registered*? *Boast not thyself of to-morrow*; for *thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*, saith the Wise Man; boast not of it, that is, do not pretend it to be at thy disposal, presume not upon any thing that may befall therein; for whilst thou presumest thereon, may it not be said unto thee, as to the rich projector in the gospel, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee*? Doth not, secluding hidden decrees, every man's life hang upon a thread very slender and frail? Is it not subject to many diseases lurking within, and to a

^m Qui pœnitenti veniam spondit, peccanti crastinum diem non promisit. *Greg. in Evang. Hom. ix.*

thousand accidents flying about us? How many, SERM. XLVIII. that might have promised themselves as fair scope as we can, have been unexpectedly snapt away! How many have been cropt in the flower of their age and vigour of their strength! Doth not every day present experiments of sudden death? Do we not continually see that observation of the Preacher verified, *Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it cometh suddenly upon them?* Eccles. ix. 12. Old men are ready to drop of themselves, and young men are easily brushed or shaken down^u; the former visibly stand upon the brink of eternity, the latter walk upon a bottomless quag, into which unawares they may slump; who then can anywise be secure? We are all therefore highly concerned to use our life, while we have it; to catch the first opportunity, lest all opportunity forsake us; to cut off our sinning, lest ourselves be cut off before it; and that the rather, because by lavishing, or misemploying our present time, we may lose the future, provoking God to bereave us of it: for as prolongation of time is a reward of piety; as to observance of the commandments it is promised, *Length of days, and long life, and peace, shall be added unto thee;* Prov. iii. 2. so being immaturely snatched hence is the punishment awarded to impious practice: so it is threatened, that *evil men shall be cut off;* Ps. xxxvii. that *bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half* Ps. lv. 23.

^u Τί γὰρ οἶδας, ἄνθρωπε ἀμαρτήσας, εἰ ἡμέρας ζήσεις ἐν τῷδε τῷ βίῳ, ἵνα καὶ μετανοήσῃς, &c.

^o Ὅτι ἄδηλος ἡ ἔξοδος σου ἐκ τοῦ βίου ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἐν ἀμαρτίᾳ τελευτήσασαι μετάνοια οὐκ ἔσται, &c. Const. Ap. ii. 12.

SERM. XLVIII. *their days; that God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his wickedness: the very being unmindful of their duty is the cause why men are thus surprised; for, If, saith God, thou dost not watch, I shall come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know when I come upon thee. And, If, saith our Lord, that servant doth say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, &c. the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, &c.*

If then it be certain, that we must render a strict account of all our doings here; if, by reason of our frail nature and slippery state, it be uncertain when we shall be summoned thereto; if our negligence may abridge and accelerate the term; is it not very reasonable to observe those advices of our Lord; *Watch, for ye do not know the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like men that wait for your Lord: and to take the counsel of the Wise Man, Make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from day to day; for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance.*

These considerations plainly do shew how very foolish, how extremely dangerous and destructive the procrastinating our reformation of life is: there are some others of good moment, which we shall reserve.

SERMON XLIX.

THE DANGER AND MISCHIEF OF DELAYING REPENTANCE.

PSALM cxix. 60.

I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

I PROCEED to the considerations which yet remain to be spoken to. SERM.
XLIX.

1. We may consider the causes of delay in this case (as in all cases of moment) to be bad, and unworthy of a man: what can they be but either stupidity, that we do not apprehend the importance of the affair; or improvidence, that we do not attend to the danger of persisting in sin; or negligence, that we do not mind our concernments; or sloth, that keepeth us from rousing and bestirring ourselves in pursuance of what appeareth expedient; or faintheartedness and cowardice, that we dare not attempt to cross our appetite or our fancy? All which dispositions are very base and shameful. It is the prerogative of human nature to be sagacious in estimating the worth, and provident in descrying the consequences of things; whereas other creatures, by impulse of sense, do only fix their regard on present appearances; which peculiar excellency by stupidity and improvidence we forfeit, degenerating into brutes; and negligence of that, which we dis-

'Αργίας περι-
φρασις ἢ ἀνα-
βελία. Simpl.

Animal hoc
providum,
sagax, &c.
Cic. de Leg.
i. Cic. de
Offic. i.

SERM. cern mainly to concern us, is a quality somewhat
XLIX. beneath those, depressing us below beasts, which
 cannot be charged with such a fault; sloth is no less
 despicable, rendering a man fit for nothing; nor is
 there any thing commonly more reproachful than
 want of courage: so bad are the causes of delay.

2. And the effects are no less unhappy, being dis-
 appointment, damage, trouble, and sorrow. As ex-
 pedition (catching advantages and opportunities,
 keeping the spirit up in its heat and vigour, making
 forcible impressions wherever it lighteth, driving on
 the current of success) doth subdue business, and
 achieve great exploits, (as by practising his motto,
to defer nothing, Alexander did accomplish those
 mighty feats, which make such a clatter in story;
 and Cæsar more by the rapid quickness and for-
 wardness of undertaking, than by the greatness of
 courage, and skilfulness of conduct, did work out
 those enterprises, which purchased to his name so
 much glory and renown;) so delay and slowness do
 spoil all business, do keep off success at distance
 from us; thereby opportunity is lost, and advantages
 slip away; our courage doth flag, and our spirit lan-
 guisheth; our endeavours strike faintly, and are
 easily repelled; whence disappointment necessarily
 doth spring, attended with vexation^a.

μηδὲν εἰς-
 βαλλόμενος.
 Successus
 urgere suos,
 instare, &c.
Luc. i.

3. Again, we may consider, that to set upon our
 duty is a great step toward the performance of it: if
 we can resolve well, and a little push forward, we

^a Plerisque in rebus tarditas et procrastinatio odiosa est. Cic.
Philip. 6.

Αἰεὶ δ' ἀμβολεργὸς ἀνὴρ ἄτησι παλαίει. Hes.

Dum deliberamus quando incipiendum est, incipere jam serum
 est. *Quint.* xii. 7.

are in a fair way to despatch; *to begin*, they say, *is to have half done*^b; to set out is a good part of the journey; to rise betimes is often harder than to do all the day's work: entering the town is almost the same with taking it; it is so in all business, it is chiefly so in moral practice: for if we can find in our hearts to take our leave of sin, if we can disengage ourselves from the witcheries of present allurements, if we can but get over the threshold of virtuous conversation, we shall find the rest beyond expectation smooth and expedite; we shall discover such beauty in virtue, we shall taste so much sweetness in obedience, as greatly will encourage us to proceed therein^c.

4. Again: we may consider, that our time itself is a gift, or a talent committed to us, for the improvement whereof we are responsible no less than for our wealth, our power, our credit, our parts, and other such advantages, wherewith for the serving of God, and furthering our own salvation, we are intrusted; *To redeem the time* is a precept, and of all precepts the most necessary to be observed; for that without redeeming (that is, embracing and well employing) time we can do nothing well; no good action can be performed, no good reward can be procured by us: well may we be advised to take our best care in husbanding it, seeing justly of all things it may be reckoned most precious; its price being

SERM.
XLIX.

Eph. v. 16.
Col. iv. 5.

Πολυτιλί-
στατον ἀνά-
λωμα.

^b Dimidium facti qui cœpit habet. *Hor. Ep. i. 2.*

Μόνον ἀρχὴν ἐπιθές τῷ πράγματι, &c. *Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. p. 68.*

Τὸ δυσχερὲς καὶ δυσκατόρθωτον τοῦτο ἔστι, τὸ δυνηθῆναι ἐπιβῆναι τῆς εἰσόδου καὶ τῶν προθύρων ἀψασθαι τῆς μετανοίας. *Ib. p. 79.*

^c Honestas, quæ principio anxia habetur, ubi contigerit, voluptati luxurique habetur. *Vict. in Sept. Sev.*

SERM. XLIX. inestimable, and its loss irreparable; for all the world cannot purchase one moment of it more than is allowed us; neither can it, when once gone, by any means be recovered: so much indeed as we save thereof, so much we preserve of ourselves; and so far as we lose it, so far in effect we slay ourselves, or deprive ourselves of life; yea by mispending it we do worse than so, for a dead sleep, or a cessation from being, is not so bad as doing ill; all that while we live backward, or decline toward a state much worse than annihilation itself. Further,

5. Consider, that of all time the present is ever the best for the purpose of amending our life. It is the only sure time, that which we have in our hands, and may call our own; whereas the past time is irrevocably gone from us; and the future may never come to us: it is absolutely (reckoning from our becoming sensible of things, and accountable for our actions,) the best, as to our capacity of improving it;

*Omnia quæ
ventura
sunt in in-
certo ja-
cent, proti-
nus vive.
Sen. de Vit.
brev. 9.*

Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi

Prima fugit.

Virg. Georg. iii.

Our best days do first pass away, was truly said; the nearer to its source our life is, the purer it is from stain, the freer from clogs, the more susceptible of good impressions, the more vivid and brisk in its activity; the further we go on, especially in a bad course, the nearer we verge to the dregs of our life; the more dry, the more stiff, the more sluggish we grow: delay therefore doth ever steal away the flour of our age, leaving us the bran and refuse thereof. Again,

6. If at any time we do reflect upon the time that hath already slipped away unprofitably from us, it

will seem more than enough, and (if we consider SERM. well) it will be grievous to us to lose more; the XLIX. morrow will seem too late to commence a good life; *Sera nimis* *vita est* *ἀρκετὸς ὁ παρεληλυθὸς χρόνος, The time past of our life,* *crastina,* saith St. Peter, *may suffice us to have wrought the* *vive hodie.* *will of the Gentiles,* or to have continued in ill *Mart. i. 16.* *1* *Pét. iv. 3.* courses: more indeed it might than suffice; it should be abundantly too much to have embezzled so large a portion of our precious and irreparable time: after we have slept in neglect of our duty, *ἄρα ἤδη ἐγερθῆναι,* *it is,* as St. Paul saith, *now high time to awake* *Rom. xiii.* unto a vigilant observance thereof: this we shall the ¹¹ rather do, if we consider, that,

7. For ill living now we shall come hereafter to be sorry, if not with a wholesome contrition, yet with a painful regret; we shall certainly one day repent, if not of our sin, yet of our sinning; if not so as to correct for the future, yet so as to condemn ourselves for what is past: the consideration of our having sacrilegiously robbed our Maker of the time due to his service; of our having injuriously defrauded our souls of the opportunities granted to secure their welfare; of our having profusely cast away our most precious hours of life upon vanity and folly, will sometime twitch us sorely. There is no man who doth not with a sorrowful eye review an ill-past life; who would not gladly recall his mispent time; *O mihi præteritos!* O that God would restore my past years to me, is every such man's prayer, although it never was heard, never could be granted unto any. And what is more inconsistent with wisdom, than to engage ourselves upon making such ineffectual and fruitless wishes? What is more disagreeable to reason, than to do that, for which

SERM. we must be forced to confess and call ourselves fools?

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What man of sense, for a flash of transitory pleasure, for a puff of vain repute, for a few scraps of dirty pelf, would plunge himself into such a gulf of anguish?

8. On the contrary, if, laying hold on occasion, we set ourselves to do well, reflection thereon will yield great satisfaction and pleasure to us; we shall be glad that we have done, and that our task is over; we shall *enjoy our former life*: our time which is so past will not yet be lost unto us; but rather it will be most securely ours, laid up beyond the reach of danger, in the repository of a good conscience^d.

9. Again, all our time of continuance in sin we do *treasure up wrath*, or accumulate guilt; and the larger our guilt is, the sorer must be our repentance; the more bitter the sorrow, the more low the humbling, the more earnest the deprecation requisite to obtain pardon; the broader and deeper the stain is, the more washing is needful to get it out; if we sin much and long, we must grieve answerably, or we shall be no fit objects of mercy.

Rom. ii. 5.
Quam
magna deliquimus,
tam granditer defleamus, &c.
Cypr. de
Laps. Or. 5.

10. And whenever the sin is pardoned, yet indelible marks and monuments thereof will abide. We shall eternally be obliged to cry *peccavi*: although the punishment may be remitted, the desert of it cannot be removed; a scar from it will stick in our flesh, which ever will deform us; a tang of it will stay in our memory, which always will be disgusting; we shall never reflect on our miscarriages

^d Ille sapit quisquis, Posthume, vixit heri. *Mart.* v. 60.

Ampliat ætatis spatium sibi vir bonus; hoc est

Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui. *Mart.* x. 23.

without some confusion and horror^c; incessantly we shall be liable to that question of St. Paul, *What fruit had ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* If, therefore, we could reasonably presume, yea if we could certainly foresee, that we should hereafter in time repent, yet it were unadvisable to persist in sin, seeing it being once committed, can never be reversed, never expunged from the registers of time, never dashed out from the tables of our mind and memory; but will perpetually rest as matter of doleful consideration, and of tragical story to us. *Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed. That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.*

11. Again, so much time as we spend in disobedience, so much of reward we do forfeit; for commensurate to our works shall our rewards be; the fewer our good works are in the course of our present life, the smaller shall be the measures of joy, of glory, of felicity dispensed to us hereafter; the later consequently we repent, the less we shall be happy: *One star, saith the apostle, differeth from another in glory;* and of all stars, those in the celestial sphere will shine brightest, who did soon rise here,

^c Pœna potest demi, culpa perennis erit. *Ovid.*

^h Η συγχώρησις ἐγένετο τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἡ μὴμὴ τῶν συγκεχωρημένων ἀμαρτημάτων οὐκ ἠφανίζετο παρὰ τῷ Παύλῳ. *Chrys.* tom. viii. p. 97.

SERM.

XLIX.

Rom. vi. 21.

Ezek. xvi.
61, 63.Ezek.
xxxvi. 31.
xx. 43.

1 Cor. xv.

41.

SERM. and continued long, by the lustre of their good
 XLIX. works, to glorify their heavenly Father; for *the path*
 Prov. iv. 18. *of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more*
and more unto the perfect day. While, therefore,
 we let our interest lie dead by lingering, or run be-
 hind by sinful practice, we are very bad husbands
 for our soul; our spiritual estate doth thereby hugely
 suffer; every minute contracteth a damage, that
 runneth through millions of ages, and which there-
 fore will amount to an immense sum: and who for
 all the pleasures here would forego one degree of
 blissful joy hereafter? who for all earthly splendours
 would exchange one spark of celestial glory? who
 for all the treasures below would let slip one gem
 out of his heavenly crown?

12. Further, let us consider that whatever our
 age, whatever our condition or case be, the advice
 not to procrastinate our obedience is very suitable
 and useful.

Sub pæda-
 gogo cœpe-
 ria licet, se-
 rum est.
 Mart. viii.
 44.

Art thou young? then it is most proper to enter
 upon living well. For when we set out, we should
 be put in a right way; when we begin to be men,
 we should begin to use our reason well; life and
 virtue should be of the same standing. What is
 more ugly than a child, that hath learnt little,
 having learnt to do ill? than naughtiness springing
 up in that state of innocence? The foundation of
 good life is to be laid in that age, upon which the
 rest of our life is built; for this is the manner of
 our proceeding; the present always dependeth upon
 what is past; our practice is guided by notions that
 we had sucked in, is swayed by inclinations that we
 got before; whence usually our first judgments of
 things, and our first propensions do stretch their in-

fluence upon the whole future life. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,* saith the Wise Man. SERM. XLIX. Prov. xxii. 6.

That age, as it is most liable to be corrupted by vice, so it is most capable of being imbued with virtue; then nature is soft and pliable, so as easily to be moulded into any shape, ready to admit any stamp impressed thereon^f; then the mind is a pure table, in which good principles may be fairly engraven without rasing out any former ill prejudices; then the heart being a soil free of weeds, the seeds of goodness being cast therein will undisturbedly grow and thrive; then the complexion being tender will easily be set into a right posture: our soul is then a vessel empty and sweet; good liquor therefore may be instilled, which will both fit it, and season it with a durable tincture; the extreme curiosity and huge credulity of that age, as they greedily will swallow any, so will they admit good instruction. If we do then imbibe false conceptions, or have bad impressions made on our minds, it will be hard afterwards to expel, or to correct them^g. Passion is then very fluid and moveable, but, not being impetuously determined any way, may easily be derived into the right channel. Then the quickness of our wit, the briskness of our fancy, the fresh-

^f *Natura tenacissimi sumus eorum, quæ rudibus annis percipimus, &c. Quint. i. 1.*

Difficiliter eraditur quod rudes animi pertiberunt. Hier. ad Letam.

^g *Ut corpora ad quosdam membrorum flexus formari nisi tenera non possunt, sic animos ad pleraque duriores robur ipsum facit. Quint. i. 1.*

Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem

Testa diu.

Hor. Ep. i. 2.

SERM. ness of our memory, the vigour of our affections, the
XLIX. lusty and active mettle of our spirits, being applied
 to virtuous studies and endeavours, will produce most noble fruits; the beauty of which will adorn us, the sweetness will please us, so as to leave on our minds a perpetual relish and satisfaction in goodness^h. Then, being less encumbered with the cares, less entangled in the perplexities, less exposed to the temptations of the world and secular affairs, we can more easily set forth, we may proceed more expeditely in good courses. Then, being void of that stinging remorse, which doth adhere to reflections upon past follies and mispent time, with more courage and alacrity we may prosecute good undertakings; then, beginning so soon to embrace virtue, we shall have advantage with more leisure and more ease to polish and perfect it through our ensuing course of life; setting out so early, in the very morning of our age, without much straining, marching on softly and fairly, we may go through our journey to happiness.

Our actions then are the first-fruits of our life, which therefore are fit and due sacrifices to our Maker; which if we do withdraw, we shall have nothing left so worthy or acceptable to present unto him. Will it be seemly to offer him the dregs and refuse of our age? Shall we not be ashamed to bring a crazy temper of body and soul, dry bones, and decayed senses, a dull fancy, a treacherous memory, a sluggish spirit before him? Shall we then, when we are fit for little, begin to undertake his service? With our decrepit limbs and wasted

^h Ἡδὲ γὰρ ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἢ νεότης, ὅτι εὐρίπιστος, ὅτι εὐεξαπάτητος, ὅτι εὐδύσθητος, καὶ σφοδρτέρου δεῖ χαλινοῦ. Chrys. ἀνδρ. α'.

strength shall we set ourselves to *run the ways of* **SERM.**
his commandments? **XLIX.**

As it is uncomfortable to think of being parsimonious, when our stock is almost gone; so it is to become thrifty of our leif when it comes near the bottom. Δεινὴ ἐνὶ πνυθμενὶ φειδῶ.

If we keep innocency, spend our youth well, it will yield unexpressible comfort to us; it will save us much sorrow, it will prevent many inconveniences to us: if we have spent it ill, it will yield us great displeasure, it will cost us much pains; we shall be **Ps. xxxvii.** forced sadly to bewail our folly and vanity therein; ^{38.} it will be bitter to see that we must unlive our former life, and undo all we have done; that we must renounce the principles we have avowed, we must root out the habits we have planted, we must forsake the paths which we have beaten and so long trod in, if ever we will be happy; it will be grievous to us, when we come with penitential regret to deprecate, *Lord, remember not the sins of my youth,*; we shall **Ps. lxxv. 7.** feel sore pain, when *our bones are full of the sins* **Job xx. 11.** *of our youth;* and we come to *possess the iniquities* **xiii. 26.** thereof.

It is therefore good, as the prophet saith, *that a* **Lam. iii.** *man bear the yoke in his youth,* when his neck is ^{27.} tenderⁱ; it is excellent advice which the Preacher giveth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy* **Ecccl. xii. 1.** *youth, while the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*

Aristotle saith, that young men are not *fit hearers of moral doctrine,* because, saith he, *they are*

ⁱ Fingit equum tenera docilem cervicem magister

Ire viam, quam monstrat eques. *Hor. Ep. i. 2.*

SERM. *unexperienced in affairs of life ; and because they*
 XLIX. *are apt to follow their passions, which indispose to*

hear with fruit or profit^k. But his conclusion is
 false, and his reasons may be well turned against
 him ; for because young men want experience, there-
 fore is there no bad prejudice, no contrary habit to
 obstruct their embracing sound doctrine ; because
 their passions are vehement and strong, therefore
 being rightly ordered, and set upon good objects,
 they with great force will carry them to virtuous
 practice : that indeed is the best time to regulate
 and tame passions ; as horses must be broken when
 they are colts, dogs must be made when they are
 whelps, else they will never be brought to any thing.
 The poet therefore advised better than the philoso-
 pher ;

Hor. Ep. i.
2.

—nunc adhibe puro

Pectore verba puer, nunc te melioribus offer :

and St. Paul plainly doth confute him, when he bid-
 Eph. vi. 4. *deth parents to educate their children in the nur-*
ture and admonition of the Lord ; when he charg-
 Tit. ii. 6. *eth Titus, that he exhort young men to be sober-*
 minded ; when he commendeth Timothy, for that
 2 Tim. ii. *he had ἀπὸ βρέφους, from his infancy, known the holy*
 22. *scriptures ; so doth the Psalmist, when he saith,*
 2 Tim. iii. *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way ?*
 15. *by taking heed according to thy word. And Solo-*
 Psal. cxix. *mon, when he declareth that his moral precepts did*
 9. *serve to give subtilty to the simple, to the young*
 Prov. i. 4. *man knowledge and discretion ; when he biddeth*

^k Τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ ἔστιν οικεῖος ἀκροατῆς ὁ νέος· ἄπειρος γὰρ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων· ἔτι τοῖς πάθεσιν ἀκολουθητικὸς ὢν ματαίως ἀκούσεται καὶ ἀνωφελῶς. Eth. i. 3.

us to *train up a child in the way he should go*, SERM. XLIX.
 St. Peter doth intimate the same when he biddeth Prov. xxii. 6, 15.
 us *as newborn babes to desire the sincere milk of* 1 Pet. ii. 2.
the word; and our Saviour, when he said, *Suffer* Luke xviii. 16.
little children to come unto me, for of such is the
kingdom of God; that is, the more simplicity and
 innocence a man is endued with, the more apt
 he is to embrace and comply with the evangelical
 doctrine. Aristotle therefore was out, when he would
 exclude young men from the schools of virtue. It
 is observable that he contradicteth himself; for *Οὐ*
μικρὸν διαφέρει τὸ οὕτως ἢ οὕτως, εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων ἐθίζεσθαι, Eth. ii. 2.
ἀλλὰ πάμπολυ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ πᾶν. *It is, saith he, of no*
small concernment to be from youth accustomed
thus or thus; yea, it is very much, or rather all.
 And how shall a young man be accustomed to do
 well, if he be not allowed to learn what is to be
 done?

Again; Are we old? it is then high time to be-
 gin; we have then less time to spare from our most
 important business; we stand then in most immi-
 nent danger, upon the edge of perdition, and should
 therefore be nimble to skip out thence; our forces
 being diminished, our quickness and industry should
 be increased; the later we set out, the more speed
 it behoveth us to make. If we stay, we shall grow
 continually more indisposed and unfit to amend; it
 will be too late, when utter decrepitness and dotage
 have seized upon us, and our body doth survive our
 soul¹. When so much of our time, of our parts, of
 our strength, are fled, we should husband the rest to

¹ Quod facere solent qui serius exeunt—calcar addamus. *Sen. Ep. 61. 76. 19.*

Αποκ. iii. 2. Στήριζον τὰ λοιπὰ, ἃ μέλλει ἀποθανεῖν.

SERM. best advantage, and make the best satisfaction we
XLIX. can unto God, and unto our souls, with the remain-
der.

This age hath some peculiar advantages, which we should embrace: the froth of humours is then boiled out, the fervours of lust are slaked, passions are allayed, appetites are flatted; so that then inclinations to sin are not so violent, nor doth the enjoyment thereof so much gratify^m.

Long experience then hath discovered the vanity of all worldly things, and the mischief of ill courses; so that we can then hardly admire any thing, or be fond of enjoying what we have found unprofitable or hurtful.

Age is excused from compliance with the fashions, and thence much exempted from temptations of the world; so that it may be good without obstacle or opposition.

It is proper thereto to be grave and serious, and, consequently, to be virtuous; for gravity without virtue, and seriousness about vain things, are ridiculous.

Prov. xvi. Nothing doth so adorn this age as goodness, no-
31. thing doth so disgrace it as wickedness; *The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness*; but it is a mark of infamy, if it be observed proceeding in a course of iniquity; it signifieth that experience hath not improved it; it

^m — non omnia grandior ætas

Quæ fugiamus habet—— Ovid.

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ νεότης πελάγει προσέοικε μαινομένη, κυμάτων ἀγρίων, καὶ πνευμάτων γέμοντι πονηρῶν· ἡ δὲ πολὺ ὥσπερ εἰς λιμένα ἀκύμαντον τὰς τῶν γεγηρακότων ὀρμίζει ψυχὰς, παρέχουσα τῇ παρὰ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐστρυφῆν ἀσφαλείῃ. Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. 38.

argueth incorrigible folly, or rather incurable madness therein. SERM.
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There is indeed no care, no employment proper for old men, but to prepare for their dissolution; to be bidding adieu to the world, with its vain pomps and mischievous pleasures; to be packing up their goods, to be casting their accounts, to be fitting themselves to abide in that state into which they are tumbling; to appear at that bar before which suddenly nature will set them. As a ship, which hath long been tossed and weatherbeaten, which is shattered in its timber, and hath lost much of its rigging, should do nothing in that case but work toward the port, there to find its safety and ease; so should a man, who, having passed many storms and agitations of the world, is grievously battered and torn with age, strive only to die well, to get safe into the harbour of eternal rest. In freto
viximus,
moriamur
in portu.
Sen. Ep. 19.

In fine, Epicurus himself said well, that *no man is either immature or overripe in regard to his soul's health*^a; we can never set upon it too soon, we should never think it too late to begin: to live well is always the best thing we can do, and therefore we should at any time endeavour it; there are common reasons for all ages, there are special reasons for each age, which most strongly and most clearly do urge it; it is most seasonable for young men, it is most necessary for old men, it is most advisable for all men^o.

^a Οὐτ' ἄωρος οὐδείς ἐστιν, οὔτε πάρος πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν ἕγμαινον. Epict. ad Monæc.

^o Quare juvenus, imo omnis ætas (neque enim rectæ voluntati serum est tempus ullum) totis mentibus huc tendamus, in hoc elaboremus; forsân et consummare contingat. Quint. xii. 1.

SERM. Again; be our condition what it will, this advice
XLIX. is reasonable: Are we in health? we owe God thanks for that excellent gift; and the best gratitude we can express is the improving it for his service and our own good: we should not lose the advantage of a season so fit for our obedience and repentance; while the forces of our body and mind are entire, while we are not discomposed by pain or faintness, we should strive to despatch this needful work, for which infirmity may disable us.

Are we sick? it is then time to consider our frailty, and the best we can to obviate the worst consequences thereof: it is then very fit, when we do feel the sad effects of sin, to endeavour the prevention of worse mischiefs that may follow; it is seasonable, when we lie under God's correcting hand, to submit unto him, to deprecate his wrath, to seek reconciliation with him by all kinds of obedience suitable to that state; with serious resolutions to amend hereafter, if it shall please God to restore us; it is most advisable, when we are in the borders of death, to provide for that state which lieth just beyond it.

Are we rich and prosperous? it is expedient then presently to amend, lest our wealth do soon corrupt us with pride, with luxury, with sloth, with stupidity; lest our prosperity become an inevitable snare, an irrecoverable bane unto us.

Are we poor or afflicted? it is then also needful to repent quickly, that we may have a comfortable support for our soul, and a certain succour in our distress; that we may get a treasure to supply our want, a joy to drown our sorrow, a buoy to keep our hearts from sinking into desperation and dis-

consolateness. This condition is a medicine, which God administereth for our soul's health; if it do not work presently, so as to do us good, it will prove both grievous and hurtful to us.

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13. Lastly, we may consider, that, abating all the rueful consequences of abiding in sin, abstracting from the desperate hazards it exposeth us to in regard to the future life, it is most reasonable to abandon it, betaking ourselves to a virtuous course of practice. For virtue in itself is far more eligible than vice; to keep God's commandments hath much greater convenience than to break them; the life of a good man, in all considerable respects, is highly to be preferred above the life of a bad man: for what is virtue, but a way of living that advanceth our nature into a similitude with God's most excellent and happy nature^p; that promoteth our true benefit and interest; that procureth and preserveth health, ease, safety, liberty, peace, comfortable subsistence, fair repute, tranquillity of mind, all kinds of convenience to us? To what ends did our most benign and most wise Maker design and suit his law, but to the furthering our good, and securing us from mischief, as not only himself hath declared, but reason sheweth, and experience doth attest? What is vice, but a sort of practice which debaseth and disparageth us, which plungeth us into grievous evils, which bringeth distemper of body and soul, distress of fortune, danger, trouble, reproach, regret, and numberless inconveniences upon us; which, for no other reason than because it so hurt-

Dent. x. 13.
Mic. vi. 8.
Neh. ix. 13.
Rom. vii.
12.
Ps. xix. 9.
cxix. 107.

^p Est virtus nihil aliud quam in se perfecta, et ad summum perducta natura. *Cic. de Leg.* 1.

SERM. eth and grieveth us, was by our loving Creator in-
XLIX. terdicted to us? Virtue is most noble and worthy,
 most lovely, most profitable, most pleasant, most
 creditable; vice is most sordid and base, ugly, hurt-
 ful, bitter, disgraceful in itself, and in its conse-
 quences. If we compare them together, we shall
 find that virtue doth always preserve our health,
 but vice commonly doth impair it; that virtue im-
 proveth our estate, vice wasteth it; that virtue
 adorneth our reputation, vice blemisheth it; that
 virtue strengtheneth our parts, vice weakeneth
 them; that virtue maintaineth our freedom, vice
 enslaveth us; that virtue keepeth our mind in or-
 der and peace, vice discomposeth and disquieteth it;
 virtue breedeth satisfaction and joy, vice spawneth
 displeasure and anguish of conscience: to enter
 therefore into a virtuous course of life, what is it
 but to embrace happiness? to continue in vicious
 practice, what is it but to stick in misery?

By entering into good life, we enter into the
 favour and friendship of God, engaging his infinite
 power and wisdom for our protection, our succour,
 our direction, and guidance; enjoying the sweet
 effluxes of his mercy and bounty; we therewith
 become friends to the holy angels and blessed saints;
 to all good men, being united in a holy and happy
 consortship of judgment, of charity, of hope, of
 devotion with them: we become friends to all the
 world, which we oblige by good wishes, and good
 deeds, and by the influence of good example: we
 become friends to ourselves, whom we thereby en-
 rich and adorn with the best goods; whom we gra-
 tify and please with the choicest delights: but, per-
 sisting in sin, we continue to affront, wrong, and

displease our Maker, to be disloyal toward our sovereign Lord, to be ingrateful toward our benefactor, to disoblige the best friend we have, to provoke a most just and severe judge, to cope with omnipotency, to contradict infallibility, to enrage the greatest patience, to abuse immense goodness: we thereby become enemies to all the world; to God, whom we injure and dishonour; to the friends of God, whom we desert and oppose; to the creatures, which we abuse to our pride, lust, and vanity; to our neighbours, whom we corrupt or seduce; to ourselves, whom we bereave of the best goods, and betray to the worst evils.

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Beginning to live soberly, we begin to live like men, following the conduct of reason; beginning to live in charity, we commence the life of angels, enjoying in ourselves most sweet content, and procuring great benefit to others; but going on in sinful voluptuousness, we proceed to live like beasts, wholly guided by sense, and swayed by appetite; being pertinacious in malice, we continue to be like fiends, working torment in ourselves, and mischief to our neighbours.

Embracing virtue, we become wise and sober men, worthy and honourable, beneficial and useful to the world; but continuing in vice, we continue to be foolish and vain, to be vile and despicable, to be worthless and useless.

By our delay to amend, what do we gain? what, but a little flashy and transient pleasure, instead of a solid and durable peace; but a little counterfeit profit, instead of real wealth; but a little smoke of deceitful opinion, instead of unquestionably sound honour; shadows of imaginary goods, instead of

SERM. those which are most substantial and true, a good
XLIX. mind, the love of God, the assured welfare of our
souls. But this field of discourse is too spacious; I shall only therefore for conclusion say, that speedily applying ourselves to obedience, and breaking off our sins by repentance, is in effect nothing else but, from a present hell in trouble, and the danger of a final hell in torment, to be translated into a double heaven; one of joyful tranquillity here, another of blissful rest hereafter; unto the which Almighty God in his mercy bring us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praise.
Amen.

¹ Thess. v.
^{23.} *The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

S E R M O N L.

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. ix. 10.

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy
might.*

IN St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, among divers SERM.
excellent rules of life, prescribed by that great master, L.
this is one, Τῆ σπουδῆ μὴ ἄκνητοι, *Be not slothful in* Rom. xii.
business, or to business; and in the second Epistle 11.
to the Corinthians, among other principal virtues or
worthy accomplishments, for *abounding* wherein the
apostle commendeth those Christians, he ranketh *all* Πάντα σπου-
diligence, or industry exercised in all affairs and δῆ.
duties incumbent on them: this is that virtue, the 2 Cor. viii.
practice whereof in this moral precept or advice the
royal Preacher doth recommend unto us; being in-
deed an eminent virtue, of very general use, and
powerful influence upon the management of all our
affairs, or in the conduct of our whole life.

Industry, I say, in general, touching all matters
incident, which *our hand findeth to do*, that is, which
dispensation of Providence doth offer, or which choice
of reason embraceth, for employing our active powers
of soul and body, the Wise Man doth recommend;
and to pressing the observance of his advice (waving
all curious remarks either critical or logical upon the
words) I shall presently apply my discourse, propos-

SERM. ing divers considerations apt to excite us thereto;
 L. only first, let me briefly describe it, for our better
 apprehension of its true notion and nature.

By industry we understand a serious and steady application of mind, joined with a vigorous exercise of our active faculties, in prosecution of any reasonable, honest, useful design, in order to the accomplishment or attainment of some considerable good ; as, for instance, a merchant is industrious who continueth intent and active in driving on his trade for acquiring wealth ; a soldier is industrious who is watchful for occasion, and earnest in action, toward obtaining the victory ; and a scholar is industrious who doth assiduously bend his mind to study for getting knowledge.

Industry doth not consist merely in action ; for that is incessant in all persons, our mind being a restless thing, never abiding in a total cessation from thought or from design ; being like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, yet tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation somewhither. But the direction of our mind to some good end, without roving or flinching, in a straight and steady course, drawing after it our active powers in execution thereof, doth constitute industry ; the which therefore usually is attended with labour and pain ; for our mind (which naturally doth affect variety and liberty, being apt to loathe familiar objects, and to be weary of any constraint) is not easily kept in a constant attention to the same thing ; and the spirits employed in thought are prone to flutter and fly away, so that it is hard to fix

* Ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ φύσιν ἔχουσα τῷ κινεῖσθαι διαπαντός, οὐκ ἀνέχεται ἡρεμεῖν, ἔμπρακτον τὸ ζῆν τούτο ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεός, &c. Chrys. in Act. Or. 35.

them : and the corporeal instruments of action being strained to a high pitch, or detained in a tone, will soon feel a lassitude somewhat offensive to nature ; whence labour or pain is commonly reckoned an ingredient of industry, and laboriousness is a name signifying it ; upon which account this virtue, as involving labour, deserveth a peculiar commendation ; it being then most laudable to follow the dictates of reason, when so doing is attended with difficulty and trouble.

Such in general I conceive to be the nature of industry ; to the practice whereof the following considerations may induce.

1. We may consider that industry doth befit the constitution and frame of our nature ; all the faculties of our soul and organs of our body being adapted in a congruity and tendency thereto : our hands are suited for work, our feet for travel, our senses to watch for occasion of pursuing good and eschewing evil, our reason to plod and contrive ways of employing the other parts and powers ; all these, I say, are formed for action ; and that not in a loose and gadding way, or in a slack and remiss degree, but, in regard to determinate ends, with vigour requisite to attain them ; and especially our appetites do prompt to industry, as inclining to things not obtainable without it ; according to that aphorism of the Wise Man, *Ἐπιθυμίας ὀκνηρὸν ἀποκτείνουσιν*—*The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour* ; that is, he is apt to desire things which he cannot attain without pains ; and, not enduring them, he for want thereof doth feel a deadly smart and anguish : wherefore in not being industrious we defeat the intent of our Maker ; we pervert his work and gifts ;

SERM.
L.

Prov. xii.
25. xiii. 4.

SERM. we forfeit the use and benefit of our faculties; we
 L. are bad husbands of nature's stock.

2. In consequence hereto industry doth preserve and perfect our nature, keeping it in good tune and temper, improving and advancing it toward its best state. The labour of our mind in attentive meditation and study doth render it capable and patient of thinking upon any object or occasion, doth polish and refine it by use, doth enlarge it by accession of habits, doth quicken and rouse our spirits, dilating and diffusing them into their proper channels. The very labour of our body doth keep the organs of action sound and clean, discussing fogs and superfluous humours, opening passages, distributing nourishment, exciting vital heat: barring the use of it, no good constitution of soul or body can subsist; but a foul rust, a dull numbness, a resty listlessness, a heavy unwieldiness must seize on us^b; our spirits will be stifled and choked, our hearts will grow faint and languid, our parts will flag and decay; the vigour of our mind and the health of our body will be much impaired.

It is with us as with other things in nature^c, which by motion are preserved in their native purity and perfection, in their sweetness, in their lustre, rest corrupting, debasing, and defiling them. If the water runneth, it holdeth clear, sweet, and fresh; but stagnation turneth it into a noisome puddle: if

^b Πάντα γὰρ ἢ ἀργία βλάπτει, καὶ τὰ μέλη σώματος αὐτὰ, &c. Chrys. in Act. Orat. 35.

Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τοιοῦτου τὸ σῶμα ἔκλυτον, &c. Ibid.

^c Ποῖος ἵππος χρήσιμος, ὁ τρυφῶν, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος; ποία ναῦς, ἢ πλέουσα, ἢ ἢ ἀργαῦσα; ποῖον ὕδωρ, τὸ τρέχον, ἢ τὸ ἐστῶς; ποῖος σιδηρός, ὁ κείμενος, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος, &c. Ibid.

the air be fanned by winds, it is pure and wholesome; but from being shut up, it groweth thick and putrid: if metals be employed, they abide smooth and splendid; but lay them up, and they soon contract rust: if the earth be belaboured with culture, it yieldeth corn; but, lying neglected, it will be overgrown with brakes and thistles^d; and the better its soil is, the ranker weeds it will produce: all nature is upheld in its being, order, and state, by constant agitation; every creature is incessantly employed in action conformable to its designed end and use; in like manner the preservation and improvement of our faculties depends on their constant exercise.

3. As we naturally were composed, so by divine appointment we were originally designed for industry; God did not intend that man should live idly, even in his best state, or should enjoy happiness without taking pains; but did provide work enough even in paradise itself; for *the Lord God*, Gen. ii. 15. saith the text, *took man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it*; so that had we continued happy, we must have been ever busy, by our industry sustaining our life, and securing our pleasure; otherwise weeds might have overgrown paradise, and that of Solomon might have been applicable to Adam; *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof.* Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

4. By our transgression and fall the necessity of

^d Neglectis urenda filix innascitur agris. *Hor. Ser. i. 3.*

Plut. *περί Παιδων Ἀγωγῆς*, p. 3. edit. Steph.

SERM. industry (together with a difficulty of obtaining
 L. good, and avoiding evil) was increased to us; being
 ordained both as a just punishment for our offences,
 and as an expedient remedy of our needs: for there-
 Gen. iii. 17. upon *the ground was cursed to bring forth thorns
 and thistles to us*; and it was our doom pronounced
 Gen. iii. 19. by God's own mouth, *In the sweat of thy face shalt
 thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground*:
 Job v. 7. so that now labour is fatally natural to us; now *man*,
 as Job saith, *is born to labour, as the sparks fly up-
 ward, (or, as the vulture's chickens soar aloft, ac-
 cording to the Greek interpreters^c.)*

5. Accordingly our condition and circumstances
 in the world are so ordered, as to require industry:
 so that without it we cannot support our life in any
 comfort or convenience; whence St. Paul's charge
 2 Thess. iii. 10. upon the Thessalonians, that *if any one would not
 work, neither should he eat*, is in a manner a gene-
 ral law imposed on mankind by the exigency of our
 state, according to that of Solomon; *The idle soui
 shall suffer hunger*, and, *The sluggard, who wil
 not plough by reason of the cold, shall beg in har-
 vest, and have nothing.*

Of all our many necessities, none can be supplied
 without pains, wherein all men are obliged to bear a
 share; every man is to work for his food, for his ap-
 parel, for all his accommodations, either immediately
 and directly, or by commutation and equivalence;
 for the gentleman himself cannot (at least worthily
 and inculpably) obtain them otherwise than by re-

^c 'Αλλ' ἄνθρωπος γενᾶται κόπῳ· νεοσσοὶ δὲ γῆπὸς ὑψηλὰ πέτῳται.
 LXX. Interp. Now great travail (as the son of Sirach saith) is
 created for every man; (ἀσχαλία μεγάλη ἔκτισται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, &c.
 Eccclus. xl. 1.) and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, &c.

deeming them from the ploughman and the artificer, SERM.
by compensation of other cares and pains conducive L.
to public good.

The wise poet did observe well when he said,

—Pater ipse colendi

Haud facilem esse viam voluit. Virgil. Georg. i.

And St. Chrysostom doth propose the same observation, that God, to whet our mind^f, and keep us from moping, would not that we should easily come by the fruits of the earth, without employing much art and many pains; in order thereto there must be skill used in observing seasons, and preparing the ground; there must be labour spent in manuring, in delving, and ploughing; in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it; there must be pains taken in reaping, in gathering, in laying up, in thrashing and dressing the fruit ere we can enjoy it; so much industry is needful to get bread: and if we list to fare more daintily, we must either hunt for it, using craft and toil to catch it out of the woods, the water, the air; or we must carefully wait on those creatures, of which we would serve ourselves, feeding them that they may feed us; such industry is required to preserve mankind from starving. And to guard it from other inconveniences, mischiefs, and dangers surrounding us, it is no less requisite: for to shelter us from impressions of weather, we must spin, we must weave, we must build; and in order thereto we must scrape into the bowels of the earth to find our tools; we must sweat at the anvil to forge

^f Διὰ τοῦτο εἰς ἀνάγκην κατέστησεν ἐργασίας ὁ Θεός, &c. Chrys. in Act. Hom. 35.

—curis acuens mortalia corda;

Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno. Virg. Georg. i.

SERM. them for our use; we must frame arms to defend
 L. our safety and our store from the assaults of wild
 beasts, or of more dangerous neighbours, wild men.
 To furnish accommodations for our curiosity and
 pleasure, or to provide for the convenience and orna-
 ment of our life, still greater measures of industry
 are demanded; to satisfy those intents, a thousand
 contrivances of art, a thousand ways of trade and
 business do serve, without which they are not at-
 tainable. In whatever condition any man is, in what
 state soever he be placed, whatsoever calling or way
 of life he doth embrace, some peculiar business is
 thence imposed on him, which he cannot with any
 advantage or good success, with any grace, with any
 comfort to himself, or satisfaction to others, manage
 without competent industry: nothing will go on of
 itself, without our care to direct it, and our pains to
 hold it and forward it in the right course: all which
 things shew that divine wisdom did intend that we
 should live in the exercise of industry, or not well
 without it; having so many needs to be supplied,
 so many desires to be appeased thereby; being ex-
 posed to so many troubles and difficulties, from
 which we cannot extricate ourselves without it.
 But further yet,

6. Let us consider that industry hath annexed
 thereto, by divine appointment and promise, the
 fairest fruits, and the richest rewards: all good
 things (being either such in themselves, or made
 such by human esteem) are the fruits of industry;
 ordered to sprout from it, under the protection and
 influence of God's blessing, which commonly doth
 attend it.

All good things indeed are the gifts of God, and

freely dispensed by his hand ; but he doth not give SERM. them absolutely without condition, nor miraculously L. without concurrence of ordinary means : by supporting our active powers, and supplying needful aid to our endeavours ; by directing and upholding us in the course of our action ; by preventing or removing obstacles that might cross us ; by granting that final success which dependeth on his pleasure, he doth confer them on us ; our hand commonly is God's hand, by which he worketh good and reacheth out benefits to us ; governing and wielding it as he pleaseth.

Ps. xxxvii.
3, 23.
Prov. iii. 6.
Dii laboribus omnia
vendunt.
Judges vi.
36. vii. 7.
2 Kings v.
2.
Josh. i. 17.
9.

God indeed could not well proceed otherwise in dispensing his favours to us ; not well, I say ; that is, not without subverting the method of things which himself hath established ; not without slighting and voiding his own first bounty, or rendering the common gifts of nature (our reason, our senses, our active powers) vain and useless ; not without making us incapable of any praise, or any reward ^ε, which suppose works achieved by our earnest endeavour ; not without depriving us of that sweetest content, which springeth from enjoying the fruit of our labour.

Hence it is, that whatever in holy scripture is called the gift of God, is otherwhile affirmed to be the effect of industry ; it being the useful condition upon which, and the instrument whereby, divine Providence conveyeth good things to us ^h : what

^ε Καί τινος ἔμελλες λαμβάνειν τὸν μισθὸν, εἰ τὸ πᾶν ἔμελλον ἔσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ. Chrys. in Eph. Orat. 2.

^h Περὶ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἢ ψυχὴ διάκειται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόνους ἀνέμιξεν ἀρετῇ οικειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βουλόμενος. Chrys. in Joh. Or. 36. Διὰ

SERM. God said to Joshua, doth imply the general method
 L. of his proceeding, *Only be thou strong and cou-
 Josh. i. 7. rageous—that thou mayest prosper whithersoever
 thou goest.*

Hence whatever we are directed to pray for, we are also exhorted to work forⁱ; declaring thereby, that we are serious in our devotion, and do not mock God, asking that of him which we deem not worth our pains to acquire. It was well said of Cato in Sallust, *Vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo, prospere omnia cedunt: ubi socordiae te atque ignaviae tradideris, nequicquam deos implores; irati, infestique sunt.* We are bid to pray even for our daily bread, yet we may starve if we do not work for it; and in St. Paul's judgment deserve to do so.

Hence we are bound to thank God for all those things, for the want of which we must thank ourselves, and condemn our own sloth.

Hence, although we should cast our care on God, and rely on his providence, being solicitous for nothing; yet we must not so trust him as to tempt him, by neglecting the means, which he doth offer, of relieving ourselves; to be presumptuously slothful being no less blameable, than to be distrustfully careful.

Hence God in all such cases, when we do need any good thing, is said to be our helper and suc-

Διὰ τοῦτο οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἑαυτοῦ ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἀφήκε τι ἐφ' ἡμῶν εἶναι, ἵνα εὐπρόσωπον λάβῃ πρόφασιν τοῦ δικαίως ἡμεῖς στεφανῶν. Chrys. tom. 5. Or. 28.

ⁱ Αὐτός τι νῦν δρῶν, εἶτα τοὺς θεοὺς κάλει. Cato apud Sal. in Bello Catil.

Τὰν χεῖρα ποτιφέροντα δεῖ τὰν τύχην ἐπικαλεῖν. Plut. Apoph. Lac.

courer to the obtaining it; which doth imply that SERM.
we must cooperate with him, and join our forces to L.

those which he doth afford; so that as we can do nothing without him, so he will do nothing without us; yea, so that sometime we are said also to help

God; *Curse ye Merox, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.* Judg. v. 23. Psal. lxxii. 12. xxii. 11. 2 Cor. xii. 10. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 1 Sam. xiv. 6. If ever God doth perform all without human labour conspiring, it is only in behalf of those

who are ready to do their best, but unable to do any thing, being overpowered by the insuperable difficulty of things: but he never doth act miracles, or control nature; he never doth stretch forth his arm, or interpose special power, in favour of wilful and affected sluggards.

In fine, it is very plain both in common experience, declaring the course of providence, and in holy scripture, expressing God's intention, that Almighty God doth hold forth all good things as the prizes and recompenses of our vigilant care, and painful endeavour; as by surveying particulars we may clearly discern.

Nothing is more grateful to men, than *prosperous success* in their undertakings, whereby they attain their ends, satisfy their desires, save their pains, and come off with credit; this commonly is the effect of industry^k, (which commandeth fortune, to which all things submit and serve,) and scarce ever is found without it: an industrious person, who as such is not apt to attempt things impossible or unprac-

^k Τῆς ἐπιμελείας πάντα δούλα γίνονται. Antiph.

Quodcumque imperavit sibi animus, obtinuit, &c. *Sen. de Ira*, ii. 12.

SERM. L. ticable, can hardly fail of compassing his designs, because he will apply all means requisite, and bend all his forces thereto; striving to break through all difficulties, and to subdue all oppositions thwarting his purposes: but nothing of worth or weight can be achieved with half a mind, with a faint heart, with a lame endeavour: any enterprise undertaken without resolution, managed without care, prosecuted without vigour, will easily be dashed and prove abortive, ending in disappointment, damage, disgrace, and dissatisfaction: so the Wise Man doth assure us; *The soul, saith he, of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat*: the one pineth away with ineffectual and fruitless desires; the other thriveth upon satisfaction in prosperous success.

Prov. xiii. 4.
xxi. 25.

Prov. xv.
30.

Ps. lxxv. 9,
11.

Prov. xii.
11. xxi. 5.
(deest in
LXX.)
Prov. xx. 4.
xix. 15.

Plentiful accommodations for our sustenance and convenience all men will agree to be very desirable; and these are indeed the blessings of Him, who *visiteth the earth and enricheth it*; who *crowneth the year with his goodness*, and *whose clouds drop fatness*; but they are so dispensed by Heaven, that industry must concur therewith in deriving them to us, and sloth will debar us of them; for *he, saith the holy Oracle, that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: and the thoughts of the diligent alone tend to plenteousness; but the sluggard shall beg in harvest, and have nothing; and the idle soul shall suffer hunger.*

Wealth is that which generally men of all things are wont to affect and covet with most ardent desire, as the great storehouse of their needs and conveniences, the sure bulwark of their state and dignity; the universal instrument of compassing their

designs and pleasures; and most evident it is, that in the natural course of things, industry is the way to acquire it, to secure it, to improve and enlarge it; the which course pursued innocently and modestly, God will be so far from obstructing, that he will further and bless it; for that indeed it would be a flaw in providence, if honest industry, using the means it affordeth, should fail of procuring a competency; which joined with a pious contentedness, in St. Paul's computation, is *great wealth*. Wherefore although Solomon telleth us, that *the blessing of the Lord is that which maketh rich*; yet doth he not forget or contradict himself, when he also doth affirm, that *the hand of the diligent maketh rich*; and that *he who gathereth by labour shall increase*; because God blesseth the industrious, and by his own hand, as the most proper instrument, maketh him rich. When the Preacher said, *There is a man to whom God hath given riches and wealth*, he knew well enough what man it was, to whom God giveth them; and that sluggards were not fit objects of that liberality: for he had observed it to be their doom to be poor and beggarly, their nature to waste and embezzle an estate: he could assure us, that *drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags*; he could propound it as a certain observation, that *he who is slothful in his work is brother to a great waster*; or that want of industry in our business will no less impair our estate, than prodigality itself; he could more than once warn the slothful, that if he did *sleep on*, or persist in his sluggish way, indigency would surprise and seize on him with an insupportable violence: So, saith he, *shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man*.

SERM.

L.

1 Tim. vi. 6.

Prov. xv.

16. x. 22.

xxii. 4.

2 Chron.

xxix. 12.

Eccles. v.

19.

Prov. x. 4.

xiii. 11.

Eccles. vi.

1, 2.

St. Paul ex-

horteth to

work with

our hands,

ἵνα μὴ κενώ-

σῆται

ἡ χεὶρ.

1 Thes. iv.

11.

Prov. xxiii.

21. xviii. 9.

Prov. x. 4.

Prov. vi. 11.

xxiv. 34.

SERM.

L.

Another darling of human affection (and a jewel indeed of considerable worth and use in our life) is honour, or reputation among men: this also plainly, after the common reason and course of things, is purchased and preserved by industry: for he that aspireth to worthy things, and assayeth laudable designs, pursuing them steadily with serious application of heart, and resolute activity, will rarely fail of good success, and consequently will not miss honour, which ever doth crown victory; and if he should hap to fail in his design, yet he will not lose his credit; for having meant well, and done his best, all will be ready to excuse, many to commend him; the very qualities which industry doth exercise, and the effects which it doth produce, to beget honour, as being ornaments of our person and state. God him-

1 Chron.
xxix. 12.
Dan. v. 18.
Eccles. v.
19.

self (from whom *honour cometh*, and whose special prerogative it is to bestow it, he, as King of the world, being the fountain of honour) will be concerned to dignify an industrious management of his gifts with that natural and proper recompense thereof; conducting him who fairly treadeth in the path of honour, that he shall safely arrive unto it. It is therefore a matter of easy observation, which the

Prov. xxii.
29.

wise prince doth prompt us to mark; *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men*: that is, diligence, as it is the fairest, so it is the surest way to the best preferment: as it qualificieth a man for employment, and rendereth him useful to the world, so it will procure worthy employment for him, and attract the world to him; as the same great author again doth assert: *The hand*, saith he, *of the diligent shall bear rule*; yea, so honourable

Prov. xii.
24.

a thing is industry itself, that an exercise thereof in SERM.
 the meanest rank is productive of esteem, as the L.
 Wise Man again doth observe and tell us; *He that* Prov. xxvii.
waiteth on his master (that is, with diligence at-^{18.}
 tendeth on the business committed to him) *shall be* Ος φιλῶντι
 τον ἑαυτοῦ
honoured. κέρων, τιμη-
 θήσεται.

No industrious man is contemptible; for he is
 ever looked upon as being in a way of thriving, of
 working himself out from any straits, of advancing
 himself into a better condition. But without in-
 dustry we cannot expect any thing but disrespect,
 shame, and reproach, which are the certain portion
 of the slothful; he not having the heart to enter-
 prise, or the resolution and patience to achieve any
 thing deserving regard, or apt to procure it; he
 wanting all the ornaments and good fruits that grow
 from industry; he being only fit for a sordid and
 servile condition; whence *the slothful*, saith Solo-
 mon, *shall be under tribute*; and, *He that sleepeth* Prov. xii.
in harvest is a son that causeth shame; he causeth ^{24.}
 Δόλιος ἢ
 ἴσους ἐν
 προσημῷ.
 it to his relations by his beggarly accoutrements, he ^{Prov. x. 5.}
 causeth it much more to himself by his despicable
 faultiness, and by the disgraceful consequences of it.

Another yet more precious good, far surpassing
 all external advantages of our state; the which, in
 the judgment of him who (together with it having a
 full possession of all secular prosperity, wealth, dig-
 nity, and power) was best able to prize it, *is better* Prov. viii.
than rubies, and incomparably doth excel all things 11. iii. 14,
 15. iv. 7.
that may be desired, as ennobling, enriching, and ^{Job xxviii.}
 18.
 embellishing our better part: wisdom, I mean, or a
 good comprehension and right judgment about mat-
 ters of highest importance to us, is the prize of in-
 dustry, and not to be gained without it; nature con-

SERM. ferreth little thereto¹, fortune contributeth much
 L. less; it cannot be bought at any rate; *It cannot,*
 Job xxviii. saith Job, *be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be*
 15, 16. *weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued*
with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or
the sapphire; it is the offspring of watchful observa-
tion and experience, of serious meditation and study;
of careful reflection on things, marking, comparing,
and weighing their nature, their worth, their ten-
dencies and consequences; these are needful to the
getting of wisdom, because truth, which it seeketh,
commonly doth not lie in the surface, obvious to a
superficial glance, nor only dependeth on a simple
consideration of few things; but is lodged deep in
the bowels of things, and under a knotty complica-
tion of various matters; so that we must dig to
come at it, and labour in unfolding it: nor is it an
easy task to void the prejudices springing from in-
clination or temper, from education or custom, from
passion and interest, which cloud the mind, and ob-
struct the attainment of wisdom.

If we will have it, we must get it as Solomon himself did, that great master of it. How was that?

Eccles. i. *I gave, saith he, my heart to know wisdom.* He
 17. ii. 3. who made it his option and choice before all things;
 1 Kings iii. who so earnestly and so happily did pray for it;
 9. iv. 29. upon whom it is so expressly said, that God in a
 Wisd. viii. special manner and plentiful measure did bestow it;
 21. ix. 17. who averreth God to be the sole donor of it, (for,
 Eccles. ii. 26. *The Lord, saith he, giveth wisdom, out of his*
 Jam. i. 5. *mouth cometh knowledge and understanding;*) yet
 Prov. ii. 6. even he did first give his heart to it before it was

¹ Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium. *Hor. de Arte Poet.*

given into his heart: he did not only gape for it, to receive it by mere infusion; but he worked and studied hard for it. He was indeed a great student, an inquisitive searcher into nature, a curious observer of the world, a profound considerer and comparer of things; and by that industrious course, promoted by divine blessing, he did arrive to that great stock of so renowned a wisdom. SERM.
L.

And the same method it is which he prescribeth to us for getting it; exhorting us, that we *incline our ear unto wisdom, and apply our heart to understanding*; that we *cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding*; that we *seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures*; in following which course he doth assure us of good success; for *then, saith he, shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*, which is the head or chief part of wisdom; and *Blessed, saith he again, in the person and place of wisdom itself, is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For he that findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.* It is the way he supposeth of finding wisdom, to watch assiduously, to wait diligently upon the means of attaining her; and how infallible the acquist of her is thereby, she doth again by his mouth thus acquaint us; *I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me*; and *she, saith his imitator, is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her: whoso seeketh her early shall have no great travel: for he shall find her sitting at his doors.*

This indeed is the only way; idleness is not ca-

SERM. L. pable of so rich and noble a purchase : a slothful person may be conceited, yea needs must be so ; but he can never be wise : *A sluggard*, saith Solomon, *is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.* This conceit of wisdom is a natural issue of his ignorance ; and it is indeed no small part of his folly that he doth not perceive it ; being no less stupid in reflection on his own mind, than in considering other matters : being always in a slumber, he will often fall into such pleasant dreams ; and no wonder that he should presume upon abundance of knowledge, who not listing to take any pains in the search or discussion of things, doth snatch the first appearances, doth embrace every suggestion of his fancy, every conceit gratifying his humour, for truth.

Prov. xxvi.
16.

What should I speak of learning, or the knowledge of various things, transcending vulgar apprehension ? Who knoweth not that we cannot otherwise reach any part of that, than by assiduous study and contemplation ? Who doth not find that all the power in the world is not able to command, nor all the wealth of the Indies to purchase, one notion ? Who can be ignorant that no wit alone or strength of parts can suffice, without great industry, to frame any science, to learn any one tongue, to know the history of nature or of Providence ? it is certainly by Horace's method^s,

Multa tulit, fecitque puer,—

by much exercise and endurance of pains, that any one can arrive to the mark of being learned or skilful in any sort of knowledge.

^s Qui cupit optatam cursu contingere metam,

Multa tulit, fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit. *Hor. de Art. Poet.*

But further yet, virtue, the noblest endowment SERM.
 and richest possession whereof man is capable; the L.
 glory of our nature, the beauty of our soul, the
 goodliest ornament and the firmest support of our
 life^h; that also is the fruit and blessing of industry;
 that of all things most indispensably doth need and
 require it. It doth not grow in us by nature, nor
 befall us by fortune; for nature is so far from pro-
 ducing it, that it yieldeth mighty obstacles and re-
 sistances to its birth, there being in the best dispo-
 sitions much averseness from good, and great prone-
 ness to evil; fortune doth not further its acquists,
 but casteth in rubs and hinderances thereto, every
 condition presenting its allurements or its affright-
 ments from it; all things within us and about us
 conspire to render its production and its practice
 laborious.

It is ('tis true) a gift of Heaven, and cannot be
 obtained without a special influence of divine grace;
 but it is given as children are, (of whom it is said,
Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the Psal.
fruit of the womb is his reward,) not without sore cxvii. 3.
 travail and labour of the mother, not without griev-
 ous difficulty and pangs in the birth. In our con-
 version to embrace virtue God doth guide us; but
 to what? to sit still? No, to walk, to run in his
 ways: grace doth move us, but whereto? to do
 nothing? No, but to stir, and act vigorously; *The* Rom. viii.
Holy Spirit doth help our infirmities: but how 26. συναρτι-
 could it help them, if we did not conjoin our best, λαμβάνουσι.
Heb. xii. 4.
Rom. ii. 10.
Acts x. 35.

^h Τῆ μὲν κακίᾳ ἡδονῆ, τῇ δὲ ἀρετῇ συγκεκλήρωται πόσις. Chrys. in
 Joh. Or. 36.

Κακία μὲν γὰρ αἰτιοδίδακτον· ἀρετὴ δὲ σὺν πόσῳ κτᾶται. Sen. de
 Provid. 2.

SERM. though weak, endeavours with its operations? To
 L. what doth it *συναντιλαμβάνειν*, or *cohelp* us, but to
 strive against sin, to work righteousness, to perform duty with earnest intention of mind, and laborious activity? God, saith St. Chrysostom, *hath parted virtue with us, and neither hath left all to be in us, lest we should be elated to pride, nor himself hath taken all, lest we should decline to sloth*ⁱ.

Indeed the very nature and essence of virtue doth consist in the most difficult and painful efforts of soul; in the extirpating rooted prejudices and notions from our understanding; in bending a stiff will, and rectifying crooked inclinations; in overruling a rebellious temper; in curbing eager and importunate appetites; in taming wild passions; in withstanding violent temptations; in surmounting many difficulties, and sustaining many troubles; in struggling with various unruly lusts within, and encountering many stout enemies abroad, which assault our reason, and *war against our soul*: in such exercises its very being lieth; its birth, its growth, its subsistence dependeth on them; so that from any discontinuance or remission of them it would soon decay, languish away, and perish.

What attention, what circumspection, and vigilancy of mind, what intention of spirit, what force of resolution, what command and care over ourselves

ⁱ Ἐμερίσατο πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὴν ἀρετὴν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ οὐτε ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἀφῆκε τὸ πᾶν εἶναι, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἀπόνειαν ἐκαιρώμεθα, οὐτε αὐτὸς τὸ πᾶν ἔλαβεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς βροθυμίας ἀποκλίνωμεν ἄλλ', &c. Chrys. tom. 5. Or. 28.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ περὶ τὰ καλὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγχείρησις δίχα τῆς ἄνωθεν βοήθειας τελειωθήσεται· οὐδὲ ἡ ἄνωθεν χάρις ἐπὶ τὸν μὴ σπουδάζοντα παραγένοιτ' ἂν, ἀλλ' ἐκάτερα συγκεκρᾶσθαι προσήκει, σπουδὴν τε ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ τὴν διὰ πίστεως ἄνωθεν καθήκουσαν συμμαχίαν εἰς τελείωσιν ἀρετῆς. Bas. Const. Mon. cap. 15.

doth it require, to keep our hearts from vain thoughts SERM.
 and evil desires; to guard our tongue from wanton, L.
 unjust, uncharitable discourse; to order our steps
 uprightly and steadily in all the paths of duty? *Καὶ* Chrys. in
τί οὐκ ἐπίπονον τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς; and what, as St. Chrys- Joh. Or. 36.
 ostom asketh, *of all things belonging to virtue is*
not laborious? It is no small task to know it, where-
 in it consisteth, and what it demandeth of us; it is
 a far more painful thing to conform our practice
 unto its rules and dictates.

If travelling in a rough way¹; if climbing up a
 steep hill; if combating stern foes, and fighting
 sharp battles; if crossing the grain of our nature
 and desires; if continually holding a strict rein over
 all our parts and powers, be things of labour and
 trouble, then greatly such is the practice of virtue.

Indeed each virtue hath its peculiar difficulty,
 needing much labour to master it: *Faith* is called 1 Thes. i. 3.
ἔργον πίστεως, the work of faith; and it is no such 2 Thes. i.
 easy work, as may be imagined, to bring our hearts 11.
 unto a thorough persuasion about truths crossing John vi. 29.
 our sensual conceits, and controlling our peevish hu-
 mours; unto a perfect submission of our understand-
 ing, and resignation of our will to whatever God
 teacheth or prescribeth; to a firm resolution of ad-
 hering to that profession, which exacteth of us so
 much pains, and exposeth us to so many troubles.

Charity is also a laborious exercise of many good
 works; and he that will practise it must in divers
 ways labour hardly; he must labour in voiding from
 his soul many dispositions deeply radicated therein

¹ Τῆς ἀρετῆς ἰδῶτα θεοὶ προκάραιεν ἔθηκαν
 'Αθάνατοι, μακρὸς τε καὶ ὀρθίος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτήν,
 Καὶ τρηχύς.— Hes. 'Εργ. α'.

SERM. by nature, opinion, and custom; envy, frowardness,
 L. stubbornness, perverse and vain selfishness; from
 whence wrath, revenge, spite, and malice do spring
 Gal. vi. 10. forth. He must labour in effectual performance of
 all good offices, and in catching all occasions of doing

1 Thes. i. 3. good; he must exert that κόπον ἀγάπης, that *labour of*
 Heb. vi. 10. *love*, whereof St. Paul doth speak; he must (as that
 Eph. iv. 28. holy apostle directeth, not only in precept, but by
 Acts xx. 35. his own practice) work with his own hands, that he
 may supply the wants of his neighbour.

Ἀλλ' ἴψῃ. Hope itself (which one would think, when ground-
 Heb. x. 23. ed well, should be a no less easy than pleasant duty)
 vi. 19. doth need much labour to preserve it safe, straight,
 1 Thes. i. 3. and stable, among the many waves and billows of
 Heb. x. 36. temptation assaying to shake and subvert it; whence
 vi. 11. *a patience of hope* is recommended to us; and we
 Ἐπιεικειῶν. do so often are exhorted to hold it fast, to keep it sure,
 Heb. iii. 6, firm, and unshaken to the end.
 14.
 2 Pet i. 10.

Temperance also surely demandeth no small
 pains^m; it being no slight business to check our
 greedy appetites, to shun the enticements of plea-
 sure, to escape the snares of company and example,
 to support the ill-will and reproaches of those zealots
 and bigots for vice, who cannot tolerate any non-
 conformity to their extravagances; but, as St. Peter
 1 Pet. iv. 4. doth express it, *think it strange, if others do not*
run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking
ill of them for it.

What should I speak of meekness, of patience, of
 humility, of contentedness? Is it not manifest how
 laborious those virtues are, and what pains are ne-
 cessary in the obtaining, in the exercise of them?

^m Πάντες ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος ὑμνοῦσιν, ὡς καλὸν μὲν ἢ σαφροσύνη τε καὶ
 δικαιοσύνη, χαλεπὸν μὲν τοι καὶ ἐπίπονον. Plat. de Rep. 2.

what pains, I say, they require in the voidance of SERM.
fond conceits, in the suppression of froward hu- L.
mours, in the quelling fierce passions, in the brook-
ing grievous crosses and adversities, in the bearing
heinous injuries and affronts?

Thus doth all virtue require much industry, and it therefore necessarily must itself be a great virtue, which is the mother, the nurse, the guardian of all virtues; yea, which indeed is an ingredient and constitutive part of every virtue; for if virtue were easily obtainable or practicable without a good measure of pains, how could it be virtue? what excellency could it have, what praise could it claim, what reward could it expect? God hath indeed made the best things not easily obtainable, hath set them high out of our reach, to exercise our industry in getting them, that we might raise up ourselves to them, that being obtained, they may the more deserve our esteem, and his reward.

Lastly, The sovereign good, the last scope of our actions, the top and sum of our desires, happiness itself, or eternal life in perfect rest, joy, and glory; although it be the supreme gift of God, and special boon of divine grace, (*τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *But*, Rom. vi. 23.
Eph. ii. 8. saith St. Paul, *the gift of God's grace is eternal life*;) yet it also by God himself is declared to be the result and reward of industry; for we are com-
Phil. ii. 12.
2 Pet. i. 10.
Rom. ii. 6,
7, 10. vi.
22. manded *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, and to *give diligence in making our calling and election sure*, by virtuous practice; and God, saith St. Paul, *will render to every man according to his works; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life*; and, in the close of

SERM. God's book, it is proclaimed, as a truth of greatest moment, and special point of God's will, *Blessed*
L.
 Rev. xxii. *are they that do his commandments, that they may*
 Heb. xii. *have right to the tree of life.* It is plainly industry,
 Matt. xi. which climbeth the holy mount; it is industry,
 12. which taketh *the kingdom of heaven by force*; it is
 1 Cor. ix. industry, which *so runneth as to obtain* the prize,
 24. which so fighteth *as to receive the crown*, which so
 Jam. i. 12. *watcheth* as to secure our everlasting interest to us.
 Matt xxiv. 42. xxv. 13.
 Luke xii. 37.
 Rev. iii. 3.

Thus do the choicest good things, of which we are capable, spring from industry, or depend upon it; and no considerable good can be attained without it: thus all the gifts of God are by it conveyed to us, or are rendered in effect beneficial to us; for the gifts of nature are but capacities, which it improveth; the gifts of fortune or providence are but instruments, which it employeth to our use; the gifts of grace are the supports and succours of it; and the very gift of glory is its fruit and recompense.

There are further several other material considerations and weighty motives to the practice of this duty, which meditation hath suggested to me: but these, in regard to your patience, must suffice at present; the other (together with an application proper to our condition and calling) being reserved to another occasion.

SERMON LI.

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. ix. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

INDUSTRY, which the divine Preacher in this SERM. text recommendeth to us, is a virtue of a very dif- LI. fusive nature and influence; stretching itself through all our affairs, and twisting itself with every concern we have; so that no business can be well managed, no design accomplished, no good obtained without it: it therefore behoveth us to conceive a high opinion of it, and to inure our souls to the practice of it, upon all occasions: in furtherance of which purposes I formerly, not long since, did propound several motives and inducements; and now proceeding on, shall represent divers other considerations serviceable to the same end.

1. We may consider that industry is productive of ease itself, and preventive of trouble: it was no less solidly, than acutely and smartly advised by the philosopher Crates^a, *Whether*, said he, *labour be to be chosen, labour; or whether it be to be eschewed,*

^a Εἴθ' αἰρετὸν ὁ πόνος, πόνει· εἴτε φευκτὸν, πόνει, ἵνα μὴ ποῆς· διὰ γὰρ τοῦ μὴ πόνει οὐ φεύγεται πόνος, τῷ δὲ ἐναντίῳ καὶ διώκεται. Crates, Ep. 4.

SERM. *labour, that thou mayest not labour; for by not*
 LI. *labouring, labour is not escaped, but is rather pur-*

sued; and St. Chrysostom^b doth upon the same
consideration urge industry, because sloth, saith he,
is wont to spoil us, and to yield us much pain. No
man can cozen nature, escaping the labour to which
he was born; but rather attempting it, will delude
himself, then finding most, when he shunneth all la-
bour.

Sloth indeed doth affect ease and quiet, but by affecting them doth lose them; it hateth labour and trouble, but by hating them doth incur them; it is a self-destroying vice, not suffering those who cherish it to be idle, but creating much work, and multiplying pains unto them; engaging them into divers necessities and straits, which they cannot support with ease, and out of which, without extreme trouble, they cannot extricate themselves: of this the Preacher doth afford us a plain instance; *By much slothfulness, saith he, the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.* A little care taken at first about repairing the house, would have saved its decay and ruin, and consequently the vast charge and trouble, becoming needful to reedify it: and the like doth happen in most other cases and occurrences of life: idleness commonly doth let slip opportunities and advantages, which cannot with ease be retrieved; it letteth things fall into a bad case, out of which they can hardly be recovered.

Eccles. x.
18.

The certain consequences of it (disgrace, penury,

^b Ἡ ἀργία διαφθείρει ἡμᾶς εἴωθε, καὶ πολὺν παρέχει τὸν πόνον. Chrys. in Joh. Orat. 36.

want of experience, disobliging and losing friends, SERM.
with all the like mischiefs) cannot be supported LI.
without much disquiet; and they disable a man
from redressing the inconveniences into which he
is plunged.

But industry, by a little voluntary labour taken
in due place and season; doth save much necessary
labour afterward, and by moderate care doth pre-
vent intolerable distress; and the fruits of it (wealth,
reputation, skill, and dexterity in affairs, friendships,
all advantages of fortune) do enable a man to pass
his life with great ease, comfort, and delight.

2. Industry doth beget ease, by procuring good
habits, and facility of acting things expedient for us
to do. By taking pains to-day we shall need less
pains to-morrow; and by continuing the exercise,
within a while we shall need no pains at all, but
perform the most difficult tasks of duty, or of benefit
to us, with perfect ease, yea commonly with great
pleasure. What sluggish people account hard and
irksome (as to rise early, to hold close to study or
business, to bear some hardship) will be natural and
sweet; as proceeding from another nature, raised
in us by use.

Industry doth breed assurance and courage, need-
ful for the undertaking and prosecution of all neces-
sary business, or for the performance of all duties
incumbent on us.

No man can quite decline business, or disengage
himself from duty, without infinite damage and mis-
chief accruing to himself: but these an industrious
man (confiding in this efficacious quality) will set
upon with alacrity, and despatch with facility, his
diligence voiding obstacles, and smoothing the way

SERM. to him; whenas idleness, finding some difficulties,
 LI. and fancying more, soon dishearteneth, and causeth
 a man to desist from action, rather choosing to
 crouch under the burden, than by endeavour to carry
 it through, to discharge himself thereof: whence
 as to an industrious man things seeming difficult
 will prove easy, so to a slothful person the easiest
 things will appear impossible; according to Solo-
 mon's observation: *The way, saith he, of a slothful
 man is an hedge of thorns, but the way of the
 upright is made plain^c*; whereas a slothful man,
 being apt to neglect his obligations, is opposed to
 an upright man, who hath a conscionable regard to
 them, and is willing to take pains in the discharge
 of them: so it is declared, that to the one the way
 is rough and thorny, to the other beaten and ex-
 pedite.

And again, *The slothful man, saith he, doth say,
 There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the
 streets^d*: he is very apt to conceit, or to pretend
 imaginary difficulties and hazards, and thence to be
 deterred from going about his business, or doing
 his duty. This consideration St. Chrysostom doth
 propose, exciting to an earnest pursuit of virtue;
 because, *There is, saith he, nothing so easy, which
 our great sloth doth not represent very grievous
 and burdensome; nothing so painful and difficult,
 which diligence and willingness do not shew to be
 very easy^e*.

^c ἕγγ. Prov. xv. 19. Ὅδοι ἀεργῶν ἐστρωμέναι ἀκάνθαις, αἱ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρείων τετριμμένααι.

^d Prov. xxii. 13. xxvi. 13. Προφασίζεσαι, καὶ λέγει ὀκνηρὸς, Λέων ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πλατείαις φονεταί.

^e Οὐδὲν οὕτως ἐστὶ βράδιον, ὃ μὴ σφόδρα βαρὺ καὶ ἐπαχθὲς ὁ πολὺς δείκ-

We may consider that industry will sweeten SERM.
 our enjoyments, and season them with a grateful LI.
 heart; for as no man can well enjoy himself, or find
 content in any thing, while business or duty
 is unfinished on his hand; so when he hath done
 his best toward the despatch of his work, he will
 comfortably take his ease, and enjoy his plea-
 sure; then his food doth taste savourily, then his
 amusements and recreations have a lively gust-
 ness, then his sleep is very sound and pleasant,
 according to that of the Preacher, *The sleep of a* Eccles. v.
working man is sweet. 12.
Τῷ δούλῳ.

Especially those accommodations prove most
 precious, which our industry hath procured to us;
 looking on them with a special tenderness of
 affection, as on the children of our endeavour; we
 are sensible at what costs of care and pain we did
 purchase them. If a man getteth wealth by fraud
 or violence, if he riseth to preferment by flattery,
 or action, or any bad arts, he can never taste any
 real savour, or find sound comfort in them; and
 if what cometh merely by chance, as there is
 commendation due; so much satisfaction will not
 be. It is the Wise Man's observation, *The sloth-* Prov. xii.
man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, 27.
 therefore it cannot be very grateful to him;
 and addeth he, *the substance of a diligent man is
 precious;* that is, what a man compasseth by honest
 industry, that he is apt highly to prize; he triumph-

ἵκνου ἡμῶν ὡς περ ἐπίπονον καὶ ἢ δυσχερὲς, ὁ μὴ λίαν εὐχολῶν ἢ σπουδῇ
 προθυμία. Chrys. tom. vi. Or. p. 15. 144.

μὲν βέβητα τοὺς ἀμελοῦντας φεύγει, τὰ δὲ χαλεπὰ ἐπιμελείαις
 γται. Plut. de Educ.

ui sit conditio dulcis sine pulvere palmæ? *Hor. Ep. i. 1.*

SERM. eth in it, and (in St. Paul's sense innocently) boast
 LI. eth of it; he feeleth a solid pleasure and a pure
 1 Cor. ix. complacency therein: the manner of getting it doth
 15. more please him than the thing itself; as true hunters do love the sport more than the quarry, and generous warriors more rejoice in the victory than in the spoil; for *our soul*, as St. Chrysostom discourseth, *is more affected with those things, for which it hath laboured; for which reason, addeth he, God hath mixed labours with virtue itself, that he might endear it to us* &c. Yea further,

5. The very exercise of industry immediately in itself is delightful, and hath an innate satisfaction, which tempereth all annoyances, and even ingratiateth the pains going with it.

The very settlement of our mind on fit objects, or its acquiescence in determinate action, conducing to a good end, whereby we are freed of doubt, distraction, and fastidious listlessness, doth minister content.

The reflection upon our having embraced a wise choice, our proceeding in a fair way, our being in chase of a good purpose, doth breed complacency.

To consider that we are spending our time accountably, and improving our talents to good advantage, (to the service of God, the benefit of our neighbour, the bettering of our own state,) is very cheering and comfortable.

Prov. xiv. And whereas *in all labour*, as the Wise Man
 23. telleth us, *there is profit*, the foresight of that profit

Ἔ Περι ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἢ ψυχὴ διακείται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόνους ἀνέμειξεν ἀρετῇ οικειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βουλόμενος. Chrys. in Joh. Orat. 36.

affordeth pleasure, the foretasting the good fruits of **SERM.**
our industry is very delicious. LI.

Hope, indeed, doth ever wait on industry: and what is more delightful than hope? This is the incentive, the support, the condiment of all honest labour^b; in virtue whereof the husbandman toileth, the merchant trudgeth, the scholar ploddeth, the soldier dareth with alacrity and courage, not resenting any pains, not regarding any hazards, which attend their undertakings: this the holy apostles tell us did enable them with joy to sustain all their painful work and hazardous warfare; enjoining us also as to *work with fear*, so to *rejoice in hope*.

In fine, industry doth free us from great displeasure, by redeeming us from the molestations of idleness, which is the most tedious and irksome thing in the world, racking our soul with anxious suspense and perplexing distractionⁱ; starving it for want of satisfactory entertainment, or causing it to feed on its own heart by doleful considerations; infesting it with crowds of frivolous, melancholic, troublesome, stinging thoughts; galling it with a sense of our squandering away precious time, of our slipping fair opportunities, of our not using the abilities and advantages granted us, to any profit or fruit: whence St. Chrysostom saith very truly, that *there is nothing more unpleasant, more painful, more miserable, than a man that hath nothing to do: Is not this, saith he, worse than ten thousand chains, to hang*

^b — ipsa operis difficultate lætus spem segetis de labore metitur. *Apud Aug. Ep. 142.*

ⁱ Otio qui nescit uti plus habet negotii, &c.

Otioso in otio animus nescit quid quidem velit, &c. *Ennius apud Agel. xix. 10.*

¹ Cor. ix. 10.
¹ Rom. xii. 12. v. 2.
¹ Heb. iii. 6.
¹ Tim. iv. 10.
¹ Col. i. 5.
² Cor. iii. 12.
¹ John iii. 3.
¹ Pet. i. 3.
¹ Tit. ii. 13.)

SERM. *in suspense, and be continually gaping, looking on*
 LI. *those who are present*^k? Indeed the strictest im-

Otium est
 vivi homi-
 nis sepul-
 tura.

prisonment is far more tolerable, than being under restraint by a lazy humour from profitable employment: this enchaineth a man hand and foot, with more than iron fetters: this is beyond any imprisonment; it is the very entombment of a man, quite in effect sequestering him from the world, or debarring him from any valuable concerns therein. And if liberty be *ἐξουσία αὐτοπραγίας, a power of doing what one liketh best*; then is he, who by his sloth is disabled from doing any thing wherein he can find any reasonable satisfaction, the veriest slave that can be; from which slavery industry freeing us, and disposing us to perform cheerfully whatever is convenient, thereby doeth us a great pleasure. Further,

6. Let us consider, that industry doth afford a lasting comfort, deposited in the memory and conscience of him that practiseth it. It will ever, upon his reviewing the passages of his life, be sweet to him to behold in them testimonies and monuments of his diligence; it will please him to consider, that he hath lived to purpose, having done somewhat considerable; that he hath made an advantageous use of his time; that he hath well husbanded the talents committed to him; that he hath accomplished (in some measure) the intents of God's bounty, and made some return for his excellent gifts. What comfort, indeed, can any man have, yea, how

^k Καὶ τί ἀγθέτερον γένοιτ' ἂν ἀνθρώπου ἠδὲν ἔχοντος ποιεῖν; τί μωχθηρότερον; τί ταλαιπωρότερον; μῦλλον οὐ χεῖρον τοῦτο δεσμῶν, χασμάσθαι καὶ κεχήμεναι διαπαντός ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καθήμενον, ὄρῶντα τοὺς παριόντας; Chrys. in Act. Or. 35.

sore remorse must he feel, in reflecting upon a life SERM.
spent in unfruitful and unprofitable idleness? How LI.
can he otherwise than bewail his folly and baseness
in having lived (or rather having only been) in vain; Diu fuit,
as the shadow and appearance of a man; in having non diu
lavished his days, in having buried his talents, in vixit.
having embezzled his faculties of nature, and his ad-
vantages from Providence; in having defeated the
good-will of God, and endeavoured no requital to
the munificent goodness of his Maker, of his Pre-Matt. xxv.
server, his benign Lord and Master, his gracious Sa-26.
viour and Redeemer? How, without confusion, can
he in his mind revolve, that he hath nowise bene-
fited the world, and profited his neighbour, or obliged
his friends, or rendered to his country (to the so-
ciety or community of which he is a member)
amends for all the safety and quiet, the support, the
convenience, and the pleasure he hath enjoyed under
its protection, and in its bosom? that he hath not
borne a competent share in the common burdens, or
paid a due contribution of his care and labour to the
public welfare? How can such a man look inward
upon himself with a favourable eye, or pardon him-
self for so loathsome defaults?

7. Let us consider, that industry doth argue a ge-
nerous and ingenuous complexion of soul.

It implieth a mind not content with mean and
vulgar things, (such as nature dealeth to all, or for-
tune scattereth about,) but aspiring to things of high
worth, and pursuing them in a brave way, with ad-
venturous courage, by its own forces, through diffi-
culties and obstacles.

It signifieth in a man a heart, not enduring to
owe the sustenance or convenience of his life to the

SERM. labour or the liberality of others ; to pilfer a livelihood from the world ; to reap the benefit of other men's care and toil, without rendering a full compensation, or outdoing his private obligations by considerable service and beneficence to the public.

A noble heart will disdain to subsist like a drone upon the honey gathered by others' labour ; like a vermin to filch its food out of the public granary ; or like a shark to prey on the lesser fry ; but will one way or other earn his subsistence : for he that doth not earn, can hardly own his bread, as St. Paul im-

² Thess. iii. 12. *Τὸν λαοῦν ἡσυχῶν*
^{12.} *Them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*

Of this generous ingenuity we have a notable instance in that great apostle himself ; which he doth often represent as a pattern to us, professing much complacency therein. He with all right and reason

¹ Cor. ix. 15. ² Thess. iii. 9. ¹ Cor. ix. 11. ¹ Thess. ii. 6. might have challenged a comfortable subsistence from his disciples, in recompense for the incomparable benefits he did confer on them, and of the excessive pains he did endure for their good : this he knew well ; but yet did rather choose to support himself by his own labour, than anywise to seem burdensome or troublesome to them : *These hands,*

Acts xx. 34, 35. xviii. 3. ¹ Thess. ii. 9. ² Thess. iii. 8. ¹ Cor. iv. 12. ² Cor. xi. 9, 23. said he, *have ministered to my necessities, and to them that are with me. I have shewed you all things, that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.* This was the practice of him, who was in labours most abundant ; and such is the genius of every man, who upon principles of conscience, rea-

son, and honour, is industrious. Of him it may be SERM.
 said, as of Solomon's good housewife, *She seeketh* LI.
wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her Prov. xxxi.
hands ; she is like the merchants' ship, she bringeth 13, 14, 27.
her food from afar ; she looketh well to her house-
hold, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Sloth is a base quality, the argument of a mind wretchedly degenerate and mean ; which is content to grovel in a despicable state ; which aimeth at no worthy thing, nor pursueth any thing in a laudable way ; which disposeth a man to live *gratis* (precariously) and ingrately on the public stock, as an insignificant cypher among men, as a burden of the earth, as a wen of any society ; sucking aliment from it, but yielding no benefit or ornament thereto.

8. Industry is a fence to innocence and virtue ; a bar to all kinds of sin and vice, guarding the avenues of our heart, keeping off the occasions and temptations to vicious practice. When a man is engaged in honest employment, and seriously intent thereon, his mind is prepossessed and filled, so that there is no room or vacancy for ill thoughts or base designs to creep in ; his senses do not lie open to ensnaring objects ; he wants leisure and opportunity of granting audience to the solicitations of sinful pleasure ; and is apt to answer them with a *non vacat*¹ ; the Devil can hardly find advantage of tempting him, at least many devils cannot get access to him, according to that observation in Cassian, *A working monk is assaulted by one devil, but an*

¹ Semper te diabolus inveniat occupatum. *Bern. Form. Hon. v. cap. 7.*

SERM. *idle one is spoiled by numberless bad spirits*^m.

LI. The case of men ordinarily is like to that of *Ægisthus*,

Ovid. de
Remed.

—ne nil ageretur, amavit ;

rather than do nothing, he was ready to do ill ; he not having business to employ his thoughts, wanton desires did insinuate themselves into his heart, and transported him to that disastrous wickedness, which supplied matter to so many tragedies ; and the like instance the sacred history suggesteth in king *David*, who, *walking*, it is said, *on the roof of his house*, his mind then roving, and being untacked from honest cares, that temptation seized on him, whereby he was plunged into that woful misdemeanour, which did create to him so much sorrow, did make such a spot in his life, and leave such a blur on his memory ; whence yet we may draw some benefit, taking it as a profitable document and warning, how idleness doth expose the best men to danger.

2 Sam. xi.
2.

Ecclus.
xxxiii. 27.

Idleness is indeed the nursery of sins, which as naturally grow up therein as weeds in a neglected field, or insects in a standing puddle ; *Idleness teacheth much evil*. It is the general trap, whereby every tempter assayeth to catch our soul : for the mind being loose from care, Satan is ready to step in with his suggestions, the world presenteth its allurements, fleshly desires rise up ; proud, froward, wanton cogitations slip in ; ill company doth entice, ill example is regarded, every temptation doth object and impress itself with great advantage and force ; men in

^m Operans monachus uno dæmone pulsatur, otiosus vero innumeris spiritibus devastatur. *Cass. de Instit. x. 23.*

such a case being apt to close and comply with temptations, even to divert their mind, and entertain themselves, to cure their listlessness, to pass their timeⁿ, committing sin for want of better occupation. Hence in places where there is least work, the worst sins do most prevail; and idleness therefore was by the prophet reckoned one of the three great sins of Sodom, parents of the rest: *Behold*, Ezek. xvi. saith Ezekiel, *this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her*: hence it seldom doth happen in any way of life, that a sluggard and a rakehell do not go together; or that he who is idle is not also dissolute.

9. Particularly industry doth prevent the sins of vain curiosity, pragmatism, troublesome importunity, and the like pests of common life, into which persons not diligently following their own business will assuredly fall. *We hear*, saith St. Paul to the Thessalonians, *that there are some who walk among you disorderly; working not at all, but are busybodies*^o. It is no wonder, if they did not work at all, that they should walk disorderly; or that quite neglecting their own concerns, they should *περιεργάζεσθαι*, *over-work*, or be too busy in matters not belonging to them, intruding themselves into the affairs of their neighbours: for there is a natural connection between these things, since every man must be thinking, must be doing, must be say-

ⁿ ————— si non

Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis,

Invidia vel amore vigil torquebere ——. *Hor. Ep. i. 2.*

^o 2 Thess. iii. 11. Μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους; working nothing, but over-working.

SERM. ing somewhat, to spend his leisure, to uphold con-
 LI. versation, to please himself, and gratify others, to
 appear somebody among his companions; to avoid
 the shame of being quite out of employment: where-
 fore not having the heart to mind his own affairs,
 he will take the boldness to meddle with the con-
 cerns of other men: if he cannot have the substance,
 he will set up an idol of business, and seem very
 active in his impertinency; in order thereto, being
 curiously inquisitive, and prying into the discourse,
 actions, and affairs of all men. This men are apt to
 do in their own defence: and besides, idleness doth
 put men into a loose, garish, wanton humour, dis-
 posing them without heed or regard to meddle with
 any thing, to prattle at any rate. In fine, whoever
 hath no work at home, will be gadding to seek
 entertainment abroad, like those gossips of whom
 St. Paul saith, *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.* If indeed we consider all
 the frivolous and petulant discourse, the impertinent
 chattings, the rash censures, the spiteful detractions,
 which are so rife in the world, and so much poison
 all conversation, we shall find the main root of them
 to be a want of industry in men, or of diligent at-
 tendance on their own matters; which would so
 much take up their spirit and time, that they would
 have little heart or leisure to search into or com-
 ment upon other men's actions and concerns.

¹ Tim. v.
 13.

10. Let us consider that industry is needful in every condition and station, in every calling and way of life: in all relations, for our good behaviour, and right discharge of our duty in them. Without

it we cannot in any state act decently or usefully, SERM.
either to the benefit and satisfaction of others, or to LI.
our own advantage and comfort.

Are we rich? Then is industry requisite for keeping and securing our wealth, for managing it wisely, for employing it to its proper uses and best advantages, (in the service of God, in beneficence to our neighbour, in advancing public good;) so that we may render a good account to him who hath intrusted us with the stewardship thereof: industry is very needful to guard us from the temptations and mischiefs to which wealth doth expose us, that it do not prove a treacherous snare, an unwieldy burden, a destructive poison and plague to us, throwing us into pride and vanity, into luxury, into stupidity, into distracting solicitude, into a base, worldly, and earthly temper of heart, into a profane oblivion of God, and of our own souls.

Are we in conspicuous rank of dignity, or in honour and repute among men? Then is industry requisite to keep us fast in that state, to hold us from tumbling from that pinnacle down into extreme disgrace; for then all eyes are upon us, strictly observing what we do, and ready to pass censure on our actions; so that great diligence is necessary to approve ourselves, and shun obloquy. Nothing is Vitrea fama. Hor. Eccl. x. 1. more brittle than honour; every little thing hitting on it is able to break it, and therefore without exceeding care we cannot preserve it. Nothing is more variable or fickle than the opinions of men, (wherein honour consisteth;) it is therefore no easy matter to fix or detain them in the same place.

Honour cannot live without food or fuel; it must be nourished by worthy actions; without a continual

SERM. supply of them it will decay, languish, and pine
LI. away: industry therefore is required to keep it; and no less is necessary to use it well, in a due subordination to God's honour, and reference to his service, that, instead of an ornament and convenience, it do not prove a baneful mischief to us; puffing up our minds with vain conceits and complacencies, inclining us to arrogance and contempt of others, tempting us by assuming to ourselves to rob God of his due glory; to decline which evils great care is requisite; we must have a steady ballast, and we must hold the rudder warily, when we carry so great sail.

On the other hand, are we poor and low in the world; or do we lie under disgrace? Then do we much need industry to shun extremities of want and ignominy; that we be not swallowed up and overwhelmed by need or contempt; to support us under our pressures, to keep up our spirits from dejection and disconsolateness; to preserve us from impious discontentedness and impatience: industry is the only remedy of that condition, enabling us to get out of it, retrieving a competence of wealth or credit; or disposing us to bear it handsomely, and with comfort; so as not to become forlorn or abject wretches.

It is so needful to every condition; and it is so for all vocations; for,

Is a man a governor, or a superior in any capacity? Then what is he but a public servant, doomed to continual labour, hired for the wages of respect and pomp, to wait on his people; in providing for their needs, protecting their safety, preserving their peace and welfare: where is he but on a stage,

whereon he cannot well act his part, without vigilant attendance to his charge, and constant activity in performing all the functions thereof? He is engaged in great obligations and necessities of using extreme diligence, both in regard to himself and others. Homer's description of a prince is a good one; *One who hath much people, and many cares committed to him:*

SERM.
LI.

Ὁ λαὸς τ' ἐπιτεράφαται, καὶ τόσσα μέμηλε.

He must watchfully look to his own steps, who is to guide others by his authority and his example. All his actions require special conduct, not only his own credit and interest, but the common welfare depending thereon. He must heedfully advise what to do, he must diligently execute what he resolveth on. He hath the most ticklish things that can be (the rights and interests, the opinions and humours of men) to manage. He hath his own affections to curb and guide, that they be not perverted by any sinister respects, not swayed by any unjust partiality, not corrupted by flattery or fear. He will find, that to wield power innocently, to brandish the sword of justice discreetly and worthily, for the maintenance of right, and encouragement of virtue, for the suppression of injury, and correction of vice, is a matter of no small skill or slight care.

Industry is indeed a quality most proper for persons of high rank and dignity, or of great power and authority; who have special opportunities to employ it in weighty affairs to great advantage; whose undertakings being of vast moment, do need answerable efforts to move and guide them. The industry of a mechanic or a rustic, acting in a low and narrow sphere, can effect no great matter, and there-

SERM. fore itself need not to be great : but the industry of
 LI. a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, may have a large and potent influence, so as to render a nation, a county, a town, happy, prosperous, glorious, flourishing in peace, in plenty, in virtue ; it therefore for achieving such purposes need be, and should be proportionably great ; a small power not being able to move a great weight, nor a weak cause to produce a mighty effect. Wherefore Cicero recommending Pompey for a public charge, doth reckon these to be the *imperatoria virtutes*, qualities befitting a prince, or general, wherein he did excel, *Labour in business, valour in dangers, industry in acting, nimbleness in performance, counsel in providing*^p. —And Alexander the Great, reflecting on his friends degenerating into sloth and luxury, told them, that it was *a most slavish thing to luxuriate, and a most royal thing to labour*^q.

And for those who move in a lower orb of subjection or service, I need not shew how needful industry is for them. Who knoweth not that to be a good subject, doth exact a careful regard to the commands of superiors, and a painful diligence in observing them ? that to make a good servant, fidelity and diligence must concur ? whereof the first doth suppose the last, it being a part of honesty in a servant to be diligent ; whence *δοῦλε πονηρὸ καὶ ὀκνηρὸ*, *O thou wicked and slothful servant*, were in the gospel well coupled ; and the first epithet was

Matt. xxv.
26.

^p Labor in negotio, fortitudo in periculis, industria in agendo, celeritas in conficiendo, consilium in providendo, &c. Cic. *pro lege Manil.*

^q Δουλικώτατόν ἐστι τὸ τριφῶν, βασιλικώτατον δὲ τὸ ποιεῖν. Plut. in Alex. p. 1262.

grounded on the second, he being therefore wicked, because he had been slothful. SERM.
LI.

Neither can a man be a true friend, or a good neighbour, or anywise a good relative, without industry disposing him to undergo pains in performing good offices, whenever need doth require, or occasion invite.

In fine, it is palpable, that there is no calling of any sort, from the sceptre to the spade, the management whereof with any good success, any credit, any satisfaction, doth not demand much work of the head, or of the hand, or of both.

If wit or wisdom be the head, if honesty be the heart, industry is the right hand of every vocation; without which the shrewdest insight and the best intention can execute nothing.

A sluggard is qualified for no office, no calling, no station among men; he is a mere nobody, taking up room, pestering and clogging the world.

11. It also may deserve our consideration, that it is industry, whereto the public state of the world, and of each commonweal therein, is indebted for its being, in all conveniences and embellishments belonging to life, advanced above rude and sordid barbarism; yea, whereto mankind doth owe all that good learning, that morality, those improvements of soul, which elevate us beyond brutes.

To industrious study is to be ascribed the invention and perfection of all those arts whereby human life is civilized, and the world cultivated with numberless accommodations, ornaments, and beauties.

All the comely, the stately, the pleasant, and useful works which we do view with delight, or enjoy

SERM. with comfort, industry did contrive them, industry
 LI. did frame them.

Industry reared those magnificent fabrics, and those commodious houses; it formed those goodly pictures and statues; it raised those convenient causeways, those bridges, those aqueducts; it planted those fine gardens with various flowers and fruits; it clothed those pleasant fields with corn and grass; it built those ships, whereby we plough the seas, reaping the commodities of foreign regions. It hath subjected all creatures to our command and service, enabling us to subdue the fiercest, to catch the wildest, to render the gentler sort most tractable and useful to us. It taught us from the wool of the sheep, from the hair of the goat, from the labours of the silkworm, to weave us clothes to keep us warm, to make us fine and gay. It helped us from the inmost bowels of the earth to fetch divers needful tools and utensils.

It collected mankind into cities, and compacted them into orderly societies, and devised wholesome laws, under shelter whereof we enjoy safety and peace, wealth and plenty, mutual succour and defence, sweet conversation and beneficial commerce.

It by meditation did invent all those sciences whereby our minds are enriched and enabled, our manners are refined and polished, our curiosity is satisfied, our life is benefited^r.

What is there which we admire, or wherein we delight, that pleaseth our mind, or gratifieth our sense, for the which we are not beholden to industry.

Doth any country flourish in wealth, in grandeur,

^r Ut varias usus meditando extunderet artes

Paullatim, &c.

Virg. Georg. i.

in prosperity? It must be imputed to industry, to the industry of its governors settling good order, to the industry of its people following profitable occupations; so did Cato, in that notable oration of his in Sallust, tell the Roman senate, that it was not by the force of their arms, but by the industry of their ancestors, that commonwealth did arise to such a pitch of greatness. When sloth creepeth in, then all things corrupt and decay; then the public state doth sink into disorder, penury, and a disgraceful condition.

SERM.
LI.

Cat. apud
Sallust. in
bello Catil.

12. Industry is commended to us by all sorts of examples, deserving our regard and imitation. All nature is a copy thereof, and the whole world a glass, wherein we may behold this duty represented to us.

We may easily observe every creature about us incessantly working toward the end for which it was designed, indefatigably exercising the powers with which it is endued, diligently observing the laws of its creation. Even beings void of reason, of sense, of life itself, do suggest unto us resemblances of industry; they being set in continual action toward the effecting reasonable purposes, conducing to the preservation of their own beings, or to the furtherance of common good.

The heavens do roll about with unwearied motion; the sun and stars do perpetually dart their influences; the earth is ever labouring in the birth and nourishment of plants; the plants are drawing sap, and sprouting out fruits and seeds, to feed us and propagate themselves; the rivers are running, the seas are tossing, the winds are blustering, to keep the elements sweet in which we live.

SERM. Solomon sendeth us to the ant, and biddeth us to

LI. *consider her ways, which provideth her meat in*

Prov. vi. 6, *the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.*
&c.

Many such instructors we may find in nature; the like industrious providence we may observe in every living creature; we may see this running about, that swimming, another flying in purveyance of its food and support.

If we look up higher to rational and intelligent natures, still more noble and apposite patterns do object themselves to us.

Here below every field, every shop, every street, the hall, the exchange, the court itself (all full of business, and fraught with the fruits of industry) do mind us how necessary industry is to us.

If we consult history, we shall there find, that the best men have been most industrious; that all great persons, renowned for heroical goodness, (the worthy patriarchs, the holy prophets, the blessed apostles,) were for this most commendable; that, neglecting their private ease, they did undertake difficult enterprises, they did undergo painful labours for the benefit of mankind; they did pass their days, like St. Paul, *ἐν κόποις καὶ μόχθοις*, *in labours and toilsome pains*, for those purposes.

2 Cor. xi.
27.

Acts x.

Our great example, the life of our blessed Lord himself, what was it but one continual exercise of labour? His mind did ever stand bent in careful attention, studying to do good. His body was ever moving in wearisome travel to the same divine intent.

If we yet soar further in our meditation to the superior regions, we shall there find the blessed inhabitants of heaven, the courtiers and ministers of

God, very busy and active; they do vigilantly wait on God's throne^a in readiness to receive and to despatch his commands; they are ever on the wing, and fly about like lightning to do his pleasure. They are attentive to our needs, and ever ready to protect, to assist, to relieve us! Especially, they are diligent guardians and succourers of good men; officious spirits, sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation: so even the seat of perfect rest is no place of idleness.

Yea, God himself, although immovably and infinitely happy, is yet immensely careful, and everlastingly busy: he rested once from that great work of creation; but yet *My Father*, saith our Lord, *worketh still*; and he never will rest from his works of providence and of grace. His eyes continue watchful over the world, and his hands stretched out in upholding it. He hath a singular regard to every creature, supplying the needs of each, and *satisfying the desires of all*.

And shall we alone be idle, while all things are so busy? Shall we keep our hands in our bosom, or stretch ourselves on our beds of laziness, while all the world about us is hard at work in pursuing the designs of its creation? Shall we be wanting to ourselves, while so many things labour for our benefit? Shall not such a cloud of examples stir us to some industry? Not to comply with so universal a practice, to cross all the world, to disagree with every

^a Σὺ δὲ θρόνῳ πυρόεντι παρεστᾶσιν πολέμοις
Ἄγγελαι.— Orph.

^t O tu bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum tanquam solum cures, et sic omnes tanquam singulos. Aug. Conf. iv. 11.

SERM.
LI.

Psal. ciii.
21, 22.
xxxiv. 7.
xci. 11.

Heb. i. 14.

Gen. ii. 2.
John v. 17.

Psal. cxxi.
3. cxxvii. 1.
Zech. iv. 10.
2 Chron.
xvi. 9.
Psal. cxlv.
15, 16.
(Prov. v.
21. xv. 3.

Psal. xxxiv.
15.
Gen. xxxi.
49.
Jer. xxxi.
18.)

SERM. creature, is it not very monstrous and extravagant?
 LL.

I should close all this discourse with that, at which in pitching on this subject, I chiefly did aim, an application exhortatory to ourselves, urging the practice of this virtue by considerations peculiar to us as scholars, and derived from the nature of our calling. But the doing this requiring a larger discourse than the time now will allow, I shall reserve to another occasion; adding only one consideration more.

13. Lastly, if we consider, we shall find the root and source of all the inconveniences, the mischiefs the wants of which we are so apt to complain, to be our sloth; and that there is hardly any of them which commonly we might not easily prevent or remove by industry. Why is any man a beggar, why contemptible, why ignorant, why vicious, why miserable? Why, but for this one reason, because he is slothful; because he will not labour to rid himself of those evils? What could we want, if we would but take the pains to seek it, either by our industry or by our devotion? For where the first will not do the second cannot fail to procure any good thing from

Jam. i. 5.

him, who giveth *to all men liberally*, and hath promised to supply the defect of our ability by his free bounty; so that if we join these two industries (industrious action and industrious prayer) there is no thing in the world so good, or so great, of which, if we are capable, we may not assuredly become masters: and even for industry itself, especially in the performance of all our duties toward God, let us industriously pray: even so, *The God of peace sanctify us wholly, and make us perfect in every good*

Δίπνις ἰνε-
 γουμένην.

Jam. v. 16.

Προσναερί-
 ενος.

Eph. vi. 18.

Rom. xii.

12.

Col. iv. 2.

1 Thess. v.

23.

Heb. xiii.

21.

Of Industry in general.

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work to do his will, working in us that which is wellpleasing in his sight; through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

SERM.

LI.

S E R M O N L I I .

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR GENERAL CALLING,
AS CHRISTIANS.

ROM. xii. 11.

Not slothful in business^b.

SERM. LII. **I**NDUSTRY is a very eminent virtue, being an ingredient, or the parent, of all other virtues, of constant use upon all occasions, and having influence upon all our affairs.

For it is in our nature framed ; all our powers of soul and body being fitted for it, tending to it, requiring it for their preservation and perfection.

We were designed for it in our first happy state ; and upon our lapse thence were further doomed to it, as the sole remedy of our needs and the inconveniences to which we became exposed. For

Without it we cannot well sustain or secure our life in the enjoyment of any comfort or convenience ; we must work to earn our food, our clothing, our shelter ; and to supply every indigency of accommodations, which our nature doth crave.

To it God hath annexed the best and most desirable rewards ; success to our undertakings, wealth, honour, wisdom, virtue, salvation ; all which, as they flow from God's bounty, and depend on his blessing ; so from them they are usually conveyed to us through

^a Τῆ σπουδῆ μὴ ἀνεργοί. Solitudine non pigri. *Vulg.*

Of Industry in our particular Calling, &c. 191

our industry, as the ordinary channel and instrument SERM.
of attaining them. LII.

It is requisite to us, even for procuring ease, and preventing a necessity of immoderate labour.

It is in itself sweet and satisfactory ; as freeing our mind from distraction, and wrecking irresolution ; as feeding us with good hope, and yielding a fore-taste of its good fruits.

It furnisheth us with courage to attempt, and resolution to achieve things needful, worthy of us, and profitable to us.

It is attended with a good conscience, and cheerful reflections, of having well spent our time, and employed our talents to good advantage.

It sweeteneth our enjoyments, and seasoneth our attainments with a delightful relish.

It is the guard of innocence, and barreth out temptations to vice, to wantonness, to vain curiosity, and pragmaticalness.

It argueth an ingenuous and generous disposition of soul ; aspiring to worthy things, and pursuing them in the fairest way ; disdaining to enjoy the common benefits, or the fruits of other men's labour, without deserving them from the world, and requiting it for them.

It is necessary for every condition and station, for every calling, for every relation ; no man without it being able to deport himself well in any state, to manage any business, to discharge any sort of duty.

To it the world is indebted for all the culture, which advanceth it above rude and sordid barbarism ; for whatever in common life is stately, or comely, or useful, industry hath contrived it, industry hath composed and framed it.

SERM. It is recommended to us by all sort of **patterns**
LII. considerable; for all nature is continually busy and
 active in tendency toward its proper designs; heaven
 and earth do work in incessant motion; every living
 creature is employed in propping for its sustenance;
 the blessed spirits are always on the wing in de-
 spatching the commands of God, and ministering suc-
 cour to us; God himself is ever watchful, and ever
 busy in preserving the world, and providing for the
 needs of every creature.

The lives of our blessed Saviour, of all the pa-
 triarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the saints, in
 this respect have been more exemplary; no vir-
 tue being more conspicuous in their practice than
 industry in performing the hard duties and painful
 tasks imposed on them for the service of God, and
 the benefit of mankind.

Such is the virtue upon which I have formerly
 discoursed in general and at large; but shall now
 more specially consider, according to St. Paul's pre-
 scription, in reference to its most proper matter, *bu-*
siness, explaining and pressing it accordingly.

Be not *slothful in business*, (that is, in discharge
 of it,) or *to business*, (that is, to undertake it:) this
 is the rule; the nature and needfulness whereof we
 shall declare.

By *σπουδή*, *business*, we may understand any ob-
 ject of our care and endeavours which doth re-
 quire them, and may deserve them; which by rea-
 son of its difficulty cannot well be accomplished or
 attained without them; and which is productive of
 some fruit or recompense answerable to them; the
 which hath *operæ causam*, a need of labour, and
operæ pretium, some effect worth our pains: if it

be not such, it is not a due matter of virtuous and laudable industry. SERM.
LII.

There are many things, about which men with great earnestness employ themselves, called business, but not deserving that name: there are divers spurious kinds of industry, which may not pretend to commendation, but rather do merit blame; according to that of St. Chrysostom, *Labour which hath no profit cannot obtain any praise*^b.

There is a *κενοσπουδία*, a vain industry, and a *κακοσπουδία*, a naughty industry, both agreeing with genuine virtuous industry in the act, as implying careful and painful activity, but discording from it in object and design; and consequently in worth and moral esteem.

Aliud agere, to be impertinently busy, doing that which conduceth to no good purpose, is in some respect worse than to do nothing, or to forbear all action; for it is a positive abuse of our faculties, and trifling with God's gifts^c; it is a throwing away labour and care, things valuable in themselves; it is often a running out of the way, which is worse than standing still; it is a debasing our reason, and de-

^b Πόνος οὐδὲν κέρδος ἔχων, ἐγκωμίου παντὸς ἀπεστέρηται. Chrysost. tom. v. Orat. 64.

^c Ἄλλῃ γὰρ οὐδενὶ φιλοπόνου τὸν κενόσπουδον ὀρίζομεν ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις ὅσα πολλάκις, ἢ τῆ τὸν μὲν εἰς ἀνωφελῆ ποιεῖν, καὶ ἀδιαφόρως, τὸν δὲ ἕνεκά του τῶν συμφερόντων καὶ λυσιτελῶν. Plut. de Commun. Not. p. 1949. edit. Steph.

Σπουδάζειν καὶ ποιεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν ἡλίθιον φαίνεται καὶ λαν παιδικόν. Arist. Eth. x 6.

Ἡ ἐπὶ μικροῖς σπουδῇ μέμψιν φέρει. Plut. ibid.

Vid. de Glor. Ath. p. 621.

Οἱ σπουδάζοντες ἐν τοῖς γελοίοις, ἐν τοῖς σπουδαίοις ἔσονται καταγέλαστοι. Cat. Maj. apud Plut. in Apoph.

SERM. **LII.** **LII.** clining from our manhood, nothing being more foolish or childish than to be solicitous and serious about trifles: for who are more busy and active than children? who are fuller of thoughts and designs, or more eager in prosecution of them, than they? But all is about ridiculous toys, the shadows of business, suggested to them by apish curiosity and imitation. Of such industry we may understand that of the Preacher, *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them*; for that a man soon will be weary of that labour, which yieldeth no profit, or beneficial return.

Eccles. x.
15.

But there is another industry worse than that, when men are very busy in devising and compassing mischiefs; an industry whereof the Devil affordeth a great instance; for the cursed fiend is very diligent, ever watching for occasions to supplant us, ever plotting methods and means to do harm, ever driving on his mischievous designs with unwearied activity; *going to and fro in the earth; running about as a roaring lion*, looking for prey, and *seeking whom he may devour*.

Luke xxii.
31.
2Cor. ii. 11.

Job i. 7.
1 Pet. v. 8.

And his wicked brood are commonly like him, *being workers of iniquity*^d, *οἱ πονηροὶ*, *painful men*, *οἱ πανούργοι*, men that will do all things; who will spare no pains, nor leave any stone unturned, for satisfying their lusts, and accomplishing their bad designs.

Psal. vi. 8.

Catiline,
Marius,
Stilico,
Cæsar, &c.

So indeed it is, that as no great good, so neither can any great mischief be effected without much pains; and if we consider either the characters or the practices of those, who have been famous mischief-doers, the pests of mankind and disturbers of

^d Ἔργαται τῆς ἀδικίας. Luke xiii. 27.

the world, we shall find them to have been no slug- SERM.
gards. LII.

These two sorts of vain and bad industry the prophet Isaiah seemeth to describe in those words; *They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web*; of which expressions one may denote mischievous, the other frivolous diligence in contrivance or execution of naughty or vain designs; and to them both that of the prophet Hosea may be referred; *They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind*; guilt, remorse, and punishment being the consequences of both. And of them both common experience doth afford very frequent and obvious instances, a great part of humun life being taken up with them. For

How assiduously intent and eager may we observe men to be at sports! How soon will they rise to go forth to them! With what constancy and patience will they toil in them all the day! How indefatigable are they in riding and running about after a dog or a hawk, to catch a poor beast or silly bird!

How long will men sit poring on their games, dispensing with their food and sleep for it^e.

How long and serious attention will men yield to a wanton play! How many hours will they contentedly sit thereat! What study will men employ on jests and impertinent wit! How earnest will they be to satisfy their vain curiosity!

How in such cases do men forget what they are doing, that sport should be sport^f, not work; to divert and relax us, not to employ and busy us; to

^e Συνείρουσι γὰρ οἱ φιλόκυβοι νύκτας ἡμέρας ἄσντοι καὶ ἄπνοι, καὶ ἡδονῆς ἡδονὴ περισσι. Lib. Orat. 31.

^f Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι παίζοντα δεῖ παίζειν. Plut.

SERM. take off our minds a little, not wholly to take them up; not to exhaust or tire our spirits, but to refresh and cheer them, that they may become more fit for grave and serious occupations!

LII.

Jer. ii. 18. How painful will others be *in hewing them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water;* that is, in immoderate pursuit of worldly designs? How studiously will they plod, how restlessly will they trudge, what carking and drudgery will they endure in driving on projects of ambition and avarice! What will not they gladly do or suffer to get a little preferment, or a little profit! It was a common practice of old, and sure the world is not greatly mended since the Psalmist did thus re-
Psal. xxxix. 6. *flect, Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.*

How many vigilant and stout pursuers are there of sensuality and riotous excess; such as those of whom the prophet speaketh, *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!*

Isa. v. 11.

How busy (O shame, O misery! how fiercely busy) are some in accomplishing designs of malice and revenge! How intent are some to overreach, to circumvent, to supplant their neighbour! How sore pains will some take to seduce, corrupt, or debauch others! How active will some be in sowing strifes, in raising factions, in fomenting disorders in the world! How many industrious slaves hath the Devil,

⁸ Ἐνοησωμέν τινα ὁ διάβολος ἐπέταξε, πῶς ἐπίπονα, πῶς ἐμίμοχθα, &c.
 Chrys. Ἄνθρ. 16.

who will spare no pains about any kind of work SERM.
 which he putteth them to! How many like those of LII.
 whom the Wise Man saith, *Their feet run to evil,* Prov. i. 16.
 and are *swift in running to mischief: they sleep* vi. 18.
not, except they have done mischief; and their iv. 16.
sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to
fall!

Now with all these labourers we may well ex-
 postulate in the words of the prophet; *Wherefore* Isa. lv. 2.
do ye spend money for that which is not bread,
and your labour for that which satisfieth not?

Such labours are unworthy of men, much less do
 they beseem Christians.

It becometh us not as rational creatures to em-
 ploy the excellent gifts of our nature, and noble
 faculties of our high-born soul, the forces of our
 mind, the advantages of our fortune, our precious
 time, our very care and labour, vainly or unprofit-
 ably upon any thing base or mean: being that our
 reason is capable of achieving great and worthy
 things, we much debase it by stooping to regard toys,
 we do extremely abuse it by working mischief.

Much more doth it misbecome us as Christians
 (that is, persons devoted to so high a calling, who
 have so worthy employments assigned to us, so glo- Eph. i. 18.
 rious hopes, so rich encouragements proposed to us
 for our work) to spend our thoughts and endeavours
 on things impertinent to our great design, or mainly
 thwarting it.

The proper matter and object of our industry
 (those false ones being excluded) is true business;
 or that which is incumbent on a man to do, either
 in way of duty, being required by God, or by dictate
 of reason, as conducing to some good purpose; so

SERM. that in effect it will turn to account, and finally in
 LII. advantageous return will pay him for his labour of
 mind or body; that which the Wise Man did intend,
 Eccles. ix. when he advised, *Whatever thy hand findeth to*
 10. *do, do it with all thy might*; whatever thy hand
 findeth, that is, whatever by divine appointment,
 (by the command or providence of God,) or which,
 upon rational deliberation, doth occur as matter of
 our action; comprising every good purpose and rea-
 sonable undertaking incident to us.

But our business, according to the holy apostle's
 intent, may be supposed especially to be the work
 of our calling; to which each man hath a peculiar
 obligation; and which therefore is most properly
 his business, or ἡ σπουδὴ, emphatically, the business
 allotted to him.

Now this business, our calling, is double; our
 general calling, which is common to us all as Chris-
 tians, and our particular calling, which peculiarly
 belongeth to us, as placed in a certain station, either
 in the church or state. In both which vocations
 that we are much obliged and concerned to be in-
 dustrious, shall be now my business to declare.

I. As to our general calling, (that *sublime*, that
heavenly, that *holy* vocation^h;) in which by divine
 grace, according to the evangelical dispensation, we
 are engaged, that necessarily requireth and most
 highly deserveth from us a great measure of indus-
 try; the nature and design, of it requireth, the fruit
 and result of it deserveth our utmost diligence; all
 sloth is inconsistent with discharging the duties,

^h Ἡ ἄνω κλήσις. Phil. iii. 14. Κλήσις ἐπουράνιος. Heb. iii. 1. Ἀγία
 κλήσις. 2 Tim. i. 9. (Eph. i. 18. 2 Thess. i. 11.)

with enjoying the hopes, with obtaining the benefits thereof. For SERM.
LII.

It is a state of continual work, and is expressed in terms importing abundant, incessant, intense care and pain; for to be indeed Christians, we must *work out our salvation with fear and trembling; we must by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality. We must walk worthy of the Lord, to all wellpleasing, being fruitful in every good work. We must be rich in good works, and filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

We have a soul to save, and *are appointed* *εἰς* *περιποίησιν σωτηρίας,* *to make an acquist of salvation.* Thess. v. 9.

We have a mind to improve with virtue and wisdom, qualifying us for entrance into heaven, for enjoyment of God's favour, for conversation with angels.

As Christians we are assumed to be servants of God, and readmitted into his family, from which for our disloyalty we had been discarded; so that as he was our natural Lord, so he is now such also by special grace; who did make us, who doth maintain us, under whose protection and at whose disposal we subsist; whence we are obliged to be faithfully diligent in his service: we must constantly wait upon him in devotional addresses; we must carefully study to know his pleasure; we must endeavour exactly to perform his will, and obey his commands; we must strive to advance his glory, to

SERM. LII. promote his interest, to improve all talents and advantages committed to us for those purposes; we must, as St. Paul expresseth it, *always abound in the work of the Lord.*

Col. iii. 24. We must also look upon ourselves as servants of
Eph. vi. 7. Christ our Redeemer; who by his blood hath pur-
1 Cor. vii. 23. vi. 20. chased us to himself, that we might be *zealous of*
Tit. ii. 14. *good works*; performing a service to him, which
consisteth in a faithful discharge of manifold duties,
and in pursuance of all virtue; with most intent
application of mind, with expedite promptitude, with
accurate circumspection; *giving all diligence*, as
2 Pet. i. 5. St. Peter speaketh, in *adding* one virtue to another;
σπουδῆν ἄσ-
σαν παρῶτι-
νίστασθαι.
Tit. iii. 1. *being ready*, as St. Paul saith, *to every good work*;
Eph. v. 15. and *seeing that we walk circumspectly*, or behave
ἐλάσσειν ἑαυ-
τοὺς ἀκριβῶς—
ourselves exactly according to the rules of duty in
all our conversation.

Col. iv. 2. This service requireth of us assiduous attendance
Eph. vi. 18. on works of piety and devotion; that we do *in-*
Rom. xii. 12. *cessantly watch to prayer*, that we *always give*
1 Thess. v. 17. *thanks*, that we *continually do offer up the sacri-*
Luke xviii. 1. *fice of praise to God.*

1 Thess. v. 18. It demandeth from us a continual *labour of cha-*
Eph. v. 20. *rity*; that we *serve one another in love*; that we
Col. iii. 17. should, as *we have opportunity*, *work good to all*
Heb. xiii. 15. *men*, that we should *always pursue good toward*
1 Thess. i. 3. *one another, and toward all men.*
Κόως τῆς
ἀγάπης.

Gal. v. 13. It obligeth us *with all our powers to pursue*
Δουλοῦσθαι. *peace with all men*, (which, considering our natural
Gal. vi. 10. *peevishness, pride, and perverseness, is often no easy*
Ἔργαζόμε-
θα. *task*;) and that we do *σπουδάζειν, studiously endea-*
1 Thess. v. 15. *avour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of*
Ro. xii. 18. *peace.*
Εἰ ἑνωσθῶν.
Heb. xii. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 22. Eph. iv. 3.

It chargeth on us contentedly and patiently to

undergo whatever God doth impose of burden or SERM.
 sufferance, so that *patience have its perfect work*; LII.
 and it is a crabbed work to bend our stiff inclina- Jam. i. 4.
 tions, to quell our refractory passions, to make our
 sturdy humour buckle thereto.

It doth exact that we should govern and regu-
 late according to very strict and severe laws all the
 faculties of our soul, all the members of our body,
 all internal motions, and all external actions pro-
 ceeding from us; that we should check our inclina-
 tions, curb our appetites, and compose our passions;
 that we should guard our hearts from vain thoughts
 and bad desires; that we should bridle our tongues
 from evil and from idle discourses; that we should
 order our steps in the straight way of righteousness,
 not deflecting to the right hand or to the left.

In the discharge of this service how many rough
 difficulties are there to be surmounted, how many
 great obstacles to be removed, how many stout op-
 positions to be encountered, how many potent ene-
 mies to be vanquished, how many sore hardships,
 crosses, and tribulations to be endured!

How shrewd a task must we find it to circumsise
 our hearts, to mortify our earthly members, to cru-
 cify our flesh with its affections and lusts, to pull
 out our right eyes, and cut off our right hands, to
 renounce our worldly interests, to hate our nearest
 relations, to take up and bear our cross, whenever
 conscience and duty shall call us thereto!

Our calling therefore doth require great industry;
 and the business of it consequently is well repre-
 sented by those performances, which demand the
 greatest intention, and laborious activity; it is styled
exercise, (agonistic and ascetic exercise; *γύμναζε*

SERM. *σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν, Exercise thyself to godliness;*
 LII. *and ἐν τούτῳ δὲ αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ, Herein I exercise myself,*

*to have always a conscience void of offence toward
 God and toward men;) wrestling, (ἡμῶν ἡ πάλη, our
 wrestling is not only against flesh and blood, but
 against principalities and powers;) running a
 race, (Let us run with patience the race that is
 set before us: So run that ye may obtain: I press
 toward the mark for the prize of the high calling;)
 a warfare, a combating, (War a good warfare,
 holding faith and a good conscience: Fight the
 good fight: Thou therefore endure hardship as
 a good soldier of Jesus Christ: Every man that
 striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;)
 offering violence, (The kingdom of heaven suffereth
 violence, and the violent take it by force;) watch-
 ing, (Let us not sleep as do others, but let us
 watch and be sober: Watch ye, stand fast in the
 faith, quit you like men, be strong: Watch and
 pray, that ye enter not into temptation.)*

Hence the precepts importing the general tenor of
 Christian practice are usually couched in terms im-
 plying great sedulity and contention of soul; Ἀγωνί-
*μην, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: Let us
 labour therefore to enter into that rest: Labour
 not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat
 which endureth to everlasting life. Give diligence
 to make your calling and election sure. Gird up
 the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the
 end. Wherefore, brethren, seeing that ye look for
 such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of
 him in peace, without spot and blameless.*

Such is the work of our general calling, and so
 much industry it challengeth from us; with great

reason indeed, for that such work is needful to our happiness, and that our labour will certainly be rewarded therewith. SERM.
LII.

The work indeed of itself is most worthy to employ us, doth most become us, doth much adorn us, doth best befit our divine extraction and large capacity; is the noblest, the handsomest, the sweetest employment that could take us up; but we have also the greatest inducements and encouragements possible for our industry therein. John iv. 36.

There are, by the divine bounty and mercy, wages assigned abundantly correspondent to our work, yea, infinitely surpassing it; there is *πολὺς μισθός*, a great (or a manifold) hire for our slender and simple performances; there are several noble prizes highly worth our striving for with our utmost strength and contention of soul. Matt. v. 12.

In recompense thereof we shall assuredly gain even here in this transitory state the special favour and love of God, with his constant protection and care for our goodⁱ; his faithful direction and friendly assistance to guide us and uphold us in all our ways, to bless and prosper our undertakings, to supply us in our needs, and comfort us in our distresses; so that we shall lack nothing that is good, that no evil shall happen to us, that all things shall concur and cooperate for our benefit. Ps. xxxiv. 9.
lxxxiv. 11.
xxxiii. 19.
xxxvii. 3.
19.
Ps. xci. 10.
Prov. xii.
21.
Rom. viii.
38.

We shall thereby taste the satisfactions of a calm mind and a sound conscience, quickened by the consolations of the divine Spirit; the peace of God ruling in our hearts, which passeth all understanding. Col. iii. 15.
Phil. iv. 7.

ⁱ Rom. xiv. 18. He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

SERM. We shall afterward, when this moment is passed
 LII. over, and our short day's work despatched, receive
 from God's bountiful hand an unconceivable affluence
 of good things, an eternal permanence of life; undis-
 turbed rest, *indefectible wealth*, ineffable joy, incor-
 ruptible glory, *a kingdom unshakable*.

Jam. i. 12.

1 Pet. v. 4.

1 Cor. ix.

25.

John iv. 36.

He, saith our Lord, that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting.

Ἀποστόλου—

Rom. ii. 6,

7.

To them, saith St. Paul, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, God in recompense will bestow eternal life. And

2 Tim. iv.

7, 8.

I have, saith that blessed labourer of himself, fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

What more effectual spur or incentive can there be to industry in this business, than to consider that

Eph. vi. 8.

2 Cor. v. 10.

which St. Paul so often doth inculcate; *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same* (a recompense for the same) *he shall receive*

Col. iii. 24.

of the Lord; and knowing that (in consideration of our service done to the Lord) *of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance?*

What exhortation can be more firmly grounded, or strongly backed, than is that of the apostle,

1 Cor. xv.

58.

Therefore, my brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

May it not also much encourage us to industry, to be assured, that not only the kind of our work, but the degree of our labour shall be considered and required, in just proportion; so that the harder we

work, the higher we shall be rewarded; for *to each one*, saith our Lord, *the Son of man shall render a reward*, κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ, according to his performance. Every one, saith St. Paul, shall receive, ἴδιον μισθὸν κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον, his proper reward according to his proper work; whence we have reason to observe St. John's advice, *Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full reward.*

SERM.
LII.
Ἀποδοσε
μισθόν.
Matt. xvi.
27.
1 Cor. iii. 8.
Rev. xxii.
12. ii. 23.
Matt. xxv.
21.
Luke xix.
12.
μισθὸν πλή-
ρη ἀπολα-
βῆται.
2 John 8.

To be negligent or slothful in such a case, for want of a little care and pains to forfeit such advantages, what a pity, what a folly is it! Were an opportunity presented, by a little minding our business, and bestirring ourselves, to procure a fair estate, or a good preferment, would not he be deemed mad or sottish, who should sit still, and forego that his advantage? How much more wildness is it to be drowsy and sluggish in this case, thereby losing eternal bliss and glory! Well therefore might the apostle say, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* How shall we escape, not only the sin and guilt of basest ingratitude toward him that graciously doth offer it, but the imputation of most wretched folly, in being so much wanting to our own interest and welfare?

Is it not a sad thing, a woful shame, to observe what pains men will throw away upon things of small or no concernment to them? yea, what toil and drudgery they will sustain in the service of Satan, in pursuit of sin, in the gratification of their vanities and lusts?

What pains will a covetous wretch take in scraping for pelf! How will he rack his mind with carking solicitude to get, to keep, to spare it! How will

SERM. he tire his spirits with restless travail! How will
 LII. he pinch his carcass for want of what nature craveth!
 What infamy and obloquy will he endure for his
 niggardly parsimony and sordidness!

How much labour will an ambitious fop undergo
 for preferment or vain honour! To how many te-
 dious attendances, to how pitiful servilities will he
 submit! What sore crosses and disappointments
 will he swallow! What affronts and indignities will
 he patiently digest, without desisting from his enter-
 prise!

1 Cor. ix.
 25.

How will a man, as St. Paul observed, *πάντα ἐγ-
 κρατεύεσθαι*, endure all painful abstinence and con-
 tinence, in order to the obtaining a *corruptible
 crown*, a fading garland of bays, a puff of vain ap-
 plause!

What diligence will men use to compass the en-
 joyment of forbidden pleasures! how watchful in
 catching opportunities, how eager in quest of them
 will they be! What difficulties will they undertake,
 what hazards will they incur, what damages and in-
 conveniences will they sustain, rather than fail of
 satisfying their desires!

What achings of head and heart; what pangs of
 mind, and gripes of conscience; what anxieties of
 regret and fear, will every worker of iniquity under-
 go! So faithful friends hath this vain and evil
 world; so diligent servants hath the accursed lord
 thereof; so careful and laborious will men be to de-
 stroy and damn themselves. O that we could be
 willing to spend as much care and pains in the ser-
 vice of our God! O that we were as true friends of
 ourselves! O that we could be as industrious for
 our salvation! that is, in the business of our general

Chrys.
 ἀνδρ. β.

calling: which having considered, let us proceed to SERM.
 the other business belonging to us, which is, LII.

II. The business of our particular calling; that in
 reference whereto St. Paul doth prescribe, *Every* 1 Cor. vii.
man as the Lord hath called him, so let him walk. 17, 20.

*Let every man abide in the same calling wherein
 he was called; let him so abide, as faithfully to
 prosecute the work, and discharge the duty of it;
 the doing which elsewhere he termeth *πάσσειν τὰ
 ἴδια*, to do our own business, (working with our 1 Thess. iv.
hands,) and enjoineth it in opposition to those two 11.
Eph. iv. 28.
 great pests of life, sloth and pragmatistical curiosity;
 or the neglect of our own, and meddling with other
 men's affairs.*

This the apostle nameth *our calling*, because we
 are called or appointed thereto by divine Providence;
 for he supposeth and taketh it for granted, that to
 each man in this world God hath assigned a certain
 station, unto which peculiar action is suited; in
 which station he biddeth him quietly to abide, till
 Providence fairly doth translate him, and during 1 Cor. vii.
 his abode therein diligently to execute the work 22.
 thereof.

Every man is a member of a double body; of the
 civil commonwealth, and of the Christian church:
 in relation to the latter whereof St. Paul telleth us,
 (and what he saith by parity of reason may be re-
 ferred likewise to the former,) that *God hath set* 1 Cor. xii.
the members every one in the body, as it pleaseth 18.
him; and as it is in the natural, so it is in every
 political and spiritual body, every member hath its
 proper use and function; *All members*, saith St. Rom. xii. 4.
 Paul, *have not τὴν αὐτὴν πράξιν, the same office*, or
 the same work and operation; yet every one hath

SERM. some work. There is no member designed to be
 LII. idle or useless, conferring no benefit to the whole;

Eph. iv. 16. but *the whole body*, saith the apostle, *fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love*; each member doth conspire and cooperate to the strength, nourishment, thriving, and welfare of the whole.

^{'Εὐδωκία ἢ}
^{ἡπίευσιν ὀφεί.}
 I Cor. vii.
 17. Every man (who continueth a man, in his senses, or in any good degree of natural integrity) is by God endowed with competent abilities to discharge some function useful to common good, or at least needful to his own sustenance; to every one some talent is committed, which in subordination to God's service he may improve, to the benefit of the world, God's temporal, or of the church, God's spiritual kingdom.

It is plainly necessary, that the greatest part of men should have a determinate work allotted to them, that they may support their life and get their food, without being injurious, offensive, or burdensome to others; for their living they must either follow some trade, or they must shark and filch, or they must beg, or they must starve.

And the rest are obliged to do somewhat conducive to public good, that they may deserve to live; for a drone should not be among the bees, nor hath right to devour the honey. If any man doth pretend, or presume, that he hath nothing to do but to eat, to sleep, to play, to laugh, to enjoy his ease, his pleasure, his humour, he thereby doth as it were disclaim a reasonable title of living among men, and sharing in the fruits of their industry; he, in St.

Paul's judgment, should be debarred of food, for *this*, SERM.
 saith the holy apostle, *we commanded you, that if* LII.
any man would not work, neither should he eat. 2 Thess. iii.
10.

Such an one in the body of men, what is he but an unnatural excrescence, sucking nutriment from it, without yielding ornament or use? What is he but a wen deforming and encumbering the body, or a canker infesting and corrupting it?

As no man (at least with decency, convenience, and comfort) can live in the world, without being obliged to divers other men for their help in providing accommodations for him; so justice and ingenuity, corroborated by divine sanctions, do require of him, that in commutation he, one way or other, should undertake some pains redounding to the benefit of others.

So hath the great author of order distributed the ranks and offices of men in order to mutual benefit and comfort, that one man should plough, another thrash, another grind, another labour at the forge, another knit or weave, another sail, another trade, another supervise all these, labouring to keep them all in order and peace; that one should work with his hands and feet, another with his head and tongue; all conspiring to one common end, the welfare of the whole, and the supply of what is useful to each particular member; every man so reciprocally obliging and being obliged; the prince being obliged to the husbandman for his bread, to the weaver for his clothes, to the mason for his palace, to the smith for his sword; those being all obliged to him for his vigilant care in protecting them, for their security in pursuing the work, and enjoying the fruit of their industry.

SERM. So every man hath a calling and proper business ;
LII. whereto that industry is required, I need not much
 to prove, the thing itself in reason and experience
 being so clearly evident : for what business can be
 well despatched, what success can be expected to
 any undertaking, in what calling can any man thrive,
 without industry ? What business is there that will
 go on of itself, or proceed to any good issue, if we
 do not carefully look to it, steadily hold it in its
 course, constantly push and drive it forward ? It is
 true, as in nature, so in all affairs, *Nihil movet non*
motum, nothing moveth without being moved.

Our own interest should move us to be industrious
 in our calling, that we may obtain the good effects
 of being so in a comfortable and creditable subsist-
 ence ; that we may not suffer the damages and
 wants, the disappointments and disgraces ensuing
 on sloth : but the chief motive should be from piety
 and conscience ; for that it is a duty which we owe
 to God. For God having placed us in our station,
 he having apportioned to us our task, we being in
¹ Cor. iv. 2. transaction of our business his servants, we do owe
 to him that necessary property of good servants,
 without which fidelity cannot subsist ; for how can
 he be looked on as a faithful servant, who doth not
 effectually perform the work charged on him, or
 diligently execute the orders of his master ?

Col. iii. 22. St. Paul doth enjoin servants, that they should *in*
 Eph. vi. 5. *all things obey their masters*, with conscientious
¹ Cor. vii. regard to God, as therein performing service to God,
 22, 23. and expecting recompense from him : and of princes
 he saith, that they, in dispensation of justice, enact-
 ing laws, imposing taxes, and all political adminis-
 Rom. xiii. trations, are *the ministers of God*, *προσκαρτεροῦντες*,
 6.

attending constantly upon this very thing: and if these extremes, the highest and lowest of all vocations, are services of God; if the highest upon that score be tied to so much diligence, then surely all middle places, upon the same account of conscience toward God, do exact no less.

SERM.
LII.

If he that hath one talent, and he that hath ten, must both improve them for God's interest; then he that hath two, or three, or more, is obliged to the same duty proportionably.

Every one should consider the world as the family of that great Paterfamilias, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*, and himself as an officer or servant therein, by God's will and designation constituted in that employment, into which Providence hath cast him; to confer, in his order and way, somewhat toward a provision for the maintenance of himself and of his fellow-servants. Of a superior officer our Lord saith, *Who is that faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season?* So the greatest men are as stewards, treasurers, comptrollers, or purveyors; the rest are inferior servants, in their proper rank and capacity.

Eph. iii. 15.

Matt. xxiv.

Luke xii.

45.

42.

And he that with diligence performeth his respective duty (be it high and honourable, or mean and contemptible in outward appearance) will please God, as keeping good order, and as being useful to his service; so that, upon the reckoning, God will say to him, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* But he that doeth otherwise

1 Cor. xiv.

Matt. xxv.

33.

21.

SERM. (behaving himself carelessly or sluggishly in his
 LII. business) will offend God, as committing disorder,
 and as being unprofitable.

He committeth disorder, according to that of St.
 2 Thess. iii. Paul; *We hear there are some, which walk among*
 11. *you disorderly, not working at all.* His sentence
 Matt. xxv. and doom will be, according to our Lord, *O thou*
 26, 30. *wicked and slothful servant—Cast the unprofitable*
servant into utter darkness; which words are spoken
 in relation to one who being a flatterer, or sluggard
 in his calling, did not improve the special talent
 intrusted with him for God's service.

In fine, if we are conscientiously industrious in
 our vocation, we shall assuredly find the blessing of
 God thereon; and that he thereby will convey good
 success, comfort, competent wealth, a fair repu-
 tation, all desirable good unto us; for as all these
 things are promised to industry, so the promise espe-
 cially doth belong to that industry, which a man
 doth exercise in an orderly course of action in his
 own way; or rather in God's way, wherein divine
 Providence hath set him.

An irregular or impertinent laboriousness, out of
 a man's calling or sphere; a being diligent in other
 men's affairs, invading their office, (as if I a priest
 will be trading, a layman preaching,) may not claim
 the benefit of those promises, or the blessings of in-
 dustry: but a husbandman, who, with conscientious
 Prov. x. 4. regard to God, and confidence in him, is painful in
 xiii. 11. tilling his ground, may expect a good crop; a mer-
 chant, who (upon the same principle, with the like
 disposition) earnestly followeth his trade, may hope
 for safe voyages and good markets; a prince care-
 fully minding his affairs may look for peace and

prosperity to his country; a scholar studying hard SERM.
may be well assured of getting knowledge, and find- LII.
ing truth; all, who with honest diligence constantly
do pursue their business, may confidently and cheer-
fully hope to reap the advantages suitable to it from
the favourable blessing of God. So that we have all
reason to observe the apostle's precept, *Not to be
slothful in business.*

I should apply this doctrine to our own case,
urging its practice by considerations peculiar to our
vocation: but having already passed the bounds of
time, I reserve the doing it to another opportunity.

Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly, and 1 Thess. v.
make you perfect in every good work to do his will, 23. Heb. xiii.
working in you that which is well-pleasing in his 20.
*sight, through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; to
whom for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.*

SERMON LIII.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALL-
ING, AS GENTLEMEN.

ROM. xii. 11.

Not slothful in business.

SERM. LIII. I HAVE largely treated upon the duty recommended in this precept, and urged the observance of it in general, at a distance: I now intend more particularly and closely to apply it, in reference to those persons who seem more especially obliged to it, and whose observing it may prove of greatest consequence to public good; the which application may also be most suitable and profitable to this audience. Those persons are of two sorts; the one gentlemen, the other scholars.

I. The first place, as civility demandeth, we assign to gentlemen, or persons of eminent rank in the world, well allied, graced with honour, and furnished with wealth: the which sort of persons I conceive in a high degree obliged to exercise industry in business.

This at first hearing may seem a little paradoxical and strange; for who have less business than gentlemen? who do need less industry than they? He that hath a fair estate, and can live on his means, what hath he to do, what labour or trouble can be

Of Industry in our particular Calling, &c. 215

exactd of him, what hath he to think on, or trouble SERM.
his head with, but how to invent recreations and LIII.
pastimes to divert himself, and spend his waste lei-
sure pleasantly? Why should not he be allowed to
enjoy himself, and the benefits which nature or for-
tune have freely dispensed to him, as he thinketh
best, without offence? Why may he not say with
the rich man in the gospel, *Soul, thou hast much* Luke xii.
goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, ^{19.}
eat, drink, and be merry? Is it not often said by
the Wise Man, that there is *nothing better under* Eccles. ii.
the sun, than that a man should make his soul ^{24. iii. 22.}
to enjoy good in a cheerful and comfortable fruition ^{v. 18. viii.} ^{15.}
of his estate? According to the passable notion and
definition, *What is a gentleman but his plea-
sure?*

If this be true, if a gentleman be nothing else
but this, then truly he is a sad piece, the most incon-
siderable, the most despicable, the most pitiful and
wretched creature in the world: if it is his privilege
to do nothing, it is his privilege to be most unhappy;
and to be so will be his fate, if he live according to
it; for he that is of no worth or use, who produceth
no beneficial fruit, who performeth no service to
God or to the world, what title can he have to hap-
piness? What capacity thereof? What reward can
he claim? What comfort can he feel? To what
temptations is he exposed! What guilts will he
incur!

But in truth it is far otherwise: to suppose that
a gentleman is loose from business is a great mis-
take; for indeed no man hath more to do, no man
lieth under greater engagements to industry than
he.

SERM. He is deeply obliged to be continually busy in
LIII. more ways than other men, who have but one simple
 calling or occupation allotted to them; and that
 upon a triple account; in respect to God, to the
 world, and to himself.

1. He is first obliged to continual employment in
 respect to God.

He, out of a grateful regard to divine bounty for
 the eminency of his station, adorned with dignity
 and repute, for the plentiful accommodations and
 comforts of his life, for his exemption from those
 pinching wants, those meaner cares, those sordid en-
 tertainments, and those toilsome drudgeries, to which
 other men are subject, is bound to be more diligent
 in God's service, employing all the advantages of his
 state to the glory of his munificent Benefactor, to
 whose good providence alone he doth owe them; for
 1 Cor. iv. 7. *who maketh him to differ* from another? And *what*
hath he that he did not receive from God's free
 bounty?

In proportion to the bulk of his fortune, his heart
 should be enlarged with a thankful sense of God's
 goodness to him; his mouth should ever be filled
 with acknowledgment and praise; he should always
 be ready to express his grateful resentment of so
 great and peculiar obligations.

He should dedicate larger portions of that free
 leisure which God hath granted to him, in waiting
 upon God, and constant performances of devotion.

He, in frequently reflecting on the particular
 ample favours of God to him, should imitate the
 holy Psalmist, that illustrious pattern of great and
 fortunate men; saying after him, with his spirit and
 disposition of soul; *Thou hast brought me to great*
 Psal. lxxi.
 21.

honour, and comforted me on every side; therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness, O God. SERM.
LIII.

Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mourning to stand strong: Thou hast set my feet in a large room: Thou preparest a table before me:— Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over;—to the end that my glory may sing praise unto thee, and not be silent: The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage; therefore I will bless the Lord. Psal. xxx. 7.
xxxi. 8.
xxiii. 5.
Ps. xxx. 12.
xvi. 5, 6, 7.

In conceiving such meditations, his head and his heart should constantly be employed; as also in contriving ways of declaring and discharging real gratitude; asking himself, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* Ps. cxvi. 12. What shall I render to him, not only as a man, for all the gifts of nature; as a Christian, for all the blessings of grace; but as a gentleman also, for the many advantages of this my condition, beyond so many of my brethren, by special providence indulged to me?

He hath all the common duties of piety, of charity, of sobriety, to discharge with fidelity; for being a gentleman doth not exempt him from being a Christian, but rather more strictly doth engage him to be such in a higher degree than others; it is an obligation peculiarly incumbent on him, in return for God's peculiar favours, to pay God all due obedience, and to exercise himself in all good works; disobedience being a more heinous crime in him than in others, who have not such encouragements to serve God.

His obedience may be inculcated by those argu-

SERM. ments which Joshua and Samuel did use in pressing
LIII. it on the Israelites; *Only*, said Samuel, *fear the*

¹ Sam. xiii. *Lord, and serve him in truth; for consider how*
24.
Josh. xxiv. *great things God hath done for you. And, I have*
13, 14. *given you, saith God by Joshua, a land for which*
ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not;
and ye dwell in them: of the vineyards and olive-
yards which ye planted not, do ye eat. Now
therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity
and in truth.

His disobedience may be aggravated, as Nehemiah
Nehem. ix. did that of the Israelites: *They took strong cities*
25. &c.
(Is. lxiii. 10. *and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all*
Psal. cvi. 6. *goods, wells digged, vineyards and oliveyards, and*
Jer. ii. 7. *fruit-trees in abundance; so they did eat and were*
Ezek. xvi. *filled, and became fat; and delighted themselves in*
7.
¹ Sam. xv. *thy great goodness: nevertheless they were dis-*
17.
² Sam. xii. *obedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy*
7.
¹ Kings *law behind their backs—They have not served thee*
xvi. 26. 35.) *in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness, which*
thou gavest them; neither turned they from their
wicked works.

A gentleman hath more talents committed to
him, and consequently more employment required
of him: if a rustic labourer, or a mechanic artisan,
hath one talent, a gentleman hath ten; he hath in-
nate vigour of spirit, and height of courage fortified
by use; he hath accomplishment and refinement of
parts by liberal education; he hath the succours of
parentage, alliance, and friendship; he hath wealth,
he hath honour, he hath power and authority, he
hath command of time and leisure; he hath so many
precious and useful talents intrusted to him, not to
be *wrapped up in a napkin, or hidlen under*

Luke xix.
20.
Matt. xxv.
25.

ground; not to be squandered away in private satisfactions; but *for negotiation*, to be put out to use, to be improved in the most advantageous way to God's service. Every talent doth require a particular care and pains to manage it well.

He particularly is God's steward, intrusted with God's substance for the sustenance and supply of God's family; to relieve his fellow-servants in their need, upon seasonable occasions, by hospitality, mercy, and charitable beneficence; according to that intimation of our Lord, *Who is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler of his household, to give them their portion and meat in due season?* And according to those apostolical precepts, *As every one hath received a gift, (or special favour,) even so minister the same to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God:* and, *Charge the rich in this world,—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*

And he that is obliged to purvey for so many, and so to abound in good works, how can he want business? How can he pretend to a *writ of ease*.

Surely that gentleman is very blind, and very barren of invention, who is to seek for work fit for him, or cannot easily discern many employments belonging to him, of great concern and consequence.

It is easy to prompt and shew him many businesses, indispensably belonging to him, as such.

It is his business to minister relief to his poor neighbours, in their wants and distresses, by his wealth. It is his business to direct and advise the ignorant, to comfort the afflicted, to reclaim the wicked, and encourage the good, by his wisdom. It

SERM.
LIII.

πρωμα-
ρισασθι.
Luke xix.

13.
'Εργάζεσθαι.
Matt. xxv.
16, 27.

14.
Παρίδοι τὰ
ὑμῶν
αὐτοῦ.
Luke xii.
42.

χάρισμα.
1 Pet. iv. 10.
1 Tim. vi.
17, 18.

SERM. is his business to protect the weak, to rescue the oppressed, to ease those who groan under heavy burdens, by his power; to be such a gentleman and so

Job xxxi.
17, 16.

Job xxxi.
19. xxix.
12.

1 Pet. iv. 9.
Heb. xiii. 2.
Rom. xii.
13.
Gen. xviii.
1. xix. 1.

Exod. ii. 13.
Acts vii. 26.

Josh. xxiv.
15.
Psalm ci.

employed as Job was; who *did not eat his morsel alone, so that the fatherless did not eat thereof; who did not withhold the poor from their desire, or cause the eyes of the widow to fail; who did not see any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; who delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.*

It is his business to be hospitable; kind and helpful to strangers; following those noble gentlemen, Abraham and Lot, who were so ready to invite and entertain strangers with bountiful courtesy.

It is his business to maintain peace, and appease dissensions among his neighbours, interposing his counsel and authority in order thereto: whereto he hath that brave gentleman, Moses, recommended for his pattern.

It is his business to promote the welfare and prosperity of his country with his best endeavours, and by all his interest; in which practice the sacred history doth propound divers gallant gentlemen (Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Nehemiah, Daniel, Mordecai, and all such renowned patriots) to guide him.

It is his business to govern his family well; to educate his children in piety and virtue; to keep his servants in good order.

It is his business to look to his estate, and to keep it from wasting; that he may sustain the repute of his person and quality with decency; that he may be furnished with ability to do good, may provide well for his family, may be hospitable, may have

wherewith to help his brethren ; for if, according to SERM.
 St. Paul's injunction, a man should *work with his* LIII.
own hands, that he may have somewhat to impart Μισοδιδόναι.
to him that needeth, then must he that hath an Eph. iv. 28.
 estate be careful to preserve it, for the same good
 purpose.

It is his business to cultivate his mind with know-
 ledge, with generous dispositions, with all worthy
 accomplishments befitting his condition, and qualify-
 ing him for honourable action ; so that he may excel,
 and bear himself above the vulgar level, no less in
 real inward worth, than in exterior garb ; that he
 be not a gentleman merely in name or show.

It is his business (and that no slight or easy busi- Ardua nam
 ness) to eschew the vices, to check the passions, to res est opi-
 withstand the temptations, to which his condition is bus non tra-
 liable ; taking heed that his wealth, honour, and dere mores.
 power do not betray him unto pride, insolence, or
 contempt of his poorer brethren ; unto injustice or
 oppression ; unto luxury and riotous excess ; unto
 sloth, stupidity, forgetfulness of God, and irreligious
 profaneness.

It is a business especially incumbent on him to
 be careful of his ways, that they may have good in-
 fluence on others, who are apt to look upon him as
 their guide and pattern.

He should labour and study to be a leader unto
 virtue, and a notable promoter thereof ; directing
 and exciting men thereto by his exemplary conver-
 sation ; encouraging them by his countenance and
 authority ; rewarding the goodness of meaner people
 by his bounty and favour : he should be such a gen-
 tleman as Noah, who *preached righteousness* by his
 words and works before a profane world.

SERM. Such particular affairs hath every person of quality, credit, wealth, and interest, allotted to him by God, and laid on him as duties; the which to discharge faithfully, will enough employ a man, and doth require industry, much care, much pains; excluding sloth and negligence: so that it is impossible for a sluggard to be a worthy gentleman, virtuously disposed, a charitable neighbour, a good patriot, a good husband of his estate; any thing of that, to which God, by setting him in such a station, doth call him.

Thus is a gentleman obliged to industry in respect of God, who justly doth exact those labours of piety, charity, and all virtue from him. Further,

2. He hath also obligations to mankind, demanding industry from him, upon accounts of common humanity, equity, and ingenuity; for

How can he fairly subsist upon the common industry of mankind, without bearing a share thereof? How can he well satisfy himself to dwell statelily, to feed daintily, to be finely clad, to maintain a pompous retinue, merely upon the sweat and toil of others, without himself rendering a compensation, or making some competent returns of care and pain, redounding to the good of his neighbour?

How can he justly claim, or reasonably expect from the world the respect agreeable to his rank, if he doth not by worthy performances conduce to the benefit of it? Can men be obliged to regard those, from whom they receive no good?

If no gentleman be tied to serve the public, or to yield help in sustaining the common burdens, and supplying the needs of mankind, then is the whole order merely a burden, and an offence to the world;

a race of drones, a pack of ciphers in the common-
wealth, standing for nothing, deserving no considera-
tion or regard: and if any are bound, then all are;
for why should the whole burden lie on some, while
others are exempted?

SERM.
LIII.

It is indeed supposed that all are bound thereto, seeing that all have recompenses publicly allowed to them upon such considerations; divers respects and privileges peculiar to the order, grounded upon this supposition, that they deserve such advantages by conferring notable benefit to the public; the which indeed it were an arrogance to seek, and an iniquity to accept for doing nothing.

It is an insufferable pride for any man to pretend or conceit himself to differ so much from his brethren, that he may be allowed to live in ease and sloth, while the rest of mankind are subject to continual toil and trouble. Moreover,

3. A gentleman is bound to be industrious for his own sake; it is a duty which he oweth to himself, to his honour, to his interest, to his welfare. He cannot without industry continue like himself, or maintain the honour and repute becoming his quality and state, or secure himself from contempt and disgrace; for to be honourable and slothful are things inconsistent, seeing honour doth not grow, nor can subsist without undertaking worthy designs, constantly pursuing them, and happily achieving them; it is the fruit and reward of such actions, which are not performed with ease.

External respect and a semblance of honour, for the sake of public order, may be due to an exterior rank or title: but to pay this, is not to honour the person, but his title; because it is supposed, that

SERM. men of real worth and use do bear it; or lest, by
LIII. refusing it to one, the whole order may seem disre-
 spected: but yet true honour, or mental esteem, is
 not due upon such accounts; nor is it possible to
 render it unto any person, who doth not by worthy
 qualities and good deeds appear to merit it.

Nor can a gentleman without industry uphold his
 real interests against the attempts of envy, of treach-
 ery, of flattery, of sycophantry, of avarice, to which
 his condition is obnoxious: to preserve his wealth
 and estate, which are the supports of his quality, he
 must endure care and pains; otherwise he will by
 greedy harpies and crafty lurchers be rifled or co-
 zened of his substance; it will of itself go to wreck,
 and be embezzled by negligence.

He cannot without industry guard his personal
 welfare from manifold inconveniences, molestations,
 and mischiefs; idleness itself will be very trouble-
 some and irksome to him. His time will lie upon
 his hands, as a pestering incumbrance. His mind
 will be infested with various distractions and dis-
 tempers; vain and sad thoughts, foul lusts, and un-
 quiet passions will spring up therein, as weeds in a
 neglected soil. His body will languish and become
 destitute of health, of vigour, of activity, for want
 of due exercise. All the mischiefs, which naturally
 do spring from sloth and stupidity will seize upon
 him.

4. Thus, upon various accounts, a gentleman is
 engaged to business, and concerned to exercise in-
 dustry therein: we may add, that indeed the very
 nature of gentility, or the true notion of a gentle-
 man, doth imply so much.

For what, I pray, is a gentleman, what proper-

his hath he, what qualities are characteristical or peculiar to him, whereby he is distinguished from others, and raised above the vulgar? Are they not specially two, courage and courtesy? which he that wanteth is not otherwise than equivocally a gentleman, as an image or a carcass is a man; without which, gentility in a conspicuous degree is no more than a vain show or an empty name: and these plainly do involve industry, do exclude slothfulness; for courage doth prompt boldly to undertake, and resolutely to despatch great enterprises and employments of difficulty: it is not seen in a flaunting garb, or strutting deportment; not in hectorly, ruffian-like swaggering or buffing; not in high looks or big words; but in stout and gallant deeds, employing vigour of mind and heart to achieve them: how can a man otherwise approve himself for courageous, than by signaling himself in such a way?

And for courtesy, how otherwise can it be well displayed than in sedulous activity for the good of men? It surely doth not consist in modish forms of address, or complimentary expressions, or hollow professions, commonly void of meaning, or of sincerity; but in real performances of beneficence, when occasion doth invite, and in waiting for opportunities to do good; the which practice is accompanied with some care and pain, adding a price to it; for an easy courtesy is therefore small, because easy, and may be deemed to proceed rather from ordinary humanity, than from gentle disposition; so that, in fine, he alone doth appear truly a gentleman, who hath the heart to undergo hard tasks for public

SERM. good, and willingly taketh pains to oblige his neighbours and friends.

5. The work indeed of gentlemen is not so gross, but it may be as smart and painful, as any other. For all hard work is not manual; there are other instruments of action beside the plough, the spade, the hammer, the shuttle: nor doth every work produce sweat, and visible tiring of body: the head may work hard in contrivance of good designs; the tongue may be very active in dispensing advice, persuasion, comfort, and edification in virtue; a man may bestir himself in *going about to do good*: these are works employing the cleanly industry of a gentleman.

6. In such works it was, that the truest and greatest pattern of gentility that ever was, did employ himself. Who was that? Even our Lord himself; for he had no particular trade or profession: no man can be more loose from any engagement to the world than he was; no man had less need of business or pains-taking than he; for he had a vast estate, being *heir of all things*, all the world being at his disposal; yea, infinitely more, it being in his power with a word to create whatever he would to serve his need or satisfy his pleasure; omnipotency being his treasure and supply; he had a retinue of angels to wait on him, and minister to him; whatever sufficiency any man can fancy to himself to dispense with his taking pains, that had he in a far higher degree: yet did he find work for himself, and continually was employed in performing service to God, and imparting benefits to men; nor was ever industry exercised upon earth comparable to his.

Isa. lii. 11.

Gentlemen therefore would do well to make him **SERM.**
the pattern of their life, to whose industry they must LIII.
be beholden for their salvation: in order whereto
we recommend them to his grace.

S E R M O N L I V .

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALLING, AS SCHOLARS.

ROM. xii. 11.

Not slothful in business.

SERM. **I** PROCEED to the other sort of persons, whom
LIV. we did propound, namely,

II. Scholars; and that on them particularly great engagements do lie to be industrious, is most evident from various considerations.

The nature and design of this calling doth suppose industry; the matter and extent of it doth require industry; the worth of it doth highly deserve industry. We are in special gratitude to God, in charity to men, in due regard to ourselves, bound unto it.

1. First, I say, the nature and design of our calling doth suppose industry: *There is*, saith the divine Preacher, *a man whose labour is in wisdom, in knowledge, and in equity.* Such men are scholars; so that we are indeed no scholars, but absurd usurpers of the name, if we are not laborious; for what is a scholar, but one who retireth his person, and avocatheth his mind from other occupations, and worldly entertainments, that he may σχολάζειν, *vacare studiis*, employ his mind and leisure on study and learning, in the search of truth,

the quest of knowledge, the improvement of his **SERM.**
reason. Wherefore an idle scholar, a lazy student, **LIV.**
a sluggish man of learning, is nonsense.

What is learning, but a diligent attendance to in-
struction of masters, skilled in any knowledge, and
conveying their notions to us in word or writing? **xxxviii. 24.**

What is study, but an earnest, steady, persevering
application of mind to some matter, on which we fix
our thoughts, with intent to see through it? What
in Solomon's language are these scholastic occupa-
tions, but *inclining the ear*, and *applying our heart* **Prov. ii. 2.**
to understanding? than which commonly there is
nothing more laborious, more straining nature, and
more tiring our spirits; whence it is well compared
to the most painful exercises of body and soul.

The Wise Man, advising men to seek wisdom,
the which is the proper design of our calling, doth
intimate that work to be like digging in the mines
for silver, and like searching all about for concealed
treasure; than which there can hardly be any more
difficult and painful task: *If, saith he, thou seekest* **Prov. ii. 4.**
*her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid*⁵
treasures, then shalt thou understand.—Other-
where he compareth the same work to assiduous
watching and waiting, like that of a guard or a
client, which are the greatest instances of diligence;
Blessed, saith he, (or Wisdom by him saith, Blessed) **Prov. viii.**
*is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my*³⁴
gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

Wherefore, if we will approve ourselves to be
what we are called, and what we pretend to be;
if we will avoid being impostors, assuming a name
not due to us, we must not be slothful. Further,

2. The matter and extent of our business doth

SERM. require industry from us : the matter of it, which is
LIV. truth and knowledge ; the extent, which is very
large and comprehensive, taking in all truth, all
knowledge, worthy our study, and useful for the
designs of it.

Our business is to find truth ; the which, even in
matters of high importance, is not easily to be dis-
covered ; being as a vein of silver, encompassed with
earth and mixed with dross, deeply laid in the ob-
scurity of things, wrapt up in false appearances,
entangled with objections, and perplexed with de-
bates ; being therefore not readily discoverable, espe-
cially by minds clouded with prejudices, lusts, pas-
sions, partial affections, appetites of honour and
interest ; whence to descry it requireth the most
curious observation and solicitous circumspection
that can be ; together with great pains in the pre-
paration and purgation of our minds toward the
inquiry of it.

Our business is to attain knowledge, not concern-
ing obvious and vulgar matters, but about sublime,
abstruse, intricate, and knotty subjects, remote from
common observation and sense ; to get sure and
exact notions about which will try the best forces
of our mind with their utmost endeavours ; in firmly
settling principles, in strictly deducing consequences,
in orderly digesting conclusions, in faithfully re-
taining what we learn by our contemplation and
study.

And if to get a competent knowledge about a few
things, or to be reasonably skilful in any sort of
learning, be difficult, how much industry doth it
require to be well seen in many, or to have waded
through the vast compass of learning, in no part

whereof a scholar may conveniently or handsomely SERM.
 be ignorant; seeing there is such a connection of LIV.
 things, and dependence of notions, that one part of
 learning doth confer light to another, that a man
 can hardly well understand any thing without know-
 ing divers other things; that he will be a lame
 scholar, who hath not an insight into many kinds
 of knowledge; that he can hardly be a good scholar,
 who is not a general one.

To understand so many languages, which are the
 shells of knowledge; to comprehend so many sciences,
 full of various theorems and problems; to peruse so
 many histories of ancient and modern times; to
 know the world, both natural and human; to be
 acquainted with the various inventions, inquiries,
 opinions, and controversies of learned men; to skill
 the arts of expressing our mind, and imparting our
 conceptions with advantage, so as to instruct or per-
 suade others; these are works indeed, which will
 exercise and strain all our faculties (our reason, our
 fancy, our memory) in painful study.

The knowledge of such things is not innate to
 us; it doth not of itself spring up in our minds; it
 is not any ways incident by chance, or infused by
 grace, (except rarely by miracle;) common observa-
 tion doth not produce it; it cannot be purchased at
 any rate, except by that, for which it was said of
 old, *the gods sell all things*, that is for pains; with-
 out which, the best wit and greatest capacity may Dii labori-
 bus omnia
 vendunt.
 not render a man learned, as the best soil will not
 yield good fruit or grain, if they be not planted or
 sown therein.

Consider, if you please, what a scholar Solomon
 was: beside his skill in politics, which was his prin-

SERM. LIV. cipal faculty and profession, whereby he did with admirable dexterity and prudence manage the affairs

1 Kings iii. 9. of that great kingdom, *judging his people, and discerning what was good and bad*; accurately dispensing justice; settling his country in a most flourishing state of peace, order, plenty, and wealth;

1 Kings iv. 20, 25. x. 27. iv. 21, &c. x. 6, 24. iv. 33. largely extending his territory; so that his wisdom of this kind was famous over the earth: beside, I say, this civil wisdom, he had an exquisite skill in natural philosophy and medicine; for *he spake of trees, or plants, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.*

1 Kings iv. 30. He was well versed in mathematics; for it is said, *Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east-country, and all the wisdom of Egypt*; the wisdom of which nations did consist in those sciences. And of his mechanic skill he left for a monument the most glorious structure that ever stood on earth.

1 Kings iv. 32. He was very skilful in poetry and music; for he did himself *compose above a thousand songs*; whereof one yet extant declareth the loftiness of his fancy, the richness of his vein, and the elegancy of his style.

Wisd. vii. 15. Eccles. xii. 10. 1 Kings viii. He had great ability in rhetoric; according to that in Wisdom, *God granted me to speak as I would*; and that in Ecclesiastes, *The preacher sought to find out acceptable words*; a great instance of which faculty we have in that admirable prayer of his composure at the dedication of the temple.

He did wonderfully excel in ethics; concerning

which he *spake three thousand proverbs*, or moral SERM. aphorisms; and *moreover*, saith Ecclesiastes, *because* LIV. *the preacher was wise, he still taught the people* 1 Kings iv. *knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out,* 32. Eccles. xii. *and set in order many proverbs;* the which did ⁹ contain a great variety of notable observations, and useful directions for common life, couched in pithy expressions.

As for theology, as the study of that was the chief Prov. ii. 5, study to which he exhorteth others, (as to the *head*, &c. or principal part, *of wisdom*,) so questionless he was himself most conversant therein; for proof whereof he did leave so many excellent theorems and precepts of divinity to us.

In fine, there is no sort of knowledge, to which he did not apply his study; witness himself in those words, *I gave my heart to seek and search out by* Eccles. i. *wisdom concerning all things that are done under* ^{13.} *heaven.*

Such a scholar was he; and such if we have a noble ambition to be, we must use the course he did; which was first in his heart to prefer wisdom before all worldly things; then to pray to God for it, or for his blessing in our quest of it; then to use the means of attaining it, diligent searching and hard study; for that this was his method he telleth us; *I, saith* Eccles. vii. *he, applied my heart to know, and to search, and* ^{25.} *to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things.*

Such considerations shew the necessity of industry for a scholar. But,

3. The worth, and excellency, and great utility, together with the pleasantness of his vocation, deserving the highest industry, do superadd much obligation thereto.

SERM. We are much bound to be diligent out of in-
 LIV. genuity, and in gratitude to God, who by his gracious
 providence hath assigned to us a calling so worthy,
 an employment so comfortable, a way of life no less
 commodious, beneficial, and delightful to ourselves,
 than serviceable to God, and useful for the world.

If we had our option and choice, what calling
 could we desire before this of any whereto men are
 affixed? How could we better employ our mind, or
 place our labour, or spend our time, or pass our
 pilgrimage in this world, than in scholastical occu-
 pations?

It were hard to reckon up, or to express, the num-
 berless great advantages of this calling: I shall there-
 fore only touch some, which readily fall under my
 thought, recommending its value to us.

It is a calling, the design whereof conspireth with
 the general end of our being; the perfection of our
 nature in its endowments, and the fruition of it in
 its best operations.

It is a calling, which doth not employ us in bodily
 toil, in worldly care, in pursuit of trivial affairs, in
 sordid drudgeries; but in those angelical operations
 of soul, the contemplation of truth, and attainment
 of wisdom; which are the worthiest exercises of our
 reason, and sweetest entertainments of our mind;
 the most precious wealth, and most beautiful orna-
 ments of our soul; whereby our faculties are im-
 proved, are polished and refined, are enlarged in their
 power and use by habitual accessions: the which are
 conducive to our own greatest profit and benefit, as
 serving to rectify our wills, to compose our affections,
 to guide our lives in the ways of virtue, to bring us
 unto felicity.

It is a calling, which, being duly followed, will SERM.
 most sever us from the vulgar sort of men, and ad- LIV.
 vance us above the common pitch ; enduing us with
 light to see further than other men, disposing us to
 affect better things, and to slight those meaner objects
 of human desire, on which men commonly dote ;
 freeing us from the erroneous conceits and from the
 perverse affections of common people. It is said,
διπλοῦν ὁρῶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα, men of learning
are double-sighted : but it is true, that in many
 cases they see infinitely further than a vulgar sight
 doth reach. And if a man by serious study doth
 acquire a clear and solid judgment of things, so as to
 assign to each its due weight and price ; if he accord-
 ingly be inclined in his heart to affect and pursue
 them ; if from clear and right notions of things, a
 meek and ingenuous temper of mind, a command and
 moderation of passions, a firm integrity, and a cordial
 love of goodness do spring, he thereby becometh an-
 other kind of thing, much different from those brutish
 men (beasts of the people) who blindly follow the
 motions of their sensual appetite, or the suggestions
 of their fancy, or their mistaken prejudices.

It is a calling which hath these considerable ad-
 vantages, that, by virtue of improvement therein, we
 can see with our own eyes, and guide ourselves by
 our own reasons, not being led blindfold about, or
 depending precariously on the conduct of others, in
 matters of highest concern to us ; that we are ex-
 empted from giddy credulity, from wavering levity,
 from fond admiration of persons and things, being
 able to distinguish of things, and to settle our judg-
 ments about them, and to get an intimate acquaint-
 ance with them, assuring to us their true nature and

SERM. worth; that we are also thereby rescued from admiring ourselves, and that overweening self-conceit-
 LIV. edness, of which the Wise Man saith, *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*
 Prov. xvi. 16.

It is a calling, whereby we are qualified and enabled to do God service; to gratify his desires, to promote his honour, to advance his interests; to render his name glorious in the world, by teaching, maintaining, and propagating his truth; by persuading men to render their due love, reverence, and obedience to him; than which we can have no more honourable or satisfactory employment; more like to that of the glorious and blessed spirits.

It is a calling, the due prosecution whereof doth ingratiate us with God, and procureth his favour; rendering us fit objects of his love, and entitling us thereto in regard to our qualities and recompense of our works: for *God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom:* and, *So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*
 Wisd. vii. 28.
 Psal. v. 5.
 Prov. iii. 4.

It is a calling, whereby with greatest advantage we may benefit men, and deserve well of the world; drawing men to the knowledge and service of God, reclaiming them from error and sin, rescuing them from misery, and conducting them to happiness; by clear instruction, by faithful admonition, by powerful exhortation. And what can be more noble, than to be the lights of the world, the guides of practice to men, the authors of so much good, so egregious benefactors to mankind?

It is a calling most exempt from the cares, the crosses, the turmoils, the factious jars, the anxious

intrigues, the vexatious molestations of the world; **SERM.**
 its business lying out of the road of these mischiefs, **LIV.**
 wholly lying in solitary retirement, or being trans-
 acted in the most innocent and ingenuous company.

It is a calling least subject to any danger or dis-
 appointment; wherein we may well be assured not
 to miscarry or lose our labour; for the merchant in-
 deed by manifold accidents may lose his voyage, or
 find a bad market; the husbandman may plough and
 sow in vain: but the student hardly can fail of im-
 proving his stock, and reaping a good crop of know-
 ledge; especially if he study with a conscientious
 mind, and pious reverence to God, imploring his gra-
 cious help and blessing.

It is a calling, the industry used wherein doth
 abundantly recompense itself, by the pleasure and
 sweetness which it carrieth in it; so that the more
 pains one taketh, the more delight he findeth, feeling
 himself proportionably to grow in knowledge, and
 that his work becometh continually more easy to
 him.

It is a calling, the business whereof doth so exer-
 cise as not to weary, so entertain as not to cloy us;
 being not (as other occupations are) a drawing in a
 mill, or a nauseous tedious repetition of the same
 work; but a continued progress toward fresh objects;
 our mind not being staked to one or a few poor mat-
 ters, but having immense fields of contemplation,
 wherein it may everlastingly expatiate, with great
 proficiency and pleasure^c.

It is a calling, which doth ever afford plentiful
 fruit, even in regard to the conveniences of this pre-

^c Γηράσκω ὃ ἀεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος.

SERM. sent and temporal state; the which sufficiently will
 LIV. requite the pains expended thereon: for if we be

honestly industrious, we shall not want success; and succeeding we shall not want a competence of wealth, of reputation, of interest in the world: for concerning wisdom, which is the result of honest study, the

Prov. vii.
18. iii. 16.

Wise Man telleth us, *Riches and honour are with her, yea, durable riches and righteousness: Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand*

iv. 8, 9.

riches and honour: Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. In common experience the

wealth of the mind doth qualify for employments, which have good recompenses annexed to them; and neither God nor man will suffer him long to want, who is endowed with worthy accomplishments of knowledge. It was a ridiculous providence in Nero, that if he should chance to lose his empire, he might live by fiddling: yet his motto was good; and Dionysius, another tyrant, found the benefit of it; τὸ τεχνίον πᾶσα γαῖα τρέφει, he that hath any good art, hath therein an estate, and land in every place; he is secured against being reduced to extremity of

Eccl. vii.
12.

any misfortune: *Wisdom, saith the Wise Man, is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.* Money is a defence, of which fortune may bereave us; but wisdom is beyond its attacks, being a treasure seated in a place inaccessible to external impressions.

Prov xii. 8.
A man shall
be com-

And as a learned man cannot be destitute of substance; so he cannot want credit, having such an

ornament, than which none hath a more general **SERM.** estimation; and which can be of low rate only among **LIV.** that sort of folk, to whom Solomon saith, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?—and fools hate knowledge?* mended according to his wisdom. Prov. i. 22, 7. xxii. 17. It is that which recommendeth a man in all company, and procureth regard, every one yielding attention and acceptance to instructive, neat, apposite discourse, (that which the scripture calleth *acceptable, pleasant, gracious words*;) men think themselves obliged thereby by receiving information and satisfaction from it; and accordingly *Every man*, saith the Wise Man, *shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer*; and—*for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend*; and, *the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious*. Prov. xxiv. 26. xxii. 11. Eccles. x. 12. It is that, an eminency wherein purchaseth lasting fame, and a life after death, in the good memory and opinion of posterity: *Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out: his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation*. Eccles. xxxix. 9. A fame no less great, and far more innocent, than acts of chivalry and martial prowess; for is not Aristotle as renowned for teaching the world with his pen, as Alexander for conquering it with his sword? Is not one far oftener mentioned than the other? Do not men hold themselves much more obliged to the learning of the philosopher, than to the valour of the warrior? Indeed the fame of all others is indebted to the pains of the scholar, and could not subsist but with and by his fame: *Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori*; learning consecrateth itself and its subject together to immortal remembrance.

SERM. It is a calling that fitteth a man for all conditions
LIV. and fortunes; so that he can enjoy prosperity with
 moderation, and sustain adversity with comfort: he
 that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend,
 a wholesome counsellor, a cheerful companion, an
 effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by think-
 ing, one may innocently divert and pleasantly en-
 tertain himself, as in all weathers, so in all fortunes.

In fine, it is a calling, which Solomon, who had
 curiously observed and exactly compared and scan-
 ned, by reason and by experience, all other occupa-
 tions and ways of life, did prefer above all others;
 and we may presume would sooner have parted with
 Prov. iv. 7. his royal state, than with his learning; for *Wisdom*,
 saith he, *is the principal thing, therefore get wis-
 dom; and with all thy getting get understanding;*
 Eccles. ii. and, *Then I saw* (then, that is, after a serious dis-
 13. quisition and discussion of things, I saw) *that wis-
 dom excelleth folly* (that is, knowledge excelleth
 ignorance) *as light excelleth darkness.*

These things and much more may be said of
 learning in general; but if more distinctly we sur-
 vey each part, and each object of it, we shall find
 that each doth yield considerable emoluments and
 delights; benefit to our soul, advantage to our life,
 satisfaction to our mind.

The observation of things, and collection of expe-
 riments, how doth it enrich the mind with ideas,
 and breed a kind of familiar acquaintance with all
 things, so that nothing doth surprise us, or strike
 our mind with astonishment and admiration! And
 Eccles. i. 8. *if our eye be not satisfied with seeing, nor our
 ear filled with hearing,* how much less is our mind
 satiated with the pleasures of speculating and ob-

erving that immense variety of objects subject to SERM.
its view! LIV.

The exercise of our mind in rational discursiveness about things in quest of truth; canvassing questions, examining arguments for and against; how greatly doth it better us, fortifying our natural parts, enabling us to fix our thoughts on objects without roving, inuring us to weigh and resolve, and judge well about matters proposed; preserving us from being easily abused by captious fallacies, gulled by specious pretences, tossed about with every doubt or objection started before us!

Invention of any kind (in discerning the causes of abstruse effects, in resolving hard problems, in demonstrating theorems, in framing composures of witty description, or forcible persuasion,) how much doth it exceed the pleasure of hunting for any game, or of combating for any victory! Do any man's children so much please him, as these creatures of his brain?

The reading of books, what is it but conversing with the wisest men of all ages and all countries, who thereby communicate to us their most deliberate thoughts, choicest notions, and best inventions, couched in good expression, and digested in exact method?

And as to the particular matters or objects of study, all have their use and pleasure. I shall only touch them.

The very initial studies of tongues and grammatical literature are very profitable and necessary, as the inlets to knowledge, whereby we are enabled to understand wise men speaking their sense in their own terms and lively strain, whereby especially we

SERM. are assisted to drink sacred knowledge out of the
 LIV. fountains, the divine oracles.

Luther would not part with a little Hebrew he had for all the Turkish empire.

Rhetoric, or the art of conveying our thoughts to others by speech with advantages of clearness, force, and elegancy, so as to instruct, to persuade, to delight the auditors; of how great benefit is it, if it be well used! How much may it conduce to the service of God, and edification of men! What hath been a more effectual instrument of doing good, and working wonders not only in the world, but in the church? How many souls have been converted from error, vanity, and vice, to truth, soberness, and virtue, by an eloquent Apollos, a Basil, a Chrysostom!

*Ἄνε λόγιος,
καὶ δυνατός.*
Acts xviii.
24.

The perusal of history, how pleasant illumination of mind, how useful direction of life, how sprightly incentives to virtue doth it afford! How doth it supply the room of experience, and furnish us with prudence at the expense of others, informing us about the ways of action, and the consequences thereof by examples, without our own danger or trouble! How may it instruct and encourage us in piety, while therein we trace the paths of God in men, or observe the methods of divine Providence, how the Lord and Judge of the world in due season protecteth, prospereth, blesseth, rewardeth innocence and integrity; how he crosseth, defeateth, blasteth, curseth, punisheth iniquity and outrage; managing things with admirable temper of wisdom, to the good of mankind, and advancement of his own glory!

The mathematical sciences, how pleasant is the speculation of them to the mind! How useful is the practice to common life! How do they whet

and excite the mind! How do they inure it to strict reasoning and patient meditation! SERM.
LIV.

Natural philosophy, the contemplation of this great theatre, or visible system presented before us; observing the various appearances therein, and inquiring into their causes; reflecting on the order, connection, and harmony of things; considering their original source, and their final design: how doth it enlarge our minds, and advance them above vulgar amusements, and the admiration of those petty things, about which men cark and bicker! How may it serve to work in us pious affections of admiration, reverence, and love toward our great Creator, whose *eternal divinity is clearly seen*, Rom. i. 20. whose *glory is declared*, whose transcendent per- Psal. xix. 1.
Psal. viii. fections and attributes of immense power, wisdom, and goodness are conspicuously displayed, whose particular kindness toward us men doth evidently shine in those his works of nature!

The study of moral philosophy, how exceedingly beneficial may it be to us, suggesting to us the dictates of reason, concerning the nature and faculties of our soul, the chief good and end of our life, the way and means of attaining happiness, the best rules and methods of practice; the distinctions between good and evil, the nature of each virtue, and motives to embrace it; the rank wherein we stand in the world, and the duties proper to our relations: by rightly understanding and estimating which things we may know how to behave ourselves decently and soberly toward ourselves, justly and prudently toward our neighbours; we may learn to correct our inclinations, to regulate our appetites, to moderate our passions, to govern our actions, to conduct and

SERM. wield all our practice well in prosecution of our end;
LIV. so as to enjoy our being and conveniences of life in constant quiet and peace, with tranquillity and satisfaction of mind!

But especially the study of theology, how numberless, unexpressible advantages doth it yield! For

It enlighteneth our minds with the best knowledge concerning the most high and worthy objects, in order to the most happy end, with the firmest assurance.

It certainly and perfectly doth inform us concerning the nature and attributes, the will and intentions, the works and providence of God.

It fully declareth to us our own nature, our original, our designed end, our whole duty, our certain way of attaining eternal life and felicity.

It exactly teacheth us how we should demean ourselves in all respects piously toward God, justly and charitably toward our neighbour, soberly toward ourselves; without blame in the world, with satisfaction of our conscience, with assured hope of blessed rewards.

It proposeth those encouragements, and exhibiteth assurances of those helps, which serve potently to engage us in all good practice.

It setteth before us a most complete and lively pattern of all goodness; apt most clearly to direct, most strongly to excite, most obligingly to engage us thereto; especially instructing and inclining to the practice of the most high and hard duties, meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, contempt of all worldly vanities.

¹ Pet. i. 12. It discovereth those sublime mysteries and stupendous wonders of grace, whereby God hath de-

Tit. iii. 4.

monstrated an incomprehensible kindness to man-kind, and our obligation to correspondent gratitude. SERM.
LIV.

It representeth manifold arguments and incentives to love God with most intense affection, to confide in him with most firm assurance, to delight in him continually *with joy unspeakable*; which are the noblest, the sweetest, the happiest operations of our soul.

It reareth our hearts from vain thoughts, and mean desires concerning these poor, transitory, earthly things, to contemplations, affections, and hopes toward objects most excellent, eternal, and celestial. 2 Cor. iv.
18.

It engageth us to study the book of God, the book of books, the richest mine of most excellent knowledge, containing infallible oracles of truth, and heavenly rules of life; *which are able to make us wise to salvation, and perfect to every good work.* (2 Tim. iii.
15.)
Psal. xix.
10.

And how can we otherwise be so well employed, as in meditation about such things? What occupation doth nearer approach to that of the blessed angels? What heaven is there upon earth like to that of constantly feasting our minds and hearts in the contemplation of such objects? Especially considering that this study doth not only yield private benefit to ourselves in forwarding our own salvation, but enableth us by our guidance and encouragement to promote the eternal welfare of others, and by our endeavours to people heaven, according to that exhortation of St. Paul pressing on Timothy this study with diligence: *Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this* 1 Tim. iv.
16.

SERM. *thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear*
 LIV. *thee.*

So considerable is each part of learning, so extremely profitable are some parts of it. Indeed the skill of any liberal art is valuable, as a handsome ornament, as an harmless divertisement, as an useful instrument upon occasions; as preferable to all other accomplishments and advantages of person or fortune, (beauty, strength, wealth, power, or the like;) for who would not purchase any kind of such knowledge at any rate; who would sell it for any price; who would not choose rather to be deformed or impotent in his body, than to have a mishapen and weak mind; to have rather a lank purse, than an empty brain; to have no title at all, than no worth to bear it out; if any would, he is not of

1 Kings iv.
29—

Solomon's mind; for of wisdom (by which he meaneth a comprehension of all knowledge, divine and human; into which the knowledge of natural things, of mathematics, of poetry, are reckoned ingredients)

Prov. iii. 14.
viii. 11.

he saith, *The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be com-*

Prov. viii.
19. xvi. 16.
xx. 15. iv. 7.

pared unto her. Her fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold; and her revenue than choice silver.

Now then, considering all these advantages of our calling, if we by our negligence or sluggishness therein do lose them, are we not very ingrateful to God, who gave them, as with a gracious intent for our good, so with expectation that we should improve them to his service? If God had allotted to us the calling of rustics, or of artificers, we had been

impious in not diligently following it; but we are SERM.
abominably ingrateful in neglecting this most in- LIV.
comparably excellent vocation.

Are we not extremely defective to ourselves, if indulging a wretched humour of laziness we will not enjoy those sweet pleasures, nor embrace those great profits to which God in mercy calleth us?

If Solomon said true, *He that getteth wisdom* Prov. xix. 8.
loveth his own soul, he that keepeth understanding shall find good; how little friends are we to ourselves, how neglectful of our own welfare, by not using the means of getting wisdom!

The heart of him that hath understanding seek- Prov. xv.
eth knowledge, saith Solomon; what a fool then is ^{14.}
he that shunneth it! who, though it be his way, and his special duty to seek it, yet neglecteth it; choosing rather to do nothing, or to do worse.

And do we not deserve great blame, displeasure, and disgrace from mankind, if, having such opportunities of qualifying ourselves to do good, and serve the public, we by our idleness render ourselves worthless and useless?

How, being slothful in our business, can we answer for our violating the wills, for abusing the goodness, for perverting the charity and bounty of our worthy founders and benefactors, who gave us the good things we enjoy, not to maintain us in idleness, but for supports and encouragements of our industry? how can we excuse ourselves from dishonesty, and perfidious dealing, seeing that we are admitted to these enjoyments under condition, and upon confidence (confirmed by our free promises and most solemn engagements) of using them according to their pious intent, that is, in a diligent

248 *Of Industry in our particular Calling, &c.*

SERM. prosecution of our studies, in order to the service of
LIV. God, and of the public?

Let every scholar, when he mispendeth an hour, or sluggeth on his bed, but imagine that he heareth the voice of those glorious kings, or venerable prelates, or worthy gentlemen, complaining thus, and rating him: Why, sluggard, dost thou against my will possess my estate? why dost thou presume to occupy the place due to an industrious person? why dost thou forget or despise thy obligations to my kindness? thou art an usurper, a robber, or a purloiner of my goods, which I never intended for such as thee; I challenge thee of wrong to myself, and of sacrilege toward my God, to whose service I devoted those his gifts to me.

How reproachful will it be to us, if that expostulation may concern us, *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?*

Prov. xvii.
16.

If to be a dunce or a bungler in any profession be shameful, how much more ignominious and infamous to a scholar to be such! from whom all men expect that he should excel in intellectual abilities, and be able to help others by his instruction and advice.

Nothing surely would more grate on the heart of one that hath a spark of ingenuity, of modesty, of generous good nature, than to be liable to such an imputation.

To avoid it therefore, (together with all the guilt and all the mischiefs attending on sloth,) let each of us, in God's name, carefully mind his business; and let the grace and blessing of God prosper you therein. Amen.

SERMON LV.

THE UNSEARCHABLENESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

ROM. xi. 33.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

TH**ES**E words are the close of a disputation, SERM. LV. wherein St. Paul was engaged with the advocates of Judaism, concerning God's providence toward his ancient people, in rejecting the greatest part of them, upon their refusal to embrace the Christian doctrine; and in admitting the Gentile world to favour upon its compliance with the overtures thereof proposed in the gospel. In this proceeding those infidels could not discern God's hand, nor would allow such a dispensation worthy of him, advancing several exceptions against it: God, said they, having espoused and consecrated us to himself; having to our fathers, in regard to their piety, made so absolute promises of benediction on their posterity; having consequently endowed us with such privileges and choice pledges of his favour; having taken so much pains with us, and performed so great things in our behalf; having so long avowed, supported, and cherished us; how can it well consist with his wisdom, with his justice, with his fidelity,

SERM. with his constancy, thus instantly to abandon and
LV. repudiate us? Doth not this dealing argue his former affections to have been misplaced? Doth it not implead his ancient covenant and law of imperfection? Doth it not supplant his own designs, and unravel all that he for so many ages hath been doing? Upon such accounts did this dispensation appear very strange and scandalous to them: but St. Paul, being infallibly assured of its truth, doth undertake to vindicate it from all misprisions, rendering a fair account of it, and assigning for it many satisfactory reasons, drawn from the general equity of the case, from the nature of God, his attributes, and his relations to men; from the congruity of this proceeding to the tenour of God's providence, to his most ancient purposes, to the true intent of his promises, to his express declarations and predictions; to the state of things in the world, and the pressing needs of all mankind: such reasons (I say, which I have not time more explicitly to relate) doth the apostle produce in favour of this great dispensation; the which did suffice to clear and justify it from all their objections: yet notwithstanding, after that he had steered his discourse through all these rocks, he thought it safe to cast anchor; winding up the contest in this modest intimation, that whatever he could say, might not perhaps exhaust the difficulty, or void all scruple; that therefore in this, and in all such cases, for entire satisfaction, we should have recourse to the incomprehensible wisdom of God, who frequently in the course of his providence doth act upon grounds, and ordereth things in methods, transcending our ability to discover or trace: to consider some causes and reasons of which incom-

prehensibility, and to ground thereon some practical advices, will be the scope of my discourse: the reasons may be these: SERM.
LV.

1. As the dealings of very wise men sometimes are founded upon maxims, and admit justifications, not obvious nor penetrable by vulgar conceit; so may God act according to rules of wisdom and justice, which it may be quite impossible by our faculties to apprehend, or with our means to descry.

As there are natural modes of being and operation, (such as God's necessary subsistence, his production of things from nothing, his eternity without succession, his immensity without extension, his prescience without necessitation of events, his ever acting, but never changing; and the like,) so there may be prudential and moral rules of proceeding far above our reach; so God himself telleth us: *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Isa. lv. 9. Some of them we may be incapable to know, because of our finite nature; they being peculiar objects of divine wisdom, and not to be understood by any creature: for as God cannot impart the power of doing all things possible, so may he not communicate the faculty of knowing all things intelligible; that being indeed to ungod himself, or to deprive himself of his peerless supremacy in wisdom; hence he is styled *the only wise God*; hence he is said to *dwell in light inaccessible*; hence he *chargeth the angels with folly*; hence the most illuminate seraphims do veil their faces before him. 1 Tim. i. 17.
Rom. xvi. 27.
Jude 25.
1 Tim. vi. 16.
Job iv. 18.
Isa. vi. 2.

Other such rules we may not be able to perceive from the meanness of our nature, or our low rank among creatures: for beneath omniscience there

SERM. being innumerable forms of intelligence, in the low-
LV. est of these we sit, one remove from beasts; being
 endowed with capacities suitable to that inferior station, and to those meaner employments, for which
 we were designed and framed; whence our mind
 hath a pitch, beyond which it cannot soar; and
 things clearly intelligible to more noble creatures,
 moving in a higher orb, may be dark and unexpli-
 cable to us: *As an angel of God, so is my lord the*
king, to discern good and bad, was an expression
 importing this difference, how those glorious crea-
 tures do overtop us in intellectual capacities.

Ps. ciii. 20.
 2 Pet. ii.
 11.

2 Sam. xiv.
 17, 20. xix.
 27.

Also divers notions not simply passing our capacity to know, we are not yet in condition to ken, by reason of our circumstances here, in this dark corner of things, to which we are confined, and wherein we lie under many disadvantages of attaining knowledge. He that is shut up in a close place, and can only peep through chinks, who standeth in a valley, and hath his prospect intercepted, who is encompassed with fogs, who hath but a dusky light to view things by, whose eyes are weak or foul, how can he see much or far; how can he discern things remote, minute, or subtile, clearly and distinctly? Such is our case; our mind is pent up in the body, and looketh only through those clefts by which objects strike our sense; its intuition is limited within a very small compass; it resideth in an atmosphere of fancy, stuffed with exhalations from temper, appetite, passion, interest; its light is scant and faint, (for sense and experience do reach only some few gross matters of fact; light infused, and revelation imparted to us, proceed from arbitrary dispensation, in definite measures;) our ratiocination consequently

such principles must be very short and defect- SERM.
 ; nor are our minds ever thoroughly sound, or LV.
 re and defecate from prejudices; hence no won-
 : that now we are wholly ignorant of divers great
 ths, or have but a glimmering notion of them,
 ich we may and hereafter shall come fully and
 arly to understand; so that even apostles, the
 retaries of Heaven, might say, *We know in part,* ^{1 Cor. xiii.}
and we prophesy in part; we now see through a ^{9, 12.}
glass darkly, but then face to face.

In fine, those rules of equity or expedience, which
 in our transactions with one another do use,
 being derived from our original inclinations to like
 the good things, or from notions stamped on our
 mind when God made us according to his image,
 or in common experience, from any kind of rational
 instruction, (from the prescription of God's word,) if
 they be applied to the dealings of God, will be found
 very incongruous, or deficient; the case being vastly
 altered, from that infinite distance in nature and
 distance between God and us; and from the immense
 differences which his relations toward us have from
 our relations to one another.

Wherefore in divers inquiries about Providence,
 which our curiosity will stretch itself, it is impos-
 sible for us to be resolved; and launching into them,
 we shall soon get out of our depth, so as to swim in
 dissatisfaction, or to sink into distrust: Why God
 made the world at such an instant, no sooner or
 later; why he made it thus, not exempt from all
 disorder; why he framed man (the prince of visible
 creatures) so fallible and frail, so prone to sin, so
 liable to misery; why so many things happen of-
 fensive to him, why his gifts are distributed with

SERM. such inequality? Such questions we are apt to pro-
LV. pound and to debate; but the resolution of them
 our mind perhaps was not made to apprehend, nor
 in its most elevate condition shall attain it: how-
 ever in this state we by no means can come at it;
 it at least being kept close from us among those
 things, of which it is said, *the secret things belong*
unto the Lord our God, in distinction from others,
 about which it is added, *but those that are revealed*
belong unto us, and to our children for ever.

Deut. xxix.
29.

Rom. ix.
20.

Isa. xlv. 9.

Gen. xviii.

25.

Ezek. xviii.

25.

Isa. v. 3.

son; when the case is such that we can apprehend
 it, and the apprehension of it may conduce to good
 purposes.

2. As the standing rules of God's acting, so the
 occasional grounds thereof are commonly placed be-
 yond the sphere of our apprehension.

God is obliged to prosecute his own immutable
 decrees; *working all things*, as the apostle saith,
according to the counsel of his own will; which
 how can we anywise come to discover? Can we
 climb up above the heaven of heavens, and there
 unlock his closet, rifle his cabinet, and peruse the
 records of everlasting destiny, by which the world is
 governed? No; *Who knoweth his mind, or hath*

Rom. xi.
34.

counsellor? *Who, saith the prophet, hath* SERM.
the counsel of the Lord; or hath perceived LV.

and his word?

He searcheth the hearts, and tryeth the reins of
them; he doth weigh their spirits, and their works;

and now he knoweth their frame, he doth understand their
affairs; he perceiveth their closest in-
teriors; their deepest contrivances, their most re-
volutions; he consequently is acquainted with

all their qualifications, capacities, and merits; unto
whom he doth most justly and wisely accommodate
his judgments; the which therefore must
surpass the opinions and expectations of us,
being ignorant of those particulars, and can only

judge by the exterior face or semblance of things: for
as he saith (in the case of preferring David before his
*father) *God seeth not as man seeth; for**
he judgeth on the outward appearance, but God
judgeth on the heart.

So hath a perfect foresight of contingent
 things; he seeth upon what pin each wheel moveth,

and what weight every scale will be turned; he
 knoweth all the connections, all the entanglements
 of things, and what the result will be upon the combi-
 nation: the clashing of numberless causes; in cor-
 dination to which perceptions he doth order things
 orderly and conveniently; whereas we being
 blind, or very dimsighted in such respects,
 know nothing future, and but few things present,)

κνι. 2. Isa. xxvi. 7. 1 Sam. ii. 3. Psal. ciii. 14. cxix.
 Job xiv. 16.

ν γὰρ μόνα ὁρῶμεν τὰ πράγματα· ὁ δὲ τῶν ὅλων Θεός, καὶ τῶν
 ὧν ἐπίσταται τὸν σκοπὸν, καὶ ταῦτα μᾶλλον, ἢ τοῖς ἔργοις δικάζων
 ἰσχύει. Theod. Ep. 3.

Isa. xl. 13.

Jer. xxiii.

18.

Wisd. ix.

13.

1 Sam. xvi.

Isa. xlv. 11.

SERM. cannot apprehend what is fit and feasible ; or why
 LV. that is done, which appeareth done to us.

God observeth in what relations, and what degrees of comparison, (as to their natures, their virtues, their consequences,) all things do stand, each toward others ; so poising them in the balance of right judgment, as exactly to distinguish their just weight and worth : whereas we cannot tell what things to compare, we know not how to put them into the scale, we are unapt to make due allowances, we are unable to discern which side doth overweigh : in the immense variety of objects our knowledge doth extend to few things eligible, nor among them can we pick out the best competitors for our choice : hence often must we be at great losses in scanning the designs, or tracing the footsteps of Providence.

3. We are also incapable thoroughly to discern the ways of Providence from our moral defects, in some measure common to all men ; from our stupidity, our sloth, our temerity, our impatience, our impurity of heart, our perverseness of will and affections : we have not the perspicacity to espy the subtile tracks and secret reserves of divine wisdom ; we have not the industry, with steady application of mind, to regard and meditate on God's works ; we have not the temper and patience to wait upon God, until he discover himself in the accomplishment of
 Matt. v. 8. his purposes ; we have not that *blessed purity of heart*, which is requisite to the *seeing God* in his special dispensations ; we have not that rectitude of will and government of our passions, as not to be scandalized at what God doeth, if it thwarteth our conceit or humour : such defects are observable in the best men ; who therefore have misapprehended,

have disrelished, have fretted and murmured at the proceedings of God: we might instance in Job, in David, in Elias, in Jonah, in the holy apostles themselves, by whose speeches and deportments in some cases it may appear how difficult it is for us, who have *eyes of flesh*, as Job speaketh, and hearts too never quite freed of carnality, to see through, or fully to acquiesce in the dealings of God. SERM.
LV.

It is indeed a distemper incident to us, which we can hardly shun or cure, that we are apt to measure the equity and expedience of things according to our opinions and passions; affecting consequently to impose on God our silly imaginations as rules of his proceeding, and to constitute him the executioner of our sorry passions: what we conceit fit to be done, that we take God bound to perform; when we feel ourselves stirred, then we presume God must be alike concerned: to our apprehensions every slight inconvenience is a huge calamity, every scratch of fortune is a ghastly wound; God therefore, we think, should have prevented it, or must presently remove it; every pitiful bauble, every trivial accommodation is a matter of high consequence, which if God withhold, we are ready to clamour on him, and wail as children for want of a trifle. Are we soundly angry, or inflamed with zeal? then *fire must come down from heaven*, then thunderbolts must fly about, then nothing but sudden woe and vengeance are denounced. Are we pleased? then showers of blessings must descend on the heads, then floods of wealth must run into the laps of our favourites, otherwise we are not satisfied; and scarce can deem God awake, or mindful of his charge. We do beyond measure hate or despise some persons, and to those God must not

SERM. afford any favour, any mercy, any forbearance, or
LV. time of repentance; we excessively admire or dote
 on others, and those God must not touch or cross; if
 he doth not proceed thus, he is in danger to forfeit
 his authority: he must hardly be allowed to govern
 the world, in case he will not square his administra-
 tions to our fond conceit or froward humour: hence
 no wonder that men often are stumbled about Pro-
 vidence; for God will not rule according to their
 fancy or pleasure, (it would be a mad world if he
 should,) neither indeed could he do so if he would,
 their judgments and their desires being infinitely
 various, inconsistent, and repugnant. Again,

4. The nature of those instruments which divine
 Providence doth use in administration of human
 affairs, hindereth us from discerning it: it is an ob-
 servation among philosophers, that the footsteps of
 divine wisdom are, to exclusion of doubt, far more
 conspicuous in the works of nature, than in the
 management of our affairs^b; so that some who by
 contemplation of natural appearances were convinced
 of God's existence, and his protection of the world,
 (who thence could not doubt but that an immense
 wisdom had erected the beautiful frame of heaven
 and earth, had ranged the stars in their order and

Diod. Sic. l. courses, had formed the bodies and souls of animals,
 xv. p. 482.

^b Nam cum dispositi quæsissem fœdera mundi,
 Præscriptosque mari fines ———

—————tunc omnia rebar

Consilio firmata Dei ———

Sed cum res hominum tanta caligine volvi

Adspicerem—————

—————rursus labefacta cadebat

Relligio, &c.

Claud. in Ruff. 1.

had provided for the subsistence and propagation of each species, had settled and doth uphold the visible world in its so comely and convenient state; that even such men,) reflecting on the course of human transactions, have staggered into distrust, whether a divine wisdom doth sit at the helm of our affairs; many thence hardly would admit God to be concerned in them, but supposed him to commit their conduct to a fatal swinge, or a casual fluctuation of obvious causes: one great reason of this difference may be, that whereas the instruments of divine power in nature are in themselves merely passive, or act only as they are acted by pure necessity, (as a pen in writing, or a hammer in striking,) being thence determinate, uniform, constant, and certain in their operation; whenever there any footsteps of counsel, any tendency to an end, and deviation from the common tracks of motion do appear, such effects cannot reasonably be imputed merely to natural causes, but to a superior wisdom, wielding them in such a manner, and steering them to such a mark: but the visible engines of Providence in our affairs are self-moving agents, working with knowledge and choice; the which, as in themselves they are indeterminate, irregular, and uncertain; so they are capable to be diversified in numberless unaccountable ways, according to various representations of objects, or by influence of divers principles inclining to judge and choose differently: temper, humour, passion, prejudice, custom, example, together with contingencies of occasion, (depending on like principles in adjacent free causes,) do move, singly or combinedly, in ways so implicate, to the production of so various events, that nothing hardly can fall out, which may not with some

SERM.
LV.

SERM. plausible colour of reason be derived from some one
LV. of those sources, or from a complication of them : no-
 thing can appear so uncouth or extravagant, which
 may not be fathered on some fetch of wit, or some
 hit of fancy, or some capricio of humour, or some
 transport of passion, or some lucky advantage, or on
 divers of those conspiring ; whence in accounting
 for the reason of such events, men deem they may
 leave out Providence as superfluous ; especially con-
 sidering, that usually disorders and defects, only im-
 putable to man's will, do accompany and further such
 events.

For instance, what other cause would many think
 needful to assign for the conveyance of Joseph into
 Egypt, than the envy of his brethren ; for Shimei's
 reviling David, than his base malignity ; for David's
 numbering the people, than his wanton pride ; for
 Jeroboam's revolt, than his unruly ambition ; for
 Job's being robbed, than the thievish disposition of
 the Arabs ; for his being diseased, than a redundance
 of bad humours ; for our Lord's suffering, than the
 spiteful rage of the Jewish rulers and people ; to-
 gether with the treacherous avarice of Judas, and
 the corrupt easiness of Pilate ? These events all of
 them are ascribed to God's hand and special ordi-
 nation ; but men could not see or avow it in them :
 what need, will men ever say, in such cases to in-
 troduce God's aid, when human means suffice to
 achieve the feat ?

5. Indeed, as in nature, the influences of heaven,
 and of inferior causes, so commonly in the produc-
 tion of these events, divine and human agency are
 so knit and twisted one with the other, that it is
 not easy to discriminate them, so as to sever the

ounds of common and special providence; or to discern what God performeth by natural instruments, what by superior efficacy; when the balance urneth from our inclinations, when it is cast from grain thrown in by divine interposition; the management of these affairs being a concert, wherein God's wisdom beareth one part, man's free-will playeth another^c; fortune and occasion also do strike us; we, not seeing the first, are prone to ascribe all the harmony to the last, which are most obvious and visible.

6. The more apt we are to do thus, because the manner of divine efficacy is ever very soft and gentle: God disposeth things *fortiter et suaviter*; Wisd. viii. so as effectually to perform what he designeth, but in the most sweet and easy way: his providence doth not hurry along like an impetuous rumbling torrent, but glideth on as a smooth and still current, with an irresistible but imperceptible force carrying things down therewith: without much ado, without any clatter, by a nod of his head, by a whisper of his mouth, by a turn of his hand, he doth effect his purposes: winding up a close spring, he setteth the greatest wheels in motion; and thrusting in an invisible spoke, he stoppeth the greatest wheels in their career; injecting a thought, exciting an honour, presenting an occasion, insinuating a petty accident, he bringeth about the most notable events. He doth so *fashion the hearts of men, so manage their hands, so guide their steps*, that even they who are acted by him cannot feel the least touch upon them. For, *the king's heart is in the hand*

^c Θεός μὲν πάντα, καὶ μετὰ Θεὸν τύχη καὶ καιρὸς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα κυβερνῶσι πάντα. Max. Tyr. diss. 3. e Plat.

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¹ ἰσχύσεως καὶ
χερσῶν.

<sup>Θεῶ τινος
ἰμβάλλοντος
εἰς τοὺν ἀν-
θρώπου.</sup>
Plut. Timol.

<sup>Psal. xxxiii.
15.
Isa. xli. 13.
xlii. 6.
Prov. xvi.
9. xx. 24.
Jer. x. 23.</sup>

<sup>Job xxxiii.
14. xxxiii.
8.
Prov. xxi.
1.</sup>

SERM. *of the Lord, as the rivers of waters; he turneth*
 LV. *it wheresoever he will; that is, by secret pipes, by*

obscure channels, God conveyeth the minds and wills of greatest persons (the chief engines of his providence) unto such points of resolution as he pleaseth, so that they seem to flow thither of their own accord, without any exterior direction or impulse: hence do his most effectual operations slip by us without making impression on our minds, which are wont to apprehend things, as with a gross palpability they do incur the senses, so that the Preacher, comparing the methods of Providence with the most occult proceedings in nature, might

Eccles. xi. well say, *As thou knowest not the way of the spi-*
 5. *rit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.* Again,

7. God, in his progress toward the achievement of any design, is not wont to go in the most direct and compendious ways, but commonly windeth about, and taketh a large compass, enfolding several other coincident purposes, some whereof may be no less considerable, than is that, which we deem most necessary, and affect to see despatched: but this course seemeth tedious to us, who have not the wit to perceive that complexion of ends, nor the temper to wait for the completion of them. If God, when we seem to need, doth not instantly appear in our favour and succour; if he doth not presently vindicate truth and right; if he doth not nip wicked designs in the bud, and repress the first onsets of outrageous violence; if for a while he suffereth the *tabernacles of robbers to prosper, and iniquity to lift up its horn*; then he is in a slumber, quite

unmindful or insensible of us; then he turneth aside SERM. LV.
 his face, or doth behold what passeth as an uncon-
 cerned spectator; then he standeth aloof, unready
 to help us; then doth he hold off his hand, not
 meddling in our affairs: in such cases we are apt
 to cry out, *Estis ubi? O superi!* ^d *How long,* Sil. Ital.
O Lord, wilt thou forget; how long wilt thou
hide thy face? Lord, how long wilt thou look on?
Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? why standest
thou afar off? why withdrawest thou thy hand?
pluck it out of thy bosom: Return, O Lord, how
long? Such are our prayers, such our expostula-
 tions; so is our blind impatience prone to muse and
 mutter; not considering how many good designs
 God is carrying on in a calm and steady pace, by
 well measured steps, all which, in due season, when
 they are ripe for accomplishment, shall undoubtedly
 be effected; for, *The Lord*, as St. Peter saith, *is* (Jer. xxiii. 20.)
not slack concerning his promise, as some men 2 Pet. iii.
count slackness; but is longsuffering toward all ^{9, 10.}
men; that is, he certainly will express his faithful
 benignity toward good men, yet so as also to extend
 his merciful patience toward others; he so will ten-
 der the interests of some, as concurrently to procure
 the welfare of all, and accordingly will time his pro-
 ceedings, allowing the leisure and opportunities re-
 quisite thereto: he can, although we cannot, *wait* Isa. xxx. 18.
to be gracious; for as in him there are no passions
 to precipitate action, so to him there are no sensible
 differences of time, *one day being with the Lord*

^d Psal. xiii. 1. lxxxix. 46. xc. 13. lxxiv. 10. xlv. 24. lv. 1.
 xciv. 3. xxxv. 17. xlv. 23. xxxv. 23. vii. 6. lxxiv. 11. x. 1. xc. 13.
 vi. 4. vii. 7. lxxx. 14. xxii. 1. xi. 19. xxxviii. 2. lxxi. 12. Vid.

SERM. *as a thousand years, and a thousand years as*
 LV. *one day.*

8. Again, God (as is the property of every wise agent) is wont to act variously, according to the state and circumstances of things, or to the dispositions and capacities of persons; so as to do the same thing for different ends, and different things for the same end; to apply one instrument to several uses, and by several instruments to work out one purpose: so he afflicteth good men out of love, for trial and improvement of their virtues; bad men in displeasure, to illustrate his power and justice on them; he encourageth and blesseth the one, he punisheth and curseth the other with prosperity; he reclaimeth both from error and sin by either of those methods, as their temper and their circumstances do require. Whence it is very difficult for us ever from the kind of accidents befalling men, to divine how far God is concerned in them, or to what particular scope they are aimed; so that well might the Preacher, upon a careful observation of such occurrences, establish this rule, *No man knoweth love or hatred* (that is, the special regard of God toward men) *by all that is before them; because, all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* Further,

Eccles. ix.
1, 2.

9. There are different ends which Providence in various order and measure doth pursue, which we, by reason of our dim insight and short prospect, cannot descry: God, as the universal and perpetual Governor of the world, in his dispensation of things, respecteth not only the good of this or that person, of one nation or one age; but often in some degree waving that, or taking care for it in a less remark-

able way, hath a provident regard to the more extensive good of a whole people, of the world, of posterity; as he did order his friend Abraham to wander in a strange land for the benefit of his seed; Joseph to be sold, calumniated, and fettered for the preservation of his family; our Lord to suffer those grievous things for the redemption of mankind; the Jews to be rejected for the salvation of the Gentiles: in such cases purblind men, observing events to gross particular and present ends, but not being aware how conducive they may prove to general, remote, and more important designs, can hardly be satisfied how God should be concerned in them; the present, or that which lieth adjacent just under our nose, is all that we can or will consider; and therefore must be ill judges of what is done by all-provident wisdom.

SERM.
LV.

10. Again, God permitteth things, bad in their own nature, with regard to their instrumental use and tendency; for that often the worst things may be ordinable to the best ends; things very bitter may work pleasant effects; upon the wildest stock divine husbandry can ingraft most excellent fruit; sin really, and suffering reputedly, are the worst evils, yet from them much glory to God and great benefit to men do accrue; even from the most wicked act that ever was committed, from the most lamentable event that ever did happen, fruits admirably glorious and immensely beneficial did spring; yet usually so blind are we as to be offended at such things, and from them to raise exceptions against Providence.

11. Also the expediency of things to be permitted or crossed, doth frequently consist, not in themselves

SERM. singly taken, as particular acts or events, but in
 LV. their conjunction, or reference to others, with which
 they may become subservient toward a common
 end; so that divers things in themselves extremely
 bad may by combination or collision engender good
 effects; and thence prove fit weapons or tools of
 Providence; as the most deadly poisons may be so
 mixed, that curbing one another's force, they may
 constitute a harmless mass, sometimes a wholesome
 medicine: but we poring on the simple ingredients,
 and not considering how they may be tempered, or
 how applied by a skilful hand, can hardly deem the
 toleration of them congruous to wisdom. Further,

12. That Providence sometimes is obscure and
 intricate, may be attributed to the will of God,
 upon divers good accounts designing it to be such:

Isa. xlv. 15. *Verily*, saith the prophet, *thou art a God that*
 Ps. lxxxix. *hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*
 46.

God commonly doth not intend to exert his hand
 notoriously; for that whereas every special inter-
 position of his hand is in effect a miracle, (sur-
 mounting the natural power, or thwarting the ordi-
 nary course of inferior causes,) it doth not become
 him to prostitute his miraculous power, or to exert
 it otherwise than upon singular occasions, and for
 most weighty causes: it is not conformable to the
 tenour of his administrations to convince men against
 their will, or by irresistible evidence to wring per-
 suasion from stubborn or stupid minds; but to exer-
 cise the wisdom, and to prove the ingenuity of well
 disposed persons, who upon competent intimations
 shall be capable to spell out, and forward to approve
 his proceedings.

13. He will not glare forth in discoveries so bright

as to dazzle, to confound our weak sight; therefore he veileth his face with a cloud, and wrappeth his power in some obscurity; therefore *clouds and darkness are round about him: he maketh darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him is dark waters and thick clouds of the sky.*

SERM.
LV.
Hab. iii. 4.
Ps. xcvi. 2.
xviii. 11.

14. He meaneth thereby to improve and exalt our faith, being the less seen, that he may be the more believed; faith never rising higher than when it doth soar to objects beyond our sight; when we can approve God's wisdom and justice in occurrences surmounting our conceit; when we can rely upon God's word and help, although the stream of his proceedings seemeth to cross our hopes.

15. It is fit also that God many times designedly should act in ways surpassing our apprehension, and apt to baffle or puzzle our reason, that he may appear God indeed, infinitely transcending us in perfection of wisdom and justice; or that we, comprehending the reason of his actings, may not imagine our wisdom comparable, our justice commensurate to his; yea, that we in those respects do exceed him; for *that, as Tertullian discourseth, which may be seen, is less than the eyes that survey it; that which may be comprehended, is less than the hands that grasp it; that which may be valued, is less than the senses which rate it*^e. It is God's being inestimable that makes him worthily esteemed^f; his being incomprehensible rendereth him adorable.

^e Quod videri communiter, quod comprehendi, quod æstimari potest, minus est oculis quibus occupatur, et manibus quibus contaminatur, et sensibus quibus invenitur. *Tert. Apol. 17.*

^f Hoc est quod Deum æstimari facit, dum æstimari non capit. *Tert., 16.*

SERM. 16. The obscurity of Providence doth indeed conciliate an awful reverence toward it; for darkness naturally raiseth a dread of invisible powers; we use to go on tremblingly, when we cannot see far about us; we regard none so much as those, whose wisdom we find to overreach ours, and whose intentions we cannot sound: it was Elihu's observation, *With God is terrible majesty; the Almighty, we cannot find him out;—men do therefore fear him.*

Job xxxvii.
22, 23, 24.

17. It is also requisite that God should dispose many occurrences, cross to our vulgar notions, and offensive to our carnal sense, that we may thence be prompted to think of God, driven to seek him, engaged to mark him interposing in our affairs: men from disorderly and surprising accidents preposterously do conceive doubts about Providence, as if, it managing things, nothing odd or amiss would occur; whereas if no such events did start up, they might be proner to question it, they would at least come to forget or neglect it; for if human transactions passed on as do the motions of nature, in a smooth course, without any rub or disturbance, men commonly would no more think of God than they do when they behold the sun rising, the rivers running, the sea flowing; they would not depend on his protection, or have recourse to him for succour: it is difficulty and distress seizing on them which compel men to implore God for relief, which dispose them to see his hand reaching it forth unto them; according to that in the Psalm; *When he slew them, then they sought him; they returned and inquired early after God; they remembered that God was their rock, and the most high God their Redeemer.* Again,

Ps. lxxviii.
34, 35.

18. It is needful that the present course of Providence should not be transparently clear and satisfactory, that we may be well assured concerning a future account, and forced in our thoughts to recur thither for a resolution of all such emergent doubts and difficulties: for if all accounts were apparently stated and discharged here; if now right did ever prevail, and iniquity were suppressed; if virtue were duly crowned, and vice deservedly scourged, who would hope or fear an after-reckoning?

This indeed is the grand cause why Providence now doth appear so cloudy, that men consider not how our affairs have no complete determination, or final issue here; things now are doing, and not done; in a progress and tendency toward somewhat beyond, not in a state of consistence and perfection; this not being the place of deciding causes or dispensing rewards; but a state of probation, of work, of travail, of combat, of running for the prize, of sowing toward the harvest; a state of liberty to follow our own choice, and to lay the ground of our doom; of falling into sin, and of rising thence by repentance; of God's exercising patience, and exhibiting mercy: wherefore as we cannot well judge of an artificial work by its first draughts, or of a poem by a few scenes, but must stay till all be finished or acted through; so we cannot here clearly discern the entire congruity of providential dispensations to the divine attributes; the catastrophe or utmost resolution of things is the general judgment, wherein the deep wisdom, the exact justice, the perfect goodness of God will be displayed to the full satisfaction or conviction of all men; when God's honour will be thoroughly vindicated, his despised patience and his

SERM.
LV.

Chrys. tom.
vii. p. 15.

Rom. ii. 7.

SERM. abused grace will be avenged ; every case will be
 LV. rightly tried, every work will be justly recompensed,

all accounts will be set straight ; in the mean time
 divers things must occur unaccountable to us, look-
 ing upon things as they now stand absolutely before
 us, without reference to that day ; considering this
 may induce us to suspend our opinion about such
 matters, allowing God to go through with his work
 before we censure it, not being so quick and precipi-
 tate as to forestall his judgment : and surely, would
 we but observe that reasonable advice of St. Paul,
 1 Cor. iv. 5. *Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord*
come, our chief doubts would be resolved, our
 shrewdest exceptions against Providence would be
 voided.

These are the chief reasons of the point which
 meditation did suggest ; upon it (for it is not a point
 merely speculative, but pregnant with useful conse-
 quences) divers practical applications may be ground-
 ed, which the time scarcely will allow me to name.

1. It should render us modest and sober in our
 judgment about providential occurrences, not pre-
 tending thoroughly to know the reasons of God's
 Ecclus. iii. proceedings, or to define the consequences of them ;
 20. Psal. cxxxi. for it is plainly fond arrogance, or profane imposture,
 1. to assume perfect skill in that which passeth our
 capacity to learn.

2. It should make us staunch and cautious of
 grounding judgment or censure upon present events
 Luke xiii. 1. about any cause, or any person ; for it is notorious
 temerity to pass sentence upon grounds incapable
 of evidence.

3. It should repress wanton curiosity, which may
 Job xi. 12. transport us beyond our bounds in speculation of
 Wisd. ix. 13.
 Job xlii. 3.

these mysterious intrigues; so that we shall lose SERM.
our labour and time, shall discompose our minds, LV.
shall plunge ourselves into vain errors or anxious
doubts.

4. It should keep us from conceitedness and con-Job xl. 4.
dence in our own wisdom; for how can we conceit xlii. 2.
ourselves highly of that, or much confide in it, which we find Psal. lxxiii.
ourselves unable to penetrate the reason of most common 22. xxxix.
and obvious appearances; so nonplust in its inquiries, 9.
and defeated in its expectations, so mistaken in its
judgments of things?

5. It should preserve us from infidelity, and from
despair upon account of any cross accidents occur-
ing here; for it is unreasonable to disbelieve a no-
tion, otherwise well grounded, because we cannot
recoil scruples or cavils drawn from matters inscrut-
ible to us; it is foolish to despair of a good event
upon appearances, whereof we cannot apprehend the
full reason or final result.

6. It should prevent our taking offence, or being 2 Kings xx.
discontented at any events rising up before us; for Matt. xvi.
we should be displeased at that, which a superior wisdom, 23.
unsearchable to us, doth order, is to be displeased at
things we know not what, or why, which is childish weak-
ness; to fret and wail at that, which, for all we can
see, proceedeth from good intention, and tendeth to
a good issue, is pitiful frowardness.

7. It should guard us from security, or from pre-Eccles. viii.
suming upon impunity for our miscarriages; for see- 11.
ing God doth not always clearly and fully discover his
will, it is vain from God's reservedness to conclude
his unconcernedness; or because he is now patient,
that he never will be just in chastising our offences.

8. It should quicken our industry in observing

272 *The Unsearchableness of God's Judgments.*

SERM. and considering the works of Providence; for since
LV. they are not easily discernible, and the discerning
Isa. xxvi. them in some measure is sometimes of great use, it
11. v. 12. is needful that we be very diligent in contemplation
of them; the fainter our light is, the more attent we
should be in looking; the knottier the subject, the
more earnest should be our study on it.

9. It should oblige us to be circumspect and wary
in our conversation; for the darker the way is, the
more careful should be our walking therein, lest we
err, lest we stumble, lest we strike on somewhat
hurtful to us.

10. It should engage us constantly to seek God,
Jer. x. 23. and to depend on him, for the protection and con-
duct of his grace, which is the only clue that can
lead us safely through this intricate labyrinth of
worldly contingencies.

11. In fine, it should cause us humbly to admire
Psalm. xxxvi. and adore that wisdom, which governeth the world
6. xcii. 5. in ways no less great and wonderful, than just and
Apoc. xv. holy: for, *Great and marvellous are thy works, O*
3. xix. 2. *Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways,*
O thou King of saints.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible,
the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever
and ever. Amen.

S E R M O N LVI.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

OBEDIENCE unto spiritual guides and governors SERM. LVI. is a duty of great importance; the which to declare and press is very seasonable for these times, wherein so little regard is had thereto: I have therefore pitched on this text, being an apostolical precept briefly and clearly enjoining that duty; and in it we shall consider and explain these two particulars:
1. The persons to whom obedience is to be payed.
2. What that obedience doth import, or wherein it consisteth: and together with explication of the duty, we shall apply it, and urge its practice.

I. As to the persons, unto whom obedience is to be performed, they are, generally speaking, all spiritual guides, or governors of the church, (those *who speak to us the word of God, and who watch for our souls*, as they are described in the context,) Heb. xiii. 7, 17. expressed here by a term very significant and apposite, as implying fully the nature of their charge, the qualification of their persons, their rank, and privileges in the church, together consequently with the grounds of obligation to the correspondent duties toward them. There are in holy scripture divers names and phrases appropriate to them, each of

SERM. them denoting some eminent part of their office, or
 LIV. some appurtenance thereto; but this seemeth of all
 most comprehensive; so that unto it all the rest are
 well reducible: the term is ἡγούμενοι, that is, *leaders*,
 or *guides*, or *captains*; which properly may denote
 the subsequent particulars in way of duty, or privi-
 lege, appertaining to them.

1. It may denote eminence of dignity, or superior-
 ity to others: that they are, as it is said of Judas and
 Acts xv. 22. Silas in the Acts, ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι ἐν ἀδελφοῖς, *principal*
men among the brethren: for to *lead* implieth pre-
 cedence, which is a note of superiority and preemi-
 nence. Hence are they styled προεστῶτες, *presidents*
 1 Tim. v. or prelates; οἱ πῶτοι, *the first* or *prime* men; οἱ
 17. Rom. xii. 8. μείζους *the greater*, majors, or grandees among us:
 1 Thess. v. 12. *He*, saith our Lord, *that will be the first among*
 Matt. xx. *you, let him be your servant*; and, *He that is*
 27. *greater among you, let him be as the younger*; and
 Luke xxii. 26. *he that is chief, as he that doth serve*; where ὁ μείζων
 and ὁ ἡγούμενος (the *greater* and the *leader*) are terms
 equivalent, or interpretative the one of the other;
 and our Lord in those places, as he prescribeth hu-
 mility of mind and demeanour, so he implieth dif-
 ference of rank among his disciples: whence to
 render especial respect and honour to them, as to
 our betters, is a duty often enjoined.

2. It doth imply power and authority: their superi-
 ority is not barely grounded on personal worth or for-
 tune; it serveth not merely for order and pomp; but
 it standeth upon the nature of their office, and tend-
 eth to use: they are by God's appointment enabled
 to exercise acts of power; to command, to judge, to
 check, control, and chastise in a spiritual way, in order
 to spiritual ends, (the regulation of God's worship and

service, the preservation of order and peace, the promoting of edification in divine knowledge and holiness of life;) so are they ἡγούμενοι, as that word in common use (as the word ἡγεμῶν, of kin to it) doth signify, *captains* and *princes*, importing authority to command and rule; (whence the Hebrew word מַשְׁלָל, a *prince*, is usually rendered by it; and ὁ ἡγούμενος is the title attributed to our Lord, to express his kingly function, being the same with ἀρχηγός, the *prince* or *captain*;) hence are they otherwise styled κυβερνήσεις (*governors*), ἐπίσκοποι (*overseers* or *superintendents*, as St. Hierome rendereth it), *pastors* (a word often signifying *rule*, and attributed to civil governors,) πρεσβύτεροι (*elders* or *senators*; the word denoteth not merely age, but office and authority), οἱ ἐπιμελοῦντες, *such as take care for*, the *curators* or *supervisors* of the church: hence also they are signally and specially in relation unto God styled δοῦλοι (*the servants*), διάκονοι (*the ministers*), ὑπηρέται (*the officers*), λειτουργοὶ (*the public agents*), οἰκονόμοι (*the stewards*), συνεργοὶ (*the coadjutors* or *assistants*), πρέσβεις (*the legates*), ἄγγελοι (*the angels* or *messengers*), of God; which titles imply, that God by them, as his substitutes and instruments, doth administer the affairs of his spiritual kingdom: that as by secular magistrates (his vicegerents and officers) he manageth his universal temporal kingdom, or governeth all men in order to their worldly peace and prosperity; so by these spiritual magistrates he ruleth his church toward its spiritual welfare and felicity.

3. The word also doth imply direction or instruction; that is, guidance of people in the way of truth and duty, reclaiming them from error and sin: this, as it is a means hugely conducing to the design of

SERM. their office, so it is a principal member thereof:
LVI. whence διδάσκαλοι, *doctors*, or masters in doctrine, is

Eph. iv. 11. a common name of them; and to be διδακτικοί, *able*
1 Cor. xiii. 28. and apt to teach, (ικανοὶ διδάξαι, and πρέθυμοι,) is a
Rom. xii. 7. chief qualification of their persons; and to attend on
1 Tim. iii. 2. teaching, to be instant in preaching, to labour in
2 Tim. ii. 28. ii. 2. the word and doctrine, are their most commendable
1 Tim. iv. 13, 16. performances: hence also they are called *shepherds*,
v. 17. because they feed the souls of God's people with the
2 Tim. iv. 2. food of wholesome instruction; *watchmen*, because
Col. i. 28. they observe men's ways, and warn them when they
decline from right, or run into danger; the *messen-*
gers of God, because they declare God's mind and
will unto them for the regulation of their practice.

4. The word further may denote exemplary prac-
tice; for to lead implieth so to go before, that he who
is conducted may follow; as a captain marcheth be-
fore his troop; as a shepherd walketh before his
flock, as a guide goeth before the traveller whom
he directeth; hence they are said to be, and enjoined
to behave themselves *as patterns of the flock*; and
the people are charged to imitate and follow them.

1 Pet. v. 3. Such in general doth the word here used imply
1 Tim. iv. 12. the persons to be, unto whom obedience is pre-
Phil. iii. 17. scribed: but there is further some distinction to be
Tit. ii. 7. made among them; there are degrees and subordi-
2 Thess. iii. 9, 7. nations in these guidances; some are in regard to
Heb. iii. 7. different persons both empowered to guide, and
1 Thess. i. 6. obliged to follow, or obey.
1 Cor. xi. 1. iv. 16.

The church is *acies ordinata*, a well marshalled
1 Pet. v. 4. army; wherein, under the *Captain-general of our*
Heb. iii. 1. *faith and salvation, (the Head of the body, the*
sovereign Prince and Priest, the Arch-pastor, the
chief *Apostle of our profession, and Bishop of our*

souls,) there are divers captains serving in fit degrees of subordination; bishops commanding larger regiments, presbyters ordering less numerous companies; all which, by the bands of common faith, of mutual charity, of holy communion and peace, being combined together, do in their respective stations govern and guide, are governed and guided: the bishops, each in his precincts, guiding more immediately the priests subject to them; the priests, each guiding the people committed to his charge: all bishops and priests being guided by synods established, or congregated, upon emergent occasion; many of them ordinarily by those principal bishops, who are regularly settled in a presidency over them; according to the distinctions constituted by God and his apostles, or introduced by human prudence, as the preservation of order and peace (in various times and circumstances of things) hath seemed to require: to which subordination the two great apostles may seem to have regard, when they bid us *ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἀλλήλοις to be subject to one another*^a; their injunction at least may, according to their general intent, (which aimeth at the preservation of order and peace,) be well extended so far.

Of this distinction there was never in ancient times made any question, nor did it seem disputable in the church, except to one malecontent, (Aerius,) who did indeed get a name in story, but never made much noise, or obtained any vogue in the world; very few followers he found in his heterodoxy; no great body even of heretics could find cause to dissent from the church in this point; but all Arians,

^a Ὑποτάσσεσθω ἕκαστος τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καθὼς καὶ ἐτίθη ἐν τῷ χαρίσματι αὐτοῦ. Clem. ad Corinth. p. 49.

SERM. LVI. Macedonians, Novatians, Donatists, &c. maintained the distinction of ecclesiastical orders among themselves, and acknowledged the duty of the inferior clergy to their bishops: and no wonder, seeing it standeth upon so very firm and clear grounds; upon the reason of the case, upon the testimony of holy scripture, upon general tradition and unquestionable monuments of antiquity, upon the common judgment and practice of the greatest saints, persons most renowned for wisdom and piety in the church.

Reason plainly doth require such subordinations; for that without them it is scarce possible to preserve any durable concord or charity in Christian societies, to establish any decent harmony in the worship and service of God, to check odious scandals, to prevent or repress baneful factions, to guard our religion from being overspread with pernicious heresies, to keep the church from being shattered into numberless sects, and thence from being crumbled into nothing; in fine, for any good time to uphold the profession and practice of Christianity itself: for how, if there be not settled corporations of Christian people, having bulk and strength sufficient by joint endeavour to maintain the truth, honour, and interest of their religion; if the church should only consist of independent and incoherent particles, (like dust or sand,) easily scattered by any wind of opposition from without, or by any commotion within; if Christendom should be merely a Babel of confused opinions and practices; how, I say, then could Christianity subsist? how could the simple, among so discordant apprehensions, be able to discern the truth of it? how would the wise be tempted to dislike it, being so mangled and disfigured? what an

object of contempt and scorn would it be to the profane world in such a case! It needeth therefore considerable societies to uphold it; but no society (especially of any large extent) can abide in order and peace, under the management of equal and coordinate powers; without a single undivided authority, enabled to moderate affairs and reduce them to a point, to arbitrate emergent cases of difference, to put good orders in execution, to curb the adversaries of order and peace: these things cannot be well performed where there is a parity of many concurrents, apt to dissent, and able to check each other^b; no democracy can be supported without borrowing somewhat from monarchy; no body can live without a head; an army cannot be without a general, a senate without a president, a corporation without a supreme magistrate^c: this all experience attesteth; this even the chief impugnors of episcopal presidency do by their practice confess; who for prevention of disorder have been fain of their own heads to devise ecclesiastical subordinations of classes, provinces, and nations; and to appoint moderators (or temporary bishops) in their assemblies; so that reason hath forced the dissenters from the church to imitate it.

If there be not inspectors over the doctrine and

^b Ecclesiæ salus in summi Sacerdotis dignitate consistit, cui si non exors quædam, et ab omnibus eminens detur potestas, tot in ecclesia efficientur schismata, quot sacerdotes. *Hier. in Lucif.*

- Nec presbyterorum cætus rite constitutus dici potest, in quo nullus sit ἡγούμενος. *Bez. de Grad. Min. cap. 22.*

^c Essentiale fuit, quod ex Dei ordinatione perpetua necesse fuit, est, et erit, ut presbyterio quispiam et loco et dignitate primus actioni gubernandæ præsit cum eo, quod ipsi divinitus attributum est jure. *Bez. de Min. Evang. Grad. cap. xxiii. p. 153.*

SERM. manners of the common clergy, there will be many
LVI. who will say and do any thing; they will in teach-
 ing please their own humour, or soothe the people,
 or serve their own interests; they will indulge them-
 selves in a licentious manner of life; they will clash
 in their doctrines, and scatter the people, and draw
 them into factions.

It is also very necessary for preserving the unity
 and communion of the parts of the catholic church;
 seeing single persons are much fitter to maintain
 correspondence, than headless bodies.

The very credit of religion doth require that
 there should be persons raised above the common
 level, and endued with eminent authority, to whose
 care the promoting it should be committed; for
 such as the persons are, who manage any profession,
 such will be the respect yielded thereto: if the
 ministers of religion be men of honour and author-
 ity, religion itself will be venerable; if *those* be
 mean, *that* will become contemptible.

The holy scripture also doth plainly enough coun-
 Apoc. ii. 3, &c. tenance this distinction; for therein we have repre-
 sented one angel presiding over principal churches,
 which contained several presbyters; therein we find
 episcopal ordination and jurisdiction exercised; we
 have one bishop constituting presbyters in divers
 Tit. i. 5. cities of his diocese; ordering all things therein con-
 1 Tim. v. cerning ecclesiastical discipline; judging presbyters,
 1, 17, 19, rebuking, *μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς*, with *all authority*, (or
 20, 22, &c. imperiousness, as it were; Tit. ii. 15.) and recon-
 ciling offenders, secluding heretics and scandalous
 persons.

In the Jewish church there were an high-priest,
 chief-priest, a sanhedrim, or senate, or synod.

The government of congregations among God's **SERM.**
ancient people (which it is probable was the pattern LVI.
 that the apostles, no affecters of needless innova-
 tion, did follow in establishing ecclesiastical dis-
 cipline among Christians) doth hereto agree; for
 in their synagogues, answering to our Christian
 churches, they had, as their elders and doctors, so
 over them an ἀρχισυνάγωγος, the head of the elder-
 ship, and president of the synagogue. שמעון
הקני

The primitive general use of Christians most ef-
 fectually doth back the scripture, and interpret it in
 favour of this distinction; scarce less than demon-
 strating it constituted by the apostles; for how
 otherwise is it imaginable, that all the churches
 founded by the apostles, in several most distant and
 disjoined places, (at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Alex-
 andria, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Rome,) should
 presently conspire in acknowledgment and use of
 it? how could it without apparent confederacy be
 formed, how could it creep in without notable clat-
 ter, how could it be admitted without considerable
 opposition, if it were not in the foundation of those
 churches laid by the apostles? How is it likely, that
 in those times of grievous persecution, falling chiefly
 upon the bishops, (when to be eminent among
 Christians yielded slender reward, and exposed to
 extreme hazard; when to seek preeminence was in
 effect to court danger and trouble, torture and ruin,)
 an ambition of irregularly advancing themselves
 above their brethren should so generally prevail
 among the ablest and best Christians? How could
 those famous martyrs for the Christian truth be
 some of them so unconscionable as to affect, others
 irresolute as to yield to such injurious encroach-

SERM. ments? and how could all the holy Fathers (per-
LVI. sons of so renowned, so approved wisdom and in-
 tegrity) be so blind as not to discern such a corrup-
 tion, or so bad as to abet it? How indeed could all
 God's church be so weak as to consent in judgment,
 so base as to comply in practice with it? In fine,
 how can we conceive that all the best monuments
 of antiquity down from the beginning (the acts, the
 epistles, the histories, the commentaries, the writ-
 ings of all sorts coming from the blessed martyrs,
 and most holy confessors of our faith) should con-
 spire to abuse us; the which do speak nothing but
 bishops; long catalogues and rows of bishops suc-
 ceeding in this and that city; bishops contesting
 for the faith against pagan idolaters, and heretical
 corrupters of Christian doctrine; bishops here teach-
 ing and planting our religion by their labours, there
 suffering and watering it with their blood?

I could not but touch this point: but I cannot in-
 sist thereon; the full discussion of it, and vindica-
 tion of the truth from the cavils advanced against
 the truth by modern dissenters from the church,
 having employed voluminous treatises: I shall only
 further add, that if any man be so dully or so af-
 fectedly ignorant as not to see the reason of the
 case, and the dangerous consequences of rejecting
 this ancient form of discipline; if any be so over-
 weeningly presumptuous, as to question the faith of
 all history, or to disavow those monuments and that
 tradition, upon the testimony whereof even the truth
 and certainty of our religion, and all its sacred oracles
 do rely; if any be so perversely contentious, as to
 oppose the custom and current practice of the
 churches through all ages down to the last age;

1 Cor. xi.
16.

if-conceitedly arrogant, as to condemn or slight **SERM.**
 e judgment and practice of all the Fathers, (to- **LVI.**
 ther also with the opinion of the later most grave
 rines, who have judged episcopal presidency need-
 l or expedient, where practicable;) so peevishly
 fractory as to thwart the settled order of that
 urch in which he was baptized, together with the
 w of the country in which he was born; upon
 ch a person we may look as one utterly invincible
 d intractable: so weak a judgment, and so strong
 will, who can hope by reason to convert? I shall
 y no more to that point.

The *ἡγούμενοι* then (the guides and governors) in
 r text are primarily the bishops, as the superior
 d chief guides, each in his place according to order
 aceably established; then, secondarily, the pres-
 ters, in their station as guides inferior, together
 th the deacons as their assistants: such the church
 ways hath had, and such, by God's blessing, our
 urch now hath, toward whom the duty of obe-
 ence is to be performed.

To the consideration of that I should now pro-
 ed: but first it seemeth expedient to remove a
 ain obstruction to that performance; which is
 is: a misprision, or doubt concerning the persons
 our guides and governors; for in vain it would be
 teach or persuade us to obey them, if we do not
 ow who they are, or will not acknowledge them:
 r as in religion it is *primus Deorum cultus Deos* Sen. Ep.
edere, the first worship of God to believe God, ^{95.}

Seneca saith; so it is the first part of our obe-
 ence to our governors to avow them; it is at least
 solutely prerequisite thereto. It was of old a pre-
 pt of St. Paul to the Thessalonians; *We beseech* Thess. v.
 12.

SERM. *you, brethren, to know those who labour among*
 LVI. *you, and preside over you :* and another to the Co-

¹ Cor. xvi. 16, 18. rinthians ; *Submit yourselves, saith he, to such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth :* then he subjoineth, ἐπιγινώσκετε τοὺς τοιοῦτους, *acknowledge such.* There were, it seemeth, those in the apostolical times who would not know or acknowledge their guides ; there were even those who would not *admit* the apostles themselves, as St. John ³ John 10. saith of Diotrophes, who *resisted their words, as St.* ² Tim. iv. 15. Paul saith of Alexander, to whom the apostles were not apostles, as St. Paul intimateth concerning *some,* in regard to himself ; there were then *pseud-apostles,* ² Cor. ix. 2. who excluded the *true apostles,* intruding themselves into that high office : no wonder then, it may ² Cor. xi. 13. be, that now, in these dregs of time, there should be ^{Phil. iii. 2.} many who disavow and desert their true guides, transferring the observance due to them upon bold pretenders ; who are not indeed guides, but seducers ; not governors, but usurpers, and sacrilegious invaders of this holy office : the duty we speak of cannot be secured without preventing or correcting this grand mistake ; and this we hope to compass by representing a double character, or description, one of the *true guides,* another of the *counterfeits ;* by comparing which we may easily distinguish them, and consequently be induced dutifully to avow and follow the one sort, wisely to disclaim and decline the other.

Those, I say, then, who constantly do profess and teach that sound and wholesome doctrine, which was delivered by our Lord and his apostles in word and writing, was received by their disciples in the primitive churches, was transmitted and confirmed by ge-

eral tradition, was sealed by the blood of the blessed **SERM.**
 martyrs, and propagated by the labours of the holy **LVI.**
 fathers; the which also manifestly recommendeth
 and promoteth true reverence and piety toward
 God, justice and charity toward men, order and
 quiet in human societies, purity and sobriety in each
 man's private conversation.

Those who celebrate the true worship of God, and
 administer the holy mysteries of our religion in a se-
 rious, grave, decent manner, purely and without any
 notorious corruption, either by hurtful error, or su-
 perstitious foppery, or irreverent rudeness, to the
 advancement of God's honour, and edification of the
 participants in virtue and piety.

Those who derive their authority by a continued
 succession from the apostles; who are called unto,
 and constituted in their office in a regular and
 peaceable way, agreeable to the institution of God,
 and the constant practice of his church; according
 to rules approved in the best and purest ages: who
 are prepared to the exercise of their function by the
 best education that ordinarily can be provided, under
 proper discipline, in the schools of the prophets, who
 receive by competent endowments of mind, and useful
 furniture of good learning, acquired by painful study,
 become qualified to guide and instruct the people:
 who, after previous examination of their abilities,
 and probable testimonies concerning their manners,
 with regard to the qualifications of incorrupt doc-
 trine, and sober conversation prescribed by the
 apostles, are adjudged fit for the office; who also
 in a pious, grave, solemn manner, with invocation
 of God's blessing, by *laying on the hands of the* **1 Tim. iii.**
resbytery, are admitted thereunto. **7, 10.**

SERM. Those whose practice in guiding and governing
 LVI. the people of God is not managed by arbitrary, uncertain, fickle, private fancies or humours, but regulated by standing laws; framed (according to general directions extant in holy scripture) by pious and wise persons, with mature advice, in accommodation to the seasons and circumstances of things for common edification, order, and peace.

Those who, by virtue of their good principles, in their disposition and demeanour appear sober, orderly, peaceable, yielding meek submission to government, tendering the church's peace, upholding the communion of the saints, abstaining from all schismatical, turbulent, and factious practices.

Those also, who are acknowledged by the laws of our country, an obligation to obey whom is part of
 1 Pet. ii. 13. that *human constitution*, unto which we are in all things (not evidently repugnant to God's law) indispensably bound to submit; whom our sovereign, God's vicegerent and the nursing father of his church among us, (unto whom in all things high respect, in all lawful things entire obedience is due,) doth command and encourage us to obey.

Those, I say, to whom this character plainly doth agree, we may reasonably be assured that they are our true guides and governors, whom we are obliged to follow and obey: for what better assurance can we in reason desire? what more proper marks can be assigned to discern them by? what methods of constituting such needful officers can be settled more answerable to their design and use? how can it be evil or unsafe to follow guides authorized by such warrants, conformed to such patterns, endowed with such dispositions, acting by such principles and

rules? can we mistake or miscarry by complying with the great body of God's church through all ages, and particularly with those great lights of the primitive church, who by the excellency of their knowledge, and the integrity of their virtue, have so illustrated our holy religion?

SERM.
LVI.

There are, on the other hand, sufficiently plain characters, by which we may descry seducers, and false pretenders to guide us.

Those who do *ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν*, *teach otherwise*, or discost from the good ancient wholesome doctrine, revealed in the holy scripture, attested by universal tradition, professed, taught, maintained to death by the primitive saints and martyrs; who affect novel-
1 Tim. vi. 3. i. 3, 4.
Gal. i. 9.
1 Tim. i. 4.
vi. 4, 20.
2 Tim. ii. 14, 16, 23.
Tit. iii. 9.
2 Pet. ii. 18.
 ties, uncouth notions, big words, and dark phrases; who dote on curious empty speculations and idle questions, which engender strife, and yield no good fruit.

Those who ground their opinions and warrant their proceedings not by clear testimonies of divine revelation, by the dictates of sound reason, by the current authority of wise and good men, but by the suggestions of their own fancy, by the impulses of their passion and zeal, by pretences to special inspiration, by imaginary necessities, and such like fallacious rules.
Ipsorum ordinationes temerarie, inconstantes, levee. Tertull.

Those who, by counterfeit shows of mighty zeal and extraordinary affection, by affected forms of speech, by pleasing notions, by prophesying *smooth things*, daubing and glozing, by various artifices of flattery and fraud, attract and abuse weak and heedless people.

Those who, without any apparent commission from God, or allowable call from men, or extraordi-

SERM. nary necessity of the case, in no legal or regular way,
LVI. according to no custom received in God's church, do
 intrude themselves into the office, or are only as-
 sumed thereto by ignorant, unstable, giddy, fac-
 tious people ^d, such as those of whom St. Paul
^{2 Tim. iv. 3.} saith, that *according to their own lusts they*
heap up teachers to themselves, having itching
ears.

Those who are not in reasonable ways fitly pre-
 pared, not duly approved, not competently author-
 ized, not orderly admitted to the office, according
 to the prescriptions of God's word, and the practice
 of his church; not entering into the fold by the
 door, but breaking through, or clambering over the
 fences of sober discipline.

Those who in their mind, their principles, their
 designs, and all their practice, appear void of that
 charity, that meekness, that calmness, that gravity,
 that sincerity, that stability, which qualify worthy
 and true guides: who in the disposition of their
 mind are froward, fierce, and stubborn; in their
 principles loose and slippery; in their designs and
 behaviour turbulent, disorderly, violent, deceitful:
 who regard not order or peace, but wantonly raise
 scandals, create dissensions, abet and foment dis-
 turbances in the church: who under religious ap-
 pearances indulge their passions, and serve their in-
 terests, using a guise of devotion, and talk about
 holy things as instruments to vent wrath, envy, and
 spleen; to drive forward designs of ambition and

^d Hi sunt qui se ultro apud temerarios convenas sine divina
 dispositione præficiunt, qui se præpositos sine ulla ordinationis
 lege constituunt, qui nemine episcopatum dante episcopi sibi
 nomen assumunt. *Cypr. de Un. Eccl. p. 256.*

who will not submit to any certain judgment, will like nothing but what their fancy will acknowledge no law but their own for no just cause, and upon any slender withdraw themselves, and seduce others church in which they were brought up, de- communion, impugning its laws, defaming rors, endeavouring to subvert its establish- no manage their discipline (such as it is of framing) unadvisedly and unsteadily, in method, according to no settled rule, but ; conceit, or humour, or advantage prompt- that, not being fixed in any certain judgment-practice, they soon clash with themselves, e from one another, incessantly roving from to another; *being carried about with di- strange doctrines; like children, tossed to with every wind of doctrine.*

SERM.
LVI.

Heb. xiii. 9.
Eph. iv. 14.

the fruits of whose doctrine and managery it best only to empty *form of godliness, real virtue*; while in truth they fill the men with ill passions, ill surmises, ill-will; duce impious, unjust, and uncharitable deal- kinds, particularly discontentful murmur- obedience to magistrates, schisms and fac- he church, combustions and seditions in the

, those who in their temper and their de- resemble those ancient seducers, branded icture, those *evil men, who did seduce, and* ^{2 Tim. iii. 13.} *uced:*

dispositions are represented in these epi- ey were *ἀνπότακτοι, unruly*, or persons in- ^{Tit. i. 10.} and unwilling to submit to government;

SERM. *τολμηται, ἀθάδεις, presumptuous, and self-willed, or*

LVI. *self-pleasing darers; γογγυσται, μεμψίμοιροι, murmur-*

2 Pet. ii. 10. ers, complainers, or conjunctly discontented muti-

Tit. iii. 10, *ners; ἀποκατάκριτοι, self-condemned, namely, by con-*

11.

tradictionous shuffling and shifting, or by excommuni-

2 Tim. iii. cating themselves from the church; γόητες, bewitch-

13, 5.

ers, inveigling and deluding credulous people by dis-

simulation and specious appearances; having a form

of godliness, but denying the power thereof; being

Matt. vii.

15.

Acts xx. 29. wolves in sheep's clothing, grievous wolves, not

2 Cor. xi. sparing the flock; deceitful workers, transforming

13, 15.

themselves into the servants of Christ, and ministers

1 Tim. vi. 4.

2 Pet. iii. 16.

of righteousness; lovers of themselves, covetous,

boasters, proud, revilers, truce-breakers, false ac-

cusers, traitors, heady, high-minded, vain talkers,

deceivers, ignorant, unlearned, unstable:

Rom. xvi. Whose practices were; *to cause divisions and of-*

17, 18.

fences contrary to received doctrine; by good words

(1 Tim. i.

6, 7.)

and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple;

—to swerve from charity—having turned aside to

vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law,

understanding neither what they say, nor whereof

they affirm: to beguile unstable souls; to lie in

Eph. iv. 14.

Acts xx. 19.

wait to deceive; to speak perverse things that they

2 Tim. iii.

5.

may draw disciples after them; to creep into houses,

1 Tim. vi.

4.

captivating silly women; to dote about questions

and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife,

railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings; to

2 Pet. ii. 18. speak swelling words of vanity; to admire persons

Jude 16. because of advantage, (or out of private design, for

self-interest;) to subvert whole houses, teaching

things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake;

1 Tim. iv. 2. to speak lies in hypocrisy; to preach Christ out of

Phil. i. 15,

16.

envy and strife, not out of good-will, or pure in-

tention, (οὐχ ἀγῶς,) not purely; to promise liberty SERM. LVI.
 to their followers; *to walk disorderly*; (that is, in repugnance to order settled in the church;) *to despise dominion, and without fear to reproach dignities*; *to speak evil* (rashly) *of those things which they know not*, (which are beside their skill and cognisance;) *to separate themselves* from the church.

Such persons as these, arrogating to themselves the office of guides, and pretending to lead us, must not follow or regard; but are in reason and conscience obliged to reject and shun them, as the ministers of Satan, the pests of Christendom, the enemies and murderers of souls.

It can indeed nowise be safe to follow any such leaders, (whatever pretences to special illumination they hold forth, whatever specious guises of sanctity they bear,) who in their doctrine or practice deflect from the great beaten roads of holy scripture, primitive tradition, and catholic practice, roving in by-paths suggested to them by their private fancies and humours, their passions and lusts, their interests and advantages: there have in all ages such counterfeit guides started up, having debauched some few heedless persons, having erected some *παρασυναγωγὰς*, or petty combinations against the regularly settled corporations; but never with any durable success or countenance of divine Providence; but like prodigious meteors, having caused a little gazing, and some disturbance, their sects have soon been dissipated, and have quite vanished away; the authors and abettors of them being either buried in oblivion, or recorded with ignominy; like that Theudas in the speech of Gamaliel, who *rose up, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about*

SERM. *four hundred, joined themselves ; who was slain,*
LVI. *and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered,*
and brought to nought.

But let thus much suffice to have been spoken concerning the persons to whom obedience must be performed.

SERMON LVII.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

I PROCEED to the duty itself, the obedience prescribed, which may (according to the extent in signification of the word *πειθεσθαι*) be conceived to relate either to the government, or to the doctrine, or to the conversation of the persons specified; implying, that we should obey their laws, that we should embrace their doctrine, that we should conform to their practice, according to proper limitations of such performance, respectively.

SERM.
LVII.

We begin with the first, as seeming chiefly intended by the words:

Obedience to ecclesiastical government: what this doth import we may understand by considering the terms whereby it is expressed, and those whereby its correlate (spiritual government) is signified; by examples and practice relating to it, by the nature and reason of the matter itself.

Beside the word *πειθεσθαι*, (which is commonly used to signify all sorts of obedience, chiefly that which is due to governors,) here is added a word serving to explain that, the word *ὑπακούειν*, which sig-

SERM. LVII. nifieth to yield, give way, or comply; relating (as it seemeth by its being put indefinitely) to all their

proceedings in matters concerning their charge. In

(Tit. iii. 1. other places, parallel to our text, it is expressed by

Rom. xiii. 1. *ὑποτάσσεσθαι*, the same term by which constantly the

1 Pet. ii. 13.) subjection due to secular powers, in all the precepts

enjoining it, is expressed: *Ὁμοίως νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε*

1 Pet. v. 5. *πρεσβυτέροις*, *In like manner*, (or correspondently,)

Luke xxiii. 26. saith St. Peter, *ye younger, submit yourselves to the*

elder; (that is, as the context shews, ye inferiors in

the church obey your superiors; *ὁ νεώτερος*, both there

and elsewhere doth signify the state of inferiority,

as *ὁ πρεσβύτερος* importeth dignity and authority.)

1 Cor. xvi. 16. And, *ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς τοιοῦτοις*, *submit yourselves unto*

such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and

laboureth, saith St. Paul; and, *ἀλλήλοις ὑποτασσόμενοι*,

Eph. v. 21. *submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of*

1 Pet. v. 5. *God*, that is, yielding conscientiously that submission,

which established order requireth from one to

another: whence we may collect, that the duty consisteth

in yielding submission and compliance to all

laws, rules, and orders enacted by spiritual governors

for the due celebration of God's worship, the promoting

edification, the conserving decency, the maintenance

of peace; as also to the judgments and censures in order

to the same purposes administered by

them.

This obedience to be due to them may likewise

be inferred from the various names and titles attributed

to them; such as those of prelates, superintendents,

pastors, supervisors, governors, and leaders;

which terms (more largely touched before) do imply

command and authority of all sorts, legislative, judicial,

and executive.

Such obedience also primitive practice doth assert **SERM.**
 o them: for what authority the holy apostles did **LVII.**
 assume and exercise, the same we may reasonably
 oppose derived to them; the same in kind, although
 not in peculiarity of manner, (by immediate com-
 mission from Christ, with supply of extraordinary
 gifts and graces,) and in unlimitedness of extent:
 or they do succeed to the apostles in charge and **Cujus in so-**
 are over the church, each in his precinct, the **lidum sin-**
 postolical office being distributed among them all. **guli parti-**
 The same titles which the apostles assumed to them- **cipes su-**
 selves they ascribe to their sympresbyters, requiring **mus. Vid.**
 the same duties from them, and prescribing obe- **Cypr. de**
 dience to them in the same terms; they claimed no **Unit. Eccl.**
 more power than was needful to further edifica- **2 Cor. x. 8.**
 tion, and this is requisite that present governors **xiii. 10.**
 also should have; their practice in government may **To ordain**
 also well be presumed exemplary to all future go- **elders.**
 vernors. As then we see them *διατάσσειν, to order* **To confirm**
 things, and frame ecclesiastical constitutions; *διορθοῦν,* **proselytes.**
 to rectify things, or reform defects, to impose ob- **To exercise**
 servances necessary, or expedient to the time; to **jurisdic-**
 judge causes and persons, *being ready to avenge,* **tion.**
 or punish, *every disobedience; to use severity* upon **1 Cor. xi.**
 occasions; with the spiritual rod to chastise scan- **34.**
 dalous offenders, *disorderly walkers,* persons contu- **Tit. i. 5.**
 macious and unconfordable to their injunctions; to **Acts xv. 28.**
 reject heretics, and banish notorious sinners from **1 Cor. v. 12.**
 communion, warning the faithful to forbear conver- **2 Cor. x. 6.**
 sation with them: as they did challenge to them- **xiii. 10.**
 selves *an authority from Christ* to exercise these **1 Cor. iv.**
 and the like acts of spiritual dominion and jurisdic- **21. xii. 21.**
 tion, exacting punctual obedience to them; as we **xiii. 2.**
 so see the like acts exercised by bishops, whom **2 Thess. iii.**
6, 14.
Tit. iii. 10.
1 Tim. vi. 5.
Rom. xvi.
17.
2 Cor. x. 8.
xiii. 10.
Episcopi
successores
apostolo-
rum. Cypr.
Ep. 27. 69.
&c.
Ep. 41. 75.
(Firmil.)

SERM. they did constitute to feed and rule the church ; so
LVII. we may reasonably conceive all governors of the
 church (the heirs of their office) invested with like
 authority in order to the same purposes, and that
 correspondent obedience is due to them ; so that
 what blame, what punishment was due to those,
 who disobeyed the apostles, doth in proportion be-
 long to the transgressors of their duty toward the
 present governors of the church ; especially consi-
Matt. dering that our Lord promised his perpetual pre-
xxviii. 20. sence and assistance to the apostles.

We may further observe, that accordingly, in
 continual succession from the first ages, the good
 primitive bishops (the great patrons and propagators
 of our religion) did generally assume such power,
 and the people readily did yield obedience ; wherein
 that one did wrongfully usurp, the other did weakly
 comply, were neither probable nor just to suppose :
 whence general tradition doth also confirm our obli-
 gation to this duty.

That this kind of obedience is required doth also
 further appear from considering the reason of things,
 the condition of the church, the design of Christian
 religion.

1. Every Christian church is a society ; no society
 can abide in any comely order, any steady quiet,
 any desirable prosperity, without government ; no
 government can stand without correspondent obli-
 gation to submit thereto.

2. Again ; The state of religion under the gospel
 is the kingdom of heaven ; Christ our Lord is king
 of the church ; it he visibly governeth and ordereth
 by the spiritual governors, as his substitutes and
 lieutenants ; (whence they peculiarly are styled his

ministers, his officers, his stewards, his legates, his **SERM:**
 co-workers.) When he ascending up to God's right **LVII.**
 hand was invested with entire possession of that
 royal state, he settled them to administer affairs
 concerning that government in his place and name :
Ascending up on high he gave gifts unto men.— **Eph. iv. 8,**
He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evan-
gelists, some pastors and teachers: he gave them,
 that is, he appointed them in their office, subordi-
 nate to himself, *for the perfecting of the saints,*
for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of
the body of Christ. As to him, therefore, ruling
 by them, by them enacting laws, dispensing justice,
 maintaining order and peace, obedience is due.

3. Again ; For the honour of God, the commenda- (**1 Cor. xiv.**
 tion of religion, and benefit of the people, it is need-^{23.}
 ful, that in all religious performances things should, **Tit. ii. 10.)**
 according to St. Paul's rule, be performed *decently,* **1 Cor. xiv.**
and according to order, without unhandsome con-^{40.}
 fusion and troublesome distraction : this cannot be
 accomplished without a determination of persons,
 of modes, of circumstances appertaining to those
 performances ; (for how can any thing be performed
 decently, if every person hath not his rank and sta-
 tion, his office and work allotted to him ; if to every
 thing to be done, its time, its place, its manner of
 performance be not assigned, so that each one may
 know what, when, where, and how he must do ?)
 Such determination must be committed to the dis-
 cretion and care of some persons, empowered to
 frame standing laws or rules concerning it, and to
 see them duly executed ; (for all persons without
 delay, strife, confusion, and disturbance, cannot
 meddle in it :) with these persons all the rest of the

SERM. body must be obliged to comply; otherwise all such
 LVII. determinations will be vain and ineffectual. Such
 order reason doth recommend in every proceeding;
 such order especially becometh the grandeur and
 importance of sacred things; such order God hath
 declared himself to approve, and love, especially in
 his own house, among his people, in matters relating
 to his service; for, *He is not*, as St. Paul saith,
 1 Cor. xiv. 33. *arguing to this purpose, the God of confusion, but
 of peace, in all churches of the saints.*

4. Again; It is requisite that all Christian bre-
 thren should conspire in serving God with mutual
 charity, hearty concord, harmonious consent; that,
 as the apostles so often prescribed, they *should*
 endeavour to keep unity of spirit in the bond of
 peace; that they should be *likeminded, having the*
 same love, being of one accord, of one mind,
 standing fast in one spirit, with one mind; that
 they should walk by the same rule, and mind the
 same thing; that with one mind and one mouth
 they should glorify God, the Father of our Lord
 Jesus Christ; that they should all speak the same
 thing; and that there be no divisions among them,
 but that they be perfectly joined together in the
 same mind, and in the same judgment; (like those
 in the Acts, of whom it is said, *the multitude of*
 believers had one heart and one soul;) that there
 should be no schisms (divisions, or factions) in the
 body; that all dissensions, all *murmurings*, all emu-
 lations should be discarded from the church: the
 which precepts, secluding an obligation to obedience,
 would be impossible and vain; for (without con-
 tinual miracle, and transforming human nature,
 things not to be expected from God, who apparently

Σύνθεσις.

Phil. ii. 2.

Ὁμόφρον.

1 Pet. iii. 8.

Eph. iv. 3.

Phil. ii. 2.

i. 27. iii. 16.

Rom. xv.

5, 6. xii. 16.

2 Cor. xiii.

11.

1 Cor. i. 10.

Acts iv. 32.

1 Cor. xii.

25. xi. 18.

i. 11. iii. 3.

2 Cor. xii.

20.

Phil. ii. 14.

designeth to manage religion by ordinary ways of SERM.
 human prudence, his gracious assistance concurring) LVII.
 no durable concord in any society can ever effectually be maintained otherwise than by one public reason, will, and sentence, which may represent, connect, and comprise all; in defect of that every one will be of a several opinion about what is best, each will be earnest for the prevalence of his model and way; there will be so many lawgivers as persons, so many differences as matters incident; nothing will pass smoothly and quietly, without bickering and jangling, and consequently without animosities and feuds: whence no unanimity, no concord, scarce any charity or good-will can subsist.

5. Further; In consequence of these things common edification requireth such obedience: it is the duty of governors to order all things to this end, that is, to the maintenance, encouragement, and improvement of piety; for this purpose their authority was given them, as St. Paul saith, and therefore it 2 Cor. xiii. 10. x. 8. must be deemed thereto conducive: it is indeed very necessary to edification, which, without discipline guiding the simple and ignorant, reclaiming the erroneous and presumptuous, cherishing the regular, and correcting the refractory, can nowise be promoted.

Excluding it, there can be no means of checking or redressing scandals, which to the reproach of religion, to the disgrace of the church, to the corrupting the minds, and infecting the manners of 1 Tim. i. 19. 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17, 18. men, will spring up and spread. Neither can there be any way to prevent the rise and growth of pernicious errors or heresies; the which assuredly in a state of unrestrained liberty the wanton and wicked

SERM. minds of men will breed, their licentious practice
 LVII. will foster and propagate, to *the increase of all*
 2 Tim. ii. *impiety: their mouths must be stopped, otherwise*
 16. *they will subvert whole houses, teaching things*
 Tit. i. 11. *which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake; the*
 2 Tim. ii. *word of naughty seducers will spread like a gan-*
 17. *grene, if there be no corrosive or corrective remedy*
to stay its progress.

Where things are not managed in a stable, quiet, orderly way, no good practice can flourish or thrive; dissension will choke all good affections, confusion will obstruct all good proceedings; from anarchy, emulation and strife will certainly grow, and from
 Jam. iii. 16. *them all sorts of wickedness; for where, saith St. James, there is emulation and strife, there is confusion and every evil thing.*

All those benefits, which arise from holy communion in offices of piety and charity, (from common prayers and praises to God, from participation in all sacred ordinances, from mutual advice, admonition, encouragement, consolation, good example,) will together vanish with discipline; these depend upon the friendly union and correspondence of the members; and no such union can abide without the ligament of discipline, no such correspondence can be upheld without unanimous compliance to public order. The cement of discipline wanting, the church
 1 Pet. ii. 5. *will not be like a spiritual house, compacted of lively stones into one goodly pile; but like a company of scattered pebbles, or a heap of rubbish.*

So considering the reason of things, this obedience will appear needful: to enforce the practice thereof we may adjoin several weighty considerations.

Consider obedience, what it is, whence it springs,

what it produceth ; each of those respects will engage us to it. SERM.
LVII.

It is in itself a thing very good and acceptable to God, very just and equal, very wise, very comely and pleasant.

It cannot but be grateful unto God, who is the God of love, of order, of peace, and therefore cannot but like the means furthering them ; he cannot but be pleased to see men do their duty, especially that which regardeth his own ministers ; in the respect performed to whom he is himself indeed avowed, and honoured, and obeyed^a.

It is a just and equal thing, that every member of society should submit to the laws and orders of it ; for every man is supposed upon those terms to enter into, and to abide in it ; every man is deemed to owe such obedience, in answer to his enjoyment of privileges and partaking of advantages thereby ; so therefore whoever pretendeth a title to those excellent immunities, benefits, and comforts, which communion with the church affordeth, it is most equal, that he should contribute to its support and welfare, its honour, its peace ; that consequently he should yield obedience to the orders appointed for those ends. Peculiarly equal it is in regard to our spiritual governors, who are obliged to be very solicitous and laborious in furthering our best good ; who stand deeply engaged, and are responsible for the welfare of our souls : they must be contented to *spend, and be spent* ; to undergo any pains, any hardships, any dangers and crosses occurring in pur-

^a Tempus est,—ut de submissione provocent in se Dei clementiam, et de honore debito in Dei sacerdotem eliciant in se divinam misericordiam. *Cypr. Ep.* 30.

SERM. suance of those designs: and is it not then plainly
LVII. equal (is it not indeed more than equal, doth not all
 ingenuity and gratitude require?) that we should
 encourage and comfort them in bearing those bur-
 dens, and in discharging those incumbencies, by a
 fair and cheerful compliance? it is the apostle's
 enforcement of the duty in our text: *Obey them,*
saith he, and submit yourselves; for they watch
for your souls, as those who are to render an
account, that they may do it with joy, and not
with grief, (or groaning.)

Is it not indeed extreme iniquity and ingratitude,
 when they with anxious care and earnest toil are
 endeavouring our happiness, that we should vex and
 trouble them by our perverse and cross behaviour?

Nay, is it not palpable folly to do thus, seeing
 thereby we do indispose and hinder them from effec-
 tually discharging their duty to our advantage? ἀλ-
 σιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο, *for this,* addeth the apostle,
 further pressing the duty, *is unprofitable to you,* or
 it tendeth to your disadvantage and damage; not
 only as involving guilt, but as inferring loss; the
 loss of all those spiritual benefits, which ministers
 being encouraged, and thence performing their office
 with alacrity and sprightly diligence, would pro-
 cure to you: it is therefore our wisdom to be obe-
 dient, because obedience is so advantageous and pro-
 fitable to us.

The same is also a comely and amiable thing,
 yielding much grace, procuring great honour to the
 church, highly adorning and crediting religion: it is
 a goodly sight to behold things proceeding orderly;
 to see every person quietly resting in his post, or
 moving evenly in his rank; to observe superiors

calmly leading, inferiors gladly following, and equals SERM. LVII.
 lovingly accompanying each other: this is the Ps. cxxxix.
 Psalmist's *Ecce quam bonum! Behold, how (ad-¹*
mirably) good, and how pleasant it is for brethren
to dwell together in unity! such a state of things
 argueth the good temper and wisdom of persons so
 demeaning themselves, the excellency of the prin-
 ciples which do guide and act them, the goodness of
 the constitution which they observe; so it crediteth
 the church, and graceth religion; a thing which, as
 St. Paul teacheth, *in all things* we should endea-Tit. ii. 10.
 vour.

It is also a very pleasant and comfortable thing to live in obedience; by it we enjoy tranquillity of mind and satisfaction of conscience, we taste all the sweets of amity and peace, we are freed from the stings of inward remorse, we escape the grievances of discord and strife.

The causes also and principles from which obedience springeth do much commend it: it ariseth from the dispositions of soul which are most Christian and most humane; from charity, humility, meekness, sobriety of mind, and calmness of passion; the which always dispose men to submit, complaisant, peaceable demeanour toward all men, especially toward those whose relation to them claimeth such demeanour: these a genuine, free, cordial, and constant obedience do signify to live in the soul; together with a general honesty of intention, and exemption from base designs.

In fine, innumerable and inestimable are the benefits and good fruits accruing from this practice; beside the support it manifestly yieldeth to the church, the gracefulness of order, the conveniences

SERM. and pleasures of peace, it hath also a notable influence upon the common manners of men, which
LVII. hardly can ever prove very bad, where the governors of the church do retain their due respect and authority; nothing more powerfully doth instigate to virtue, than the countenance of authority; nothing more effectually can restrain from exorbitancy of vice, than the bridle of discipline: this obvious experience demonstrateth, and we shall plainly see, if we reflect upon those times when piety and virtue have most flourished: Whence was it, that in those good old times Christians did so abound in good works, that they burned with holy zeal, that they gladly would do, would suffer any thing for their religion? whence but from a mighty respect to their superiors, from a strict regard to their direction and discipline? Did the bishops then prescribe long fasts, or impose rigid penances? willingly did the people undergo them: Did the pastor conduct into danger, did he lead them into the very jaws of death and martyrdom? the flock with a resolute alacrity did follow: Did a prelate interdict any practice scandalous or prejudicial to the church, under pain of incurring censure? every man trembled at the consequences of transgressing^b: no terror of worldly power, no severity of justice, no dread of corporal punishment had such efficacy to deter men from ill-doing, as the reproof and censure of a bishop; his frown could avail more than the menaces of an emperor, than the rage of a persecutor, than the rods

^b Neque hoc ita dixerim, ut negligatur ecclesiastica disciplina, et permittatur quisquam facere quod velit sine ulla correptione, et quadam medicinali vindicta, et terribili lenitate, et charitatis severitate. *Aug. adv. Petil.* iii. 4.

And axes of an executioner : no rod indeed did smart SERM.
like the spiritual rod, no sword did cut so deep as LVII.
that of the Spirit ; no loss was then so valuable as
being deprived of spiritual advantages ; no banish-
ment was so grievous as being separated from holy
communion ; no sentence of death was so terrible as
that which cut men off from the church ; no thun-
der could astonish or affright men like the crack of a
spiritual anathema : this was that which kept virtue
in request, and vice in detestation ; hence it was
that men were so good, that religion did so thrive,
that so frequent and so illustrious examples of piety
did appear ; hence indeed we may well reckon that
Christianity did (under so many disadvantages and
oppositions) subsist and grow up ; obedience to go-
vernors was its guard ; that kept the church firmly
united in a body sufficiently strong to maintain it-
self against all assaults of faction within, of opposi-
tion from abroad ; that preserved that concord,
which disposed and enabled Christians to defend
their religion against all fraud and violence ; that
cherished the true virtue, and the beautiful order,
which begot veneration to religion : to it therefore
we owe the life and growth of Christianity ; so that
through many sharp persecutions it hath held up its
head, through so many perilous diseases it hath kept
its life until this day. There were not then of old
any such cavils and clamours against every thing
prescribed by governors ; there were no such uncon-
ditionable scruples, no such hardhearted pretences to
conscience devised to baffle the authority of
superiors : had there been such, had men then com-
monly been so froward and factious as now, the
church had been soon shivered into pieces, our reli-

SERM. gion had been swallowed up in confusion and licen-
LVII. tiousness.

If again we on the other hand fix our consideration upon disobedience, (the nature, the sources, the consequences thereof,) it will, I suppose, much conduce to the same effect, of persuading us to the practice of this duty.

It is in itself a heinous sin, being the transgression of a command in nature and consequence very important, upon which God layeth great stress, which is frequently inculcated in scripture, which is fenced by divers other precepts, which is pressed by strong arguments, and backed by severe threatenings of punishment upon the transgressors.

It is in its nature a kind of apostasy from Christianity, and rebellion against our Lord; for as he that refuseth to obey the king's magistrates in administration of their office is interpreted to disclaim his authority, and to design rebellion against him; so they who obstinately disobey the ministers of our Lord's spiritual kingdom do thereby appear to disavow him, to shake off his yoke, to impeach his reign over them; so doth he himself interpret and take it: *He*, saith our Lord, *that heareth you heareth me, and he that* (ὁ ἀθετῶν, *that baffleth*) *despiseth you despiseth me*; and, *If any man neglect to hear the church*, (or shall disobey it, ἐὰν παρακούσῃ,) *let him be to thee as a heathen, and a publican*; that is, such a refractory person doth by his contumacy put himself into the state of one removed from *the commonwealth of Israel*, he forfeiteth the special protection of God, he becometh as an alien or an outlaw from the kingdom of our Lord^d.

Luke x. 16.
 Matt. x. 40.
 xii. 17.

^d Nec putent sibi vitæ aut salutis constare rationem, si epi-

Under the Mosaical dispensation those *who would do presumptuously, and would not hearken unto the priest, that stood to minister before the Lord,* SERM. LVII. Deut. xvii. 12. did incur capital punishment; those who factiously murmured against Aaron are said to make an insurrection against God, and answerably were punished in a miraculous way, (*the Lord made a new thing, the earth opened, and swallowed them up; they went down alive into the pit.*) Num. xvi. 11, 30. It was in the prophetic times an expression signifying height of impiety, *My people is as those who strive with the priest.* Hos. iv. 4. Seeing then God hath no less regard to his peculiar servants now than he had then; seeing they no less represent him, and act by his authority now, than any did then; seeing their service is as precious to him, and as much tendeth to his honour now, as the Levitical service then did; seeing he no less loveth order and peace in the church, than he did in the synagogue; we may well suppose it a no less heinous sin, and odious to God, to despise the ministers of Christ's gospel, than it was before to despise the ministers of Moses's law^e.

It is a sin indeed pregnant with divers sins, and involving the breach of many great commands, which are frequently proposed and pressed in the 1 Cor. xvi. 14. New Testament, with design in great part to guard Phil. ii. 14. and secure it: that of *doing all things in charity;* Rom. xii. 18. of *doing all things without murmurings and dissensions;* 2 Tim. ii. 22. of *pursuing peace so far as lieth in us;* Heb. xii. 14. of maintaining unity, concord, unanimity in de- Mark ix. 10.

scopis et sacerdotibus obtemperare noluerint; cum in Deutron. Deus dicat, &c. Cypr. Ep. 61.

^e Quo exemplo ostenditur, et probatur obnoxios omnes et culpæ et pœnæ futuros, qui se schismaticis contra præpositos et sacerdotes irreligiosa temeritate miscuerint. *Cypr. Ep. 76.*

SERM. votion ; of avoiding schisms, and dissensions, and the
LVII. like : which are all notoriously violated by this disobedience ; it includeth the most high breach of charity, the most formal infringing peace, the most scandalous kind of discord that can be, to cross our superiors^f.

It is also a practice issuing from the worst dispositions of soul, such as are most opposite to the spirit of our religion, and indeed very repugnant to common reason and humanity ; from a proud haughtiness or vain wantonness of mind ; from the irregularity of unmortified and unbridled passion ; from exorbitant selfishness, (selfishness of every bad kind, self-conceit, self-will, self-interest,) from turbulent animosity, froward crossness of humour, rancorous spite, perverse obstinacy ; from envy, ambition, avarice, and the like ill sources, the worst fruits of the flesh and corrupt nature : to such dispositions the rejecting God's prophets of old, and the noncompliance with the apostles, are ascribed in scripture ; and from the same the like neglect of God's messengers now do proceed ; as whoever will observe may easily discern ; do but mind the discourses of factious people, you shall perceive them all to breathe generally nothing but ill-nature.

The fruits also which it produceth are extremely bad ; manifold great inconveniences and mischiefs, hugely prejudicing the interest of religion and the welfare of the church.

Vid. Cypr.
Ep. 55. Ne-
que enim
aliunde, &c.

It is immediately and formally a violation of order and peace ; whence all the woful consequences of disorder and faction do adhere thereto.

^f An esse sibi cum Christo videtur, qui adversus sacerdotes Christi facit ? &c. *Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.* p. 258.

It breedeth great disgrace to the church and scandal to religion; for what can appear more ugly than to see among the professors of religion children opposing their fathers, scholars contesting with their masters, inferiors slighting and crossing their superiors? what can more expose the church and religion to the contempt, to the derision of atheists and infidels, of profane and lewd persons, of wild heretics and schismatics, of all enemies unto truth and piety, than such foul irregularity^s.

It corrupteth the minds and manners of men: for when that discipline is relaxed which was ordained to guard truth and promote holiness; when men are grown so licentious and stubborn as to contemn their superiors, to disregard their wholesome laws and sober advice, there can be no curb to restrain them, but down precipitantly they run into all kind of vicious irregularities and excesses; when those mounds are taken away, whither will men ramble? when those banks are broken down, what can we expect but deluges of impious doctrine and wicked practice, to overflow the ignorant and inconsiderate people?

Doth not indeed this practice evidently tend to the dissolution of the church and destruction of Christianity? for when the *shepherds* are (as to

^s Inde schismata, et hæreses obortæ sunt, et oriuntur, dum episcopus, qui unus est, et ecclesiæ præest superba quorundam præsumptione contemnitur. *Cypr. Ep. 69.*

Hæc sunt initia hæreticorum, et ortus atque conatus schismaticorum male cogitantium ut sibi placeant, ut præpositum superbo tumore contemnant. Sic de ecclesia receditur, sic altare profanum foris collocatur, sic contra pacem Christi, atque unitatem Dei rebellatur. *Cypr. Ep. 65.*

SERM. conduct and efficacy) *taken away, will not the sheep be scattered, or wander astray, like sheep without*

LVII.
 Matt. xxvi. *a shepherd, being bewildered in various errors, and*
 31. exposed as a prey to any wild beasts; to *the grievous wolves, to the ravenous lions, to the wily foxes?* here a fanatical enthusiast will snap them, there a profane libertine will worry them, there again a desperate atheist will tear and devour them^h.

Consult we but obvious experience, and we shall see what spoils and mines of faith, of good conscience, of common honesty and sobriety, this practice hath in a few years caused; how have atheism and infidelity, how have profaneness and dissoluteness of manners, how have all kinds of dishonesty and baseness grown up since men began to disregard the authority of their spiritual guides! what dismal tragedies have we in our age beheld acted upon this stage of our own country! what bloody wars and murders, (murders of princes, of nobles, of bishops and priests!) what miserable oppressions, extortions, and rapines! what execrable seditions and rebellions! what barbarous animosities and feuds! what abominable treasons, sacrileges, perjuries, blasphemies! what horrible violations of all justice and honesty! And what, I pray, was the source of these things? where did they begin? where but at murmuring against, at rejecting, at persecuting the spiritual governors, at casting down and trampling on their authority, at slighting and spurning at their advice? Surely would men have observed the laws, or have hearkened to the counsels of those grave and sober persons, whom God had appointed to di-

^h Τοῦτο πάντων τῶν κακῶν αἴτιον, ὅτι τὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἠφρανίσθη, οὐδὲ μία αἰδώς, οὐδεὶς φόβος, &c. Chrys. in 2 Tim. Or. 2.

rect them, they never would have run into the com-
mission of such enormities.

SERM.
LVII.

It is not to be omitted, that, in the present state of things, the guilt of disobedience to spiritual governors is increased and aggravated by the supervenient guilt of another disobedience to the laws of our prince and country. Before the secular powers (unto whom God hath committed the dispensation of justice, with the maintenance of peace and order, in reference to worldly affairs) did submit to our Lord, and became *nursing parents of the church*, the power of managing ecclesiastical matters did wholly reside in spiritual guides; unto whom Christians, as the *peculiar* subjects of God, were obliged willingly to yield obedience; and, refusing it, were guilty before God of spiritual disorder, faction, or schism: but now, after that political authority (out of pious zeal for God's service, out of a wise care to prevent the influences of disorder in spiritual matters upon the temporal peace, out of grateful return for the advantages the commonwealth enjoyeth from religion and the church) hath pleased to back and fortify the laws of spiritual governors by civil sanctions, the knot of our obligation is tied faster, its force is redoubled, we by disobedience incur a double guilt, and offend God two ways, both as supreme Governor of the world, and as King of the church; to our schism against the church we add rebellion against our prince, and so become no less bad citizens than bad Christians. Some may perhaps imagine their disobedience hence more excusable, taking themselves now only thereby to transgress a political sanction: but (beside that even that were a great offence, the command of our temporal governors

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SERM. being sufficient, out of conscience to God's express
LVII. will, to oblige us in all things not evidently repugnant to God's law) it is a great mistake to think the civil law doth anywise derogate from the ecclesiastical; that doth not swallow this up, but succoureth and corroborateth it; their concurrence yieldeth an accession of weight and strength to each; they do not by conspiring to prescribe the same thing either of them cease to be governors, as to right; but in efficacy the authority of both should thence be augmented, seeing the obligation to obedience is multiplied upon their subjects; and to disobey them is now two crimes, which otherwise should be but one.

S E R M O N LVIII.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

SUCH is the nature of this duty, and such are SERM. LVIII. the reasons enforcing the practice thereof: I shall only further remove two impediments of that practice, and so leave this point.

1. One hinderance of obedience is this, that spiritual power is not despotical or compulsory, but parental or pastoral; that it hath no external force to abet it, or to avenge disobedience to its laws: they must not *κατεξουσιάζειν*, or *κατακυριεύειν*, (be imperious, or domineer,) they are not allowed to exercise violence, or to inflict bodily correction^a; but Matt. xx. Luke xxii. 25. 1 Pet. v. 3. must rule in meek and gentle ways, directly influential upon the mind and conscience, (ways of rational persuasion, exhortation, admonition, reproof) *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;—convincing, rebuking, exhorting with all 2 Tim. ii. 25. iv. 2. 1 Tim. 3. iii. longsuffering and doctrine;* their word is their only weapon, their force of argument all the constraint

^a Μάλιστα γὰρ πάντων Χριστιανῶς οὐκ ἐφεῖται πρὸς βίαν ἐπαγορθεῖν τὰ τῶν ἀμαρτανόντων πταίσματα, &c. Chrys. de Sacerd. 2.

^b Ἐνταῦθε οὐ βιαζόμενον, ἀλλὰ πειθοντα δεῖ ποιεῖν ἀμεῖνω τὸν τοιοῦτον.

Ibid.

SERM. they apply: hence men commonly do not stand in
LVIII. awe of them, nor are so sensible of their obligation
 to obey them; they cannot understand why they
 should be frighted by words, or controlled by an
 unarmed authority.

But this in truth (things being duly considered) is so far from diminishing our obligation, or arguing the authority of our governors to be weak and precarious, that it rendereth our obligation much greater, and their authority more dreadful; for the sweeter and gentler their way of governing is, the more disingenuous and unworthy a thing it is to disobey it; not to be persuaded by reason, not to be allured by kindness, not to admit friendly advice, not to comply with the calmest methods of furthering our own good, is a brutish thing; he that only can be scared and scourged to duty, scarce deserveth the name of a man: it therefore doth the more oblige us, that in this way we are moved to action by love rather than fear. Yet if we would fear wisely and justly, (not like children, being frighted with formidable shapes and appearances, but like men, apprehending the real consequences of things,) we should the more fear these spiritual powers, because they are insensible: for that God hath commanded us to obey them, without assigning visible forces to constrain or chastise, is a manifest argument that he hath reserved the vindication of their authority to his own hand, which therefore will be infallibly certain, and terribly severe; so the nature of the case requireth, and so God hath declared it shall be: the sentence that is upon earth pronounced by his ministers upon contumacious offenders, he hath declared himself ready to ratify in heaven, and

Matt. xviii.
18.

therefore most assuredly will execute it. As under **SERM.**
 the old law God appointed to the transgression of LVIII.
 some laws, upon which he laid special stress, the
 punishment of *being cut off from his people*; the
 execution of which punishment he reserved to him-
 self, to be accomplished in his own way and time;
 so doth he now in like manner take upon him to
 maintain the cause of his ministers, and to execute
 the judgments decreed by them; and, if so, we may
 consider that *it is a dreadful thing to fall into* Heb. x. 31.
the hands of the living God. Ecclesiastical author-
 ity therefore is not a shadow, void of substance or
 force, but hath the greatest power in the world to
 support and assert it; it hath arms to maintain it
 most effectual and forcible, (those of which St. Paul
 saith; *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,* 2 Cor. x. 4.
but mighty through God,—) it inflicteth chastise-
 ments far more dreadful than any secular power can
 inflict; for these only touch the body, those pierce
 the soul; these concern only our temporal state,
 those reach eternity itself; these at most yield a
 transitory smart, or kill the body, those produce
 endless torment, and (utterly as to all comfort in
 being) destroy the soul.

The punishment for extreme contumacy is called *delivery to Satan*; and is not this far worse than Spirituali
gladio su-
perbi et
contuma-
ces necan-
tur, dum
de ecclesia
ejiciuntur.
Cypr. Ep.
61.
 to be put into the hands of any gaoler or hangman?
 what are any cords of hemp or fetters of iron in
 comparison to those bands, of which it is said,
Whatever ye bind on earth shall be bound in
heaven; which engage the soul in a guilt never to
 be loosed, except by sore contrition and serious re-
 pentance? what are any scourges to St. Paul's rod,
 lashing the heart and conscience with stinging re-

SERM. morse? what any axes or falchions to that *sword*
 LVIII. *of the spirit*, which cutteth off a member from the
 body of Christ? what are any fagots and torches to
 that unquenchable *fire and brimstone* of the in-
 fernal lake? what, in fine, doth any condemnation
 here signify to that horrible curse, which devoteth
 an incorrigible soul to the bottomless pit?

It is therefore indeed a great advantage to this
 power that it is spiritual.

2. Another grand obstruction to the practice of
 this duty is, pretence to scruple about the lawfulness,
 or dissatisfaction in the expedience of that
 which our governors prescribe; that we are able to
 advance objections against their decrees; that we
 can espy inconveniences ensuing upon their orders;
 that we imagine the constitution may be reformed,
 so as to become more pure, more convenient and
 comely, more serviceable to edification; that we
 cannot fancy that to be best, which they enjoin:
 for removing this obstruction let me only propound
 some questions.

Cypr. Ep.
 50. 52. (p.
 97.)

Φιλάνους ὁ-
 ρος εἰς λείπει,
 οὐδὲ φιλονί-
 κης μάχη.
 Socr. Hist.
 vii. 31.

Were not any government appointed in vain, if
 such pretences might exempt or excuse from con-
 formity to its orders? can such ever be wanting?
 Is there any thing devisable, which may not be im-
 pugned by some plausible reason, which may not
 disgust a squeamish humour? Is there any matter
 so clearly innocent, the lawfulness whereof a weak
 mind will not question; any thing so firm and solid,
 in which a small acuteness of wit cannot pick a
 hole; any thing so indisputably certain, that who-
 ever affecteth to cavil may not easily devise some
 objections against it?

Is there any thing here that hath no inconveni-

ences attending it? are not in all human things SERM. conveniences and inconveniences so mixed and com- LVIII. plicated, that it is impossible to disentangle and sever them? can there be any constitution under heaven so absolutely pure and perfect, that no blemish or defect shall appear therein? can any providence of man foresee, any care prevent, any industry remedy all inconveniences possible? Is a reformation satisfactory to all fancies anywise practicable; and are they not fitter to live in the Platonic idea of a commonwealth than in any real society, who press for such an one? To be facile and complaisant in other cases, bearing with things which do not please us, is esteemed commendable, a courteous and humane practice: why should it not be much more reasonable to condescend to our superiors, and comport with their practice? is it not very discourteous to deny them the respect which we allow to others, or to refuse that advantage to public transactions which we think fit to grant unto private conversation?

To what purpose did God institute a government, if the resolutions thereof must be suspended till every man is satisfied with them; or if its state must be altered so often as any man can pick in it matter of offence or dislike; or if the proceedings thereof must be shaped according to the numberless varieties of different and repugnant fancies^b?

Are, I pray, the objections against obedience so clear and cogent, as are the commands which enjoin,

^b Οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὴν ἀρίστην (πολιτείαν) δεῖ θεωρεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν δυνατήν. Arist. Pol. iv. 1.

Si ubi jubeantur quærere singulis liceat; pereunte obsequio etiam imperium intercidit. Tac. i. p. 450. *Otho*.

SERM. LVIII. and the reasons which enforce it? are the inconveniences adhering to it apparently so grievous, as are the mischiefs which spring from disobedience? do they in a just balance counterpoise the disparagement of authority, the violation of order, the disturbance of peace, the obstruction of edification, which disobedience produceth?

Do the scruples (or reasons, if we will call them so) which we propound, amount to such a strength and evidence, as to outweigh the judgment of those whom God hath authorized by his commission, whom he doth enable by his grace, to instruct and guide us^c? May not those, whose office it is to judge of such things, whose business it is to study for skill in order to that purpose, who have most experience in those affairs specially belonging to them, be reasonably deemed most able to judge both for themselves and us what is lawful and what expedient? have they not eyes to see what we do, and hearts to judge concerning the force of our pretences, as well as we?

Qui fidei
et veritati
præsumus.
Cypr. Ep.
72.

Is it not a design of their office to resolve our doubts and void our scruples in such cases, that we may act securely and quietly, being directed by better judgments than our own? Are they not strictly obliged in conscience, are they not deeply engaged by interest, to govern us in the best manner? Is it therefore wisdom, is it modesty, is it justice for us to advance our private conceits against their most deliberate public resolutions? may we not in so doing mistake? may we not be blind or weak, (not

^c Dixisti sane scrupulum tibi esse tollendum de animo, in quem incidisti; Incidisti sed tua credulitate irreligiosa, &c. *Cypr. Ep.* 69. (ad Florent.) vid. optime et apposite de hac re disserentem.

to say fond, or proud, or perverse?) and shall those defects or defaults of ours evacuate so many commands of God, and render his so noble, so needful an ordinance quite insignificant? SERM.
LVIII.

Do we especially seem to be in earnest, or appear otherwise than illusively to palliate our naughty affections and sinister respects, when we ground the justification of our nonconformity upon dark subtilties and intricate quirks; which it is hard to conceive that we understand ourselves, and whereof very perspicacious men cannot apprehend the force? Do we think we shall be innocent men, because we are smart sophisters? or that God will excuse from our duty, because we can perplex men with our discourses? or that we are bound to do nothing, because we are able to say somewhat against all things?

Would we not do well to consider what huge danger they incur, and how massy a load of guilt they must undergo, upon whom shall be charged all those sad disorders and horrid mischiefs which are naturally consequent on disobedience? What if confusion of things, if corruption of manners, if oppression of truth, if dissolution of the church do thence ensue; what a case then shall we be in, who confer so much thereto? Would not such considerations be apt to beget scruples far more disquieting an honest and truly conscientious mind, than any such either profound subtilties or superficial plausibilities can do, which dissenters are wont to allege? For needeth he not to have extreme reason (reason extremely strong and evident) who dareth to refuse that obedience which God so plainly commandeth; by which his own authority is maintained; on which the

**SERM. safety, prosperity, and peace of the church dependeth;
LVIII. in which the support of religion, and the welfare of
numberless souls is deeply concerned?**

Did, let me further ask, the apostles, when they settled orders in the church, when they imposed what they conceived needful for edification and decency, when they inflicted spiritual chastisements upon disorderly walkers, regard such pretences? or had those self-conceited and self-willed people (who
^{2 Tim. iv. 15.} *obeyed not their words, but resisted and rejected*
^{1 Tim. i. 20.} *them*) no such pretences? had they nothing, think
^{2 Thess. iii. 14, 6.} we, to say for themselves, nothing to object against the apostolic orders and proceedings? They had surely; they failed not to find faults in the establishment, and to pretend a kind of tender conscience for their disobedience; yet this hindered not, but that the apostles condemned their misbehaviour and inflicted severe censures upon them?

Did not also the primitive bishops (and all spiritual governors down from the beginning every where almost to these days of contention and disorder) proceed in the same course; not fearing to enact such laws concerning indifferent matters and circumstances of religion, as seemed to them conducive to the good of the church? Did not all good people readily comply with their orders, how painful soever, or disagreeable to flesh and blood, without contest or scruple? yet had not they as much wit, and no less conscience than ourselves? They who had wisdom enough to descry the truth of our religion through all the clouds of obloquy and disgrace, which it lay under; who had zeal and constancy to bear the hardest brunts of persecution against it; were they such fools as to see no fault, so stupid as to resent

nothing, or so loose as to comply with any thing? **SERM. LVIII.**
No surely; they were in truth so wise as to know
 their duty, and so honest as to observe it.

If these considerations will not satisfy, I have done; and proceed to the next point of our duty, to which the precept in our text may extend, concerning the doctrine of our guides: in which respect it may be conceived to imply the following particulars to be performed by us, as instances, or parts, or degrees thereof.

1. We should readily and gladly address ourselves to hear them; not out of profane and wilful contempt or slothful negligence declining to attend upon their instructions: there were of old those, of whom the prophets complain, who would not so much as hearken to the words of those whom God sent unto them; but stopped their ears, *withdrew the shoulder, and hardened the neck, and would not hear*: there were those in the evangelical times, who did ἀποθεῖν τὸν λόγον, *thrust away the word of God, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life; who would not admit or hear the word of life, and overtures of grace propounded by the apostles*: there were Gadarenes, who beseeched our Lord himself to depart from their coasts: there have always been *deaf adders, who stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely*; no wonder then if now there be those who will not so much as allow a hearing to the messengers of God, and the guides of their soul: some out of a factious prejudice against their office, or their persons, or their way, do shun them, giving themselves over to the conduct of seducers; some out of a profane neglect of all religion, out of being wholly possessed with

Neh. ix. 29.

Prov. i. 24.

Is. lxx. 12.

lxvi. 4.

Jer. vii. 13.

vi. 10.

Acts xiii.

46.

Matt. x. 14.

Luke viii.

37.

Psalm lviii.

4, 5.

SERM. LVIII. worldly cares and desires, out of stupidity and sloth, (indisposing them to mind any thing that is serious,) will not afford them any regard: all these are extremely blameable, offensive to God, and injurious to themselves. It is a heinous affront to God (implying an hostile disposition toward him, an unwillingness to have any correspondence with him) to refuse so much as audience to his ambassadors; it is an interpretative repulsing him: so of old he expressed it; *I, saith he, spake unto you, rising early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called you, but ye answered not:* so under the gospel; *He, saith our Lord, that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth (or regardeth not) you despiseth me;* and, *We are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.* It is a starving our souls, depriving them of that food which God hath provided for them; it is keeping ourselves at distance from any means or possibility of being well informed and quickened to the practice of our duty, of being reclaimed from our errors and sins; it is the way to become hardened in impiety, or sinking into a reprobate sense. This is the first step to obedience; for *how can we believe, except we hear?* this is that which St. James urgeth, *Let every man be quick to hear;* and which St. Peter thus enjoineth, *Like newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby:* we should especially be quick and ready to hear those whom God hath authorized and appointed to speak; we should *desire to suck the milk of the word* from those who are our spiritual parents and nurses.

2. We should hear them with serious, earnest at-

tion and consideration; so that we may well un-
 derstand, may be able to weigh, may retain in me-
 mory, and may become duly affected with their dis-
 courses; we must not hear them drowsily and
 slightly, as if we were nothing concerned, or were
 hearing an impertinent tale; their word should not
 pass through the ears, and slip away without effect;
 but sink into the understanding, into the memory,
 into the heart; like *the good seed* falling into a
depth of earth, able to afford it root and nourish-
 ment; therefore we must attend diligently thereto:
περισσότερος ὄν δεῖ προσέχειν, we should therefore give
more abundant heed, as the apostle saith, *to the*
things we hear, lest at any time we should let them
slip. This duty the nature and importance of their
 word requireth: *it is the word not of men*, but, in
truth, the word of the great God, (his word as pro-
 ceeding from him, as declaring his mind and will, as
 tendering his overtures of grace and mercy,) which
 as such challengeth great regard and awe; it in-
 formeth us of our chief duties, it furthereth our
 main interests, it guideth us into, it urgeth us for-
 ward in the way to eternal happiness; it is the word
 that is *able to save our souls, to render us wise*
unto salvation; it therefore claimeth and deserveth
 from us most earnest attention; it is a great indig-
 nity and folly not to yield it.

3. We should to their instructions bring good dis-
 positions of mind, such as may render them most ef-
 fectual and fruitful to us; such as are right inten-
 tion, candour, docility, meekness.

We should not be induced to hear them out of
 curiosity, (as *having itching ears*,) being desirous
 to hear *some new things*, some fine notions, some

SERM. LVIII. taking discourse ; somewhat to fancy or talk pleasantly about, (as the Athenians heard St. Paul ;) not

Acts xvii. 21. out of censoriousness, or inclination to criticise and find fault, (as the Pharisees heard our Saviour,

Luke xi. 54. *laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him ;*) not out of design to gratify our passions in hearing them, to reprove other persons, or for any such corrupt and sinister intention ; but altogether out of pure design that we may be improved in knowledge, and excited to the practice of our duty.

We should not come to hear them with minds imbued with ill prejudices and partial affections, which may obstruct the virtue and efficacy of their discourse, or may hinder us from judging fairly and truly about what they say ; but with such freedom and ingenuity as may dispose us readily to yield unto and acquiesce in any profitable truth declared by them ; like the generous Bereans, who *received the word, μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, with all alacrity and readiness of mind, searching the scriptures daily, whether these things were so ; ὡς ἀκριβέστα βρέφη, like infants newly born,* that come to the dug without any other inclination than to suck what is needful for their sustenance.

Acts xvii. 11.

1 Pet. ii. 2.

We should be docile and tractable, willing and apt to learn, shaking off all those indispositions of soul (all dulness and sluggishness, all peevishness and perverseness, all pride and self-conceitedness, all corrupt affection and indulgence to our conceits, our humours, our passions, our lusts and inordinate desires) which may obstruct our understanding of the word, our yielding assent to it, our receiving impression from it : there were those, concerning whom

the apostle said, that he could not proceed in his dis- SERM.
course, because they were *καθαρὸν ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*, *dull of* LVIII.
hearing, (or sluggish in hearing,) who were indis- Heb. v. 11.
posed to hear, and incapable to understand, because (1 Cor. iii.
2.)
they would not be at the pains to rouse up their
fancies, and fix their minds upon a serious considera-
tion of things : there were those, who had *a spirit* Isa. xxix.
of slumber, eyes not to see, and ears not to hear ; 10.
Rom. xi. 8.
who *did hear with the ear, but not understand* ; Isa. vi. 9.
Acts xxviii.
seeing did see, but not perceive ; for their heart 26.
had waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing, John xii.
40.
and their eyes were closed ; such indocile persons
there always have been, who, being stupified and
perverted by corrupt affections, became incapable of
bettering from good instruction : all such we should
strive to free ourselves from, that we may perform
this duty to our guides, and *in meekness receive the* Jam. i. 21.
engrafted word.

These practices (of hearing, of attending, of coming
well disposed to instruction) are at least steps and
degrees necessarily prerequisite to the obedience pre-
scribed ; and further to press them all together upon
us, we may consider, that it is strictly incumbent on
them (under danger of heavy punishment and *woe*) 1 Cor. ix.
willingly, earnestly, with all diligence and patience, 16.
2 Cor. v. 14.
to labour in teaching and admonishing us ; they must 1 Pet. v. 2.
Rom. xii. 3.
give attendance, and *take heed unto their doctrine*, 1 Tim. v.
17. iv. 13,
that it may be *sound* and profitable ; they *must* 16.
2 Tim. iv. 2.
preach the word, and *be instant* upon it *in season*,
out of season, (that is, not only taking, but seeking
and snatching all occasions to do it,) *reproving, re-*
buking, exhorting with all longsuffering and doc-
trine ; they *must warn every man, and teach every* Col. i. 28.
man in all wisdom, that they may present every

SERM. *man perfect in Christ Jesus*: as they are obliged
 LVIII. in such manner to do these things, so there must be
 correspondent duties lying upon us, to receive their
 doctrine readily, carefully, patiently, sincerely, and
 fairly: as they must be faithful dispensers of God's
¹ Cor. iv. 2. heavenly truth and holy mysteries, so we must be
 obsequious entertainers of them: imposing such com-
 mands on them doth imply reciprocal obligations in
 their hearers and scholars; otherwise their office
 would be vain, and their endeavours fruitless; God
 no less would be frustrated in his design, than we
 should be deprived of the advantages of their insti-
 tution.

But further, it is a more immediate ingredient of
 this duty, that,

4. We should effectually be enlightened by their
 doctrine, be convinced by their arguments persuading
 truth and duty, be moved by their admonitions and
 exhortations to good practice; we should open our
 eyes to the light which they shed forth upon us, we
 should surrender our judgment to the proofs which
 they allege, we should yield our hearts and affections
 pliable to their mollifying and warming discourses:
 it is their part to subdue our minds to *the obedience
 of faith*, and to subject our wills to the observance
² Cor. x. 5. of God's commandments, (*casting down imagina-
 tions, and every high thing that exalteth itself
 against the knowledge of God, and bringing into
 captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*;) it
 must therefore answerably be our duty not to re-
 sist, not to hold out, not to persist obstinate in our
 errors or prejudices; to submit our minds to the
 power of truth, being willingly and gladly conquered
 by it; it must be our duty to subjugate our wills, to

bend our inclinations, to form our affections to a free SERM. LVIII.
 compliance of heart with the duties urged upon us ;
 we should not be like those disciples, of whom our
 Lord complaineth thus ; *O fools, and slow of heart* Luke xxiv.
to believe all that the prophets have spoken: nor ^{25.}
 like the Jews, with whom St. Stephen thus expos-
 tulates ; *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart* Acts vii. 51.
and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. iv. 20. ii. 4.
 They should speak with power and efficacy ; we
 therefore should not by our indispositions (by ob-
 stinacy of conceit or hardness of heart) obstruct their
 endeavours : they should be *co-workers of your joy,* 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Cor. iii. 5.
 (that is, working in us that faith and those virtues,
 which are productive of true joy and comfort to us ;)
 we therefore should co-work with them toward the
 same end : they should edify us in knowledge and
 holiness ; we should therefore yield ourselves to be
 fashioned and polished by them.

5. We should, in fine, obey their doctrine by con-
 forming our practice thereto ; this our Lord pre-
 scribed in regard even to the Jewish guides and doc-
 tors ; *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's* Matt. xxiii.
seat ; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, ^{2, 3.}
that observe and do : the same we may well con-
 ceive that he requireth in respect to his own min-
 isters, the teachers of a better law, authorized to
 direct us by his own commission, and thereto more
 specially qualified by his grace : this is indeed the
 crown and completion of all ; to hear signifieth no-
 thing ; to be convinced in our mind, and to be
 affected in our heart, will but aggravate our guilt,
 if we neglect practice : every sermon we hear, that
 sheweth us our duty, will in effect be an enditement
 upon us, will ground a sentence of condemnation, if

- SERM. we transgress it : for, as *the earth which drinketh*
 LVIII. *in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth*
 Heb. vi. 7, *forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed,*
 8. x. 26. *receiveth blessing from God, so that which beareth*
thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto
 Rom. ii. 13. *cursing, and its end is to be burned : and, Not the*
hearers of the law are just with God, but the doers
of the law shall be justified. And it is a good ad-
 Jam. i. 22. vice, that of St. James ; *Be ye doers of the word,*
and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves ;
 it is, he intimateth, a fallacy some are apt to put
 upon themselves, to conceit they have done suffi-
 ciently when they have lent an ear to the word ; this
 is the least part to be done in regard to it, practice
 is all in all ; what is it to be shewed the way, and to
 know it exactly, if we do not walk in it, if we do
 not by it arrive to our journey's end, the salvation of
 our souls ? To have waited upon our Lord himself,
 and hung upon his discourse, was not available ; for
 when in the day of account some shall begin to allege,
 Luke xiii. *We have eaten and drunk before thee, and thou*
 26, 27. *hast taught in our streets ; our Lord will say, I*
know you not whence ye are ; depart from me, all
ye workers of iniquity. And it is our Lord's de-
 Matt. vii. claration in the case, *Whosoever heareth these say-*
 24. *ings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto*
a wise man, which built his house upon a rock ;—
 (John xiv. *but every one that heareth these sayings of mine,*
 21.) *and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish*
man, which built his house upon the sand.
 Mark vi. 20. Many are very earnest to hear, they hear *gladly,*
 Matt. xiii. as Herod did St. John Baptist's homilies ; they *re-*
 20. *ceive the word with joy,* as the *temporary believers*
 in the parable did ; they do, as those men did in the

prophet, *delight to know God's ways, do ask of God the ordinances of justice, do take delight in approaching God*; or as those in another prophet, *who speak one to another every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord: and they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness: and, lo, thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not: they for a time rejoice in the light of God's messengers as those Jews did in the light of that burning and shining lamp*, St. John the Baptist; but all comes to nothing; but they are backward and careless to perform, at least more than they please themselves, or what suiteth to their fancy, their humour, their appetite, their interest: many hearers will believe only what they like, or what suiteth to their prejudices and passions; many of what they believe will practise that only which sorteth with their temper, or will serve their designs; they cannot conform to unpleasant and unprofitable doctrines: sometimes care choketh the word; sometimes temptation of pleasure, of profit, of honour allureth; sometimes difficulties, hazards, persecutions, discourage from obedience to it.

These particulars are obvious, and by most will be consented to: there is one point which perhaps will more hardly be admitted, which therefore I shall more largely insist upon; it is this:

6. That as in all cases it is our duty to defer

SERM.

LVIII.

Is. lviii. 2.

Ezek.

xxxiii. 30,

31, 32.

St. John v. 35.

SERM. much regard to the opinion of our guides, so in
 LVIII. some cases it behoveth us to rely barely upon their
 judgment and advice; those especially among them
 who excel in dignity and worth, who are approved
 for wisdom and integrity; their definitions, or the
 declarations of their opinion, (especially such as are
 exhibited upon mature deliberation and debate, in a
 solemn manner,) are ever very probable arguments
 of truth and expediency; they are commonly the
 best arguments which can be had in some matters,
 especially to the meaner and simpler sort of people.
 This upon many accounts will appear reasonable.

It is evident to experience, that every man is not
 capable to judge, or able to guide himself in matters
 of this nature, (concerning divine truth and con-
 science.) There are *children in understanding*;
 there are men *weak in faith*, (or knowledge con-
 cerning the faith;) there are *idiots*, ἄκακος, (men not
 bad, but *simple*,) persons *occupying the room of the
 unlearned, unskilful in the word of righteousness*,
 who, as the apostle saith, *need that one should teach
 them which be the first principles of the oracles of
 God*.

The vulgar sort of men are as undiscerning and
 injudicious in all things, so peculiarly in matters of
 this nature, so much abstracted from common sense
 and experience; whence we see them easily seduced
 into the fondest conceits and wildest courses by any
 slender artifice or fair pretence; *like children tossed
 to and fro, and carried about with every wind of
 doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning crafti-
 ness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*.

There are also some particular cases, a competent
 information and skill in which must depend upon

Rom. xiv.
 1. xv. 1, &c.
 xvi. 18.
 1 Cor. xiv.
 16. iii. 2.
 viii. 10.

Heb. v. 12.

Vulgo non
 judicium,
 non veritas.
 Tac.
 ἄκακος ὁ
 ἄνημος. M.
 Ant.

Eph. iv. 14.

rovements of mind acquired by more than ordinary study and experience; so that in them most people do want sufficient means of attaining knowledge requisite to guide their judgment or their practice: and for such persons in such cases it is only the best, the wisest, and the safest way, to follow upon the direction of their guides, assenting to what they declare, acting what they prescribe, going whither they conduct^d.

The very notion of guides, and the design of their office, doth import a difference of knowledge, and a need of reliance upon them in such cases; it signifies, that we are in some measure ignorant of the way, and that they better know it; and, if so, plain reason dictateth it fit that we should follow them: and indeed what need were there of guides, to what purpose should we have them, if we can sufficiently find the way, and judge what we should do without them?

In the state of learning, (in which the assigning teachers supposeth us placed,) whatever our capacity may be, yet our judgment at least (for want of a full comprehension of things, which must be discovered in order and by degrees) is imperfect: in that state therefore it becometh us not to pretend to exercise of judgment, but rather easily to yield assent to what our teachers, who see further into the way, do assert; *The learner, as Seneca saith, is to be ruled, while he beginneth to be able to rule himself.*

Regi debet, dum incipit se posse regere. Sen. Ep. 94.

Ἄλλ' εἰδότες ἐτέροις βέλτιον εἶναι τὰς ταυτῶν ἡγίας ἐνδιδόναι τεχνικῶς, ἢ ἄλλων ἡνίχους εἶναι ἀνεπιστήμονας, καὶ ἀκοῆν ὑποτιθέσθαι μᾶλλον ἴμμενα, ἢ γλῶσσαν κινεῖν ἀπαιδευτων. Naz. Or. 1.

—fide calidus, et virtute robustus, &c. Cypr. Ep. 23. de iaspo.

332 *Of Obedience to our spiritual Guides.*

SERM.
LVIII.

Δεῖ μαθήνορα πιστεύειν, *A learner should in some measure be credulous*; otherwise, as he will often fail in his judgment, so he will make little progress in learning; for if he will admit nothing on his master's word, if he will question all things, if he will continually be doubting and disputing, or contradicting and opposing his teacher, how can instruction proceed? He that presently will be his own master is a bad scholar, and will be a worse master: he that will fly before he is fledged, no wonder if he tumble down.

There are divers obvious and very considerable cases in which persons most contemptuous of authority, and refractory toward their guides, are constrained to rely upon the judgment of others, and are contented to do it, their conscience shewing them unable to judge for themselves: in admitting the literal sense of scripture, according to translations; in the interpretation of difficult places, depending upon the skill of languages, grammar, and criticism, upon the knowledge of human arts and sciences, upon histories and ancient customs: in such cases, all illiterate persons (however otherwise diffident and disregardful of authority) are forced to see with the eyes of other men, to submit their judgment to the skill and fidelity of their learned guides, taking the very principles and foundations of their religion upon trust: and why then consonantly may they not do it in other cases; especially in the resolution of difficult, sublime, obscure, and subtle points, the comprehension whereof transcendeth their capacity?

S E R M O N L I X .

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

BUT further,

The more to engage and incline us to the performing this part of our duty, (the regarding, prizing, confiding in the judgment of our guides,) we may consider the great advantages, both natural and supernatural, which they have to qualify them in order to such purposes.

SERM.
LIX.

1. They may reasonably be presumed more intelligent and skilful in divine matters than others; for as they have the same natural capacities and endowments with others, (or rather commonly somewhat better than others, as being designed and selected to this sort of employment,) so their natural abilities are by all possible means improved: it is their trade and faculty, unto which their education is directed; in acquiring ability toward which they spend their time, their care, their pains; in which they are continually versed and exercised, (*having, as the apostle speaketh, by reason of use their senses exercised to discern both good and evil;*) for which also they employ their supplications and devotions to God.

Heb. v. 14.

SERM. Many special advantages they hence procure, need-
LIX. ful or very conducible to a more perfect knowledge
of such matters, and to security from errors; such
as are conversing with studies, which enlarge a
man's mind, and improve his judgment; a skill of
disquisition about things; of sifting and canvassing
points coming under debate; of weighing the force
of arguments, and distinguishing the colours of
things; the knowledge of languages, in which the
divine oracles are expressed; of sciences, of histo-
ries, of practices serving to the discovery and illus-
tration of the truth; exercise in meditation, read-
ing, writing, speaking, disputing, and conference,
whereby the mind is greatly enlightened, and the
reason strengthened; acquaintance with variety of
learned authors, who with great diligence have
expounded the holy scriptures, and with most ac-
curacy discussed points of doctrine; especially with
ancient writers, who, living near the apostolical
times, and being immediately (or within few degrees
mediately) their disciples, may justly be supposed
most helpful toward informing us what was their
genuine doctrine, what the true sense of their writ-
ings: by such means, as in other faculties, so in
this of theology, a competent skill may be obtained;
there is no other ordinary or probable way; and no
extraordinary way can be trusted, now that men
appear not to grow learned or wise by special in-
spiration or miracle; after that all pretences to such
by-ways have been detected of imposture, and do
smell too rank of hypocrisy.

Since then our guides are so advantageously qua-
lified to direct us, it is in matters difficult and
doubtful (the which require good measure of skill

and judgment to determine about them) most reasonable that we should rely upon their authority, SERM. LIX. preferring it in such cases to our private discretion; taking it for more probable that they should comprehend the truth than we (unassisted by them, and judging merely by our own glimmering light) can do; deeming it good odds on the side of their doctrine against our opinion or conjecture.

They have also another peculiar advantage toward judging sincerely of things, by their greater retirement from the world and disengagement from secular interests; the which ordinarily do deprave the understandings and pervert the judgments of men, disposing them to accommodate their conceits to the maxims of worldly policy, or to the vulgar apprehensions of men, many of which are false and base: 2 Tim. ii. 4. by such abstraction of mind from worldly affairs, together with fastening their meditation on the best things (which their calling necessarily doth put them upon) more than is usual to other men, they commonly get principles and habits of simplicity and integrity, which qualify men both to discern truth better, and more faithfully to declare it.

Seeing then in every faculty the advice of the skilful is to be regarded, and is usually relied upon; and in other affairs of greatest importance we scruple not to proceed so; seeing we commit our life and health (which are most precious to us) to the physician, observing his prescriptions commonly without any reason, sometimes against our own sense; we intrust our estate, which is so dear, with the lawyer, not contesting his advice; we put our goods and safety into the hands of a pilot, sleeping securely whilst he steereth us as he thinketh fit; seeing in

SERM. many such occasions of common life we advisedly
LIX. do renounce or wave our own opinions, absolutely yielding to the direction of others, taking their authority for a better argument or ground of action than any which our conceit or a bare consideration of the matter can suggest to us; admitting this maxim for good, that it is a more advisable and safe course in matters of consequence to follow the judgment of wiser men than to adhere to our own apprehensions^a: seeing it is not wisdom (as every man thinks) in a doubtful case to act upon disadvantage, or to venture upon odds against himself, and it is plainly doing thus to act upon our own opinion against the judgment of those who are more improved in the way, or better studied in the point than ourselves; seeing in other cases these are the common approved apprehensions and practices; and seeing in this case there is plainly the same reason, for that there are difficulties and intricacies in this no less than in other faculties, which need good skill to resolve them; for that in these matters we may easily slip, and by error may incur huge danger and damage: why then should we not here take the same course, following (when no other clearer light, or prevalent reason occurreth) the conduct and advice of our more skilful guides? especially considering, that, beside ordinary, natural, and acquired advantages, they have other supernatural both obligations to the well discharging this duty, and assistances toward it: For,

^a *Ὁν ἂν ἠγήσωνται περὶ τὰ συμφέροντα ἑαυτοῖς φρονιμώτερον ἑαυτῶν εἶναι, τοῦτω ἄνθρωποι ὑπερηδέως πείθονται. Xen. Pæd. 1.

Ἐν μὲν τῷ πλείν πείθεσθαι δεῖ τῷ κυβερνήτῃ, ἐν δὲ τῷ ζῆν τῷ λογίζεσθαι δυναμένῃ βέλτιον. Aristonymus apud Stob. tom. ii. tit. 3.

We may consider, that they are by God appointed and empowered to instruct and guide us: SERM. LIX.
 their special office, not assumed by themselves, constituted by human prudence, but ordained and directed by divine wisdom for our edification in knowledge, and direction in practice^b: they are God's messengers, purposely sent by him, selected and appointed by his instinct *for this work*: they are *sent from heaven given for the perfecting of the saints, and for building up the body of Christ*: it is by God's warrant and in his name, that they speak; which giveth special weight to their words, and no mean ground of assurance to us in relying upon them: for who are more likely to know God's mind and will, who are more likely to be presumed more faithful in declaring them, God's own officers and agents? those whose duty, whose main concernment it is to speak, their own sense, but the word of God? They are God's mouth, by whom alone ordinarily he expresseth his mind and pleasure; by whom *he enjoineth us to be reconciled* in heart and practice: what they say therefore is to be received as the word, except plain reason upon due examination forbid.

As they by office are teachers, or masters in doctrine, then we answerably must in obligation be disciples, which implies admitting their doctrine and proficiency in knowledge thereby: if they are appointed shepherds, then must we be their sheep, to be led and fed by them; if they are God's messengers, we must yield some credence, and embrace

1 Cor. iii. 15. I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. *Cypr.*

5.

SERM. the message uttered by them ; so the prophet telleth
 LIX. us : *The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and*
 Mal. ii. 7. *they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is*
the messenger of the Lord of hosts: so the Law of
 Deut. xvii. old enjoined;—*According to the sentences of the*
 11. *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: so our Lord also, in regard to the Scribes and
 Matt. xxiii. Pharisees, saith, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in*
 2, 3. *Moses's chair: all therefore whatsoever they bid*
you observe, that observe and do; upon account
 (Ezek. of their office, whatever they direct to (not repug-
 xxxiv. 16.) *nant to the divine law) was to be observed by the*
people; and surely in doubtful cases, when upon
competent inquiry no clear light offereth itself, it
cannot be very dangerous to follow their guidance
whom God hath appointed and authorized to lead
us; if we err doing so, we err wisely in the way
of our duty, and so no great blame will attend our
error.

3. We may consider that our guides as such have special assistance from God ; to every vocation God's aid is congruously afforded ; but to this (the principal of all others, the most important, most nearly related to God, and most peculiarly tending to his service) it is in a special manner most assuredly and plentifully imparted.

1 Pet. iv. They are *stewards of God's various grace*; and
 10. they who dispense grace to others cannot want it
 1 Cor. iii. 9. themselves: they are *cooperators with God*, and
 God consequently doth cooperate with them; it is
 God who doth *ικανῶν*, *render them sufficient to be*

ministers of the New Testament; and they minister of the ability which God supplieth; every spiritual labourer is obliged to say with St. Paul, By the grace of God I am what I am—I have laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.

God's having given them, as St. Paul saith, to the church, doth imply that God hath endowed them with special ability, and furthereth them (in their conscionable discharge of their ministry) with aid requisite to the designs of perfecting the saints, and edifying the body in knowledge, in virtue, in piety.

As the Holy Ghost doth constitute them in their charge, (according to that of St. Paul in the Acts, Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,) so questionless he doth enable and assist them in administering their function. There is a gift (of spiritual ability and divine succour) imparted by their consecration to this office, with the laying on the hands of the presbytery, joined with humble supplications for them, and solemn benedictions in God's name upon them. The divine Spirit, which distributeth, as he seeth good, unto every member of the church needful supplies of grace, doth bestow on them in competent measure the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge requisite for their employment.

God of old did in extraordinary ways visibly communicate his Spirit unto his prophets and agents; the same he did liberally pour out upon the apostles, and first planters of the gospel; the same questionless he hath not withdrawn from those, who under

SERM. the evangelical dispensation (which is peculiarly the
LIX. *ministration of the Spirit*, unto which the aid of

2 Cor. iii. 8. God's Spirit is most proper and most needful) do still by a settled ministry supply the room of those extraordinary ministers; but imparteth it to them in a way although more ordinary and occult, yet no less real and effectual, according to proportions answerable to the exigencies of need and occasion; and by the influence hereof upon the pastors of his church it is, that our Lord accomplisheth his promise to be *with it until the end of the world*.

Matt.
xxviii. 20.
Luke xi.
52.

Clavis scientiæ, the key of knowledge spiritual, is one of those keys which he hath given to them, whereby they are enabled to open the kingdom of heaven.

Great reason therefore we have to place an especial confidence in their direction; for whom can we more safely follow than those whom (upon such grounds of divine declarations and promises) we may hope that God doth guide; so that consequently in following them we do in effect follow God himself? *He that heareth you heareth me*, might be said, not only because of their relation unto Christ; but because their word proceedeth from his inspiration, being no other than his mind conveyed through their mouth.

4. We may also for our encouragement to confide in our guides consider, that they are themselves deeply concerned in our being rightly guided; their present comfort, their salvation hereafter, depending upon the faithful and careful discharge of their duty herein: they must render an account for it; so that if by their wilful or negligent miscarriage we do fall into dangerous error or sin, they do thence not only

forfeit rich and glorious rewards, (assigned to those *who turn many unto righteousness,*) but incur SERM. LIX.
 woful punishment; this doth assure their integrity, and render our confidence in them very reasonable: for as we may safely trust a pilot who hath no less interest than ourselves in the safe conveyance of the vessel to port; so may we reasonably confide in their advice whose salvation is adventured with ours in the same bottom, or rather is wrapped up and carried in ours: it is not probable they will (at least designedly) misguide us, to their own extreme damage, to their utter ruin: *if they do not warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, God hath said that he will require his blood at their hands;* Ezek. iii. 18. xxxiii. 2, 8. and is it likely they wittingly should run such a hazard, that they should purposely cast away the souls for which they are so certainly accountable? it is our apostle's enforcement of the precept in our text; *Obey them that guide you; for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account:* which argumentation is not only grounded upon the obligations of ingenuity and gratitude, but also upon considerations of discretion and interests; we should obey our guides in equity and honesty; we may do it advisedly, because they, in regard to their own accounts at the final judgment, are obliged to be careful for the good of our souls.

Upon these considerations, it is plainly reasonable to follow our guides in all matters wherein we have no other very clear and certain light of reason or revelation to conduct us: the doing so is indeed (which is further observable) not only wise in itself, but safe in way of prevention, that we be not seduced by other treacherous guides; it will not

SERM. only secure us from our own weak judgments, but
 LIX. from the frauds of those *who lie in wait to deceive.*

Eph. iv. 14. The simpler sort of men will in effect be always led, not by their own judgment, but by the authority of others; and if they be not fairly guided by those whom God hath constituted and assigned to that end, they will be led by the nose by those who are concerned to seduce them: so reason dictateth that it must be, so experience sheweth it ever to have been; that the people, whenever they have deserted their true guides, have soon been hurried by impostors into most dangerous errors and extravagant follies; being *carried about with divers and strange*
 Heb. xiii. *doctrines; being like children, tossed to and fro*
 Eph. iv. 14. *with every wind of doctrine.*

It is therefore a great advantage to us, and a great mercy of God, that there are (by God's care) provided for us such helps, upon which we may commonly for our guidance in the way to happiness more safely rely, than upon our own judgments, liable to mistake, and than upon the counsel of others, who may be interested to abuse us; very foolish and very ingrateful we are, if we do not highly prize, if we do not willingly embrace this advantage.

I further add, that as wisdom may induce, so modesty and humility should dispose us to follow the
 1 Pet. v. 5. direction of our guides: *Ye younger, saith St. Peter, submit yourselves unto the elder, (that is, ye inferiors to your superiors, ye that are the flock to your pastors,) and, subjoineth he immediately, be clothed with humility; signifying, that it is a point of humility to yield that submission; every modest and humble person is apt to distrust his own, and to*

submit to better judgments; and, *Not to lean to our understanding, not to be wise in our own eyes, not to seem to know any thing, not to seem any body to oneself, in humility to prefer others before ourselves*, are divine injunctions, chiefly applicable to this case, in reference to our spiritual guides; for if it be pride or culpable immodesty to presume ourselves wiser than any man, what is it then to prefer ourselves in that respect before our teachers; as indeed we do, when without evident reason we disregard, or dissent from their opinion?

It is then a duty very reasonable, and a very commendable practice, to rely upon the guidance of our pastors in such cases, wherein surer direction faileth, and we cannot otherwise fully satisfy ourselves.

Neither in doing so (against some appearances of reason, or with some violence to our private conceits) do we act against our conscience, but rather truly according to it; for conscience (as the word in this case is used) is nothing else but an opinion in practical matters grounded upon the best reason we can discern: if therefore in any case the authority of our guides be a reason outweighing all other reasons apparent, he that in such a case, notwithstanding other arguments less forcible, doth conform his judgment and practice thereto, therein exactly followeth conscience; yea, in doing otherwise, he would thwart and violence his own conscience, and be self-condemned, adhering to a less probable reason in opposition to one more probable.

I do not hereby mean to assert that we are obliged indifferently (with an implicit faith, or blind obedience) to believe all that our teachers say, or to practise all they bid us: for they are men, and

SERM. therefore subject to error and sin ; they may neglect
LIX. or abuse the advantages they have of knowing better than others ; they may sometimes, by infirmity, by negligence, by pravity, fail in performing faithfully their duty toward us ; they may be swayed by temper, be led by passion, be corrupted by ambition or avarice, so as thence to embrace and vent bad doctrines : we do see our pastors often dissenting and clashing among themselves, sometimes with themselves, so as to change and retract their own opinions^c.

We find the prophets of old complaining of priests, of pastors, of elders and prophets, who *handled the law, yet were ignorant of God ; who erred in vision, and stumbled in judgment ; who were profane, brutish, light, and treacherous persons ; who polluted the sanctuary, and did violence to the law, and profaned holy things ; who handled the law, yet knew not God ; from whom the law and counsel did perish ; who taught for hire, and divined for money ; who themselves departed out of the way, and caused many to stumble, and corrupted the covenant of Levi ; who destroyed and scattered the sheep of God's pasture.*

There were in our Saviour's time guides, *of the ferment of whose doctrine good people were bid to beware ; who transgressed and defeated the commandment of God by their traditions ; who did take away the key of knowledge, so that they would not enter themselves into the kingdom of heaven, nor would suffer others to enter ; blind guides, who both*

^c Isa. iii. 12. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

themselves did fall, and drew others into the ditch SERM.
of noxious error and wicked practice: the followers LIX.
of which guides did *in vain worship God, observing* Matt. xv.9.
for doctrine the precepts of men.

There have not since the primitive times of the gospel wanted those who (indulging to ambition, avarice, curiosity, faction, and other bad affections) have depraved and debased religion with noxious errors and idle superstitions; such as St. Bernard Vid. Apol. Eccl. Ang. describeth, &c.

We are, in matters of such infinite concernment to our eternal welfare, in wisdom and duty obliged not wholly without further heed or care to trust the diligence and integrity of others, but to consider and look about us, using our own reason, judgment, and discretion, so far as we are capable; we cannot in such a case be blamed for too much circumspection and caution.

We are not wholly blind, not void of reason, not destitute of fit helps; in many cases we have competent ability to judge, and means sufficient to attain knowledge: we are therefore concerned to use our eyes, to employ our reason, to embrace and improve the advantages vouchsafed us.

We are accountable personally for all our actions, as agreeable or cross to reason; if we are mistaken by our own default, or misled by the ill guidance of others, we shall however deeply suffer for it, and *die in our iniquity*; the ignorance or error of our Ezek. iiii. 18. guides will not wholly excuse us from guilt, or exempt us from punishment; it is fit therefore that we should be allowed, as to the sum of the matter, to judge and choose for ourselves: for if our salvation were wholly placed in the hands of others, so

SERM. that we could not but in case of their error or default miscarry, our ruin would be inevitable, and consequently not just: we should perish without blame, if we were bound, as a blind and brutish herd, to follow others.

We, in order to our practice, (which must be regulated by faith and knowledge,) and toward preparing ourselves for our grand account, are obliged to get a knowledge and persuasion concerning our duty; *to prove* (or search and examine) *what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;* for ignorance, if anywise by our endeavour vincible, will not secure us: *He that, saith our Lord and Judge, knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes;* (few; not in themselves, but comparatively to those which shall be inflicted on them who transgress against knowledge and conscience.)

We are bound to study truth, to improve our minds in the knowledge and love of it, to be firmly persuaded of it in a rational way; so that we be not easily shaken, or seduced from it.

The apostles do charge it upon us as our duty and concernment, that we *abound in faith and knowledge;* that we *be rooted and built up in Christ, and stablished in the faith, so as to be steadfast, and unmoveable, not to be soon shaken in mind, or troubled; to grow up and increase in all divine knowledge;* that *the word of God should dwell richly in us in all wisdom;* that we should be *filled with all knowledge, so as to be able to teach and admonish one another;* that *our love should abound more and more in knowledge, and all judgment, that we may approve things excellent, (or*

LIX.

Rom. xii. 2.
Eph. v. 10.

Luke xii.
48.

2 Cor. viii.

7.
Col. ii. 7.

1 Cor. xv.

58.

2 Thess. ii.

2.

Col. i. 10.

2 Pet. iii.

18. ii. 2.

Eph. iv. 15.

Col. iii. 16.

Rom. xv.

14.

Heb. v. 12.

Phil. i. 9,

10.

scan things different;) that we *be enriched in all the word*, (that is, in all the doctrine of the gospel,) SERM. LIX.
and in all knowledge; that we be filled in the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we should not be *unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is;* that we should *be perfect and complete in all the will of God*, (that is, first in the knowledge of it, then in compliance with it;) that *in understanding we should not be children, but perfect men.* 1 Cor. i. 5. Col. i. 9. Eph. v. 17. Col. iv. 12. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Heb. v. 12.

We are likewise by them commanded to *take heed of false prophets; to try the spirits whether they are of God; to see that no man deceive us; to look that no man spoil us by vain deceit; to try all things, and hold fast that which is good;* which precepts imply, that we should be furnished with a good faculty of judgment, and competent knowledge in the principal matters of Christian doctrine, concerning both the mysteries of faith and rules of practice. Our Lord himself and his apostles did not upon other terms than of rational consideration and discussion exact credit and obedience to their words; they did not insist barely upon their own authority, but exhorted their disciples to examine strictly, and judge faithfully concerning the truth and reasonableness of their doctrine: *Search the scriptures, for they testify of me; If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works:* so our Lord appealed to their reason, proceeding upon grounds of scripture and common sense: and, *I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say;* so St. Paul addressed his discourse to his disciples; otherwise we should be incapable to observe them. Matt. vii. 15. 1 John iv. 1. Matt. xxiv. 4. Eph. v. 6. Col. ii. 8, 18. 1 Thess. v. 21. John v. 39. John x. 37, 38. xv. 22, 24. xii. 48. 1 Cor. x. 15.

- SERM. LIX.** We are also bound to defer the principal regard to God's wisdom and will, so as, without reservation or exception, to embrace whatever he doth say, to obey what he positively doth command, whatever authority doth contradict his word, or cross his command: in such cases we may remonstrate with the
- Acts iv. 19. apostles, *If it be just before God to hearken unto*
- Acts v. 29. *you rather than unto God, judge ye; and, We ought to obey God rather than men: we may de-*
- Gal. i. 8. *nounce with St. Paul; If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.*
- Rom. xiv. 22, 23. We are obliged always to act *with faith*, (that is, with a persuasion concerning the lawfulness of what we do;) for *whatever is not of faith is sin*: we should never condemn ourselves in what we try or embrace.

These things considered, we may, and it much behoveth us, reserving due respect to our guides, with humility and modesty to weigh and scan their dictates and their orders; lest by them unawares we be drawn into error or sin; like the ingenuous Bereans,

Acts xvii. 11. who did ἀνακρίνειν τὰς γραφὰς *search and examine the scriptures, if those things were so.* Our guides are

2 Cor. i. 24. but the *helpers*, they are not lords of our faith; the apostles themselves were not.

We may, and are bound, if they tell us things evidently repugnant to God's word, or to sound reason and common sense, to dissent from them; if they impose on us things evidently contrary to God's law, to forbear compliance with them; we may in such cases appeal *ad legem et testimonium*; we must not admit a *non obstante* to God's law.

If other arguments, weighed in the balance of honest and impartial reason, with cautious and in-

Is. viii. 20. Plebs timens Dominum separare se debet a peccatore proposito. Cyp.

dustrious consideration, do overpoise the authority SERM. LIX.
of our guides ; let us in God's name adhere to them, and follow our own judgments ; it would be a violation of our conscience, a prevarication toward our own souls, and a rebellion against God to do otherwise : when against our own mind, so carefully informed, we follow the dictates of others, we like fools rashly adventure and prostitute our souls.

This proceeding is nowise inconsistent with what we delivered before ; for this due wariness in examining, this reservation in assenting, this exception in practice, in some cases, wherein the matter hath evidence, and we a faculty to judge, doth nowise hinder but that we should defer much regard to the judgment of our guides ; that we should in those cases, wherein no light discovereth itself outshining their authority, rely upon it ; that where our eyes will not serve clearly to direct us, we should use theirs ; where our reason faileth to satisfy us, we should acquiesce in theirs ; that we should regard their judgments so far, that no petty scruple emerging, no faint semblance of reason should prevail upon us to dissent from their doctrine, to reject their advice, to disobey their injunctions.

In fine, let us remember, that the mouth of truth, which bid us to *beware of the bad doctrine* of those Matt. xv. 14. xxiii. 3. who *sat in Moses's chair*, did also charge us *to observe all they taught and enjoined* ; that is, all not certainly repugnant to the divine law. In effect, if we discost from the advices of our sober teachers, appointed for us by God, we shall in the end have occasion to bewail with him in the Proverbs: *How* Prov. v. 12, *have I hated instruction, and my heart despised* ^{13.} *reproof ; and have not obeyed the voice of my*

SERM. *teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that in-*
LIX. *structed me !*

To these things I shall only add one rule, which we may well suppose comprised in the precept we treat upon ; which is, that at least we forbear openly to dissent from our guides, or to contradict their doctrine ; except only, if it be not so false (which never, or rarely, can happen among us) as to subvert the foundations of faith, or practice of holiness. If we cannot be internally convinced by their discourses, if their authority cannot sway with us against the prevalence of other reasons, yet may we spare outwardly to oppose them, or to slight their judgment ; for doing thus doth tend, as to the disgrace of their persons, so to the disparagement of their office, to an obstructing the efficacy of their ministry, to the infringement of order and peace in the church : for when the inconsiderate people shall see their teachers distrusted and disrespected ; when they perceive their doctrine may be challenged and opposed by plausible discourses ; then will they hardly trust them, or comply with them in matters most certain and necessary ; than which disposition in the people there cannot happen any thing more prejudicial or baneful to the church.

But let thus much serve for the obedience due to the doctrine of our guides ; let us consider that which we owe to them in reference to their conversation and practice.

The following their practice may well be referred to this precept ; for that their practice is a kind of living doctrine, a visible law, or rule of action ; and because indeed the notion of a guide primarily doth imply example ; that he which is guided should re-

spect the guide as a precedent, being concerned to walk after his footsteps. SERM.
LIX.

Most of the reasons, which urge deference to their judgment in teaching, do in proportion infer obligation to follow their example; (which indeed is the most easy and clear way of instruction to vulgar capacity; carrying with it also most efficacious encouragement and excitement to practice;) they are obliged, and it is expected from them, to live with especial regularity, circumspection, and strictness of conversation; they are by God's grace especially disposed and enabled to do so; and many common advantages they have of doing so; (a more perfect knowledge of things, firmness of principles, and clearness of notions; a deeper tincture, and more savoury relish of truth, attained by continual meditation thereon; consequently a purity of mind and affection, a retirement from the world and its temptation, freedom from distraction of worldly care and the encumbrances of business, with the like.)

They are often charged to be exemplary in conversation, as we before shewed, and that involveth a correspondent obligation to follow them. They must, like St. John Baptist, *be burning and shining lights; stars in God's right hand; lights of the world; whose light should shine before men, that men may see their good works;* and by their light direct their steps. John v. 35.
Rev. xvi.
20.
Matt. v. 14,
16.

They are proposed as copies, which signifies that we must in our practice transcribe them.

We are often directly commanded to imitate them; *ὡς μιμεῖσθε τὴν πίστιν, whose faith imitate ye,* (that is, their faithful perseverance in the doctrine and

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SERM. practice of Christianity,) saith the apostle in this
LIX. chapter.

Their conversation is safely imitable in all cases wherein no better rule appeareth, and when it doth not appear discordant from God's law and the dictates of sound reason; for supposing that discordance, we cease to be obliged to follow them; as when our Lord prescribeth in respect to the Pharisees; *Whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works; for they say and do not.*

It is indeed easier for them to speak well than to do well; their doctrine therefore is more commonly a sure guide than their practice; yet when there wanteth a clearer guidance of doctrine, their practice may pass for instructive, and a probable argument or warrant of action.

S E R M O N L X.

OF SELF-LOVE IN GENERAL.

2 TIM. iii. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves.

ST. PAUL in this place out of a prophetic spirit SERM. LX. instructing or warning his disciple Timothy, concerning *difficult times*, or the calamitous state of Καιροὶ χαλεποὶ ἐσονται. things, which should ensue, induced upon the world, as it useth to happen, by a general prevalency of vicious dispositions and practices among men, doth thence take occasion, by a specification of their vices, to characterize the persons who should concur to produce that hard state.

Among those vices he placeth self-love in the van, as the capital and leading vice; intimating thereby, that it is of all in its nature most heinous, or in its influence most noxious^a.

This indeed is of all vices the most common, so deeply radicated in our nature, and so generally overspreading the world, that no man thoroughly is exempted from it, most men are greatly tainted with it, some are wholly possessed and acted by it: this is the root from which all other vices do grow, and without which hardly any sin could subsist; the

^a Hæc omnia mala ab eo velut fonte manantia, quod primum posuit, seipsos amantes. *August. in Joh. Tract. 123.*

SERM. chief vices especially have an obvious and evident
 LX. dependance thereon.

All impiety doth involve a loving ourselves in undue manner and measure; so that we set ourselves in our esteem and affection before God; we prefer our own conceits to his judgment and advice; we raise our pleasure above his will and authority; we bandy forces with him, and are like the profane
 Dan. v. 23. Belshazzar, of whom it is said, *Thou hast lifted up thyself against (or above) the Lord of heaven.*

From hence particularly, by a manifest extraction, are derived those chief and common vices, pride, ambition, envy, avarice, intemperance, injustice, uncharitableness, peevishness, stubbornness, discontent, and impatience. For

We overvalue ourselves, our qualities and endowments, our powers and abilities, our fortunes and external advantages; hence are we so proud, that is, so lofty in our conceits, and fastuous in our demeanour.

We would be the only men, or most considerable, in the world; hence are we ambitious, hence continually with unsatiable greediness we do affect and strive to procure increase of reputation, of power, of dignity.

We would engross to ourselves all sorts of good things in highest degree; hence enviously we become jealous of the worth and virtue, we grudge and repine at the prosperity of others; as if they defalked somewhat from our excellency, or did eclipse the brightness of our fortune.

We desire to be not only full in our enjoyment, but free and absolute in our dominion of things; not only secure from needing the succour of other

men, but independent in regard to God's providence; hence are we so covetous of wealth, hence we so eagerly scrape it, and so carefully hoard it up. SERM.
LX.

We can refuse our dear selves no satisfaction, although unreasonable or hurtful; therefore we so readily gratify sensual appetites in unlawful or excessive enjoyments of pleasure.

Being blinded or transported with fond dotage on ourselves, we cannot discern or will not regard what is due to others; hence are we apt upon occasion to do them wrong.

Love to ourselves doth in such manner suck in and swallow our spirits, doth so pinch in and contract our hearts, doth according to its computation so confine and abridge our interests, that we cannot in our affection or in real expression of kindness tend outwards; that we can afford little good-will, or impart little good to others.

Deeming ourselves extremely wise and worthy of regard, we cannot endure to be contradicted in our opinion, or crossed in our humour; hence upon any such occasion our choler riseth, and easily we break forth into violent heats of passion.

From the like causes it is, that we cannot willingly stoop to due obeisance of our superiors, in reverence to their persons, and observance of their laws; that we cannot contentedly acquiesce in the station or portion assigned us by Providence; that we cannot patiently support our condition, or accept the events befalling us.

In fine, if surveying all the several kinds of naughty dispositions in our souls, and of miscarriages in our lives, we do scan their particular nature, and search into their original causes; we shall

SERM. find inordinate self-love to be a main ingredient and
LX. a common source of them all: so that a divine of
 great name had some reason to affirm, that original
 sin (or that innate distemper from which men gene-
 rally become so very prone to evil and averse to
 good) doth consist in self-love, disposing us to all
 kinds of irregularity and excess^b: St. Paul therefore
 might well set this in the front of all those sins
 which depraved the age he spake of; they having
 all such a dependance on it.

It is therefore very requisite that we should well
 understand this fault, that we may be the better
 able to curb and correct it; to which purpose I shall
 endeavour, by God's help, somewhat to declare its
 nature.

The word *self-love* is ambiguous; for all self-love
 is not culpable; there is a necessary and unavoidable,
 there is an innocent and allowable, there is a worthy
 and commendable self-love.

There is a self-love originally implanted by God
 himself in our nature, in order to the preservation
 and enjoyment of our being; the which is common
 to us with all creatures, and cannot anywise be ex-
 tirpated; for *no man*, as St. Paul saith, *ever yet*
hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth
it: every man living, by a natural and necessary in-
 stinct, is prompted to guard his life, shunning all
 dangers threatening its destruction; to purvey for
 the support and convenience of it; to satisfy those
 natural appetites, which importunately crave relief,
 and without intolerable pain cannot be denied it; to
 repel or decline whatever is very grievous and offen-

^b Est ergo ista ad peccandum amore sui propensio, peccatum
 originale, &c. *Zuingl. apud Bell. de Amiss. Grat. iv. 2.*

sive to nature ^c; the self-love that urgeth us to do SERM.
 these things is no more to be blamed than it can be LX.
 shunned.

Reason further alloweth such a self-love, which moveth us to the pursuance of any thing apparently good, pleasant, or useful to us, the which doth not contain in it any essential turpitude or iniquity; doth not obstruct the attainment of some true or greater good; doth not produce some overbalancing mischief; doth not infer harm to the world, or wrong to other men ^d.

Reason dictateth and prescribeth to us, that we should have a sober regard to our true good and welfare; to our best interest and solid content; to that, which (all things being rightly stated, considered, and computed) will in the final event prove most beneficial and satisfactory to us: a self-love working in prosecution of such things common sense cannot but allow and approve ^e.

God himself hath to these suggestions of nature, and dictates of reason, adjoined his own suffrage, having in various ways declared it to be his will and pleasure, that we should tender our real and final good. He, as the Author of nature, and Fountain of reason, may be supposed to ordain that, unto which nature doth so potently incline, and which reason so clearly prescribeth. He plainly hath to every man Quia tutela certissima ex proximo committed himself in charge, so as to preserve his

^c Panis ematur, olus, vini sextarius; adde

Queis humana sibi doleat natura negatis. *Hor. Serm. i. 1.*

^d Τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν δεῖ φιλαυτὸν εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὀνήσεται τὰ καλὰ πράττων, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ὠφελήσει· τὸν δὲ μωχθηρὸν οὐ δεῖ, βλάψει γὰρ καὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς πέλας, φαύλους πάθεισιν ἐπόμενος. *Arist. Eth. ix. 8.*

^e Πᾶς γὰρ νοῦς αἰρεῖται τὸ βέλτιστον ἑαυτῷ, ὃ δὲ ἐπιεικῆς κειθαρχεῖ τῷ ἄλλῳ. *Ibid.*

SERM. being from ruin, and to enjoy it with comfort. He

LX.

est, sibi
quisque
commissus
est. *Sen.*
Ep. 121.

by making so rich a provision for the sustenance of our lives, and satisfaction of our appetites, by framing our bodies to relish delight, and suiting so many accommodations in wondrous correspondence to our senses, hath sufficiently intimated it to be his pleasure, that we should in reasonable measure seek them and enjoy them; otherwise his care would have been vain, and his work useless; yea, he might seem to have laid an ill design to tempt and ensnare us: he certainly had no such intent; but as he made us out of goodness, as he made us capable of tasting comfort, as he hath furnished us with means of attaining it, so he meaneth that we should partake thereof.

He also expressly hath commanded us to love all men, not excluding ourselves from the number; to love our neighbour, and therefore ourselves; who of all are nearest to ourselves; who occur as the first objects of humanity and charity; whose needs we most sensibly feel; whose good is in itself no less considerable than the single good of any other person; who must first look to our own good before we can be capable to love others, or do any good to our neighbour.

He therefore hath made the love of ourselves to be the rule and standard, the pattern, the argument of our love to others; imposing on us those great commands of *loving our neighbours as ourselves*, and *doing as we would be done unto*; which imply not only a necessity, but an obligation of loving ourselves.

Matt. xvi.
26.

He doth enforce obedience to all his commands by promising rewards, yielding immense profit and

transcendent pleasure to us, and by threatening punishments grievous to our sense ; which proceeding SERM. LX. is grounded upon a supposition that we do and ought greatly to love ourselves, or to regard our own interest and pleasure.

He doth recommend wisdom or virtue to us, as most agreeable to self-love ; most eligible, because it yieldeth great benefit to ourselves ; because, as the Wise Man saith, *he that getteth it, doth love his own soul ; he that keepeth it, shall find good.* Prov. xix. 8, 16. xi. 17.

Aristotle saith of a virtuous man, that he is the greatest *self-lover* ; *Δόξειε δ' ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι μᾶλλον φίλαυτος ἀπονέμει γὰρ ἑαυτῷ τὰ κάλλιστα, καὶ μάλιστα ἀγαθὰ, καὶ χαρίζεται ἑαυτοῦ τῷ κυριωτάτῳ.* Eth. ix. 8.

He dissuadeth from vice, as therefore detestable, because the embracing it doth imply hatred of ourselves, bringing mischief and damage to us ; because, as the Wise Man doth express it, *he that sinneth, wrongeth his own soul ; he that despiseth instruction, despiseth his own soul ; he that committeth injury, hateth his own soul.* Prov. viii. 36. xv. 32. xxix. 24.

He commendeth his laws to our observance, by declaring them in their design and tendency chiefly to regard our good and advantage ; made apt to preserve the safety and quiet, to promote the wealth and prosperity of our lives ; to bring ease and comfort to our minds, grace and ornament to our names, salvation and happiness to our souls. Deut. x. 12. Mic. vi. 8. Neh. ix. 13. Prov. iii. iv. &c.

In fine, God chargeth and encourageth us to affect and pursue the highest goods whereof we are capable ; most ample riches, most sublime honours, most sweet pleasures, most complete felicity ; *He*, Rom. ii. 7. saith St. Paul, *will render to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and ho-*

SERM. *nour, and immortality, eternal life* ; to seek such
 LX. things is the highest instance, is the surest argument
 of self-love that can be ; he therefore who obligeth,
 who encourageth us thereto, doth plainly shew his
 approbation of a self-love.

So it appeareth that all self-love is not culpable,
 but that some kind thereof is very commendable ;
 Jer. xv. 19. how then shall we distinguish ; how shall we *sever*,
 to use the prophet's language, *the precious from the
 vile* ?

To this we may answer in general, that all love
 of ourselves which is unreasonably grounded, or
 which is excessive in its degrees and limits ; or
 which venteth itself in wrong instances ; or which
 driveth our mind, will, and affections toward bad
 objects ; or which produceth effects noxious to our-
 selves or others, is culpable. If we esteem ourselves
 for things not true, or really for things indifferent or
 mean, for things nowise excellent or valuable ; if we
 affect ourselves beyond compass, so as to postpone
 the love of God, or exclude the love of our neigh-
 bour ; if out of regard to ourselves we do things
 base or mischievous ; if thence we dote upon vain
 profits, embrace foul pleasures, incur sinful guilt, ex-
 pose ourselves to grievous danger, trouble, remorse,
 and punishment ; if thereby we are engaged to for-
 sake our true interest, and forfeit our final happi-
 ness ; then assuredly it is a foolish and vicious self-
 love ; it is indeed not a proper, but a false and equi-
 vocal love, usurping that goodly name ; it is a real
 hatred, or enmity, disguised under the semblance of
 friendship ; it more properly may be called cruelty,
 treachery, flattery, mockery, delusion, and abuse of
 ourselves.

But for a more distinct and clear resolution of SERM.
the case, we may do well to consider the proper acts LX.
of love, which do constitute it, or inseparably do ad-
here thereto; such as those: a good esteem of the
person, which is the object of our love; an earnest
good-will toward him, or desire of his good; a com-
placence in good, and dissatisfaction in evil arriving
to him; a readiness to yield or procure good to him;
a desire of union and enjoyment, that is, of intimate
conversation and intercourse with him, a deference
of regard to him, a compliance with his desires, and
care to please him. Now if these acts toward our-
selves are in their kind, in their grounds, in their
measures conformable to reason, piety, and justice,
then is our self-love innocent or worthy: if they are
not so, it is criminal and vicious.

If we do rightly esteem ourselves, (both abso-
lutely, and in comparison to others;) if we desire
to ourselves what is fit and just; if we are pleased
with true goods, and displeased at real evils incident
to us; if we do in lawful ways endeavour to pro-
cure things truly convenient and beneficial to us; if
we maintain a faithful and cheerful correspondence
with ourselves; if we have a sober regard to our-
selves, agreeable to our nature and state; if we
comply with the dictates of our reason, and satisfy
our desires conforming thereto; then do we love
ourselves innocently, then are we true friends to
ourselves.

But if we overvalue ourselves; if we do wish to
ourselves things incommodious or hurtful; if we are
delighted or dissatisfied in false shows of good or evil
befalling us; if we strive to acquire for ourselves
things bad or mischievous; if our converse with our-

SERM. selves is naughty or vain ; if we make indecent applications to ourselves ; if we stoop to our fond humours, or soothe our unreasonable desires ; then is our self-love spurious, then are we indeed enemies to ourselves.

LX.

Further, toward an exact discussion and trial of this case, we should do well, divesting ourselves of selfishness, to consider ourselves as other persons, or abstractedly as mere objects of those acts which love doth imply ; for what rectitude or what obliquity there would be in them in regard to any object, the same would be in reference to ourselves. For instance,

If we should value any person justly according to his real worth, allowing a just rate to his virtue, to his parts, to his endowments, to his advantages of nature or fortune ; not ascribing to him things which belong not to him, nor overprizing those he hath, not preferring him in any respect before those which are his superiors or equals therein ; we shall herein do wisely and justly : but if (having our judgment anywise perverted) we do admire a person beyond his worth, and advance him above his rank ; if we overlook his apparent defects and blemishes, or take them for excellencies, and yield them applause ; what is this but folly and dotage, tempered with iniquity ? and if it be such in regard to another, it is no less such in respect to ourselves.

If to any person we should wish things suitable, commodious, and advantageous, by obtaining which he, without any wrong or prejudice to others, might be considerably benefited, we shall herein act humanely, and like good friends ; but if we desire things to him, which do not become or befit him,

which will do him mischief, or which he cannot have SERM.
without injury and damage to others, are we not LX.
herein notoriously unkind or unjust? The case is
the same transferred to ourselves.

If we should observe any man by occurrences happening to him well improved in his condition, thriving in an honest way, prosperous in good undertakings, growing in worthy accomplishments of soul, to find satisfaction therein would be greatly laudable; and so it would be to condole, if we should see any man to fall into any grievous disaster or calamity; but should we behold a man (although in false appearance bettered, yet really) prejudiced and endamaged, (as when one is enriched by cozenage or rapine, is advanced by flattery or sycophantry, is famed for base or vain exploits, is immersed into care and trouble, is exposed to danger and temptation, is fallen into the enchantments of pleasure,) are we not, if we take pleasure therein, very silly, or very cruel? and if we should observe good physic administered to a sick neighbour, or that he is engaged in painful exercise for his health, should it not be absurd for us to be sorry thereat? For the same reasons we are blameable if we do rejoice when that we prosper in bad courses, or enjoy sinful pleasures, or fall into dangerous temptations; if we distaste the wholesome physic of adversity dispensed by Providence, or dislike the needful exercises of duty by God prescribed to us.

If we do yield our advice and aid to our neighbour, in furtherance of any design which is honest and beneficial to him, we then unquestionably do well; but if we do abet or encourage him in unjust or mischievous enterprises; if we render ourselves

SERM. panders to his unlawful desires, factors for his unjust profits, complices of his wicked practices, advocates of his sins; is this true love, is this faithful friendship? No surely; nor is it such toward ourselves, when we employ our faculties in contrivance or achievement of any unlawful designs, however satisfactory to our desires.

LX.

If we should indifferently (without regard to the laws of piety, justice, humanity, or decency) espouse the interests of any person, so that for the promoting his designs, advancing his profit, gratifying his humour or pleasure, we should violate the commands of God, we should neglect the public good, we should work injury or mischief to our neighbour; would this dealing be allowable? Neither would it be so, if for our own sake, in regard to our private interest, we should thus behave ourselves.

2. If we do affect to hold free, sincere, cheerful, kind conversation with any person, for mutual instruction and comfort, this is sociable and friendly; but if we maintain frothy, foul, malicious, anywise pestilent discourse, apt to corrupt, or to annoy him, this is loathsome: and so it is, if we keep such intercourse with ourselves, harbouring vain, impure, unjust, uncharitable thoughts in our minds.

If we should defer regard to any man, answerable to his worth, we should thereby practise according to the good rules of humanity: but should we so affect or fancy any man that we should care for no man else, should pay no due respect, or perform any office of kindness elsewhere; should take no man's word, or mind any man's opinion beside, nor care to converse with any other; would this be love, would it not be ridiculous fondness? It is no less,

if in regard to ourselves we are so morose, surly, or neglectful. SERM.
LX.

If we should comply with any man's reasonable desire, this were fair and courteous; if we should confide in the probable assistance of any person, this were modest prudence: but if we should entirely conform our practice to the will or humour of another, against the dictates of our own reason, and to the harm of ourselves or others; would this be love, would it not rather be vile and pitiful slavery? If we should without any ground, yea against plain reason, rely upon the help or direction of another, would this be love, would it not rather be wild presumption? The same therefore it must be in us, if we in like manner are devoted to our own will, or confident in our own ability.

If we should commend any man for good qualities or good deeds, this is honest; if we should encourage him in good undertakings, this is charitable: but to applaud his defects, to bolster him in ill practice, this is flattery and treachery; and in so doing toward others, we are not friends to ourselves, but traitors and parasites.

By such reflections and comparisons we may, I think, competently understand the nature of that bastard self-love, which is so vicious in itself, and productive of so many vices: but more fully to display, and withal to dissuade us from this vice, I shall particularly insist upon the common sorts thereof, shewing the peculiar unreasonableness of each, and the mischiefs consequent from it. They are indeed usually combined and complicated in practice, and have much affinity both in their nature and fruit; but I shall, as well as I can, abstract them

SERM. one from the other, and so treat on them distinctly;
LX. they are these: *self-conceit, self-confidence, self-complacence, self-will, self-interest.* These I shall handle in the following Discourses.

SERMON LXI.

OF SELF-CONCEIT.

2 TIM. iii. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.

I. **T**HE first and most radical kind of vicious SERM. self-love is *self-conceitedness*; that which St. Paul LXI. calleth τὸ ὑπερφρονεῖν, *to overween, or to think highly of one's self, beyond what he ought to think.* This doth consist in several acts or instances.

Sometimes we in our imagination assume to ourselves perfections not belonging to us, in kind or in degree; we take ourselves to be other men than we are; to be wise, to be good, to be happy, when we are not so; at least to be far wiser, better, and happier than we are. The pleasure naturally springing from a good opinion of ourselves doth often so blind our eyes and pervert our judgment, that we see in us what is not there, or see it magnified and transformed into another shape than its own; any appearance doth suffice to produce such mistakes, and, having once entertained them, we are unwilling to depose them; we cannot endure by severe reflection on ourselves to correct such pleasant errors; hence commonly we presume ourselves to be very considerable, very excellent, very extraordinary persons, when in truth we are very mean and worth-

SERM. less : so did St. Paul suppose when he said, *If a*
LXI. *man think himself to be something, when he is*
 Gal. vi. 3. *nothing, he deceiveth himself*; such was the case of
 Rev. iii. 17. that church in the Apocalypse ; *Thou sayest, I am*
rich, and increased in goods, and have need of
nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched
and miserable ; they were like men in a dream, or
 in a phrensy, who take themselves for great and
 wealthy persons, when indeed they are in a sorry
 and beggarly condition : into the like extravagancies
 of mistake we are all likely to fall, if we do not very
 carefully and impartially examine and study our-
 selves.

Again ; sometimes we make vain judgments upon
 the things we do possess, prizing them much beyond
 their true worth and merit ; consequently overva-
 luing ourselves for them ; the most trivial and piti-
 ful things (things which in themselves have no
 worth, but are mere tools, and commonly serve bad
 purposes ; things which do not render our souls
 anywise better, which do not breed any real content,
 which do not conduce to our welfare and happiness)
 we value at a monstrous rate, as if they were the
 most excellent and admirable things in the world.
 Have we wit ? how witless are we in prizing it, or
 ourselves for it ; although we employ it to no good
 end, not serving God, not benefiting men, not further-
 ing our own good, or anywise bettering our condi-
 tion with it ; although we no otherwise use it, than
 vainly to please ourselves or others, that is, to act
 the part of fools or buffoons. Have we learning or
 knowledge ? then are we rare persons ; not con-
 sidering that many a bad, many a wretched person
 hath had much more than we, who hath used it to

the abuse of others, to the torment of himself; that hell may be full of learned scribes and subtile dis-
 puters, of eloquent orators and profound philoso-
 phers; who *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*; not considering also how very defective our knowledge is, how mixed with error and darkness; how useless and vain, yea how pernicious it is, if not sanctified by God's grace, and managed to his service. Have we riches? then are we brave men, as fine and glorious in our conceit as in our outward attire; although the veriest fools, the basest and most miserable of men, that go on the ground, do exceed us therein; although, as Aristotle saith, *Most either not use it, or abuse it*^a; although our wealth affordeth us no real benefit or comfort, but exposeth us to numberless snares, temptations, and mischiefs; although it hath no stability, but easily may be taken from us. Have we reputation? how doth that make us highly to repute ourselves in a slavish imitation of others! yet nothing is less substantial, nothing is less felt, nothing is so easily lost, nothing is more brittle and slippery than it; a bubble is not sooner broken, or a wave sunk, than is the opinion of men altered concerning us. Have we power? what doth more raise our minds! yet what is that commonly but a dangerous instrument of mischief to others, and of ruin to ourselves; at least an engagement to care and trouble? What but that did render Caligula, Nero, and Domitian so hurtful to others, so unhappy themselves? what

SERM.
LXI.

Rom. i. 21.
Ardua res
hæc est,
opibus non
tradere
mores.
Mart. xi. 6.

^a Τῶν πολλῶν οἱ μὲν οὐ χροῦνται τῇ πλοίῳ διὰ μικρολογίαν, οἱ δὲ παρα-
 χροῦνται δι' ἄσωτίαν. Arist. apud Plut. in Pelop.

SERM. but that hath filled the world with disasters, and
 LXI. turned all history into tragedy? Have we prosperous success in our affairs? then we boast and triumph in our hearts; not remembering what the

Prov. i. 32. Wise Man saith, *The prosperity of fools destroyeth them*; and that experience sheweth, prosperity doth usually either find or make us fools^b; that the wisest men (as Solomon), the best men (as Hezekiah), have been befooled by it: thus are we apt to overvalue our things, and ourselves for them.

² Chron. xxxii. 25.

There is no way indeed wherein we do not thus impose upon ourselves, either assuming false, or misrating true advantages; the general ill consequences of which misdemeanour are, that our minds are stuffed with dreams and fantastic imaginations, instead of wise and sober thoughts; that we misbehave ourselves toward ourselves, treating ourselves like other men than we are, with unseemly regard; that we expect other men should have like opinions, and yield answerable deferences to us; and are, if we find it otherwise, grievously offended; that we are apt to despise or disregard others, demeaning ourselves insolently and fastuously toward them; that we are apt to seek and undertake things, which we cannot attain or achieve; that we neglect the succours needful to help or comfort us, and the like: which will appear more plainly by considering the several objects or matters in which self-conceit is exercised; they are especially three: *intellectual endowments; moral qualities; advantages of body, fortune, and outward state.*

1. We are apt to conceit highly of ourselves upon

^b Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa
 Fortuna——— *Juv. Sat. 8.*

resumption of our *intellectual endowments* or capacities, whether *natural* (as *wit, fancy, memory, judgment*) or *acquired*, (as *learning, skill, experience*,) especially of that which is called *wisdom*, which in a manner comprehendeth the rest, and manageth them; whereby we rightly discern what is true, and what is fit to be done in any case proposed: this we are prone in great measure to arrogate, and much to pride ourselves therein. The world is full as it can hold of wise men, or of those who take themselves to be such; not only absolutely, but comparatively, in derogation and preference to all others: may it not be said to us as Job did to his friends, *No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you?* Do we not fancy ourselves incomparably wise, so that all our imaginations are deep and subtile, all our resolutions sound and safe, all our opinions irrefragably certain, all our sayings like so many oracles, or indubitable maxims? Do we not expect that every man's judgment should stoop to ours? do we not wonder that any man should presume to dissent from us? must any man's voice be heard when we speak? Do we not suppose that our authority doth add huge weight to our words? that it is unquestionably true because we say it? that it is presumption, it is temerity, it is rudeness hardly pardonable to contest our dictates? This is a common practice, and that which is often prohibited and blamed in scripture: *Be not wise in thine own eyes*, saith the Wise Man; and, *Be not wise in your own conceits*, saith the apostle; and, *I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to*

SERM.
LXI.1 Cor. iii.
18.
Μαγίς γινώσκω, ἢ οὐ γινώσκω σοφίας. Vid. Chrysa. in Phil. Or. 7.

Job xii. 2.

Οἷος ἀκούσαντες τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ.

Prov. iii. 7.

Rom. xii.

16.
Rom. xii. 3.

SERM. *think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every*
 LXI. *man the measure of faith.*

The great reasonableness of which precepts will appear by considering both the absurdity and the inconveniences of the practice which they forbid.

If we do reflect either upon the common nature of men, or upon our own constitution, we cannot but find our conceits of our wisdom very absurd: for how can we take ourselves for wise, if we observe the great blindness of our mind, and feebleness of human reason, by many palpable arguments discovering itself? if we mark how painful the search, and how difficult the comprehension is of any truth; how hardly the most sagacious can descry any thing, how easily the most judicious mistake; how the most learned everlastingly dispute, and the wisest irreconcilably clash about matters seeming most familiar and facile; how often the most wary and steady do shift their opinions; how the wiser a man is, and the more experience he gaineth, the less confident he is in his own judgment, and the more sensible he groweth of his weakness; how dim the sight is of the most perspicacious, and how shallow the conceptions of the most profound; how narrow is the horizon of our knowledge, and how immensely the region of our ignorance is distended; how imperfectly and uncertainly we know those few things to which our knowledge reacheth^c; how answerably to such experience we are told in sacred writ, that *every man is brutish in his knowledge; that the Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are*

Jer. x. 14.
 Ps. xciv. 11.
 1 Cor. iii.
 20.

^c Quamcunque partem rerum humanarum divinarumque comprehenderis, ingenti copia quærendarum ac discendarum fatigaberis. *Sen. Ep. 88.*

vanity; that vain man would be wise, though he be SERM.
born like an ass's colt, (that is, he is naturally wild LXI.
 and stupid;) *that wisdom is hid from the eyes of* Job xi. 12.
all men, and is not found in the land of the living; xxviii. 21,
that the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and Wisd. ix.
our devices uncertain: if we, I say, do consider ¹⁴
 such things, how can we but find it strange that any
 man should admire his own wisdom, seeing that he
 thereby doth exempt himself from the common ad-
 junct of his nature, and forgetteth himself to be a
 man?

If also a man particularly reflecteth on himself,
 the same practice must needs appear very foolish;
 for that every man thence may discover in himself
 peculiar impediments of wisdom; every man in his
 complexion and in his condition may find things apt
 to pervert his judgment, and obstruct his acquisition
 of true knowledge. Is his temper sanguine? thence
 becometh he quick, rash, credulous, confident and
 peremptory, slippery and fickle: is it phlegmatic?
 thence is he slow and heavy; diffident, pertinacious,
 and stiff in his conceits: his mind is either soft and
 limber, so as easily to receive the impressions of
 falsehood speciously represented; or hard and tough,
 so that he cannot readily admit instruction in truth,
 or correction of error. His wealth distracteth, or
 his poverty disturbeth his thoughts; prosperity swell-
 eth his mind up into vain presumptions and satisfac-
 tions, or adversity sinketh it down into unreasonable
 despondencies and dislikes of things; plenty breed-
 eth sloth, want createth trouble, indisposing him to
 think well; ease doth rust his parts, and business
 weareth them out; inclination, interest, company,
 prejudice, do forcibly sway his apprehensions; so that

SERM. LXI. no man can get himself into, or keep himself steady

in a perfect balance, requisite for exact judgment of things; no man therefore can obtain a degree of wisdom, whereof he may with any reason be conceited; the wisest men surely upon such experience

Prov. iii. 2. have been little satisfied with their share; *Surely*, saith one, *I am more brutish than any man, and I*

Psal. lxxiii. *have not the understanding of a man*; and, *So*
22. *foolish*, said another, *was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee*: this conceitedness therefore

is very absurd, and an argument of notable ignorance and folly; neither is there perhaps any more plain instance or demonstration of general folly reigning among men than this, that commonly we are so blind and stupid as not to discern and resent

1 Cor. viii. *our own folly: If any man*, saith St. Paul, *thinketh*
2. *that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth not any thing yet as he ought to know*; that is, if any man conceiteth himself to be considerably wise or intelligent, it is a plain sign that he is very ignorant, and understandeth little to any purpose.

So it is, if we consider ourselves singly; and it is more so in comparison to others; for what ground can a man have of arrogating to himself a peculiarity of wisdom or judgment? to deem himself extraordinary in that, to which there are no other than ordinary means of arriving? to fancy himself wiser than any other, whenas (secluding accidental differences, that cannot be accounted for) all men have the same parts and faculties of soul, the same means and opportunities of improvement, the same right and liberty of judging about things? Did not he,

Zech. xii. 1. *who formeth the spirit of man within him*, put into every man that heavenly mark, whereby we discern

and judge of things? is not every man concerned in that saying of Elihu, *There is a spirit in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding?* do not the fountains of knowledge (natural delight, divine revelation, human instruction, continual experience) stand open to all; and are no less common to men than is the air they breathe, and the sun which equally shineth on them all? Is God, the donor of wisdom, partial in the distribution of it? doth not that overture reach indifferently to all, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally,—and it shall be given him?* may not others be as inquisitive, as industrious, as sincere as we in the search of truth? why not then as successful in finding it? Is there any private chink, through which light shineth only upon us, or truth may be espied? is there any cunning by-path, in which we alone, with more expedition and security than others in the common roads, can travel on toward knowledge? What patents have we to shew for a monopoly of reason? what right have we to engross any knowledge? who hath granted us a privilege of sure judgment, or an exemption from error? how can we in trial of things claim more than a single vote? or why should our word have more weight than any other? may not any man with as much reason prefer his judgment before ours, as we before his? and if we blame him for it, do we not thereby condemn ourselves for doing the like? if we do know but the same things, or frame the same judgments with others, how can we be conceited of that which is promiscuous? if we pretend to abstruse notions, or hold forth paradoxes, how can that be ground of boasting, seeing

SERM.

LXI.

'Ερ βερνις.
LXX.

Job xxxii.

8.

Jam. i. 5.

SERM. the cause standeth contested by authority no less
 LXI. than our own, and that it is vain to triumph over
 the opinions of others before we have conquered
 them? why in such cases is it not reasonable to pre-
 sume, that among the many dissenters from us,
 there are some who have as much sense as we, and
 who have weighed the matter with no less care, no
 less indifferency? In fine, may not any man with
 good cause propound to us that expostulation in
 Job xv. 8, 9. Job: *Hast thou heard the secret of God? and
 dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What know-
 est thou, that we know not? what understandest
 thou, which is not in us?*

Such conceitedness therefore is very absurd; and
 it is no less hurtful; for many great inconveniences,
 many sad mischiefs spring from it, such as gave the
 prophet cause to denounce, *Woe unto them that are
 wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own
 conceit*: it hath many ways bad influence on our
 souls and on our lives; it is often our case, which
 was the case of Babylon, when the prophet said of
 Is. xlvii. 10. it, *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge hath perverted
 thee; for thou hast said in thy heart, I am, and
 none else beside me.*

Hæc est
 hominis
 vera sapi-
 entia, Im-
 perfectum
 esse se
 nosse. Hier.
 contra.
 Pelag. i. 5.
 Prov. xx.
 12.
 It is a great bar to the getting wisdom, to the
 receiving instruction and right information about
 things; for he that taketh himself to be abundantly
 knowing, or incomparably wise, will not care to
 learn, will scorn to be taught; he thence becometh
 more incapable of wisdom than a mere idiot; so did
 Solomon observe, *Seest thou*, said he, *a man wise in
 his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than
 of him*: of a fool, that is sensible of his ignorance,
 there may be hope that he may by instruction be-

come wise ; but he that taketh himself to want no instruction, or to be above learning, is in a desperate condition^d. SERM.
LXI.

It rendereth men in doubtful or difficult cases unwilling to seek, and unapt to take advice ; he will not care for or admit any counsellor but himself ; hence he undertaketh and easily is deceived, and incurreth disappointment, damage, disasters in his affairs. As it is most incident to weak, inconsiderate, lazy persons, who have not a capacity, will not yield attention, or take pains to get right notions of things, so it doth smother all industry, consideration, and circumspection ; for such persons think they need no labour in searching truth, no care in weighing arguments, no diligence in observing things ; they can easily at first sight descry all, and penetrate to the bottom of things ; they have at easy rates the pleasure of fancying themselves wise ; why should they spend further pains to dispossess themselves of that pleasure, or to introduce another less satisfactory ? thus *is the sluggard*, as Solomon saith, *wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason*. Prov. xxvi.
16.

It rendereth us very rash and precipitant in judging ; for the first shows of things, or the most slender arguments, which offer themselves, being magnified, and aggravated from opinion concerning ourselves, do sway our judgment, and draw forth a sudden resolution from us ; it must, we presently suppose, be very reasonable, because it seemeth reasonable to us.

Hence also we persist obstinate and incorrigible

^d Puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam pervenire, nisi putassent se pervenisse. *Sen. de Tranq. An.* 1.

SERM. in error; for what reason can he efficacious to re-
LXI. claim him whose opinion is the greater reason? what
 argument can be ponderous enough to outweigh his
 authority? how can he (the man of wisdom, the
 perspicacious and profound person) yield that he
 hath erred? how can he part with the satisfaction
 of being always in the right, or endure the affront
 of being any time baffled?

It rendereth men peevish and morose, so as to
 bear nobody that dissenteth from them, nor to like
 any thing which doth not hit their fancy; to cross
 their opinion or humour, is to derogate from their
 wisdom; and being in their apprehension so injured,
 they find cause to be angry.

It rendereth them insolent, and imperious in con-
 versation, so as to dictate, and impose their conceits
 upon others. He that is conceited of his own wis-
 dom, will imagine that upon that advantage he hath
 a right to prescribe, others an obligation to submit;
eo ipso he becometh a common master and judge;
 and they are culpable, who will not yield him a cre-
 dulous ear, who will not stand to his decision.

Hence also do men become so carping and censo-
 rious; for if any man's words do not jump with
 their notions, if any man's actions be not conform-
 able to their rules, they straightway rise up to con-
 demn them of folly, of faultiness.

Yea, hence men become intolerably pragmatical;
 for they conceit themselves better to know another's
 concernments than he himself doth, and so will in-
 trude his advice, will be angry if his advice be not
 followed.

To such inconveniences and iniquities this ill dis-
 position exposeth us, and to many others; for it is

indeed that in effect, which the holy scripture representeth as the source of all impious and wicked courses; to which men betray themselves, while making themselves to be wise, they do stiffly adhere to their own imaginations and devices, although contrary to the prescriptions of divine wisdom, to the dictates of common reason, to the admonitions of sober and good men; *We will*, say they in the prophet, *walk after our own devices, and we will very one do the imagination of his evil heart: and, I have spread out my hands all the day unto rebellious people; which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts: and, If he lesseth himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart: and, So I have them unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels.* These are descriptions of bad men, implying self-conceit to be the root of their impiety.

SERM.
LXI.

Jer. xiii. 10.
vi. 19.

Isa. lxxv. 2.
liii. 6.

Deut. xxix.
19.

Ps. lxxxii.
12.

Prov. i. 30,
31.

Isa. lxvi. 4.

2. Again, we are apt to conceit highly and vainly of our moral qualities and performances; taking ourselves for persons rarely good, perfect, and blameless; apprehending no defects in our souls, or misarrriages in our lives, although indeed we are as full of blemishes, we are as guilty of faults as others; *There is*, saith the Wise Man, *a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness; to this generation we belong, we admire our virtues, if we justify our lives, if as it is said of the Pharisee) we trust in ourselves that we are righteous.*

Prov. xxx.

12.

Luke xviii.
9. xvi. 15.
x. 29.

This practice doth include great folly, and it produceth great mischiefs.

It is very foolish, and argueth the greatest igno-

SERM. rance that can be ; for such is the imperfection, the
LXI. impotency, the impurity of all men, even of the wisest and best men, (discernible to them who search their hearts and try their ways, strictly comparing them to the rules of duty, God's laws, and the dictates of reason,) that no man can have reason to be satisfied in himself or in his doings: every man looking into himself shall find his mind so pestered with vain and filthy thoughts ; his will so perverse, so froward, so weak, so unsteady ; his desires so fond and unwarrantable ; his passions so disorderly and ungovernable ; his affections so misplaced, or at least so cold and dull in regard to their right objects ; his resolutions toward good so weak and slack ; his intentions so corrupt, or mixed with oblique regards ; he that observeth his actions, shall in the best of them (as to the principles whence they rise, as to the ends they drive at, as to the manner of their performance) find so many great defailances, that he will see cause rather to abhor than to admire himself.

Hier. in
 Lucif. cap.
 6.

Who, let me ask, doth love God with all his soul, so as to place in him his total content and delight, so as to do all things out of love to him, with a regard to his honour and service? so as to be willing and glad to part with all things for his sake? who hath that constant and lively sense of God's benefits and mercies that he should have? who hath a perfect resignation of will to his pleasure, so as to be displeased with no event dispensed by his hand? who hath such a vigour of faith and confidence in him, as will support him in all wants, in all distresses, in all temptations, so as never to be disquieted or discouraged by them, so as to *cast on*

God (as he is commanded) all the *cares* of his soul and *burdens* of his life? who constantly maintaineth a fervour of spirit, a steadiness of resolution, a clear and calm frame of soul, an abstractedness of mind from worldly desires and delights? who continually is fervent and undistracted in his devotion? who with an unwearied and incessant diligence doth watch over his thoughts? who doth entirely command his passions, and bridle his appetites? who doth exactly govern his tongue? who is perpetually circumspect over his actions? who loveth his neighbour as himself, seeking his good, and delighting therein as in his own; being sorry for his adversities, as if they had befallen himself? who feeleth that contrition of spirit, that shame, that remorse for his sins, or that detestation of them, which they deserve? who is duly sensible of his own unworthiness? Very few of us surely, if we examine our consciences, can answer, that we are they who perform these duties; and if not, where is any ground of self-conceit? how much cause rather is there of dejection, of displeasure, of despising and detesting ourselves!

There have indeed been sects of men (such as the Novatians and the Pelagians) who have pretended to perfection and purity; but these men, one would think, did never read the scripture, did never consult experience, did never reflect on their minds, did never compare their practice with their duty; had no conscience at all, or a very blind and stupid one. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* was a question of Solomon, to the which he thought no man could answer affirmatively of himself: *If I justify myself,*

SERM.
LXI.

The Donatists—*re-missionem peccatorum sic datis, quasi nullum habeatis ipsi peccatum, &c.*
Opt. lib. 2. Prov. xx. 9. Eccles. vii. 20. Job ix. 20. xv. 14. xxv. 4. iv. 18. ix. 2. (Psal. cxliiii. 2.)

SERM. *my own mouth shall condemn me ; if I say I am
LXI. perfect, it shall prove me perverse ;* was the asse-

veration of that person, whose virtue had undergone

Jam. iii. 2. the severest trials : *In many things we offend all,* was the confession of an apostle in the name of the wisest and best men.

Such men indeed (in contemplation of themselves and of their doings) have ever been ready to think meanly of themselves, to acknowledge and bewail their unworthiness, to disclaim all confidence in themselves, to avow their hope wholly to be reposed in the grace and mercy of God ; (in his grace for ability to perform somewhat of their duty ; in his mercy for pardon of their offences ;) to confess them-

Gen. xxxii. selves, with Jacob, *less than the least of God's
10. mercies ;* with David, that they *are worms, and no
Ps. xxii. 6. men ;* with Job, that they are *vile, and unable to
Job xl. 4. answer God,* calling them to account, *in one case
xliii. 6. ix. of a thousand ;* that they *abhor themselves, and re-
2. pent in dust and ashes ;* that *after they have done
Luke xvii. all, they are unprofitable servants.* And is he not
10.

very blind who doth see in himself those perfections which the greatest saints could not descry in themselves ? is he not infinitely vain that fancieth himself more worthy than they did take themselves to be ?

In fine, every man is in some kind and degree bad, sinful, vile ; it is as natural for us to be so, as to be frail, to be sickly, to be mortal : there are some bad dispositions common to all, and which no man can put off without his flesh ; there are some, to which every man (from his temper, inclination, and constitution of body or soul) is peculiarly subject, the which by no care and pain can be quite ex-

irrupted, but will afford during life perpetual matter SERM.
of conflict and exercise to curb them : conceit there- LXI.
ore of our virtue is very foolish.

And it breedeth many great mischiefs.

Hence doth spring a great security, and careless- Matt. ix.
ness of correcting our faults ; for taking ourselves to John ix.
e well, we see not any need of cure, thence seek 41.
none, nor admit any.

Yea, hence riseth a contempt of any means con-
lucible to our amendment, such as good advice and
wholesome reproof ; to advise such an one is to ac-
cuse him wrongfully, to reprove him is to commit
an outrage upon his presumed integrity of virtue.
Hence also proceedeth a neglect of imploring the
grace and mercy of God ; for why should persons of
so great strength crave succour ? how should they
beg pardon, who have so little sense of guilt ? It is
for a weak person to cry, Lord help me ; it is for a
publican to pray, *God be merciful unto me a sin-* Luke xviii.
ner. 13.

It breedeth arrogance and presumption even in
devotions, or addresses to God, inducing such per-
sons in unseemly manner to justify themselves before
God, to claim singular interest in him, to mind him,
and as it were to upbraid him with their worthy
deeds, to thank him for their imaginary excellen-
cies, like the conceited Pharisee ; *God, I thank* Luke xviii.
thee, that I am not as other men, extortioners, un- 11.
just, adulterers—I fast twice a week, I give tithes
of all that I possess. They cannot demean them-
selves toward God as miserable sinners, who fancy
themselves as admirable worthies, and gallants in
virtue.

Also, a natural result thereof is a haughty con-

SERM tempt of others, venting itself in a supercilious and
LXI. fastuous demeanour; so it was in the Pharisees,

Luke xviii. 9. *who, saith St. Luke, trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.* Such persons,

observing or suspecting defects and misbehaviours in others, but discerning none in themselves, do in their opinion advance themselves above their brethren, and accordingly are prone to behave themselves toward them: such men as they are the especially good men, the godly, the saints, the flower of mankind, the choice ones, the darlings of God, and favourites of Heaven, the special objects of divine love and care: others are impure and profane, rejectaneous and reprobate people, to whom God beareth no good-will or regard; hence proceedeth a contemptuous disregard or estrangedness toward other men; like that of those separatists in the

Is. lxxv. 5. *prophet, who, notwithstanding they were a people provoking God to anger continually to his face, were yet, in conceit of their own special purity, ready to say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou: whereas those who, soberly reflecting on their nature, their hearts, their ways, do frame a right judgment of themselves, can hardly esteem any man worse than themselves; they perceive themselves so frail, so defectuous, so culpable, as to find great reason for their compliance with those apostolical precepts; In lowliness of mind, let each man esteem others better than himself; In honour prefer one another.*

Rom. xii. 10.

This likewise disposeth men to expect more than ordinary regard from others; and they are much displeased, if they find it not in degree answerable to their conceit of themselves; taking them for silly,

envious, or injurious persons, who forbear to yield SERM.
 it : such excellent persons must in all things be hu- LXI.
 moured, and cockered, otherwise you greatly wrong
 them.

Hence also such men easily become discontented and impatient ; for if they be crossed in any thing, if any misfortune toucheth them, they take it very ill ; supposing they deserve it not, but are worthy of better usage and fortune.

In fine, as this causeth a man to behave himself untowardly in respect to all others, (toward God and toward his neighbour,) so thence he most unbecomingly carrieth himself toward himself ; he is no faithful friend, no good companion to himself, but a fond minion, a vile flatterer, or a profane idolater of himself : for (like Narcissus) being transported with conceit of his own incomparable beauty or excellency, he maketh love to and courteth himself ; finding delight in such conceit, he by all means cherisheth it, glozing and *flattering himself* (as the Ps. xxxvi. Psalm hath it) *in his own eyes* ; representing his^{2.} qualities to his imagination in false shapes, he devoutly adoreth those idols of his brain. Further,

3. Self-conceit is also frequently grounded upon other inferior advantages ; upon gifts of nature, (as strength, activity, beauty ;) upon gifts of fortune, (so called,) as birth, wealth, dignity, power, fame, success ; upon these things men ordinarily much value themselves, and are strangely puffed up with vain opinion, taking themselves from them to be great and happy persons : but seeing (as we touched before) these things are in themselves little valuable, (as serving no great purpose, nor furthering our true happiness ;) seeing they are not commendable,

SERM. (as not depending on our free choice, but proceeding
LXI. from nature or chance;) seeing they are not durable
 or certain, but easily may be severed from us; the
 vanity of self-conceit founded on them is very noto-
 rious, and I shall not insist more to declare it; I
 shall only recommend the prophet's advice concern-
 ing such things: *Let not the wise man glory in his*
wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his
might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but
let him that glorieth glory in this, that he under-
standeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord
which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and
righteousness in the earth: that is, nothing within
 us or about us should elevate our minds, excepting
 the assurance that God doth govern the world,
 being ready to protect and succour us, to dispense
 mercy and justice to us; so that how weak and
 helpless soever in ourselves, yet, confiding in him,
 we shall never be overwhelmed by any wrong or
 misfortune.

Jer. ix. 23,
 24.

So much concerning self-conceit; the other parts
 of vicious self-love may be reserved to another occa-
 sion.

S E R M O N LXII.

OF SELF-CONFIDENCE, SELF-COMPLACENCE,
SELF-WILL, AND SELF-INTEREST.

2 TIM. iii. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.

OF SELF-CONFIDENCE.

II. **A**NOTHER like culpable kind of self-love is **SERM.**
that of *self-confidence*; when men beyond reason, **LXII.**
and without regard unto God's providence, do rely
upon themselves and their own abilities, imagining
that, without God's direction and help, by the con-
trivances of their own wit and discretion, by the
prevalency of their own strength and courage, by
their industrious care, resolution, and activity, they
can compass any design, they can attain any good,
they can arrive to the utmost of their desires, and
become sufficiently happy^a; not considering, that of
God (*in whose hand our breath is, and whose are* Dan. v. 23.
all our ways; in whose hand is the soul of every Job xii. 10.
living thing, and the breath of all mankind) all
our being and all our ability do absolutely depend;
that he manageth and turneth all things, dispensing
success according to his pleasure; that no good thing
can be performed without the supply and succour

^a Ὅστις γὰρ αὐτὸς ἢ φρονεῖν μόνος δακεῖ.

^b Ἡ γλῶσσαν ἢ οὐκ ἄλλος ἢ ψυχὴν ἔχειν.

Οἷτοι διακτυθέντες ἠφθησαν κενοί. Soph. Antig.

SERM. of his grace, nothing can be achieved without the
 LXII. concurrence of his providence; that, *the way of man*
 Jer. x. 23. *is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to*
 Prov. xvi. 1. *direct his steps; that the preparations of the heart*
 9. xix. 21. *in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the*
 xx. 24. *Lord; that, although a man's heart deviseth his*
 Ps. xxxiii. *way, yet the Lord directeth his steps; that no king*
 16, 17. *is saved by the multitude of an host, a mighty man*
 Eccles. ix. *is not delivered by much strength, a horse is a*
 11. *vain thing for safety; The race is not to the swift,*
 nor the battle to the strong; that (as St. Paul, one
 abundantly furnished with abilities suiting his de-
 signs as any man can be, doth acknowledge) *we are*
 2 Cor. iii. *not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, but*
 5. ii. 16. *our sufficiency is of God:* these oracles of truth,
 and even dictates of reason, no less than principles
 of religion, they consider not, who confide in their
 own abilities, with which nature or fortune do seem
 to have furnished them.

This is that instance of self-love, which the Wise
 Prov. iii. 5, Man biddeth us to beware of: *Trust*, saith he, *in the*
 6. *Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine*
own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge
him, and he shall direct thy paths. This is that
 which he condemneth as foolish, and opposite to wise
 proceeding: *He that trusteth in his own heart is a*
 Prov. xxviii. *fool; but whoso walketh wisely shall be delivered.*
 26.

This is that which smothereth devotion, and keep-
 eth men from having recourse to God; while they
 think it needless to ask for that which they have
 in their power, or have means of obtaining; this
 consequently depriveth them of divine aid, which
 is afforded only to those who seek it, and confide
 therein.

—sequum
 ml animum
 ipse parabo.

This often engageth men to attempt things rashly, and causeth them to come off unhappily; God inter-
 posing to cross them, with purpose to cure their error, or confound their presumption. SERM.
LXII.

From hence, if God ever suffereth their attempt to prosper, they sacrilegiously and profanely arrogate to themselves the success, *sacrificing to their own net*, and saying with him in the prophet, *By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent.* Habak. i.
Isa. x. 13.
16.

This causeth most men to fail of true content here, and of happiness finally; while taking them to be, where they are not, at home, within their own hand or reach, they neglect to search after them abroad, there where they only do lie, in the hand and disposal of God.

OF SELF-COMPLACENCE.

III. A like act of blameable self-love is *self-complacence*, that is, greatly delighting in one's self, or in the goods which he fancieth himself to enjoy, or in the works which he performeth; when men, in contemplation of their works and achievements, go strutting about, and saying with that vain prince, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?* Dan. iv. 30. when, reflecting on their possessions, they applaud and bless themselves, like the *rich man* in the gospel, *Soul*, (saith he, looking upon his accumulated store,) *thou hast much goods laid up for many years.* Luke xii.
19. Such vain soliloquies do men ordinarily make! Thou hast (saith a man to himself) rare endowments of soul; a wonderful skill and ability in this and that matter; thou art master of excellent things; thou hast managed very important business,

SERM. hast accomplished hard designs, hast achieved brave
LXII. feats, with great dexterity and admirable success, by
 thy wit and industry; thou hast framed and vented
 very curious orations, very facetious speeches, very
 nervous and pithy discourses; thou hast put obliga-
 tions upon this man and that; thou hast got much
 credit and interest amongst men; the world much
 looketh on thee, loveth and prizeth thee hugely, re-
 soundeth with thy fame and praise; surely thy worth
 is notable, thy deserts are egregious; how happy art
 thou in being such a person, in performing such
 things, in enjoying such advantages! Thus with a
 spurious and filthy pleasure do men reflect upon and
 revolve in their minds the goods they deem them-
 selves to possess, and the favourable occurrences that
 seem to befall them; being fond of their own qua-
 lities and deeds as of their children, which, however
 they are in themselves, do always appear handsome
 and towardly unto them; any little thing is great
 and eminent, any ordinary thing is rare, any indif-
 ferent thing is excellent to them, because it is theirs;
 out of any thing, how dry and insipid soever it is in
 itself, they suck a vain and foolish pleasure.

Hence is that honest and pure delight which they
 should taste in faith and love toward God, in the
 hope of future celestial things, in the enjoyment of
 spiritual blessings, in the conscience of virtuous prac-
 tice, quite choked or greatly damped.

Hence also that hearty contrition and sober sad-
 ness, which, by reflection upon their great defects
 and frequent miscarriages, they should continually
 maintain in their souls, is utterly stifled.

Hence also that charitable complacency in the
 welfare, and condolency with the adversities of their

brethren, is suppressed; hence cannot they be satisfied with any thing done by others, they cannot apprehend the worthy deserts, they cannot render due commendation to the good deeds of their neighbour; for while men are so pleased with their own imaginary felicities, they cannot well discern, they will not be duly affected with, the real advantages or disasters of themselves or of others.

SERM.
LXII.

OF SELF-WILL.

IV. Another culpable kind of self-love is *self-will*, (*αὐθάδεια*, pleasing one's self in his choice, and proceeding without or against reason;) when a man unaccountably or unreasonably, with obstinate resolution, pursueth any course offensive to others or prejudicial to himself, so that he will not hearken to any advice, nor yield to any consideration diverting him from his purpose, but putteth off all with a —*Stat pro ratione voluntas*: Say what you can, let what will come on it, I will do as I please, I will proceed in my own way; so I am resolved, so it shall be ^b.

This is that generally which produceth in men the wilful commission of sin, although apparently contrary to their own interest and welfare, depriving them of the best goods, bringing on them most heavy mischiefs; this causeth them irreclaimably to persist in impenitence. Hence do they stop their ears against wholesome counsel; they harden their hearts against most pathetic and softening dis-

^b Περὶ δὲ ἂν ἀπαξ τι εἶπω, μηκέτι με αὐθις πύθη. Nero apud Dion. Cass.

Οἱ ἀμαθεῖς ἰσχυρογώμονες. Synes. Calv.

Vid. Sen. Ep. 23. de Ben. 438. Arr. ii. 15.

SERM. courses : they *withdraw their shoulder*; they *stiffen*
 LXII. *their neck* against all sober precepts, admonitions,
 and reproofs; they defeat all means and methods
 of correction; they will not hear God command-
 ing, entreating, promising, threatening, encouraging,
 chastising; they will not regard the advices and
 reprehensions of friends; the most apparent conse-
 quences of damage, disgrace, pain, perdition, upon
 their ill courses will not stir them; their will is
 impregnable against the most powerful attempts to
 win and better them: let all the wisdom in the
 world solicit them, with a *Turn at my reproof*; it
 shall have occasion to complain, *They would none*
of my counsel, they despised all my reproof.

Prov. i. 23,
25, 29.

This is that also more particularly, which breedeth
 so much mischief to the public, which pestereth and
 disturbeth private conversation: this maketh con-
 versation harsh, and friendship intolerable^c.

Αὐθάδεια ἰ-
 σημία ξυνου-
 κος. Plat.
 ad Dionem.
 Ep. 4.

Hence are men in their demeanour so peevish
 and froward, so perverse and crossgrained, so stiff
 and stubborn; with much inconvenience to others,
 and commonly with more to themselves.

Hence will they not submit to the commands of
 their superiors, they will not comply with the cus-
 toms of their country, they will not be complaisant
 in conversation; but every where raise factious oppo-
 sitions, kindle fierce contentions, maintain disorderly
 singularities: they care not how for enjoying their
 humour they break the peace of the world, they dis-
 turb the order of things, they create tumults and
 troubles in any society, they bring vexations and

^c ——— τούτῳ δ' ἀνδρὶ μήτ' εἶην φίλος,
 Μήτε ξυνείην, ὅστις αὐτάρκη φρονεῖν
 Πέποιθε, δούλους τοῖς φίλους ἠγαύμενος.

Eurip.

mischiefs on others, on themselves. They do not consider or value the great harm they bring upon the public, nor how much themselves do suffer by it; so they have their will, what if the state be plunged into confusion and trouble; what if their neighbours be sorely incommoded; what if themselves lose their ease and pleasure?

SERM.
LXII.

It must be just as they will have it; what if ten to one think otherwise; what if generally the wisest men are agreed to the contrary; what if the most pressing necessity of affairs do not admit it; what if public authority (those whom all equity doth constitute judges, and to whom God himself hath committed the arbitration thereof) do not allow it? yet so it must be, because they fancy it, otherwise they will not be quiet: so do they sacrifice the greatest benefits of society (public order and peace, mutual love and friendship, common safety and prosperity) to their private will and humour.

This is that which St. Paul so often did forbid in word, and discountenanced in practice: for the edification of others, to procure advantage to his endeavours, to shun offence, to preserve concord and amity, he waved pleasing his own desire and fancy, he complied with the conceits and humours even of those who were most ignorant and weak in judgment; he even subjected and *enslaved* himself to the pleasure of others, directing us to do the like: *We then, saith he, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves: let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification; for even Christ pleased not himself,* (he adjoineth the great example of our

Rom. xv. 1,
2, 3.

SERM. Lord to enforce his own.) Again; *Give none of-*
 LXII. *fence, saith he, even as I please all men in all*

1 Cor. x.
33. xl. 1.

things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved: Be ye (here-

1 Cor. ix.
22, 19.

in) followers of me, as I am of Christ: and again, To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some: Though I be free from all men, (that is, although I have no superior that can command me, or oblige me in these matters,) yet have I made myself servant to all, that I might gain the more. What this excellent person was in this instance of managing ecclesiastical discipline, and promoting the gospel, that, both in the same cases, and in the prosecution of all other designs, in all our conversation and practice, should we likewise be.

We should in no case indulge our own humour or fancy, but ever look to the reason of the thing, and act accordingly, whatever it requireth.

We should never act without striving with competent application of mind to discern clearly some reason why we act; and from observing the dictates of that reason, no unaccountable cause should pervert us: blind will, headstrong inclination, impetuous passion, should never guide, or draw, or drive us to any thing; for this is not to act like a man, but as a beast, or rather worse than a beast; for beasts operate by a blind instinct indeed, but such as is planted in them by a superior wisdom, unerringly directing them to a pursuit of their true

Wisd. i. 12.
Deut. xxx.
19.

good: but man is left *in manu concilii sui*, is obliged (under sore penalties) not to follow blind inclinations

or instinct ; but to act with serious deliberation and choice, to observe explicit rules and resolutions of reason.

SERM. LXII.

1 Cor. x.
24.

OF SELF-INTEREST.

V. Another culpable sort of self-love is that of *self-interest*; when men inordinately or immoderately do covet and strive to procure for themselves these worldly goods, merely because profitable or pleasant to themselves, not considering or regarding the good of others, according to the rules of justice, of humanity, of Christian charity ; when their affections, their cares, their endeavours do mainly tend to the advancement, advantage, or delight of themselves ; they little caring what cometh on it, who loseth, who suffereth thereby.

Vid. Chrys.
in 1 Cor.
Or. 25.

They look upon themselves as if they were all the world, and no man beside concerned therein, or considerable to them ; that the good state of things is to be measured by their condition ; that all is well, if they do prosper and thrive ; all is ill, if they are disappointed in their desires and projects.

The good of no man, not of their brethren, not of their friends, not of their country, doth come with them under consideration ; what scandals do arise, what disorders are committed, what mischiefs are caused, they matter not, if they get somewhat thereby : what if the church or state be reproached, what if the neighbourhood be offended or disturbed, what if the world cry out and complain, if they become richer by it, or have their passion gratified, or find some pleasure in it ?

This is the chief spring of injustice ; for from hence it is, that oftentimes men regard not what courses they take, what means they use, (how un-

SERM. just, how base soever they be,) toward the com-
 LXII. passing their designs; hence they trample upon
 right, they violate all laws and rules of conscience,
 they falsify their trusts, they betray their friends,
 they supplant their neighbour, they flatter and col-
 lague, they wind about and shuffle any way, they
 detract from the worth and virtue of any man, they
 forge and vent odious slanders, they commit any
 sort of wrong and outrage, they (without regard or
 remorse) do any thing, which seemeth to further
 their design.

This is the great source of uncharitableness; for
 from hence men affect no man otherwise than he
 seemeth able to serve their turn; the poor therefore
 is ever slighted and neglected by them as unser-
 viceable; the rich only is minded and respected as
 capable to promote their ends; they become hard-
 hearted toward others, not considering or commi-
 serating their case; they will part with nothing from
 themselves to those who need their relief; they de-
 light in nothing which doth not make for their ad-
 vantage; all their shows of friendship and respect
 are mercenary, and mere trade; they do nothing
gratis, or for love.

This is the great root of all the disorders and
 mischiefs in the world; this self-love prompteth
 men to those turbulent scramblings and scufflings,
 whereby good order is confounded; this engageth
 them to desert their stations, to transgress their
 bounds, to invade and encroach upon others with
 fraud and violence: did men with any conscionable
 moderation mind and pursue their own private in-
 terest, all those fierce animosities, those fiery con-
 tentions, those *bitter emulations*, those rancorous

grudges, those calumnious supplantings, those perfidious cozenages, those outrageous violences, those factious confederacies, those seditious murmurings and tumultuous clamours, would vanish and cease; self-interest it is that gives life and nourishment to all such practices, the which embroil the world in discord and disorder. It is not out of pure madness or wanton humour that commonly men engage themselves and others in those base and troublesome courses, but out of design to get by it; hope of gain to be raked out of public ruins and disorders is the principle that moveth them, the reward they propound to themselves for their pains in meddling, toward the promoting them; like those who set fire on the town, that they may get opportunity to rifle and pillage.

SERM.
LXII.

—nullum
furor egit
in arma.
Bella pe-
tunt mag-
na victi
mercede.—

He that taketh himself to be as but one man, (naturally like and equal to others,) conceiving that he ought to consider the interest and right of other men in the same rank with his own, that he in reason should be contented with that share which ariseth to him by fair means^d; who thence resolveth to be satisfied with his own lot, to abide quiet in his station, to yield the same deference and compliance to others which he can presume or pretend to receive from them; who desires only to enjoy the gifts of Providence and the fruits of his industry in a due subordination to the public peace and welfare; he will not easily strive or struggle for preferments, he will not foment emulations or factions for his advantage, he will never design to cozen or supplant, to

^d Ut quisque maxime ad suum commodum refert quæcunque agit, ita minime est vir bonus; ut qui virtutem præmio metiantur, nullam virtutem nisi malitiam putant, &c. Cic. de Leg. 1.

SERM. detract or calumniate for advancement of his ends;
LXII. he thence will not contribute to the mischiefs and troubles in the world.

Self-interest therefore is the great enemy to the commonweal; that which perverteth all right, which confoundeth all order, which spoileth all the convenience and comfort of society.

It is a practice indeed (this practice of pursuing self-interest so vehemently, so especially above all things) which is looked upon and cried up as a clear and certain point of wisdom; the only solid wisdom; in comparison whereto those precepts which prescribe the practice of strict justice, ingenuous humanity, free charity, are but pedantical tattles, or notions merely chimerical; so the world now more than ever seemeth to judge, and accordingly to act; and thence is the state of things visibly so bad and calamitous; thence so little honesty in dealings, thence so little settlement in affairs are discernible. But how false that judgment is will appear if the case be weighed in the balance of pure reason; and most foolish it will appear being scanned according to the principles of religion.

In reason is it not very absurd that any man should look upon himself as more than a single person; that he should prefer himself before another, to whom he is not in any respect superior; that he should advance his own concernment above the public benefit, which comprehendeth his good, and without which his good cannot subsist? Can any man rationally conceive that he can firmly thrive or persist in a quiet and sweet condition, when he graspeth to himself more than is due or fitting, when he provoketh against himself the emulation,

the competition, the opposition, the hatred, and ob-
loquy of all or of many other persons?

SERM.
LXII.

May not any man reasonably have the same apprehensions and inclinations as we may have? may not any man justly proceed in the same manner as we may do? will they not, seeing us mainly to affect our private interest, be induced, and in a manner forced, to do the like? Thence what end can there be of propping and scrambling for things? and in the confusion thence arising, what quiet, what content can we enjoy?

Again; Doth not nature, by implanting in our constitution a love of society and aversion from solitude, inclinations to pity and humanity, pleasant complacencies in obliging and doing courtesies to others, appetites of honour and good esteem from others, aptness to approve and like the practices of justice, of fidelity, of courtesy, of beneficence, capacities to yield succour and benefit to our brethren, dictate unto us, that our good is inseparably connected and complicated with the good of others, so that it cannot without its own impairing subsist alone, or be severed from the good of others; no more than a limb can without suffering and destruction be torn from the whole?

Is there not to all men in some measure, to some men in a higher degree, a generosity innate, most lovely and laudable to all; which disposeth men with their own pain, hazard, and detriment to succour and relieve others in distress, to serve the public, and promote the benefit of society; so that inordinately to regard private interest doth thwart the reason and wisdom of nature?

The frame of our nature indeed speaketh, that

SERM. we are not born for ourselves ; we shall find man, if
LXII. we contemplate him, to be a nobler thing than to
 have been designed to serve himself, or to satisfy
 his single pleasure ; his endowments are too excel-
 lent, his capacities too large for so mean and narrow
 purposes ^c. How pitiful a creature were man, if this
 were all he was made for ! how sorry a faculty were
 reason, if it served not to better uses ! he debaseth
 himself, he disgraceth his nature, who hath so low
 conceits, and pursueth so petty designs.

St. Paul,
 Rom. ix.

Nay, even a true regard to our own private good
 will engage us not inordinately to pursue self-in-
 terest ; it being much hugged will be smothered and
 destroyed.

As we are all born members of the world, as we
 are compacted into the commonwealth, as we are
 incorporated into any society, as we partake in any
 conversation or company, so by mutual support, aid,
 defence, comfort, not only the common welfare first,
 but our particular benefit consequently doth subsist ;
 by hindering or prejudicing them, the public first,
 in consequence our particular doth suffer ; our thriv-
 ing by the common prejudice will in the end turn to
 our own loss. As if one member sucketh too much
 nourishment to itself, and thence swelleth into an
 exorbitant bulk, the whole thence incurreth disease,
 so coming to perish or languish ; whence conse-
 quently that irregular member will fall into a par-
 ticipation of ruin or decay : so it is in the state of
 human corporations ; he that in ways unnatural or
 unjust (for justice is that in human societies, which

^c Nec sibi, sed toti natum se credere mundo.

——nullosque Catonis in actus

Subrepsit, partemque tulit sibi nata voluptas.

nature is in the rest of things) draweth unto himself SERM. LXII.
 the juice of profit or pleasure, so as thence to grow
 beyond his due size, doth thereby not only create
 distempers in the public body, but worketh mis-
 chief and pain to himself; he must not imagine to
 escape feeling somewhat of the inconvenience and
 misery which ariseth from public convulsions and
 disorders.

So doth reason plainly enough dictate; and reli-
 gion with clearer evidence and greater advantage
 discovereth the same.

Its express precepts are, that we should aim to
 love our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore should
 tender his interests as our own; that we should not
 in competition with the greater good of our neigh-
 bour regard our own lesser good; that we should
 not seek our own things, but concern ourselves in
 the good of others; that we should not consult our
 own ease and pleasure, but should contentedly bear
 the burdens of our brethren: *Look not every man* Phil. ii. 4.
to his own things, but every man also to the things
of others; Let no man seek his own, but every man 1 Cor. x. 24.
another's wealth; Bear one another's burdens, and Gal. ii. 6.
so fulfil the law of Christ; Charity seeketh not its 1 Cor. xiii.
own: these are apostolical precepts and aphorisms;⁵
 these are fundamental rules and maxims of our holy
 religion.

It chargeth us industriously to employ our pains,
 liberally to expend our goods, yea (in some cases)
 willingly to expose and devote our lives for the
 benefit of our brethren.

It recommendeth to us the examples of those who
 have underwent unspeakable pains, losses, disgraces,
 troubles, and inconveniences of all kinds, for the fur-

SERM. LXII. thering the good of others; the examples of our Lord and of his apostles, who never in any case regarded their own interests, but spent and sacrificed themselves to the public welfare of mankind.

It representeth us not only as brethren of one family, who should therefore kindly favour, assist, and grace one another, but as members of one spiritual body, (*members one of another,*) compacted by the closest bands of common alliance, affection, and interest; whose good much consisteth in the good of each other; who should together rejoice; and condole with one another; who should care for one another's good as for our own; looking upon ourselves to gain by the advantage, to thrive in the prosperity, to be refreshed with the joy, to be graced with the honour, to be endamaged by the losses, to be afflicted with the crosses of our brethren; so that, *If, as St. Paul saith, one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

These which I have already handled are the principal kinds of vicious self-love; there are further some special acts of kin to them, sprouting from the same stock; which I shall touch: such as *vain-glory, arrogance, talking of one's self, thinking about one's self.* Of these I shall treat more briefly.

Rom. xii. 5.
1 Cor. xii.
25.
Rom. xii.
15.

1 Cor. 12.
26.

SERMON LXIII.

OF VAIN-GLORY, ARROGANCE, TALKING AND THINKING OF ONE'S SELF.

2 TIM. iii. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.

OF VAIN-GLORY.

WHEN a regard to the opinion or desire of the esteem of men is the main principle from which their actions do proceed, or the chief end which they propound to themselves, instead of conscience of duty, love and reverence of God, hope of the rewards promised, a sober regard to their true good, this is *vain-glory*. Such was the vain-glory of the Pharisees, who fasted, who prayed, who gave alms, who *did all their works that they might be seen of men*, and from them obtain the reward of estimation and applause: this is that which St. Paul forbiddeth; *Let nothing be done out of strife or vain-glory.*

SERM.
LXIII.

Matt. vi.
&c. xxiii. 5.

Phil. ii. 3.

When men affect and delight in praise from mean or indifferent things; as from secular dignity, power, wealth, strength, beauty, wit, learning, eloquence, wisdom, or craft: as, *There are many*, saith the Psalmist, *that boast themselves in the multitude of their riches*. Nebuchadnezzar was raised with the conceit of having built a palace for the glory of his majesty, Herod was puffed with applause for his oration, the philosophers were vain in the esteem procured by their pretence to wisdom, the Pharisees

Φάρισαιοι
τινας σοφοί.
Rom. i. 22.

SERM. LXIII. were elevated with the praise accruing from external acts of piety, (fasting twice a week, making long prayers, tithing mint and cumin;) all which things being in themselves of little worth, the affecting of praise from them is manifestly frivolous and vain. Honour should be affected only from true virtue and really good works.

Rom. ii. 7.

Those who seek glory from evil things, (who *glory in their shame*,) from presumptuous transgression of God's law, (hectorly profaneness and debauchery,) from outrageous violence, from overreaching craft, or from any bad quality, are not only vain-glorious, but impudent.

When men affect praise immoderately, not being content with that measure of good reputation which naturally doth arise from a virtuous and blameless life.

As all other goods, so this should be affected moderately.

It is not worth industry, or a direct aim.

John xii.
43.

When they are unwilling to part with the esteem of men upon any account, but rather will desert their duty than endure disgrace, prizing the opinion of men before the favour and approbation of God; as it is said of those rulers, who *believed in our Lord, but because of the Pharisees did not confess him, that they might not be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the glory of men, rather than the glory that is of God*;

John v. 44.

and those to whom our Saviour said, *How can ye believe, who receive glory from one another, but do not seek the glory that is of God?*

When they pursue it irregularly, are cunning and politic to procure it, hunt for it in oblique ways, lay gins, traps, and baits for it; such are ostentation

of things commendable, fair speeches, kind looks SERM.
and gestures, devoid of sincerity, &c. Such ways LXIII.
ambitious and popular men do use.

This practice is upon many accounts vain and Tò ἰβρίλις
ταῦτο δεξι-
μιον καὶ ἀ-
σίγητον.
culpable, and it produceth great inconvenience.

1. It is vain, because unprofitable. Is it not a fool-
ish thing for a man to affect that which little con-
cerneth him to have, which having he is not consi-
derably benefited? Such manifestly is the good opin-
ion of men; how doth that reach us? Do we feel
the commotions of their fancy? doth their breath
blow us any good?

2. It is vain, because uncertain. How easily are Qui dedit
hoc hodie,
cras auferet
idem.
the judgments of men altered! how fickle are their
conceits! the wind of heaven is not more fleeting
and variable than the wind of popular air. In a
trice the case is turned with them; they admire and
scorn, they approve and condemn, they applaud and
reproach, they court and persecute the same person,
as their fancy is casually moved, or as fortune doth
favour a person. Histories are full of instances of
persons who have been now the favourites of the
people, presently the objects of their hatred and ob-
loquy.

3. It is vain, because unsatisfactory. How can a —Stultus
honores
Sæpe dat
indignis.
man be satisfied with the opinion of bad judges;
who esteem a man without good grounds, commonly
for things not deserving regard; who cannot dis-
cern those things which really deserve esteem, good
principles and honest intention? These only God
can know, these only wise and good men can well
guess at: it is therefore vain much to prize any
judgment but that of God and of wise men, which
are but few. *Praise becometh not the mouth of a fool.*

SERM. LXIII. How also can a man rationally be pleased with the commendation of others, who is sensible of his so great defects, and conscious to himself of so many miscarriages? which considering, he should be ashamed to receive, he should in himself blush to own any praise.

Falsus honor juvat, &c.
Quem nisi mendosum?

4. It is vain, because fond. It is ugly and unseemly to men; they despise nothing more than acting out of this principle. It misbecometh a man to perform things for so pitiful a reward, or to look upon it as a valuable recompense for his performances, there being considerations so vastly greater to induce and encourage him; the satisfaction of conscience, the pleasing God, and procuring his favour; the obtaining eternal happiness.

5. It is vain, because unjust. If we seek glory to ourselves, we wrong God thereby, to whom the glory thereof is due. If there be in us any natural endowment considerable, (strength, beauty, wit,) it is from God, the Author of our being and life: is there any supervenient or acquire perfection, (as skill, knowledge, wisdom,) it is from God, who gave us the means and opportunities of getting it, who guided our proceeding and blessed our industry: is there any advantage of fortune belonging to us, (as dignity, power, wealth,) it is the gift of God, who dispenseth these things, who disposeth all things by his providence: is there any virtuous disposition in us, or any good work performed by us, it is the production of God, *who worketh in us to will and to do according to his good pleasure*: have we any good that we can call our own, that we have independently and absolutely made or purchased to ourselves; if not any, why do we assume to ourselves

Phil. ii 13.

the glory of it, as if we were its makers or authors? SERM. LXIII.
 it is St. Paul's expostulation; *Who made thee to differ? what hast thou, which thou didst not receive? and if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. John iii. 27.

This is that which maketh this vice so odious to God, who is sensible of the injury done him, in robbing him of his due honour: how sensible he is he shewed in that great instance of smiting Herod with a miraculous vengeance; because he did not *give the glory to God*, but arrogated glory to himself, receiving with complacence the profane flatteries of the people. He hath said, *I will not give my glory to another.* Acts xii. 23.

6. It is vain, because mischievous. It corrupteth our mind with a lewd pleasure, which choketh the purer pleasures of a good conscience, spiritual joy and peace.

It incenseth God's displeasure, who cannot endure to see us act out of so mean and base a principle.

It depriveth us of the reward due to good works, performed out of pure conscience, and other genuine principles of piety. *Ἀπέχουσι τὸν μισθόν* *They have their reward.* Matt. vi. 1.

7. It is vain, because unbecoming us.

It is observable, that the word *לְהַלֵּל* signifieth to praise or applaud, and also to infatuate or make mad.

Glory doth sit unhandsomely upon us, who are so weak and frail, who are so impure and sinful, who are so liable to reproach and blame: it is like purple on a beggar—a panegyric upon a fly. When all is said that can be well of us, we are ridiculous, because a thousand times more might be said to our Job xii. 17. Isa. xlv. 25. Eccles. vii. 8. ii. 2.

SERM. LXIII. disparagement and disgrace. For one good quality we have many bad, for one good deed we have done numberless evil. The best things we have or do, yield greater matter of dispraise than commendation, being full of imperfection and blemish.

Absolutely so; comparatively much more; what are we in comparison to God; whose excellency if we consider, and our distance from his perfections, how can we admit commendation? how can we take any share of that which is wholly his due?

If we consider even the blessed angels and saints, and how far short we come of them; what can we say, but praise them who are so worthy, and abhor ourselves who are so vile?

Seeing there are such objects of praise, how can it be conferred on a mortal, vile, wretched creature?

OF ARROGANCE.

When a man (puffed up with conceit of his own abilities, or unmeasurably affecting himself) doth assume to himself that which doth not belong to him; (more than in reason and justice is his due in any kind, more honour, more power, more wisdom, &c.)

When he encroacheth on the rights, invadeth the liberties, intrudeth into the offices, intermeddleth with the businesses, imposeth on the judgments of others. When he will be advising, teaching, guiding, checking, controlling others, without their leave or liking.

When he will unduly be exercising judgment and censure upon the persons, qualities, and actions of his neighbour.

These are instances and arguments of vicious self-

love. He that doth rightly understand and duly affect himself will contain himself within his own bounds, will mind his own affairs, will suffer every man undisturbedly to use his own right and liberty in judging and acting. SERM.
LXIII.

The effects of this practice are, dissensions, dissatisfactions, grudges, &c. for men cannot endure such fond and unjust usurpations upon their rights, their liberties, their reputations.

OF TALKING OF ONE'S SELF.

Περιαυτολογία, *talking about one's self* is an effect and manifest sign of immoderate self-love.

It may seem a very slender and particular matter, but is of great use to be considered and corrected.

To talk much of one's self, of his own qualities, of his concernments, of his actions, so as either downrightly to commend one's self, or obliquely to insinuate grounds of commendation; to catch at praise; or, however, to drive on our own designs and interests thereby.

It is an argument of self-love, proceeding from a fulness of thought concerning one's self, and a fond affection to one's own things; (*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*; assuredly we think much of that, and we like it greatly, concerning which we are prompt to discourse: the imaginations and affections discharge themselves at the mouth.) Matt. xii.
34.

This is a foolish and hurtful practice. For,

1. It is vain, and hath no effect. We thereby seek to recommend ourselves to the opinion of men; but we fail therein; for our words gain no belief. For no man is looked upon as a good judge or a

SERM. faithful witness in his own case; a good judge and
 LXIII. a faithful witness must be indifferent and disinterest-

ed; but every man is esteemed to be favourable, to be partial in his opinion concerning himself; to be apt to strain a point of truth and right in passing testimony or sentence upon himself: he therefore that speaketh of himself is not believed, his words have no good effect on the hearers: it is true what
 Prov. xx. 6. the Wise Man observeth; *Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?* (but it is hard to find one who, in making report or passing judgment concerning him-
 2 Cor. xii. 1. self, will be faithful and just.) *Καυχᾶσθαι οὐ συμφέρει μοι.*

2. Yea it usually hath a contrary effect, and destroyeth that which it aimeth at. Self-commendation is so far from procuring a good opinion, that it breedeth an evil one.

Men have a prejudice against what is said, as proceeding from a suspected witness; one who is biassed by self-love and bribed by self-interest to
 2 Cor. x. 18. impose upon them: *Not he that commendeth himself is approved.*

2 Cor. x. 13. It is fastidious, as impertinent, insignificant, and
 οὐχὶ τὰ ἑμίστρας κευχθησόμεθα. insipid; spending time, and beating their ears to no purpose; they take it for an injury to suppose them so weak as to be moved by such words, or forced into a good conceit.

It is odious and invidious; for all men do love themselves, no less than we ourselves; and cannot endure to see those who affect to advance themselves and reign in our opinion.

It prompteth them to speak evil of us; to search for faults to cool and check us.

It is therefore a preposterous and vain way to think of gaining credit and love : men thereby indubitably lose or depress themselves. SERM.
LXIII.

Of all words those which express ourselves and our things, *I* and *mine*, &c. are the least pleasing to men's ears.

It spoileth conversation ; for he that loveth to speak of himself doth least love to hear others speak of themselves, and so is not attentive.

If a man have worthy qualities and do good deeds, let them speak for him ; they will of themselves extort commendation ; his silence about them, his seeming to neglect them, will enhance their worth in the opinion of men. Prating about them, obtruding them upon men, will mar their credit ; including men to think them done, not out of love to virtue, but for a vainglorious design. Thus did Cicero, thus have many others blasted the glory of their virtuous deeds. Γίγνηται ἄφρονος καυχῆ-
μιτος.
2 Cor. xii.
11. xi. 17.

3. Supposing you get the belief and the praise you aim at, to have complacence therein is bad or dangerous ; it is a fond satisfaction, it is a vicious pleasure ; it puffeth up, it befooleth.

4. It is against modesty. It argueth the man hath a high opinion of himself : if he believe himself what he saith, he hath so ; if not, why would he persuade others to have it ?

Modesty cannot without pain hear others speak of him, nor can with any grace receive commendations ; it is therefore great impudence to speak of himself, and to seek praise.

5. We may observe it to be a great temptation to speak falsely. Men, when they affect commendation, will gladly have it to the utmost ; are loath to

SERM. LXIII. wrong themselves, or to lose any thing; they will therefore at least speak to the extreme bounds of what may be said in their own behalf; and while they run upon the extreme borders of truth, it is hard to stop their career, so as not to launch forth into falsehood: it is hard to stand upon the brink, without falling into the ditch.

It is therefore advisable in our discourse to leave ourselves out as much as may be; never, if we can help it, to say, *I, mine*, &c. never seeking, commonly shunning and declining occasion to speak of ourselves: it will bring much convenience and benefit to us.

Our discourse will not be offensive; we shall decline envy and obloquy; we shall avoid being talked of; we shall escape temptations of vanity; we shall better attend to what others say, &c.

If we will be speaking of ourselves, it is allowable to speak sincerely and unaffectedly concerning our infirmities and faults; as St. Paul does of himself.

2 Cor. xii.
5. xi. 30.
Plut. αὐτῶν
τῆς ἑαυτῶν
ἰσχυρίσθαι.

There are some cases wherein a man may commend himself; as in his own defence, to maintain his authority, to urge his example, &c. so doth St. Paul often. He calleth it folly to boast, (because generally such it is,) yet he doth it for those ends.

Prov. xxvii.
2. *Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.*

THINKING OF OURSELVES.

Thinking of ourselves with glee and pleasure; this is a great nourisher of immoderate self-love; for the more they indulge to a gazing upon themselves with delight, the more they grow in love, the more passionately they come to dote on themselves.

It is good to reflect inward, and to view our souls; **SERM.**
ut we should do it so, as to find a wholesome dis- **LXIII.**
pleasure and regret in beholding ourselves so foul
and impure, so weak and defectuous, so ugly and
deformed: if we do thus, we shall not over-love our-
elves.

Some general Remedies of Self-Love.

1. To reflect upon ourselves seriously and impar-
tially, considering our natural nothingness, mean-
ness, baseness, imperfection, infirmity, unworthiness;
the meanness and imperfection of our nature, the de-
fects and deformities of our souls, the failings and
misdemeanours of our lives. He that doeth this can-
not surely find himself lovely, and must therefore
take it for very absurd to dote on himself. He will
rather be induced to dislike, despise, abhor, and
loathe himself.

2. To consider the loveliness of other beings su-
perior to us, comparing them with ourselves, and
observing how very far in excellency, worth, and
beauty they transcend us; which if we do, we must
appear no fit objects of love, we must be checked in
our dotage, and diverted from this fond affection to
ourselves. It cannot but dazzle our eyes and dull
our affections to ourselves.

If we view the qualities and examples of other
men, who in worth, in wisdom, in virtue, and piety,
do far excel us; their noble endowments, their
heroical achievements; what they have done and
suffered in obedience to God, (their strict temperance
and austerity, their laborious industry, their self-
denial, their patience, &c.) how can we but in com-
parison despise and loathe ourselves?

If we consider the blessed angels and saints in

SERM. glory and bliss; their purity, their humility, their
LXIII. obedience; how can we think of ourselves without
contempt and abhorrence?

Especially if we contemplate the perfection, the purity, the majesty of God; how must this infinitely debase us in our opinion concerning ourselves, and consequently diminish our fond affection toward things so vile and unworthy?

3. To study the acquisition and improvement of charity toward God and our neighbour. This will employ and transfer our affections; these drawing our souls outward, and settling them upon other objects, will abolish or abate the perverse love toward ourselves.

4. To consider, that we do owe all we are and have to the free bounty and grace of God: hence we shall see that nothing of esteem or affection is due to ourselves; but all to him, who is the Fountain and Author of all our good.

5. To direct our minds wholly toward those things which rational self-love requireth us to regard and seek: to concern ourselves in getting virtue, in performing our duty, in promoting our salvation, and arriving to happiness; this will divert us from vanity; a sober self-love will stifle the other fond self-love.

SERMON LXIV.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF
ALL MEN.

ROM. xii. 17.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

THE world apparently is come to that pass, that SERM. LXIV. men commonly are afraid or ashamed of religious practice, hardly daring to own their Maker by a conscientious observance of his laws. While profaneness and wickedness are grown outrageously bold, so that many *declare their sin as Sodom*; piety and Isa. iii. 9. virtue are become pitifully bashful, so that how few have the heart and the face openly to maintain a due regard to them! Men in nothing appear so reserved and shy as in avowing their conscience, in discovering a sense of their duty, in expressing any fear of God, any love of goodness, any concern for their own soul. It is wisdom, as they conceive, to compound with God, and to collude with the world; reserving for God some place in their heart, or yielding unto him some private acknowledgment; while in their public demeanour they conform to the world, in commission of sin, or neglect of their duty; supposing that God may be satisfied with the invisible part of his service, while men are gratified by visible compliance with their ungracious humours.

SERM. Such proceeding is built on divers very fallacious,
 LXIV. absurd, and inconsistent grounds or pretences;
 whereby men egregiously do abuse themselves and
 would impose on others; namely these, and the
 like.

They would not, by a fair show and semblance of piety, give cause to be taken for hypocrites; whereas, by dissembling their conscience, and seeming to *have no fear of God before their eyes*, they incur an hypocrisy no less criminal in nature, but far more dangerous in consequence, than is that which they pretend to decline.

They would not be apprehended vain-glorious for affecting to serve God in the view of men; whereas often at the bottom of their demeanour a most wretched and worse than pharisaical vain-glory doth lie; they forbearing the performance of their duty merely to shun the censure or to gain the respect of the vilest and vainest persons.

They would be deemed exceedingly honest and sincere, because forsooth all their piety is cordial, pure, and void of sinister regards to popular esteem; whereas partial integrity is gross nonsense; whereas no pretence can be more vain, than that we hold a faithful friendship or hearty respect for God, whom we openly disclaim or disregard; whereas also it is easily discernible, that although their piety is not, yet their impiety is popular, and affected to ingratiate with men.

They would be taken for men of brave, courageous, and masculine spirits, exalted above the weaknesses of superstition and scrupulosity; whereas indeed, out of the basest cowardice, and a dread to offend sorry people, they have not a heart to act

according to their duty, their judgment, their best interest. SERM.
LXIV.

They would seem very modest in concealing their virtue; while yet they are most impudent in disclosing their want of conscience; while they are so presumptuous toward God, as *to provoke him to his face* by their disobedience; while they are not Isa. lxxv. 3.
Jer. vi. 17.
viii. 12. ashamed to wrong and scandalize their brethren by their ill behaviour.

They would not be uncivil or discourteous in thwarting the mind and pleasure of their company; as if in the mean time they might be most rude toward God in affronting his will and authority; as if any rule of civility could oblige a man to forfeit his salvation; as if it were not rather most cruel discourtesy and barbarous inhumanity to countenance or encourage any man in courses tending to his ruin.

They would not be singular and uncouth, in distancing from the common road or fashion of men; as if it were better to leave the common duty than the common faults of men; as if wisdom and virtue were ever the most vulgar things; as if the way to heaven were the broadest and the most beaten way; as if rarity should abate the price of good things; as if conspiracy in rebellion against God might justify or excuse the fact; as if it were advisable to march to hell in a troop, or comfortable to lie there for ever among the damned crew of associates in wickedness.

They cannot endure to be accounted zealots or bigots in religion; as if a man could love or fear God too much; or be over-faithful and careful in serving him; as if to be most earnest and solicitous

SERM. (not in promoting our own fancies, but) in discharg-
 LXIV. ing our plain duties could be justly reproachable, or
 were not indeed highly commendable.

These things I may hereafter fully declare; in the mean time it is manifest that such a practice is extremely prejudicial to religion and goodness; so that it may be very useful to employ our meditations upon this text of the apostle, which directly doth oppose and prohibit it.

The same text he elsewhere (in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians) doth repeat in the same terms, (only inserting a clause more fully explaining his sense,) backing his precept with his own example; for We, saith he there, did so manage the business of collecting and dispensing alms, as *to avoid that any man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us; providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men.*

2 Cor. viii.
20, 21.

The words do imply a precept of very large extent, and touching a great part of our duty; even all thereof which is public and visible; for which we are accountable to the world, whereof man can take any cognisance; which concerneth all our speech and conversation, all our dealing and commerce, all our deportment relating to human society, civil or spiritual.

I shall first a little consider its meaning and design; then I shall propose reasons and inducements to its observance; then I shall declare the folly of those principles and pretences which obstruct that observance.

I. The meaning of it is, that we should have a special care of our external demeanour and conver-

sation, which cometh under the view and observa- **SERM.**
tion of men; that it be exempted from any offence **LXIV.**
or blame; yea, that it be comely and commendable. ^{Ἀμιμῶτα.}

The terms in which it is expressed are notably ^{Phil. ii. 15.}
emphatical; we are directed *προνοεῖν* to *provide*, ^{Ἀσίγμητοι.}
to use a providence and forecast in the case: ere we ^{Col. i. 22.}
undertake any design, we should deliberate with
ourselves, and consider on what theatre we shall act,
what persons will be spectators, what conceits our
practice may raise in them, and what influence prob-
ably it will have on them. We should not rush on
into the public view with a precipitant rashness, or
blind negligence, or contemptuous disregard, not
caring who standeth in our way, who marketh what
we do, what consequence our proceeding may have
on the score of its being public and visible: we
should advise beforehand, lay our business, and on
set purpose order our behaviour with a regard to
those to whose sight and notice we expose it, foresee-
ing how our actions may affect or incline them. So
we must provide; what things? *καλὰ*, things fair
and handsome; things not only good, innocent, and
inoffensive to the sight of men; but goodly, plea-
sant, and acceptable to well-disposed beholders;
such as our apostle doth elsewhere recommend,
when he chargeth us to regard, *ὅσα σεμνὰ*, *whatever* ^{Phil. iv. 8.}
things are venerable, *ὅσα προσφιλεῖ*, *whatever things*
are lovely, *ὅσα εὐφημα*, *whatever things are of good*
report, *εἴ τις ἔπαινος*, *whatever things are laudable*;
and when he doth exhort us to *walk εὐσχημόνως*,
handsomely and decently, in a comely garb and ^{Rom. xiii.}
fashion of life: this may add an obligation to some ^{13.}
things not directly prescribed by God, which yet ^{1 Thess. iv.}
may serve to adorn religion, but it cannot detract ^{12.}

SERM. any thing from what God hath commanded ; it doth
LXIV. comprehend all instances of piety and virtue practicable before men ; it certainly doth exclude all commission of sin, and omission of duty ; for that nothing can be fair or handsome which is ugly in God's sight, which doth not suit to his holy will.

Such things we must provide, *ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων*, *before all men* ; not only before some men, to whom we bear a particular respect, of whom we stand in awe, upon whom we have a design ; but universally before all men, as having a due consideration of all those upon whom our deportment may have influence ; not despising or disregarding the observation of the meanest or most inconsiderable person whatever.

But in this practice, to avoid misapprehensions, we must distinguish ; for it is not required that we should do all things openly, nor intended that we should do any thing vainly ; but that we should act constantly according to the nature and reason of things, with upright and pure intention : the apostle doth not mean that in our practice we should resemble the Pharisees, whom our Lord reproveth for *doing their alms before men*, for loving to pray *standing in the synagogues*, for *doing all their works to be seen of men* ; performing those acts of piety openly *in the corners of the street*, which should have been done secretly *in the closet* ; and so doing them out of vanity and ambitious design, to procure the good opinion and praise of men : he doth not intend that we should assume a formal garb of singular virtue ; that we should aim to seem better than we are, counterfeiting any point of religion or virtue ; that we should affect to appear even

Matt. vi.

1, 5.

Matt. xxiii.

5.

good as we are, exposing all our piety to common SERM.
 v: that we should *sound a trumpet before us*, LXIV.
 giving an ostentation of any good deeds, catching Matt. vi. 2.
 reputation or applause for them; that we should
 any commendable thing chiefly to obtain the
 opinion of the world, or to escape its censure:
 itely far it was from the apostle's intention, that
 should be *like those whited sepulchres, which* Matt. xxiii.
appear beautiful outward, but are within full of ^{27, 28.}
dead men's bones and all uncleanness; that is, like
 the Pharisees, who *did outwardly appear right-*
s, but within were full of hypocrisy and ini-
quity: No;

In some cases we must be reserved, and keep our
 conversation close to ourselves; and ever under a fair Τὸ σίμων ἀ-
 appearance there must be a real substance of good, to- πλάστως—
 correspond with an honest intention of heart; a good Τὸ εὐρημον
 conscience must always lie at the bottom of a good ἀψοφησί.
 conversation; the outside must be good, but the Ant. i. §. 9.
 inside must be inward; we must endeavour to
 justify our life and conversation, but we must espe-
 cially labour to purify our hearts and affections.

Join the precept with others duly limiting it, and
 do not import, that with pure sincerity and unaf-
 fected simplicity (void of any sinister or sordid de-
 sign) we should in all places, upon all occasions, in
 all matters, carefully discharge that part of our duty
 which is public, according to its nature, season, and
 emergency, that is, publicly; not abstaining from the
 practice of those good deeds, which cannot other-
 wise than openly be well performed; or the conspi-
 cuous performance whereof is absolutely needful in
 regard to God's law and the satisfaction of our con-
 science, is plainly serviceable to the glory of God, is

SERM. very conducive to the edification of our neighbour,
LXIV. or which may be useful to good purposes concurrent

Matt. vii. with those principal ends : we should as *good trees*

17. from a deep root of true piety, in due *season* natu-

Luke vi. 44. rally, as it were, shoot forth good fruits, not only

Psal. i. 3. pleasant to the sight, but savoury to the taste, and

wholesome for use ; as St. Paul, who, as he saith of

2 Cor. viii. himself, that he *did provide things honest in the*

21. *sight of all men*, so he also doth affirm, that *his*

2 Cor. i. 12. *rejoicing was this, the testimony of his conscience,*

that in simplicity and godly sincerity—he had his

conversation in the world.

There are indeed some duties, or works of piety and virtue, the nature whereof directeth, that in the practice of them we should be reserved ; such as those wherein the world is not immediately concerned, and which may with best advantage be transacted between God and our own souls ; as private devotion, meditation on God's word and will, the discussion of our consciences, voluntary exercises of penitence, and the like : such also be those wherein the intervention or notice of few persons is required ; as deeds of particular charity in dispensing alms, good advice, friendly reproof ; the which sort of duties our Lord hath taught us to per-

'Εν τῷ κρυπ- perform *in secret*, or as closely as we may ; studiously

πρῶτ. keeping our observance of them from the eyes of

Matt. vi. 4, 6. men ; thereby assuring our sincerity to ourselves,

and guarding our practice from any taint of vanity

or suspicion of hypocrisy ; as also in some cases

avoiding to cause prejudice or offence to our neigh-

Matt. vi. 1. bours : *Take heed*, saith our Lord, *that ye do not*

Matt. vi. 6. *your alms before men* ; and, *Thou, when thou*

Matt. vi. 17. *prayest, enter into thy closet* ; and, *Thou, when*

17.

thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, SERM. that thou appear not unto men to fast; and, If LXIV. thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell^{Matt. xviii.} him his fault between thee and him alone.^{15.}

But there are divers other duties, the discharge whereof necessarily is notorious and visible; the public being the stage on which they are to be acted; the transaction of them demanding the intercourse of many persons, who are the objects or instruments of them, or are somehow concerned in them: such is that negative duty, of a general nature and vast^{Psal. xxxiv.} comprehension, which we may call innocence; that^{14.} is, a total abstinence from sin, or forbearance to transgress any divine command; which is a part of Job's character, *That man was perfect and up-^{Job i. 1.}right, one that feared God, and eschewed evil:^{ii. 3.}* the which duty, being to be practised at all times in every place, cannot avoid being observable.

Such are also divers positive duties; for such is the profession of our faith in God, and acknowledgment of his heavenly truth, revealed in the gospel of our blessed Saviour; which is styled *confessing*^{Rom. x. 10.} *our Lord before men*, and is, as St. Paul telleth us, indispensably requisite to salvation.

Such is joining in that public adoration, whereby the honour and authority of God are upheld in the world with seemly expressions of reverence; the which is to be performed solemnly, and, as the holy Psalmist speaketh, *in the midst of the congregation.*^{Psal. xcix. 5. cxxxii. 7.}

Such is zeal in vindication of God's honour, when^{xxii. 22.} occasion requireth, from blasphemous aspersions, or from scandalous offences against it.

Such are justice, equity, fidelity, and ingenuity in our dealings; meekness, gentleness, patience, kind-

SERM. LXIV. ness, and courtesy in our converse ; peaceableness in our carriage, and charitable beneficence ; the objects

whereof are most general, according to those apostolical precepts, *That our moderation* (or our equity and ingenuity) *be known unto all men*; that we
 Phil. iv. 5. *shew all meekness to all men*; that we must not
 Tit. iii. 2. *strive, but be gentle unto all men*; that we be pa-
 2 Tim. ii. 24. *tient toward all men*; that we *pursue peace with*
 1 Thess. v. 14. *all men*; that *as we have opportunity, we should*
 Heb. xii. 14. *do good unto all men*; should *abound in love one*
 Rom. xii. 18. *towards another, and towards all men*; should
 Gal. vi. 10. *ever follow that which is good, both among our-*
 1 Thess. iii. 12. v. 15. *selves and to all men*; should *liberally distribute*
 2 Cor. ix. 13. *to the saints and to all men*: in performing which so general duties, how can a man pass *incognito*, how can he so deal with all men indiscernibly?

Such are likewise gravity and modesty in our behaviour ; sweetness, soberness, aptness to profit and edify the hearers in our discourse ; moderation and temperance in our corporeal enjoyments ; industry in our business and the works of our calling ; integrity in the management of any office or trust committed to us ; a constant practice of which virtues is not only enjoined to us as our particular duty, but for public example.

Such are seasonable defence of the truth, and opposing of error ; the commendation of virtue, and reprehension of notorious sin, with the like.

Such things must be practised, because indispensable duties ; but they cannot be done out of sight, or barring the observation of men ; they do involve publicness ; they carry a light and lustre with them, attracting all eyes to regard them ; it is as impossible to conceal them as to hide the sun from all the

world, or to *conceal a city that is set upon a hill*; SERM. for *nothing*, as St. Chrysostom saith, *doth render a* LXIV.
man so illustrious, although he ten thousand times Matt. v. 14.
would be hid, as an open practice of virtue^a.

Wherefore *the works of mercy*, saith St. Austin, *the affection of charity, the sanctity of godliness, the incorruptness of chastity, the moderation of sobriety, these are perpetually to be held, whether we are in the public or at home; whether before men or in the closet, whether we speak or keep silence*^b.

In the practice of them, it is true, we mainly should respect the approving our conscience to God, with expectation of our recompense from him; not 1 Cor. iv. 3. being much concerned in the judgment or 'pleasure 1 Thess. ii. of men, purely considered in themselves; not aim- Gal. i. 10.^{4, 5.} ing at any interest of credit or profit from them as a reward of our work^c; *We ought*, as St. Austin saith, while we do good, *to be seen, but we ought not to do it that we may be seen; the end of our joy, the bound of our comfort, should not be there; so that we should think ourselves to have obtained the whole fruit of a good work, when we have been seen and commended*^d: no, *whatever we do*, We Eph. vi. 6.

^a Οὐδὲν γὰρ ὄτως ἐπίσημον ἄνδρα ποιεῖ, κἄν μυριάκις λανθάνειν βούληται, ὡς ἀρετῆς ἐπιδειξίς. Chrys. in Matt. v. 16.

^b Opera misericordiæ, affectus charitatis, sanctitas pietatis, incorruptio castitatis, modestia sobrietatis, semper hæc tenenda sunt; sive cum in publico sumus, sive cum in domo; sive ante homines, sive in cubiculo; sive loquentes, sive tacentes. Aug. in Ep. 1. Joh. Tract. 8.

^c —non cum fama sed cum rerum natura deliberandum est. Sen. Ep. 81.

^d Si times spectatores non habebis imitatores; debes ergo videri, sed non ad hoc debes facere, ut videaris, non ibi debet esse

SERM. should, as the apostle directeth, do it *as the ser-*
 LXIV. *vants of Christ, doing the will of God from the*
 Col. iii. 23, *heart; doing it heartily as to the Lord, and not*
 24. *unto men; knowing that of the Lord we shall re-*
ceive the reward of the inheritance.

Yet nothing in the mean-time should hinder us from performing such necessary duties; strictly and exactly, with our most diligent care and endeavour, even in that light which their nature doth carry in it.

How much soever of our virtue or piety out of hu-
 mility or modesty we may conceal, yet we must be careful of discovering any vice or irreligion, either by notoriously committing any thing forbidden by God, or omitting any thing commanded by him.

This we should not do upon any terms, upon any pretence whatever; no wicked fashion should engage us, no bad example should inveigle us, no favour of men should allure us, no terror should scare us thereto; we should not out of fear, out of shame, out of complaisance, out of affected prudence or politic design; out of deference to the quality, dignity, or authority of any person; out of regard to any man's desire or pleasure; we should not to decline offence, envy, blame, reproach, ill treatment, or upon any such account, comply in any sinful practice, wave any duty, neglect any season of performing a good deed, whereby we may glorify God, or edify our neighbour, or promote the welfare of our own soul.

To such a practice, according to the intent of St. Paul's injunction, we are obliged; and thereto we

finis gaudii tui, non ibi terminus letitiæ tuæ, ut putes te totum fructum consecutum esse boni operis, cum visus fueris atque laudatus. Ibid.

may be induced by divers considerations, particularly SERM. LXIV.
by those which we shall now propose.

1. We may consider that the public is the proper, Bona conscientia prodire vult et conspicere, ipsas nequitias tenebras timet. Sen. Ep. 27.
natural, and due place of goodness; it should dwell in the light, it should walk freely and boldly everywhere, it should expose itself to open view, that it may receive from rational creatures its due approbation, respect, and praise; it by publicness is advanced, and the more it doth appear, the more beautiful, the more pleasant, the more useful it is; yielding the fairer lustre, the greater influence, the better effects; thereby diffusing and propagating itself, becoming exemplary, instructive, and admonitive; drawing lovers and admirers to it; exciting and encouraging men to embrace it: wherefore it is very absurd that it should skulk or sneak; it is a great damage to the public that it should retire from common notice.

On the other hand, it is proper for wickedness never to appear or to shew its head in view; it Omne malum aut timore aut pudore natura perfudit. Tert. Apol. cap. 1. Job xxiv. 13-17.
should be confined to darkness and solitude, under guard of its natural keepers, shame and fear; it should be exterminated from all conversation among rational creatures, and banished to the infernal shades: publicness doth augment and aggravate it; the more it is seen, the more ugly, the more loathsome, the more noxious it is; its odious shape being disclosed, its noisome steams being dispersed, its pestilent effects being conveyed thereby.

Wherefore to smother virtue (that fair child of light) in privacy, and to vent sin (*the works of darkness*) Rom. xiii. 12. Eph. v. 11.
openly, is quite to transplace things out of their natural situation and order; according to which we are taught by our Lord, that *he that doeth truth* John iii. 21.

SERM. *cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest ;*
 LXIV. and by St. Paul, that *every one who doeth evil hateth*
 Eph. v. 13. *the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his*
deeds should be reprov'd : so indeed it is, and will
be, where conscience retaineth its due sway and force ;
where a due respect and reverence are preserved for
goodness.

As that any good cometh from detection of sin is an accidental advantage ; so that any mischief doth ever follow the manifestation of virtue is an unnatural abuse ; the which may well be prevented : there can be no danger of acting any good most evidently, if we do withal act sincerely, having purified our hearts from dishonest intention and from ambitious vanity ; the fear of which should not wholly drive virtue under the hatches and bring vice upon the stage. But,

2. We should consider, that we cannot really in any competent or tolerable measure be good men, without approving ourselves such in our conversation before men.

Whatever may be pretended, it commonly doth happen, and it ever is to be suspected, that the invisible piety which is not accompanied with visible conscientiousness is false, or is no piety at all ; or that they who have little care and conscience to serve God publicly have much less to serve him privately ; or that such as betray a scandalous negligence of their ways will hardly maintain a careful watch over their hearts ; for the same causes (be it profane infidelity, or looseness of principles, or supine incogitancy, or sloth, or stupidity) which dispose them to disregard God and his laws before the world, more effectually will incline them to neglect God and

forget their duty by themselves, where beside their own conscience there is no witness, no judge, no censor to encourage or reproach them. But admit it possible, and put case, that sometimes the heart and conversation may not run parallel; that a man may better govern his interior thoughts and affections than he doth manage his exterior behaviour and actions; that a man secretly may cleave to God, although he seemeth openly to desert him; yet this will not suffice to constitute or denominate a man good; because much of goodness, as we have shewed, even the nobler half thereof, (that part whereby God is most glorified, and whereby the world is most benefited,) doth lie in open and visible practice: that virtue therefore must be very imperfect, that obedience must be very lame, which is deficient in great a part. SERM. LXIV.

As there can be no fair pretence to goodness, where so little thereof is conspicuous; so there can be no real integrity thereof, where so much of duty is wanting.

Our Lord hath taught us, that *every tree is known by its fruit*; and St. James saith, that *faith is shewed by works*; and so it is that a man can hardly be good in any reasonable degree without appearing such. Impiety may, but piety cannot be quite concealed. As gold may be counterfeited, (for all is not gold that glistereth,) yet true gold always doth look like gold; so although bad men sometimes may seem good, yet good men also must seem such, appearing in their own native temper and lustre. Luke vi. 44. Jam. ii. 18.

Goodness cannot be disguised in the shape of evil, because simplicity and innocence are essential ingredients of it: any mixture of notorious sin, any visible

SERM. LXIV. neglect of duty assuring (yea formally making) a want of it, or a real defect therein : it may be daubed with false aspersions, it may be dimmed by the breath of unjust and uncharitable censures ; but, wiping them off, its natural hue certainly will appear.

Wherefore if we would satisfy ourselves in our own consciences, or justify ourselves to others, that we are truly good, we must (without partiality, or distinguishing between public and private) like the holy Psalmist, *have respect unto all God's commandments* ; we, like Zachary and Elizabeth, must *walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless* ; we must, like David, *accomplish all God's wills* ; we must observe St. Paul's rule, *to abstain ἀπὸ παντὸς εἴδους πορνῆϋ, from both every kind of evil, and every bad appearance*. But further,

(Num. xv. 39, 40.)
Ps. cxix. 6.
Luke i. 6.
Παύτῳ πάν-
τα τὰ θελή-
ματά μου.
Acts xiii. 22.
1 Thes. v. 23.

3. A great care of our good behaviour before men is necessary in regard to Almighty God ; whose just interest is preserved, whose due homage is payed, whose honour is promoted thereby ; the same being greatly prejudiced and impaired by the contrary defaultance.

It is a clear point of justice toward God, as to render all obedience to him, so particularly that which consisteth in an open acknowledgment and service of him ; for as he made and doth preserve not only the heart, but the tongue, the members, the whole man, so all must concur in rendering their tribute of reverence and service to him.

1 Cor. x. 31. The apostle doth prescribe, that *whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God* ; and well he might, seeing that to glorify God is indeed to execute

the main design of our creation, to apply our faculties SERM.
to their best use, to achieve the most proper and LXIV.
most excellent work whereof we are capable; to do
that which is the worthiest and happiest employment
of angels, which all the company of heaven, with
most ardent desire, with most zealous ambition, with
restless endeavour, doth pursue; and this we cannot
better, we cannot otherwise do, than by an apparent
good conversation. For

He that apparently in all his actions maketh conscience of obeying God's laws, thereby doth evidence his firm persuasion concerning the existence and providence of God; doth adhere to him against all adversaries of piety, and all temptations to rebellion; doth avow his sovereign majesty and authority; doth yield him due veneration and obedience; doth shew right apprehensions of him, and just affections towards him; implying that he doth most highly esteem him, doth most heartily love him, doth chiefly dread him, doth repose his trust and hope in him for all his happiness; hath a great opinion of his wisdom, a great awe of his power, a great sense of his goodness; the which practice is in itself a direct and formal glorification of God, in his own person.

He also thereby doth further promote the glory of God, instructing, exciting, and encouraging others to the like practice of deferring respect and service to God; for naturally men have such a capacity, such aptitude, such proclivity to religion, (or to the acknowledgment and worship of their Maker,) that when they behold others seriously and earnestly pursuing it, they are easily drawn to conspire therein; especially those who are not utterly perverted and corrupted by ill custom.

SERM. LXIV. And whereas good conversation hath a native beauty, affecting beholders with delight; whereas

Ἄριστῆς ἄσκησις τῶν μὲν κατὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν καὶ τὴν ἰσχύν, ἡδίστοι δὲ ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἐπισημασμένοι.
Bas. Ep. 42.

the fruits of virtue have a pleasing sweetness, grateful to all who taste them; men from that sight and that sense will presently be moved to commend the wisdom, and to bless the goodness of him who was pleased to institute so excellent a religion, to enact so beneficial laws, to prescribe so wholesome

Ὅταν γὰρ ἀπιστοί, &c. Chrys. ἀνθ. θ. (p. 524.)

duties to us: for *when*, saith the most divine Father, *an infidel shall see thee, a believer, to be κατεσταλμένον—staunch, sober, orderly, he will be astond, and will say, In truth, great is the God of Christians: What men hath he made! what persons out of what persons hath he made them! how from men hath he made them angels! If one abuse them, they do not rail; if one smite them, they do not resent; if one injure them, they pray for him that doeth the offence; they know not to remember ill turns, they skill not to be vain, they have not learnt to lie, they cannot abide to forswear, or rather to swear at all, but sooner would choose to have their tongue cut out, than to let an oath slip out of their mouth.*

So may we really glorify God; and otherwise than by open practice we cannot do it; for glory doth require a public stage; it implying, as Seneca saith, *the consent of many worthy persons* declaring their esteem; it being, as Cicero defineth it, *the agreeing praise of good men, with an incorrupted vote judging well of an excellent virtue*°.

° Gloria consensum multorum exigit—Consentire in hoc plures insignes et præstantes viri debent, ut claritas sit. Sen. Ep. 102.

Wherefore toward our being enabled to glorify SERM. LXIV.
 1, two things must concur; that we be good
 1, and that we be openly such.

That we be good men, because otherwise our
 commendation will have no worth or weight; for
wise is not comely in the mouth of sinners. It is Non est speciosa laus in ore peccatoris. Ecclus. xv.
 ornament to be commended by ill men, to whose
 words little regard is due, little trust can be given.
 That we be good openly, avowing God in practice⁹.

ducing to his honour; otherwise no glory can
 rue to him from our goodness: we may serve
 1, and please him in private; but we cannot by
 t service glorify him; at least at present, and
 e in this world. It is true, the closest piety will
 ld glory to God at the last, when *our Lord shall* Thess. 1.
*re to be glorified in his saints, and admired in*¹⁰
m that believe; but to design such a future glorifi-
 ion of God is not enough; it is our duty to glorify
 1 now, that we may be rewarded for it, and that
 may requite us with glory hereafter.

God himself telleth us in the Psalm, *Whoso of* Psal. 1. 23.
eth praise, he glorifieth me; and how can praise
 offered, or to what purpose will it be offered,
 erwise than apparently, either in word or deed, by
 1 or by real expression, to the ears or to the eyes
 men, so as to occasion in them the production of
 rthy conceptions and due affections toward God?
 such a manner the holy man did offer it, who
 1, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in* Psal. xxii. 22. cxl. 1. cvii. 32.
midst of the congregation I will praise thee;

Floria est consentiens laus bonorum incorrupta voce bene ju-
 ntium de eccellente virtute. Cic. 3. Tusc. init.

Floria est frequens de aliquo fama cum laude. Cic. de Inv. ii.

SERM. *I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the*
 LXIV. *assembly of the upright, and in the congregation:*

he did it sometimes with his mouth, which is a notable part of our conversation; but we may do it continually by our life; for, *He*, saith St. Austin, *who praiseth God with his tongue, cannot do that always; but he that praiseth God by his manners can always do it*^f.

This motive is by the great masters of our Christian practice frequently urged; for

Phil. i. 11. St. Paul wisheth the Philippians *to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God*; he prayeth for the Thessalonians, that *God would fulfil all*

2 Thess. i. 11— the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them; he particularly

2 Cor. ix. 11—13. doth incite the Corinthians to works of charity, that by that ministration men might be induced to glorify God, rendering him thankful praise for their beneficial obedience.

1 Pet. ii. 12. St. Peter likewise doth exhort all Christians to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they might by their good works, which they should behold, glorify God in the day of visitation, (that is, perhaps, when they carefully do view and reflect on them.)

Matt. v. 16. Our Lord himself thus chargeth his disciples, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*; they did observe his command, and

Chrys.

^f Qui Deum laudat lingua, non semper potest; qui moribus Deum laudat semper potest. Aug. in 1 Ep. Joh. Tr. 8.

the effect did follow, many being converted to God, SERM. LXIV.
 no less by the radiant integrity of their life, than by John xv. 8.
 the persuasive efficacy of their doctrine: and, *In this*, saith our Lord again, *is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit*: what fruit was that? what but of good works, visible to the eye and perceptible to the taste; otherwise how could men thence find cause to glorify God?

In fine, this is declared to be the peculiar design of our religion, or of the whole Christian institution; to this end we are made *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that we should shew forth the praises (or virtues) of him, who hath called us out of darkness to his marvellous light*; not only by our profession, but in our practice declaring his goodness.

On the other hand, by stifling our virtue and conscience, in an open compliance with sin, or neglect of our duty, we greatly shall dishonour God; for thereby in effect we deny him and desert him; we injure his majesty, and disclaim our allegiance to him; we intimate our mean opinion of him, and small affection to him; we betray our want of reverence to his excellency, of dread to his greatness, of love to his goodness, of hope in his promises and gracious overtures of mercy, of fear in regard to his severe justice and fierce menaces; so immediately we dishonour him, and we thereby also do countenance disrespect and disobedience to him; and our behaviour tendeth to produce or to confirm the like irreligious dispositions of mind and impious practices in others; so that with horrible disingenuity we cross the design of our creation, and violate our greatest obligations toward our Maker.

SERM.
LXIV.

Tit. i. 16.

Indeed what greater affront or more heinous indignity can we offer to God, than openly before the world, *by the most real expression of our works, to deny and disown him*: than to be notoriously ashamed or afraid to avow him for our Lord and Master; than to express no sense of our duty to him, no reverence of his authority, no gratitude for his benefits to us; than visibly to prefer any other consideration or worldly advantage before a regard to his will and pleasure?

In this, open sin doth outgo private wickedness, and putteth down even the worst hypocrisy, (beside its own,) that it not only offendeth God, but sorely woundeth his honour, and exposeth his glorious name to contempt; by which consideration such miscarriages are frequently aggravated in holy scripture; so in the prophets God complaineth of his people, for having by their scandalous crimes *profaned his holy name among the heathen*; so St.

Ezek.
xxxvi. 21—

Is. lii. 2.
Rom. ii. 23.

Paul expostulateth with the Jew, *Thou that boastest of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?* so Nathan told David, that God would punish him, *because by his bad deed he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.* But,

2 Sam. xii.
14.

4. We should be careful of our good behaviour in the sight of men, that we may thereby maintain the dignity and repute of our Christian profession, which by our naughty or negligent demeanour will be much disparaged and disgraced.

Most evident it is to reason, that a visible practice, conformable to the rules of our religion, cannot otherwise than exceedingly commend and grace it; for how can the goodness of a rule more surely

obtain its due commendation, than from its being applied to observable practice and experience? SERM.
LXIV.

Assuredly charity, meekness, humility, patience, sobriety, discretion, and all Christian virtues, as in themselves they are very amiable and venerable to all men, as they yield great benefit and much pleasure to those whom their consequences do touch; so they do ingratiate the law which prescribeth them, they bring esteem to the principles whence they are derived; *he*, as the apostle saith, *that in these things serveth Christ, is both acceptable to God, and approved of men*, as the follower of a most excellent rule. Rom. xiv.
18.

We may also consider, that a conspicuous practice, according to our religion, is a demonstrative proof that we do seriously and firmly embrace it, or that we are heartily and steadily persuaded of its truth; which is no small credit to any profession; arguing that it hath a good foundation in reason, apt to bottom and sustain a solid faith.

And as thereby we pregnantly do evidence that we ourselves do highly value the noble privileges, the excellent promises, the precious rewards exhibited in the gospel; so we thereby do breed a like esteem in others; upon whom the authority of men apparently virtuous and conscientious infallibly will have a forcible influence.

Such a practice will have a great stroke toward evincing the truth and reality, the perfect excellency, the notable strength and efficacy of our religion; plainly shewing, that it is not a mere name, an idle pretence, a weak fancy, a dry speculation, a chimerical dream; but a vigorous and masculine principle, able to produce most worthy fruits of sub-

SERM. *stantial goodness, profitable to men; conducive to*
LXIV. *our own welfare, and to the benefit of others.*

As gallant actions, becoming a noble rank, elevated above the vulgar level, do illustrate and dignify nobility itself; so doth a worthy conversation, beseeming our high station in the heavenly kingdom, our near alliances to God, those splendid titles and glorious privileges assigned to every faithful Christian in the evangelical charter, render our state admirable, and make it seem an excellent advantage to be a Christian.

Hence in the apostolical writings an observance of the evangelical laws is so much and often enforced by this consideration; for upon this account we are exhorted to a careful discharge of our duty, that

Tit. ii. 10. *we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in*
Phil. i. 27. *all things; we are urged to have our conversation*
Eph. iv. 1. *worthy of the gospel; to walk worthy of the voca-*
v. 3. *tion wherewith we are called, to behave ourselves*
Rom. xvi. *as worthily becometh saints, (that is, persons insti-*
2. *tuted in so holy a religion, and designed to so pecu-*
Eph. v. 8. *liar excellency in virtue;) to walk as children of*
the light, (that is, of truth and knowledge revealed
1 Thess. ii. *from heaven;) to walk worthy of God, who hath*
12. *called us unto his kingdom and glory; worthy of*
Col. i. 10. *the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in*
every good work; the which enforcements of duty
do imply a visible practice, producing the visible
effects of ornament and credit to our religion, re-
commending it to the minds and consciences of
men.

Contrariwise, the defect of good conversation before men in Christians is upon divers accounts disgraceful to our religion. For

It tempteth men to judge, that we ourselves do SERM.
not heartily believe its truth or value its worth; LXIV.
that we do not approve its doctrine for reasonable,
or take its advantages for considerable; or deem the
name and state of a Christian to be honourable; see-
ing we are not concerned to own them, or do not
care to engage our reputation in avowing and abet-
ting them in that way which doth best signify our
mind and meaning^s: for men certainly will judge
of our sense not so much by what we say as from
what we do; not by our verbal profession or pre-
tence, but from our practice, as the surest indication
of our heart.

Wherefore when they hear us to confess our faith,
and see us act like infidels, they will be forced to
esteem us either for subdalous hypocrites or for in-
consistent fools; who assume the name of Christians,
and pretend to great advantages thence, yet in effect
do not mind or regard them; highly commending
the rules of our religion, but not at all observing
them; greatly admiring the example of our Saviour,
but not caring to imitate it; describing heaven for
a most happy place, but not striving to get thither
in the sole way which our Lord prescribeth, of faith-
ful and diligent obedience to his precepts.

Seeing, I say, this repugnance between our pro-
fession and our practice will induce men to charge
us with hypocrisy or folly; and if the professors be
taken for counterfeits or fools, the profession itself
will hardly scape from being held imposture or folly.

Our religion at least will thence be exposed to
the censures of being no better than a fond device,

^s *Εἰ δὲ τις ἐλεγχθῆ πράξας τι ἄνομον, ὁ τοιοῦτος οὐ μόνον ἑαυτὸν ἔβλαψεν,
ἀλλὰ καὶ βλασφημίαν προσέτριψε τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ.* Const. Ap. ii. 8.

SERM. and a barren notion, unpracticable, ineffectual, and
 LXIV. insignificant to any good purpose.

The visible misbehaviour, I say, of Christians will assuredly derive obloquy and reproach on Christianity, if not as bad, yet as vain, impotent, impertinent, and useless; especially those who are disaffected to it will hence take advantage to insult upon it with contemptuous scorn; To what, will they say, do your fine rules serve? what effects do your glorious hopes produce? where are the fruits of that holy faith and heavenly doctrine which you so extol and magnify?

Whereas also bad conversation commonly doth not only deprive men of the benefits which our religion promiseth, but doth carry with it hurtful fruits; men that see or feel them will be apt to impute them to religion.

If a Christian be unjust, censorious, factious, anywise offensive or troublesome, although irreligion be the cause of such things, yet religion must bear the blame, and they presently exclaim,

Quantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

Whence St. Paul (who as a powerful instructor doth impress matters of duty by the most proper motives) doth often and upon all occasions urge this consideration; he chargeth us *to give no offence in any thing, that the ministry* (or evangelical dispensation) *be not blamed*, or exposed to the censure of any captious Momus; he biddeth us to forbear harsh judgment and all uncharitable dealing, that *our good be not evil spoken of*; he presseth the discharge of our duty in each calling and relation, that by neglect thereof the gospel be not defamed:

2 Cor. vi. 3.
 ἵνα μὴ μω-
 μηθῶ.

Rom. xiv.
 16.

1 Tim. vi. 1. *Let, saith he, as many servants as are under the*

yoke, count their own masters worthy of all ho- SERM.
nour, that the name of God and his doctrine be LXIV.
not blasphemed; and, Let women be discreet, Tit. ii. 5.
chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their
own husbands, that the word of God be not blas-
phemed; and, I will that younger women marry, 1 Tim. v.
bear children, guide the house, (so as) to give no ¹⁴
occasion to the adversary (that is, to persons dis-
affected to Christianity) to speak reproachfully (of
it): which discourse, by clear parity of reason, may
be applied to any other state or relation.

Now seriously what greater mischief can we do, what heavier guilt may we contract, than by working dishonour to God's adorable name, than by casting reproach on God's heavenly truth, than by drawing a scandal on that holy religion, which the Son of God came down from heaven to establish, for the glory of God and salvation of mankind? Surely next after directly blaspheming God, and defying religion with our own mouths, the next crime is to Rom. ii. 24.
 make others to do so, or in effect to do it by their ^{δι' ὑμῶν.} profane tongues.

There remain divers arguments of very great moment, which the time will not suffer me to urge; and therefore I must reserve them to another occasion.

S E R M O N L X V .

—◆—
PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF
ALL MEN.
—◆—

Rom. xii. 17.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

SERM.
LXV. **I** HAVE formerly discoursed upon this apostolical precept; and having declared the meaning of it, (briefly importing that we should have a special care of our external behaviour, coming under the view and observation of men, that it be perfectly innocent and inculpable,) I did propose divers motives inducing to the observance of it; but divers others of great importance the time would not allow me to urge; I shall therefore now proceed to offer them to your consideration.

I did then shew that a regard to the reason and nature of things, to the satisfaction of our conscience, to the honour of God, and to the credit of our religion, did require from us a good conversation before men; I now further add, that,

I. The real interest of piety and virtue do exact such a conversation, as the most effectual way of upholding, advancing, and propagating them among men.

Example is a very powerful thing either way, both for attraction to good and seduction to evil; such is

the nature of men, that they are more apt to be SERM.
guided by the practice of others than by their own LXV.
reason, and more easily can write after a copy than
by a rule; that they are prone to imitate whatever
they see done, be it good or bad, convenient or in-
convenient, profitable or hurtful, emulating the one,
and aping the other; that they love to be in the
fashion, and will go anywhither in company, presum-
ing of support, defence, and comfort therein; that
they will satisfy their minds and justify their doings
by any authority, deeming that laudable or allowable,
or at least tolerable and excusable, for which they
can allege precedents; judging, that if they are not
singular, they are innocent, or however not very cul-
pable; that hardly they will undertake any thing
without countenance, whereby their modesty is in
some measure secured, and partners engaged to bear
a share with them in the censure to which their de-
portment is liable. Hence a visible good conversation
will have a great efficacy toward the promotion and
propagation of goodness; the authority of that being
adjoined to the native worth and beauty, to the
rational plausibility, to the sensible benefit of virtue,
will cogently draw men to it; it will be a clear pat-
tern, whereby they shall be informed what they are
obliged and what they are able to perform; it will
be a notable spur, smartly exciting them to mind and
pursue their duty; it will be a vigorous incentive,
inflaming their courage, and provoking an emulation
to do well.

The visible succour and countenance of many, es-
pousing the cause of goodness by their practice, will
assuredly bring it into request and vogue, and thence
into current use and fashion; so just a cause cannot

SERM. fail to prosper, having any reasonable forces to maintain it; it will have great strength, great boldness and assurance, when a considerable party doth appear engaged on its side.

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Yea, sometimes even the example of a few will do it great service; the rarity giving a special lustre to their virtue, and rendering it more notable; according to that intimation of the apostle, when he thus doth exhort the Philippians to a cheerful and forward practice of goodness; *Do all things, saith he, without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*

Phil. ii. 14,
15.

A good conversation doth notify good men to one another, and draweth them together, and combineth them in a party, for the protection of goodness, heartening and aiding one another therein.

Such advantages goodness doth always need; for it ever hath in the world many adversaries, striving by violent force to beat it down, or by treacherous fraud to supplant it; who use their authority and interest to suppress it; who by their evil example do seduce from it; who labour by detraction to blast it, by scorn and reproach to discourage it, by divers temptations and baits to entice from it; who combining their forces with the wicked spirits, and with the corrupt inclinations of men, do raise a mighty party for wickedness.

Wherefore, to balance such oppositions, goodness doth need friends to maintain it; not only friends in heart, or secret well-wishers; but open friends, who frankly will avow it, and both in word and deed will stoutly abet it.

A demure, bashful, timorous friendship, will rather prejudice than help it; for nothing will more animate its foes to assail and persecute it, than observing its friends to slink and sneak: when good men hide their faces, as if they were ashamed of their goodness, then bad men will grow more impudent and insolent in their outrages against it.

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Wherefore, if we would have goodness hold up its head, we must openly take its part; if we would not be guilty of its ruin, we must stand up to uphold it; for whoever openly complieth with sin, or neglecteth his duty, may well be charged with its ruin; since if thou so desertest goodness, another after thy pattern may do the like, and a third may follow him; so the neglect of it may soon be propagated, until at length it may be quite abandoned, and left destitute of support: if it doth not thus happen, it will as to thee be accidental, and no thanks to thee for its better fortune.

The declension of piety is not perhaps more to be ascribed to any other cause than to this, than that men who approve goodness in their hearts are so backward to shew it in their practice; that good men do so affect retirement and wrapping up their virtue in obscurity; that most men think it enough if in the cause of religion against profaneness and dissoluteness they appear neuters, and do not impugn it: for if in a time of infection all sound men do shut up themselves, and all sick men walk abroad, how necessarily must the plague reign in the place?

II. Charity toward our neighbour demandeth from us a great care of our conversation before men.

The law of charity, which is the great law of Christianity, doth oblige us earnestly to further our

SERM. LXV. neighbour's good of all kinds, especially that which is incomparably his best good, the welfare of his soul; which how can we better do, than by attracting him to the performance of his duty to God, and by withdrawing him from the commission of sin? And how can we do that without an apparently good conversation, or without plainly declaring, as occasion sheweth, for virtue, both in word and deed? how can a shy reservedness conduce to that end? what will invisible thoughts or affections of heart confer thereto?

Rom. xiv. 19.
1 Cor. xiv. 26. It is a precept of charity, that we should *pursue things wherewith one may edify another*: and how can we perform that duty, without imparting our mind, and, as it were, transfusing it into others; so as by converting them from error and sin, by instilling good principles, by exciting good resolutions, to lay in them a foundation of goodfiness, or by cherishing and improving the same to rear a structure of virtue in them? how can we mutually edify without mutually advising virtue, exhorting to it, recommending and impressing it by our exemplary behaviour?

Παραπαλιῶ-
σι ἀλλήλους.
1 Thess. v. 11.
Heb. x. 24.
Εἰς παρα-
ξυσμὸν.
The apostles do enjoin, that we should *exhort one another, and edify one another*; that we should *consider one another, to provoke* (or to whet and instigate one another) *to love and to good works*; the which can nowise be performed, without expressly declaring for goodness and remarkable actings in its behalf: to commend and press it by word is a part of our duty; but not all of it, nor sufficient to this purpose; especially seeing we cannot urge that with good confidence, nor shall be held serious in pleading for it, which we do not ourselves embrace in prac-

ice ; for how can we expect that our reason should **SERM.**
 onvince others, when it doth not appear really to **LXV.**
 have persuaded ourselves, when our doings evidently
 lo argue the weakness of our discourse ?

Words hardly will ever move without practice,
 although practice sometimes will persuade without
 words ; according to that of St. Peter, *Ye wives, be* 1 Pet. iii. 1.
in subjection to your own husbands, that if any
they not the word, they may without the word be
won by the conversation of the wives, while they
behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear,
 (or due reverence to them.)

Again ; We are frequently commanded to shun 1 Cor. x. 32.
*the giving any offence, or the putting a stumbling- viii. 9.
block, or an occasion to fall, in the way of our bro- 2 Cor. vi. 3.
ther ; that is, to do any thing which anyway may Rom. xiv.
 confer to his incurring any sin : the which precepts 13.
 are violated not only by positive and active influ-
 ence, by proposing erroneous doctrine, evil advice,
 fraudulent enticements to sin, or discouragements
 from duty ; but also by withholding the means serv-
 ing to prevent his transgression ; such as a tacit in-
 dulgence or connivance, when good admonition may
 reclaim him ; the omission of good example when
 it is seasonable, and probably may prove efficacious :
 for these neglects have a moral causality, inducing
 or encouraging the commission of sin ; our silence,
 our forbearing to act, our declining fair opportuni-
 ties to guide him into the right way will be taken
 for signs of approbation and consent ; and conse-
 quently as arguments to justify or to excuse bad
 practice, in proportion to the authority and esteem
 we have ; which ever will be some in this case, when
 they favour the infirmity of men.*

SERM. Charity doth further oblige us, upon just cause,
 LXV. and in due season, to check and reprove our neigh-

¹ Thess. v. 14. Eph. v. 11. bour misdemeaning himself; for, *Warn the disorderly*, saith the apostle; and, *Have no fellowship*, saith he, *with the unfruitful works of darkness*,

Levit. xix. 17. *but rather reprove them*; and, *Thou shalt not*, saith the law, *hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*: where forbearance of reproof

is implied to shew not only a defect of charity, but hatred of our brother; and a good reason is intimated for it, because in so doing we suffer sin to lie upon him; not hindering his progress in it, not endeavouring his conversion from it: but reproof is an overt act; involving somewhat of openness and plain freedom, such as the Wise Man doth prefer before

Prov. xxii. 5. close good-will; for, *Open rebuke*, saith he, *is better than secret love*.

We are all thus far *the keepers of our brethren*, and it is a charge incumbent on us, by all good means to preserve them from the worst of mischiefs.

In fine, there is plainly nothing more inconsistent with true charity, than such a compliance with sin or neglect of duty in the sight of our neighbour, which is scandalous, or may prove contagious to him; for how can we love him, whose chief good, whose eternal welfare we do not tender? whom we do not fear to seduce into the way of extreme misery, or do not at least care to lead into the way of happiness? whom without any check we can suffer to forfeit the best goods, and to incur the saddest calamities?

Wherefore if the love of ourselves and a sober regard to our own welfare be not sufficient to induce

yet a charitable disposition and a concernedness SERM. LXV.
our neighbour (for our brethren, our relations,
or friends) should move us to a good, innocent,
tuous, fruitful, and exemplary conversation: if Rom. xiv.
do not care to save ourselves, yet let it pity us ¹⁵
damn and destroy others by our negligence.

III. But if charity will not move us, yet justice,
acting from us a care of our good conversation
fore men, should constrain us thereto.

Exemplary and edifying conversation is a debt
which we owe to the world, a good office imposed
us by the laws of common humanity.

When without our own hurt or inconvenience we
do considerable good to our neighbour, he hath
title thereto, (granted by the common Author of
our nature, the absolute Lord of all we are or have,)
and he may justly demand it from us; as we in like
case might claim it from him, and certainly would
others matters agreeable to our humour expect it:
therefore seeing good conversation not only doth
no harm or incommode us, but is most beneficial to
ourselves, and it exceedingly may benefit our neigh-
bour, it is most just that we should afford it to him;
it is no more than fair dealing to do it; to neglect
it is a real injury to him.

To set ill example before our neighbour, or (which
in part and in effect the same) to withhold good
example from him, (for not to give a good example
is a bad thing, and so a bad example; this,) I say,
is plainly a great iniquity, and a wrong to him.

Or,

Is it not an injury to offer a cup of poison to any
man, to invite him to drink it, to be his taster of it,

SERM. LXV. so drawing him to take it off without suspicion or fear of deadly mischief? is it not an injury to forbear warning him thereof, or not to deter him from it, when it standeth before him, and he is ready to put it to his mouth? would not such a man in all conscionable esteem pass for a murderer of his neighbour?

Is it not a great wrong to carry any man out of his way (out of a right, easy, fair, and safe road) into mazes, thickets, and sloughs, or into intricate, foul, dangerous by-ways? Is it not wrongful, when he doth wander or err, not to reduce him thence, not to set him in the right way?

Is it not very foul dealing to bring a man to a steep precipice, and thence to leap down before him? is it not so, not to stop him, when he is on the brink, and blindly moving forward to cast himself down headlong?

If these be injurious dealings, then palpably it is far more such to yield any enticements or encouragements, yea not to put obstructions, if we are able, to our neighbour's incurring sin, which to his soul is all those things; the most baneful venom, the most woful exorbitancy, the most pernicious gulf that can be.

Prov. viii.
36.

We *by sinning* do not only, as the Wise Man saith, *wrong our own souls*, but we do also wrong the souls of others; drawing them or driving them, by the efficacious impulse of our example, into mischief and misery; for, *When*, saith St. Paul, *ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ*: he there speaketh of bad example; the which he not only affirm-

1 Cor. viii.
12.

eth to be sinful in regard of Christ, but calleth it SERM.
 sinning against our brethren^a; and supposeth that LXV.
 we thereby do wound or smite their conscience; τύπονους
 which to do is surely no less wrong to them, than if αὐτοὺς ἐν
 we should assault, beat, and wound their bodies; συνίδησιν
 the wounds of conscience being of all most grievous; ἀρσενούσαι—
 and producing most insupportable affliction; accord-
 ing to that of the Wise Man, *The spirit of a man* Prov. xviii.
will bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who ¹⁴
can bear?

Indeed by thus hurting our neighbour, we do him
 a wrong, not only very great in itself, but such as
 may probably be irreparable, for which hardly we
 can ever be able to make him any restitution or
 compensation; for a better example scarce will
 reach all whom a bad example hath touched; the
 best example hardly will avail to undo that which a
 bad example hath done; if thereby we have en-
 gaged our neighbour in sin, we by no means can re-
 store his lost innocence, or prevent his saying, *Woe* Lam. v. 16.
be to me, for I have sinned: it will be very diffi-
 cult to recover him into that state (that sound con-
 dition of soul) from which we did move him; it
 will however cost him, if not a final ruin, yet a sore
 repentance; the pangs whereof no compensation 1 Cor. viii.
 which we can yield will requite: the wounds which ¹¹
 we thereby do inflict may rankle and prove incur-
 able; they assuredly will find no easy cure; they
 must however either in consequence or in the cor-
 rection be very painful; and they will leave an ugly
 scar behind them.

^a Ὁ γὰρ ἀμαρτάνων ἐπὶν εἶδη τινα ὅμοια αὐτῷ δρῶντα οἰκοδομηθήσεται
 εἰς τὸ τὰ αὐτὰ ποιεῖν. Const. Ap. ii. 17.

SERM. LXV. The injustice of this practice may also further appear upon divers special accounts.

All men esteem pity a debt which one man oweth to another, as liable to grief and misery, (the obligation whereto is written in the bowels of each man;) which pity will incline to succour the object of it in danger or distress; wherefore every man by the natural law is bound to endeavour the prevention or the rescue of another falling into mischief; according to that of St. Jude, *Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*; whence to draw men into sin by ill practice, or not to restrain them from it by good, is unjust, as a pitiless, hardhearted, cruel thing^b.

Jude 22,
23.

Again; All men hold flattery to be a practice very abusive, or more than simply wrongful; as with injury joining contempt and cozenage; taking advantage of a man's infirmity to work prejudice to him; it is indeed a mischievous, a pernicious, and withal a perfidious, an insidious, an ensnaring practice; for, *A flattering mouth*, saith the Wise Man, *worketh ruin*; and, *A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet*: but flattery is not only verbal; the worst flattery is not that whereby men soothe and gloze with their lips, encouraging others by fictitious commendations to persist in bad courses; there is a tacit flattery, when by our connivance at sin we seem to approve it; there is a real flattery, when by our compliance with sin we recommend it to our camerades; these do not look so grossly, yet do insinuate our mind, and commonly do inveigle to

Prov. xxxi.
30.
Favour is
deceitful.
Prov. xxvi.
28.
Prov. xxix.
5.

^b 1 Sam. iii. 13. (His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.)

sin more effectually; men being more apt to trust SERM.
our deeds than our words, being more pleased in our LXV.
vouching their actions by a participation in them,
and running a common hazard with them, than in
our straining to commend or to excuse them: whence
it is, that gross flattery hath its effect chiefly upon
simpler folks, but this subtile flattery doth often gull
and abuse persons of greatest capacity.

Again; A good conversation before men is a part
of that due respect which we owe to them. There
is a regard and a kind of reverence to be had toward
every man; which should engage us to behave our-
selves decently in his presence, signifying a consi-
deration and esteem of his person, of his opinion, of
his resentment, of his affection toward us: to do any
foul or unhandsome thing is a contempt of him, a
rudeness toward him, an affront put on him; where-
by in effect we do slight, disparage, and reproach
him; implying, that we do little value his judgment,
that we care not for his good-will; that we presume
he hath not the sense to discern, or hath not the
spirit to dislike, or must have the patience to com-
port with our unseemly and unsavoury carriage.
And if to do other unhandsome things before men
is such an indignity offered to them, then it is espe-
cially such to commit sin before them, which is the
most ugly, the most sordid, the most loathsome be-
haviour that can be; there is no deformity, no tur-
pitude in nature comparable to sin; nothing so of-
fensive, so distasteful, so abominable to a rational
sense; so that the *Wise Man's* saying is very true,
taken any way, *He that despiseth his neighbour* Prov. xiv.
sinneth: it is both a sin to contemn him, and sin- 21. xi. 12.
ning is an argument of contempt toward him; nor

SERM. can we better observe St. Peter's injunction, that we
 LXV. *honour all men*, than by forbearing to sin in their

¹ Pet. ii. 17. presence, out of respect to them. But further,

IV. Let us consider, that a good conversation before men is a public benefit, a great advantage to the world and common state of men.

It is not only a good office of charity to this or that man; but it layeth a general obligation on our country, on our age, on posterity itself; upon which a fruitful life, an exemplary virtue may have notable influence.

As notorious sin is a plague to the world, throwing infection and death about it; provoking the wrath of Heaven, and thence deriving vengeance on it; so notable virtue is a general blessing, producing most wholesome and comfortable effects to mankind.

For how can one more oblige the public, than by conferring help to uphold the reputation, and to propagate the entertainment of those things, which are the main props of the world, for the sake of which it standeth, and by the means of which it is sustained; than by preserving the virtue and power of conscience, which is the band of all society, the guardian of faith and honesty, the best ensurer of justice, order, and peace in the state, (that which *exalteth a nation, and establisheth a kingdom;*)
 Prov. xiv. 34. xx. 28. than by producing and promoting those things which certainly will procure the favour and blessing of God on any people?

How can a man better deserve of the world, than by concurring to stop the contagion of sin, and the overspreading deluge of iniquity, together with all the lamentable mischiefs consequent on them; than

by averting the fierce wrath and severe judgments SERM.
of God, which a general prevalence of wickedness LXV.
necessarily will bring down ?

Most men pretend to be concerned even for the honour of their country; and how can we better promote that than by checking the progress of *sin*, Prov. xiv.
which will not only be the bane, but *is*, as Solomon ³⁴
telleth us, *the reproach of any people?*

It may possibly be, it hath really been, that the conspicuous virtue of a few men (yea sometimes of one single person) hath leavened a country, hath seasoned an age, hath imbued posterity with an admiration of goodness, and with an affection to it. (*One man*, saith St. Chrysostom, *inflamed with zeal may suffice to reform an entire people* ^{c.}) So among the pagans one person did set up the study of morality, and worthily was stiled *the parent of* Socrates
(that most useful) *philosophy*; whereby he did ex- philoso-
ceedingly benefit mankind, and did confer much phis pa-
toward preparing men for the reception of our hea- rens. Cic.
venly philosophy.

Such our Lord designed his apostles to be; for, *Ye*, saith he, *are the lights of the world, ye are* Matt. v. 13,
the salt of the earth; and such in effect they did ¹⁴
prove, *God by them*, as St. Paul saith, *manifesting* 2 Cor. ii.
the savour of his knowledge in every place; they ¹⁴
not only by their heavenly doctrine, but chiefly by the lustre and influence of their holy example, converting the world from impious errors and naughty practices unto true religion and virtuous conversation; they did lead men to goodness not only by the ears, but by the eyes, seeing their ex-

^c Ἀρκεῖ εἰς ἄνθρωπος ζήλω πεπυρωμένος ὀλόκληρον διορθώσασθαι δῆμον.
Chrys. ἄνθρ. α'.

SERM. cellent life, and *walking as they had them for*
 LXV. *ensamples.*

Phil. iii. 17. It consequently may be, yea hath been, that the
 1 Cor. xi. 1. singular integrity of one, or of a few persons, dis-
 iv. 16. playing itself, hath appeased divine wrath, and hath
 2 Theas. iii. 7, 9. staved off imminent ruin from a people. So one
 2 Pet. ii. 5. Noah, publicly maintaining and *preaching righte-*
 Gen. xviii. 32. *ousness*, did preserve the whole race of men from
 extirpation; so ten persons avowing righteousness
 would have kept Sodom from that rueful destruc-
 tion; so one good man (notably owning God, and
 interposing for the concerns of piety) might have
 prevented that calamitous vengeance which fell upon
 Israel; as Jeremy told before, and Ezekiel affirmed
 Jer. v. 1. after it; *Run ye to and fro*, saith God in Jeremy,
through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and
know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye
can find a man, if there be any that executeth
judgment, that seeketh truth, and I will pardon
 Ezek. xxii. 30. *it: and, I sought for a man*, saith God in Ezekiel,
among them, that should make up the hedge, and
stand in the gap before me for the land, that I
should not destroy it, but I found none; therefore
have I poured mine indignation upon them: there
 Isa. i. 9. *was then a remnant* of those who closely did serve
 1 Kings 19. 14, 18. God; and perhaps *seven thousand* unknown per-
 sons, who had not in their hearts deserted religion;
 but this did not avert God's wrath, or preserve the
 nation from captivity; as a few openly profess-
 ing and resolutely practising goodness might have
 done.

Now who would not be glad of being so public
 a friend, so general a benefactor, in performing that
 which doth otherwise so much become him, and so

greatly behove him; yielding him the best ornaments and highest advantages even upon his private account? who would not be ambitious both to oblige his country, and to save his own soul together, by a worthy conversation?

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Assuredly nothing can be devised more conducive to the effecting a reformation and amendment of the world, (and consequently to the prosperity and felicity of mankind here,) than a conspiracy of good men in a frank and brisk avowing of goodness in the face of the world.

V. A care of our conversation in the sight of men is needful for the preservation of our good name and fair repute among them.

A good name in holy scripture is represented as a special gift and blessing of God, bestowed in recompense of piety and virtue, and preferred before other most considerable gifts and blessings concerning our external state; for, *By humility*, saith the Wise Man, *and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour*; both are the rewards of piety; but comparing them, *A good name*, saith he, *is rather to be chosen than great riches*: it cannot therefore be a contemptible thing, nor ought it to be neglected by us; for none of God's gifts, no reward which he proposeth, ought to be slighted.

¹ Chron. xxix. 12.

Eccl. vi. 2.

(Eccl. vii. 1.)

Prov. xxii.

(Ps. cxii. 9.)

Prov. xxii. 1.

Reason and experience also do concur in shewing that a good repute is a valuable thing, not only as a fair ornament of our persons, and a commodious instrument of action toward our private welfare, as a guard of our safety and quiet, as serving to procure divers conveniences of life; but as very advantageous, very useful upon moral and spiritual accounts; qualifying us with greater ease and efficacy to serve God,

^{Δι' εὐνομίας}
αὐτοῦ. Αὐτοῦ
τον. iv. §. 19.

SERM. and to do good ; for indeed it is manifest, that with-
LXV. out it we shall be uncapable of doing God or man
 any considerable service.

Wherefore in duty and wisdom we should be careful of preserving this jewel ; the which we cannot otherwise do, than by observing this apostolical rule, of *providing things honest in the sight of all men*; for a good conversation is the only guard and convoy of a good name : how can men conceive good opinion of us otherwise than from a view of worthy qualities and good deeds? They may charitably hope, but they cannot confidently judge well of us otherwise than upon good evidence : *Ye shall know them by their fruits*, (that is, by apparent works, falling under human cognizance,) is the rule whereby our Saviour teacheth us to distinguish of men, and to build a right opinion concerning them. Honour is the shadow, the inseparable attendant of conspicuous virtue.

Matt. vii.
16. xii. 33.

A good conversation will indeed command esteem, and irresistibly extort respect from all men.

Wise and good men heartily will approve it, and gladly will yield it due commendation ; they cannot but honour it whenever they see it, as best suiting with their own judgment and with their affection.

Rom. xiv.
18.

Yea it will procure respect even from the worst men ; for it is a mistake to think that bad men really do or can despise true goodness : in truth, however they may pretend or make a show to slight and scorn it, however in words they may flout and revile it, yet in their hearts they cannot but admire and reverence it ; although their will may be so perverted as to set them against it, yet their reason cannot be so

destroyed (or natural light so quenched in them) as **SERM.**
to disapprove it; they do but vilely dissemble, and **LXV.**
believe their conscience, when they make as if they
did condemn or contemn it: *As, saith St. Chrysostom,*
they who openly do flatter ill livers, do in their mind
reprove them; so they who envy the workers of
good, in their conscience will admire and approve
them^d: at least they will do thus in their sober mind;
when with any serious application they do reflect on
things; when the eye of their soul is anywise cleared
from the mists of lust and passion: it is not to be
heeded what they say in a fluster or ranting mood,
when they are near out of their wits, and have their
judgment stifled by sensual imaginations; but what
they think when their mind is somewhat composed,
and natural light doth shine freely in it.

Indeed such wretches really do most despise those
who consort and comply with them in sinful follies;
as they cannot in their hearts honour themselves, so
they cannot esteem those whom they find like unto
them; especially they despise those whom they ob-
serve to be so base and silly, as against their own
judgment and conscience to fear their displeasure or
to regard their censure; looking upon them as vas-
sals to their humour, and renegadoes from their own
conscience.

Moreover a good conversation certainly will engage
Almighty God to protect our reputation, and to con-
fer honour upon us. For he as Governor of the
world, the Patron of goodness, the Dispenser of
proper rewards to all, is in a manner bound to en-

^d Οἱ ἐν βασκανίᾳ τοῦτο ποιοῦντες, κατὰ τὸ συνειδὸς ἡμᾶς θαυμάσονται,
καὶ ἀποδέχονται ὥσπερ οἱ φανερῶς κολακεύοντες τοὺς ἐν πονηρίᾳ ζῶντας,
κατὰ νοῦν διαβάλλουσι. Chrys. in Matt. v. 16.

SERM. **courage those openly who visibly do own him and**
 LXV. **take his part, who promote his glory and interest,**

who pay him due service and obedience, who in regard to his authority do faithfully pursue that which is right and good ; he surely will see fit to repay such in the same kind, by openly acknowledging, countenancing, and honouring them : accordingly he hath tied himself to do so by his express word and promise ; for, *Them*, saith he, *that honour me I will honour ; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed* : he said it in reference to old Eli, who had neglected the duty of *restraining his sons* from sin ; which is a case very much of kin to all neglect of

1 Sam. ii.
30.

exemplary piety. And, *Whosoever*, saith our Lord, *shall confess me before men him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God ; but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God* : the which (one most comfortable, the other most terrible) sentences are to be understood, He that confesseth our Lord not merely by verbal profession, (for divers such who *say, Lord, Lord*, he will not so much as *know* at the final judgment,) but in real practice ; he that denieth him, not only by renouncing him with the tongue, but by disobeying him in scandalous conversation, by working iniquity, by the apostasy of bad manners.

Matt. vii.
22, 23.

VI. Lastly ; The public discharge of a good conscience will yield manifold advantages and great benefits to ourselves ; not only as good (and thence needful to our salvation and our comfort) but as public ; some of which I shall touch.

Such a practice will much secure and strengthen us in goodness ; for he that hath the heart with resolution and constancy to do well, notwithstanding

by worldly discouragement, although he thereby SERM.
with cross the humour of the world, and incurreth LXV.
the displeasure, envy, hatred, censure, and obloquy
of men, he thus having exalted his virtue above the
favour and fear of the world, hath set it in a safe
place, hath rendered it impregnable.

The consideration of having attained so happy
and so worthy a victory over the most dangerous
temptations (the victory of faith over the world) will 1 John v. 4.
be very comfortable; and the sufferings which (from
the disfavour, enmity, and opposition of men) do
attend such a practice, being a kind of martyrdom,
will yield all the joys and comforts (together with
the hopes and rewards) of an heroical patience.

It will afford great satisfaction of mind to reflect
on the consequences of such a practice; and to con-
sider that our resolution hath engaged or confirmed
others in goodness, hath preserved them from sin,
withdrawn them from bad courses, and saved
them from perdition; that we have been instru-
mental to the salvation and happiness of any soul;
that, beside our own sins, (which are a burden too
heavy for any man well to bear,) we have not the
names of others to account for, and shall not be loaded
with the guilt of those whom our neglect of duty,
our compliance with sin, our stupid coldness and in-
ference in regard to spiritual affairs, our dissimu-
lation or connivance at the scandalous violation of
God's honour and transgression of his laws, might
have encouraged in sin; that we are not liable to
be at reproof in the prophet, *Ye have strengthened* Ezek. xiii.
the hands of the wicked, that he should not return ^{22.}
from his wicked way.

We shall highly oblige those whom by our good

SERM. endeavour or example we shall convert to righteousness, or reclaim from iniquity, or shall anywise stop

LXV.

in their career to ruin; who when they shall recover from their error, and soberly reflect on their case,

² Tim. ii. 26.

(when they shall ἀναήφειν, become again sober, getting out as it were of their drunken fit,) will heartily thank us, will bless us, will pray for us, as having laid on them a very great obligation, and done them the greatest kindness that could be; so that they will be ready to say to us, as David did to Abigail,

¹ Sam. xxv. 32.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from shedding of blood: this will be the consequence of plain dealing in such cases, and that will be fulfilled which the Wise Man saith,

Prov. xxviii. 23. xxvii. 6. xix. 25.

He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

We thereby shall escape the sore complaints and fell curses of those whom our naughty or careless demeanour hath involved in sinful practice; for when their conscience is awakened into a sense of their guilt, when they feel the stings of remorse, when they perceive the extreme damage and woe which they have incurred, then will they discharge their resentments of heart against those who have anywise been accessory to their fall into such a condition; then in their bitterness of soul, in the agony of their sorrow and perplexity, they will be apt to exclaim, Cursed be the day that I knew such an one, or that I did converse with him, who did betray me into this plight, who did inveigle me into temptation, who did not pluck me back from that

ful practice by which I now so deeply suffer; SERM.
rsed be his base cowardice, his fond modesty, LXV.
s affected wisdom, his treacherous negligence, his
conscionable indifference, his impious want of zeal
r God's honour and charity for my soul, which
d keep him from checking me in my bad courses
d reclaiming me to my duty by wholesome re-
oof, by seasonable advice, by exemplary practice
fore me: it will surely be a great comfort to
, that we have not given occasion for such com-
aints; but in proportion may say with St. Paul,
am pure from the blood of all men; for I have Acts xx.
st shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of ^{26.} Ezek. vii.
od. 17. xxxiii. 7.

It is also no small advantage to us, that by a good
nversation we shall procure the particular friend-
ip and affection of good men; for it is that which
scovereth good men to one another, which kindleth
eir affection toward each other, which draweth
em together, and breedeth a familiarity between
em, and knitteth their hearts together in a holy
ve; from whence they come to enjoy the faithful
lvice, the kind assistance, the seasonable consolations,
and the hearty prayers each of other; the
hich great benefits are lost by concealment of our-
lves, and reservedness in doing good; for how can
y man know him to deserve love, whose goodness
not discernible?

Such considerations may induce all persons, of
ery rank and condition, to observe this apostolical
cept, so far as their capacities do reach; I shall
ly adjoin, that it especially doth concern persons
quality, in proportion to their eminency in dig-
ty, power, authority, reputation, or any peculiar

SERM. advantage, whereby the beneficial efficacy of good
LXV. conversation is increased.

Matt. v. 14. Such persons are like *a city seated on a mountain, which cannot be hid*; the height of their station and lustre of their quality do expose them to the observation of all; and their authority doth recommend their practice to the imitation of observers.

Their example cannot fail of having a mighty influence; its light doth guide men, its weight doth sway them; it doth seem to warrant and authorize practice; inferiors would be afraid or ashamed to discost from it.

They have not the temptations which other men have to comply with sin out of fear, out of complaisance, out of design; they being to lead and give law, not to follow or receive it; they being the first movers in conversation; the fashion being regulated by them, or indeed being merely a conformity to their deportment.

Const. A-
post. ii. 17. They should by their innocence qualify themselves to reprove others with authority and courage.

They in gratitude to God, who hath bestowed on them such advantages, are obliged to employ them for his service.

Rom. xiii.
3—6.
1 Pet. ii. 14. They particularly were designed and endowed with those advantages, that by them they might countenance, might encourage, might reward, might by all means promote goodness in the world.

They accordingly are responsible for the influence their conversation hath; so that in the final account most actions of men will lie at their door, so that they shall respectively be either highly rewarded

for the virtues and good works, or severely punished **SERM.**
for the vices and sins of mankind: the which most **LXV.**
weighty consideration I leave by God's grace to be
seriously applied by them who are concerned there-
in.

SERMON LXVI.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF
ALL MEN.

2 COR. viii. 21.

*Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the
Lord, but also in the sight of men.*

SERM. LXVI. **I**F we observe the world, we may easily therein discern many persons, who being inwardly well disposed (standing right both in judgment and affection to goodness) are yet loath to appear very good, and hardly will own Christian virtue in the constant discharge of public duties, or in strict abstinence from sinful practices; but commonly (against the dictate of their reason, and sense of their heart) neglect the one, and comply with the other: an odd sort of hypocrites or dissemblers; who studiously conceal their better part, and counterfeit themselves worse than they are; who adore God in their hearts, and address devotions to him in their closets, but scarce will avow him in their visible profession and practice; who have a conscience, but are shy of disclosing it, or letting it take air, and walk in open light, confining it as a criminal to close restraint or obscure retirement; who gladly would be religious and staunch, if there might be no notice taken of it, but take care of being remarkable (or as it were scan-

dalous) for it; who think fit to compromise and compound the business between God and the world, maintaining a neutrality and correspondence with both, so as privately to court the one and publicly to close with the other. SERM.
LXVI.

Such practice is flatly repugnant to that rule, Rom. xii. which elsewhere in precept, and here by his own 17. Εὐσέβειον ἀποδείκναι. example, the holy apostle doth recommend to us; directing us not only *before God*, (that is, in our heart, and in our secret retirements, which God alone doth behold,) but also *before men*, that is, in our external and visible conversation, carefully to perform things good and laudable, eschewing whatever is bad or culpable.

Our obligation to which rule hath already been confirmed by divers other precepts in holy scripture, concurring in the injunction of it; and its observance urged by various positive considerations of great weight and force, (declaring how necessary it is for promoting God's honour and glory, how requisite it is for maintaining the dignity of our profession, and advancing the interests of goodness, how charity and justice toward our neighbour do exact it from us, how conducive it is to the public benefit of mankind, and how advantageous in many respects to our own particular welfare;) and not insisting further upon those considerations, I shall now only enforce it by scanning the common principles, grounds, motives, pretences or excuses of the contrary practice, which I before touched, of openly deserting virtue, or declining the performance of duty before men; and by shewing how very foolish and vain, how very naughty and base, how very mischievous, dangerous, and pernicious they are.

SERM. They chiefly are those which I shall immediately
 LXVI. touch and reflect upon.

1. Men commonly in their visible conversation do neglect their duty, or comply with sin out of modesty; because they are ashamed of doing that which may expose them to some disgrace or censure; because virtuous practice may raise distaste in the company, and provoke the scorn of those with whom they converse; because such a point of duty is out of request, and slighted in the world; they are *afraid of men's faces*; their tender forehead cannot sustain derision, or endure to be flouted for being out of the mode, and wearing an uncouth garb of conscience.

Jer. i. 8.

But this plainly is a perverse and unmanly modesty; a fond, a vile, a shameful shame: fie on it! should any man be ashamed of that, which is his chief beauty, his best ornament, his sole dignity and glory? should a man be ashamed of being evidently wise in his conduct, of following his reason, of consulting his true interest, of pursuing his own certain welfare and felicity? is it fit that any man should be ashamed of paying due acknowledgment, of yielding due reverence, of rendering due gratitude, of performing due service to his Creator, sovereign Lord, and great Benefactor; to whom he oweth all, upon whose will he entirely dependeth, at whose absolute disposal he is? Surely these are no shameful things, but such rather wherein we ought to have the greatest confidence, which we ought to perform with the greatest assurance.

If we are bashful, let us be so in regard to things which are truly shameful; let us be ashamed of sin, that is, of our most real deformity, our turpitude,

our disgrace, our wretchedness; the which indeed is **SERM.**
 the only dishonourable and despicable thing; the **LXVI.**
 which did first produce shame, and did introduce it
 into the world, (for while innocence did abide, there **Gen. iii. 2.**
 was no shame,) and the which will ever carry shame **ii. 25.**
 along as its inseparable adherent: it would indeed
 become us to blush at our horrible unworthiness and
 detestable ingratitude toward our bountiful Lord,
 and most gracious Redeemer; it were proper for
 us to be confounded at our extreme folly and foul
 treachery toward ourselves, in betraying our souls
 to guilt, to regret, to wrath and punishment: who
 should be ashamed, who not, the holy Psalmist hath
 well taught us, *Let none that wait on thee be* **Psal. xxv. 3.**
ashamed; let them be ashamed which transgress **Psal. cxix.**
without cause: and, Let the proud be ashamed— **78—80.**
but let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I
be not ashamed.

It is true modesty to be ashamed of doing un-
 worthy and unhandsome things; but to be ashamed
 of doing what reason and duty require, is pitiful
 weakness of mind.

We do not owe so much regard to vicious and
 vain persons, as to be dashed out of countenance by
 them; we should rather by our masculine resolution
 and upright confidence put them to confusion. **Tit. ii. 8.**

If shame be an evil which we would avoid, the
 only remedy thereof we may learn from those words
 of the Psalmist, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when* **Psal. cxix.**
I have respect to thy testimonies: but it is a fond **6.**
 course to shun disgrace by doing that which alone
 deserveth it.

Is it not also a wild thing to seem modest toward
 men, while we are really so bold with God, as. pre-

SERM. sumptuously to offend him, to affront him, to provoke him (as those in the prophet did) to his face?
 LXVI.

Is. lxx. 3.
 Jer. vi. 17.
 viii. 12.

for so indeed every sinner doth; and as it is the greatest inadvertency not to consider God alway present with us, so it is the height of impudence to sin in his presence, or to prefer a regard to men before the reverence due to his eye^a.

Wisd. iv.
 20.

Is it not also great folly for declining a little present transient disgrace, to do that whereof afterward we shall be grievously and perpetually ashamed; which we shall never remember or reflect upon without confusion, (according to that of the apostle,

(Jer. xxii.
 22.)

Rom. vi.
 21.

Dan. xii. 2.

What fruit had ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed?) the consequence whereof is our standing obnoxious to *shame and everlasting contempt.*

Luke ix.
 26. xii. 9.
 2 Tim. ii.
 12.

If we be thus ashamed of God, and of our duty to him, may he not justly in recompense be ashamed of us, and disdain to own us in favour and mercy? He will surely, he hath often declared so; *Whosoever, saith our Lord, shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

2. Another principle, near of kin to the former, disposing men to commit sin, or wave duty in their open conversation, is fear of losing the good-will, or getting the ill-will of men.

It must often happen, that whoever will be virtuous, and stick to his duty, will forfeit the favour of men, will incur their displeasure, will provoke their indignation; by crossing their humour and

^a Quid quæso rationis habet verecundari ad diem hominis, et vultum Dei non vereri? *Bern. Ep.* 108.

conceit, by implicitly slighting their opinion and SERM. condemning their practice: this is the portion and LXVI. fate of strict and stiff piety; the friendship of God and the world are not well consistent; and St. Paul's rule may be converted, *If I should please men, I should not be the servant of Christ:* hence men ^{Jam. iv. 4.} ^{1 John ii.} ^{15.} prizing the favour of men with the advantages of ^{Gal. i. 10.} it, and dreading their anger, hatred, disdain, with the mischiefs consequent on them, are scared from their duty.

But in truth this is a silly, a base, a sorry fear, arguing wretched meanness of spirit, and pitiful cowardice. For

Dost thou, fond wretch, fear to lose the favour of man, whose favour doth avail nothing to thy main interests, and cannot anywise considerably benefit thee, (for in no respect dost thou depend on his will and providence,) but dost not fear being deprived of God's favour, upon which all thy good hangeth, wherein thy felicity consisteth, without which thou art incapable of any prosperity, of any security, of any joy or comfort?

Dost thou fear the displeasure of man, of poor impotent man, a sorry frail *worm*, whose *breath is* ^{Job xxv. 6.} ^{Is. ii. 22.} *in his nostrils*, (ready to fly away in every moment,) whose anger can do thee no real harm, whose power can hardly touch thee, can nowise reach thy soul or ^{Matt. x. 28.} its concerns; whilst thou darest not to offend the eternal almighty God, under whose feet thou liest, ready to be crushed into nothing, or stamped down into hell at his pleasure?

Darest thou not, O heartless dastard, to do that which is in thy power easily to do, which thou art infinitely concerned to do, which upon so many ac-

SERM. counts thou art obliged to do, out of fear to cross
LXVI. thine equal, yea far thine inferior in this case; for
 he that standeth to his duty, as he hath the better
 cause, so he hath the greater force, and assuredly
 will defeat all his opposers?

Art thou, O pusillanimous slave, in regard to any
 creature, thy fellow-subject and servant, afraid of
 expressing thy loyalty to thy sovereign Lord, thy
 love to infinite goodness, thy gratitude to thy best
 friend and kindest benefactor, thy reverence to-
 ward the divine majesty, thine awe of uncontrol-
 able power? is this a reasonable, an excusable, a
 tolerable fear?

Surely if ever to be driven out of heart is re-
 proachful, if ever to be cowed doth argue infirmity
 and abjectness of spirit, it is in this case; when we
 have all the reason and obligation in the world to
 be most courageous and resolute, to fear no colours,
 to make our party good against all opposition; when
 we have the greatest necessity to engage us, and
 the greatest advantage to encourage us to hold out
 stoutly; the greatest necessity, seeing all that we
 have, our life, our salvation, our eternal weal doth
 lie at stake; *for it is not a vain thing for you, be-
 cause it is your life:* the greatest advantage, for
 that if we will, we are invincible, and assured of an
 easy victory, seeing we take part with God, and
 have omnipotency on our side; so that we can say

with David, *The Lord is my helper, I will not
 fear what man can do unto me: The Lord is my
 light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the
 Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I
 be afraid?*

There is not indeed, to those who are under

God's special protection, and confide in him, any SERM.
 thing in nature really formidable or terrible: it is LXVI.
 his peculiar attribute to be the mighty and terrible Num. xiv.
 One; he recommendeth himself to us as *our fear*, 9. Deut.
 that is, the special object of it; we therefore do sa- xxxi. 8.
 crilegiously wrong him, by fearing any other thing 2 Chron.
 in such cases of competition, and when we are xx. 17.
 concerned to fear him; whence then we are pro- Jer. v. 22.
 hibited to fear the greatest powers in the world; x. 7.
Fear not them which kill the body, (if God permit Rev. xv. 4.
 them,) *but are not able to kill the soul: but rather* Deut. vii.
fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul 21. x. 17.
in hell. xxviii. 58.
 Ps. lxxvi. 7.
 Is. viii. 12.
 Is. xcix. 3.
 Matt. x.
 26, 28.

Who, saith St. Peter, *is he that will* (or that can) *τῆς ἰκανότητος*
harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 1 Pet. iii.
—wherefore be not afraid of their terror, neither 13, 14.
be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your
hearts, (by a pure confidence in him.)

In such cases, we should be ready to accost the
 greatest potentates in terms like those of the three
 brave youths in Daniel; *O Nebuchadnezzar, we* Dan. iii.
are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If 16—18.
it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver
us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will
deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But (how-
 ever) *if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that*
we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden
image which thou hast set up. And if, in imitation
 of so worthy an example, we should defy the wrath
 of the greatest kings, demanding any sinful compli-
 ance from us, how poor a thing is it to fear the
 displeasure of sorry companions enticing us to the
 like! how much more should we defy all the crew
 of hectorly ruffians and huffing braggadocios!

SERM. LXVI. While wicked profane men are so bold and stout in impugning goodness, we should be courageous in defence of it. *The righteous is as bold as a lion.*

Prov. xxviii.
1.

The fear of God (the which is most reasonable and prudent, and consistent with the bravest courage) should exclude the fear of men; the which is no less vain than base; the which indeed doth involve the wildest boldness, and most rash foolhardiness in the world, pushing us into the most desperate adventures that can be; while by sinning we incense the most dreadful anger, we invade the most formidable power, we incur the most horrible dangers, we run headlong into the jaws of death and hell: such a mixture there is of base cowardice and mad audacity in practices issuing from that principle.

3. Men commonly do neglect the open practice of virtue out of care to decline envy; for ill men seeing others endowed with worthy qualities, which they want; performing good deeds, from which their infirmity or pravity doth hold them averse; entitled to commendations, rewards, and advantages to which they cannot aspire, and whereby they seem to eclipse their credit, or impair their interest, or expose their unworthiness; cannot look on such persons without an *evil eye*, or without conceiving in their heart malevolent grudges at them, which they will be apt to vent in spiteful practices, endeavouring to supplant or blast their virtue; men are apt to envy the favourites of God, as they are of princes. Nor indeed doth any thing more powerfully incite men to hurt their neighbour than such malignity, being edged by that anguish which their sore eye doth feel; to shun which

Invidiam
placare pa-
ras virtute
relicta?
Contem-
nere miser.
Hor. Serm.
ii. 3.

envy, and its mischievous effects, men commonly
re tempted to withdraw its cause, their own vir-
ue, that its bright lustre may not wound the sight
f such neighbours.

SERM.
LXVI.

But thus to appease envy by deserting virtue is
very fond and absurd. For

Shall I cast away my best goods, because another
would not have me to enjoy them? shall I be terri-
bly sick, to cure another's distempered fancy? shall
I render myself miserable, because another doth not
like to see me happy? because he doth want cha-
rity, must I forego innocence? because he doth not
love me, shall I hate myself? to please him merely,
without bettering him, to ease him of a wholesome
mart, shall I displease God, and abuse myself?

Would he not be a silly man, who being envied
because he seemeth a favourite of his prince, would,
to gratify such enviers, offend his prince? No sure-
ly, this is too fond a regard unto any man's base
disposition, this is too great a gratification of an
enemy's pleasure, this is too slavish a depression of
a man's self: rather let him fret, let him torment
himself, let him inflict a just punishment on his own
incharitable and unworthy humour; whereby per-
haps he may be reduced to discern his folly and
correct his fault.

Would any man upon such terms part with his
estate, mar his business, slur his reputation, or pur-
posely play the fool? would any man become poor,
infamous, or contemptible, because to be rich, to be
prosperous, to be honourable, to be wise, are invi-
dious things? Much less should a man upon that
account neglect his duty, thereby betraying his soul,
discarding the love and favour of God, destroying

SERM. the satisfaction of his conscience, and forfeiting his
LXVI. hopes of felicity: damages and mischiefs comparable to which all the envy and spite in the world can nowise bring upon him.

If we would avoid envy, we should not do it by incurring a worse evil, and rendering ourselves contemptible for unworthiness; we should rather damp it by modesty, humility, an inoffensive tenour of life.

We should surmount it, and quash it by constant blameless conversation: the which will kill the envious or the envy.

An unquestionable virtue will stop the mouth of detraction, and drive envy into corners, not daring to shew itself against it.

4. A common principle, from whence neglect of duty and commission of sin in visible conversation doth spring, is a fear of infamy and reproach, where-to the strict practice of virtue is liable; men not enduring to bear the odious censures, the foul imputations, the ugly characters, the scurvy epithets, and opprobrious names, wherewith the bold and spiteful enemies of goodness are wont to asperse and brand its faithful adherents.

To be deemed weak, credulous, superstitious, formal, timorous, nice, squeamish, scrupulous, strait-laced, conceited, affected, cross, surly, morose, forward, stubborn, pertinacious, proud.

To be termed a foppish simpleton, doting on speculations, and enslaved to rules; a fantastical humourist, a precise bigot, a rigid stoic, a demure sneaksby, a clownish singularist, or nonconformist to ordinary usage, a stiff opiniatre; a man of a pitiful narrow spirit, pent up within a small com-

pass, confined by principles, fettered by laws, living **SERM.**
in bondage to his conscience. **LXVI.**

These and the like harsh censures, foul reproaches, and abusive scoffs, even all which invention quickened by envy, choler, rancorous spite, and aided by the malicious fiend, can suggest, wherewith the profane crew of men usually do conspire to daub and persecute those who refuse to comply with their unconscionable extravagances and impieties, men can hardly brook; and thence to shun them yield up all, cross their reason, prostitute their conscience, violate all their obligations; choosing rather to be justly reproachable for bad actions, than unjustly reproached for good.

But with such a person, who is thus diverted from his duty, let me expostulate.

Dost thou well to regard what unbridled tongues out of a wanton mind and corrupt heart do sputter and foam? Shall thy practice depend on their loose wit or licentious talk, so that thou must do nothing which they shall not be in humour to commend^b?

Wilt thou renounce all wisdom, abandon thy best interest, forfeit thy happiness, to decline a squib or a flirt^c?

Would not he be a stark fool, who would be railed or jeered out of his way in travel, out of his business in traffick, out of his estate or real interest upon any occasion? and is he not evidently far more such, who will be flouted out of his duty, out of his salvation, out of any spiritual advantage? Was not

^b Nihil est turpius, quam sapientis vitam ab insipientium sermone pendere. *Cic. de Fin. ii.*

^c Quid de te alii loquantur, ipsi videant. *Scipio apud Cic. in Somn.*

SERM. the practice of David more advisable, who said, *The LXVI. proud have had me in derision; yet have I not*

Psal. cxix. declined from thy law?
51.

David, a great king, a man of singular courage and gallantry, a glorious hero; yet even him did bold and base people deride. Whom will not profane impudence assail? whom will not they attempt to deter from goodness?

Art thou so blind as not to discern whence it cometh that they disparage virtue? that is, from their extreme vanity and rashness, which move them to speak any thing without consideration or discretion; from their great naughtiness and weakness, their being bewitched with pleasure and besotted with vice, which engageth them to take part so furiously with them; from their malignity and spite against that which crosseth their fond humours and exorbitant lusts; from their pride, which swelleth against those who by contrary practice dissent from their folly, and reprove their wickedness, and eclipse their repute; from their envy, which repineth at thy appearing better and happier than themselves, thy excelling them in true worth, thy enjoying that satisfaction which they want, thy attaining that blessed hope to which they cannot aspire: and seeing that their reproaches do issue from such principles, wilt thou regard them?

Are their words any slander, who being professed enemies of goodness do naturally impugn it by the readiest arms they have, a virulent and petulant tongue^d?

Can their dirty language, bespattering good things,

^d Οὐδείς φαῦλος τοῖς σπουδαίους ἐπαινεῖν ὑπομένει. Isid. Pelus. Ep. ii. 220.

alter their nature, or render that dishonourable and odious, which in itself is most excellent, most amiable, most venerable, most useful and profitable^e? SERM. LXVI.

Is it not indeed a commendation of virtue, which should encourage us the more to like it, to honour it, to embrace it, that vain, wild, dissolute persons, distempered in their minds, notoriously void of discretion, of integrity, of sobriety, do pretend to vilify and disgrace it^f? "Αφροσύνη.
1 Pet. ii. 15.
"Ασώβητα.
2 Thess. iii. 2.
Ant. iii. 5.
4

As their commendation is of no worth, so their reproach is less considerable.

Dost thou not disparage thine own judgment by heeding theirs, or suffering it to be of any consideration with thee in the conduct of thy life^g?

Dost thou take them to be serious in this, or to speak in good earnest, when they reproach virtue, and slight the plain dictates of reason, the clear light of natural conscience, the express commands of God, the apparent concerns of their own soul? they who are sober in nothing, how can they be serious in this, why should they seem judicious in such a case^h?

Is it not evidently better to be slandered by giddy, lewd, ungodly wretches, who mind not what they

^e (Ὁς γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος, ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλω. Τὸ δοκεῖν οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὡς περ οὐδὲ ἕναρ ἀλλότριον. Greg. Naz. Orat.—de sede Const.)
Ant. viii. §. 1.

^f Malis displicere, laudari est. Sen. Excerpt.

Non potest bonus non esse, qui bonis placet; nec minus validum argumentum mihi videtur, quod bonus sit si malis displiceat. Bern. Ep. 248.

^g Quanta dementia est vereri ne infameris ab infamibus? Sen. Ep. 91.

^h Moverer si iudicio hoc facerent, nunc morbo faciunt. Sen. Exc.

SERM. LXVI. say, nor care what they do, whose judgment therefore can signify nothing; than really to deserve reproof, and thence certainly to incur blame, from all staid, sober, considerate, wise, and virtuous persons, who judge advisedly and uprightly about thingsⁱ?

Is it not better to undergo their severest censure and most biting scoffs, than to be condemned of folly and baseness by thy own mind, and reviled by thy own conscience?

Is it not infinitely better to be unjustly defamed by men, than to be disreputed by God, exposed to most disgraceful condemnation at his bar, and thrown **Dan. xii. 2.** into that state of everlasting ignominy?

Is it not more tolerable to hear such language, than, having violated our duty and broken God's commands, one day to hear that dismal sentence,

Matt. xxv. 41. *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire^k?*

It is a glorious infamy which one sustaineth for the sake of righteousness^l.

Even heathens, with whom glory was the most ample reward and sweetest fruit of virtue, yet do enjoin that we should prefer conscience before it;

Ant. v. §. 3. xi. 16. ix. 18. and that we should rather gladly embrace infamy than forsake virtue^m.

It is the lot of all good men (for probation, exercise, and improvement of their virtue) to be persecuted, at least in some times, as when St. Paul said,

ⁱ Ego cum a nostro Catone laudabar, vel reprehendi me a cæteris facile patiebar. *Cic. de Orat.*

^k Tu ergo plus opprobria times quam tormenta? &c. *Bern. Ep. 108.*

^l Æquissimo animo ad honestum consilium per mediam infamiam tendam, &c. *Sen. Ep. 81.*

^m Non vis esse justus sine gloria? at mehercle sæpe justus esse debetis cum infamia. *Sen. Ep. 113.*

All that will live godlily in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution: and surely he that sincerely loveth God would even desire occasion of suffering somewhat for his sake, in testimony of his faithful affection: but what more tolerable persecution, what more easy martyrdom could we wish, than to be lashed by a scurrilous tongue: or rather to observe the ears of others to be infested with the buzzes of detraction? what is this but a little air stirred in vain, but a mere sound or blast of wind, importing nought to him that doth not mind it, or will not be affected with it? the which surely to a sound heart and pure conscience cannot be very sensible; a man must have a froward temper, or a tender ear, whom a little such creaking or grating noise doth much vex; all its force is broken, all its mischief is remedied easily, by neglect or contempt.

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² Tim. iii.

^{12.} Acts xiv.

^{22.} Heb. xii. 6.

Quid stultius homine
verba metuente?
Sen. Ep. 91.

It is in a manner more commendable to suffer for being good, than for being a Christian; a truer martyrdom to suffer for the temper, than for the name of Christ; for doing well, than for professing truth.

Who indeed had ever been good, in any notable degree, if some had minded the opinion or the discourse of such men, whom in all times the great adversary of goodness and maligner of our welfare hath excited to deter men from virtue by thus abusing it? hath it not ever been the portion of good men to suffer in this kindⁿ?

Was not our Lord himself, were not his apostles, were not all the prophets of old, were not all the heroes in goodness of all times thus pursued with obloquy? what vile imputation, what name of re-

ⁿ Jer. xx. 7. Psal. xlv. 16, 17. lvii. 3, 4. cxix. 51. lxi. 10. Job xii. 4. Wisd. v. 3.

SERM. proach can be devised, wherewith the spiteful world
LXVI. did not besmear them^o?

<sup>Ὁσυνδισμοῖς
καὶ θλίψεσι
θιασφισί-
μεισι.</sup> Yet were they much disturbed at it? were they
anywise discouraged or scared by it from their duty?
Heb. x. 33. No; they rather did find satisfaction and delight in

it; it rather did heighten their mind and strengthen
their resolution; it begat a gallant and triumphant
disdain of such injuries, enlivening and animating
them in their career of duty; they did embrace re-
proach for righteousness not only with content, as
their proper lot and portion from God's providence,

Acts 7. 41. but with joy, as their special glory and happiness
2 Cor. xii. from divine goodness; feeling it most true what our

10. Master taught: *Blessed are ye, when men shall*

<sup>Εὐδοκῶ ἐν
ὑβρισί—</sup>
Matt. v. 11. *revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against*
Lukē vi. 22. *you falsely, for my sake. Blessed are ye, when*

men—shall reproach you, and cast out your name
as evil, for the Son of man's sake. And, according

1 Pet. iv. 14. *to St. Peter, εἰ ὀνειδίζεσθε, If ye be reproached for*
the name of Christ, (that is for conscionably dis-
charging any Christian duty,) happy are ye; for
the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you: on
their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part
he is glorified.

In fine, it is all reason, and it is the express com-
mand of God, that in such cases we should not regard
the censures or the reproaches of any mortal; it is
a part of duty to despise obloquy, to expose and lose
1s. li. 7, 8. reputation for God's sake. For, *Hearken*, saith he,
unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in
whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach
of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For

^o Ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πείραν ἔλαβον. Heb. xi. 36. xii. 3.
Ἀναλογισασθαι. 2 Cor. vi. 8. Διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας.

the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

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5. Men commonly decline the public practice of duty out of affectation thereby to be deemed more honest and sincere, or to decline the suspicion of being hypocritical.

As this is the most obvious and usual calumny wherewith dissolute people do charge good men; so to men of generous disposition it is of all censures most poignant, as most crossing their temper; according to which as they hate to be, so they can hardly endure to be counted or called dissemblers; whence often they choose rather to seem indifferent to goodness, than zealously affected to it; they rather wave some points of duty, than, for the performance of them, expose themselves to that imputation.

But this proceeding is very unreasonable: for,

What can be more absurd, than to be really and notoriously bad, (as whoever omitteth his duty is,) to prevent a surmise of being such? or to be truly worse than we should be, that we may not be deemed worse than we seem?

How can we more gratify the enemy of our salvation, than by approving ourselves in truth to be what we would falsely challenge us to be, mockers of God, and traitors to our own soul?

Is it not a vain thing to regard that kind of censure which it is impossible for any man to escape, upon other terms than of being very naughty? for wicked men will never fail to load those with this charge, who will not comply with their follies, and

SERM. *run with them to the same excess of riot*, or are any-
LXVI. wise better than themselves; it is inevitable for a

¹ Pet. iv. 4. staunch man not to be stigmatized for a hypocrite by them.

² Cor. i. 12. We have certainly more reason to be satisfied with
¹ John iii. the sure conscience and sense of our own integrity,
21. than to be moved with the presumptuous assertions of any wretch devoid of justice or charity: his censure, being plainly injurious and contrary to all rules of equity, which prescribe that no man should judge of things unknown or uncertain, is utterly despicable.

¹ John iii. The testimony of God, (*who is greater than our*
20. *hearts*;) perfectly knowing our sincerity, may abundantly support us; it is a great wrong to him for us
¹ Thess. ii. to value the rash suspicions of men, when we are
4. Gal. i. 10. secure of his knowledge, who *seeth all our works*,
Col. iii. 23. and *trieth our hearts*; who hath said, that *if we*
Eph. vi. 5. *commit our way to him, and trust in him, he will*
¹ Cor. iv. 4. *bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our*
Ps. xxxvii. *judgment as the noonday.*
5, 6.

It is certainly better to be called hypocrite by men for doing our duty, than to be treated as a hypocrite by God for neglecting it; for all those who upon any account do violate God's laws shall *have their portion with the hypocrites* in that disconsolate place *where is weeping and gnashing of teeth*. And good reason; for indeed by thus avoiding hypocrisy, we really do incur it; by seeking to preserve an opinion of sincerity, we forfeit the reality of it; by the practice of disavowing the fear of God and care of goodness, we do constitute ourselves certain hypocrites and impostors; dissembling our thoughts, smothering our conscience, deluding our neighbours with false conceits of us, feigning that indifference which

Matt. xxiv.
51.

we have not, pretending to act without regret or remorse, which we cannot do ; seeming otherwise than we are, signifying otherwise than we mean, doing otherwise than we judge fit, or like to do ; that is, if we be not stark infidels, or utterly void of conscience.

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This is hypocrisy turned the wrong side outward, disguising a man in a fouler shape, and uglier garb, than that which is natural and true.

And if we compare the two hypocrisies, (that of pretending conscience which we want, and this of denying conscience which we have ; that of seeming better than we are, this of seeming worse than we may be,) this in nature may well seem more vile, in tendency more dangerous, in effect more mischievous than the other.

There is in both the same falsehood, the same prevarication, the like contempt and abuse of God ; but the hypocrite of whom we speak doeth worse things, more directly wrongful to God, more prejudicial to goodness, more harmful to the world.

The specious hypocrite, counterfeiting goodness, and *having a form of godliness, without the power and reality of it*, doth yield to God some part (the exterior part) of his due honour and respect ; but the sneaking hypocrite, disowning goodness, doth apparently desert, slight, and affront God : the one serveth God with his face and his voice, though *his heart be far from him* ; the other doth not so much as sacrifice a carcass of obedience to him : that may bring some credit and advantage to goodness, strengthen its interest by his vote and countenance ; this by not avowing it doth assuredly weaken its reputation and cause : that hypocrisy, as such, is a

SERM. private and single evil, whereby a man doth indeed
LXVI. prejudice himself, but doth not injure his neighbour,
 yea, may edify him by the appearing (which in this
 respect is the same with the real) goodness of his ex-
 ample; but this hypocrisy is a general mischief, a
 scandalous evil, a contagious pestilence, whereby a
 man not only harmeth himself, but wrongeth many
 others, seducing them into dissoluteness, infecting
 the world with base indifference to good, and easi-
 ness to comply with sin.

It is indeed a sad thing, that God and goodness
 should be deserted upon this account; that most men
 should be so uncharitable, so unjust, so imprudent,
 as to suspect all good men of hypocrisy; as if it were
 incredible that any man should heartily love or fear
 God, (when it is rather strange that any man should
 do otherwise;) that any man in good earnest, or
 otherwise than in pretence and for sinister respects,
 should embrace virtue; (when it is marvellous that a
 reasonable man should decline it;) that so many, of
 themselves inclinable to goodness, should be so weak
 as to be deterred from it by so vain an apprehension;
 and that the name of hypocrisy should drive away
 piety; that it should become desirable, that hypo-
 crites might abound in the world, lest religion both
 in truth and show should be discarded.

In fine, we may otherwise suppress this odious im-
 putation than by deserting goodness; we may de-
 monstrate ourselves serious and sincere by an inflex-
 ible adherence to it in the continual tenor of our
 practice; and especially in some instances of duty,
 which are hardly consistent with hypocrisy: for no
 man can hold long in a strained posture; no man
 will take much pains, or encounter great difficulties,

· sustain grievous hardships and afflictions, cross SERM.
s appetites, forego gains and honours, for that LXVI.
hich he doth not heartily like and love: he may Matt. xxiii.
unterfeit in ceremonies and formalities, but he will ^{23.}
urdly feign humility, meekness, patience, content-
lness, temperance, at least uniformly and constantly.
ven the patient enduring this censure will confute
, and wipe off the aspersion of hypocrisy.

SERMON LXVII.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT
OF ALL MEN.

2 Cor. viii. 21.

*Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the
Lord, but also in the sight of men.*

SERM. LXVII. 6. **ANOTHER** great impediment of good conversation before men is a desire of seeming courteous and civil. Men usually conform to sinful practices, because they would not be held clowns, rude and distasteful in conversation; they would not give offence to their company, by clashing with their humour; by preferring their own judgment, and seeming to be in their own conceit wiser and better than those with whom they converse; by provoking them to think they are held fools, or worse, by such noncompliance.

This is an ordinary snare to easy and ingenuous natures; but the ground of it is very unreasonable: for although in matters of indifference, where duty and sin do not fall into consideration, to be limber and ductile as can be, (which is the temper of the best metal,) to have no humour of our own, or to resign up all our humour to the will of our company, to condescend unto, and comport with, any thing; to raise no faction or debate, but presently

to yield to the swaying vote; to *become all things* SERM. LXVII.
to all men in a ready complaisance, be wisdom and
good manners, doth argue good-nature, good under-
standing, good breeding; is a rightly gentle and
obliging quality:

Yet where duty is concerned, where sinning or
not sinning is the case, there courtesy hath no
room; there it is vain to pretend any engagement
to complaisance.

For surely it is better to be held uncivil, than to
be ungodly; it is far better manners to offend any
number of men, than to be rude with God, to clash
with his pleasure, to offer indignity and injury to
him: there can be no competition in the case; no
shadow of reason, why we should displease God to
please men.

As it were more civil to offend ten thousand boors
(peasants) than to affront our king; so to offend
ten thousand kings than to affront our God were in
policy more advisable, and in equity more justifi-
able: so the royal Psalmist did judge; for, *Princes*, Psal. cxix.
said he, *did sit and speak against me, but thy*²³
servant did meditate in thy statutes: so Moses, so Matt. x. 18.
Samuel, so Elias, so Jeremy, so Daniel, so the three
noble children, so the holy apostles did conceive;
who being persons otherwise very courteous and
gentle, yet had not that consideration of mighty
princes, as not rather to approve their consciences
to God, than to comply with their pleasure; how
much less should we, upon pretence of courtesy
toward inferior persons in ordinary conversation,
transgress our duty?

Our own interest in such cases is too considerable
to be sacrificed to the conceit or pleasure of any

SERM. men : our salvation is no matter, wherein formality
LXVII. of respect should intervene, or have any weight ; to gain or forfeit our eternal happiness is no business of compliment or ceremony : it were a silly courtesy for a man to wait on his company to hell, a wild point of gallantry to be damned in complaisance.

Who would take himself to be obliged in good manners to hold on the round in a cup of poison ; to leap down after those, who, from blind inadvertency, or wilful perverseness, tumble into a gulf, to gash or stab himself in conformity to some desperate folk ? Much less can a man be engaged out of any such regard (in compliance with the mistake, weakness, or pravity of others) to incur guilt, to provoke divine wrath, to expose his soul to utter ruin, to undergo a damage, for which all the world cannot make any reparation or amends ?

Is it not far better to disgust than to gratify those, who have so little consideration of our welfare ; who indeed are very discourteous and heinously rude in offering to tempt us unto sin, to desire a compliance therein with them ; to expect from us, that we should adventure so much for their vain satisfaction ?

Indeed to gratify such persons were great and noble courtesy : but really to do it, we should not go this way ; for this is a spurious courtesy, rather conspiracy and treachery, than courtesy.

It is in truth, at the bottom, great discourtesy (involving much unkindness, real abuse, unmerciful inhumanity and cruelty) to second, to countenance, to support or encourage any man in doing that which manifestly tendeth unto his great prejudice, to his utter bane.

It is the truest civility (implying real humanity, SERM. LXVII. genuine charity, faithful kindness, and tender pity) to stand off in such cases, and, by refusing (in a modest, gentle, discreet manner refusing) to concur in sin with our friends and companions, to check them, to warn them, to endeavour their amendment and retreat from pernicious courses; to exercise that *compassion* toward them, which St. Jude call-
eth *pulling them out of the fire.* Jude 22,23.

In such cases to repel them, yea to reprove them, is the greatest favour we can shew them; it is not only safe for ourselves, but kind to them, to observe St. Paul's precept, *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*; for which deportment, whenever they come to themselves, and soberly reflect on things, they will thank and bless us; and it will happen as the Wise Man saith, *He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flatter-
eth with his tongue.* Eph. v. 11, Prov. xxviii. 23.

In fine, if we thoroughly scan the business, we shall find that commonly it is not abundance of courtesy, but a defect of charity, or of conscience, or of courage, which disposeth us to reservedness, or to concurrence upon such occasions, in regard to inallowable practices.

7. Another snare which catcheth and holdeth us in open practice of sin, or neglect of duty, is deference to the opinion, authority, custom, or example of others; to the common opinion, to the authority of great and leading persons, to the fashion of the world, and prevalent humour of the age.

A man (not consulting or not confiding in his own reason) is apt to credit the vogue, to defer a

SERM. LXVII. kind of veneration to the general sentiments of men, (especially of men qualified,) apprehending that allowable or tolerable which men commonly by their practice seem to approve. He is prone to suspect his own judgment of mistake, when it doth thwart the opinion of so many; and hardly can have the heart to oppose his single apprehension against so common notions.

—illos De-
fendit nu-
merus—
Juv. Sat.
ii. 45.

The commonness of sin and multitude of offenders doth in a manner authorize and warrant it, doth at least seem to excuse and extenuate it.

Eccclus. xvi. 17. A man easily conceiteth himself safe enough, while he is in the herd, while he walketh in the road, when he hath the broad coverlet of general usage to shroud him from blame; he doth at least fancy consolation in undergoing a doom with so many.

But upon many accounts this is a very fallacious and dangerous ground of practice.

Ant. ix. 18. xi. 3, 4. For multitudes are no good authors of opinion, or guides of practice.

Argumen-
tum pes-
simi turba.
Sen. de Vit.
b. 2.

Wise men have ever been apt to suspect that to be bad, which is most commonly admired and affected.

Nothing is more vulgarly noted, than the injudiciousness, the blindness, the levity, temerity, and giddiness of the vulgar; temper, inclination, appetite, interest, and the like perverting biases, have most sway on them; any specious appearance, any slight motive, any light rumour doth serve to persuade them any thing, to drive them any whither.

All ages have deplored the paucity of wise and good men; the genuine disciples of our Lord, and *sons of wisdom*, have ever been *pusillus grex*, a

small flock; our Lord hath told us, that *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therein.*

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LXVII.

Matt. vii.
13.
Luke xiii.

Wherefore popular use is no good argument of truth or right; nor can yield any warrant or any colour for infringing God's law: no *plebiscitum* can be of force against it.

Rom. ix. 27.
Is. x. 22.

God never did allow the people to exempt themselves or us from their loyalty, or obedience to his laws; they are universally obligatory; he hath *commanded all men to repent*; he hath threatened that *otherwise all shall perish*; and that *tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*

Acts xvii.
30.
Luke xiii. 3.
Rom. ix. 12.
ii. 9.

He by express prohibitions hath obviated all such pretences and pleas; *Thou shalt not*, saith he, *follow a multitude to do evil*; and, *Say ye not a confederacy—neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid*, (fear not to dissent and discost *from the way of this people*.) And, *If sinners entice thee*, (how many soever they be, though it be *a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers*), *consent thou not.*

Exod. xxiii.
2.
Rom. xii. 2.
Be not conformed to this world.
Is. viii. 11.
1 John ii.
15. Love not the world.
Is. viii. 10.
Prov. i. 10.
Isa. i. 4.

Indeed if we consider it, it is so far from excusing sin, that it is an aggravation thereof, that we therein conspire with others, and the more the worse: to oppose God singly is not quite so criminal, as to join with a rout in hostility and rebellion against him; for hereby God's authority is more shaken, and his honour more rudely violated; hereby we do not only sin ourselves, but contribute to the sin of others, encourage them to it, and uphold them in it by our patronage.

SERM. LXVII. Hereby we become accessory to the degeneracy and general apostasy of the age.

Hereby we do join our forces to pull down God's judgments on our country, and by promoting general corruption induce general vengeance.

The multitude of sinners is so far from sheltering any one from wrath, that it surely draweth it upon all; forcing the Almighty not only for the assertion of his own authority, and vindication of his honour, but for the good of the people, and *purgation* of the world, to pour forth remarkable vengeance.

Isa. i. 25
I will purge
away the
dross.

Gen. vi. 12.
2 Pet. ii. 5.

For example; In the time of Noah did God *spare* the old world, when all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth, did that stave off God's wrath, or stop the deluge? No, it did grievously provoke him, it did in a manner necessitate him to *destroy* man from the face of the earth; bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.

Did the number of sinners in Sodom prevent vengeance on them? was it not that which did *condemn them to an overthrow* so dismal, pulling down fire and brimstone on them?

What was the reason of that woful captivity into which Israel was carried? was it not because they were all *grievous revolters*; and had so generally conspired in wickedness, that the prophet could say, Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it? Was it not this which did wring from God that sentence, *Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

Jer. vi. 28.

Jer. v. 1.

Jer. v. 29.

When the case is such in any community, as it **SERM.**
 was in Israel, when God said, *From the sole of the* **LXVII.**
foot even to the head there is no soundness in it, then Isa. i. 6.
 judgment is necessary, and it must assuredly follow,
Your country is desolate—then God, his patience Isa. i. 7.
 being tired, and his goodness unsupportably abused,
 will cry out, *Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries,* Isa. i. 24.
and avenge me of mine enemies.

God as Governor of the world, in discharge of his
 office, for clearing his honour, for assuring his ma-
 jesty, out of regard to public good, for the safety
 and welfare of his subjects, is concerned to chastise
 notorious, scandalous, and infectious sin: he may
 reserve private sins for the final doom, when *the* 1 Cor. iv.
hidden things of darkness shall be brought to ¹⁵
light, and the counsels of hearts manifested, and all
 things shall receive just reward and recompense;
 but it is expedient to punish public sins publicly:
 they who *declare their sin as Sodom,* with out- Isa. iii. 9.
 rageous impudence, are like to find a punishment
 like that in a common vengeance.

We should therefore in such a case be the more
 careful of our conversation, more shy of sinful com-
 pliance with others, for preventing public calamity;
 for that our single piety and innocence (or the good-
 ness of a few) may save our country, together with
 ourselves, from wrath and ruin; seeing it is the gra-
 cious method of God in regard to a few righteous
 men to spare the rest, to release a nation from de-
 served punishment; for if in Sodom had been found Gen. xviii.
 ten righteous persons, it had escaped that horrible ³²
 destruction; and Israel in Hezekiah's time (although
 in a very great and general corruption of that age)
 by a few good men did avoid the like doom; ac-

SERM. cording to that of the prophet, *Except the Lord of*
 LXVII. *hosts had left unto us a very small, remnant, we*
 Isa. i. 9. *should have been as Sodom.*
 Lam. iii. 22.

The righteousness of one Noah did save the race of mankind from being extinct.

The zeal of one Phinehas did stop that plague which had devoured Israel: *Phinehas*, said God
 Num. xxv. *himself, the son of Eleazar, hath turned my wrath*
 11. *away from the children of Israel, while he was*
 Psal. cvi. *zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed*
 30. *not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*

If there had been such another public patron of piety, at the time when Israel was so severely punished by deliverance into captivity, it would have obstructed that lamentable event; God himself so testified; for, *I sought*, said he, *for a man among*
 Ezek. xxii. *them, that would make up the hedge, and stand in*
 30, 31. *the gap before me for the land, that I should not*
destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I
poured out mine indignation upon them:—and,
 Jer. v. i. *Run ye to and fro, (said he again,) seek if ye*
can find a man—in Jerusalem,—and I will pardon it.

Wherefore, beside regard to our own welfare, a consideration of public good, charity toward the world, a compassion of our country should withhold us from conspiring in common transgressions, or omissions of duty.

If we sin with all, we must suffer with all; nor will the having so much company in suffering yield any true comfort to us: *Socios habuisse doloris* (to have companions in sorrow) is in itself a pitiful solace, and an unworthy one, savouring of inhuman malignity; for our fellows will bear no share with
 God will
 not oversee
 us. Eccles.
 xvi. 17.

us, or take off any thing from the burden of our pains, which will be equally to them and us extreme. SERM.
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Can it be any considerable satisfaction, that we are sick of an epidemical disease, that sweepeth away multitudes about us and with us ?

Is it better for one part, that the whole body is overspread with a noisome leprosy ? that its fellow members are tortured with grievous anguish ?

Can the sorest pains of our brethren cure the achings of our heart, assuage the pangs of our conscience, or slack the consuming flames beneath ?

What advantage can we enjoy from going down to hell in a troop ? what ease shall we find there from being encompassed with the doleful groans, the piercing shrieks, and dismal howlings of fellow sufferers in that infernal dungeon ?

Alas ! will it not rather augment our pains to hear the sore complaints, the fierce accusations, the desperate curses of those, whom our compliance hath engaged, or encouraged, or confirmed and hardened in that wicked practice, which did throw them into that disconsolate case ?

8. Another principle (near of kin to the former) is a dislike of singularity and solitude ; together with the consequences and imputations usually cleaving thereto.

One would not be a man by himself ; to be gazed on, to be hooted at as a kind of prodigy, to be deemed an extravagant, odd, humourous, fantastic person, conceited of his own opinion, addicted to his own way, arrogating to himself a liberty of crossing and condemning or contemning the world ; there-

SERM. fore he runneth along with the age, complying with
LXVII. its sinful customs and naughty fashions^a.

But this is a vain principle ; for really to be singular is no fault, to be held so is no disgrace ; it is rather in many cases laudable and honourable ; and if in any, most reasonably it is in this.

Doth not singularity or paucity increase the price and estimation of every valuable thing? What maketh a jewel but rarity? what but that maketh a diamond more precious than a pebble?

Do not men for singular eminency in any art, skill, faculty, endowment, gain credit and renown? What recommended to posterity the names of Apelles, Praxiteles, Phidias, but excelling in their art beyond the ordinary rate? what gave to Demosthenes and Cicero their esteem, but a singular knack of eloquence? to what did Alexander and Cæsar owe their fame, but to an extraordinary valour? whence got Socrates such a name, but from his singular wisdom? whence Fabricius, Aristides, Cato, but from their singular integrity?

Why then should it be a discouragement or reproach to be singular or extraordinary in the noblest of all faculties, that of living well, in the most excellent of all perfections, that of virtue?

In truth a man is hardly capable of a greater commendation than this, that he is singularly good; that he surpasseth the vulgar level, and mounteth near heaven in the divinest qualities; that no bad example or fashion hath been able to seduce or corrupt

^a He is grievous unto us even to behold: for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion. Wisd. ii. 15, &c.

him : this should render him to be most highly esteemed, and most dearly cherished, as a choice ornament of the world, as a most useful instrument of good to mankind. SERM.
LXVII.

It were desirable that virtue were more common in the world ; but surely its being more rare doth render it more admirable, more illustrious, more glorious.

Heroical virtue is therefore such, because so few do attain or can reach it ;

—pauci quos æquus amavit
Jupiter ;

A few, who by special assistance of God's grace, and by extraordinary resolution, do surmount the obstacles which are set against it.

It was well said of St. Bernard, *To be good among good men hath safety, but to be such among bad men hath also praise ;* (a man will be saved by that, but he should be commended for this;) *that hath as much facility as it hath security, this is of as much worth as difficulty*^b.

Indeed if we consider the nature of things, or consult the history of times, we shall find that virtue must be, and ever hath been, liable to this imputation ; it is commonly so hard and hazardous to be good in any notable degree, that few will take the pains, or undergo the hardships requisite to attain or exercise it.

Hence the best men (who are such, not according to the blind conjecture of men, but in God's sure esteem) are an elect, and peculiar sort of people, a 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^b Inter bonos, bonus esse salutem habet, inter malos vero et laudem ; illud tantæ facilitatis est, quanta et securitatis ; hoc tantæ virtutis, quantæ et difficultatis. *Bern. Ep. 25.*

SERM. few choice persons culled out of a great lump of
LXVII. those, who either reject religion, or embrace it only
 in verbal profession or formal show.

Hence it hath been the observation, and complaint
 of all times,

Juv. Sat.
 xiii. 28.

Rari quippe boni.

Hence the most renowned men for goodness, and
 who by God's special care have been recommended
 to us as patterns thereof, have been very singular in
 it; and their singularity did much enhance the price
 of their goodness.

Gen. v. 22. It is said of Enoch, that *he walked with God*;
 but it seemeth with small or no company beside;
 otherwise it would not have been so particularly re-
 corded of him.

Noah was content to be a man by himself, a
preacher of righteousness against the vogue, and a
 practiser thereof against the stream of his whole age;
Gen. vii. 1. for *thee* (said God of him, that is, thee alone) *have*
I seen righteous before me in this generation.
 He was no less singular in his goodness, than in his
 salvation.

Abraham had no common qualities, which moved
 God to pick him out, and separate him from the rest
Gen. xii. 1. of mankind, (to single him *from his kindred and*
country,) to confer special graces and blessings on
 him.

2 Pet. ii. 7. Lot had *his righteous soul vexed with the filthy*
conversation of the wicked, which did inclose him,
 yet so that he did retain a sound and clear integrity
 among them.

Job had this testimony from God, examining Satan
Job i. 8. concerning him, *Hast thou considered my sercant*
Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a per-

fect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? SERM. LXVII.

What was the resolution of Joshua? did he value being sole or singular in his practice? No; for, propounding to his people whether they would choose God or not, he told them that however it were, although all of them should forsake God, he was resolved to stick fast to him, not regarding their practice; *But*, said he, *as for me and my house we will serve the Lord*: that indeed was nobly resolved; it was a resolution worthy of such an hero, to stand alone in so good and wise a choice against his whole nation. It was a resolution suitable to that his behaviour, which he expressed in these words, *My brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God*; in regard to which his camerade Caleb, being of the same spirit with him, is called a man of *another spirit*; different from, and above the mean spirit of his fellows.

What was David? was he not a man by himself? was he not like one, of whom the poet saith,

Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri	Juv. Sat.
Hoc monstrum puero, vel foetæ comparo mulæ?	xiii.

So he telleth us; *I*, saith he, *am become as it were a *monster unto many, but my sure trust is in thee.* * A wonder

Did Elias, to shun the imputation of singularity, or in regard to common practice, swerve from his faithful adherence to God's service, although he did passionately resent, and bewail his case? No, for *I have*, said he, *been very jealous for the Lord of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy*

SERM. *prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.*

LXVII. *left, and they seek my life, to take it away.*
Lam. iii. 14. What was the case of Jeremy? *I, saith he, was a derision to all my people, and their song all the*

Jer. i. 18. *day: yet did he maintain his integrity, and was a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and a brazen wall against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, and against the people of the land.*
Murus abeneus.

What was the condition of our Lord? was not he

Luke ii. 34. *σημείον ἀτιλεγόμενον, a prodigy spoken against by all;*
Heb. xii. 3. *against whom both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered*

Is. lxiii. 3. *together; who trod the wine-press alone, and of the*

John xii. *people there was none with him; who in his life was*

37. *regarded by few, and at his death (when he yielded*

John xvi. *his great attestation to truth and righteousness) was*

32. *deserted by all?*
Matt. xxvi. 31, 56.

What was the apostles' condition? were they not

Acts xxviii. *singular men? were not they held a sect, everywhere*

22. *spoken against, and impugned with all violence of*

2 Cor. iv. 9. *spirit and rage? were not they made a spectacle to*

Heb. x. 33. *the world, to be gazed at, with scorn and reproach?*

1 Cor. i. 26. *did not they (a few, simple, poor, weak folk) in doctrine and practice cross and control the world, confuting, reproving, condemning the generality of men, of error, of folly, of wickedness?*

It can therefore be no just blame or reasonable discouragement to appear singular in the practice of virtue.

Such a singularity is no good argument of fond conceitedness, of wilful humour, of arrogant pride. For,

Can it be fond conceitedness to follow the dictates

of the best reason, to observe the advices of the wisest men in all times, to follow the direction and conduct of infinite wisdom ; to embrace that, which in most cases natural light, common sense, and continual experience do approve ? is it not wildness to do otherwise, though all should do it? SERM.
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Can it be wilful humour to hold fast our best interest, our truest comfort, our eternal salvation ? is it not rather so, to comply with *a perverse generation* in running headlong to their own ruin ?

Can it be pride or arrogance to acknowledge our Maker, to be loyal and dutiful to our heavenly Sovereign, to fear the Almighty God, to submit to his will, to *tremble at his word*, to *be afraid of his judgments*, to shun his fierce anger and severe vengeance ?

Is it a bad ambition to seek that honour and immortal glory which God doth offer, to shun that everlasting shame and contempt which he doth menace ?

Is it not rather monstrous presumption and enormous vanity to consort and conspire with rebels against God's law, with despisers of his grace ?

In fine, when the most men are foolish and vain, when the world is depraved and dissolute, it is necessary that the best reason should be called humour, and the wisest men should be deemed extravagant ; that the best things should be slighted, and the best persons represented with odious characters : but hence to renounce wisdom and goodness is abominably absurd ; as if we should therefore put out our light, because it is night about us, or in deep winter should put off our clothes among the wild Indians.

SERM. LXVII. 9. Of affinity to the foregoing principles is this most plausible apology for mothering our conscience, namely, a prudential apprehension, that we shall not come off well in openly avowing and abetting goodness, so as to do any good or service to it thereby; but shall thereby rather work prejudice and disservice to it.

The age (will such a wise man say) is incorrigibly degenerate; wickedness is not only bold and impudent, but even outrageously insolent; so that to appear strictly good is a kind of scandal, to pretend conscience for our rule of action is to be ridiculous, to patronise duty is to provoke scorn and obloquy, to mention religion is to prostitute and profane it, to concern God in our doing is to expose his most sacred and venerable name to irrision and foul abuse.

Such is the posture of things, that of all the sects and factions which divide the world, that of Epicurean scorners and mockers is become the most formidable; with disdainful pride insulting and vapouring over the professors of religion, persecuting all soberness of mind and staunchness of manners with a fierce rage and a kind of satanic zeal.

The state of the world being like to that when the holy Psalmist cried out, *Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? how long shall they utter and speak hard things, and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*

In such a case, is it not seasonable to observe our Lord's advice, *not to give that which is holy unto dogs, nor to cast our pearls before swine;* (not to expose good doctrine and holy practice to scurrilous and sensual people, who will snarl and bark at it,

will scorn and trample on it, will bite and tear you for it?) SERM.
LXVII.

Is it not then wisdom rather fairly to retreat, withdrawing our virtue into a safe retirement, than by openly contesting for it against overmatching forces to hazard its being baffled and abused, its being trampled on and triumphed over, by scornful pride and malice?

In such a world to oppose impiety, what is it but attempting to stop a torrent, to allay a storm, to gape against an oven, to blow against the wind, to kick against the pricks?

But if this case be rightly weighed, it rather strongly may engage us to an open profession and practice of the strictest virtue, than excuse us from it.

St. Paul doth enjoin us *to walk accurately, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, for this reason, because the days are evil; and that we should be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, shining among them as lights in the world, and *holding forth the word of life.*

Eph. v. 15.
Phil. ii. 15.
(or holding fast,
'Επιχορηγίαι.)

And great reason for it; for the worse the world is, the more need there is of good patterns to instruct and guide it, to admonish and excite it to goodness.

If the days are evil, it is high time that we should apply our best endeavours to the mending of them.

If virtue be so near lost, or so quite gone from among us, it is needful that we should presently seek to recover or to retrieve it^c.

^c Specta juvenis—in ea tempora natus es, quibus formare animum expediat constantibus exemplis. *Tac. Ann.* 16.

SERM. If goodness be so hardly pressed by opposition,
LXVII. then hath every good man the more reason to appear strenuously in its defence, the more are we engaged to hasten with all our might to its relief and succour from irrecoverable oppression.

Every one should labour to raise a bank against that inundation which threateneth to overflow and overwhelm all.

Shall we endure to see the adversary of our welfare to carry all before him without any opposition or obstruction? Shall we suffer iniquity to enjoy a quiet reign, to root and settle itself in its usurpation, to raise itself a title of long occupancy and prescription against goodness?

Is it not then more generous to avow our friendship to virtue, and to abet it in our patronage, when it is under the hatches, and crieth for our aid? is it not vile treachery in such a case to desert it?

Is it not gallant then *to resist sin*, and check wickedness, when it is so high and rampant?

Who will not be virtuous (or endeavour at least to appear such) when virtue is in fashion and request; when it flourisheth in reputation, when all the world doth countenance and abet it? who will not shun or disown wickedness, when it is commonly odious and despicable? who will *not help the Lord against* weak adversaries.

But to embrace virtue upon greatest disadvantages, to disclaim vice in its triumphant prosperity, this is indeed brave and masculine.

He is a worthy man indeed who can keep the field among so many stout enemies, who can stand upright *in a crooked generation*; who can despise the scorn, defy the rage, bear up against the impu-

dence and malignity of vain, base, wretched men, SERM. LXVII.
 combining to supplant and extirpate goodness.

Nor have we reason in proceeding thus to despair of good success; we need not fear thereby to expose the credit, or endanger the interest of goodness. For,

How can we fail of prospering in the maintenance of God's cause and special concern? Although men may commonly desert him, yet doth he not utterly forsake them, or give over the government of the world; he may let the reins lie a little loose, but he doth not put them out of his hands; his power cannot be abated, his providence can never sleep; though he is so patient in suffering wicked men to provoke him, yet he will not be *slack* in assisting good men, who take his part, and undertake to maintain his honour; assuredly he will help them, who *help him against the mighty*.

In this service *one will chase a thousand, and* Deut. xxxii.
two put ten thousand to flight; one David will Jos. xxiii.
 knock down never so many Philistines reproaching 10.
 God's name; one Phinehas will repress the petulancy Num. xxv.
 of a whole nation; one Jeremy shall be a *braxen* Jer. xv. 20.
wall against a whole land; God will make it good
 to such an one, *They shall fight against thee, but* Jer. i. 19.
they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with xx. 11.
thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.

One sober man in defence of virtue is able to discomfit all the hectors, the huffing blades, and boisterous ruffians in the world, attacking them with sound discretion and steady resolution: for all their bravery and confidence, they are easily mated; and being like their sire, if you *resist them, they* Jam. iv. 7.
will flee from you: a prudent, seasonable, smart

SERM. check will quash their spurious courage and giddy
LXVII. audacity. Their contempt of goodness is but feign-

ed; they cannot really for their hearts despise it; there is stamped on their souls and consciences such a respect, such an awe thereof, which they cannot quite rase out: wherefore if you briskly represent it to them, and challenge their reverence to it, they cannot but succumb, their own mind and conscience joining to back your reproof; so that if you cannot reclaim them, you shall however repress them; if

Jer. xx. 11. you cannot correct their vice, you shall yet confound

1 Pet. ii. 15. their impudence; *For so, saith St. Peter, it is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to*

1 Pet. iii. 16. *silence the ignorance of foolish men; and, Having*
Tit. ii. 8. *a good conscience, that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your conversation in Christ.*

It is only sneaking, or a timorous pretence to virtue, which they contemn; but they will admire those who stiffly adhere to it, and stoutly maintain it.

We shall therefore expose virtue, not by frankly avowing it, but by faintly slinking from it, when occasion requireth an open acknowledgment and exemplary practice of it.

If the world is so very bad, it will not be worse for our attempt to better it; it will be so much at least better, that one therein hath that worthy purpose.

It was bad, when Noah preached righteousness to it.

It was bad, when Elias was so zealous for the Lord of hosts.

It was bad, when Jeremy was derided for declaring God's will and exhorting to repentance.

They were very bad times, when all the prophets did strive so earnestly to reclaim men from their wickedness; being reproached and persecuted for doing so, but not deterred from doing it: the resentment they had of the badness of times did not make them abandon the means of its recovery from it.

SERM. LXVII.

The whole world did lie in wickedness when the apostles did undertake the reformation of it.

1 John v. 19.

In fine, if men generally upon such accounts of despairing prudence neglect to own goodness, what must the consequence be? what, but that piety shall be cashiered, that virtue shall be discarded, that conscience shall be quite exploded and exterminated from the world? that consequently an horrible deluge of various mischiefs, a general prevalence of lewdness and luxury, of fraud and violence, of faction and tumult, a violation of all faith and friendship, a dissolution of all order and peace will ensue?

None call-eth for justice, nor any plead-eth for truth—
Isa. lix. 4.

And what must grow upon this state of things? what but another flood of judgments, and woful vengeance? when God's patience hath been tried to the utmost, and his goodness tired with bearing such a load of abominations, he will be forced to cry out, *Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

Jer. v. 29.
Isa. i. 24.
lix. 17.

10. Another principle of dispensing with conscience in public duties and conversation before men, is a kind of perverse wisdom, or subtle craft, affecting the name of discretion.

Stulta caliditas, perverse imitata prudentiam.
Cic. de Off. iii. p. 143.

Men see there are divers inconveniences attending the profession of respect to God and conscience in all their doings; that the world may dislike and

SERM. disesteem them, that divers persons will hate, malign, reproach, and persecute them for it; that they may chance to be crossed in their designs, and lose profits or preferments thereby; therefore they deem it advisable to decline it in open view, making up the defect by adoring and serving God in private.

Thus they think to salve all, by maintaining a neutrality, and compounding the business, yielding an open conformity to the world, and reserving a secret regard to God; sinning publicly, and privately repenting; retaining their credit, quiet, ease, pleasure, with their conscience and peace of mind; affecting some piety, but avoiding the scandal of it.

They would hold fair with both sides; so that neither the world should persecute them for crossing its humour, nor God punish them for transgressing his will.

They drive a subtle trade, hoping to gain on all hands, both the benefits of the other, and the advantages of this world; to save their soul, and serve their worldly interests together:

This they would believe a point of special wisdom, prescribed by Solomon: *Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise; for why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before the time?*

But this rooking trick, to hedge thus and save stakes, to play fast and loose, to dodge and shuffle with God, God doth not like, nor will suffer himself to be gulled with it.

He will not be satisfied with such a mongrel, partial, and *halting service*.

1 Kings
xviii. 21.

He will not allow us to withhold that half of his

service (the external, visible part thereof) which is most honourable to him, and most beneficial to our neighbour. SERM.
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He cannot endure a double heart, or a double face; one looking upward to heaven, another downward to the earth^e.

He exacteth from us an integrity of heart and perfection of obedience; that we should love him with our whole heart, that we should be *perfect with him*, that we should walk uprightly, not *deflecting to the right hand or left* from our duty.

He will not endure that we should hold amity or correspondence with his enemies; particularly with the world, the friendship whereof he hath declared inconsistent with his favour; and that it is a spiritual adultery to impart any of our affections to it; according to that of St. James; *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? so that whosoever will be a friend of the world becometh the enemy of God.* Jam. iv. iii.
John ii.
15.
Καθίσταται.
(John xv.
19. xvii.
14.)
Ps. xxxvii.
xxxviii.
O. Tr.
Phil. ii. 5.

We may shift as well as we can in the world, provided that we hold innocence, and do not conspire with it against God, by violation of our duty to him^f: *Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves.* Matt. x. 16. (*as lambs*, Luke x. 3.)

They reproach good men as superstitious; who are afraid of invisible powers; who let go things in

^e Psal. xii. 2. Jam. i. 8. iv. 8. 2 Chron. xii. 33. Tim. iii. 8. Δύλωος. Psal. xxxviii. 37. Their heart was not whole with him. (O. Tr.) Deuter. xviii. 13. Job i. 8. Psalm xliv. 18. cxix. 51. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 2. Job xxiii. 11. Matthew vi. 24. Luke xvi. 13. Δυσὶ κυρίως.

^f Rom. xvi. 19. Σοφοὺς εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀκεραίους δὲ εἰς τὸ κακόν.

SERM. hand (present interests and pleasures) for a rever-
 LXVII. sion and hope.

As if God's word were not sufficient security; as if we may not as well rely upon things conspicuous to reason, as those which are obvious to sense.

^{Arrows.} If Christianity be plainly false, they say well; but
 2 Thess. iii. if it be true, very absurdly; yea if probable, very
 2. imprudently; yea if possible, not wisely.

They charge conscientious men with timorousness, faintheartedness.

It is timorousness or blameable fear to dread things without reason, things nowise formidable, which cannot hurt us; such a timorous man is he, that out of fear of men, (of displeasing them, of suffering by them, of their reproach,) &c. transgresseth his duty.

But to fear God is wisdom, soberness, duty, virtue; it is handsome and honourable, becoming our nature, our condition; the passion of fear was chiefly put in us for this purpose, as its best use.

Is it courage, and not rather madness to provoke, to resist, to challenge, to cope with the Almighty? is it courage to throw one's self down a precipice, to leap into the infernal lake? is it gallantry to dare transgress all reason and sobriety? is it brave to be wild and senseless, &c.?

It is true courage to resist and repel sin assaulting a man with whatever advantages; to dare to do well, although vain men deride, and spiteful men hate us for it.

It is a kind of martyrdom to be ill used by the world for adhering to his duty; and he hath a share in that, *Blessed are they, who suffer for righteousness.*

In fine, it is a vain prudence to be thus politic with God; whereby we shall lose the whole, or that part which is invaluable, out of presumption to save a small inconsiderable part.

If this be prudence, *then*, as St. Paul saith, *is the offence of the cross ceased.*

Then our Lord prescribed a foolish condition.

Then were the apostles very imprudent, who deserted all, and suffered so much for their conscience; being content to secure their spiritual interest, and to obtain the eternal rewards of piety; *choosing the better part, which could not be taken from them.*

What the true wisdom is in such cases St. James hath told us: *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*

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Matt. x. 39.
Ὁ ὅλος τῆς
ψυχῆς αὐ-
τοῦ, ἀπολέ-
σεται ἀντὶν.

Gal. v. 11.
Matt. x. 38.
xvi. 24.
Phil. iii. 8.

Luke x. 42.

Jam. iii. 13.

SERMON LXVIII.

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM cxlv. 9.

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

SERM. LXVIII. **T**HE goodness of God is a frequented theme; to many perhaps it may seem vulgar and trite; so that discourse thereon, like a story often told, may be nauseous to their ears: but in truth neither can we speak too much upon this most excellent subject, nor ought we ever to be weary in hearing about it; for it is a sign that the palate of our mind is distempered, if we do not with delight and affection relish any mention of divine goodness. Yea, the observation of men's common practice would induce us to think, that either this point is not so well known, or but little believed, or at least not well considered and applied. For how could we be so void of love to God, of gratitude toward him, of faith and hope in him, were we thoroughly persuaded, did we seriously consider, that he is so exceedingly good toward us? How can we be so insensible of the benefits we enjoy, so distrustful of finding succours and supplies in our need, so dissatisfied and discontented with what befalls us, if we conceive and weigh, that all things do proceed from, are guided and governed by immense

goodness? How also, if men have such an opinion of God impressed on their minds, comes it to pass, **SERM. LXVIII.** that they are so little careful to resemble and imitate him in kindness, bounty, and mercy to one another? How is it, in fine, that the most powerful argument to all manner of good practice, and the mightiest aggravation of sin, if well known and pondered, hath so little force and efficacy upon us? From experience therefore this argument may seem scarce sufficiently inculcated. We may add, that discourse upon this attribute^a (which above all other attributes doth render God peculiarly admirable and amiable) hath this special advantage beyond other discourses, that it doth, if our hearts conspire therewith, approach most nearly to the formal exercise of the most high and heavenly parts of devotion, praise and thanksgiving; that it more immediately conduces to the breeding, the nourishing, the augmenting in us the best and noblest of pious affections, love and reverence to God; trust and hope in him; willing resolutions to please and serve him; whence it is consequent, that we cannot too much employ our thoughts, our words, or our attention upon this point. Besides so much reason, we have also good example to countenance us in so doing: we have the precedent of the holy Psalmist resolving to make it his constant and continual employment: *I will sing, saith he, of the mercies of the Lord; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.* And, *Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name ever and ever;* (that blessing and praising God, the context shews to have consisted especially in the de-

^a — Θεός, ὃ πολλῶν ἔσται, ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν αὐτως ὡς τὸ πάντα εὐεργέτην βιωτατόν. Naz. Orat. 26.

SERM. LKVIII. clarification of God's great goodness :) and, *It is a good thing*, saith he again, *to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most High: to shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.* Such were his intentions, and such his judgment about this practice; and we find him in effect true and answerable to them; every song of his, every meditation, every exercise of devotion chiefly harping upon this string; and he earnestly wishes that others would consent and consort with him therein; he earnestly exhorts and excites them thereto: *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Praise the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.* That one example might sufficiently authorize this practice; but we have innumerable others, and those the highest that can be, to encourage and engage us thereto; even the whole choir of heaven, whose perpetual business and happy entertainment it is to contemplate with their minds, to celebrate with their voices, the immense goodness of God; *They have, as it is in the Revelation, no rest day or night, from performing this office.* Such is the subject of our discourse; the which our text most plainly and fully expresses; asserting not only the goodness of God, but the universal and boundless extent thereof; *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies (or his bowels of affection and pity) are over all his works.* And that God indeed is such, we shall first endeavour to declare, then shall briefly apply the consideration thereof to practice.

That God the Lord, and Maker of all things, is of

Psal. xcii.
1, 2.

Psal. cvii.
8. cvi. 1.

Rev. iv. 8.

himself, in regard to all his creatures, especially to **SERM.**
us men, superlatively good, that is, disposed never **LXVIII.**
without just or necessary cause to harm us, and in-
clinable to do us all possible and befitting good, the
universal frame of nature and the constant course of
Providence do afford us sufficient reason to conceive,
and most frequent, most express testimonies of holy
scripture do more fully demonstrate. There is no
argument from natural effects discernible by us, which
proveth God's existence, (and innumerable such there
are, every sort of things well studied may afford
some,) the which doth not together persuade God to
be very kind and benign; careful to impart to us all
befitting good, suitable to our natural capacity and
condition; and unwilling that any considerable harm,
any extreme want or pain should befall us. (I inter-
pose such limitations, for that an absolute, or uni-
versal and perpetual exemption from all kinds or all
degrees of inconvenience, an accumulation of all sorts
of appearing good upon us, doth not become or suit
our natural state of being, or our rank in perfection
among creatures; neither, all things being duly stated
and computed, will it turn to best account for us.)
The best (no less convincing than obvious) argu-
ments, asserting the existence of a Deity, are de-
duced from the manifold and manifest footsteps of
admirable wisdom, skill, and design apparent in the
general order, and in the particular frame of crea-
tures; the beautiful harmony of the whole, and the
artificial contrivance of each part of the world; the
which it is hardly possible that any unprejudiced and
undistempered mind should conceive to proceed from
blind chance, or as blind necessity. But with this
wisdom are always complicated no less evident marks

SERM. of goodness. We cannot in all that vast bulk of the **LXVIII** creation, and numberless variety of things, discover any piece of mere pomp, or dry curiosity; every thing seems to have some beneficial tendency; according to which it confers somewhat to the need, convenience, or comfort of those principal creatures, which are endued with sense and capacity to enjoy them. Most of them have a palpable relation to the benefit (to the subsistence or delight) of living creatures; and especially in an ultimate relation to the benefit of man; and the rest, although their immediate use be not to our dim sight so discernible, may therefore be reasonably presumed in their natural designation to regard the same end. Wherefore as upon consideration of that ample provision, which is made in nature for the necessary sustenance, defence, and relief, for the convenience, delight, and satisfaction of every creature, any man, who is not careless or stupid, may be induced to cry out with the Psalmist, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all:* so may he with no less reason and ground after him pronounce and acknowledge; *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: Thy mercy is great unto the heavens: thy mercy is great above the heavens.* It is indeed because divine goodness is freely diffusive and communicative of itself; because essential love is active and fruitful in beneficence; because highest excellency is void of all envy, selfishness, and tenacity, that the world was produced such as it was; those perfections being intrinsic to God's nature, disposed him to bestow so much of being, of beauty, of pleasure upon his creatures. *He openeth his hand, they are filled with*

Psalm. civ.
24.

Ps. xxxiii.
5. cxix. 64.
lvii. 10.
cviii. 4.
civ. 10, &c.
lxv. 11.
ciii. 4.

Ps. civ. 28.

good: it is from God's open hand, his unconfined SERM.
bounty and liberality, that all creatures do receive LXVIII.
all that good which fills them, which satisfies their
needs, and satiates their desires. Every pleasant
object we view, every sweet and savoury morsel we
taste, every fragranciness we smell, every harmony we
hear; the wholesome, the cheering, the useful, yea,
the innocent and inoffensive qualities of every thing
we do use and enjoy, are so many perspicuous argu-
ments of divine goodness; we may not only by our
reason collect it, but we even touch and feel it with
all our senses.

The like conclusion may be inferred from the ob-
servation of divine Providence. Every signification
or experiment, whence we may reasonably infer that
divine power and wisdom do concur in upholding,
managing, and directing the general state of things,
or the particular affairs of men, being well examined
and weighed, would afford reason apt to persuade,
that the Governor of the world is graciously affected
toward his creatures and subjects. The general pre-
servation of things in their natural constitution and
order; the dispensing constant vicissitudes of season,
so as may serve for the supply of our needs; the
maintaining such a course of things in the world,
that, notwithstanding the great irregularity of will,
and violence of passion in so many persons; yet
men do ordinarily shift so as to live tolerably upon
earth in peace and safety, and enjoyment of compe-
tent accommodations for life; with the aids and
consolations arising from mutual society; the sup-
ports, encouragements, and rewards of virtue many
times in a strange manner administered; the re-
straints, disappointments, and seasonable chastise-

SERM.
LXVIII.

ments of wickedness, especially when it grows exorbitant and outrageous, unexpectedly intervening, with the like passages of Providence, will, to him that shall *regard the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands*, sufficiently declare as the other glorious attributes, (wisdom, power, and justice, so especially the goodness of him who presides over the world; assuring that he is a friend to the welfare, and dislikes the misery of mankind. He that shall well observe and consider how among so many fierce and hardhearted, so many crafty and spiteful, so many domineering and devouring spirits, the poor and weak, the simple and harmless sort of people do however subsist, and enjoy somewhat, cannot but suspect that an undiscernible hand, full of pity and bounty, doth often convey the necessary supports of life to them, doth often divert imminent mischiefs from them; cannot but acknowledge it credible what the holy scripture teacheth, that God is the friend, and patron, and protector of those needy and helpless people, *redeeming their soul from deceit and violence*, as the Psalmist speaks; that he is, as the prophet expresseth it, *a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall*. He that shall remark, how frequently, in an unaccountable way, succour and relief do spring up to just and innocent persons; so that in a whole age, as the Psalmist observed, such persons do not appear destitute or forsaken; how also iniquity is commonly stopped in its full career, and then easily receives a check, when its violence seemed uncontrollable; how likewise many times the world is

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

Psal. xiv. 6.
tot. x. 14.
lxxii. 12.
Isa. xxv. 4.

Ps. xxxvii.
25.

rescued from confusions and distractions unextricable by any visible wit or force; with other like occurrences in human affairs; must admit it for a reasonable hypothesis (fit to render a cause of such appearances) that a transcendent goodness doth secretly interpose, furthering the production of such effects: he must upon such observation be ready to verify that of the Psalmist: *Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth the earth.* St. Paul instructs us, that in past times (that is, in all generations from the beginning of things) *God did attest himself to be the Governor of the world: How? ἀγαθοποιῶν, by his beneficence; giving to men showers from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness:* competent evidences, it seems, these were of his providence, and withal (supposing that) certain demonstrations of his goodness: although some have abused this kind of testimony, or argumentation, so valid in itself, unto a contrary purpose; alleging, that if God ruled the world, so much wickedness and impiety would not be tolerated therein; that ingrateful and evil men could not so thrive and flourish; that more speedy and more severe vengeance would be executed; that benefits would not be scattered among the crowd of men, with so promiscuous and undistinguishing a freeness. But such discourses, upon a just and true account, do only infer the great patience and clemency, the unconfined mercy and bounty of our Lord; that he is in disposition very different from pettish and impatient man, who, should he have the reins put into his hands, and in his administration of things should be so often neglected, crossed, abused, would soon over-

SERM.
LXVIII.Psal. lviii.
ult.Acts xiv.
17.

SERM. turn all things ; and, being himself discomposed with
LXVIII. passion, would precipitate the world into confusion
 and ruin.

Things would not have subsisted hitherto, and continued in their orderly course, but by the moderation of an immense goodness ; by that

Claud.

—magni custos clementia mundi.

Lam. iii.
32.

It is *by the Lord's mercies that we* (we, the whole body of sinful men, so guilty of heinous provocations and rebellions against our Maker) *are not consumed.*

Hos. xi. 8.

And what again God in the prophet speaks concerning Israel, he might have applied to the whole nation of men : *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man.* The reason (for I am God, and not man) is observable; implying. (upon parity of reason in the cases, concerning that one nation, and concerning the body of men) that it is an indulgence and forbearance above, if not contrary to the temper of man, and even beyond human conceit, whereby the state of things here doth subsist, and is preserved from ruin.

Exod.
xxxiv. 6.

Thus nature and thus Providence do bear witness concerning the disposition of God. As for scripture, there is nothing either in way of positive assertion more frequently inculcated, or by more illustrious examples set forth, and made palpable, than this attribute of God. When God would impart a portraiture or description of himself to his dearest friend and favourite, Moses ; the first and chief lineaments thereof are several sorts, or several instances of

goodness; he expresses himself *merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness*: SERM. LXVIII.
(Merciful: El rachum) a God of pitying, or strong רחם לו
in pity; that is, most apt to commiserate and to succour those who are in need or distress. *Gracious*, that is, ready both freely to forgive wrongs, and to dispense favours. *Longsuffering*, or *longus irarum*, that is, not soon moved, or apt easily to conceive displeasure; not hasty in execution of vengeance, or venting his anger in hurtful effects. *Abundant in goodness*, that is, not sparing as to quantity or quality, either in the multitude or magnitude of his favours, but in all respects exceedingly liberal; conferring willingly both very many and very great benefits. Such did God represent himself to Moses, when he desired a fuller knowledge Psal. lxxvi. 5. ciii. 8, &c. and nearer acquaintance with him, than ordinary means afford. The same character in substance we have often repeated, and sometimes with advantage of emphatical expression, well deserving our observation and regard; as when the prophet Joel saith, that God *is penitent, or sorry, for evil inflicted*; Joel ii. 13. and Micah, that *he delighteth in mercy*; and when Micah vii. 18. Nehemiah calleth him *a God of pardons*; and Neh. ix. 17. Isa. xxx. 18. when Isaiah represents him as *waiting* (or seeking occasions) *to be gracious*: and all this in the Old Testament, where God seems to look upon man with a less serene and debonair aspect. Indeed, as that dispensation (suitably to the nature and condition of things under it) doth set out God's mercy and goodness, with especial relation to this present world, or temporal estate; so the New one more abundantly displays his more excellent care and love of our souls; his great tenderness of our spiritual and eter-

SERM. LXVIII. nal welfare. It is all of it in its nature and design but as it were one entire declaration of the τὸ χρη-

Rom. ii. 4. στόν τοῦ Θεοῦ, (the beneficial disposition, the benignity, or bountifulness of God, as St. Paul telleth us;) it is a rare project of divine philanthropy; an illustrious affidavit of God's wonderful propensity to bless and save mankind; manifested by the highest expressions and instances of love and goodness that were possible. (For his not sparing his own Son, *the express image of his substance*, the dearest object of his infinite love, the partaker of his eternal nature and glory, but delivering him up a sacrifice for our offences; his most earnest wooing our baseness and unworthiness to reconciliation with him, and admission or acceptance of his favour; his tendering upon so fair and easy terms an endless life in perfect joy and bliss; his furnishing us with so plentiful means and powerful aids for attaining that happy state—

Rom. v. 21. how pregnant demonstrations are these, of unspeakable goodness toward us! whence) The ordinary titles in this dispensation attributed unto him, are,

² Cor. xiii. *the God of love and peace, of hope, of patience;*
 11. i. 3. *of all grace, of all consolation; the father of pities,*
 1 Pet. v. 10. *rich in mercy, full of bowels; love and goodness*
 Eph. ii. 4. *itself.* Thus doth the scripture positively assert
 Jam. v. 11. God's goodness; thus it directly represents and describes his gracious disposition toward us. And as
 1 John iv. 8. for examples, (which must serve as to illustrate and explain, so also to verify and assure matters of this nature,) if we carefully attend to God's ordinary proceedings with men there recorded, we shall find

Luke vi.
 35. For he
 is kind unto
 the un-
 thankful
 and to the
 evil.

this disposition very conspicuous in them. Who can recount the number, or set out the value of those instances wherein God's goodness is expressed to-

ward such as loved him? of his admirable conde-
 scension in drawing them to him; of the affection-
 ate tenderness with which he constantly embraced
 them; of his merciful indulgence toward them,
 when provoked by their untowardly behaviour; of
 his kind acceptance, and munificent recompensing
 their endeavours to please him; of his deep com-
 passionating their sufferings; of his vigilant careful-
 ness over them, and over all their concerns? **SERM.**
LXVIII.
 Methinks the highest expressions that language, as-
 sisted with all its helps of metaphor and resemblance,
 can afford, are very languid and faint in comparison
 of what they strain to represent, when the goodness
 of God toward them who love him comes to be ex-
 pressed: *As the heaven is high above the earth, so* **Psal.**
great is his mercy toward them that fear him: **xxxvi. 6.**
ciii. 11, 13.
Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord
pitieth them that fear him: so David strives to
 utter it, but with similitudes far short of the truth.
 If any will come near to reach it, it is that in Moses
 and Zechariah, when they are compared to *the apple* **Dent.**
of God's eye, that is, to the most dear and tender **xxxiii. 10.**
Zech. ii. 8.
 part, as it were, about him.

We find them often stiled, and ever treated, as **John xv.**
 friends and as children; and that in a sense trans-
 cending the vulgar signification of those words; for, **14.**
2 Chron.
 what friendship could endure, could pass over, could
 forget, could admit an entire reconciliation and re-
 establishment in affection after such heinous indig-
 nities, such infidelities, such undutifulness, as were
 those of Adam, of Noah, of David, of Peter? Who
 would have received into favour and familiarity a
 Manasses, a Magdalen, a Paul? Who would so far
 extend his regard upon the posterity (upon such a **xx. 7.**

SERM. LXVIII. posterity, so untoward, so unworthy) of his friend, as God did upon that of Abraham, in respect unto him? What great prince would employ his principal courtiers to guard and serve a poor attendant, a mean subject of his? Yet, *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;* and many instances we have of those glorious inhabitants of heaven by God's appointment stooping down to wait upon and to perform service to the sons of men. But upon examples of this nature, being numberless, and composing indeed the main body of the sacred history, (it being chiefly designed to represent them,) I shall not insist; I shall only observe, for preventing or satisfying objections, (yea, indeed, for turning them to the advantage and confirmation of that which we assert,) that even in those cases, wherein God's highest severity hath been exercised, when God hath purposed to exhibit most dreadful instances of his justice upon the most provocative occasions; we may discern his goodness eminently shewing itself^b: that even in the greatest extremity of his displeasure, in his acts of highest vengeance, *mercy doth κατακαυχᾶσθαι τῆς κρίσεως,* (as St. James speaketh,) *boast itself, and triumph over justice:* that God, as the sun, (to use Tertullian's similitude,) when he seems most to infest and scorch us, doth even then dis-

Ps. xxxiv. 7.

Jam. ii. 13.

^b Γίνεται φιλανθρωπία ἢ τιμωρία· οὕτω γὰρ ἐγὼ κείβομαι κολάζειν τὸν Θεόν. Naz. Orat. 38.

Ἐγὼ τοσαύτην περίουσιαν εἶναι φημι τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ κηδεμονίας, ὡς μὴ μόνον ἀφ' ὧν ἐτίμησεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀφ' ὧν ἐκόλασεν ὁμοίως ἡμᾶς δύνασθαι τὴν ἀγαθότητα αὐτοῦ δεικνύσαι, καὶ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν. Chrys. Ἄνθρ. ζ'.

Ἄλλοι οὖν ἀπαθῆς ὢν, κἄν εὐεργετῆ, κἄν κολάζῃ, ὁμοίως ἐστὶν ἀγαθός. Ibid.

sense useful and healthful influences upon us^c. SERM. LXVIII.
 Even, I say, in the most terrible and amazing examples of divine justice (such as were the ejecting and excluding mankind from Paradise; the general destruction in the deluge; the excising and extirpation of the Amorites, together with other inhabitants of Canaan; the delivering Israel and Judah into the Assyrian thralldom; the final destruction of Jerusalem, together with the dispersion of the Jewish nation over the world, and its sad consequences) we may (not hardly) observe particulars, more than savouring of great mercy and goodness.

Vide Chrys.
 tom. vi. Or.
 8. p. 63.
 optime.

1. That (in most of these cases, in all according to some account) God was not moved to the displeasure productive of those effects but upon very great considerations. That he did not seek advantages, nor embrace all occasions; but was incensed by superlative degrees of iniquity and impurity, (such in their own nature, and much aggravated by their circumstances,) such as rendered common life inconvenient and insupportable to men; made the earth to stink with their filth and corruption; to groan under the burden and weight of them; to pant and labour for a riddance from them.

2. That God did not upon the first glimpses of provocation proceed to the execution and discharge of his wrath, but did with wonderful patience expect a change in the offenders, *waiting to be gracious*, as the prophet speaketh; affording more than competent time, and means more than sufficient of appeasing him by repentance; vouchsafing frequent

Isa. xxx.
 18.

^c Tunc maxime est optimus, cum tibi non bonus; sicut sol tibi etiam quando non putas optimus et utilis, &c. *Tertull. in Marc. ii. 2.*

SERM. admonitions, solicitations, threatenings, moderate
 LXVIII. corrections, and other such proper methods con-
 ducting to their amendment and to their preserva-
 tion.

3. That the inflictions themselves, how grievous
 soever in appearance, were not really extreme in
 measure; not accompanied with so acute torments,
 nor with so lingering pains, nor with so utter a ruin,
 as might have been inflicted; but that (as Ezra, in
 Ez. ix. 13. respect to one of those cases, confesseth) they *were*
less than their iniquities deserved. That, as it is
 Ps. lxxviii. in the Psalm, *He did not stir up all his wrath*;
 38. which would have immediately consumed them, or
 infinitely tormented them.

4. That (consequently upon some of those pre-
 mises) the afflictions brought upon them were in a
 sort rather necessary than voluntary in respect of
 him; rather a natural fruit of their dispositions and
 dealings, than a free result of his will; however con-
 trary to his primary intentions and desires. Whence
 Ezek. xviii. 23, 32. he no less truly than earnestly disclaims having any
 xxxiii. 11. pleasure in their death, that he *afflicted willingly,*
 Lam. iii. 33. *or grieved the children of men*; and charges their
 Hos. xiii. 9. disasters upon themselves, as the sole causes of
 them.

5. That further, the chastisements inflicted were
 wholesome and profitable, both in their own nature,
 and according to his design^d; both in respect to the
 generality of men, (who by them were warned, and
 by such examples deterred from incurring the like
 mischiefs; were kept from the inconveniences, se-
 cured from the temptations, the violences, the allure-

^d Chrys. 'Ανδρ. ζ'.

'Ομοῦ καὶ δικαστῆς καὶ ἰατρὸς καὶ διδάσκαλός ἐστιν ὁ Θεός. Ibid.

ments, the contagions of the present evil state; according to that reason alleged for punishments of this kind: *All the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously,* and in regard to the sufferers themselves, who thereby were prevented from proceeding further in their wicked courses^c; accumulating (or *treasuring up*, as the apostle speaketh) further degrees of *wrath*, as obdurate and incorrigible people will surely do: (*Why*, saith the prophet, *should ye be stricken any more?* (to what purpose is moderate correction?) *Ye will revolt more and more.*) That he did with a kind of violence to his own inclinations, and reluctancy, inflict punishments on them. *O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up, O Ephraim!* Yea further:

6. That, during their sufferance, God did bear compassion toward them who underwent it. *His bowels*, as we are told, *sounded and were troubled; his heart was turned within him; his repentings were kindled together; in all their afflictions himself was afflicted; he remembered, and considered they were but dust; that they were but flesh,* (that they were but of a weak and frail temper; that they were naturally prone to corruption and evil,) and did therefore pity their infirmity and their misery.

7. That God *in his wrath remembered mercy*, (as the prophet Habakkuk speaks,) mixing gracious intentions of future refreshment and reparation with the present executions of justice. *I know*, saith he in the prophet Jeremiah, *the thoughts that I think toward you; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to*

^c Ἐπιτίθησι τιμωρίαν, ὡς τῶν ἀπελθόντων ἀπαντῶν δίκην, ἀλλὰ τὰ μέλλοντα διορθούμενος. Chrys. tom. viii. p. 99.

SERM. *give you an expected end. Behold, I will bring*
 LXVIII. *health and cure, I will cure them, and will reveal*
 unto them abundance of peace and truth. And,
 Isa. liv. 7. *For a small moment, saith he again in Isaiah, have*
 I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I
 Ezek. xiv. *gather thee. And, Ye shall be comforted concern-*
 2, 23. *ing the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem—*
 and, ye shall know that I have not done without
 cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord;
 (he saith so in Ezekiel;) *without cause*, that is, with-
 out a beneficial design toward them.

8. Lastly, That he always signified a readiness to
 turn from his anger, and to forgive them; and upon
 very equal and easy terms to be fully reconciled to
 them; according to that in the Psalm, *He doth not*
 Ps. ciii. 9. *always chide, neither will he keep his anger for*
ever; but upon any reasonable overtures of humilia-
 tion, confession, and conversion to him, was ready to
 abate, yea, to remove the effects of his displeasure:
 Ps. xcix. 8. *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou*
tookest vengeance of their inventions.

These particulars, if we attentively survey those
 dreadful examples of divine severity forementioned,
 (the greatest which history acquaints us with, or
 which have been shewed on this theatre of human
 affairs,) we may observe most of them in all, all of
 them in some, either plainly expressed, or sufficiently
 insinuated by the circumstances observable in the
 historical narrations concerning them; so that even
 the harshest instances of God's wrathful dealing with
 some men, may well serve to the illustration of his
 mercy and goodness toward all men; may evince it
 true, what our Lord affirms, that God is *χρηστός ἐπὶ*
 Luke vi. 35. *ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηροὺς, kind and beneficent even to the*

most ingrateful and unworthy persons. To make which observation good, and consequently to assert the verity of our text (that *God is good unto all, and merciful over all his works*) against the most plausible exceptions, I shall examine the particulars in the following Discourse. SERM.
LXVIII.

SERMON LXIX.

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM cxlv. 9.

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

SERM. LXIX. I SHALL now more particularly consider the several instances before mentioned.

I. The punishment inflicted on mankind for the first transgression containeth in it much of depth and mystery, surpassing perhaps all capacity of man to reach; its full comprehension being by divine wisdom, I conceive, purposely concealed from us; so that I cannot pretend thoroughly to explain it; and shall not therefore speak much about it.

This indeed is clear, that God did in his proceedings, occasioned thereby, intend remarkably to evidence his grievous resentment and indignation against wilful disobedience; yet in the management thereof we may observe, that,

I. After that provocation (in itself so high, and liable to so great aggravations) ^aGod did express his resentment in so calm and gentle a manner, that Adam, though abashed upon the conscience of his fault, was not yet by the vehemency of the reproof utterly dismayed or dejected.

^a Vid. Chrys. 'Ανδρ. ζ'. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε, καθάπερ εἰκός ἦν ὑβρισμένον εἰπεῖν, ὦ μισαρέ, καὶ παμμίσαιρε, &c. Ibid.

2. God used great moderation in the infliction of **SERM.** this punishment; mitigating the extremity of the **LXIX.** sentence justly decreed and plainly declared to Adam, Gen. ii. 17. (that, in case of his offending against the law prescribed him, he should immediately die,) for notwithstanding his forfeiture that very day of life, God reprieved him, and allowed him a long life, almost of a thousand years, after.

3. God did not quite reject man thereupon, nor did withdraw his fatherly care and providence from him, but openly continued them; insomuch that, immediately after the curse pronounced upon our first parents, the next passage we meet with is, that unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats, Gen. iii. 21. and clothed them.

4. Although indeed man was by his fault a great loser, and became deprived of high advantages; yet the mercy of God did leave him in no very deplorable estate, simply considered, as to his life here; the relics of his first estate, and the benefits continued to him, being very considerable; so that we the inheritors of that great disaster do commonly find the enjoyment of life, with the conveniences attending it, to be sweet and desirable.

5. The event manifests, that while God in appearance so severely punished mankind, he did in his mind reserve thoughts of highest kindness toward us; even then designing not only to restore us to our former degree, but to raise us to a capacity of obtaining a far more high pitch of happiness. While he excluded us from a terrestrial paradise here, he provided a far better celestial one, into which, if we please, by obedience to his holy laws we may certainly enter. So that in this of all most heavy in-

SERM. stance of vengeance, God's exceeding goodness and
LXIX. clemency do upon several considerations most clearly
 shine.

II. The calamity, which by the general deluge did overflow the world, was not (we may consider) brought upon men but in regard to the most enormous offences long continued in, and after amendment was become desperate: not till after much forbearance, and till men were grown to a superlative pitch of wickedness, by no fit means (by no friendly warning, no sharp reprehension, no moderate chastisement) corrigible; not until the earth was become (especially for persons of any innocence or integrity) no tolerable habitation, but a theatre of lamentable tragedies, a seat of horrid iniquity, a sink of loathsome impurity. So that in reason it was to be esteemed rather a favour to mankind to rescue it from so unhappy a state, than to suffer it to persist therein. To snatch men away out of so uncomfortable a place, from so wretched a condition, was a mercy; it had been a judgment to have left them annoying, rifling, and harassing; biting, tearing, and devouring; yea, defiling and debauching each other; and so heaping upon themselves loads of guilt, and deeper

Gen. vi. 11, obligations to vengeance. *The earth, saith the*
 12. *text, was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth; which universal and extreme corruption had not in probability sprung up in a small time; for,*

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus, —

is true not only of single men, but of communities; no people, no age doth suddenly degenerate into

extreme degrees of wickedness; so that the divine SERM.
 patience had long endured and attended upon men LXIX.
 before the resolution of thus punishing them was
 taken up; the which also was not at first peremptory
 and irreversible, but in God's design and desire it
 was revocable; for the world had a long reprieve
 after the sentence passed; execution was deferred
 till Noah's long preaching of righteousness, and de-
 nouncing of judgment in a manner so notorious and
 signal, (not by verbal declarations only, but by the
 visible structure of the ark,) could prevail nothing
 toward their amendment, but was either distrusted
 or disregarded, and perhaps derided by them. For,
 as St. Peter tells us, *they were disobedient, when* 1 Pet. iii.
once the longsuffering of God waited in the days 2 Pet. ii. 5.
of Noah, while the ark was preparing; that is, (as
 is collected by several interpreters from the text of
 the story,) during no less than one hundred and Gen. vi. 3.
 twenty years; a competent time for their recollect-
 ing themselves, and endeavouring by amendment of
 life to prevent the ruin threatened to come upon
 them. Yet notwithstanding that, this obstinate and
 incorrigible disobedience did so much displease God,
 as that in consideration thereof God is said to have
repented that he made man on the earth, and to Gen. vi. 6.
 have been thereby grieved at the heart: yet did he
 so temper his anger as not utterly to destroy man-
 kind, but provided against its total ruin, by preserv-
 ing one family as a seminary thereof; preserving the
 father thereof (questionless by a special grace) from
 the spreading contagion, inspiring him with faith,
 and qualifying him for the favour, which by him he
 designed to communicate unto the world; the repa-
 ration thereof, and restoring the generations of men.

SERM. So that also through this passage of providence,
LXIX. how dismal and dreadful soever at first sight, much
 goodness will be transparent to him that looks upon
 it attentively.

III. In the next place, as to that extermination
 and excision of the Canaanites, which carries so
Levit. xviii. horrible an appearance of severity, we may find it
 qualifiable, if we consider, that for the nature of the
 trespasses, which procured it, they were insufferably
 heinous and abominable: most sottish, barbarous,
 and base superstitions, (cruelty and impurity being
 essential ingredients into their performances of re-
 ligion, and it being piety with them to be exceed-
 ingly wicked,) and in their other practice most
 beastly lasciviousnesses, most bloody violences, op-
 pressions, and rapines generally abounding. So that
 for those men themselves, who were by turns, as it
 happened, the authors and the objects of these deal-
 ings, it could not be desirable to continue in a state
 of living so wretched and uncomfortable. Impunity
 had been no mercy to such people, but rather a cru-
 elty; cutting them off must needs be the greatest
 favour they were capable of, it being only removing
 them from a hell here, and preventing their deserv-
 ing many worse hells hereafter. Even to themselves
 it was a favour, and a greater one to their posterity,
 whom they might have brought forth to succeed into
 their courses, and to the consequences of them;
 whom they would have engaged into their wicked
 customs, and their woful mischiefs. They were not
 so destroyed from the land, until it grew uninhabit-
 able in any tolerable manner, and itself could not,
 as it were, endure them any longer, but (as the text
Levit. xviii. doth most significantly express it) *did spue them*
 28.

out; being like a stomach surcharged with foul or poisonous matter, which it loathes, and is pained with, and therefore naturally labours to expel. Neither was this sad doom executed upon them till after four hundred years of forbearance; for even in Abraham's time God took notice of their iniquity, then born and growing; and gave account of his suspending their punishment; *because*, said he, *the iniquity of the Amorites* was not yet full, (that is, was not yet arrived to a pitch of desperate obstinacy and incorrigibility:) while there was the least glimpse of hope, the least relics of any reason, any regret, any shame in them, the least possibility of recovery, God stopped his avenging hand: but when all ground of hope was removed, the whole stock of natural light and strength was embezzled, all fear, all remorse, all modesty were quite banished away, all means of cure had proved ineffectual, the gangrene of vice had seized on every part, iniquity was grown mature and mellow; then was the stroke of justice indeed not more seasonable than necessary; then was the fatal sword the only proper remedy; then so with one stroke to cut off them, and their sins, and their mischiefs, and their miseries together, was an argument no less strong and clear of God's merciful goodness, than of his just anger toward them.

IV. The like account we may render of God's judgments upon the people of Israel. If we consult the prophets, who declare the state of things, the facts, the dispositions, the guilts, that brought them down from heaven, we shall see, that they came upon account of an universal apostasy from both the faith and practice of true religion; *a deep corrup-* Hos. xi. 9.

SERM.
LXIX.

SERM. *tion (like that in the days of Gibeah, as the pro-*
 LXIX. *phet Hosea speaketh) in mind and manners; an*

utter perverting of all truth and right; an obstinate compliance with, or emulation of, the most abominable practices of the heathen nations about them; an universal apostasy, I say, from God and all goodness; a thorough prevalence of all iniquity. Hear the prophets expressing it, and describing them:

Jer. v. 1. *Jeremiah; Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the*

Is. xxiv. 5. *truth; and I will pardon it. Isaiah; The earth*
 i. 4. *is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because*

they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant: Ah sinful nation! a people laden with iniquities, a seed of evil doers; children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward, &c. Thus do these and other prophets in a like strain describe in the gross the state

Ezek. xxii. *of things preceding those judgments. And in Ezekiel (in divers places, particularly in the 8th, but especially in the 22d chapter) we have their offences in detail, and by parts (their gross impieties, their grievous cruelties, extortions, and oppressions) set out copiously, and in most lively colours. And as the quality of their provocations was so bad, and the extension of them so large, so was their condition desperate; there were no means of remedy left, no hopes of amendment; so was their forehead covered with impudence, their heart hardened with obstinacy, their minds deeply tintured with habitual*

pravity and perverseness: *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil,* saith SERM. LXIX. Jer. xiii. 23. Jeremiah concerning them. All methods of reclaiming them had proved fruitless; no favourable dealings, no gentle admonition or kind instruction would avail any thing; for it is of them the prophet Isaiah saith, *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness.* Isa. xxvi. 10. No advices, no reproofs (how frequent, how vehement, how urgent soever) had any effect upon them. Almighty God declares often, that he had spoken unto them rising up early, but they would not hear nor regard his speech; did not only neglect and refuse, but *despise, loathe, mock, and reproach it, (turning their back upon him, pulling away their shoulder, stiffening their neck, and stopping their ears, that they should not hear;)* that he had spread out his hands all the day long to a rebellious and gainsaying people; to a people that (with extreme insolence and immodesty) provoked him to anger continually to his face. Nor could any tenders of mercy allure or move them: *I said* (God said it in Jer. iii. 7. vii. 3. iv. 1. xxxii. 33. vi. 10. Jeremiah) *after all these things, Turn unto me; but she returned not. Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin;* and innumerable the like overtures we have of grace and mercy to them; all which they proudly and perversely rejected, persisting in their wicked courses: they even repelled and silenced, they rudely treated and perse- Jer. xi. 21. xxxii. 30.

SERM. cuted the prophets sent unto them with messages of
 LXIX. kind warning and overtures of grace; so obstruct-

ing all access of mercy to themselves: *They say to*

the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy

not unto us right things: so Isaiah reports their

proceeding. *Which of the prophets did not your*
fathers persecute? so St. Stephen expostulates with

them. Neither were gentler chastisements designed

for their correction and cure anywise available;

they made no impression on them, they produced

no change in them: *In vain, saith God, I have*

smitten your children, they have received no cor-

rection. And, Thou hast smitten them, but they

have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but

they have refused to receive correction; they have

made their faces harder than a rock, they have

refused to return. And, The people turneth not

to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the

Lord of Hosts. Unto this *καταρτισμὸς εἰς ἀπόλειαν,*

this perfect fitness, (as St. Paul speaketh,) this ma-

turity of desperate and irrecoverable impiety, had

that people grown, not at once, and on a sudden,

but by continual steps of provocation, through a

long course of time, during that divine patience

sparing them, and by various expedients striving to

recover them. This consideration is frequently in-

sisted upon, especially in the prophet Jeremiah:

The children of Israel and the children of Ju-

dah have only done evil before me from their

youth: Since the day that your fathers came forth

out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have

even sent unto you all my servants the prophets,

daily rising up early, and sending them; yet they

hearkened not unto me, &c. Well then, after so

Jer. xxxii.

30. vii. 25.

xvi. 12. xi.

7.

Ezra ix. 7.

many hundred years of abused patience, and unsuccessful labour to reclaim them, it was needful that justice should have her course upon them: yet how then did God inflict it, with what mildness and moderation, with what pity and relenting? *Nevertheless, say they in Nehemiah, for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.* And, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve,* doth Ezra confess. *I will not execute the fierceness of my anger,* doth God himself resolve and declare in Hosea. So mild he was as to the measure of his punishing; and what compassion accompanied it those pathetic expressions declare: *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him. In all their afflictions he was afflicted,* &c. We may add, that notwithstanding all these provocations of his wrath, and abusings of his patience, which thus necessitated God to execute his vengeance; yet even during the execution thereof, and while his hand was so stretched forth against them, he did retain thoughts of favour, and intentions of doing good, even toward this so ingrateful, so insensible, so incorrigible a people: *For a small moment, saith God, have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee: I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Now these things being seriously laid together, have we not occasion and ground sufficient

SERM.
LXIX.

Neh. ix. 31.

Ezra ix. 13.

Hos. xi. 9.

Hos. xi. 8.

Jer. xxxi.

20.

We Isa. lxiii. 9.

Jer. xxix.

11. xxxiii.

6, 7.

SERM. even in this instance, no less to admire and adore
 LXIX. the wonderful benignity, mercy, and patience of
 God, than to dread and tremble at his justice?

V. As for the last so calamitous and piteous destruction of Jerusalem, with the grievous consequences thereof, as we might apply thereto the former considerations, so we shall only observe what was peculiar in that case; that God dispensed such means to prevent it, (to remove the meritorious causes thereof, obstinate impenitency and incredulity; resisting the truth by him sent from heaven with so clear a revelation and powerful confirmation; despising the Spirit of God, and the dictates of their own conscience; basely misusing divers ways, and at last cruelly murdering the Son of God;) such means, I say, God did employ for the removing those provocatives of vengeance, which, as our Lord himself saith, were sufficient to have converted Tyre and Sidon; yea, to have preserved Sodom itself; so that our Saviour could with a compassionate grief deplore the unsuccessfulness of his tender affection, and solicitous care for their welfare, in these passionate terms: *How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, but ye would not!* That St. John the Baptist's sharp reproofs, his powerful exhortations, his downright and clear forewarnings of what would follow, (*Even now, said he, the axe is laid to the root of the tree,*) attended with so remarkable circumstances of his person and his carriage, (which induced all the world about him to regard him as no ordinary man, but a special instrument of God and messenger from heaven,) did yet find no effect considerable: the Pharisees and lawyers, those cor-

Matt. xi.
21.

Matt. xxiii.
37.

Matt. iii.
10.

rupt guides, whose authority managed the blind SERM.
 multitude, *defeating the counsel of God toward* LXIX.
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 ing his gracious purpose of reclaiming them from 30.
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 that venerable prophet; *He hath a devil*, said Matt. xi. 18.
 they: they slighted his premonitions, and rejected
 his advices, by observing which, those dreadful mis-
 chiefs, which fell upon their rebellious heads, might
 have been averted. We may add, that even those
 fearful judgments were tempered with mixtures of
 favourable design, not only to the community of
 mankind, (which, by so remarkable a vengeance
 upon the persecutors of our Lord, and the scorn-
 ers of his doctrine, was converted unto, or con-
 firmed in, the Christian faith,) but even toward
 that people whom it served to convince of their
 errors and crimes; to induce them to repentance,
 to provoke them unto the acknowledgment and
 embracing of God's truth, so palpably vindicated
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 of St. Paul, (if not directly and adequately according
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 least,) *Have they stumbled, that they should fall?* Rom. xi.
 (or, was there no other design of God's judgments 11.
 upon them but their utter ruin?) *μη γένοιτο*. *No*
such matter; but through their fall salvation came
to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy (or
 emulation). And, in effect, as our Lord in the midst
 of his sufferings did affectionately pray for God's
 mercy upon them, as the apostles did offer reconcilia-
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 and were willing to embrace it; so were such of

SERM. ruin. *As I live, saith the Lord, (and surely when*
LXIX. *God swears, we may believe that he is very serious,)*
 Ezek. xviii. *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but*
 30. xxxiii. *that the wicked turn from his way, and live. I*
 11. *call heaven to record this day against you, that*
 Deut. xxx. *I have set life and death before you: therefore*
 19. *choose life. He doth not afflict willingly, nor*
 Lam. iii. 33. *grieve the children of men. He would have all men*
to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the
 Wisd. i. 13. *truth. He would not have any perish, but that all*
should come to repentance. He made not death,
nor hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living.
 God then, if we may believe him, is not the first au-
 thor of our calamities. Who then? He tells us
 Hos. xiii. 9. *himself: O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself:*
 xiv. 1. *thou hast fallen by thine own iniquity. Your sins*
 Jer. v. 25. *have withholden good things from you. Our ini-*
 Isa. lxiv. 6. *quities, like the wind, have taken us away. How*
 Matt. xxiii. *often would I have gathered you, but ye would*
 37. *not!* The designs and the endeavours of God do tend
 to our welfare and salvation; it is our will and our
 actions which only procure our ruin: *It is we, that,*
 Wisd. i. 12. *as the Wise Man saith, seek death in the error of*
our life, and pull upon our own selves destruction.
 So that, to conclude this part of our discourse, even
 those passages of providence, which at first glimpse
 appear most opposite or disadvantageous to the good-
 ness of God^k, (or to our opinion and belief concern-
 ing it,) do, being well sifted, nowise prejudice it, but
 rather serve to corroborate and magnify it.

^k St. Chrysostom in divers places doth insist upon the good-
 ness of God in making and threatening hell itself.

Τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔλαττον, ἢ τῆς γέεννης ἀπειλή δέικνυ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγαθότητα, &c. Ἀδρ. ζ'.

I shall only further briefly touch (or rather but SERM. LXIX. mention) the uses and effects, to the producing which, the consideration of God's goodness, in so manifold ways declared, should be applied.

1. It should beget in us hearty love and reverence toward God, in regard to this attribute so excellent and amiable in itself, so beneficial and advantageous to us. What can we esteem, what can we love, if so admirable goodness doth not affect us? How prodigiously cold and hard is that heart, which cannot be warmed and softened into affection by so melting a consideration!

2. It should produce, as grateful sense in our hearts, so real endeavours of thankful obedience in our lives. It should make us *walk worthy of God*, Col. i. 10. *to all well-pleasing, bringing forth fruit in every good work*; taking heed of doing as did Hezekiah, of whom it is said, that *he rendered not according* 2 Chron. xxxiii. 25. *to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore was wrath upon him*; that we may not have that expostulation justly applied unto us, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and* Deut. Lxxxii. 6. *unwise?*

3. It should engage us the more to fear God; complying with the prophet's admonition, *Fear the* Hos. iii. 5. *Lord and his goodness*; considering that intimation of the Psalmist, *There is forgiveness with thee*, Ps. cxxx. 4. *that thou mayest be feared*; observing that advice of Samuel, *Only fear the Lord, and serve him; for* 1 Sam. xii. 24. *consider what great things he hath done for you*. For that indeed nothing is more terrible than goodness slighted, and patience abused.

4. It should humble, ashame, and grieve us, for having crossed and offended such exceeding goodness

SERM. LXIX. and mercy. It should cause us greatly to detest our sins, which lie under so heinous an aggravation; to be deeply displeas'd with ourselves, who have so unworthily committed them.

Neh. ix.
25, 26.

5. It should therefore render us wary and vigilant against the commission of any sin; that is, of incurring the guilt of so enormous ingratitude and baseness; making us cautious of doing like those, of whom it is confessed in Nehemiah; *They did eat, and were filled, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness: nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy laws behind their back.*

Vid. Chrys.
ad Theod.
ii. tom. 6.
p. 63. opti-
me et fuse.
Matt. vii.
11.

6. It should also breed and nourish in us faith and hope in God. For what reason can we have to distrust of so great goodness; that he will refuse to help us in our need; that he will fail in accomplishment of his promises; that he will withhold what is convenient for us? It should preserve us from despair. What temptation can we have to despair of mercy, if we heartily repent of our misdoings, and sincerely endeavour to please him?

7. It should upon the same account excite us to a free and constant exercise of all devotions. For why should we be shy or fearful of entering into so friendly and favourable a presence? why should we be backward from having (upon any occasion or need) a recourse to him, who is so willing, so desirous, so ready to do us good? what should hinder us from delighting in oblations of blessing and praise unto him?

8. It ought to render us submissive, patient, and contented under God's hand, of correction or trial, as knowing that it cannot be without very just cause

that such goodness seemeth displeas'd with us; that SERM.
 we are the chief causes of our suffering or our want; LXIX.
 so that we can have no good cause to repine or com-
 plain: for, *Wherefore doth the living man complain?* Lam. iii. 39.
since a man (suffers) for the punishment of his sins;
 since it is *our sins that withhold good things from* Jer. v. 25.
us; since also we considering this attribute may be
 assured, that all God's dispensations do aim and tend
 to our good.

9. It should also, in gratitude toward God, and
 imitation of him, engage us to be good, kind, and
 bountiful, placable, and apt to forgive; meek and
 gentle, pitiful, and affectionate toward our brethren;
to be good and merciful, as our heavenly Father is Luke vi.
merciful and benign even toward the wicked and 1 John iii.
ungrateful; to be kind unto one another, full of Coloss. iii.
bowels, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's Eph. iv. 32.
sake hath forgiven us.

10. Lastly, we ought to have an especial care of
 perverting this excellent truth by mistakes and vain
 presumptions; that we *do not turn the grace of God* Jude 4.
into wantonness, or occasion of licentious practice.
 Because God is very good and merciful, we must not
 conceive him to be fond, or slack, or careless; that
 he is apt to indulge us in sin, or to connive at our
 presumptuous transgression of his laws. No; *ἔπειτα*
τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἢ ἀγαθὸν, ἢ μισοπονηρία, (*the hatred of wicked-*
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 Clemens Alexandrinus saith,) God, even as he is good,
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SERM. LIX. cuted the prophets sent unto them with messages of kind warning and overtures of grace; so obstructing all access of mercy to themselves: *They say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things:* so Isaiah reports their proceeding. *Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?* so St. Stephen expostulates with them. Neither were gentler chastisements designed for their correction and cure anywise available; they made no impression on them, they produced no change in them: *In vain, saith God, I have smitten your children, they have received no correction. And, Thou hast smitten them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return. And, The people turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.* Unto this *καταρτισμὸς εἰς ἀπώλειαν*, this perfect fitness, (as St. Paul speaketh,) this maturity of desperate and irrecoverable impiety, had that people grown, not at once, and on a sudden, but by continual steps of provocation, through a long course of time, during that divine patience sparing them, and by various expedients striving to recover them. This consideration is frequently insisted upon, especially in the prophet Jeremiah: *The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them; yet they hearkened not unto me, &c.* Well then, after so

many hundred years of abused patience, and unsuccessful labour to reclaim them, it was needful that justice should have her course upon them: yet how then did God inflict it, with what mildness and moderation, with what pity and relenting? *Nevertheless*, say they in Nehemiah, *for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.* And, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve*, doth Ezra confess. *I will not execute the fierceness of my anger*, doth God himself resolve and declare in Hosea. So mild he was as to the measure of his punishing; and what compassion accompanied it those pathetic expressions declare: *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, &c.* We may add, that notwithstanding all these provocations of his wrath, and abusings of his patience, which thus necessitated God to execute his vengeance; yet even during the execution thereof, and while his hand was so stretched forth against them, he did retain thoughts of favour, and intentions of doing good, even toward this so ingrateful, so insensible, so incorrigible a people: *For a small moment, saith God, have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee: I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Now these things being seriously laid together, have we not occasion and ground sufficient

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I shall only further briefly touch (or rather but SERM. LXIX. mention) the uses and effects, to the producing which, the consideration of God's goodness, in so manifold ways declared, should be applied.

1. It should beget in us hearty love and reverence toward God, in regard to this attribute so excellent and amiable in itself, so beneficial and advantageous to us. What can we esteem, what can we love, if so admirable goodness doth not affect us? How prodigiously cold and hard is that heart, which cannot be warmed and softened into affection by so melting a consideration!

2. It should produce, as grateful sense in our hearts, so real endeavours of thankful obedience in our lives. It should make us *walk worthy of God*, Col. i. 10. *to all well-pleasing, bringing forth fruit in every good work*; taking heed of doing as did Hezekiah, of whom it is said, that *he rendered not according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up*; 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. *therefore was wrath upon him*; that we may not have that expostulation justly applied unto us, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?* Deut. xxxii. 6.

3. It should engage us the more to fear God; complying with the prophet's admonition, *Fear the Lord and his goodness*; Hos. iii. 5. considering that intimation of the Psalmist, *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*; Ps. cxxx. 4. observing that advice of Samuel, *Only fear the Lord, and serve him; for consider what great things he hath done for you.* 1 Sam. xii. 24. For that indeed nothing is more terrible than goodness slighted, and patience abused.

4. It should humble, ashame, and grieve us, for having crossed and offended such exceeding goodness

SERM. and mercy. It should cause us greatly to detest our
LXIX. sins, which lie under so heinous an aggravation ; to
 be deeply displeas'd with ourselves, who have so un-
 worthily committed them.

Neh. ix.
25, 26.

5. It should therefore render us wary and vigi-
 lant against the commission of any sin ; that is, of
 incurring the guilt of so enormous ingratitude and
 baseness ; making us cautious of doing like those, of
 whom it is confessed in Nehemiah ; *They did eat,
 and were filled, and delighted themselves in thy
 great goodness : nevertheless they were disobedient,
 and rebelled against thee, and cast thy laws behind
 their back.*

Vid. Chrys.
ad Theod.
ii. tom. 6.
p. 63. opti-
me et fuse.
Matt. vii.
11.

6. It should also breed and nourish in us faith and
 hope in God. For what reason can we have to dis-
 trust of so great goodness ; that he will refuse to
 help us in our need ; that he will fail in accomplish-
 ment of his promises ; that he will withhold what is
 convenient for us ? It should preserve us from de-
 spair. What temptation can we have to despair of
 mercy, if we heartily repent of our misdoings, and
 sincerely endeavour to please him ?

7. It should upon the same account excite us to
 a free and constant exercise of all devotions. For
 why should we be shy or fearful of entering into so
 friendly and favourable a presence ? why should we
 be backward from having (upon any occasion or need)
 a recourse to him, who is so willing, so desirous, so
 ready to do us good ? what should hinder us from
 delighting in oblations of blessing and praise unto
 him ?

8. It ought to render us submissive, patient, and
 contented under God's hand, of correction or trial,
 as knowing that it cannot be without very just cause

that such goodness seemeth displeas'd with us; that we are the chief causes of our suffering or our want; SERM. LXIX. so that we can have no good cause to repine or complain: for, *Wherefore doth the living man complain? since a man (suffers) for the punishment of his sins; since it is our sins that withhold good things from us*; since also we considering this attribute may be assured, that all God's dispensations do aim and tend to our good.

9. It should also, in gratitude toward God, and imitation of him, engage us to be good, kind, and bountiful, placable, and apt to forgive; meek and gentle, pitiful, and affectionate toward our brethren; *to be good and merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful and benign even toward the wicked and ungrateful; to be kind unto one another, full of bowels, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.* Luke vi. 35, 36. 1 John iii. 16. Coloss. iii. 13. Eph. iv. 32.

10. Lastly, we ought to have an especial care of perverting this excellent truth by mistakes and vain presumptions; that we do not turn the grace of God into wantonness, or occasion of licentious practice. Because God is very good and merciful, we must not conceive him to be fond, or slack, or careless; that he is apt to indulge us in sin, or to connive at our presumptuous transgression of his laws. No; *ἕτερα τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἢ ἀγαθὸν, ἢ μισσησπονηρία, (the hatred of wickedness is consequent upon goodness even as such, as Clemens Alexandrinus saith,)* God, even as he is good, cannot but detest that which is opposite and prejudicial to goodness; he cannot but maintain the honour and interest thereof; he cannot, he will not endure us to dishonour him, to wrong our neighbour, to spoil ourselves. As he is a sure friend to us as

SERM. his creatures, so he is an implacable enemy to us as

LXIX. impenitent rebels and apostates from our duty. *The*

Psal. xi. 5. wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.

Hab. i. 13. As he is infinitely benign, so he is also perfectly holy,

Psal. v. 4, 5. and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. He is

not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither

shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not

stand in his sight; he hateth all workers of ini-

Psal. xxxiv. quity. His face is against them that do evil.

16.

Finally, as God is gracious to all such as are capable

of his love, and qualified for his mercy; so he is an

impartial and upright Judge, who will deal with men

according to their deserts, according to the tenor of

his laws and ordinances; according to his immutable

decree and word: so that as we have great reason to

trust and hope in him, so we have no true ground to

presume upon him, vainly to trifle, or insolently to

dally with him.

But I leave this point to be further improved by
your meditations.

*Grant we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the
words which we have heard this day with our out-
ward ears, may through thy grace be so grafted in-
wardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in
us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise
of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.

SERMON LXX.

NO RESPECT OF PERSONS WITH GOD.

ROM. ii. 11.

For there is no respect of persons with God.

IT is an ordinary conceit, grounded on a superficial SERM. view of things, that Almighty God dispenseth his LXX. gifts with great inequality, and dealeth very partially with men; being lavish in his bounty to some, but sparing therein to others; slack and indulgent in calling some to account, but rigorous and severe in judgment toward others.

Which imagination often hath influence upon the affections and the actions of men; so that hence some men do highly presume, others are much discouraged: some are apt to boast themselves special Ps. lxxiii. 6. darlings and favourites of Heaven; others are tempted to complain of their being quite deserted, or neglected thereby.

But whoever more carefully will observe things, and weigh them with good consideration, shall find this to be a great mistake; and that in truth God distributeth his favours with very equal measures: he poiseth the scales of justice with a most even hand; so that reasonably no man should be exalted, Job xxxi. 6. no man should be dejected in mind, upon account of

SERM. cuted the prophets sent unto them with messages of
LXIX. kind warning and overtures of grace; so obstruct-
 Matt. xxiii. ing all access of mercy to themselves: *They say to*
 37. *the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy*
 Ezek. xviii. *not unto us right things:* so Isaiah reports their
 Isa. xxx. 10. proceeding. *Which of the prophets did not your*
 Acts vii. 52. *fathers persecute?* so St. Stephen expostulates with
 Isa. i. 16, them. Neither were gentler chastisements designed
 17, &c. for their correction and cure anywise available;
 (Neh. ix. 29.) they made no impression on them, they produced
 Jer. ii. 30. no change in them: *In vain, saith God, I have*
smitten your children, they have received no cor-
 Jer. v. 3. *rection. And, Thou hast smitten them, but they*
have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but
they have refused to receive correction; they have
made their faces harder than a rock, they have
 Isa. ix. 13. *refused to return. And, The people turneth not*
to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the
 Rom. ix. 22. *Lord of Hosts. Unto this καταρισμὸς εἰς ἀπώλειαν,*
 this perfect fitness, (as St. Paul speaketh,) this ma-
 turity of desperate and irrecoverable impiety, had
 that people grown, not at once, and on a sudden,
 but by continual steps of provocation, through a
 long course of time, during that divine patience
 sparing them, and by various expedients striving to
 recover them. This consideration is frequently in-
 sisted upon, especially in the prophet Jeremiah:
 Jer. xxxii. *The children of Israel and the children of Ju-*
 30. vii. 25. *dah have only done evil before me from their*
 xvi. 12. xi. *youth: Since the day that your fathers came forth*
 7: *out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have*
 Ezra ix. 7. *even sent unto you all my servants the prophets,*
daily rising up early, and sending them; yet they
hearkened not unto me, &c. Well then, after so

many hundred years of abused patience, and unsuccessful labour to reclaim them, it was needful that justice should have her course upon them: yet how then did God inflict it, with what mildness and moderation, with what pity and relenting? *Nevertheless, say they in Nehemiah, for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.* And, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve,* doth Ezra confess. *I will not execute the fierceness of my anger,* doth God himself resolve and declare in Hosea. So mild he was as to the measure of his punishing; and what compassion accompanied it those pathetic expressions declare: *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, &c.* We may add, that notwithstanding all these provocations of his wrath, and abusings of his patience, which thus necessitated God to execute his vengeance; yet even during the execution thereof, and while his hand was so stretched forth against them, he did retain thoughts of favour, and intentions of doing good, even toward this so ingrateful, so insensible, so incorrigible a people: *For a small moment, saith God, have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee: I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Now these things being seriously laid together, have we not occasion and ground sufficient

SERM.
LXIX.

Neh. ix. 31.

Ezra ix. 13.

Hos. xi. 9.

Hos. xi. 8.

Jer. xxxi.

20.

We Isa. lxiii. 9.

Jer. xxix.

11. xxxiii.

6, 7.

SERM. even in this instance, no less to admire and adore
 LXIX. the wonderful benignity, mercy, and patience of
 God, than to dread and tremble at his justice?

V. As for the last so calamitous and piteous destruction of Jerusalem, with the grievous consequences thereof, as we might apply thereto the former considerations, so we shall only observe what was peculiar in that case; that God dispensed such means to prevent it, (to remove the meritorious causes thereof, obstinate impenitency and incredulity; resisting the truth by him sent from heaven with so clear a revelation and powerful confirmation; despising the Spirit of God, and the dictates of their own conscience; basely misusing divers ways, and at last cruelly murdering the Son of God;) such means, I say, God did employ for the removing those provocatives of vengeance, which, as our Lord himself saith, were sufficient to have converted Tyre and Sidon; yea, to have preserved Sodom itself; so that our Saviour could with a compassionate grief deplore the unsuccessfulness of his tender affection, and solicitous care for their welfare, in these passionate terms: *How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, but ye would not!* That St. John the Baptist's sharp reproofs, his powerful exhortations, his downright and clear forewarnings of what would follow, (*Even now, said he, the axe is laid to the root of the tree,*) attended with so remarkable circumstances of his person and his carriage, (which induced all the world about him to regard him as no ordinary man, but a special instrument of God and messenger from heaven,) did yet find no effect considerable: the Pharisees and lawyers, those cor-

Matt. xi.
21.

Matt. xxiii.
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1. It should beget in us hearty love and reverence toward God, in regard to this attribute so excellent and amiable in itself, so beneficial and advantageous to us. What can we esteem, what can we love, if so admirable goodness doth not affect us? How prodigiously cold and hard is that heart, which cannot be warmed and softened into affection by so melting a consideration!

2. It should produce, as grateful sense in our hearts, so real endeavours of thankful obedience in our lives. It should make us *walk worthy of God*, Col. i. 10. *to all well-pleasing, bringing forth fruit in every good work*; taking heed of doing as did Hezekiah, of whom it is said, that *he rendered not according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up*; 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. *therefore was wrath upon him*; that we may not have that expostulation justly applied unto us, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?* Deut. xxxii. 6.

3. It should engage us the more to fear God; complying with the prophet's admonition, *Fear the Lord and his goodness*; Hos. iii. 5. considering that intimation of the Psalmist, *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*; Ps. cxxx. 4. observing that advice of Samuel, *Only fear the Lord, and serve him*; 1 Sam. xii. 24. *for consider what great things he hath done for you.* For that indeed nothing is more terrible than goodness slighted, and patience abused.

4. It should humble, ashame, and grieve us, for having crossed and offended such exceeding goodness

SERM. common Master, hath an equal respect to both;

LXX. *knowing that your Master also is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.*

Ephes. vi.

^{9.}
1 Tim. iv. 3. God is *the Saviour of all*; desiring and designing that *all men should be saved, and come to*

10. ii. 4. *the knowledge of the truth; being willing that no man should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Wherefore out of philanthropy and love to mankind he sent his Son to be *the Saviour of the world; to give himself a ransom for all men, to taste death for every man.*

Tit. ii. 11.

1 John iv.

14.

Luke ix.

56.

John iii. 17.

xii. 47.

2 Cor. v.

19.

1 Tim. ii. 6.

Heb. ii. 9.

And what greater instance could there be of perfect impartiality?

So by reasons from the principal attributes and relations of God his impartiality may be deduced: the same also may be declared from his proceedings and dealings with men. For,

Clem. Pæd.

i. 4.

1. God hath proposed to all men indifferently the same terms and conditions of obtaining his love and favour, of enjoying his bounty and mercy, of obtaining rewards and felicity from him.

The same laws and rules of life are prescribed to all persons, as men, and as Christians.

The natural dictates of reason, the precepts of holy scripture, the great moral duties of religion, by observance whereof God's favour is retained, and salvation assured, are of general concern and common obligation to all without exception.

God hath not framed one law, or one gospel, for princes and great men, another for peasants and mean artisans; he hath not chalked out one way toward heaven for the rich, another for the poor to

Psal. xlix.

2.

walk in; but all, *high and low, rich and poor, one*

with another, are tied to observe the precepts of SERM. LXX.
 piety, of charity, of justice, of temperance, sobriety
 and chastity, of modesty, humility, and patience;
 none, great or small, can otherwise, than by pro-
 ceeding in the common road of virtuous practice,
 arrive to happiness. *He that doeth the will of my* Matt. vii.
Father that is in heaven, shall enter into the king- 21.
dom of heaven.

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the command- Matt. xix.
ments: Enter in through the strait gate: Blessed 17. vii. 13.
are they that do his commandments, that they may Luke xiii.
have right to the tree of life: To them, who by 24.
patient continuance in well-doing seek glory and Psal. xxxiv.
honour and immortality, eternal life will be con- 12. *
ferred: these are the grand infallible maxims, the Rev. xxii.
fixed irreversible decrees, expressing the general 14.
duty and doom of mankind, according to the eter- Rom. ii. 7.
nal reason of things, and the declared will of God
 Almighty, our sovereign Governor and Judge.

Whoever it is, that will please God, that will have John xv.
 his love, that will be happy by his grace, must hum- 14.
 bly submit to God's will, must faithfully obey God's
 laws, must carefully walk in God's way; from this
 course there can be no exemption, no dispensation,
 no special privilege for any person whatever.

As all men naturally, by indissoluble bands of
 obligation, are the subjects and servants of God; so
 God indispensably and inexcusably doth require the
 same loyalty and fidelity, the same diligence, the
 same reverence from all.

Great men sometimes may live as if they con-
 ceited themselves free from the obligations which
 bind other men; as if they had not souls (as we
 poor mortals have) to be saved, or were to be saved

SERM. in some other way; as if obedience to the divine
 LXX. laws doth not touch them, but only doth belong to
 the commonalty; as if they had special indulgence
 to live in pride, luxury, and sloth, might warrant-
 ably practise injustice, oppression, revenge; might
cum privilegio be lewd and lascivious, withhold
 their debts, take God's name in vain, neglect devo-
 tion and the service of God: but in thus doing they
 much abuse themselves; for they no less than others
 are obnoxious to guilt and to punishment, for such
 misdemeanours against the divine laws. In truth, if
 there be any difference in the case, it is only this;
 that they, in all equity, ingenuity, and gratitude,
 are obliged to a more strict, more faithful, more dili-
 gent observance of God's laws; they being more in-
 debted to God for his special bounty to them; they
 having larger talents and advantages committed to
 their trust, their deportment being of higher con-
 sequence, and most influential on the world, they
 being liable to render an account according to that
 just rule, *Unto whom much is given, of him much
 shall be required*; whence their eminency of con-
 dition doth not excuse them from common duties,
 but doth advance their obligation, will aggravate
 their neglect, will inflame their reckoning, will
 plunge them deeper into woful punishment; accord-
 ing to that of the Wise Man, *A sharp judgment
 shall be to them that are in high places; for mercy
 will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men
 shall be mightily tormented.*

Luke xii.
48.

Wisd. vi. 5,
6.

2. All persons have the same means, the same
 aids, the same supports afforded to them, for abi-
 lity to perform their duty, and attain their hap-
 piness.

The word of God, as the light of heaven, doth SERM.
indifferently shine to all men, for instructing their LXX.
minds, for directing their practice, for *guiding their*
feet in the way of peace.

The divine grace is ever at hand, ready to assist
all those who sincerely and seriously do apply them-
selves to serve God.

Seasonable comforts are never wanting to support
those who need them, and who in their distress seek
them from God, who *healeth the broken in heart,* Ps. cxlvii. 3
and *bindeth up their wounds;* so that when *the* (cxlvi. 7.)
poor man crieth, the Lord heareth him, and saveth Ps. xxxiv. 6.
him out of his troubles.

The universal good Spirit of God (the fountain of 1 Cor. xii.
light and wisdom, of spiritual power and strength, 7.
of consolation and joy) is communicated according
to the needs of men, and exigencies of occasion;
preventing them by direction to the right way, by
reclaiming them from ill courses, by exciting in
them good thoughts and good desires; quickening
their good resolutions, and assisting in the pursuit
of them; enabling them to resist temptations, and
to combat with their spiritual adversaries: to such
best purposes the Holy Spirit is given to all in need- Luke xl. 13.
ful seasons and measures; especially to those who
do earnestly seek it, do faithfully use it, do treat it
well.

3. God hath provided, and doth propose to all
men the same encouragements for obedience, the
same punishments for transgression; the which be-
ing the same in kind do only differ in degree, pro-
portionably to the good deeds or bad demerits of
persons.

God hath appointed one heaven for all pious and

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SERM. virtuous persons, of what nation, of what rank, of
 LXX. what condition soever they are; he hath *prepared*
 Col. iii. 11. *those things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear*
 1 Cor. ii. 9. *heard, nor heart of man conceived, for all that*
 2 Tim. iv. *love him. For all that have fought the good fight,*
 7, 8. *and kept the faith, and love his appearance, the*
Lord, the righteous Judge, hath laid up a crown
of righteousness.

Luke xxii. Immortality of life, an unfading crown of glory,
 29. a kingdom that cannot be shaken, unspeakable joys,
 endless bliss, God hath covenanted and promised to
 Rev. xxii. to accept and embrace them; *ὁ θέλων, He that will-*
 17. *eth, let him take of the water of life freely:* and
 what greater rewards could there be assigned?

What room is there for partiality, where all are
 capable of the same equally great, because in a man-
 ner' immense felicity? *Many, saith our Saviour,*
 Matt. viii. *shall come from the east, and from the west, and*
 11. *from the north, and from the south, and shall sit*
 Luke xiii. *down with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with*
 29. *Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*

Lazarus, the poor beggar, shall rest with the illus-
 trious Moses, and the noble Daniel, with David, and
 Hezekiah, and Josiah, and all pious princes, in the
 bosom of Abraham. The poor fishermen, the pain-
 ful tent-makers, the sorry publicans, shall reign to-
 gether with Constantine, and Theodosius, and all
 those good princes, who have faithfully served God
 and promoted his glory. The rich, well using their
 wealth, may obtain that state, *treasuring up to*
 1 Tim. vi. *themselves a good foundation against the time to*
 19. *come, that they may lay hold on eternal life:* the
 Luke xii. *poor, contentedly bearing their condition, have a good*
 33. xvi. 9.

title thereto, expressed in those words, *Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.* SERM.
LXX.

On the other hand, the same dismal punishments Luke vi. 20. are threatened to all presumptuous, contumacious, and impenitent transgressors of God's law, however dignified or distinguished; be they princes or subjects, noble or base, wealthy or indigent; the same unquenchable fire, the same gnawing worm, the same weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; the same utter darkness; the same burning lake of brimstone; the same extreme disconsolate anguish is reserved for them all: *Depart from me; Go ye cursed into everlasting fire,* Matt. vii. 23. xxv. 41. will be the doom pronounced on *all the workers of iniquity; Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be* Luke xiii. 27. *upon every soul that doeth evil.* Rom. ii. 8,

No regard will be had to the quality of men in this world; for *the rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day,* Luke xvi. 19, 23. was not excused from *hell and torment:* Jam. v. 1. there is a *Tophet ordained of old, even for kings; mighty men shall be mightily tormented,* Luke vi. 24. if they Is. xxx. 33. have mightily sinned. Wisd. vi. 6.

Even present encouragements of virtue in this life, the joys and comforts of God's holy Spirit, the sweet elapses of spiritual consolation in devotion, *the peace of God,* and delicious sense of his love, the cheerful satisfaction of a good conscience, the *joy in believing* God's truth, and hoping for accomplishment of his promises, the delight in obeying God's commandments, the blessing of God upon good undertakings, and happy success therein, the *cooperation of all things for good to them who love God,* Ps. xxxvii. 4, 5. i. 3. the supply of all wants, and satisfaction Rom. viii. 28.

SERM. of all desires, the experimental assurance of God's
LXX. constant protection and gracious providence over

Ps. cxlv. those who fear him and trust in him, (according to
19. xxxvii. numberless declarations and promises in holy scrip-
4. xxxiv. 10. ture,) are indifferently dispensed to all, who shall
use the means to attain them, in way of conscien-
tious practice.

Ps. xi. 6. As correspondently the temporal discouragements
lxxiii. 19. from sin (crosses, disappointments, vexations, mise-
xxxii. 10. ries) are without exception allotted to all transgres-
Isa. xlviii. sors of God's law, according to many denunciations
22. lvii. 20. therein.
liv. 17.

4. The impartiality of God doth appear from his
universal providence, carefully watching over all and
every person, dispensing good things to each, accord-
ing to his need, without distinction ^b.

Is any man in extreme want? his liberal hand
Ps. cvii. 9. presently doth reach forth a supply; for, *He satis-
fieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul
Ps. cxlv. 16. with goodness; He openeth his hand, and satis-
fieth the desire of every living thing.*

Is any man in distress? the Lord is ready to
afford relief; according to that repeated burden of
Ps. cvii. 6, the 107th Psalm: *Then they cry unto the Lord in
13, 19, 28. their trouble, and he saveth them out of their dis-
xxxiv. 6. tresses.*
cxlvi. 7.
cxlvii. 6.

Is any man engaged in sin and guilt? he is pa-
tient and longsuffering; not pouring forth his anger,
not withholding his mercies; letting his sun arise
and his showers descend upon the most unworthy
and ungrateful: this he doth so generally, that com-
monly by apparent events it is not easily discernible

^b Bonus omnipotens ita curat universos tanquam singulos, ita
singulos tanquam solos. *Aug. Conf.*

to whom God beareth special favour; according to SERM. LXX.
 that observation of the Preacher, *No man knoweth* Ecl. ix. 1,
either love or hatred by all that is before them;
all things coming alike to all. How then can any
 man complain of partiality in him, who exerciseth so
 unconfined bounty, clemency, and patience?

If there be any considerable difference, it is only Ps. cxlvi. 9.
 this, that God hath a peculiar care of the poor, the cxlvii. 14.
 afflicted, the oppressed, the helpless and discon- ix. 9.
 solate, who do most need (and thence are most in- xxxiv. 18.
 duced to seek) his succour and comfort; being also Is. xxv. 4.
 commonly better qualified to receive them; as is
 frequently declared in scripture.

It is true, that God hath his particular friends,
 his favourites, his privados, whom he doth specially
 regard and countenance; upon whom he conferreth
 extraordinary boons and graces; namely, those who
 do love, who do fear, who do trust in, who do ho-
 nour him, who do obey him; concerning whom it is
 said, *We know that all things work together for* Rom. viii.
good to them that love God: and, *The Lord pre-* 28.
serveth all those that love him: There is no want Ps. cxlv. 20.
to them that fear him: He will fulfil the desire of xxxvi. 23.
them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, xxxiv. 9.
and will save them: The Lord redeemeth the soul cxlv. 19.
of his servants, and none of them that trust in him Ps. xxxiv.
shall be desolate: Them that honour me, I will 22.
honour: The Lord loveth the righteous: The eyes 1 Sam. ii. 30.
of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears Ps. cxlvi. 8.
are open unto their cry: Ye are my friends, if ye xxxiv. 15.
do whatsoever I command you. John xv. 14.

But evidently there is no partiality in this; for
 he doth not favour them irrespectively as persons,
 but as in justice specially qualified for favour; friend-

SERM. ship, dutifulness, reverence toward him, being the
LXX. highest virtues, and arguing a mind endued with
dispositions (with equity, with ingenuity, with gra-
titude, with sober wisdom, with love of truth and
goodness) which demand a correspondence of love
and respect from God himself. And as we do not
hold a man partial, who beareth a special affection
and regard to those who express good-will, who deal
kindly and fairly with them, who serve them faith-
fully, and pay them due respect; so neither is God
partial, if he doth specially bless good men upon the
like accounts.

Especially considering, that God doth not so fa-
vour mere pretenders, who profess to love and ho-
nour him, but do not love true goodness; fond,
superstitious, hypocritical people, who *call, Lord,*
Lord, but practise iniquity; who think to please
him by affected services; who court and flatter him
with their lips; who would bribe him with their
gifts and sacrifices.

5. All Christians, without distinction, have the
same illustrious relations and honourable privileges,
the most great and glorious that can be imagined.

Of what greater honour is a man capable, than
to be adopted into the blood royal of heaven, *to be*
called to be one of the sons of God? *Ye are all the*
sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. God sent
forth his Son, born of a woman, that he might re-
deem us—and that we might receive the adoption
of sons.

Ἰδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην Behold, saith St. John, *what*
love the Father hath given us, that we should be
called the sons of God. This is a *privilege* which
God hath given, which Christ hath purchased for

us all. And *whosoever received him*, he gave *them* SERM. LXX.
ἐξουσίαν ταύτην, (this power, this privilege, this advantage,) *that they should become the sons of God.* Gal. iv.

To what higher dignity can any one pretend, than to be heir of a kingdom by the most infallible assurance that can be; by covenant, by promise of God? Such are all good Christians, God's children; for *if sons, then heirs*, saith the apostle, *heirs of God, coheirs with Christ*: heirs of God's kingdom; Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7. for, *Hearken, my beloved brethren*, saith St. James; Tit. iii. 7. Heb. i. 14. *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?* Jam. ii. 5.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you. Matt. xxv.

Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom. Luke xii. 32.

I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me. Luke xxii. 29.

To what higher pitch can the most ambitious soul aspire, than to be a king?

Such, St. John saith, that our Lord hath constituted every good Christian; *partakers*, not of a carnal, an earthly, a temporal kingdom, (which is unstable, is subject to various chances and crosses, cannot endure long, or last any considerable time,) but of a spiritual, a celestial, an eternal kingdom, *which cannot be shaken*; which hath continual rest, peace, joy.

We are by God *called unto his kingdom and glory,—translated into the kingdom of his own dear Son.* 1 Thess. ii. 12. Col. i. 13.

To be the brethren of Christ; who is the sovereign *Lord of glory, King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

Is it not a considerable honour to be the friends

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SERM. of our Lord? so is every poor soul, which hath the
LXX. conscience to serve him faithfully; for, *Ye are my
John xv. friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

14.
Phil. iii. 20. All are citizens, free denizens of the heavenly
Heb. xiii. commonwealth; *συμπολιται τῶν ἁγίων*——.

20. xii. 22. 6. All men are liable to the same judgment, at
Eph. ii. 19. the same tribunal, before that one impartial, in-
Deut. x. 17. flexible Judge, who cannot be corrupted with gifts,
(Col. iii. 25.) or dazzled with shows, or moved by any sinister re-
gards.

All persons must stand before that bar upon equal
ground; without any advantage; according to that
Apoc. xx. representation of St. John; *I saw the dead, small
12. and great, stand before God, and the books were
opened—and the dead were judged out of those
things which were written in the books, according
to their works.*

The greatest monarchs, the mightiest potentates,
the most redoubtable warriors, and successful con-
querors, (the *men, who made the earth to tremble,
Is. xiv. 16, 17. that did shake kingdoms,*) *that made the world as
a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof;* who
v. 13, 14. affected to ascend into heaven, and to exalt his
(v. 11.) throne above the stars of God, to ascend above
the heights of the clouds, and to be like the Most
High.

There shall they stand bare and divested of all
their phantastry; their splendid pomp, their numer-
ous retinue, their guards, their parasites.

No consideration there will be had of their windy
titles, of their gay attire, and glittering pomp.

No respect will be had to the dread of their name,
to the fame of their prowess; to that spurious glory,
for which they unsettled mankind, and overturned

the world; their actions will be strictly scanned according to the rules of God's law and common equity. SERM.
LXX.

They will be put to answer for all the violences and outrages, for all the spoils and rapines, for all the blood and slaughters, for all the ruins, devastations, and desolations, their cruel ambition hath caused; for all the sins they have committed, and all the mischiefs they have done.

They who now have so many flatterers and adorers, will not then find one advocate to plead for them.

Thus it may appear that God is impartial.

But there are divers obvious exceptions against this doctrine. As,

Obj. 1. Is it not apparent that the gifts of God are distributed with great inequality?

Doth not one swim in wealth and plenty, while another coucheth under the burden of extreme want and penury?

Are not some perched aloft in high dignity, while others crawl upon the ground, and grovel in despicable meanness?

Are not some *clothed with purple and fine linen, and fare deliciously every day*; while others scarce find rags to cover them, and *lie at the door* begging for relief? Luke xvi.
19, 20.

Do not some thrive and prosper in their affairs, while others are disappointed and crossed in their undertakings?

Was it not truly observed of some persons, (and those least deserving good fortune,) *They are enclosed in their own fat—Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish?* Psal. xvii.
10. lxxiii. 7.
Job xxi. 7.
—xii. 6.
Jer. xii. 1.
Hab. i. 16.

SERM. And whence doth this difference come, but from
 LXX. God's hand? *Who*, as the apostle asketh, *maketh*
 1 Cor. iv. 7. *thee to differ* from another, but God, the disposer
 of all things?

To this exception I answer:

Rom. viii. 18. *Λογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἴσθια*
 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1. That temporal things are so inconsiderable,
 that they scarce deserve to come into the balance,
 or to be computed; for they have but the same
 proportion to spiritual things, as time hath to eter-
 nity; or a finite to an infinite; which is none at
 all.

Luke vi. 24. xvi. 25. Ps. xvii. 14. What partiality therefore is there, if God in mercy
 and patience bestow on bad men a farthing in the
 temporal *consolations* of this life, (if the universal
 Father give a small *portion in this life* to untoward
 children,) while he reserveth infinite millions for his
 obedient children?

2. The goods of fortune commonly are dispensed
 not by a special hand of God, but according to the
 general course of providence: and what partiality is
 he guilty of, who scattereth money into a crowd of
 poor people; although in scrambling some get more
 than other; and often the worst (being most bold
 and fierce) do get most?

Eccles. ix. 1, 2. 3. Indeed the receiving those gifts is no sign of
 God's special regard; as the Preacher well observed;
No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that
is before them. All things come alike to all; there
is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.

4. God, as St. Austin saith, purposely doth spar-
 ingly deal these things to good men, and freely be-
 stoweth them on bad men, to shew how little we
 ought to value them; how much inferior they are
 to spiritual goods. For surely he would give the

best things to his friends, and the worst to his enemies. SERM.
LXX.

5. Even temporal gifts are dispensed with a very even hand; for if, barring injudicious fancy and vulgar opinion, we rightly prize things, we compare the conveniences and inconveniences of each state, it will be hard to judge which hath the advantage.

Wealth hath more advantages for pleasure; but it hath also more cares, more fears, more crosses, more dangers, more troubles, more temptations.

It hath more plenty; but withal it hath less safety, less ease, less liberty, less quiet, less real enjoyment.

Set the distraction of the rich man's mind against the toil of the poorest man's body; the nauseous surfeits of one against the griping hunger of the other.

That which really doth constitute a state happy, content, may be common to both, or wanting to either, as the person is disposed.

6. The goods of fortune are not purely gifts, but talents deposited in trust for God's service, for which a proportionable return is expected; so that he that hath less of them hath a less burden to bear, and an easier account to render.

7. Many gifts are not dispensed with personal regard, but for public good; and therefore all have an interest in them.

The wealth, the power, the reputation, the prosperity of a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, are not his, but his neighbour's; for governing, for protecting, for encouraging, for assisting whom, they are conferred: the world not being able to subsist in order and peace without subordinate ranks, and without answerable means to maintain them.

SERM. *Obj.* 2. It is apparent, that God dispenseth his
 LXX. grace, the light of knowledge, and means of salva-
 tion, very unequally; some nations living in the
 Luke i. 79. clear sunshine of the gospel, while others *sit in*
 Matt. iv. 16. *darkness and the shadow of death*; whole nations
 Eph. iv. 18. being detained in barbarous and brutish ignorance.
 ii. 1.
 Tit. iii. 3.
 1 Pet. iv. 3.

To answer this exception fully would require much discourse; it being a dark and difficult point: but briefly we may say,

1. That God dispenseth measures of grace according to a just, yet inscrutable wisdom, knowing what use will be made thereof, and what *fruit* men will *bear*. It may therefore be a favour not to dispense light to them, who are not prepared to embrace and improve it well.

2. No man can tell what God doth in preparation, and what obstructions are made by men to his grace.

3. As lower means of grace are conferred, so proportionably less returns are expected.

4. How hard soever it may be to descry the reason of God's proceedings in this case, yet assuredly it is just; and our ignorance of it should not prejudice the belief of those general truths, which are so plainly declared, concerning the universal benignity and impartial equity of God.

Obj. 3. Is it not in holy scripture sometimes asserted, that God doth act arbitrarily and absolutely; dispensing his bounty and mercy without regard to any quality in men, or deed committed by them either in whole or in proportion—God saith, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*—and, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*

Rom. ix. 15.
 Matt. xx. 15.

Is not a plain instance of this dealing alleged by SERM. St. Paul concerning Jacob and Esau, that *before the* LXX. *children were born, or had done either good or evil,* Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13. God said, *The elder shall serve the younger;* and in regard thereto, in the prophet, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

We answer briefly, that

Such expressions do import, not that God acteth absolutely in the thing itself, but *quoad nos*; not that he acteth without reason, but upon reasons (transcending our capacity, or our means to know Rom. xi. it) incomprehensible or undiscernible to us; not that ^{33.} he can give no account, but is not obliged to render any to us; that the methods of his providence commonly are inscrutable; that his proceedings are not subject to our examination and censure; that his acting doth sufficiently authorize and justify itself; that it is high presumption and arrogance for us to Rom. ix. scan, sift, or contest, or cavil at the equity or wis- ^{20.} dom of God's acting.

That God doth not act according to necessity, but is free in dispensing his mercy, and applying it to any person, so that they have nothing to challenge upon account of their own deserts or works; but must refer all to his mere bounty.

However, there can be nothing in these mysteries of predestination and providence, which really doth subvert an assertion so often clearly expressed, and so well grounded in reason, or the consideration of God's nature, attributes, ordinary way of acting, &c.

Whatever expressions are repugnant thereto in sound, whatever instances (depending on occult causes) in appearance do cross it; it yet must stand, that God is impartially merciful, benign, just, &c.

SERM. *Obj.* 4. Had not Jeremy, St. John Baptist, St. LXX. Paul, absolute favours and graces conferred on them, who were *sanctified*, and separated from the womb to be prophets and apostles?

(Isa. xlix. 1, 5.)
Jer. i. 5.
Luke i. 15.
Gal. i. 15.
Jer. i. 10.
Luke i. 16.
Acts ix. 15.
xxvi. 16.

Resp. These favours were in design not so much particular and personal, as general and public; those persons being raised up by God upon occasions as needful instruments (*elect vessels*) of his providence, to instruct men, and to reduce them to God; so that God, in raising up such extraordinary persons, did express his common goodness to mankind.

The like may be said of that special favour, which was vouchsafed to the holy Virgin, who was *κεχαρι-*
χαιρι *κεχα-* *ταμμένη*, and *blessed among women*, for the general good of mankind.

κεχαρι-
ταμμένη.
Luke i. 28.

The consideration of this point is very useful, and may dispose us to many sorts of good practice.

1. No man should presume upon God's dealing with him more favourably than with others, as if he were a darling or favourite; that God will indulge him in the commission of any thing prohibited, or in omission of any duty.

No man should indulge himself in any thing, upon a conceit that God will indulge him, or oversee his errors; and that, in this sense, *He seeth not iniquity in Jacob.*

2. No man should be puffed up with conceit that God hath a singular regard to him. For all such conceits are groundless and vain; in them men do miserably delude themselves.

No man can otherwise found any assurance of God's special love to him, than upon a good conscience; testifying that he doth sincerely love God, and endeavour faithfully to obey his commandments.

1 John iii.
19, 21.

3. No man should despair of God's favour; seeing SERM. LXX.
 God hath no particular aversation from any; but every person hath the same grounds of hope.

If we can buckle our hearts to observe our duty, we may be sure to be accepted.

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? Gen. iv. 7.

4. No man should be discouraged for his condition, or fortune; since in allotting it to him God had no disfavour, nor did intend him ill.

God hath no less regard to him, than to persons of the most high, wealthy, prosperous state.

5. No man should repine, murmur, or complain of God's dealing, as if he were unkindly used, more than others: for there is no such thing. God dealeth alike kindly with all.

6. No man, upon account of his rank, wealth, or worldly advantages, should boast or pride himself; seeing thence he partaketh no more than his meanest and poorest neighbour, of the principal advantage, God's favour.

7. No man, upon such accounts, should despise his neighbour, *the brother of low degree*: for upon these accounts it appeareth, that the Wise Man James i. 9.
 saith truly, that *he is void of wisdom who despiseth his neighbour*; seeing no man can be despisable, whom God regardeth; seeing *God*, as Elihu Job xxxvi.
 saith, *is mighty, and despiseth not any*; seeing the James ii. 6.)
 meanest person standeth on equal terms with the greatest in the eye of God.

8. Great men should not take themselves for another sort of creatures, or another race of men than their poor neighbours; that the world is theirs, and all things are for them; that they may do what they please; that they are exempted from laws,

SERM. which oblige others ; for in moral and spiritual ac-
LXX. counts they are upon a level with others.

They are but fellow-subjects and fellow-servants with others ; all accountable to the same Master.

9. Superiors hence should be moved to deal fairly, gently, and courteously with inferiors ; seeing these are their fellow-servants, equally considerable as themselves with the great Master of the family.

This is the use, to which St. Paul applieth the consideration :

Col. iv. 1.
iii. ult.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye have a Master in

Ephes. vi. 9.

heaven—Ye masters, do the same things unto them, (that is, be conscientiously good to them, as they are faithful to you,) forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.

10. This consideration should preserve us from superstition, or thinking to please or satisfy God, win his favour, or appease his displeasure, by uncouth ways, which he hath not prescribed to all men ; to corrupt him by our sacrifices and oblations ; our flatteries, glozings, colloguings with him ; so that he will indulge us in any bad thing, or excuse us from our true duty, in regard to those affected services.

Coloss. ii.
Mic. vi. 7, 8.

We do herein but abuse ourselves ; for he will not approve or accept us upon any other account, than of discharging our duty, being truly righteous and good.

11. It is matter of comfort and satisfaction to a man, who is conscious of his sincerity, that (whatever his condition and circumstances be) God will have a fair regard thereto, and will not reject him.

It was so to Job; *Doth not God see my ways, and count all my steps?—Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity.* SERM. LXX.

12. The consideration of this point should keep us from partial respects of men.

Not to admire the state of great men, nor to yield them undue deferences, (in prejudice to meaner persons, making greater difference than there is ground for,) not to flatter or humour them in an immoderate measure, or unbeseeming manner.

This is that which St. James doth urge in his second chapter, as a very unequal thing.

We should imitate God; we should consider that our opinions and affections should resemble his.

As in exterior judgment no respect is to be had to the rich above the poor; so neither in the interior judgment or esteem of our mind; to which St. James seemeth to apply the law; *If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.*

13. This should keep us from envying at those who have more worldly advantages.

14. It should keep us from being offended, or scandalized, or perverted into false notions of God, upon occasion of any mysterious points, or hard expressions importing absolute and arbitrary proceedings of God, in predestination or providence. For however they are to be understood, they cannot derogate from the impartial goodness and justice of God.

15. This consideration should engage us readily to pay due respect and reverence to princes, to magistrates, to all our superiors.

For hence we see, that the reason why we are

Job xxxi.

4. 6.

Jam. ii. 1, 9.

Pr. xxviii.

21.

Οὐ μίλει σοι

πρὸς αὐθιγός.

Matt. xxii.

16.

Θαυμάζω

πρὸς ἑσένα.

Jude 16.

Levit. xix.

15.

Deut. i. 17.

xvi. 19.

Prov. xxiv.

23. xvi. 5.

xxviii. 21.

Jam. ii. 9.

SERM. commanded to honour and fear them, is, not their
LXX. worldly grandeur of wealth or power, (things of small consideration with God;) but it standeth on a more solid ground, their sacred relations to God, as his representatives and officers; who in his name and behalf do administer justice, and protect right and innocence, encourage virtue, maintain order and peace in the world.

Though God doth not favour their persons as rich and mighty; yet he regardeth his own character imprinted on them; he regardeth his honour and interest concerned in their respect; he regardeth the public good of mankind, which they are constituted to promote: he considers them as the *ministers of his kingdom*, and instruments of conveying his benefits to mankind.

Whence he *giveth salvation to kings*; he by his law, and by his providence, doth guard and secure them from violence, from contempt, from disrespect.

In honouring them, we honour the authority of God, and the character of divinity stamped on them;

Rom. xiv. 4.
Eis αγαθόν. we serve ourselves, for whose sake they are constituted, for whose good they watch.

It may also engage us the more gladly and fully to yield them their due respect, to consider, that their condition is not invidious, or their case better than other men's; seeing they are accountable to God for the advantages of it; seeing that God hath no regard to them upon account of that greatness which dazzleth our eyes; seeing that for all the burdens they sustain, for all the cares they take, for all the pains they endure, for our good and public service, they can receive so inconsiderable a recompense from us.

Finally, it should engage us to be very careful of SERM.
our ways, and diligent in our obedience; seeing there LXX.
is no other way possible of pleasing God, of gaining
his favour and friendship, of appeasing his displea-
sure, of standing upright, and coming off well in his
judgment; this is St. Peter's inference, with which I
conclude.

If ye call on the Father, who without respect of 1 Pet. i. 17.
persons judgeth according to every man's work,
pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

END OF VOL. III.



