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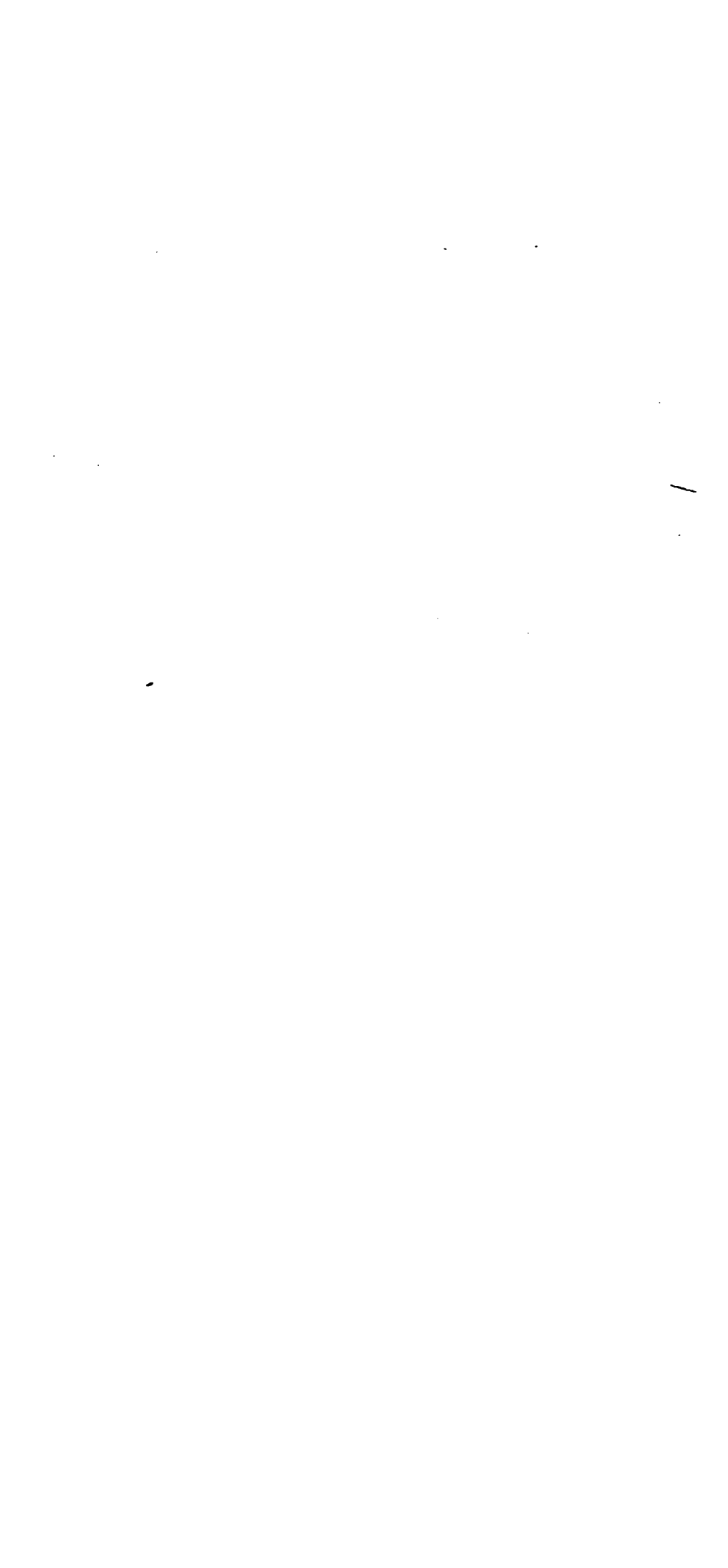






1. Omī.

2. Theology - Collected works.









Engraved by W. Pinney

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

the first of the series of the Hall of Trinity College, Cambridge

THE
THEOLOGICAL
WORKS

OF
ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING

TWENTY-FOUR SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

OXFORD,
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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THE English theological works of Barrow were first published by Dr. Tillotson, who was then dean of Canterbury, in three volumes folio, in 1685. This edition was reprinted more than once, and for the last time in 1741. A fourth volume, containing the Latin works, was added in 1687: but this was not reprinted with the others. The English works were printed at the Clarendon Press in 1818, in six volumes 8vo. The present edition may be considered a reprint of the last; but, being printed in a larger type, it extends to seven volumes, with the addition of an eighth, containing the Latin works, as published in 1687: these consist of theological treatises, academical exercises, and poems. Perhaps it might be correct to say, that the present edition contains all the works of Barrow, which are known to exist in English or Latin, beside his mathematical compositions.

It is to be lamented, that the folio volume, containing his Latin works, was printed so inaccurately. No person, who has not examined it for himself, could form any notion of the number and the nature of the errors, which disfigure almost every page. In the absence of the original MSS., and with only one edition to consult, it has been extremely difficult to produce a text, which has even moderate claims to correctness. The actual words

of the author are not perhaps always faithfully represented in the present edition: but it has been thought better, in desperate cases, to employ conjecture in substituting an intelligible meaning, than to follow a copy, which is demonstrably wrong, and to reprint expressions which have no meaning at all. In some instances the reader will still meet with words which are palpably incorrect, and which could not have been written by the author; but no alteration suggested itself, which approached in any degree to the printed copy.

The Latin treatises and poems were printed in the folio edition without any systematic arrangement; they are now placed in a chronological order, so far as their dates could be ascertained.

Some notes have been added to the short Life of Barrow by Abraham Hill, which are taken from Dr. Pope's Life of Ward bishop of Salisbury, Ward's Lives of the Professors of Gresham College, and the Biographia Britannica.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENEAGE,

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM,

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND,

AND

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

MY LORD,

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

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

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

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

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged
and most obedient servant,

THOMAS BARROW.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
L I F E
OF
DR. ISAAC BARROW:
TO THE
REV. DR. TILLOTSON, DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

SIR,

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

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

Dr. Isaac Barrow was the son of Mr. Thomas Barrow, (a citizen of London of good reputation^a yet living, brother to Isaac Barrow, late lord bishop of St. Asaph^b.) son of Isaac

^a He was linen-draper to king Charles I, to whose interests he adhered, and followed him to Oxford. After the beheading of the king, Thomas Barrow attended his son Charles II, then in exile, and continued with him till the restoration. *Pope.*

^b He was educated at Cambridge, and became fellow of Peter-house: but having written against the covenant, he was ejected by the earl of Manchester, chancellor of the university in 1643, and went to Oxford, where he became chaplain of New College. He continued in Oxford till the surrender of the garrison to the parliament forces; after which time he shifted from place to place, and suffered with the rest of the loyal and

orthodox clergy, till the restoration of Charles II; when he not only recovered his fellowship at Peter-house, but was appointed fellow of Eton. In 1663 he was consecrated bishop of Man; and in 1664 he was made governor of the island by Charles earl of Derby; which office he discharged with considerable reputation. He was a great benefactor to the clergy of the island, having raised a large subscription, by which he bought up all the impropriations from the earl of Derby, and settled them upon the clergy. In 1669 he was translated to the see of St. Asaph; and his consecration-sermon was preached by his nephew, Isaac Barrow, in Henry the Seventh's chapel in Westminster-abbey. The cathedral and palace at St. Asaph

Barrow, esq. of Spiny Abbey in Cambridgeshire^c, (where he was a justice of peace for forty years,) son of Philip Barrogh, who has in print a Method of Physic, and had a brother, Isaac Barrow, doctor of physic^d, a benefactor to Trinity college, and there tutor to Robert Cecil, earl of Salisbury, and lord treasurer.

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

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

Removing thence to Felsted in Essex, he quickly made

were repaired by his liberality, and in other respects he was no small benefactor to the see. He died at Shrewsbury on the 24th of June, 1680, in the 67th year of his age, and was buried in the cathedral at St. Asaph. *Wood.*

^c He was born at Gazeby in Suffolk in 1563.

^d He died in 1616, and was buried in the church of All Saints in Cambridge. *Blomefield.* He was son of John Barrow of Suffolk, and grandson of Henry Barrow. *Ward.*

^e This date may be inferred from his epitaph, which states him to have died in 1677, at the age of 47; and also from the college register at Peterhouse, which speaks of him as *annum agens decimum quartum* at the time of his admission in 1643. But Dr. Pope asserts, upon the authority of Barrow himself, that his birthday fell upon the 29th of February: "and, if he said true, it could not be either in October or in 1630, that not being a leap-year."

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

The young man continued such a royalist, that he would never take the Covenant; yet carrying himself with fairness, candour, and prudence, he gained the good-will of the chief governors of the university. One day Dr. Hill, master of the college^g, laying his hand on his head, said, *Thou art a good lad; 'tis pity thou art a cavalier*: and when in an Oration on the Gunpowder-Treason^h he had so celebrated the former times, as to reflect much on the present, some Fellows were provoked to move for his expulsion; but the master silenced them with this; *Barrow is a better man than any of us*. Afterward, when the Engagement was imposed, he subscribed it; but upon second thoughts, repenting of

^f He was admitted December 15th, 1643, which was the year of his uncle being ejected from his fellowship. See note b. This was perhaps the reason of his entering afterwards at Trinity

college.

^g He was appointed by the parliament, who had ejected Dr. Comber, for adhering to the king.

^h See vol. VIII. p. 231.

what he had done, he went back to the commissioners, and declared his dissatisfaction, and got his name rased out of the list.

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

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

When the time came that he could be chosen fellow of his college, ann. Dom. 1649ⁱ, he obtained by his merit; nothing else could recommend him who was accounted of the contrary party. After his election, finding the times not favourable to men of his opinion in the affairs of church and state, to qualify him (as he then thought) to do most good, he designed the profession of physic, and for some years bent his studies that way, and particularly made a great progress in the knowledge of anatomy, botanics, and chymistry. But afterward, upon deliberation with himself, and conference with his uncle, the late lord bishop of St. Asaph, thinking that profession not well consistent with the oath he had taken when admitted fellow, to make divinity the end of his studies, he quitted medicine, and applied himself chiefly to what his oath seemed to oblige him.

He was upon all opportunities so open and communicative, that many of his friends in that college (for out of it he had few acquaintance) can, and I hope some one will, re-

ⁱ He was elected scholar in 1647, and took his degree of B.A. in 1649. In 1652 he commenced M.A. and on

the 12th of June in the following year he was incorporated in that degree at Oxford. *Ward. Wood.*

port frequent instances of his calm temper in a factious time, his large charity in a mean estate, his facetious talk upon fit occasions, his indefatigable industry in various studies, his clear judgment on all arguments, his steady virtue in all difficulties, which they must often have observed, and can better describe.

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

Tractare res multi norunt, æstimare pauci. CARDAN.

While he read Scaliger on Eusebius, he perceived the dependence of chronology on astronomy, which put him on the study of Ptolemy's *Almagest*; and finding that book and all astronomy to depend on geometry, he applied himself to Euclid's *Elements*, not satisfied till he had laid firm foundations; and so he made his first entry into the mathematics, having the learned Mr. John Ray then for his *socius studiorum*, and always for his esteemed friend: he proceeded to the demonstration of the other ancient mathematicians, and published his *Euclid* in a less form and a clearer method than any one had done before him: at the end of his demonstration of Apollonius he has writ, *April 14. Intra hæc temporis intervalla peractum hoc opus. May 16.* To so much diligence nothing was impossible: and in all his studies his way was not to leave off his design till he brought it to effect; only in the Arabic language he made an essay for a little while, and then deserted it. In the same place having also writ, *Labore et constantia*, he adds, *bonæ si conjungantur humilitati et subministrent charitati*. With these speculations the largeness of his mind could join poetry, to which he was always addicted, and very much valued that part thereof which consists of description; but the hyperboles of some modern poets he as much slighted: for our plays, he was an enemy to them, as a principal

cause of the debauchery of these times; (the other causes he thought to be the French education and the ill examples of great persons;) for satires, he writ none; his wit was pure and peaceable.

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

To provide for his voyage, ann. Dom. 1654^m, he sold his books, and went first into France: at Paris he found his father attending the English court, and out of his small *viaticum* made him a seasonable present. He gave his college an account of his voyage thither, which will be found among his Poemsⁿ; and some further observations in a letter^o, which will shew his piercing judgment in political affairs, when he applied his thoughts that way.

After some months he went to Italy, and made a stay at Florence; where he had the favour, and neglected not the advantage, to peruse many books in the great duke's library,

^k It was given to Mr. Ralph Widdington. *Biog. Brit.*

^l Dr. Pope writes, "This disappointment, the melancholy aspect of public affairs, together with a desire to see some of those places mentioned in Greek and Latin writers, made him resolve to travel."

^m In the *Biog. Brit.* it is 1655, where it is also said, "This same year his Euclid was printed at Cambridge, which he had left behind him for that purpose."

ⁿ See vol. VIII. p. 433.

^o See vol. VIII. p. 271.

and ten thousand of his medals, and discourse thereon with Mr. Fitton, the fame of whose extraordinary abilities in that sort of learning had caused the duke to invite him to the charge of that great treasury of antiquity^p.

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

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

^p This passage was misunderstood by Dr. Pope, who states, that the duke invited Barrow to undertake this charge.

^q Here the straitness of his circumstances must have put an end to his travels, had he not been generously supplied with money by Mr. James Stock, a young merchant of London, to whom he afterwards dedicated his edition of Euclid's *Data*.

^r The Biog. Brit. says November 6th, 1656, which appears to be correct.

^s "In his passage from Leghorn to Constantinople, the ship he sailed in was attacked by an Algerine pirate: during the fight, he betook himself to his arms, stayed upon

"the deck, cheerfully and vigorously fighting, till the pirate, perceiving the stout defence the ship made, steered off and left her. I asked him, why he did not go down into the hold, and leave the defence of the ship to those to whom it did belong: he replied, It concerned no man more than myself: I would rather have lost my life, than have fallen into the hands of those merciless infidels. This engagement he describes at large in a copy of verses in the fourth volume of his works:" [vol. VIII. p. 445.] *Pope*.

^t He wrote an elegy upon his death, which may be seen in vol. VIII. p. 492.

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

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

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

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

^u In 1659.

^x Seven years after the degree of M.A. See note i.

^y By Brownrigg bishop of Exeter, and master of Catherine Hall, who, after being ejected from his see by the parliament, lived in retirement at Sunning in Berkshire.

^z He wrote an ode upon that occasion, in which he introduces Britannia congratulating the king upon his return. See vol. VIII. p. 496. It must have been during a visit to London, soon after the restoration, that he preached at St. Laurence Jewry for Dr. Wilkins, master of Trinity; when according to Dr. Pope

the following extraordinary scene took place: "At the time appointed he came, with an aspect pale and meagre and unpromising, slovenly and carelessly dressed, his collar unbuttoned, his hair uncombed, &c." An alarm of fire having been given, great confusion ensued from the congregation endeavouring to escape; but the preacher, "seeming not to take notice of this disturbance, proceeds, names his text, and preached his sermon, to two or three gathered, or rather left together, of which number, as it fortunately happened, Mr. Baxter, that eminent nonconformist was one; who

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

July 16, 1662^c, he was chosen to the Geometry Lecture at Gresham College, vacant by the death of Mr. Laurence Rook. Dr. Wilkins, who, while Trinity college had the happiness of his mastership, throughly observed and much esteemed him, and was always zealous to promote worthy men and generous designs, did interpose vigorously for his assistance, well knowing that few others could fill the place of such a predecessor; he not only discharged the duty incumbent on him, but supplied the absence of his learned colleague Dr. Pope, astronomy professor; and among other of his Lectures were divers of the Projections of the Sphere; which he lent out also, and many other papers we hear no

“ afterwards gave Dr. Wilkins a visit, and commended the sermon to that degree, that he said he never heard a better discourse.” The rest of his small audience, with one exception, was not so well pleased: and some of the parishioners waited upon Dr. Wilkins, “ to expostulate with him, why he suffered such an ignorant, scandalous fellow to have the use of his pulpit.—They wondered he should permit such a man to preach before them, who looked like a starved cavalier, who had been long sequestered, and out of his living for delinquency, and came up to London to beg, now the king was restored.” Mr. Baxter, happening to be present at this expostulation, and being appealed to by Dr. Wilkins, said that Mr. Barrow “ preached so well, that he could willingly have been his auditor all day long:” upon which the com-

plainants immediately changed their tone, and confessed “ they did not hear one word of the sermon, but were carried to mislike it by his unpromising garb and mien, the reading of his prayer, and the going away of the congregation.” They even went so far as to ask Dr. Wilkins to procure Mr. Barrow to preach again: but Mr. Barrow (to use the language of Dr. Pope) “ would not by any persuasions be prevailed upon to comply with the request of such conceited, hypocritical combs.”

^a His Latin oration upon that occasion may be seen in vol. VIII. p. 289.

^b He designed to have read upon the tragedies of Sophocles: but, altering his intention, he made choice of Aristotle's Rhetoric.

^c He took the degree of bachelor of divinity in 1661.

more of^d. He so well answered all expectation, and performed what Dr. Wilkins had undertaken for him, that when (1663^e) Mr. Lucas founded a Mathematic Lecture at Cambridge, the same good and constant friend recommended him to the executors, Mr. Raworth and Mr. Buck, who very readily conferred on him that employment: and the better to secure the end of so noble and useful a foundation, he took care that himself and successors should be bound to leave yearly to the university ten written Lectures; and those of his which have been, and others yet to be printed, will best give an account how well he acquitted himself of that service^f. But after that learned piece *Geometricæ Lectiones* had been some while in the world, he had heard only of two persons that had read it through; these two were monsieur Slusius of Liege, and Mr. Gregory of Scotland, two that might be reckoned instead of thousands: yet the little relish that such things met with did help to loosen him from these speculations, and the more engage his inclination to the study of morality and divinity, which had always been so predominant, that when he commented on Archimedes, he could not forbear to prefer and admire much more Suarez for his book *De Legibus*: and before his Apollonius I find written this divine ejaculation:

'Ο Θεός γεωμετρεῖ.

Tu autem, Domine, quantus es geometra? quum enim hæc scientia nullos terminos habeat; cum in sempiternum

^d His Latin Oration, previous to his Lectures, is preserved, and may be seen in vol. VIII. p. 322.

^e On the twentieth of May in this same year, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, in the first choice made by the council after their charter. About this time also he was offered a very good living: but the condition annexed of teaching the patron's son made him refuse it, as too like a simoniacal contract. *Ward. Biog. Brit.*

^f His prefatory Oration, spoken in the mathematical school, March 14, 1664, is still extant, and may be seen in vol. VIII. p. 341. On May the 20th in this year he resigned his lectureship in Gresham college, though the two situations were not incompatible. He had also been invited to take the charge of the Cotton library; but after a short trial he declined it, and resolved to settle in the university.

novorum theorematum inventioni locus relinquatur, etiam penes humanum ingenium, tu uno hæc omnia intuitu perspecta habes, absque catena consequentiarum, absque tædio demonstrationum. Ad cætera pene nihil facere potest intellectus noster; et tanquam brutorum phantasia videtur non nisi incerta quædam somniare, unde in iis quot sunt homines tot existunt fere sententiæ: in his conspiratur ab omnibus, in his humanum ingenium se posse aliquid, imo ingens aliquid et mirificum visum est, ut nihil magis mirum; quod enim in cæteris pene ineptum in hoc efficax, sedulum, prosperum, &c. Te igitur vel ex hac re amare gaudeo, te suspicor, atque illum diem desiderare suspiriis fortibus, in quo purgata mente et claro oculo non hæc solum omnia absque hac successiva et laboriosa imaginandi cura, verum multo plura et majora ex tua bonitate et immensissima sanctissimæque benignitate conspiceret et scire concederetur, &c.

The last kindness and honour he did to his mathematic chair was to resign it (1669) to so worthy a friend and successor as Mr. Isaac Newton, fixing his resolution to apply himself entirely to divinity; and he took a course very convenient for his public person as a preacher, and his private as a Christian; for those subjects which he thought most important to be considered for his own use, he cast into the method of sermons for the benefit of others, and herein was so exact, as to write some of them four or five times over. And now he was only a fellow of Trinity college, till my lord bishop of St. Asaph^g gave him a small sinecure in Wales, and the right reverend Seth, lord bishop of Salisbury, (who very much valued his conversation^h,) a prebend in his church;

^g His uncle, Dr. Isaac Barrow. See note ^b.

^h Dr. Pope supplies the following information: "Some time after," i. e. not long after the restoration, "the bishop of Salisbury, I mean Dr.

"Ward, invited Dr. [Mr.] Barrow to live with him, not as a chaplain, but rather as a friend and companion: yet he did frequently do the duty, if the domestic chaplain was absent. Whilst he was there, the

the advantages of both which he bestowed in a way of charity, and parted with them as soon as he was made master of his college, (1672ⁱ;) he and his relations being by that time out of a necessitous condition: the patent for his mastership being so drawn for him as it had been for some others, with permission to marry, he caused to be altered^k, thinking it not agreeable with the statutes, from which he desired no dispensation.

He had hitherto possessed but a scanty estate, which yet was made easy to him by a contented mind, and not made a trouble by envy at more plentiful fortunes: he could in patience possess his soul when he had little else; and now with the same decency and moderation could maintain his character under the temptations of prosperity.

archdeaconry of North-Wiltshire became void, by the death of Dr. Childerey, if I mistake not: this the bishop proffered Dr. [Mr.] Barrow; but he modestly and abominably refused it, and told me the reason, which it is not necessary I should declare. Not long after a prebendary died, whose corps, I mean revenue, lay in Dorsetshire: this also the bishop offered him, and he gratefully accepted it, and was installed accordingly. I remember about that time I heard him once say, *I wish I had 500 pounds!* I replied, *That is a great sum for a philosopher to desire: what would you do with so much?* *I would,* said he, *give it my sister for a portion, that would procure her a good husband:* which sum in few months after he received, for putting a life into the corps of his new prebend: after which he resigned it to Mr. Corker, a fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge. All the while he continued with the bishop of Salisbury, I was his bedfellow, and a witness of his indefatigable study: at that time he

applied himself wholly to divinity, having given a divorce to mathematics and poetry, and the rest of the *belles lettres*, wherein he was profoundly versed; making it his chief, if not only business, to write in defence of the church of England, and compose sermons; whereof he had great store, and, I need not say, very good."

ⁱ In 1670 he was created doctor of divinity by mandate. His patent of the mastership bears date February 13, 1672: and he was admitted the 27th of the same month. "He was then the king's chaplain in ordinary, and much in favour with the duke of Buckingham, then chancellor of the university of Cambridge; as also of Gilbert, lord archbishop of Canterbury; both which were ready, if there had been any need, to have given him their assistance to obtain this place." *Pope*.

^k Dr. Pope states that he chose rather to be at the expense of double fees, and procure a new patent: but the accuracy of this fact is denied in the *Biog. Brit.*

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

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

Besides the particular assistance he gave to many in their study, he concerned himself in every thing that was for the interest of his college¹. Upon the single affair of building their library, he writ out quires of paper, chiefly to those who had been of the college, first to engage them, and then to give them thanks, which he never omitted. These letters he esteemed not enough to keep copies of; but by the generous returns they brought in, they appeared to be of no small value: and those gentlemen that please to send back their letters will deserve to be accounted further benefactors to the library. He had always been a constant and early man at the chapel, and now continued to do the same; and was therein encouraged, not only by his own devotion, but by the efficacy his example had upon many others of his college.

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

¹ Dr. Pope states, that "to shew his humility and care of the college revenue, he remitted to them the charge of keeping a coach for his

"time, which they had done a long while before for other masters." In 1675 he was chosen vice-chancellor of the university.

wherein of all others in the world he could have been most useful, and which he meant not to make use of as a step to ascend higher, he abated nothing of his studies; he yielded the day to his public business, and took from his morning sleep many hours, to increase his stock of Sermons^m, and write his Treatise of the Pope's Supremacyⁿ. He understood popery both at home and abroad; he had narrowly observed it militant in England, triumphant in Italy, disguised in France; and had earlier apprehensions than most others of the approaching danger, and would have appeared with the forwardest in a needful time: for his engagement

^m With respect to his Sermons, Dr. Pope freely allows that they were too long. "He thought he had not said enough, if he omitted any thing that belonged to the subject of his discourse; so that his Sermons seemed rather complete treatises, than orations designed to be spoke in an hour. He was once requested by the bishop of Rochester [Dr. Sprat], then and now dean of Westminster, to preach at the Abbey, and withal desired not to be long, for that auditory loved short sermons, and were used to them. He replied, *My lord, I will shew you my sermon*: and, pulling it out of his pocket, puts it into the bishop's hands. The text was in the tenth chapter of the Proverbs, the latter end of the 18th verse: the words these, *He that uttereth slander is a fool*. The sermon was accordingly divided into two parts; one treated of slander, the other of lies. The dean desired him to content himself with preaching only the first part; to which he consented, not without some reluctance; and in speaking that only, it took up an hour and an half. This discourse is since published in two Sermons, as it was preached. [See

vol. I. p. 480.] Another time, upon the same person's invitation, he preached at the Abbey on a holiday. Here I must inform the reader, that it is a custom for the servants of the church upon all holidays, Sundays excepted, betwixt the Sermon and Evening Prayers, to show the tombs and effigies of the kings and queens in wax to the meaner sort of people, who then flock thither from all the corners of the town. These perceiving Dr. Barrow in the pulpit after the hour was past, and fearing to lose that time in hearing, which they thought they could more profitably employ in receiving; these, I say, became impatient, and caused the organ to be struck up against him, and would not give over playing till they had blowed him down. But the sermon of the greatest length was that concerning charity, before the lord mayor and aldermen, at the Spital: in speaking which he spent three hours and an half. Being asked, after he came down from the pulpit, whether he was not tired, *Yes indeed*, said he, *I began to be weary with standing so long.*"

ⁿ See the address of the Publisher to the Reader prefixed to the treatise.

in that case, and his place in your friendship, I would (with the leave of the most worthy dean of St. Paul's, his highly respected friend) call him another Dr. Stillingfleet.

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

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

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

He died the 4th of May, 1677; and had it not been too inconvenient to carry him to Cambridge^p, then wit and eloquence had paid their tribute for the honour he has done them^q.

^o He was dining with the bishop of Salisbury at Knightsbridge, and being observed by Dr. Pope, who was present, not to eat, he said "that he had a slight indisposition hanging upon him, with which he had struggled two or three days, and that he hoped by fasting and opium to get it off, as he had removed another and more dangerous sickness at Constantinople some years before. But these remedies availed him not, his malady proved in the event

"an inward, malignant, and insuperable fever." *Pope*.

^p He had come to London on account of the election of scholars from Westminster school; and died "in mean lodgings, at a saddler's near Charing Cross, an old, low, ill-built house, which he had used for several years." *Pope*.

^q Dr. Pope adds, that "my lord keeper [the earl of Nottingham] sent a message of condolence to his father, who had then some place

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

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

Virtue was thy life's centre, and from thence
 Did silently and constantly dispense
 The gentle vigorous influence
 To all the wide and fair circumference. COWLEY.

The estate he left was books^s; those he bought, so well chosen as to be sold for more than they cost; and those he

“under him, importing that he had
 “but too great reason to grieve; for
 “never father lost so good a son.”
 See the Dedication of the father,
 Thomas Barrow, to the earl of Not-
 tingham.

^r It is stated in the Biographia
 Britannica, that some of his friends
 contrived to have it taken without his
 knowledge, while they diverted him
 with such discourse as engaged his at-
 tention. The picture was painted by
 Mrs. Beale, and in 1747 was in the
 possession of James West, esq. The

engraving prefixed to this edition is
 taken from a portrait in the hall of
 Trinity college, which was presented
 by Mr. Garforth, and upon which is
 written, “Isaac Wwood faciebat.”
 There is another in the master's lodge,
 which was given by Dr. Samuel
 Knight in 1791.

^s “He left his manuscripts, I
 “mean his written works, to Dr.
 “Tillotson and Mr. Abraham Hill,
 “committing it to their discretion to
 “publish which of them they should
 “think fit.” *Pope*.

made, whereof a catalogue is annexed: and it were not improper to give a further account of his works than to name them: beside their number, variety, method, style, fulness, and usefulness, I might thence draw many proofs to confirm what I have before endeavoured to say to his advantage, and many more important reflections will be obvious to you, than to such a reader as I am. I will only take leave to say, that for his little piece of *The Unity of the Church*, he has better deserved of the church and religion, than many who make a greater figure in ecclesiastic history and politics. But such remarks will be more fitly placed in what we expect from his learned friends of the university. And to them I must also refer for the observables at the taking his several degrees, and discharging the office of vice-chancellor.

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

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

^t Dr. Pope, who knew him well, describes his habits thus: "He was of a healthy constitution, used no exercise or physic, besides smoking tobacco, in which he was not

"sparing, saying, it was an *instar omnium*, or *panpharmacum*. He was unmercifully cruel to a lean carcass, not allowing it sufficient meat or sleep. During the winter

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

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

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

All I have said, or can say, is far short of the idea which Dr. Barrow's friends have formed of him, and that cha-

" months, and some part of the rest,
 " he rose always before it was light,
 " being never without a tinder-box
 " and other proper utensils for that

" purpose. I have frequently known
 " him, after his first sleep, rise, light,
 " and after burning out his candle,
 " return to bed before day."

racter under which he ought to appear to them who knew him not. Beside all the defects on my part, he had in himself this disadvantage of wanting foils to augment his lustre, and low places to give eminence to his heights; such virtues as his, contentment in all conditions, candour in doubtful cases, moderation among differing parties, knowledge without ostentation, are subjects fitter for praise than narrative.

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

Sir,

Your obedient

And humble servant,

A[BRAHAM] H[ILL].

London,

April 10, 1683.

ISAACUS BARROW,

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

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

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

Mores sanctissimi undequaque, et suavissimi.

Geometriæ Professor Londini Greshamensis,

Græcæ Linguæ, et Matheseos apud Cantabrigienses suos.

Cathedras omnes, ecclesiam, gentem ornavit.

Collegium S. S. Trinitatis Præses illustravit,

Jactis bibliothecæ vere regiæ fundamentis auxit.

Opes, honores, et universum vitæ ambitum,

Ad majora natus, non contempsit, sed reliquit seculo.

Deum, quem a teneris coluit, cum primis imitatus est,

Paucissimis egendo, benefaciendo quam plurimis,

Etiam posteris, quibus vel mortuus concionari non desinit.

Cætera, et pene majora ex scriptis peti possunt.

Abi, Lector, et æmulare.

Obiit iv. die Maii, ann. Dom. MDCLXXVII.

Ætat. suæ XLVII.

Monumentum hoc Amici posuere.

THE WORKS OF DR. ISAAC BARROW.

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Lectio de Sphæra et Cylindro.

Lectiones Mathematicæ.

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S E R M O N I.

THE PLÉASANTNESS OF RELIGION.

PROV. iii. 17.

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

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

SERM. I. Then, wisdom of itself is delectable and satisfactory, as it implies a revelation of truth, and a de-

*Veritatis
luce menti
hominis ni-
hil dulcius.
Cic. Acad.
2.*

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

II. Much more in its worthy consequences is wisdom exceedingly pleasant and peaceable: in general, by disposing us to acquire and to enjoy all the good, delight, and happiness we are capable of; and by freeing us from all the inconveniences, mischiefs, and infelicities our condition is subject to. For whatever good from clear understanding, deliberate

advice, sagacious foresight, stable resolution, dexterous address, right intention, and orderly proceeding doth naturally result, wisdom confers: whatever evil blind ignorance, false presumption, unwary credulity, precipitate rashness, unsteady purpose, ill contrivance, backwardness, inability, unwieldiness and confusion of thought, beget, wisdom prevents. From a thousand snares and treacherous allurements, from innumerable rocks and dangerous surprises, from exceedingly many needless encumbrances and vexatious toils of fruitless endeavour, she redeems and secures us. More particularly,

III. Wisdom assures us we take the best course, and proceed as we ought. For by the same means we judge aright, and reflecting upon that judgment are assured we do so: as the same arguments by which we demonstrate a theorem convince us we have demonstrated it, and the same light by which we see an object makes us know we see it. And this assurance in the progress of the action exceedingly pleases, and in the sequel of it infinitely contents us. He that judges amiss, not perceiving clearly the rectitude of his process, proceeds usually with a dubious solicitude; and at length, discovering his error, condemns his own choice, and receives no other satisfaction but of repentance. Like a traveller, who, being uncertain whether he goes in the right way, wanders in continual perplexity, till he be informed, and then too late, understanding his mistake, with regret seeks to recover himself into it. But he that knows his way, and is satisfied that it is the true one, makes on merrily and carelessly, not doubting he shall in good time arrive to his designed journey's end. Two troublesome mischiefs

SERM. therefore wisdom frees us from, the company of
 I. anxious doubt in our actions, and the consequence
 of bitter repentance : for no man can doubt of what
 he is sure, nor repent of what he knows good.

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

V. Wisdom prevents discouragement from the
 possibility of ill success, yea and makes disappoint-
 ment itself tolerable. For if either the foresight of
 a possible miscarriage should discourage us from ad-
 venturing on action, or inculpable frustration were
 intolerable, we should with no heart apply ourselves
 to any thing; there being no designs in this world
 though founded upon the most sound advice, and
 prosecuted by the most diligent endeavour, which
 may not be defeated, as depending upon diverse
 causes above our power, and circumstances beyond
 our prospect. The inconstant opinions, uncertain
 resolutions, mutable affections, and fallacious pre-
 tensions of men, upon which the accomplishment of
 most projects rely, may easily deceive and disap-
 point us. The imperceptible course of nature exert-

ing itself in sudden tempests, diseases, and unlucky casualties, may surprise us, and give an end to our businesses and lives together. However, the irresistible power of the Divine Providence, guided by the unsearchable counsel of his will, we can never be assured that it will not interpose, and hinder the effects of our endeavours. Yet notwithstanding, when we act prudently, we have no reason to be disheartened; because, having good intentions, and using fit means, and having done our best, as no deserved blame, so no considerable damage can arrive to us: and though we find Almighty God hath crossed us, yet we are sure he is not displeased with us. Which consideration, wherewith wisdom furnishes us, will make the worst success not only tolerable, but comfortable to us. For hence we have reason to hope, that the All-wise Goodness reserves a better reward for us, and will sometime recompense not only the good purposes we unhappily pursued, but also the unexpected disappointment we patiently endured; and that however we shall be no losers in the end. Which discourse is mainly fortified by considering how the best and wisest attempts have oft miscarried. We see Moses, authorized by God's command, directed by his counsel, and conducted by his hand, intended to bring the Israelites into the land of Canaan; yet by the unreasonable incredulity and stubborn perverseness of that people he had his purpose frustrated. The holy prophets afterward earnestly endeavoured to contain the same people within compass of obedience to the divine commands, and to reduce them from their idolatrous and wicked courses; yet without correspondent effect. Our Saviour, by the example of his holy life,

SERM.
I.

SERM. continual instruction, and vehement exhortations,
 I. assayed to procure a belief of and submission to his

most excellent doctrine; yet how few *believed his report*, and complied with his discipline! Yea, Almighty God himself often complains, how in a manner his designs were defeated, his desires thwarted, his offers refused, his counsels rejected, his expectations deceived. *Wherefore*, (saith he concerning his vineyard,) *when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* And again, *I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people.* And again, *I have even sent unto you all my prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto me.*

Isa. v. 4.

Isa. lxxv. 2.

Jer. vii. 25,
26.

Wherefore there is no good cause we should be disheartened, or vexed, when success is wanting to well-advised purposes. It is foolish and ill-grounded intentions, and practices unwarrantable by good reason, that make the undertakers solicitous of success, and being defeated leave them disconsolate. Yea further,

VI. Wisdom makes all the troubles, griefs, and pains incident to life, whether casual adversities, or natural afflictions, easy and supportable; by rightly valuing the importance, and moderating the influence of them. It suffers not busy fancy to alter the nature, amplify the degree, or extend the duration of them, by representing them more sad, heavy, and remediless than they truly are. It allows them no force beyond what naturally and necessarily they have, nor contributes nourishment to their increase. It keeps them at a due distance, not permitting them to encroach upon the soul, or to propagate their influence beyond their proper sphere. It will

not let external mischances, as poverty and disgrace, to produce an inward sense which is beyond their natural efficacy : nor corporeal affections of sickness and pain to disturb the mind, with which they have nothing to do. The region of these malignant distempers being at most but the habit of the body, wisdom by effectual antidotes repels them from the heart, and inward parts of the soul. If any thing, sin, and our unworthy miscarriages toward God, should vex and discompose us : yet this trouble wisdom, by representing the divine goodness, and his tender mercies in our ever-blessed Redeemer, doth perfectly allay. And as for all other adversities, it abates their noxious power, by shewing us they are either merely imaginary, or very short and temporary ; that they admit of remedy, or at most do not exclude comfort, not wholly hindering the operations of the mind, nor extinguishing its joys ; that they may have a profitable use, and pleasant end ; and, however, neither imply bad conscience, nor induce obligation to punishment. For,

VII. Wisdom hath always a good conscience attending it, that purest delight and richest cordial of the soul ; that brazen wall, and impregnable fortress against both external assaults and internal commotions ; that *continual feast*, whereon the mind, destitute of all other repast, with a never languishing appetite may entertain itself ; that faithful witness, and impartial judge, whoever accuses, always acquitting the innocent soul ; that certain friend, in no strait failing, in no adversity deserting ; that sure refuge in all storms of fortune, and persecutions of disgrace ; which, as Solomon here notes, renders a man's *sleep sweet*, and undisturbed with fearful

SERM. phantasms, his heart light, and his steps secure;
 I. and, if any thing, can make the Stoical paradox good, and cause the wise man to smile in extremity of torment; arming his mind with an invincible courage, and infusing a due confidence into it; whereby he bears up cheerfully against malicious reproach, undauntedly sustains adversity, and triumphs over bad fortune. And this invaluable treasure the wise man is only capable of possessing; who certainly knows and heartily approves the grounds upon which he proceeds; whenas the fool, building his choice upon blind chance, or violent passion, or giddy fancy, or uncertain example, not upon the steady warrant of good reason, cannot avoid being perplexed with suspicion of mistake, and so necessarily is deprived of the comfort of a good conscience.

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

IX. Wisdom begets a sound, healthful, and har-

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

X. Wisdom acquaints us with ourselves, our own temper and constitution, our propensions and passions, our habitudes and capacities; a thing not only of mighty advantage, but of infinite pleasure and content to us. No man in the world less knows a fool than himself; nay, he is more than ignorant, for he constantly errs in the point, taking himself for, and demeaning himself as toward another, a better, a wiser, and abler man than he is. He hath wonderful conceits of his own qualities and faculties; he affects commendations incompetent to him; he soars at employment surpassing his ability to manage. No comedy can represent a mistake more odd and ridiculous than his: for he wanders, and stares, and hunts after, but never can find nor discern himself; but always encounters with a false shadow instead thereof, which he passionately hugs and admires. But a wise man, by constant observation, and impartial reflection upon himself, grows very familiar with himself: he perceives his own inclinations, which, if bad, he strives to alter and correct; if good, he cherishes and corroborates them: he apprehends the matters he is fitting for, and capable to manage, neither too mean and unworthy of him,

SERM. nor too high and difficult for him ; and those apply-
I. ing his care to, he transacts easily, cheerfully, and
 successfully. So being neither puffed up with vain
 and overweening opinion, nor dejected with heart-
 less diffidence of himself ; neither admiring, nor de-
 spising ; neither irksomely hating, nor fondly loving
 himself ; he continues in good humour, maintains a
 sure friendship and fair correspondence with him-
 self, and rejoices in the retirement and private con-
 versation with his own thoughts : whence flows a
 pleasure and satisfaction unexpressible.

XI. Wisdom procures and preserves a constant
 favour and fair respect of men, purchases a good
 name, and upholds reputation in the world : which
 things are naturally desirable, commodious for life,
 encouragements to good, and preventive of many in-
 conveniences. The composed frame of mind, uni-
 form and comely demeanour, compliant and in-
 offensive conversation, fair and punctual dealing,
 considerate motions, and dexterous addresses of wise
 men, naturally beget esteem and affection in those
 that observe them. Neither than these things is
 there any thing more commendable to human re-
 gard. As symmetry and harmony to the animal
 senses, so delectable is an even temper of soul and
 orderly tenour of actions to rational apprehensions.
 Folly is freakish and humorous, impertinent and
 obstreperous, inconstant and inconsistent, peevish
 and exceptious ; and consequently fastidious to so-
 ciety, and productive of aversion and disrespect.
 But the wise man is stable in his ways, consonant
 to himself, suiting his actions to his words, and those
 to his principles, and all to the rule of right reason ;
 so that you may know where to find him, and how

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

XII. Wisdom instructs us to examine, compare, and rightly to value the objects that court our affections, and challenge our care; and thereby regulates our passions, and moderates our endeavours, which begets a pleasant serenity and peaceable tran-

✓ **SERM.** quillity of mind. For when, being deluded with
I. false shows, and relying upon ill-grounded presumptions, we highly esteem, passionately affect, and eagerly pursue things of little worth in themselves or concernment to us, as we unhandsomely prostitute our affections, and prodigally mispend our time, and vainly lose our labour; so the event not answering our expectation, our minds thereby are confounded, disturbed, and distempered. But when, guided by right reason, we conceive great esteem of, and zealously are enamoured with, and vigorously strive to attain things of excellent worth, and weighty consequence; the conscience of having well placed our affections, and well employed our pains, and the experience of fruits corresponding to our hopes, ravishes our mind with unexpressible content. And so it is: present appearance and vulgar conceit ordinarily impose upon our fancies, disguising things with a deceitful varnish, and representing those that are vainest with the greatest advantage; whilst the noblest objects, being of a more subtile and spiritual nature, like fairest jewels enclosed in a homely box, avoid the notice of gross sense, and pass undiscerned by us. But the light of wisdom, as it unmaskes specious imposture, and bereaves it of its false colours; so it penetrates into the retirements of true excellency, and reveals its genuine lustre. For example, corporeal pleasure, which so powerfully allures and enchants us, wisdom declares that it is but a present, momentary, and transient satisfaction of brutish sense, dimming the light, sullyng the beauty, impairing the vigour, and restraining the activity of the mind; diverting from better operations, and indisposing it to enjoy purer delights; leaving no com-

fortable relish or gladsome memory behind it, but often followed with bitterness, regret, and disgrace. That the profit the world so greedily gapes after is but a possession of trifles, not valuable in themselves, nor rendering the masters of them so ; accidentally obtained, and promiscuously enjoyed by all sorts, but commonly by the worst of men ; difficultly acquired, and easily lost ; however, to be used but for a very short time, and then to be resigned into uncertain hands. That the honour men so dote upon is ordinarily but the difference of a few petty circumstances, a peculiar name or title, a determinate place, a distinguishing ensign ; things of only imaginary excellence, derived from chance, and conferring no advantage, except from some little influence they have upon the arbitrary opinion and fickle humour of the people ; complacence in which is vain, and reliance upon it dangerous. That power and dominion, which men so impatiently struggle for, are but necessary evils introduced to restrain the bad tempers of men ; most evil to them that enjoy them ; requiring tedious attendance, distracting care, and vexatious toil ; attended with frequent disappointment, opprobrious censure, and dangerous envy ; having such real burdens, and slavish encumbrances, sweetened only by superficial pomps, strained obsequiousness, some petty privileges and exemptions scarce worth the mentioning. That wit and parts, of which men make such ostentation, are but natural endowments, commendable only in order to use, apt to engender pride and vanity, and hugely dangerous, if abused or misemployed. What should I mention beauty, that fading toy ; or bodily strength and activity, qualities so palpably inconsiderable ?

SERM. Upon these and such like flattering objects, so adored
I. by vulgar opinion, wisdom exercising severe and impartial judgment, and perceiving in them no intrinsic excellence, no solid content springing from them, no perfection thence accruing to the mind, no high reward allotted to them, no security to the future condition, or other durable advantages proceeding from them ; it concludes they deserve not any high opinion of the mind, nor any vehement passion of the soul, nor any laborious care to be employed on them, and moderates our affections toward them : it frees us from anxious desire of them ; from being transported with excessive joy in the acquisition of them ; from being overwhelmed with disconsolate sorrow at the missing of them, or parting with them ; from repining and envying at those who have better success than ourselves in the procuring them ; from immoderate toil in getting, and care in preserving them : and so delivering us from all these unquiet anxieties of thought, tumultuous perturbations of passion, and tedious vexations of body, it maintains our minds in a cheerful calm, quiet indifferency, and comfortable liberty. On the other side, things of real worth and high concernment, that produce great satisfaction to the mind, and are mainly conducive to our happiness, such as are a right understanding and strong sense of our obligations to Almighty God, and relations to men, a sound temper and complexion of mind, a virtuous disposition, a capacity to discharge the duties of our places, a due qualification to enjoy the happiness of the other world ; these and such like things, by discovering their nature, and the effects resulting from them, it engages us highly to esteem, ardently to affect, and indus-

triously to pursue ; so preventing the inconveniences that follow the want of them, and conveying the benefits arising from the possession of them. SERM.
I.

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

SERM. and opprobrious language ; it becomes unsavoury
I. and odious, and both in show and effect resembles a
 froward, malicious exceptiousness. It were infinite
 to compute in how many instances want of due
 order, measure, and manner, do spoil and incom-
 modate action. It is wisdom that applies remedy to
 these mischiefs. Things must be compared to, and
 arbitrated by, her standard, or else they will contain
 something of monstrous enormity ; either strutting
 in unwieldy bulk, or sinking in defective scantness.
 If she do not fashion and model circumstances, they
 will sit ugly on the things that wear them ; if she
 do not temper the colours, and describe the linea-
 ments, the draught of practice will be but rude and
 imperfect, and little resemble the true patterns of
 duty : but if she interpose, and perform her part, all
 things will appear conformable, neat, and delicate.

XIV. Wisdom discovers our relations, duties, and
 concernments, in respect of men, with the natural
 grounds of them ; thereby both qualifying and in-
 clining us to the discharge of them : whence exceed-
 ing convenience, pleasure, and content ensues. By
 it we understand we are parts and members of the
 great body, the universe ; and are therefore concerned
 in the good management of it, and are thereby
 obliged to procure its order and peace, and by no
 irregular undertaking to disturb or discompose it ;
 which makes us honest and peaceable men : that we
 proceed from the same primitive stock, are children
 of the same father, and partake of the same blood
 with all men ; are endowed with like faculties of
 mind, passions of soul, shape of body, and sense of
 things : that we have equally implanted in our origi-
 nal constitution inclinations to love, pity, gratitude,

sociableness, quiet, joy, reputation : that we have an SERM.
indispensable need and impatient desire of company, I.
assistance, comfort, and relief; that therefore it is
according to the design of nature, and agreeable to
reason, that to those, to whom our natural condi-
tion by so many bands of cognation, similitude, and
mutual necessitude, hath knit and conjoined us, we
should bear a kind respect and tender affection ;
should cheerfully concur in undergoing the common
burdens ; should heartily wish and industriously pro-
moté their good, assist them in accomplishing their
reasonable desires, thankfully requite the courtesies
received from them, congratulate and rejoice with
them in their prosperity, comfort them in their dis-
tresses, and, as we are able, relieve them ; however,
tenderly compassionate their disappointments, mise-
ries, and sorrows. This renders us kind and court-
eous neighbours, sweet and grateful companions.
It represents unto us the dreadful effects and insup-
portable mischiefs arising from breach of faith, con-
travening the obligations of solemn pacts, infringing
public laws, deviating from the received rules of
equity, violating promises, and interrupting good
correspondence among men ; by which considera-
tions it engages us to be good citizens, obedient sub-
jects, just dealers, and faithful friends. It minds us
of the blindness, impotence, and levity, the prone-
ness to mistake and misbehaviour that human na-
ture necessarily is subject to ; deserving rather our
commiseration, than anger or hatred, which prompts
us to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to be
gentle in censure, to be insensible of petty affronts,
to pardon injuries, to be patient, exorable, and re-
conciliable to those that give us greatest cause of

SERM. offence. It teaches us, the good may, but the evil
 I. of our neighbour can in no wise advantage us; that
 from the suffering of any man, simply considered,
 no benefit can accrue, nor natural satisfaction arise
 to us; and that therefore it is a vain, base, brutish,
 and unreasonable thing, for any cause whatsoever,
 to desire or delight in the grief, pain, or misery of
 our neighbour, to hate or envy him, or insult over
 him, or devise mischief to him, or prosecute revenge
 upon him; which makes us civil, noble, and placable
 enemies, or rather no enemies at all. So that wis-
 dom is in effect the genuine parent of all moral and
 political virtue, justice, and honesty; as Solomon
 says in her person, *I lead in the way of righteous-*
ness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment.
 And how sweet these are in the practice, how com-
 fortable in the consequences, the testimony of conti-
 nual experience, and the unanimous consent of all
 wise men sufficiently declare. But further,

Prov. viii.
20.

XV. The principal advantage of wisdom is, its
 acquainting us with the nature and reason of true
 religion, and affording convictive arguments to per-
 suade to the practice of it; which is accompanied
 with the purest delight, and attended with the most
 solid content imaginable. I say, the nature of reli-
 gion, wherein it consists, and what it requires; the
 mistake of which produceth daily so many mischiefs
 and inconveniences in the world, and exposes so
 good a name to so much reproach. It sheweth it
 consisteth not in fair professions and glorious pre-
 tentences, but in real practice; not in a pertinacious
 adherence to any sect or party, but in a sincere love
 of goodness, and dislike of naughtiness, wherever
 discovering itself; not in vain ostentations and

flourishes of outward performance, but in an inward **SERM.**
good complexion of mind, exerting itself in works of I.
true devotion and charity; not in a nice orthodoxy,
or politic subjection of our judgments to the peremp-
tory dictates of men, but in a sincere love of truth,
in a hearty approbation of, and compliance with, the
doctrines fundamentally good, and necessary to be
believed; not in harsh censuring and virulently in-
veighing against others, but in careful amending
our own ways; not in a peevish crossness and obsti-
nate repugnancy to received laws and customs, but
in a quiet and peaceable submission to the express
laws of God, and lawful commands of man; not in a
furious zeal for or against trivial circumstances, but
in a conscionable practising the substantial parts of
religion; not in a frequent talking or contentious
disputing about it, but in a ready observance of the
unquestionable rules and prescripts of it: in a word,
that religion consists in nothing else but doing what
becomes our relation to God, in a conformity or si-
militude to his nature, and in a willing obedience
to his holy will: to which by potent incentives it
allures and persuades us; by representing to us his
transcendently glorious attributes, conspicuously dis-
played in the frame, order, and government of the
world: that wonderful power, which erected this
great and goodly fabric; that incomprehensible wis-
dom, which preserves it in a constant harmony; that
immense goodness, which hath so carefully provided
for the various necessities, delights, and comforts of
its innumerable inhabitants. I say, by representing
those infinitely glorious perfections, it engages us
with highest respect to esteem, reverence, and ho-
nour him. Also, by minding us of our manifold

SERM. obligations to him, our receiving being, life, reason,
I. sense, all the faculties, powers, excellencies, privileges, and commodities of our natures from him; of his tender care and loving providence continually supporting and protecting us; of his liberal beneficence, patient indulgence, and earnest desire of our good and happiness, by manifold expressions evidently manifested toward us; it inflames us with ardent love, and obliges us to officious gratitude toward him. Also, by declaring the necessary and irreconcilable contrariety of his nature to all impurity and perverseness, his peerless majesty, his irresistible power, and his all-seeing knowledge, it begets an awful dread and a devout fear of him. By discovering him from his infinite benignity willing, and from his unlimited power only able to supply our needs, relieve us in distresses, protect us from dangers, and confer any valuable benefit upon us, it engenders faith, and encourages us to rely upon him. By revealing to us his supereminent sovereignty, uncontrollable dominion, and unquestionable authority over us; together with the admirable excellency, wisdom, and equity of his laws, so just and reasonable in themselves, so suitable to our nature, so conducive to our good, so easy and practicable, so sweet and comfortable; it powerfully inclines, and by a gentle force, as it were, constrains us to obedience. By such efficacious inducements wisdom urges us to all duties of religion, and withal surely directs us (as I before said) wherein it consists; teaching us to have right and worthy apprehensions of the divine nature, to which our devotion, if true and good, must be suited and conformed: and so it frees us, as from irreligion and profane neglect of

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

Lastly, Wisdom attracts the favour of God, purchaseth a glorious reward, and secureth perpetual felicity to us. *For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom.* And, *Glorious is the fruit of good labours: and the root of wisdom shall never fall away.* And, *Happy, is the man that findeth wisdom: and, Whoso findeth her, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.* These are the words of wise Solomon in the book of Wisdom, and in the Proverbs. God loveth her, as most agreeable to his nature; as resembling him; as an offspring,

SERM.
I.

Wis. vii. 28.
iii. 15.

Prov. iii. 13.
viii. 35.

SERM. beam, and efflux of that wisdom which founded the earth, and established the heavens; as that which begetteth honour, love, and obedience to his commands, and truly glorifies him; and as that which promotes the good of his creatures, which he earnestly desires. And the paths she leads in are such as directly tend to the promised inheritance of joy and bliss.

I.

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

S E R M O N II.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 TIM. iv. 8.

—*but godliness is profitable for all things.*

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

SERM. II.

Prov. xiv.
23.
Φίλ, δὲ ἰβ-
λὼ ἄς μίγα
δύνασθον
πανταχοῦ.
Aristoph.
Plut.

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

This practice then being so general, and seeing

^a Prima fere vota, et cunctis notissima templis,
 Divitiæ ut crescant, &c. *Juv. Sat. x.*

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

that men are reasonable creatures, that it is so can- SERM.
not surely proceed from mere brutishness or dotage ; II.
there must be some fair colour or semblance of rea-
son, which draweth men into, and carrieth them for-
ward in this way. The reason indeed is obvious
and evident enough ; the very name of profit im-
plieth it, signifying that which is useful, or con-
ducible to purposes really or seemingly good. The
gain of money, or of somewhat equivalent thereto,
is therefore specially termed profit, because it readily
supplieth necessity, furnisheth convenience, feedeth
pleasure, satisfieth fancy and curiosity, promoteth
ease and liberty, supporteth honour and dignity,
procureth power, dependencies, and friendships, ren-
dereth a man somebody considerable in the world ;
in fine, enableth to do good, or to perform works
of beneficence and charity. Profit is therefore so
much affected and pursued, because it is, or doth
seem, apt to procure or promote some good desir-
able to us.

If therefore a project should be proposed to us
very feasible, and probable to succeed, in pursuance
whereof assuredly we might obtain great profit ; me-
thinks, in consistence with ourselves, and conform-
ably to our usual manner of acting, we should be
very ready to embrace and execute it. Such a pro-
ject it is, which in my text, by a very trusty voucher
and skilful judge of such things, and one who had
himself fully experimented it, is proposed ; which in
itself is very practicable, so that any of us may, if we
have a mind to it, and will be at the pains, throughly
compass and carry it on : which will exceedingly
turn to account, and bring in gains unto us unspeak-
ably vast ; in comparison whereto all other designs,

SERM. which men with so much care and toil do pursue,
II. are very unprofitable or detrimental, yielding but shadows of profit, or bringing real damage to us.

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

It hath been ever a main obstruction to the practice of piety, that it hath been taken for no friend, or rather for an enemy, to profit ; as both unprofitable and prejudicial to its followers : and many semblances there are countenancing that opinion. For religion seemeth to smother or to slacken the industry and alacrity of men in following profit, many ways : by charging them to be content with a little, and careful for nothing ; by diverting their affections and cares from worldly affairs to matters of another nature, place, and time, prescribing in the first place to seek things spiritual, heavenly, and future ; by disparaging all secular wealth, as a thing, in comparison to virtue and spiritual goods, very mean and inconsiderable ; by checking greedy desires and aspiring thoughts after it ; by debarring the most ready ways of getting it, (violence, exaction, fraud, and flattery,) yea, straitening the best ways, eager

care and diligence ; by commending strict justice in SERM.
all cases, and always taking part with conscience II.
when it clasheth with interest ; by paring away the
largest uses of wealth, in the prohibition of its free
enjoyment to pride or pleasure ; by enjoining libe-
ral communication thereof in ways of charity and
mercy ; by engaging men to expose their goods
sometimes to imminent hazard, sometimes to certain
loss ; obliging them to forsake all things, and to em-
brace poverty for its sake.

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

It furthereth the prejudice, that some persons,
void of true piety, or imperfectly good, (some *dabblers*
in religion,) do not from their lame, slight, and su-
perficial performances, feel satisfactory returns, such
as they did presume to find ; and thence, to the de-
famation of piety, are apt to say, with those men in
the prophet, *It is vain to serve God : and what* Mal. iii. 14.
profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and
that we have walked mournfully before the Lord
of hosts ? Yea, that sometimes very pious men,
being out of humour, and somewhat discomposed
by the urgent pressures of affliction, the disappoint-
ments and crosses incident to all men here in this
region of trouble, are apt to complain and express
themselves dissatisfied, saying with Job, *It profiteth* Job xxxiv.
a man nothing that he should delight himself with 9. xxxv. 3.
God. What advantage will it be unto me, and
what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my
sin ? or with David, Verily I have cleansed my Ps. lxxiii.
13, 14.

SERM. *heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency:*
 II. *for all the day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning.*

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

Job xxi.
14, 15.

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

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

It rendereth all superiors equal and moderate in SERM.
their administrations; mild, courteous, and affable II.
in their converse; benign and condescensive in all Eph. vi. 9.
their demeanour toward their inferiors. Col. iv. 1.

Correspondently it disposeth inferiors to be sin- Eph. vi. 5.
cere and faithful, modest, loving, respectful, diligent,
apt willingly to yield due subjection and service.

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

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

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

Husbands from it become affectionate and com- Eph. v. 25.
pliant to their wives; wives submissive and obedient Col. iii. 19.
to their husbands. 1 Pet. iii. 7.

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

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

It rendereth all men just and punctual in their Gal. vi. 2.
dealing, orderly and quiet in their behaviour, court- 10.
Phil. iv. 8.

SERM. eous and complaisant in their conversation, friendly
II. and charitable upon all occasions, apt to assist, to re-

¹ Thess. iii. lieve, to comfort one another.

^{12.}

² Cor. ix.

^{13.}

It tieth all relations more fastly and strongly, assureth and augmenteth all endearments, enforceth and establisheth all obligations by the firm bands of conscience; set aside which, no engagement can hold sure against temptations of interest or pleasure. Much difference there is between performing these duties out of natural temper, fear of punishment, hope of temporal reward, selfish design, regard to credit, or other the like principles, and the discharging them out of religious conscience: this alone will keep men tight, uniform, resolute, and stable; whereas all other principles are loose and slippery, will soon be shaken and falter.

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

Prov. xiv.

34. xvi. 12.

xx. 28.

xxix. 14.

viii. 15.

xxix. 8.

that which, as the Wise Man saith, *exalteth a nation*; it is that which *establisheth a throne*.

It is indeed the best prop and guard that can be

of government, and of the commonweal: for it settleth the body politic in a sound constitution of health, it firmly cementeth the parts thereof; it putteth all things into a right order and steady course. It procureth mutual respect and affection between governors and subjects, whence ariseth safety, ease, and pleasure to both. It rendereth men truly good, (that is, just and honest, sober and considerate, modest and peaceable,) and thence apt, without any constraint or stir, to yield every one their due; not affected to needless change, nor disposed to raise any disturbance. It putteth men in good humour, and keepeth them in it; whence things pass smoothly and pleasantly. It cherisheth worth, and encourageth industry; whence virtue flourisheth, and wealth is increased; whence the occasions and means of disorder are stopped, the pretences for sedition and faction are cut off. In fine, it certainly procureth the benediction of God, the source of all welfare and prosperity: whence, *When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth*; and, *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice*. saith the great politician Solomon.

It is therefore the concernment of all men, who, as the Psalmist speaketh, *desire to live well, and would fain see good days*; it is the special interest of great persons, (of the magistracy, the nobility, the gentry, of all persons that have any considerable interest in the world,) who would safely and sweetly enjoy their dignity, power, or wealth, by all means to protect and promote piety, as the best instrument of their security, and undisturbedly enjoying the accommodations of their state. 'Tis in all respects their best wisdom and policy; that which will as

SERM.
II.

Prov. xi. 10.
xxix. 2.

Psal. xxxiv.
12.
1 Pet. iii. 10.

SERM. well preserve their outward state here, as satisfy
II. their consciences within, and save their souls here-
 after. All the Machiavelian arts and tricks, all the
 sleights and fetches of worldly craft, do signify no-
 thing in comparison to this one plain and easy way
 of securing and furthering their interests.

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

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

Is a man prosperous, high, or wealthy in condi-
 tion? Piety guardeth him from all the mischiefs in-
 cident to that state, and disposeth him to enjoy the
 best advantages thereof. It keepeth him from being
 swelled and puffed up with vain conceit, from being
 transported with fond complacence or confidence
 therein; minding him, that it is purely the gift of
 God, that it absolutely dependeth on his disposal, so
 that it may soon be taken from him; and that he
 cannot otherwise than by humility, by gratitude, by

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

SERM. and careful father, who, although he hath yet **nothing** in his own possession, or passing under his name, yet is assured that he can never come into any want of what is needful to him: the Lord of all things (who hath all things in heaven and earth at his disposal, who is infinitely tender of his children's good, who doth incessantly watch over them) being his gracious Father, how can he fear to be left destitute, or not to be competently provided for, as is truly best for him?

This is the difference between a pious and an impious man. Is the pious man in need? he hath then an invisible refuge to fly to, an invisible store to furnish him; he hath somewhat beyond all present things to hope in, to comfort himself with: whereas the impious person hath nothing beside present appearances to support or solace himself by; the which failing, down he sinketh into dejection and despair. Is the good man in affliction? he knoweth that it cometh not on him without God's wise appointment, nor without good intention toward him, for probation, exercise, and improvement of his virtues, or for wholesome correction of his bad dispositions; that it is only physic and discipline to him, which shall have a comfortable issue; that it shall last no longer than it is expedient for him that it should: wherefore he patiently submitteth to it, and undergoeth it cheerfully, with the same mind wherewith a patient swalloweth down an unsavoury potion, which he presumeth will conduce to his health^b. Never, indeed,

^b Scimus amicos Dei ab amantissimo, misericordissimo Patre Deo mala ista pœnalia recipere, non ut pœnam seu vindictam iracundiæ, sed magis ut correctiones et medicamenta stultitiæ,

hath any man enjoyed more real content, or hath been more truly satisfied, than good men have been in a seeming depth of adversity. What men ever upon earth have been more sorely afflicted, have underwent greater losses, disgraces, labours, troubles, distresses in any kind, than did the holy apostles? Yet did they most heartily rejoice, exult, and triumph in them all^c. Such a wondrous virtue hath piety to change all things into matter of consolation and joy. No condition in effect can be evil or sad to a pious man: his very sorrows are pleasant, his infirmities are wholesome, his wants enrich him, his disgraces adorn him, his burdens ease him; his duties are privileges, his falls are the grounds of advancement, his very sins (as breeding contrition, humility, circumspection, and vigilance) do better and profit him: whereas impiety doth spoil every condition, doth corrupt and embase all good things, doth im-bitter all the conveniences and comforts of life.

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

He that hath it is *ipso facto* vastly rich, is entitled to immense treasures of most precious wealth; in comparison whereto all the gold and all the jewels in the world are mere baubles. He hath interest

et adjumenta virtutis, ut malleationes sive fabricationes, et tunctiones, sive ablutiones, et candidationes. *Guil. Par. de Sacram.* .

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

SERM. in God, and can call him his, who is the *all*, and in
II. regard to whom all things existent are *less than*

nothing. The infinite power and wisdom of God belong to him, to be ever, upon all fit occasions, employed for his benefit. All the inestimable treasures of heaven (a place infinitely more rich than the Indies) are his, after this moment of life, to have and to hold for ever: so that great reason had
 Prov. xv. 6 the Wise Man to say, that *in the house of the righteous is much treasure*. Piety therefore is profitable, as immediately instating in wealth: and whereas the desired fruits of profit are chiefly these, honour, power, pleasure, safety, liberty, ease, opportunity of getting knowledge, means of benefiting others; all these, we shall see, do abundantly accrue from piety, and in truth only from it.

Sen. Ep. xc. The pious man is in truth most honourable. *Inter homines pro summo est optimus*, saith Seneca; whom

Prov. xii. Solomon translateth thus; *The righteous is more
 26. Κατ' ἀλλό- excellent than his neighbour*. He is dignified by
 θυμας ὁ ἀγα- the most illustrious titles, a son of God, a friend and
 θος μόνος τι- favourite to the sovereign King of the world, an heir
 μωτός. Ari- of heaven, a denizen of the Jerusalem above: titles
 stot. Eth. far surpassing all those which worldly state doth
 iii. 3. assume. He is approved by the best and most infallible judgments, wherein true honour resideth.

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

The pious man is also the most potent man: he

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

SERM.
II.

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

Ps. xvi. 11.
Rom. xv.
13.
Heb. iii. 6.
Phil. iv. 4.
Ps. xliii. 4.
cxii. i. l. 2.
cxix. 16. 24.
47. 70. 77.
92. 111.
143. c. 2.
xxi. 6.
xciv. 19.
ls. xxix. 19.
Johu xvi.
20, &c.
1 Pet. i. 8.
Rom. xiv.
17.

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

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

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

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

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

As for liberty, the pious man most entirely and truly doth enjoy that ; he alone is free from captivity to that cruel tyrant Satan, from the miserable slavery to sin, from the grievous dominion of lust and passion. He can do what he pleaseth, having a mind to do only what is good and fit. The law he

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

observeth is worthily called *the perfect law of liberty*; the Lord he serveth pretendeth only to command freemen and friends: *Ye are my friends*, James i. 25. II. said he, *if ye do whatever I command you*; and, *If the Son set you free, then are ye free indeed.* John xv. 14. viii. 36. Οὐ γὰρ ἐλευθεροῦν ἴσταν

And for ease, it is he only that knoweth it; having his mind exempted from the distraction of care, from disorder of passion, from anguish of conscience, from the drudgeries and troubles of the world, from the vexations and disquiets which sin produceth. He findeth it made good to him, which our Lord inviting him did promise, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*: he feeleth the truth of those divine assertions, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee*; and, *Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.* Matt. xi. 28. Ιλιούθιτος, ἀλλ' ἢ μένος ἰ Χριστοῦ Chrysost. ad Theod. Is. xxvi. 3. Ps. cxix. 165.

As for knowledge, the pious man alone doth attain it considerably, so as to become truly wise and learned to purpose. *Evil men*, saith the Wise Man himself, who knew well, *understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things.* It is the pious man that employeth his mind upon the most proper and worthy objects, that knoweth things which certainly best deserve to be known, that hath his soul enriched with the choicest notions; he skilleth to aim at the best ends, and to compass them by the fittest means; he can assign to each thing its due worth and value; he can prosecute things by the best methods, and order his affairs in the best manner: so that he is sure not to be defeated or disappointed in his endeavours, nor to mispend his care and pains, without answerable fruit. He hath the best master to instruct him in his stu-

SERM. dies, and the best rules to direct him in his proceed-
 II. ings: he cannot be mistaken, seeing in his judg-
 ment and choice of things he conspireth with infal-

Trismeg. lible wisdom. Therefore *ὁ εὐσεβῶν ἄκρως φιλοσοφεῖ,*
 Job xxviii. *the pious man is the exquisite philosopher. The*
 28. *fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart*
 Prov. ix. 10. *from evil is understanding. The fear of the Lord*
 i. 7. *(as is said again and again in scripture) is the head*
 Psalm cxl. *(or top) of wisdom. A good understanding have*
 10. cxix. *all they that keep his commandments.*
 34. 99. 104.
 130.

Further: the pious man is enabled and disposed (hath the power and the heart) most to benefit and oblige others. He doth it by his succour and assistance, by his instruction and advice, which he is ever ready to yield to any man upon fit occasion: he doth it by the direction and encouragement of his good example: he doth it by his constant and earnest prayers for all men: he doth it by drawing down blessings from heaven on the place where he resideth. He is upon all accounts the most true, the most common benefactor to mankind; all his neighbours, his country, the world are in some way or other obliged to him: at least, he doth all the good he can, and in wish doth benefit all men.

Thus all the fruits and consequences of profit, the which engage men so eagerly to pursue it, do in the best kind and highest degree result from piety, and indeed only from it. All the philosophical bravados concerning a wise man being only rich, only honourable, only happy, only above fortune, are verified in the pious man: to him alone, as such, with a sure foundation, without vanity, with evident reason, those aphorisms may be applied. They are paradoxes and fictions abstracting from religion, or

considering men only under the light and power of SERM.
nature : but supposing our religion true, a good II.
Christian soberly, without arrogance, in proportion
and according to the measure of his piety, may
assume them to himself, as the holy apostles did : *I*
possess all things, I can do all things, he may in a
sort say after St. Paul.

As for all other profits, secluding it, they are but Sen. Ep. 59.
imaginary and counterfeit, mere shadows and illu-
sions, yielding only painted shows instead of sub-
stantial fruit.

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

If a man affecteth power thence, he is grievously
mistaken : for, instead thereof, he proveth exceed-
ingly feeble and impotent, able to perform nothing
worthy a man, subject to fond humours and pas-
sions, servant to divers lusts and pleasures, *capti-*
vated by the Devil at his pleasure, overborne by
temptation, hurried by the stream of the world, and
liable to the strokes of fortune.

If he propoundeth to himself thence the enjoy-
ment of pleasure, he will also much fail therein : for

SERM. in lieu thereof he shall find care and trouble, surfeiting and disease, wearisome satiety and bitter regret; being void of all true delight in his mind, satisfaction in his conscience; nothing here being able to furnish solid and stable pleasure.

II.

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

¹ *Thess. v.*
^{3.} *Prov. x. 29.*

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

August.
Prov. xxv.
28.

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

Isa. lvii. 20.

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

He is, in fine, extremely mistaken, and in all his

projects will be lamentably disappointed, whoever fancieth any true profit without piety : he never can attain to be so much as wealthy ; but drudge and plod what he can, must be a beggar, and a forlorn wretch. For how can he be any wise rich, who doth want all the best things, the only valuable things in the world, which any man may have, which any good man doth possess ? How can he be rich, who is destitute of the most needful accommodations of life ; who constantly feedeth on the coarsest and most sordid fare, (the dust of pelf, the dung of sensuality ;) who hath no faithful or constant friends, (nothing earthly can be such ;) who is master of nothing but dirt, or chaff, or smoke ? Whereas also riches do consist, not in what one enjoyeth at present, (for that can be little,) but in a presumed ability to enjoy afterward what he may come to need or desire ; or in well-grounded hopes that he shall never fall into want or distress. How can that man be rich, who hath not any confidence in God, any interest in him, any reason to expect his blessing ? yea, who hath much ground to fear the displeasure of him, in whose hand all things are, and who arbitrarily disposeth of all ? Piety therefore is the only profitable thing, according to just esteem. *She is more precious than rubies, and all the things we can desire are not to be compared to her.* Prov. iii. 15. Upon this account it is most true, what the Psalmist affirmeth, *A little that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly.* Ps. xxxvii. 16.

IV. That commendation is not to be omitted, which is nearest at hand, and suggested by St. Paul himself to back this assertion concerning the uni-

SERM. II. versal profitableness of piety ; *For*, saith he, *it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come* : that is, God hath promised to reward it with blessings appertaining to this mortal life, and with those which concern the future eternal state.

As for the blessings of this life, although God hath not promised to load the godly man with affluence of worldly things, not to put him into a splendid and pompous garb, not to dispense to him that which may serve for pampering the flesh, or gratifying wanton fancy, not to exempt him from all the inconveniences to which human nature and this worldly state are subject ; yet hath he promised to furnish him with whatever is needful or convenient for him, in due measure and season, the which he doth best understand. There is no good thing which a man naturally desireth, or reasonably can wish for, which is not in express terms proposed as a reward, or a result of piety.

In general, it is declared, that *Blessings are upon the head of the just* ; that, *No good thing God will withhold from them that walk uprightly* ; that, whatever otherwise doth fall out, it *assuredly shall be well with them that fear God* ; that, *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways* :—*happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee* ; that, *There shall no evil happen to the just* ; that, *All things work together for good to them that love God*.

Particularly, there are promised to the pious man, A supply of all wants. *The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish. The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul. There is no*

Prov. x. 3.
xiii. 25.

Ps. xxxiv.
9, 10.

Prov. x. 6.
Deut.
xxviii. 8.
xxx. 9.
Ps. lxxxiv.
11.
Eccles. viii.
12.
Isa. iii. 10.
Ps. cxviii.
1, 2.
(Prov. viii.
35.)
Prov. xii.
21.
Rom. viii.
28.

want to them that fear God. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

SERM. II.

xxxiii. 19.
xxxvii. 3,
19.

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

Ps. xxxiii. 18.
xxxiv. 20.
cxii. 7.
xxxvii. 28.
xci. 10, 11.

Guidance in all his undertakings and proceedings.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord — none of his steps shall slide. — In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Ps. xxxvii. 23, &c.
Prov. iii. 6.
(Prov. xi. 3. 5. xvi. 3.)

Success and prosperity in his designs. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. — Whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper. — Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established; and the light shall shine upon thy ways. The Lord shall command a blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto. Thine expectation shall not be cut off.

Ps. xxxvii. 5.
Ps. i. 3.
Job xxii. 28.
Deut. xxviii. 8.
12.
Prov. xxiii. 18.

Comfortable enjoying the fruits of his industry. —

Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands.

Ps. cxxviii.

Satisfaction of all reasonable desires. The desire of the righteous shall be granted. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he will hear their cry, and will save them.

2.
Prov. x. 24.
Ps. xxxvii.

cxlv. 19.

Firm peace and quiet. The work of righteous-

Isa. xxxii. 17.

SERM. *ness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Great peace have they which love thy law. The fruit of righteousness is sowed in peace.*

II.

Psal. cxix.

165.

James iii.

18.

Psal. xcvi.

11.

Prov. xxix.

6.

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

Pa. cxlvii. 3. Support and comfort in afflictions. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*

Psal. xxxi.

24.

xxvii. 14.

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Pa. xxxiv.

19, 20.

xxxvii. 39.

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

Preservation and recovery from mishaps or mis-carriages. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*

Pa. xxxvii.

24.

Preferment of all sorts, to honour and dignity, to wealth and prosperity. *Wait upon the Lord, and keep his way; and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land. By humility and fear of the Lord are riches and honour. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord—wealth and riches are in his house.*

Pa. xxxvii.

34.

Prov. xxii.

4.

Ps. cxii. 1.

3.

Prov.

xxviii. 10.

(Job xxxvi.

7.)

Job xxxvi.

11.

Prov. xiv.

11.

The upright shall have good things in possession. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasure. The tabernacle of the righteous shall flourish.

Long life. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days. By me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. Let thine*

Prov. x. 27.

ix. 11. iii. 1.

2. 16.

heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add unto thee. SERM. II.

A good name enduring after death. *The memory of the just is blessed.* Prov. x. 7. 25.

Blessings entailed on posterity. *His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed. The root of the righteous shall not be moved.* Ps. xxxvii. 26. cxii. 2. (Exod. xx. 6.) Prov. xii. 3.

Thus is a liberal dispensation even of temporal goods annexed by God's infallible word unto the practice of piety. It is indeed more frequently, abundantly, and explicitly promised unto God's ancient people, as being a conditional ingredient of the covenant made with them, exhibited in that as a recompense of their external performance of religious works prescribed in their law. The gospel doth not so clearly propound it, or so much insist upon it, as not principally belonging to the evangelical covenant, the which, in reward to the performance of its conditions by us, peculiarly doth offer blessings spiritual, and relating to the future state; as also scarce deserving to be mentioned in comparison to those superior blessings. Yet as the celestial benefits, although not openly tendered in the Jewish law, were yet mystically couched therein, and closely designed for the spiritual and hearty practisers of religion; so is the collation of temporal accommodations to be understood to belong to all pious Christians: there is a *codicil*, as it were, annexed to the New Testament, in which God signifieth his intention to furnish his children with all that is needful or convenient for them. His providence hath not ceased to watch over us, his bounty doth not fail

SERM. toward us even in this respect ; his care will not be

II.

wanting to feed us and clothe us comfortably, to protect us from evil, to prosper our good undertaking Hence doth he command us to care for nothing, but *to cast our care upon him, to recommend our business to him, because he careth for us ; he will never forsake us ; he will hear our prayers, and help u*

1 Pet. v. 7.
Phil. iv. 6.
Heb. xiii. 5.

Matth. vi.

25-

1 Tim. vi.

17-

2 Pet. i. 3.

Hence we are enjoined *not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly a things to enjoy.* Hence it is said, that *the divine power hath given us all things pertaining unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.* Hence it :

Matth. vi.

33-

promised by our Lord, that *if we seek first the kingdom of God, all things shall be added to u.*

Hence it is inferred, as consequential to the nature of the evangelical dispensation, that we cannot want any good thing ; *He, saith St. Paul, that spare not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*

Rom. viii.

32-

how shall he not with him also freely give us a things ? In fine, hence it is proposed as notorious that nothing is permitted to fall out otherwise than

Rom. viii.

28.

1 Cor. x. 13.

as conduceth to our good. *We know, saith St. Paul, that all things work together for good unto those that love God: nor will God, in any case, suffer u to be tempted, by any want or pressure, beyond what we are able to bear.* Thus is piety evidently profitable, as *having the promises of this life, or exhibiting all temporal blessings desirable to the practisers thereof.*

But infinitely more profitable it is, as *having the promises of the future life, or as procuring a title to those incomparably more excellent blessings of the other world ; those indefectible treasures, the*

incorruptible, undefiled, and never-fading inheritance, reserved in heaven for us; that exceeding weight of glory; those ineffable joys of paradise, SERM. II. Luke xii. 33. 1 Pet. i. 4. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Pet. i. 8. iv. 13.
 that lightsome countenance and beatifying presence of God; that unconceivably and unexpressibly joyful, glorious, perfect, and endless bliss; briefly, all that is comprised and intimated in those words of the apostle, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Infinitely profitable surely must that be, which procureth those things for us: and in these respects great reason had St. Paul to say, that *godliness is profitable for all things.*

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

S E R M O N III.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF GODLINESS.

1 TIM. iv. 8.

—*but godliness is profitable for all things.*

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

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

Of all things in the world there is nothing more generally profitable than light : by it we converse with the world, and have all things set before us ; by it we truly and easily discern things in their right magnitude, shape, and colour ; by it we guide our steps safely in prosecution of what is good, and shunning what is noxious ; by it our spirits are

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

Again: it is a fair ornament of a man, and a grand convenience both to himself, and to others with whom he converseth or dealeth, to act regularly, uniformly, and consistently; freeing a man's self from distraction and irresolution in his mind, from change and confusion in his proceedings; securing others from delusion and disappointment in their transactions with him. ^a Even a bad rule constantly observed is therefore better than none: order and perseverance in any way seemeth more conve-

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

SERM. nient than roving and tossing about in uncertainties.
III. But, secluding a regard to the precepts of religion, there can hardly be any sure or settled rule, which firmly can engage a man to, or effectually restrain a man from any thing.

There is scarce in nature any thing so wild, so untractable, so unintelligible, as a man who hath no bridle of conscience to guide or check him. A profane man is like a ship, without anchor to stay him, or rudder to steer him, or compass to guide him; so that he is tossed with any wind, and driven with any wave, none knoweth whither; whither bodily temper doth sway him, or passion doth hurry him, or interest doth pull him, or example leadeth him, or company inveigleth and haleth him, or humour transporteth him; whither any such variable and unaccountable causes determine him, or divers of them together distract him: whence he so rambleth and hovereth, that he can seldom himself tell what in any case he should do, nor can another guess it; so that you cannot at any time know where to find him, or how to deal with him: you cannot with reason ever rely upon him, so *unstable he is in all his ways*. He is in effect a mere child, all humour and giddiness, somewhat worse than a beast, which, following the instinct of its nature, is constant and regular, and thence tractable; or at least so untractable, that no man will be deceived in meddling with him. Nothing therefore can be more unmanly than such a person, nothing can be more unpleasant than to have to do with him^b.

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

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

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

This it doth by confining our practice within settled bounds: but this advantage appeareth greater, considering that the rules which it prescribeth are the best that can be. Such they must needs be, as proceeding from infallible wisdom and immense goodness; being indeed no other than laws, which the all-wise and most gracious Lord and Maker of the world, out of tender kindness to his subjects and creatures, with especial regard to our welfare, hath been pleased to enact and declare. What of old he said to the Israelites concerning their laws, may with greater advantage be applied to those, which should regulate our lives: *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear* ^{Deut. x. 12, 13.}

^c Οἱ ἐπιεικεῖς ἑαυτοῖς ὁμονοοῦσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις, ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ὄντες, ὡς εἰπεῖν τῶν τοιοῦτων μένει γὰρ τὰ βουλήματα, καὶ οὐ μεταρρέει, ὡς περ εὐρι-
ακ. Arist. Eth. ix. 6.

SERM. *the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to*
 III. *love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all*

thy heart, and with all thy soul; to keep the com-
mandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I
command thee this day for thy good? (For thy
 good; that was the design of their being com-
 manded; thereto the observance of them did tend.)

And that commendation, which by the Levites in
 Nehemiah is given to that, doth more clearly and
 fully agree to the Christian (general and perfect) in-

Neh. ix. 13. *stitution; Thou camest down from mount Sinai;*
and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest
them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes

Rom. vii. *and commandments.* And, *The law, saith the apo-*
 12. *stle Paul, is holy; the commandment is holy, just,*

and good: as such it is recommended to us by its
 Author, so we Christians are by many great argu-
 ments assured that it is, and that it is such even
 our natural reason dictateth; so (as to the chief in-
 stances thereof) the most wise and sober men always
 have acknowledged, so the general consent doth
 avow, and so even common experience doth attest.
 For, heartily to love and reverence the Maker of all
 things, who by every thing apparent before us de-
 monstrateth himself incomprehensibly powerful, wise,
 and good, to be kind and charitable to our neigh-
 bours, to be just and faithful in our dealings, to be
 sober and modest in our minds, to be meek and
 gentle in our demeanours, to be staunch and tempe-
 rate in our enjoyments, and the like principal rules
 of duty, are such, that the common reason of men
 and continual experience do approve them as hugely
 conducive to the public good of men, and to each
 man's private welfare. So notoriously beneficial

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

SERM. men, and which disturb the world, palpably do arise
 III. from the transgression or neglect thereof.

If we look on a person sticking to those rules, we shall perceive him to have a cheerful mind and composed passions, to be at peace within, and satisfied with himself ; to live in comely order, in good repute, in fair correspondence, and firm concord with his neighbours. If we mark what preserveth the body sound and lusty, what keepeth the mind vigorous and brisk, what saveth and improveth the estate, what upholdeth the good name, what guardeth and graceth a man's whole life ; it is nothing else but proceeding in our demeanour and dealings according to the honest and wise rules of piety. If we view a place where these commonly in good measure are observed, we shall discern, that peace and prosperity do flourish there ; that all things proceed on sweetly and fairly ; that men generally drive on conversation and commerce together contentedly, delightfully, advantageously, yielding friendly advice and aid mutually, striving to render one another happy ; that few clamours or complaints are heard there, few contentions or stirs do appear, few disasters or tragedies do occur ; that such a place hath indeed much of the face, much of the substance of paradise.

But if you mind a person who neglecteth them, you will find his mind galled with sore remorse, racked with anxious fears and doubts, agitated with storms of passion and lust, living in disorder and disgrace, jarring with others, and no less dissatisfied with himself. If you observe what doth impair the health, doth weaken and fret the mind, doth

waste the estate, doth blemish the reputation, doth SERM.
expose the whole life to danger and trouble; what III.
is it but thwarting these good rules? If you consider a place where these are much neglected, it will appear like a wilderness of savage beasts, or a sty of foul swine, or a hell of cursed fiends; full of roaring and tearing, of factions and feuds, of distractions and confusions, of pitiful objects, of doleful moans, of tragical events. Men are there wallowing in filth, wildly revelling, bickering and squabbling, defaming, circumventing, disturbing and vexing one another; as if they affected nothing more than to render one another as miserable as they can. It is from lust and luxury, from ambition and avarice, from envy and spite, and the like dispositions, which religion chiefly doth interdict, that all such horrid mischiefs do spring.

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

SERM. *more for their benefit and interest than to violate*
III. *them*, is far more true concerning the divine laws.

II. We may consider more particularly, that piety yieldeth to the practiser all kind of interior content; peace, and joy; freeth him from all kinds of dissatisfaction, regret, and disquiet; which is an inestimably great advantage: for certainly the happiness and misery of men are wholly or chiefly seated and founded in the mind. If that is in a good state of health, rest, and cheerfulness, whatever the person's outward condition or circumstances be, he cannot be wretched: if that be distempered or disturbed, he cannot be happy. For what if a man seem very poor; if he be abundantly satisfied in his own possessions and enjoyments? What if he tasteth not the pleasures of sense; if he enjoyeth purer and sweeter delights of mind? What if tempests of fortune surround him; if his mind be calm and serene? What if he have few or no friends; if he yet be thoroughly in peace and amity with himself, and can delightfully converse with his own thoughts? What if men slight, censure, or revile him; if he doth value his own state, doth approve his own actions, doth acquit himself of blame in his own conscience? Such external contingencies can surely no more prejudice a man's real happiness, than winds blustering abroad can harm or trouble him that abideth in a good room within doors, than storms and fluctuations at sea can molest him who standeth firm upon the shore. On the other hand, the greatest affluence of seeming goods will avail nothing, if real content of mind be wanting. For what will the highest eminence of outward state import to him that is de-

jected in his own conceit? What if the world court SERM.
and bless him, or if all people do admire and ap- III.
laud him; if he be displeased with, if he condemn- Prov. xviii.
eth, if he despiseth himself? What if the weather 4.
look fair and bright without, if storms rage in his
breast, if black clouds do overcast his soul? What if
he do abound with friends, and enjoy peace abroad;
if he find distraction at home, and is at cruel va-
riance with himself? How can a man enjoy any
satisfaction, or relish any pleasure, while sore re-
morse doth sting him, or solicitous doubts and fears
do rack him ^d?

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

There is no other thing here in this world that
can yield any solid or stable content to our mind.
For all present enjoyments are transient and evanid; Prov. xxvii
and of any future thing, in this kingdom of change 24.
and contingency, there can be no assurance. There Prov. xxvii
is nothing below large enough to fill our vast capaci- 20.
ties, or to satiate our boundless desires, or to appease
our squeamish delicacy. There is nothing whose
sweetness we do not presently exhaust and suck
dry; whereof thence we do not soon grow weary,

^d Chrysostom. in Rom. i. Or. 1. Εὐθυμίαν γὰρ καὶ χαρὰν οὐκ ἀρχῆς μέγεθος, οὐ χρημάτων πλῆθος, οὐ δυναστείας ὄγκος, οὐκ ἰσχύς σώματος, ἢ τελειότητα τραπεζῆς, οὐχ ἱματίων κόσμος, οὐκ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων τικῶν εἶσθε, ἀλλ' ἢ κατέρθωμα μόνον πνευματικὸν, καὶ συνείδὸς ἀγαθόν.

SERM. quite loathing, or faintly liking it. There is not
III. any thing which is not slippery and fleeting ; so that

we can for a long time hope to possess it, or for any time can enjoy it, without restless care in keeping it, and anxious fear of losing it. Nothing there is, in the pursuance, the custody, the defence and maintenance whereof we are not liable to disappointments and crosses. Nothing consequently there is productive of any sound content to the fastidious, impatient, greedy, and restless heart of man. The greatest confluence of present, corporeal, secular things (of all the health, the riches, the dignity, the power, the friendships and dependencies, the wit, the learning and wisdom, the reputation and renown in this world) will not afford much of it : which yet is but an imaginary supposition ; for in effect hardly do all such accommodations of life concur in

Eccles. x. 1. any state. There is ever some *dead fly* in our box, which marreth our *ointment* ; some adherent inconvenience, which soureth the gust of our enjoyments : there is always some good thing absent, which we do want or long for ; some ill thing present, or in prospect, which we abhor, would avoid, do fear may come. If therefore we would find content, we must not seek it here ; we must want it, or have it from another world : it must come hither from heaven, and thence only piety can fetch it down. This, instead of these unsatisfying, uncertain, and unstable things, supplieth us with goods adequate to our most outstretched wishes, infallibly sure, incessantly durable ; *an indefectible treasure, an incorruptible inheritance, an unshakable kingdom*, a perfect and endless joy, capable to replenish the vastest heart : which he that hath a good title to, or a confident

θησαυρὸν
 ἀνικλιπτου,
 ἀληθονομίαν
 ἀφθαρτον,
 βασιλείαν
 ἀσάλευτον.

hope of, how can he be otherwise than extremely pleased, than fully content? It assureth the favour and friendship of God, of him that is absolute Lord and disposer of all things: the which he that hath, and confideth in, what can he want or wish more? what can he fear? what can annoy or dismay him? what can hap to him worthy to be deemed evil or sad? What is poverty to him, for whom God is concerned to provide? What is disgrace to him, that hath the regard and approbation of God? What is danger to him, whom God continually protecteth? What can any distress work on him, whom God doth comfort, and will relieve? What is any thing to him, who is sensible that all things are purposely disposed to him by that wisdom which perfectly knoweth what is best; by that goodness which entirely loveth him? In fine, he that is conscious to himself of being well-affected in mind, and acting the best way, who is satisfied in the state of his soul, secure from God's displeasure, and hopeful of his favour, what can make any grievous impression on him? What other affections than such as are most grateful and pleasant can lodge in his soul? Joy and peace have natural seeds in such a mind, and necessarily must spring up there; in proportion, I mean, and according to the degrees of piety resident therein.

The Epicureans did conceit and boast, that having, by their atheistical explications of natural effects, and common events here, discarded the belief and dread of religion, they had laid a strong foundation for tranquillity of mind, had driven away all the causes of grief and fear, so that nothing then remained troublesome or terrible unto us; and con-

SERM. sequently, what, said they, could forbid, but that we should be entirely contented, glad, and happy?—

III.

Nos exæquat victoria cælo; no God then surely could be more happy than we. But their attempt in many respects was vain and lame. They presumed of a victory which it is impossible to obtain: and supposing they had got it, their triumph would not have been so glorious, their success would not have been so great, as they pretended. For seeing no Epicurean discourse can baffle the potent arguments which persuade religion; (those arguments, which the visible constitution of nature, the current tradition of all ages, the general consent of men, the pregnant attestations of history and experience concerning supernatural and miraculous events, do afford;) since the being and providence of God have proofs so clear and valid, that no subtlety of man can so far evade them, as not to be shaken with them, as wholly to be freed from doubt and suspicion of their truth; since there can be no means of evincing the negative part in those questions to be true or probable; it is impossible that any considering man, in this cause against religion, should suppose himself to have acquired an absolute and secure victory, or that he should reap substantial fruit of comfort thence. It cannot be that any man should enjoy any perfect quiet, without acting so as to get some good hope of avoiding those dreadful mischiefs, which religion threateneth to the transgressors of its precepts. Were there indeed but reason enough to stir, if not to stagger, an infidel; were it somewhat dubious whether, yea, were it great odds that there are not reserved any punishments for impiety, as indeed there is, if not the perfectest assur-

ance imaginable, yet vast advantage on the contrary side; were there but any small reason for a judgment to come, as there are apparently very many and great ones; had most men conspired in denying Providence, as ever generally they have consented in avowing it; were there a pretence of miracles for establishing the mortality and impunity of souls, as there have been numberless strongly testified by good witnesses and great events, to confirm the opposite doctrines; did most wise and sober men judge in favour of irreligion, as commonly they ever did and still do otherwise; yet wisdom would require that men should choose to be pious, since otherwise no man can be throughly secure. It is a wildness, not to dread the least possibility of incurring such horrible mischiefs: any hazard of such importance cannot but startle a man in his wits. To be in the least obnoxious to eternal torments, if men would think upon it as men, (that is, as rational and provident creatures,) could not but disturb them. And indeed so it is in experience; for whatever they say, or seem, all atheists and profane men are inwardly suspicious and fearful; they care not to die, and would gladly escape the trial of what shall follow death. But let us grant or imagine the Epicurean successful as he could wish in this enterprise of subduing religion: yet except therewith he can also trample down reason, new mould human nature, subjugate all natural appetites and passions, alter the state of things here, and transform the world, he will yet in the greatest part fail of his conceited advantages; very short he will fall of triumphing in a contented and quiet mind. That which accrueth thence will at most be no more than some negative

SERM. content, or a partial indolency, arising from his being
 III. rescued from some particular cares and fears; which
 exceedeth not the tranquillity of a beast, or the stupidity of one that is out of his senses: that is all he can claim, which yet is more than he can ever compass. For he cannot be as a beast, or a mere sot, if he would: reason, reflecting on present evils, and boding others future, will afflict him; his own unsatiabable desires, unavoidable fears, and untameable passions, will disquiet him. Were the other world quite out of his faith, or his thought, yet this world would yield trouble sufficient to render him void of any steady rest or solid joy. All men ever have, and ever will complain, that the burdens, crosses, satieties of this life, do much surpass the conveniences and comforts of it. So that, were no other to be expected or feared, this of itself would become grievous and nauseous; we should soon have enough or too much of it, without a support and supply from elsewhere. In the largest affluence of things, in the deepest calm of our state, we are apt to nauseate, and are weary even of our prosperity itself; the which indeed commonly hath ingredients not only somewhat unsavoury, but very bitter and loathsome. We may add, that had those profane attempters quite banished religion, they with it must have driven away all the benefits and comforts of it: which, even supposing them but imaginary, are yet the greatest which common life doth need or can desire: with it they would send packing justice, fidelity, charity, sobriety, and all solid virtue, things which cannot firmly subsist without conscience: which being gone, human life would be the most disorderly, most unsafe, most wretched and con-

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

temptible thing that can be; nothing but insipid and flashy sensualities would be left behind to comfort a man with; and those hardly any man (by reason of competitions and contentions for them, nowise restrainable) could enjoy quietly or safely. It is therefore piety alone, which, by raising hopes of blessings and joys incomparably superior to any here, that cannot be taken from us, can lay any ground of true content, of substantial and positive content; such as consisteth not only in removing the objects and causes of vexatious passions, but in employing the most pleasant affections (love, hope, joy) with a delightful complacence upon their proper and most noble objects. *The kingdom of God* (and that only, Rom. xiv. no other kingdom hath that privilege) *consisteth in*^{17.} *righteousness* (first, then in) *peace and spiritual joy*. No philosopher, with truth and reason, can make that overture to us which our Lord doth; *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest to your souls.* Out of^{28.} religion there can be no aphorism pretended like to that of the prophet, *Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.* Isa. xxvi. 3.

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

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

SERM. and check them, doth rightly correct and reform
 III. them^e.

This no bare reason (which naturally is so dim and so feeble in man) can achieve: much less can unreasonableness do it, which is ever prevalent in irreligious persons. Their passions do ever run wildly and at random, in no good pace, within no good compass, toward the meanest and basest objects; whence they can have no rest or quiet in their minds. As they are constantly offending, so will they ever be punishing themselves, with intestine broils and conflicts, with dissatisfactions and regrets. Hence, *There is no peace to the wicked. He is like the troubled sea, which cannot rest. God* (as St. Austin speaketh) *hath said it, and so it is, Every inordinate mind is a punishment to itself*^f.

Isa. xlviii.
 22.
 lvii. 20.

Nisi sapi-
 enti sua
 non pla-
 cent: om-
 nis stultitia
 laborat fas-
 tidio sui.
 Sen. Ep. 9.

Doth content spring from a hearty approbation of, or a complacency in a man's own actions; from reflection that he constantly doth act according to reason and wisdom, to justice and duty? Then can the pious man alone pretend to it, who knoweth that he walketh *inoffensively toward God and man*; that he consulteth his own best interest and welfare; that assuredly no bad consequence can attend his unblameable behaviour; that most wise men have declared their approbation of his pro-

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

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

Τιμωρία πάσης ἀδικίας ἀκόλουθος. *Plat. de Leg, 5.*

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

ceedings; that if he prove in his chief design mis- SERM.
taken, yet no mischief can thence befall him; yea, III.
that he is not thereby quite disappointed, seeing
even much present satisfaction and convenience do
arise up to him from his practice.

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

Doth content arise specially from good success
in our attempts, or from prosperous events befall-
ing us? Then it is the pious man who is most ca-
pable thereof: for he only is secure, that what
seemeth good and prosperous is really such to
him, as meant for his good by the Divine good-
ness, as tending thereto by the guidance of infal-
lible wisdom. As he only hath ground to hope for
success, because he confideth in God, because he du-
tifully seeketh God's help, because God is favourably
disposed toward him, because God *ordereth his steps*,
because God is by promise engaged to bless him, be-
cause he is conscious of intentions to render God
thanks and praise for it, to employ his success to
God's honour and service: so he only can be satis-
fied with the appearance of success, being able with
assurance to say after St. Paul, *We know that to* Rom. viii.
those who love God all things cooperate for good. 28.

Is security from danger, from trouble, from want,

SERM. from all evil, a source or matter of content? It
 III. certainly doth attend the pious man; God being
 his especial protector, his comforter, his purveyor.

Prov. xii. 21. *There shall no evil befall the just: There shall
 Ps. xci. 10. no plague come near his dwelling. God keepeth
 xxxiv. 20. all his bones, not one of them is broken. He deli-
 17. vereth the righteous out of their troubles. The
 Prov. i. 24. desire of the righteous shall be granted. There is
 Ps. xxxiv. 9. no want to them that fear God. So do the holy
 oracles assure us.*

Doth contentedness spring from sufficiency, real
 or apprehended? This appertaineth peculiarly to
 the pious man: for, having God, the master of all,
 for *his portion*, he hath the richest estate that can
 be; he hath all that he can desire, he cannot but
 take himself to have enough. Hence *godliness
 with contentedness* (μετ' αὐταρκείας, *with sufficiency*)
 is, as St. Paul saith, μέγας πορισμὸς, *the great way of
 gaining*. He saith it not, as supposing godliness
 and contentedness to be separable; but rather, as
 implying godliness therefore to be most gainful, be-
 cause sufficiency and contentedness do ever attend
 it. In fine, if that saying of Seneca be true, that,
 if to any man the things he possesseth do not seem
 most ample, although he be master of the whole
 world, he is yet miserable; then assuredly the pious
 man only can be happy; for to him alone his pos-
 sessions can seem the largest and best, such as there
 can be no possible accession to, or amendment of.
 For nothing can be greater or better than God, in
 whom he hath a steadfast propriety, whose infinite
 power and wisdom are engaged to do him the ut-
 most good that he is capable of. And further,

III. Seeing we have mentioned happiness, or the

Si cui sua
 non viden-
 tur amplis-
 sima, licet
 totius mun-
 di dominus
 sit, tamen
 miser est.
 Sen. Ep. 9.

summum bonum, the utmost scope of human desire, we do add, that piety doth surely confer it. Happiness, whatever it be, hath certainly an essential coherence with piety. These are reciprocal propositions, both of them infallibly true, He that is pious is happy; and, He that is happy is pious. No man doth undertake or prosecute any thing, which he doth not apprehend in some order or degree conducing to that which all men under a confused notion regard and tend to, which they call happiness, the highest good, the chiefest desirable thing. But in their judgments about this thing, or the means of attaining it, as men dissent much; so of necessity most of them must be mistaken. Most, indeed, do aim and shoot at a mere shadow of profit, or at that which is very little considerable, and in comparison nothing at all; which little conduceth to the perfection of their nature, or the satisfaction of their desire. If they miss the mark, they are disappointed; if they hit it, they are no less, and in effect hit nothing. But whatever this grand matter is, in whatever it consisteth, however it be procured; be it the possession and fruition of some special choice goods, or an aggregation and affluence of all goods; piety surely is the main ingredient and principal cause thereof. All other goods without it are insignificant and unuseful thereto; and it cannot be wanting where piety is. Be a man never so rich, so powerful, so learned and knowing, so prosperous in his affairs, so honourable in the opinions and affections of men: yet nowise happy can he be, if he is not pious; being he wanteth the best goods, and is subject to the worst evils; being he wanteth the love and favour of God, he wanteth peace and

SERM. satisfaction of conscience, he wanteth a right enjoyment of present things, he wanteth security concerning his final welfare. Be he never so poor, so low in the eyes of men, so forlorn and destitute of worldly conveniences; yet if he be pious, he cannot be wretched: for he hath an interest in goods incomparably most precious, and is safe from all considerable evils; he hath a free resort to the inexhaustible fountain of all happiness, he hath a right to immense and endless felicity, the which eminently containeth all the goods we are capable of; he is possessed thereof in hope and certain reversion, there is but a moment to pass before his complete fruition of it. The want of all other petty things no more can maim the integrity of his felicity, than cutting the hair, or paring the nails, do mutilate a man: all other things are but superfluities or excrescences in regard to the constitution of happiness. Whatever happeneth, that will assuredly be true, which is so much inculcated in holy scripture,

III.

Ps. cxviii.
1, 2. cxii.
1.

Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways; happy shall he be, and it shall be well with him. Piety is indeed fraught with beatitudes, every part thereof yieldeth peculiar blessedness. To the love of God, to charity toward our neighbour, to purity of heart, to meekness, to humility, to patience, to mercifulness, to peaceableness, beatitude is ascribed by our Lord, the great Judge and Dispenser of it. Each religious performance hath happy fruits growing from it, and blissful rewards assigned thereto. All pious dispositions are fountains of pleasant streams, which by their confluence do make up a full sea of felicity.

Matt. v.

IV. It is a peculiar advantage of piety, that it

furnisheth employment fit for us, worthy of us, **SERM.**
hugely grateful, and highly beneficial to us. Man is **III.**
a very busy and active creature, which cannot live
and do nothing, whose thoughts are in restless mo-
tion, whose desires are ever stretching at somewhat,
who perpetually will be working either good or evil
to himself: wherefore greatly profitable must that
thing be, which determineth him to act well, to
spend his care and pain on that which is truly ad-
vantageous to him; and that is religion only. It
alone fasteneth our thoughts, affections, and endea-
vours upon occupations worthy the dignity of our
nature, suiting the excellency of our natural capaci-
ties and endowments, tending to the perfection and
advancement of our reason, to the enriching and
ennobling of our souls. Secluding that, we have
nothing in the world to study, to affect, to pursue,
not very mean and below us, not very base and mis-
becoming us, as men of reason and judgment. What
have we to do but to eat and drink, like horses or
like swine; but to sport and play, like children or
apes; but to bicker and scuffle about trifles and im-
pertinences, like idiots? what, but to scrape or
scramble for useless pelf; to hunt after empty shows
and shadows of honour, or the vain fancies and
dreams of men? what, but to wallow or bask in
sordid pleasures, the which soon degenerate into re-
morse and bitterness? To which sort of employ-
ments were a man confined, what a pitiful thing
would he be, and how inconsiderable were his life!
Were a man designed only, like a fly, to buz about
here for a time, sucking in the air, and licking the
dew, then soon to vanish back into nothing, or to be
transformed into worms; how sorry and despicable

SERM. a thing were he! And such without religion we
III. should be. But it supplieth us with business of a most worthy nature and lofty importance; it setteth us upon doing things great and noble as can be; it engageth us to free our minds from all fond conceits, and cleanse our hearts from all corrupt affections; to curb our brutish appetites, to tame our wild passions, to correct our perverse inclinations, to conform the dispositions of our soul and the actions of our life to the eternal laws of righteousness and goodness: it putteth us upon the imitation of God, and aiming at the resemblance of his perfections; upon obtaining a friendship and maintaining a correspondence with the High and Holy One; upon fitting our minds for conversation and society with the wisest and purest spirits above; upon providing for an immortal state, upon the acquist of joy and glory everlasting. It employeth us in the divinest actions, of promoting virtue, of performing beneficence, of serving the public, and doing good to all: the being exercised in which things doth indeed render a man highly considerable, and his life excellently valuable.

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

It is an employment most beneficial to us: in pursuing which we greatly better ourselves, and improve our condition; we benefit and oblige others; we procure sound reputation and steady friendships;

we decline many irksome mischiefs and annoyances; **SERM.**
we do not, like those in the prophet, spend our la- **III.**
bour for that which satisfieth not, nor spend our **Isa. lv. 2.**
money for that which is not bread: for both tem-
 poral prosperity and eternal felicity are the wages of
 the labour which we take herein.

It is an employment most constant, never allow-
 ing sloth or listlessness to creep in, incessantly busy-
 ing all our faculties with earnest contention; ac-
 cording to that profession of St. Paul, declaring the
 nature thereof, *Herein always do I exercise my-* **Acts xxiv.**
self, to have a conscience void of offence toward **16.**
God and toward man. Whence it is called a *fight,*
 and a *race,* implying the continual earnestness of
 attention and activity, which is to be spent thereon.

It is withal a sweet and grateful business: for it
 is a pious man's character, that *he delighteth greatly* **Psal. cxii. 1.**
in God's commandments; that *the commandments* **John v. 3.**
are not grievous to him; that it is *his meat and* **John iv. 34.**
drink to do God's will; that *God's words* (or pre- **Psal. cxix.**
 cepts) *are sweeter than honey to his taste;* that *the* **103.**
ways of religious wisdom are ways of pleasantness, **Prov. iii. 17.**
and all her paths are peace. Whereas all other
 employments are wearisome, and soon become loath-
 some; this, the further we proceed in it, the more
 pleasant and satisfactory it groweth. There is per-
 petual matter of victory over bad inclinations pester-
 ing us within, and strong temptations assailing us
 without: which to combat hath much delight; to
 master, breedeth unexpressible content. The sense

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

Dedit hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis ju-
 varent. *Quint. i. 12.*

SERM. also of God's love, the influences of his grace and
 III. comfort communicated in the performances of devo-
 tion and all duty, the satisfaction of good conscience,
 the assured hope of reward, the foretastes of future
 bliss, do season and sweeten all the labours taken,
 and all the difficulties undergone therein.

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

V. It is a considerable benefit of piety, that it

M. Ant. ii.
 11. vi. 10.

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

Nullius boni sine socio jucunda possessio est. *Sen. Ep. 6.*
 Ut aliarum rerum nobis innata dulcedo est, sic amicitiæ. *Sen. Ep. 9.*

It maketh God our friend, a friend infinitely better than all friends, most affectionate and kind, most faithful and sure, most able, most willing, and ever most ready to perform all friendly offices, to yield advice in all our doubts, succour in all our needs, comfort in all our troubles, satisfaction to all our desires. Unto him it ministereth a free address upon all occasions; with him it alloweth us continually a most sweet and pleasant intercourse. The pious man hath always the all-wise God to counsel him, to guide his actions and order his steps; he hath the Almighty to protect, support, and relieve him; he hath the immense goodness to commiserate and comfort him; unto him he is not only encouraged, but obliged to resort in need: upon him he may, he ought to discharge all his cares and burdens.

Prov. xii. 2.
 Psal. xxxiv. 15. xxxiii. 18. cxlv. 19. xxxvii. 28.
 Job xxxvi. 7.

It consequently doth engage all creatures in the world to be our friends, or instruments of good to us, according to their several capacities, by the direction and disposal of God. All the servants of our great Friend will, in compliance to him, be serviceable to us, *Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall*

Job v. 23.

SERM. *be at peace with thee* : so Job's friend promiseth
 III. him upon condition of piety. And God himself
 Hos. ii. 18. confirmeth that promise ; *In that day, saith he in
 the prophet, will I make a covenant for them with
 the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of hea-
 ven, and with the creeping things of the ground.*
 Isa. xliii. 2. And again, *When thou passest through the waters,
 I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they
 shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through
 the fire, thou shalt not be burnt ; neither shall the
 flame kindle upon thee.* And, *The sun shall not
 smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. Thou
 shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young
 lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot.*
 Ps. cxxi. 6. *They shall take up scorpions ; and if they drink
 any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them :* (so our
 Ps. xci. 13. Lord promised to his disciples.) Not only the hea-
 vens shall dispense their kindly influences, and the
 earth yield her plentiful stores, and all the elements
 discharge their natural and ordinary good offices ;
 nor only the tame and sociable creatures shall upon
 this condition faithfully serve us ; but even the most
 wild, most fierce, most ravenous, most venomous
 creatures shall, if there be need, prove friendly and
 helpful, or at least harmless to us : as were the
 ravens to Elias, the lions to Daniel, the viper to
 St. Paul, the fire to the three children.
 1 Kings xvii. 6.
 Psal. xxxiv. 7. xci. 11.
 Heb. i. 14. But especially piety doth procure the friendship
 of the good angels, that puissant host of glorious and
 happy spirits : they all do tenderly love the pious
 person ; they are ever ready to serve and do him
 good, to protect him from danger, to aid him in his
 undertakings, to rescue him from mischiefs. What
 an honour, what a blessing is this, to have such an

innumerable company of noble friends (the courtiers and favourites of heaven) deeply concerned and constantly vigilant for our welfare !

SERM.
III.

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

It rendereth all sorts of men our friends. To good men it uniteth us in holy communion ; the communion of brotherly charity and hearty goodwill, attended with all the good offices they are able to perform : to other men it reconcileth and endeareth us ; for that innocent and inoffensive, courteous and benign, charitable and beneficent demeanour, (such as piety doth require and produce,) are apt to conciliate respect and affection from the worst men.

For, *Vincit malos pertinax bonitas* ; men hardly can persist enemies to him whom they perceive to be their friend : and such the pious man in disposition of mind, and in effect when occasion serveth, is toward all men ^h ; being sensible of his obligation to love all men, and, *as he hath opportunity, to do good to all men*. It assureth and more strictly endeareth our friends to us. For, as it maketh us hearty, faithful, constant friends to others ; so it reciprocally tieth others to us in the like sincerity and fastness of good-will.

Sen. de Benef. vii. 21.

Gal. vi. 10.

Oi αγαθοι
ηδεις αλλη-
λους. Arist.
Eth. viii. 4.

It reconcileth enemies. For, *when a man's ways do please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him*. It hath a natural efficacy to that purpose, and Divine blessing promoteth it.

Prov. xvi.

^h Qui sibi amicus est, scito hunc amicum omnibus esse. Sen.

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

Quæris
quid proferam?
amicus esse
mihî cœpi.
Sen. Ep. 6.

In fine, piety rendereth a man a true friend and a good companion to himself; satisfied in himself, able to converse freely and pleasantly with his own thoughts. It is for the want of pious inclinations and dispositions, that solitude (a thing which sometimes cannot be avoided, which often should be embraced) is to most men so irksome and tedious, that men do carefully shun themselves, and fly from their own thoughts; that they decline all converse with their own souls, and hardly dare look upon their own hearts and consciences: whence they become aliens from home, wholly unacquainted with themselves, most ignorant of their own nearest concerns, no faithful friends or pleasant companions to themselves; so for refuge and ease they unseasonably run into idle or lewd conversation, where they disorder and defile themselves^k. But the pious man is, like Scipio, *never less alone, than when alone*: his solitude and retirement is not only tole-

Nunquam
minus solus,
quam
cum solus.

ⁱ Συνδιάγειν τε οὗτος ἑαυτῷ βούλεται· ἠδέως γὰρ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ.—(Aristot. Eth. ix. 4.) τῶν τε γὰρ πεπραγμένων ἐπιτερπεῖς αἱ μνήμαι, καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐλπίδες ἀγαθαί.

^k Nemo est, cui non satius sit cum quolibet esse, quam secum. Sen. Ep. 25.

^l Ἐνιοὶ τὸν ἴδιον βίον, ὡς ἀτερπέστατον θέαμα, προσιδεῖν οὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, &c. Plut. περὶ Πολυπρ. p. 916.

Ζητοῦσιν οἱ μοχθηροὶ μεθ' ἃν συνημερεύσουσιν, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ φεύγουσιν. Arist. ix. 4.

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able, but commonly the most grateful and fruitful part of his life: he can ever with much pleasure, and more advantage, converse with himself; digesting and marshalling his thoughts, his affections, his purposes into good order; searching and discussing his heart, reflecting on his past ways, enforcing his former good resolutions, and framing new ones; inquiring after edifying truths; stretching his meditations toward the best and sublimest objects, raising his hopes and warming his affections towards spiritual and heavenly things; asking himself pertinent questions, and resolving incident doubts concerning his practice: in fine, conversing with his best friend in devotion; with admiration and love contemplating the divine perfections displayed in the works of nature, of providence, of grace; praising God for his excellent benefits and mercies; confessing his defects and offences; deprecating wrath and imploring pardon, with grace and ability to amend; praying for the supply of all his wants¹. All which performances yield both unconceivable benefit and unexpressible comfort. So that solitude (that which is to common nature so offensive, to corrupt nature so abominable) is to the pious man extremely commodious and comfortable: which is a great advantage peculiar to piety, and the last which I shall mention.

¹ Acquiescit sibi, cogitationibus suis traditus. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

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

SERM. So many, and many more than I can express, v
III. great and precious advantages do accrue from pi
so that well may we conclude with St. Paul,
godliness is profitable for all things.

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

S E R M O N I V .

THE REWARD OF HONOURING GOD.

1 SAM. ii. 30.

For them that honour me I will honour.

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

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

IV.

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

doth seem to be, that men would live in some credit, would raise themselves above contempt¹.

SERM.
IV.

In such request, of such force, doth honour appear to be. If we examine why, we may find more than mere fashion (or mutual imitation and consent) to ground the experiment upon. There is one obvious reason why no mean regard should be had thereto; its great convenience and usefulness: for that a man cannot himself live safely, quietly, or pleasantly, without some competent measure thereof; cannot well serve the public, perform offices of duty to his relations, of kindness to his friends, of charity to his neighbours, but under its protection, and with its aid: it being an engine very requisite for the managing any business, for the compassing any design, at least sweetly and smoothly; it procuring to us many furtherances in our proceedings, removing divers obstacles out of our way, guarding a man's person from offences, adding weight to his words, putting an edge upon his endeavours: for every one allows a favourable ear to his discourse, lends an

¹ Ἴδοις δ' ἂν καὶ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν τοὺς ἐπιεικεστάτους, ἐπεὶ ἄλλου μὲν οὐδενὸς ἂν τὸ ζῆν ἀντικαταλλαξαμένους· ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦ τυχεῖν καλῆς δόξης, ἀποθνήσκειν ἐθέλοντας. Isocr. Orat. ad Philip.

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

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

Αἱ γὰρ δυναστεῖαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμὴν ἐστὶν αἰρετά. *Arist. Eth. iv. 3.*

Honos alit artes, omnesque incenduntur ad studia gloria, &c. *Cic. Tusc. Quæst. 1.*

SERM. assisting hand to his attempts, grants a ready credence to his testimony, and makes a fair construction of his doings, whom he esteems and respects. So is honour plainly valuable among the *bona utilia*, as no small accommodation of life; and as such, reason approves it to our judgment^m.

But, searching further, we shall find the appetite of honour to have a deeper ground, and that it is rooted even in our nature itself. For we may descry it budding forth in men's first infancy, (before the use of reason or speech;) even little children being ambitious to be made much of, maintaining among themselves petty emulations and competitions, as it were about punctilios of honour. We may observe it growing with age, waxing bigger and stronger together with the increase of wit and knowledge, of civil culture and experience; that the maturest age doth most resent and relish it; that it prevails most in civilized nations; that men of the best parts, of the highest improvements, of the weightiest employments, do most zealously affect it and stand upon it; that they who most struggle with it do most feel its might, how difficult it is to resist and restrain it, how impossible it is to stifle or extinguish it. For the philosopher with all his reasons and considerations cannot dispute it down, or persuade it away; the anchoret cannot with all his

Vidi ego et expertus sum zelum parvulum, &c. Aug.

^m Vide Hier. Ep. ad Celant.

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

Πρὸς χρείας ἐπιτήδειον ὄργανον ἡ δόξα. Galen.

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

Vide Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. 17.

austerities starve it, or by his retirement shun it: **SERM. IV.**
no affliction, no poverty, no wretchedness of condition can totally suppress it. It is a spirit that not only haunts our courts and palaces, but frequents our schools and cloisters, yea, creeps into cottages, into hospitals, into prisons, and even dogs men into deserts and solitudes; so close it sticks to our nature. Plato saith, it is the last coat which a wise man doth put off. But I question whether he could shew us that wise man who had done it, or could tell us where he dwelt, except perhaps in his own Utopian republic. For they who most pretend to have done it (who in their discourse most vilify honour; who talk like Chrysippus, that a wise man for reputation sake will not so much as stretch out his finger; or like Seneca, that we should do every thing purely for conscience sake, without any regard to men's opinion; who make harangues and write volumes against gloryⁿ) do yet appear by their practice, sometimes by so doing, to aim at it: even as men do usually complain of and eagerly quarrel with that which they most affect and woo. Chrysippus wrote, as we are told, above 700 books, most of them concerning logical quirks, and such as one can hardly imagine what other drift he could have in composing them, besides ostentation of his subtilty and sharpness of wit. Seneca, if history do not wrong him, and the face of his actions do not

In solitudine sitis superbia. Hier.

Cic. de Fin. 3.

Laert.

ⁿ Nihil opinionis causa, omnia conscientiae faciam. Sen. de V. B.

Nil sit illi cum ambitione famaue commune, sibi placeat. Epist. 113.

Justum esse gratis oportet. Ib.

Id. de Ira, iii. 41.

SERM. misrepresent him, was not in his heart exempt from
 IV. a spice of ambition. Yea, that excellent emperor

M. Aurelius, who would often speak like a Stoic, could not but commonly act like a man, more by his practice commending honour, than he disparaged it in his words. For story represents him very careful and jealous of his credit, very diligent to preserve it and to repair it °. Tertullian calls such phi-

Tert. Apol. losophers *negotiatores famæ*, merchants for fame: and it is perchance some part of their cunning in their trade, which makes them strive to beat down the price of this commodity, that they may more easily engross it to themselves. However, experience proves that such words are but words, (words spoken out of affectation and pretence, rather than in good earnest and according to truth;) that endeavours to banish or to extirpate this desire are but fond and fruitless attempts. The reason why is clear: for it is as if one should dispute against eating and drinking, or should labour to free himself from hunger and thirst: the appetite of honour being indeed, as that of food, innate unto us, so as not to be quenched or smothered, except by some violent distemper or indisposition of mind ^p; even by the wise Author of our nature originally implanted therein for very good ends and uses, respecting both the private and public benefit of men; as an engagement to virtue, and a restraint from vice; as an excitement of industry, an incentive of

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

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

courage, a support of constancy in the prosecution of worthy enterprises; as a serviceable instrument for the constitution, conservation, and improvement of human society. For did not some love of honour glow in men's breasts, were that noble spark quite extinct, few men probably would study for honourable qualities, or perform laudable deeds; there would be nothing to keep some men within bounds of modesty and decency, to deter them from doing odious and ugly things; men, not caring what others thought of them, would not regard what they did themselves; a barbarous sloth or brutish stupidity would overspread the world, withdrawing from common life most of its ornaments, much of its convenience; men generally would, if not altogether, shun society, yet at least decline the cares and burdens requisite to the promoting its welfare, for the sustaining which usually the chief encouragement, the main recompense, is this of honour. That men therefore have so tender and delicate a sense of their reputation (so that touching it is like pricking a nerve, as soon felt, and as smartly offensive) is an excellent provision in nature; in regard whereto honour may pass among the *bona naturalia*, as a good necessary for the satisfaction of nature, and for securing the accomplishment of its best designs.

SERM. IV.

Αἰδοῦναι δ' αἰ-
σχουμένην πάν-
των γυναικῶν.
ἐκ νανίστου.
Naz. Carm.
56.

A moderate regard to honour is also commendable as an instance of humanity or good-will to men, yea, as an argument of humility, or a sober conceit of ourselves. For to desire another man's esteem, and consequently his love, (which in some kind or degree is an inseparable companion of esteem,) doth imply somewhat of reciprocal esteem

Negligere
quid de se
quisque
sentiat ar-
rogantis est
et dissoluti.
Cic. de
Offic. i.

SERM. and affection toward him ; and to prize the judgment of other men concerning us, doth signify, that we are not oversatisfied with our own.

IV.

We might for its further commendation allege the authority of the more cool and candid sort of philosophers, (such as grounded their judgment of things upon notions agreeable to common sense and experience ; who adapted their rules of practice to the nature of man, such as they found it in the world, not such as they framed it in their own fancies,) who have ranked honour among the principal of things desirable, and adorned it with fairest elogies ; terming it a divine thing, the best of exterior goods, the most honest fruit and most ample reward of true virtue ; adjudging, that to neglect the opinions of men (especially of persons worthy and laudable) is a sign of stupid baseness, that to contemn them is an effect of unreasonable haughtiness ; representing the love of honour (rightly grounded and duly moderated) not only as the parent and guardian (as productive and preservative) of other virtues, but as a virtue itself, of no small magnitude and lustre in the constellation of virtues, the virtue of generosity⁹. A virtue, which, next to the spirit of true religion, (next to a hearty reverence toward the supreme, blessed goodness, and that holy charity to-

⁹ Θεῖόν τι ἡ τιμή. Plat. de Leg. iv.

Καλὸν ταῖς πολλαῖς πόλεσι τὸ παρακείμενόν ἐστι, προτιμῆν εὐδοξίαν πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν. Idem, de Rep. xii.

Μέγιστον τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀγαθῶν ἡ τιμή. Arist. Eth. iv. 3.

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

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

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

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

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

SERM. But beyond all this, the holy scripture (that most certain standard by which we may examine and determine the true worth of things) doth not teach us to slight honour, but rather in its fit order and just measure to love and prize it. It indeed instructs us to ground it well, (not upon bad qualities or wicked deeds, that is villainous madness; not upon things of a mean and indifferent nature, that is vanity; not upon counterfeit shows and pretences, that is hypocrisy; but upon real worth and goodness that may consist with modesty and sobriety:) it enjoins us not to be immoderate in our desire thereof, or complacences therein, not to be irregular in the pursuit or acquist of it; (to be so is pride and ambition;) but to affect it calmly, to purchase it fairly: it directs us not to make a regard thereof our chief principle, not to propound it as our main end of action: it charges us to bear contentedly the want or loss thereof, (as of other temporal goods; yea, in some cases, for conscience sake, or for God's service, (that is, for a good incomparably better than it,) it obliges us willingly to prostitute and sacrifice it, choosing rather to be infamous than impious, (to be in disgrace with men, rather than in disfavour with God^s;) it, in fine, commands us to seek an embrace it only in subordination and with final reference to God's honour. Which distinctions and cautions being provided, honour is represented in holy scripture as a thing considerably good, which may be regarded without blame, which sometime in duty must be regarded. It is there preferred

^s Non vis esse justus sine gloria? at mehercule sæpe justus esse debes cum infamia. *Sen. Epist. cxiii.*

before other good things, in themselves not des- SERM.
 picable. For, *A good name is better than pre- IV.*
cious ointment; yea, A good name is rather to Eccles. vii.
be chosen than great riches, saith the Wise Man. Prov. xxii.
 It is called a gift of God: for, *There is a man,* Eccles. vi.
saith the Preacher, to whom God hath given riches²
and honour. Yea, not only a simple gift, but a bless-
 ing, conferred in kindness, as a reward and encou-
 ragement of goodness: for, *By humility and the fear* Prov. xxii.
of the Lord, saith he again, *are riches and honour.*⁴
 Whence it is to be acknowledged as an especial be-
 nefit, and a fit ground of thanksgiving; as is prac-
 tised by the Psalmist in his royal hymn: *Honour,* Ps. xxi. 5.
saith he, and majesty hast thou laid upon him.
 Wisdom also is described unto us bearing *in her* Prov. iii.
left hand riches and honour: and wisdom surely¹⁶
 will not take into any hand of hers, or hold there-
 in, what is worth nothing. No: we are therefore
 moved to procure her, because, *exalting her, she* Prov. iv. 8,
shall promote us. —She shall give unto our head⁹
an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she
deliver to us. We are also enjoined to render ho-
 nour as the best expression of good-will and gra-
 titude toward them who best deserve in themselves,
 or most deserve of us; to our prince, to our parents,
 to our priests, especially to such of them *as govern* 1 Pet. ii. 17.
and teach well, to all good men, (*Have such in re-* 1 Tim. v. 3,
putation, says the apostle.) And were not honour^{17.}
 a good thing, such injunctions would be unreason-
 able. Yea, because we are obliged to bear good-will
 toward all men, St. Peter bids us *to honour all men.* 1 Pet. ii. 17.
 From hence also, that we are especially bound to ren-
 der honour unto God himself, we may well infer with
 Aristotle, that *honour is the best thing in our power* Aristot.
 Eth. iv. 3.

SERM. *to offer.* To these considerations may be added,
 IV. that we are commanded to walk εὐσχημόνως, (*de-*
 Rom. xiii. *cently*, or speciously, which implies a regard to
 13. men's opinion;) to *provide things honest in the*
 Rom. xii. *sight of all men*, (τὰ καλὰ, that is, not only things
 17. good in substance, but goodly in appearance;) to
 1 Pet. ii. 12. *have our conversation honest before the Gentiles*,
 (καλῶν again, that is, fair, or comely, and plausible,
 such as may commend us and our profession to
 the judgment of them who observe us.) St. Paul
 Phil. iv. 8. also exhorts us to *mind*, not only *what things are*
true, are just, are pure; but also ὅσα σεμνὰ, (*what-*
ever things are venerable, or apt to beget respect,)
 ὅσα προσφιλεῖ, (*whatever things are lovely*, or gra-
 cious in men's eyes and esteem,) ὅσα εὐφημα, (*what-*
ever things are well reported, or well reputed of.)
 He requires us not only, *if there be any virtue*,
 (any thing very good in itself,) but, *if there be*
any praise, (any thing much approved in common
 esteem,) that we should *mind such things*. Lastly,
 the blessed state hereafter (the highest instance of
 divine bounty, the complete reward of goodness) is
 represented and recommended to us as a state of
 honour and glory; to be ambitious whereof is the
 Rom. ii. 6, character of a good man. *To every man*, saith St.
 7. Paul, *shall God render according to his works: to*
them, who by patient continuance in well doing
seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eter-
nal life.

Such is the reward propounded to us in itself;
 no vile or contemptible thing, but upon various ac-
 counts much valuable; that which the common ap-
 prehensions of men, plain dictates of reason, a pre-
 dominant instinct of nature, the judgments of very

wise men, and divine attestation itself conspire to commend unto us as very considerable and precious. SERM. IV.
Such a reward our text prescribes us the certain, the only way of attaining.

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

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

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

1 Cor. vi.
20.

1. The soul of that honour which is required of
 us toward God, is that internal esteem and reverence
 which we should bear in our hearts towards him;

importing that we have impressed upon our minds such conceptions about him as are worthy of him, suitable to the perfection of his nature, to the eminency of his state, to the just quality of his works and actions: that we apprehend him to be, what he really is, in his nature, superlatively good, wise, powerful, holy, and just: that we ascribe unto him the production and conservation of all beings, together with an entire superintendency over, and absolute disposal of, all events: that we conceive ourselves obliged to submit unto, and acquiesce in, all his dispensations of providence, as most wise and most righteous; to rely upon the declarations of his mind, (whether in way of assertion or promise,) as infallibly true and certain. In such acts of mind the honouring of God doth primarily consist. In acts, I say: not in speculative opinions concerning the divine excellencies, (such as all men have, who are not downright atheists or infidels, floating in the fancy, or dormant in the mind; but in continually present, lively, effectual acts of apprehension and judgment, sinking down into the heart and affections, and quickening them to a congruous, real performance. Such an apprehension of God's power, as shall make us to dread his irresistible hand, shall cause us to despair of prospering in bad courses, shall dispose us to confide in him, as able to perform whatever he wills us to expect from him: such an opinion of his wisdom, as shall keep us from questioning whether that is best which God declares to be so; as shall hinder us from presuming (in compliance with our own shallow reason or vain fancy) to do any thing against God's judgment and advice: such a conceit of God's justice, as shall render us

SERM. careful to perform what his law promises to reward,
IV. and fearful to commit what it threatens to punish :

such a persuasion concerning God's goodness, as shall kindle in us an hearty affection toward him, shall make us very sensible of his bounty, and ready to yield returns of duty and gratitude unto him ; as shall preserve us from being distrustful of his providence, or doubtful in our need and distress of finding relief from him : such a vigorous and fruitful esteem of God in all respects, as shall produce in us dispositions of mind, and actions of life, agreeable to our various relations and obligations to him ; becoming us as his creatures and children, as his subjects and servants. This is indeed the soul of the duty, which being absent, all exterior (how specious soever) either professions or performances, are but as pictures, having in them somewhat of resemblance in shape and colour, nothing of life : yea rather, as carcases, not only dead and senseless, but rotten and filthy in God's sight. *This people, saith God, do honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* Such honour is indeed no honour at all, but impudent abuse and profane mockery : for what can be more abominably vain, than for a man to court and cajole him who knows his whole heart, who sees that he either minds not, or means not what he says ? It behoves us therefore by all proper means, by contemplating the works and actions of God, (his admirable works of nature, the wise proceedings of his providence, the glorious dispensations of his grace,) by meditating on his word, by praying for his grace, by observing his law and will, to raise up in our hearts, to foment and cherish this internal reverence, which is the true spring of all

Matt. xv. 8.

piety, the principle which forms and actuates that other sort, coming next to be touched on, being the body of our due honour to God; concurring in its order to the integrity thereof, as without which the interior part would be a kind of ghost, too thin in substance, too remote from sense, too destitute of good fruit and use.

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

First, in general, God is honoured by a willing and careful practice of all piety and virtue for conscience sake, or in avowed obedience to his holy will. This is the most natural expression of our reverence toward him, and the most effectual way of promoting the same in others. A subject cannot better demonstrate the reverence he bears toward his prince, than by (with a cheerful diligence) observing his laws; for by so doing he declares that he acknowledgeth the authority, and revereth the majesty, which enacted them; that he approves the wisdom which devised them, and the goodness which designed them for public benefit; that he dreads his prince's power, which can maintain them, and his justice, which will vindicate them; that he relies upon his fidelity, in making good what of protection or of recompense he propounds to the observers of them. No less pregnant a signification of our reve-

SERM. rence toward God do we yield in our gladly and
IV. strictly obeying his laws; thereby evidencing our

submission to God's sovereign authority, our esteem of his wisdom and goodness, our awful regard to his power and justice, our confidence in him, and dependance upon his word. As also the practice of wholesome laws, visibly producing good fruits, (peace and prosperity in the commonwealth,) doth conciliate respect unto the prince, he thereby appearing wise and good, able to discern, and willing to choose what confers to public benefit: so actions conformable to the divine law, being (by God's wise and gracious disposal) both in themselves comely and lovely, and in effect, as St. Paul saith, *good and profit-*

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

able to men, conducing indeed not only to private, but also to public welfare, to the rendering human society comfortable, to the settling and securing common tranquillity, the performance of them must needs bring great commendation to the author and ordainer of them. By observing them we shall, as

1 Pet. ii. 9. St. Peter speaks, *set forth the virtues of him that called us* to such a practice. The light and lustre of good works, done in regard to divine command,

will cause men to see clearly the excellencies of our most wise and gracious Lord; will consequently in-

Matt. v. 16. duce and excite them *to glorify our Father which is*

Joh. xv. 8. *in heaven. In this*, saith our Saviour, *is my Father glorified, if you bear much fruit.* The goodliness

to the sight, the pleasantness to the taste, which is ever perceptible in those fruits which genuine piety beareth, the beauty men see in a calm mind and a sober conversation, the sweetness they taste from works of justice and charity, will certainly produce veneration to the doctrine which teacheth such

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

SERM. IV.
 Rom. ii. 23.
 Tit. ii. 5.
 2 Sam. xii. 14.
 Isa. liii. 5.
 Ezek. xxxvi. 20.
 Eph. iv. 1.
 Phil. i. 27.
 Col. i. 10.
 1 Thess. ii. 12.
 Rom. xii. 17.
 1 Cor. x. 31.

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

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

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

SERM. 3. Yielding due observance to the deputies and
IV. ministers of God (both civil and ecclesiastical) as

Isa. lviii. such, or because of their relation to God : the doing
 13.
 Rom. xiii. of which God declares that he interprets and accepts
 4.
 Mal. ii. 7. as done unto himself.

1 Sam. viii. 4. Freely spending what God hath given us (out
 7.
 Matt. x. 40. of respect unto him) in works of piety, charity, and
 John xiii. mercy ; that which the Wise Man calls *honouring*
 20.
 2 Cor. ix. *the Lord with our substance.*
 13.

Prov. iii. 9. 5. All penitential acts, by which we submit unto
 xiv. 31. God, and humble ourselves before him. As Achan,
 Josh. vii. by confessing of his sin, is said to *give glory to the*
 19.
 Apoc. xvi. *Lord God of Israel.*

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

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

7. We shall especially honour God, by discharging faithfully those offices which God hath intrusted us with ; by improving diligently those talents which God hath committed to us ; by using carefully those means and opportunities, which God hath vouchsafed us, of doing him service and promoting his glory. Thus he to whom God hath given wealth, if he expend it (not to the nourishment of pride and luxury, not only to the gratifying his own pleasure or humour, but) to the furtherance of God's honour, or to the succour of his indigent neighbour, (in any pious or charitable way,) he doth thereby in espe-

cial manner honour God. He also on whom God hath bestowed wit and parts, if he employ them (not so much in contriving projects to advance his own petty interests, or in procuring vain applause to himself, as) in advantageously setting forth God's praise, handsomely recommending goodness, dexterously engaging men in ways of virtue, (doing which things is true wit and excellent policy indeed,) he doth thereby remarkably honour God. He likewise that hath honour conferred upon him, if he subordinate it to God's honour, if he use his own credit as an instrument of bringing credit to goodness, thereby adorning and illustrating piety, he by so doing doth eminently practise this duty. The like may be said of any other good quality, any capacity or advantage of doing good; by the right use thereof we honour God: for that men, beholding the worth of such good gifts, and feeling the benefit emergent from them, will be apt to bless the donor of them; as did they in the Gospel, who, seeing our Saviour cure the paralytic man, did presently *glorify God, who had given such power unto men.* Matt. ix. 8. But especially they to whom power and authority is committed, as they have the chief capacity, so they are under an especial obligation thus to honour God: they are particularly concerned to hear and observe that royal proclamation, *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the honour due unto his name.* Psal. xxix. 1, 2. When such persons (like king Nebuchadnezzar returned to his right senses) do seriously acknowledge their power and eminency derived from God alone; when they profess subjection unto him, and express it in their practice, not only driving others by their

SERM.
IV.

Matt. ix. 8.

Psal. xxix.

1, 2.

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

SERM. power, but drawing them by their example, to piety
 IV. and goodness; when they cause God's name to
 be duly worshipped, and his laws to be strictly
 observed; when they favour and encourage vir-
 tue, discourage and chastise wickedness; when they
 take care that justice be impartially administered,
 innocence protected, necessity relieved, all iniquity
 and oppression, all violence and disorder, yea, so
 much as may be, all affliction and wretchedness be
 prevented or removed; when they by all means
 strive to promote both the service of God and the
 Matt. xxiv. happiness of men (*dispensing* equally and benignly
 45. to the family over which their Lord hath set them,
their meat in due season; providing that men
 1 Tim. ii. 2. under them *may live a peaceable and quiet life,*
in all godliness and honesty; doing which is the
 business allotted to them, the interest, as it were, of
 God, which he declares himself concernedly to ten-
 der, and by their ministry to prosecute;) when they
 carefully do such things, then do they indeed ap-
 prove themselves worthy honourers of their high
 Master and heavenly King; then do they truly act
 God's part, and represent his person decently.
 When the actions of these visible gods are so di-
 vinely good and beneficial, men will be easily in-
 duced, yea, can hardly forbear to reverence and
 magnify the invisible Founder of their authority.
 By so doing, as they will set before men's eyes the
 best pattern of loyalty; as they will impress upon
 men's hearts the strongest argument for obedience
 and respect toward themselves; as they shall both
 more plainly inform and more effectually persuade
 people to the performance of their duty unto them,
 than by all the law and all the force in the world;

as they will thereby consequently best secure and maintain their own honour, and their own welfare, SERM. IV.

(for men will never be heartily loyal and submissive to authority till they become really good; nor will they ever be very good till they see their leaders such:) so they will together greatly advance the praise and glory of him in whose name they rule, to whose favour they owe their power and dignity; *in whose hand, as the prophet saith, is their breath, Dan. v. 23. and whose are all their ways.* For all men will be ready most awfully to dread him, unto whom they see princes themselves humbly to stoop and bow; no man will be ashamed or unwilling to serve him, whom he shall observe that his lords and governors do concern themselves to worship: the world cannot but have a good opinion of him, a participation of whose power and majesty yields such excellent fruits; it will not fail to adore him, whose shadows and images are so venerable. It is a most notorious thing, both to reason and in experience, what extreme advantage great persons have, especially by the influence of their practice, to bring God himself, as it were, into credit: how much it is in their power easily to render piety a thing in fashion and request. For in what they do, they never are alone, or are ill attended; whither they go, they carry the world along with them: they lead crowds of people after them, as well when they go in the right way, as when they run astray. The custom of living well, no less than other modes and garbs, will be soon conveyed and propagated from the court; the city and country will readily draw good manners thence, (good manners truly so called, not only superficial forms of civility, but real practices of good-

SERM. IV. ness.) For the main body of men goeth not *quaeundum, sed qua itur*, not according to rules and reasons, but after examples and authorities; especially of great persons, who are like stars, shining in high and conspicuous places, by which men steer their course: their actions are to be reckoned not as single or solitary ones, but are, like their persons, of a public and representative nature, involving the practice of others, who are by them awed, or shamed into compliance. Their good example especially hath this advantage, that men can find no excuse, can have no pretence why they should not follow it. Piety is not only beautified, but fortified by their dignity; it not only shines in them with a clearer lustre, but with a mightier force and influence: a word, a look (the least intimation) from them will do more good, than others' best eloquence, clearest reason, most earnest endeavours. For it is in them, if they would apply themselves to it, as the wisest prince implies, to *scatter iniquity with their eyes*. A smile of theirs were able to enliven virtue, and diffuse it all about; a frown might suffice to mortify and dissipate wickedness. Such apparently is their power of honouring God; and in proportion thereto surely great is their obligation to do it: of them peculiarly God expects it, and all equity exacts it. What the meaner rank of servants (who are employed in baser drudgeries, whose fare is more coarse, whose wages are more scant, who stand at greater distance from their lord, and receive no such ample or express marks of his favour, what these) do is of some consequence indeed, but doth not import so much to the master's reputation; their good word concerning him, their good carriage toward

him doth not credit him so much. But those whom he employs in matters of highest trust and importance to his affairs, whom he places in the nearest degree to himself, (seats even in his own throne, upon his own tribunal,) whom he feeds plentifully and daintily, maintains in a handsome garb, allows largely, as their deportment doth much reflect on their lord's esteem, as they are highly capable of advancing his repute; so all the rules of ingenuity and gratitude, all the laws of justice and equity do oblige them earnestly to endeavour it. And it is indeed no less their concernment to do so. For if there be disorders, prejudicial to the master's honour and interest, frequently committed in the family, it is those servants must be responsible: if due order be there kept to his glory and advantage, they shall chiefly be commended, and peculiarly hear the *Euge*, Matt. xxv. *bone serve*. They must be loaded with other men's²³ faults, or crowned for other men's virtues, as their behaviour hath respectively contributed to them. Those universal rules of equity, proposed in the Gospel, will, in God's reckoning with and requiting men, be punctually observed: *to whomsoever much* Luke xii. *is given, of him much shall be required*; answerable⁴⁸ to the improvement of what is delivered in trust shall the acceptance be.

I have insisted somewhat more largely on this point, because our text hath a particular aspect thereon; the words being uttered upon occasion of Eli, then judge in Israel, his not using authority to these purposes; his forbearing to redress a grievous abuse, committed by his own sons, to the disservice and dishonour of God. Whence to persons of his rank is this law especially directed; upon them is

SERM. this duty chiefly incumbent : on them assuredly, (as
 IV. sure as God is true,) if they will observe the duty,
 the reward shall be conferred. God will certainly
 not only preserve the honour they have already, but
 will accumulate more honours on them.

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

III. I should now shew why the duty is required
 of us, or how reasonable it is. I must not (and the
 matter is so palpable that I need not) spend many
 words on that. God surely doth not exact honour
 from us because he needs it, because he is the better
 for it, because he, for itself, delights therein. For
 (beside that he cannot want any thing without him-
 self, that he cannot any wise need mortal breath to
 praise him^a, or hands of flesh to serve him, who
 hath millions of better creatures than we absolutely
 at his devotion, and can with a word create millions
 of millions more, fitter than we to honour him) the
 best estimation we can have of him is much below
 him ; the best expression we can make is very un-
 worthy of him. He is infinitely excellent, beyond
 what we can imagine or declare : his *name is ex-
 alted above all blessing and praise ; his glory is
 above the earth and heaven.* So that all our en-
 deavours to honour him are, in comparison to what
 is due, but defects, and in a manner disparagements
 to him. It is only then (which should affect our

Neh. ix. 5.
 Ps. cxlviii.
 13.
 Eccus.
 xliii. 30.

^a Ἀκήρατος γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἀνευδεῆς οὐσα, οὐδενὸς ἐτέρου προσδεύ-
 ται· οἱ δὲ αἰνοῦντες αὐτὸν λαμπρότεροι γίνονται. Chrysost. in Psal. cxliv.
 et vide in Psal. ciii.

ingenuity to consider) his pure goodness that moves him, for our benefit and advantage, to demand it of us. SERM.
IV.

1. For that to honour God is the most proper work of reason ; that for which primarily we were designed and framed ; (for as other things were made to afford the matter and occasion, so man was designed to exercise the act of glorifying God ;) whence the performance thereof doth preserve and perfect our nature ; to neglect it being unnatural and monstrous. Sen. Ep. 76.

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

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

4. In fine, for that the practice of this duty is most profitable and beneficial to us ; unto it by an eternal rule of justice our final welfare and prosperity being annexed : whence God hath declared it to be the way and condition of our attaining that

SERM. thing which we so like and prize, honour to ourselves; the which by promise he hath engaged himself to confer on those who honour him. And,

IV.

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

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

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

Prov. xii.
26.

3. God hath so ordered it, that honour is naturally consequent upon the honouring him. God hath made goodness a noble and a stately thing; hath impressed upon it that beauty and majesty which commands an universal love and veneration, which strikes presently both a kindly and an awful respect into the minds of all men. *The righteous is* (not only in himself, but in common esteem) *more excellent than his neighbour.* Power may be dreaded, riches may be courted, wit and knowledge may be admired; but only goodness is truly

esteemed and honoured ^b. Not only men of goodness and discretion, but even the vulgar sort of men (yea, as Plato hath well observed, the worst men) do pass this judgment, do prefer true goodness above all things ^c.

SERM.
IV.

4. God, by his extraordinary providence, as there is reason and occasion, doth interpose, so as to procure honour to them, to maintain and further their reputation, who honour him. God *fashioneth the hearts of men*: the hearts of the greatest men are ^{Ps. xxxiii. 15.} in his hand; he turneth them as the rivers of waters, whithersoever he will: he consequently raiseth or depresseth us, as he pleases, in the judgments and affections of men. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*, saith the Wise Man; that is, he disposeth the most averse minds to love and honour him. No envy can supplant, no slander can deface the credit of such a person; since God hath taken it into his charge and care, since he hath said it, that *he will bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon day*. God ^{Ps. xxxvii. 6.} also by secret methods, and undiscernible trains, ^{Ps. xxx. 7. xc. 17.} ordereth all events, managing our thoughts and designs, our enterprises and actions so, that the result

^b Γένου τοῦ πλησίον τιμιώτερος ἐκ τοῦ φανῆναι χρηστότερος, &c. Naz. Orat. de Paup.

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

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

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

^c Θεῖόν τι καὶ εὐστοχόν ἐστι καὶ τοῖς κακοῖς ὥστε πάμπολλοι τῶν σφῆδρα κακῶν εἰ τοῖς λόγοις καὶ ταῖς δόξαις διαιροῦνται τοὺς ἀμείνους τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τοὺς χείρους. Plat. de Repub. xii.

SERM. of them shall be matter of benefit, comfort, and reputation, or of disaster, regret, and disgrace, as he thinks good. Victory and success he absolutely disposeth of, and consequently of the honour that follows them; and they do usually attend the honours of God: for, as it is in the Psalm, *a good success have they who keep his commandments.* Many are the instances of persons, (such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Job, and Daniel,) who, for their signal honouring of God, from a base and obscure, or from an afflicted and forlorn condition, have, in ways strange and wonderful, been advanced to eminent dignity, have been rendered most illustrious, by the providence of him, who *raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar out of the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.* He doth it in an evident manner, and eminent degree, to some; he doth it in a convenient way, and competent measure, to all that honour him.

Cic. Tusc. I. 5. Whereas men are naturally inclined to bear much regard to the judgment of posterity concerning them, are desirous to leave a good name behind them, and to have their memory retained in esteem; God so disposes things, that *the memory of the just shall be blessed; that his righteousness shall be had in everlasting remembrance; that his light shall rejoice,* (or burn clearly and pleasantly, even when his life is put out here.) ^d No spices can so embalm a man, no monument can so preserve his name and

^d Ἀνάγκη, ὡς ἔοικε, μέλει ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦ ἔπειτα χρόνου· ἐπειδὴ καὶ τυγχάνουσι κατὰ τινα φύσιν, οἱ μὲν ἀνδραποδωδέστατοι, οὐδὲν φροντίζοντες αὐτοῦ· οἱ δ' ἐπικεικίστατοι, πᾶν ποιῶντες ὅπως ἂν εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον εὖ ἀκούσων. Plat. Epist. ii.

memory, as a pious conversation, whereby God hath **SERM.**
been honoured, and men benefited. The fame of **IV.**
such a person is, in the best judgments, far more
precious and truly glorious, than is the fame of those
who have excelled in any other deeds or qualities.
For what sober man doth not in his thoughts afford
a more high and hearty respect to those poor fisher-
men, who by their heroical activity and patience did
honour God in the propagation of his heavenly truth,
than to all those Hectors in chivalry, those conquer-
ors and achievers of mighty exploits, (those Alex-
anders and Cæsars,) who have been renowned for
doing things which seemed great, rather than for
performing what was truly good? To the honour of
those excellent poor men, conspicuous monuments
have been erected every where; anniversary memo-
rials of their names and virtues are celebrated; they
are never mentioned or thought of without respect;
their commendations are interwoven with the praises
of their great Lord and Maker, whom they ho-
noured ^c.

6. Lastly, to those who honour God here, God
hath reserved an honour infinitely great and excel-
lent, in comparison whereto all honours here are but
dreams, the loudest acclamations of mortal men are
but empty sounds, the brightest glories of this world
are but duskish and fleeting shadows; an honour
most solid, most durable; *an eternal weight of* ^{2 Cor. iv.}
glory. They shall, in the face of all the world, be ^{17.}
approved by the most righteous Judge's unques-
tionable sentence; they shall be esteemed in the unani-

^c Τῶν δὲ δούλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τὰ σήματα λαμπρὰ, καὶ ἡμέραι κατα-
φανεῖς, ἐορτὴν τῆ οἰκουμένη² ποιῶσαι, &c. Chrys. in 2 Cor. Or. 27.

SERM. mous opinion of angels and saints; they shall be
 IV. applauded by the general voice and attestation of
 heaven; they shall then be seated upon unmove-
 able thrones, their heads encircled with unfading
 crowns, their faces shining with rays of unconceivable
 glory and majesty. The less of honour they have
 received here, in this transitory moment of life, the
 more thereof they shall enjoy in that future eternal
 state; where, with him who, through the whole
 course of his life, *sought not his own honour, but
 the honour of him that sent him*; who, *for the suf-
 fering of death, was crowned with glory and ho-
 nour*; who, *for the joy that was set before him, en-
 dured the cross, despising the shame, and is set at
 the right hand of God*; with those who consecrated
 all their endeavours, and who sacrificed their lives
 to the promoting of God's honour, they shall possess
 everlasting glory. Which, together with them, God
 Almighty of his infinite mercy grant unto us all,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with God
 the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, be for ever all
 honour and praise. Amen.

John viii.
 49. 50.
 Heb. ii. 9.
 xii. 2.

S E R M O N V.

UPRIGHT WALKING SURE WALKING.

PROV. x. 9.

He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.

THE world is much addicted to the politics; the SERM. heads of men are very busy in contrivance, and their V. mouths are full of talk about the ways of consulting our safety, and securing our interests. May we not therefore presume, that an infallible maxim of policy, proposing the most expedite and certain method of security in all our transactions, will be entertained with acceptance? Such an one the greatest 1 Kings iii. 12. politician and wisest man for business (if we may take God's own word for it) that ever was or will be, doth here suggest to us. For the practice couched in our text he elsewhere voucheth for a point of policy, telling us, that *a man of understanding* Prov. xv. 21. *walketh uprightly*: and here he recommendeth it as a method of security, *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.*

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

For explication. *To walk* (as well in the style of

SERM. holy scripture, as in other writings, and even in
 V. common speech) doth signify our usual course of
 dealing, or the constant tenor of our practice.

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

He that walketh in his uprightness, feareth the Lord.
 Prov. xiv. 2.

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

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

I. An upright walker is secure of easily finding SERM.
 his way. For it commonly requireth no reach of V.
 wit or depth of judgment, no laborious diligence of
 inquiry, no curious intentness of observation, no soli-
 citous care, or plodding study, to discern in any case
 what is just; we need not much trouble our heads
 about it, for we can hardly be to seek for it. If we
 will but open our eyes, it lieth in view before us,
 being the plain, straight, obvious road, which com-
 mon reason prompteth, or which ordinary instruc-
 tion pointeth out to us: so that usually that direc-
 tion of Solomon is sufficient, *Let thine eyes look* Prov. iv. 25.
right on, and let thine eyelids look straight be- 27. xvii. 24.
fore thee.—Turn not to the right hand, nor to the xiv. 6.
left.

The ways of iniquity and vanity, (if we may call them *ways*, which indeed are but exorbitances and seductions from the way,) ill designs and bad means of executing designs, are very unintelligible, very obscure, abstruse, and intricate; being infinitely various, and utterly uncertain: so that out of them to pick and fix on this or that may puzzle our heads, and perplex our hearts; as to pursue any of them may involve us in great difficulty and trouble. But the ways of truth, of right, of virtue, are so very simple and uniform, so fixed and permanent, so clear and notorious, that we can hardly miss them, or (except wilfully) swerve from them. For they by divine wisdom were chalked out, not only for ingenious and subtile persons, (men of great parts, of refined wits, of long experience,) but rather for the vulgar community of men, the great body of God's subjects, consisting in persons of meanest capacity and smallest improvement: being designed to *make*

SERM. *wise the simple, to give the young man knowledge and discretion* : to direct all sorts of people in their

duty, toward their happiness ; according to that in the prophet, *A high way shall be there, and it shall be called, The way of holiness—the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

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

Hence in the holy scriptures, as bad ways are called dark, crooked, rough, slippery ways ; so the good ways are said to be ^a clear, plain, direct, even ways : ^b *The path of the just, say they, is as a shining light. All the words of my mouth are plain to him that understandeth, (or, that considereth them.) My foot standeth in an even place. The law of his God is in his heart : and none of his steps shall slide.*

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

But in case such an one should ever be at a stand

V.
Psal. xix. 7.
cxix. 130.
Prov. viii. 5.
i. 4.
Ps. cxix. 9.
Isa. xxxv.
8.
Ὅτις καθ-
εὖ. LXX.
Rom. ii. 15.
Isa. xxx.
21.
Ps. xxxvii.
31.
Prov. iv. 19.
ii 13. 15.
Jo. viii. 12.
Psal. lxxxii.
5. cxlv. 5.
xxxv. 6.
lxxiii. 18.
Jer. xxiii.
12.
^a Heb. xii.
13
Psalm v. 8.
Luke iii. 5.
Prov. iii. 23.
Deut. v. 32.
xxviii. 14.
^b Prov. iv.
18. viii. 8,
9. xiv. 6.
Πάντα ἐνώ-
μις τοῖς ἐν-
νοῦσι, LXX.
Psal. xxvi.
12. xxxvii.
31. xxvi. 1.
xvii 5.
xviii. 36.
^c Prov. xi.
3, 5.

or at a loss, in doubt of his course, he hath always at SERM. hand a most sure guide to conduct or direct him. V.

It is but asking the way of him, or saying, with the Psalmist, ^d *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths; Teach me to do thy will, and, Lead me in the way everlasting; O let me not wander from thy commandments:* and then ^e *his ears*, as the prophet saith, *shall hear a word behind him, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it;* then the words of the Psalmist shall be verified, *What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way.*

^d Ps. xxv. 4.
xvi. 11.
xvii. 5.
cxliii. 10.
cxxxix. 24.
cxix. 10.
27. 33. 35.
&c.
^e Is. xxx.
21.
Ps. xxv. 9.
12.
xxxvii. 23.

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

II. The upright walker doth tread upon firm ground. He doth build his practice, not upon the (Prov. xii. 5.) perilous bogs, the treacherous quagmires, the devouring quicksands of uncouth, bold, impious paradoxes, (such as have been vented by Epicurus, by Machiavel, by others more lately, whose infamous names are too well known, as the effects of their pestilent notions are too much felt;) but upon solid, safe, approved, and well-tried principles; viz. these, and the like coherent with them: That there is an eternal God, incomprehensibly powerful, wise, just, and good; who is always present with us, and ever intent upon us; viewing not only all our external actions, (open and secret,) but our inmost cogitations, desires, and intentions, by the which our actions chiefly are to be estimated: that he, as go-

SERM. vernor of the world, and judge of men, doth concern
 V. himself in all human affairs, disposing and managing all events according to his righteous pleasure; exacting punctual obedience to his laws, and dispensing recompenses answerable thereto; with impartial justice rewarding each man according to the purposes of his heart and the practices of his life: that all our good and happiness doth absolutely depend on God's favour; so that to please him can only be true wisdom, and to offend him the greatest folly: that virtue is incomparably the best endowment whereof we are capable, and sin the worst mischief to which we are liable: that no worldly good or evil is considerable in comparison with goods or evils spiritual: that nothing can be really profitable or advantageous to us, which doth not consist with our duty to God, doth not somehow conduce to our spiritual interest and eternal welfare: yea, that every thing not serviceable to those purposes is either a frivolous trifle, or a dangerous snare, or a notable damage, or a woeful bane to us: that content of mind, springing from innocence of life, from the faithful discharge of our duty, from satisfaction of conscience, from a good hope in regard to God and our future state, is in our esteem and choice much to be preferred before all the delights which any temporal possession or fruition can afford; and, that a bad mind is the sorest adversity which can befall us. Such are the grounds of upright practice, more firm than any rock, more unshakeable than the foundations of heaven and earth; the which are assured by the sacred oracles, and attested by many remarkable providences; have ever been avowed by the wiser sort, and admitted by the general consent of

men, as for their truth, most agreeable to reason, **SERM.**
and for their usefulness, approved by constant ex- **V.**
perience; the belief of them having apparently most
wholesome influence upon all the concerns of life,
both public and private; indeed, being absolutely
needful for upholding government, and preserving
human society; no obligation, no faith or confidence
between men, no friendship or peace being able to
subsist without it. Whence the practice built on
such foundations must be very secure. And if God
shall not cease to be, if he will not let go the reins,
if his word cannot deceive, if the wisest men are not
infatuated, if the common sense of mankind do not
prove extravagant, if the main props of life and pil-
lars of society do not fail; he that walketh uprightly,
doth proceed on sure grounds.

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

Lust, passion, humour, interest, are things very
mutable, as depending upon temper of body, casual-
ties of time, the winds and tides of this vertiginous
world: whence he that is guided or moved by them
must needs be *many minded* and *unstable in all his* **James i. 8.**
ways; will *reel to and fro like a drunken man*, **Ps. cxii. 27.**
and be at his wit's end; never enjoying any settled
rest of mind, or observing a smooth tenor of action.
But a good conscience is very stable, and persisteth

SERM. unvaried through all circumstances of time, in all
 V. vicissitudes of fortune. For it steereth by immove-

Τρεπίγυρος.
 Justum et
 tenacem
 propositi
 virum, &c.
 Hor.

able pole-stars, the inviolable rules of duty; it aimeth at marks which no force can stir out of their place; its objects of mind and affection are not transitory; its hopes and confidences are fixed on the *rock of ages*. Whence an upright person in all cases, and all conditions, (prosperous or adverse,) is the same man, and goeth the same way. Continuances of affairs do not unhinge his mind from its good purposes, or divert his foot from the right course. Let the weather be fair or foul, let the world smile or frown, let him get or lose by it, let him be favoured or crossed, commended or reproached, (*by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report,*) he will do what his duty requireth: the external state of things must not alter the moral reason of things with him. This is that which the Psalmist observeth of him; *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord. His heart is stablished, and will not shrink.* And this the Wise Man promiseth to him; *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

2 Cor. vi. 8.

Psal. cxlii. 7.
 8.

Prov. iii.
 25.

Prov. xvi. 3.

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

IV. The way of uprightness is the surest for despatch, and the shortest cut toward the execution or attainment of any good purpose; securing a man from irksome expectations and tedious delays, the

Upright walking sure walking. 121

which, as the Wise Man saith, *do make the heart sick.* SERM. V.

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

In this way there are no bewildering intrigues and mazes, no crooked windings and turnings, no occasions forcing men to dance hither and thither, to skip backward and forward, to do and undo; which courses do protract business, and commonly do hinder from ever despatching it. But a man acting justly and fairly doth continually proceed on in the direct open road, without retreat, excursion, or deflection; *not turning aside* (as the phrase is in holy writ) *to the right hand or to the left.* Prov. iv. 27.
Dent. v. 32.
xxviii. 14.

To clamber over fences of duty, to break through hedges of right, to trespass upon hallowed enclosures, may seem the most short and compendious ways of getting thither where one would be: but doth not a man venture breaking his neck, or scratching his face, incurring mischief and trouble thereby? Is he not liable to the fate to which the Preacher doometh him, *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it: and whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him?* For instance, to grow rich, fraud, extortion, corruption, oppression, overreaching and supplanting may seem the readiest and most expedite ways; but in truth they are the furthest ways about, or rather no ways at all: for that which is got by

SERM. those means is not our own; nor is the possession of
 V. it truly wealth, but usurpation, or detention of spoil

and rapine, which we ought to disgorge. And how-
 ever to the getting it there are often mighty diffi-
 culties occurring from men, there are commonly in-

(Prov. xxiii. 10, 11.) superable obstacles interposed by God; who hath
 expressly condemned and cursed those ways, declar-

ing, that *wealth gotten by vanity* (or cozenage) *shall*
 Prov. xiii. 11. xxii. 16. *be diminished*; that *he that oppresseth to increase*
 xxviii. 22. *his riches, shall surely come to want*; that *he, who*
 20. xxi. 6. *hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and*
 Jer. xvii. 11.) *considereth not that poverty shall come upon him*;

that *as the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth*
them not; so *he that getteth riches and not by*
right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and
at his end shall be a fool. Whereas the plain way

of honest, harmless industry, (joined with a pious
 regard to him who is the dispenser of all good
 things,) how slow soever it may seem, is the most
 speedy, because the only safe way to thrive; hav-

ing, beside all secondary advantages, the security of
 those oracles; *The hand of the diligent shall make*
 Prov. x. 4. *rich: He that gathereth by labour shall increase:*
 xxviii. 19. *By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches,*
 xiii. 11. *and honour, and life.*
 xxii. 4. *Ps. cxii. 3.*

V. The way of uprightness is in itself very safe,
 free of danger, tending to no mischief; according
 to those sayings of the Wise Man; *There shall no*
 Prov. xxviii. 18. xvi. 17. *evil happen to the just: In the way of righteous-*
 xiii. 6. x. *ness is life; and in the path thereof there is no*
 29. xii. 21. *death.*
 28.

He who designeth only that which is just and
 reasonable, who innocently and fairly prosecuteth
 his intent, can run no great hazard, cannot fall into

any extreme disaster, cannot irrecoverably sink into SERM.
 miserable disappointment. IV.

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

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

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

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

SERM. who is constantly upright in his dealings shall by
 V. the divine Providence be infallibly and impregnably preserved from any grievous mischief, from any sore want, from any extreme distress.

The way of uprightness is ever guarded with angels, ready to promote the affairs of the honest person, or at least to protect him from evil. He may hopefully say to himself, as Abraham did to his
 Gen. xxiv. 40. servant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way*: or he confidently may apply to himself that of the Psalmist, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

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

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

(Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.) Being conscious to himself of an honest meaning, and a due course of prosecuting it, he feeleth no check or struggling of mind, no regret or sting of heart; being throughly satisfied and pleased with

what he is about, his judgment approving, and his will acquiescing in his procedure, as worthy of himself, agreeable to reason, and conformable to his duty. SERM.
V.

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

Nor hardly can any thing abroad dismay or discourage him. For he may reasonably hope for the good-will of men, and cannot hugely dread their opposition. He may strongly presume upon the propitious aspect and favourable succour of Heaven, which always smileth and casteth benign influences on honest undertakings. Prov. xi. 20.

He that hath chosen a good way may with assurance commend his way to God's providence; he may depend upon God for his concurrent benediction; he with an humble boldness may address prayers to God for his protection and aid. He so doing hath interest in divers clear declarations and express promises of good success; such as those; *Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will save them.* Jer. xxxii. 19.
Prov. xxiv. 14.
Heb. iv. 16.
Ps. xxxvii. 5. lv. 22.
Prov. xvi. 3.
Eccclus. ii. 10.
Psal. xxxiv. 22. xxvi. 1.
xxxiii. 21.
Prov. x. 24.
Ps. cxlv. 18.
19. xxxiv. 15. xxvi. 11.

He may dare to refer his case to the severest examination, saying with Job, ^a *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity*; and with the Psalmist, ^b *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.* Job xxii. 27.
Job xxxi. 6.
Psal. vii. 8. xxvi. 1.

SERM. He with an humble confidence can appeal to God;
 V. borrowing the words of Hezekiah, *° I beseech thee,*
 ° 2 Kings O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee
 xx. 3. *in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done*
that which is good in thy sight.

Prov. x. 28. Hence, *The hope of the righteous,* as the Wise
 Man telleth us, *is gladness.* He, considering the
 goodness, the justice, the fidelity of God, whereof
 his integrity doth render him capable and a proper
 object, cannot but conceive a comfortable hope of a
 good issue.

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

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

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

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

Psal. xcvi.

II.

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

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

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

God himself will be concerned to vindicate his reputation, not suffering him to be considerably de-

SERM. famed; according to that promise, *He shall bring*
 V. *forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judg-*
 Ps. xxxvii. *ment as the noon-day.* That in Job will be made
 6. 19. good to him, *Then shalt thou lift up thy face with-*
 xxxiv. 5. *out spot:* and he may confidently aver with the
 1 Pet. ii. 6. Psalmist, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I*
 Job xi. 15. Ps. cxix. 6. *have respect to all thy commandments.*
 39. 46.

If he findeth good success, it will not be invidious, appearing well deserved, and fairly procured: it will be truly honourable, as a fruit and recompense of virtue, as a mark and pledge of the divine favour toward him.

Ps. xci. 15. If he seemeth disappointed, yet he will not be disparaged: wise and candid men will excuse him; good men will patronise his cause; no man of sense and ingenuity will insult on his misfortune. *He shall not,* as the Psalmist assureth, *be ashamed in an evil time.* Yea, often his repute from under a cloud will shine, if not with so glaring splendour, yet with a pleasant lustre; uprightness disposing him to bear adverse events with a graceful decency.

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

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

He doth not wrap himself in clouds, that none

may see where he is, or know how to find him ; may discern what he is about, or whither he tendeth. SERM. V.

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

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

He layeth no baits or snares to catch men, alluring them into mischief or inconvenience. Jer. v. 26.
(Pa. lxiv. 5.
lvi. 6. ix.
15. vii. 15.
x. 2. lvii. 6.)

As he doth not affect any poor base ends, so he will not defile his fair intentions by sordid means of compassing them ; such as are illusive simulations and subdolous artifices, treacherous collusions, sly insinuations and sycophantic detractions, versatile whifflings and dodgings, flattering colloquings and glozings, servile crouchings and fawnings, and the like. xxxv. 7.
cxl. 5.
Prov. xxvi. 27.
Eccles. x. 8.)
Psal. x. 7.
lv. 21. lxiv. 6. x. 9, 10.
lvi. 5.
Rom. xvi. 18.
Eccles. xix. 26.

He hath little of the serpent, (none of its lurking insidiousness, of its surprising violence, of its rancorous venom, of its keen mordacity,) but much of the dove, (all its simplicity, its gentleness, its fidelity, its innocence,) in his conversation and commerce. 2 Sam. xv. 5.
Prov. xi. 9.
xxvi. 25.
Jam. iii. 17.

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

He sometime may prudently reserve his mind, not venting it by foolish loquacity : but his words do never clash with his meaning, so as to deceive or disappoint any man. Prov. xiv. 33. xxix. 11. xiii. 3.
16. xxi. 23.
xii. 23.
Eccles. xx. 7

He may warily prevent harm and decline perils : Prov. xxii. 3. xxvii. 12.
xiv. 8. 15, 16.

SERM. but it is without hurtful countermining, or deriving
 V. mischief on his neighbour.

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

Prov. xii. He sometimes may repress insurrections of anger
 16. xix. 11. or disgust: but he never doth allow them to bake into rancour or malice.

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

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

The principal engines he doth employ for achieving his enterprises are, a careful and cautious providence in contriving, a sedulous and steady diligence in acting, a circumspect heedfulness not to provoke any man by offensive carriage, by injury, by discourtesy, to obstruct him, but rather by kind demonstrations and real beneficence to engage men to further him in his proceedings: but especially his main instrument, wherein he most confideth, is devout supplication to God for his succour and blessing.

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

Prov. xii. It cannot but derive blessings from the God of
 19. 22.

truth, the great friend of simplicity and sincerity, SERM. V.
the hater of falsehood and guile.

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

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

SERM. mind concerning events, he cannot fail of most prosperous success. *Whatsoever he doeth*, saith the V. Psalmist of him, *it shall prosper*. How is that? Psal. i. 3. Prov. xii. 21. Doth he, if he warreth, always get the victory? is he perpetually, when he tradeth, a considerable gainer? will he certainly, after sowing, reap a plentiful crop? Probably yes; and perhaps no. Yet assuredly he shall prosper, in the true notion of prosperity, explained by those divine sayings: Ps. xxxvii. 37. Isa. xxxii. 17. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. Surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God.*

Eccles. viii. 12.

He cannot be much defeated in his purposes: for, as to his general, principal, absolute designs, (that is, his design of pleasing God, and procuring his favour; his design of satisfying himself, and discharging his conscience; his design of promoting his own spiritual interest, and saving his soul; his design of doing good, of exercising charity to his neighbour, of serving the public, of obliging the world by virtuous example, and by real beneficence,) these he cannot fail throughly to accomplish; nothing can obstruct him in the prosecution, nothing can debar him from the execution of these undertakings; in spite of all the world, by the succour of that divine grace which ever doth favour and further such designs, he most happily will achieve them. And for other inferior designs, he can hardly be crossed in regard to them: for it is an essential part of integrity, not otherwise to affect or aim at private, secular interests, than under condition, and with a reservation, if it be God's pleasure, if it seem good to divine wisdom.

He knoweth that his pains employed on any honest purpose, in a fair way, (be it to procure some worldly advantage for himself, for his relations, or for his friend,) are not lost, if they have the fruit of submission to God's will, and acquiescence in the event disposed by him. He is assured that it is good luck to have his project blasted, and that missing is better than getting, when by sovereign wisdom it is so determined. He therefore could not so fix his heart, or engage his affection in any such concern, that his mind is surprised, or his passions discomposed by a seeming adverseness of events to his endeavours. So that in effect he can have no bad success. For how can that occurrence be deemed bad, which plain reason dictateth in certain judgment to be most expedient for him; about which he ever was very indifferent, and with which at present he is not heartily displeased? How can it be taken for disappointment and misfortune, which one was prepared to embrace with satisfaction and complacence?

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

Wherefore let the worst that can arrive, (or that which human blindness and fondness do count the worst,) yet upright persons do not come off ill, or so

SERM. (matters being rightly stated) as to be losers upon
V. the foot of the account.

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

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

Prov. xiv. 2.

Deut. xxviii. 2.
 xxx. 9.
 Ps. cxxviii. 1, 2. xci. 1.
 xxxiv. 9.
 10. lxxxiv. 11.
 Matt. vi.

33.
 Eccles. viii. 5.
 Prov. xxviii. 10. 20. x. 6.

(Prov. xi. 18.)

X. To conclude; It is an infinite advantage of upright dealing, that at the last issue, when all things shall be most accurately tried and impartially decided, a man is assured to be fully justified in it, and plentifully rewarded for it. As then all the deceits, which now pass under specious masks, shall be laid bare; all varnish of pretence shall be wiped off; all perverse intrigues shall be unravelled; all wicked and base intentions shall be quite stripped of the veils which now enfold them; all shrewd contrivers and engineers of mischief, all practisers of unjust and malicious guile, shall be exposed to shame,

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

SERM.
V.

Rom. ii. 16.

1 Cor. iii.

13. iv. 5.

1 Tim. i.

17.

S E R M O N VI.

OF THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

I THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceasing.

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

Among divers such delivered here, this is one, which shall be the subject of my present discourse;

the which, having no other plain coherence (except SERM. by affinity of matter) with the rest enclosing it, I VI. shall consider absolutely by itself, endeavouring somewhat to explain it, and to urge its practice.

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

1. The word *prayer* doth, in its usual latitude of acception, comprehend all sorts of devotion, or all that part of religious practice, wherein we do immediately address ourselves to God, having by speech (oral or mental) a kind of intercourse and conversation with him. So it includeth that praise which we should yield to God, implying our due esteem of his most excellent perfections, most glorious works, most just and wise dispensations of providence and grace; that thanksgiving whereby we should express an affectionate resentment of our obligation to him for the numberless great benefits we receive from him; that acknowledgment of our entire dependance upon him, or our total subjection to his power and pleasure; together with that profession of faith in him, and avowing of service to him, which we do owe as his natural creatures and subjects; that humble confession of our infirmity, our vileness, our guilt, our misery, (joined with deprecation of wrath and vengeance,) which is due from us as wretched men, and grievous sinners; that petition of things needful or convenient for us, (of supply in our wants, of succour and comfort in our distresses, of direction and assistance in our undertakings, of mercy and

SERM. pardon for our offences,) which our natural state
VI. (our poor, weak, sad, and sinful state) doth engage
 us to seek; that intercession for others, which general charity or special relation do require from us, as concerned or obliged to desire and promote their good. All these religious performances prayer, in its larger notion, doth comprise; according where-to in common use the whole body of divine service, containing all such acts, is termed *prayer*; and temples, consecrated to the performance of all holy duties, are styled *houses of prayer*; and that brief directory, or pregnant form of all devotion, which our Lord dictated, is called *his prayer*: and in numberless places of scripture it is so taken.

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

But according to the former more comprehensive meaning, I choose to understand it here; both because it is most commonly so used, (then, especially, when no distinctive limitation is annexed, or the nature of the subject-matter doth not restrain it,) and because general reasons do equally oblige to performance of all these duties in the manner here prescribed: nor is there any ground to exclude any part of devotion from continual use; we being obliged no less incessantly to praise God for his excellencies, and thank him for his benefits, to avow his sovereign majesty and authority, to confess our infirmities and miscarriages, than to beg help and mercy from God. All devotion therefore, all sorts
 Eph. vi. 18. of proper and due address to God, (that *πᾶσα προσευχή*, *all prayer and supplication*, which St. Paul

otherwhere speaketh of,) are here enjoined, according to the manner adjoined, *without ceasing*, ἀδιάλειπτος, that is, indeminently, or continually. SERM. VI.

2. For the meaning of which expression, we must suppose, that it must not be understood as if we were obliged in every instant or singular point of time actually to apply our minds to this practice : for to do thus is in itself impossible, and therefore can be no matter of duty ; it is inconsistent with other duties, and therefore must not be practised ; yea, will not consist with itself ; for, that we may pray, we must live ; that we may live, we must eat ; that we may eat, we must work ; and must therefore attend other matters : so that actual devotion neither must nor can swallow up all our time and care. The deliberate operations of our mind are sometimes interrupted by sleep, sometimes will be taken up in satisfying our natural appetites, sometimes must be spent in attendance upon other reasonable employments, commanded or allowed by God ; whence there can be no obligation to this practice according to that unlimited interpretation. This precept therefore (as divers others of a like general purport and expression) must be understood not in a natural, but moral sense, according as the exigence of things permitteth, or as the reason of the case requireth ; so far as it is conveniently practicable, or as it is reasonably compatible with other duties and needs. But we must not so restrain it as to wrong it, by pinching it within too narrow bounds. How then it may be understood, and how far it should extend, we shall endeavour to declare by propounding divers senses whereof it is capable, grounded upon plain testimonies of scripture, and enforcible by good

Adoro
scripturæ
plenitudi-
nem. Tert.

SERM. reason ; according to which senses we shall together
 VI. press the observance thereof.

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

Zech. xiii.
10.

Ps. xxxvii.
26.
Ut quamvis
tacet Her-
mogenes,
cantor ta-
men æque
est, &c.
Hor.

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

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

II. *Praying incessantly* may denote a vigilant attendance (with earnest regard, and firm purpose) employed upon devotion: such attendance as men usually bestow on their affairs, whereof although the actual prosecution sometime doth stick, yet the design continually proceedeth; the mind ever so directing its eye toward them, as quickly to espy, and readily to snatch any advantages of promoting them. This is a kind of continuance in practice, and is commonly so termed: as we say, that such a one is building a house, is writing a book, is occupying such land, although he be at present sleeping, or eating, or following any other business; because his main design never sleepeth, and his purpose continues uninterrupted. This is that which is so often enjoined under the phrase of *watching* about prayer.

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, saith our Lord. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same*, saith St. Paul. *Be ye sober, and watch unto prayer*, saith St. Peter. Which expressions import a most constant and careful attendance upon this duty:

SERM.
VI.

Luke xxi.
36.
Col. iv. 2.
Eph. vi. 18.
1 Pet. iv. 7.
Matt. xxiv.
42. xxv. 13.

SERM. VI. that we do not make it a *πάρεργον*, or by-business in our life, (a matter of small consideration or indifference, of curiosity, of chance,) to be transacted drowsily or faintly, with a desultorious and slight endeavour, by fits, as the humour taketh us; but that, accounting it a business of the choicest nature and weightiest moment, we do adhere thereto with unmoveable purpose, regard it with undistracted attention, pursue it with unwearied diligence, being always upon the guard, wakeful and expedite, intent upon and apt to close with any occasion suggesting matter thereof. That we should do thus reason also doth oblige: for that, as in truth no business doth better deserve our utmost resolution and care; so none doth more need them; nature being so backward, and occasion so slippery, that if we do not ever mind it, we shall seldom practise it.

2 Pet. i. 12.
 και ὑπομιμν.
 Gal. iv. 18.
 πάντοτε ζη-
 λούνθαι.

III. *Praying incessantly* may signify, that we do actually embrace all fit seasons and emergent occasions of devotion. This in moral computation doth pass for continual performance: as a tree is said to bear that fruit, which it produceth in the season; and a man is accounted to work in that trade, which he exerciseth whenever he is called thereto. This sense is in several precepts parallel to that in hand plainly expressed. *Pray*, saith St. Paul, *with all prayer and supplication*, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ and, *Watch*, saith our Lord, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι, *praying in every season*, or upon every opportunity. Devotion, indeed, is rarely unseasonable or impertinent: we may offer it *εὐκαιρῶς, ἀκαιρῶς, in season, and out of season*; that is, not only taking opportunities presented for it, or urgently requiring it, but catching at them, and creating them to ourselves,

2 Tim. iv.
 2.

when there is no such apparent and pressing need of it. But there are some special occasions, which more importunately and indispensably do exact it: some seasons there are, (either ministered by extrinſical accidents, or ſpringing from internal diſpoſitions,) when, without both great blame and much damage to ourſelves, we cannot neglect it: times there be moſt proper and acceptable, when we do eſpecially need to pray, and when we are likely to ſpeed well therein. *Every one*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *that is godly will pray unto thee in a time when thou mayeſt be found*: and, *My prayer*, ſaith he again, *is unto thee in an acceptable time*.

SERM.
VI.

Pſal. xxxii.
6. lxix. 13.
2 Cor. vi. 2.
Iſa. xlix. 8.

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

Pſal. xviii.
1, 2. lxxi.
3, &c.

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

When we undertake any buſineſs of ſpecial moment and difficulty, then it is expedient (wiſdom

SERM. VI. prompting it) to sue for God's aid, to commit our
fairs into his hand, to recommend our endeavour

Διὶ πάσης
προίξιός
προνομί-
σθαι προσυ-
χῆν. Marc.
Erem.

the blessing of him, by whose guidance all things
ordered, without whose concourse nothing can be
fected, upon whose arbitrary disposal all success
pendeth.

The beginning of any design or business (altho
ordinary, if considerable) is a proper season of pra
unto him to whose bounty and favour we owe
ability to act, support in our proceedings, any co
fortable issue of what we do: (for *all our su
ciency is of him: without him we can do nothin*

2 Cor. iii. 5. Whence we can never apply ourselves to any bu
John xv. 5. ness or work, not go to eat, to sleep, to travel,
trade, to study, with any true content, any reas
able security, any satisfactory hope, if we do not fi
humbly implore the favourable protection, guidan
and assistance of God.

When we do fall into doubts, or darknesses,
the course either of our spiritual or secular affair
not knowing what course to steer, or which way
turn ourselves; (a case which to so blind and si
creatures as we are must often happen;) then do
the time bid us to consult the great oracle of tru
the mighty Counsellor, the Father of lights, see
ing resolution and satisfaction, light and wisdo

Jer. x. 23. from him; saying with the Psalmist, *Shew me t*
Prov. xx. *ways, O Lord, lead me in thy truth, and teach n*
24. xvi. 9. *for thou art the God of my salvation: Order*
Isa. ix. 6. *steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have*
Jam. i. 17. *minion over me; following the advice of St. Jam*
Psal. xxv. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, th*
4. 5. 8. *giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth n*
xxvii. 11. *and it shall be given him.*
lxxxvi. 11.
cxliii. 10.
xxxii. 8.
cxix. 125.
133.
Jam. i. 5.

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

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

When we do lie under any irksome trouble or
 sore distress, (of want, pain, disgrace,) then, for suc-
 cour and support, for ease and comfort, we should
 have recourse to *the Father of pities, and God of* **2 Cor. i. 3.**
all consolation; who is nigh to all that call upon **Psal. cxlv.**
him, will also hear their cry, and will save them; **18, 19.**
who, when the righteous cry, doth hear them, and **cxlvii. 3.**
delivereth them out of all their troubles; who is so **xxxiv. 17.**
often styled the hiding-place from troubles, the help **xviii. 1, 2.**
and strength, the shield and buckler, the rock, the **lvi. 3.**
fortress, the high tower, the horn of salvation, to **lxxxiv. 9.**
all good and distressed people. To him we should **xxxii. 7.**
 in such a condition have recourse, imitating the **xxxiii. 20.**
 pious Psalmist, whose practice was this: *In the day* **lxxi. 3.**
of my trouble I sought the Lord: I poured out my **Psal. lxxvii.**
complaint before him, I shewed before him my trou- **2. xviii. 6.**
ble: I called unto the Lord in my distress: the **cxlii. 2.**
Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. **cxviii. 5.**

When any strong temptation doth invade us, with
 which by our own strength we cannot grapple, but

SERM. are like to sink and falter under it; then is it op-
 VI. portune and needful that we should seek to God for

2 Cor. xii.
7, 8, 9.

a supply of spiritual forces, and the succour of his
 almighty grace, as St. Paul did: when *there was
 given to him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of
 Satan to buffet him; then he besought the Lord
 thrice that it might depart from him: and he had
 this return from God, My grace is sufficient for
 thee.*

When also (from ignorance or mistake, from inad-
 vertency, negligence, or rashness, from weakness,
 from wantonness, from presumption) we have trans-
 gressed our duty, and incurred sinful guilt; then,
 (for avoiding the consequent danger and vengeance,
 for unloading our consciences of the burden and
 discomfort thereof,) with humble confession in our
 mouths, and serious contrition in our hearts, we
 should apply ourselves to the God of mercy, depre-
 cating his wrath, and imploring pardon from him;

1 John i. 9.

remembering that promise of St. John, *If we confess
 our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our
 sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity; and that*

Prov. xxviii.

declaration of the Wise Man, *He that covereth his
 sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and
 forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

13.

Psal. xxxii.

5. li. 1, &c.

Job vii. 20.

In these and the like cases God by our necessities
 doth invite and summon us to come unto him; and
 no less foolish than impious we are, if we do then
 slink away, or fly from him. Then we should (as
 Heb. iv. 16. the apostle to the Hebrews exhorteth) *come boldly
 unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy,
 and find grace to help in time of need, (or, * for
 reasonable relief.)*

* εις ὑμῶν
 εἰς βοήθειαν.

And beside those outwardly prompting and urg-

ing us, there be other opportunities, springing from SERM.
within us, which we are no less obliged and con- VI.
cerned to embrace. When God by his gentle whis- Jer. xxxv.
pers calleth us, or by his soft impulses draweth us 15.
into his presence; we should then take heed of stop- Prov. i. 24.
ping our ears, or turning our hearts from him, refus- Isa. l. 2. lxx.
ing to hearken or to comply. We must not any 12. lxvi. 4.
wise quench or damp any sparks of devout affection
kindled in us by the divine Spirit; we must not re-
pel or resist any of his kindly suggestions or motions.

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

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

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

SERM. some demurs intervene,) is deemed still to be in suit.
VI.

Luke xviii.
1.

This is that which our Lord did in the Gospel prescribe and persuade, where it is recorded of him, that *he spake a parable unto them, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* That *praying* always the ensuing discourse sheweth to import restless importunity, and perseverance in prayer: the same which so often is commended to us by the

Col. i. 9.
Eph. i. 16.
Ro. xii. 12.
Col. iv. 2,
12.

phrases of *μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, not to faint or faulter; μὴ παύεσθαι, not to cease, or give over; προσκατερεῖν, to continue instant, or hold out stoutly; ἀγωνίζεσθαι, to strive earnestly, or contest and struggle in prayers; προσμένειν ταῖς δεήσεσι, to abide at supplications; ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκατεργήσει, to watch with all perseverance.*

1 Tim. v. 5.
Eph. vi. 18.
* Psal. x. 4.
xi. 10. xiv.
2. xxiv. 6.
lxiii. 1. lxix.
6, 32. lxx. 4.
lxxxiii. 16.
Job viii. 5.
Deut. iv. 29.
Prov. viii.

That which also is implied by those terms, which in scriptural style do commonly express devotion: by *seeking God*; which implieth, that God doth not presently, upon any slight address, discover himself

17.
Ps. lxxvii. 6.
b Ps. cxiii.
2. lxix. 3.
cxxx. 5.
xxxvii. 7.
xxv. 5.
xxvii. 14.
xxxvii. 34.
xxv. 21.
lii. 9. lix. 9.
cxlv. 15.
Isa. viii. 17.
xl 31. xlix.

in beneficial effects answerable to our desires, but after a careful and painful continuance in our applications to him: by *waiting upon God*; which signifieth, that if God do not presently appear, granting our requests, we should patiently stay, expecting till he be pleased to do it in his own best time, according to that in the Psalm, *Our eyes wait upon the*

23.
Hos. xii. 6.
Lam. iii.
25, 26.
Prov. xx.
22.
c Ps. cxiii.

Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us: by knocking; which intimateth, that the door of grace doth not ever stand open, or that we can have an effectual access to God, until he, warned, and as it were excited, by our earnest importunity, pleaseth to listen, to disclose himself, to come forth unto us.

2
Luke xii.
36
Matt. vii. 7.
Vid. Chrys.
tom vi.
Orat. viii.
ad Theod.
2.

And this practice reason also doth enforce. For there are some good things absolutely necessary for our spiritual life and welfare, (such as are freedom

from bad inclinations, disorderly affections, vicious habits, and noxious errors; the sanctifying presence and influence of God's holy Spirit, with the blessed graces and sweet fruits thereof; growth in virtue, delight in spiritual things, the sense of God's love and favour, with the like,) which good reason engageth us perseveringly to seek, as never to rest or be satisfied till we have acquired them in perfect degree; since we cannot ever do well without them, or ever get enough of them. In begging other inferior things, it may become us to be reserved, indifferent, and modest; but about these matters (where-Αἰθῆς οὐκ ἀγαθὴ κίχρημίση ἀνδρὶ περιεργῆ. in all our felicity is extremely concerned) it were a folly to be slack or timorous: as we cannot be said immoderately to desire them, so we cannot be supposed immodestly to seek them there, where only they can be found, in God's presence and hand. The case doth bear, yea, doth require, that we should be eager and hot, resolute and stiff, free and bold, yea, in a manner peremptory and impudent solicitors with God for them. So our Saviour intimateth, where, comparing the manner of God's proceeding with that of men, he representeth one friend yielding needful succour to another, not barely upon the score of friendship, but *διὰ τὴν ἀναίδειαν*, *for his impudence*; that is, for his confident and continued urgency, admitting no refusal or excuse. So doth God, in such cases, allow and oblige us to deal with him, being instant and pertinacious in our requests, *giving him no rest*; (as the phrase is in the prophet;) not enduring to be put off, or brooking any repulse; never being discouraged, or cast into despair, by any delay or semblance of neglect. We may *wrestle with God*, like Jacob, and with Jacob may say, *I will not let*

Luke xi. 8.

Isa. lxii. 7.

Gen. xxxiii. 26.

SERM. *thee go, except thou bless me.* Thus God sufferet
VI. himself to be prevailed upon, and is willingly over-

come: thus Omnipotence may be mastered, and happy victory may be gained over invincibility itself. Heaven sometime may be forced by storm; (o by the assaults of extremely fervent prayer;) it assuredly will yield to a long siege. God will not ever hold out against the attempts of an obstinate suppliant. So *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* We read in St. John's Gospel of a man, that, being thirty-eight years diseased, did wait at the pool of Bethesda seeking relief: him our Lord pitied and helped, crowning his patience with miraculous relief, and proposing it for an example to us of perseverance. It is said of the patriarch Isaac, that *he entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebecca his wife conceived.* Whereupon St. Chrysostom doth observe that he had persevered twenty years in that petition.

Matt. xi. 12.
John v. 5.
Vid. Chrys. tom. v. Orat. 40. and in Joh. Or. 36.

Gen. xxv. 21.

Vid. tom. vi. Orat. 68.

Lam. iii. 25. Of good success to this practice we have many
Isa. xxx. assurances in holy scripture. *The Lord is good
18. xlix. 23. unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. Blessed are all they that wait for him
Ps. xxv. 3. xxxvii. 9. eth him. Blessed are all they that wait for him
* Isa. xl. 31. None that wait on him shall be ashamed. * The
1 Chron. xxviii. 9. that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength
Ezr. viii. 22. they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint. So hath God assured by his word, an
Amos v. 4. engaged himself by promise, that he will yield unto
2 Chr. xv. 12. constant and patient devotion; so that it shall never
Ps. ix. 10. want good success.*

Ps. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxx. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

Without this practice we cannot indeed hope t

obtain those precious things; they will not come at SERM.
an easy rate, or be given for a song; a lazy wish or VI.
two cannot fetch them down from heaven. God will
not bestow them at first asking, or deal them out in
one lump: but it is upon assiduous solliciting, and
by gradual communication, that he dispenseth them.
So his wise good-will, for many special reasons, dis-
poseth him to proceed: that we may (as it becometh
and behoveth us) abide under a continual sense of
our natural impotency and penury: of our depend-
ance upon God, and obligation to him for the free
collation of those best gifts: that by some difficulty
of procuring them we may be minded of their worth,
and induced the more to prize them: that by earn-
estly seeking them we may improve our spiritual ap-
petites, and excite holy affections: that by much
conversing with heaven our minds may be raised
above earthly things, and our hearts purified from
sordid desires: that we may have a constant em-
ployment answerable to the best capacities of our
souls, worthy our care and pain, yielding most solid
profit and pure delight unto us: that, in fine, by our
greater endeavour in religious practice we may ob-
tain a more ample reward thereof.

For the same reason indeed that we pray at all,
we should pray thus with continued instance. We
do not pray to instruct or advise God; not to tell
him news, or inform him of our wants: (*He knows* Matt. vi. 8.
them, as our Saviour telleth us, *before we ask* :) nor
do we pray by dint of argument to persuade God,
and bring him to our bent; nor that by fair speech
we may cajole him or move his affections toward us
by pathetical orations: not for any such purpose are
we obliged to pray. But for that it becometh and

SERM. behoveth us so to do, because it is a proper instrument of bettering, ennobling, and perfecting our souls; because it breedeth most holy affections, and pure satisfactions, and worthy resolutions; because it fitteth us for the enjoyment of happiness, and leadeth us thither: for such ends devotion is prescribed; and constant perseverance therein being needful to those purposes, (praying by fits and starts not sufficing to accomplish them,) therefore such perseverance is required of us. Further,

V. *Praying incessantly* may import, that we do with all our occupations and all occurrences interlace devout ejaculations of prayer and praise; lifting up our hearts to God, and breathing forth expressions of devotion, suitable to the objects and occasions which present themselves. This as it nearly doth approach to the punctual accomplishment of what our text prescribeth, so it seemeth required by St. Paul, when he biddeth us *pray always ἐν πνεύματι, in spirit*, and to sing *ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, in the heart*: that is, with very frequent elevations of spirit in holy thoughts and desires toward heaven; with opportune resentments of heart, directing thanks and praise to God. We cannot ever be framing or venting long prayers with our lips, but almost ever our mind can throw pious glances, our heart may dart good wishes upwards; so that hardly any moment (any considerable space of time) shall pass without some light-some flashes of devotion^a. As bodily respiration,

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

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

without intermission or impediment, doth concur SERM.
with all our actions; so may that breathing of soul, VI.
which preserveth our spiritual life, and ventilateth
that holy flame within us, well conspire with all
other occupations^b. For devotion is of a nature so
spiritual, so subtile, and penetrant, that no matter
can exclude or obstruct it. Our minds are so ex-
ceedingly nimble and active, that no business can
hold pace with them, or exhaust their attention and
activity. We can never be so fully possessed by any
employment, but that divers vacuities of time do in-
tercur, wherein our thoughts and affections will be
diverted to other matters. As a covetous man, what-
ever beside he is doing, will be carking about his
bags and treasures; an ambitious man will be devis-
ing on his plots and projects; a voluptuous man will
have his mind in his dishes; a lascivious man will
be doting on his amours; a studious man will be
musing on his notions; every man, according to his
particular inclination, will lard his business and be-
sprinkle all his actions with cares and wishes tend-
ing to the enjoyment of what he most esteemeth and
affecteth: so may a good Christian, through all his
undertakings, wind in devout reflections and pious
motions of soul toward the chief object of his mind
and affection. Most businesses have wide gaps, all
have some chinks, at which devotion may slip in.
Be we never so urgently set or closely intent upon
any work, (be we feeding, be we travelling, be we
trading, be we studying,) nothing yet can forbid,
but that we may together wedge in a thought con-

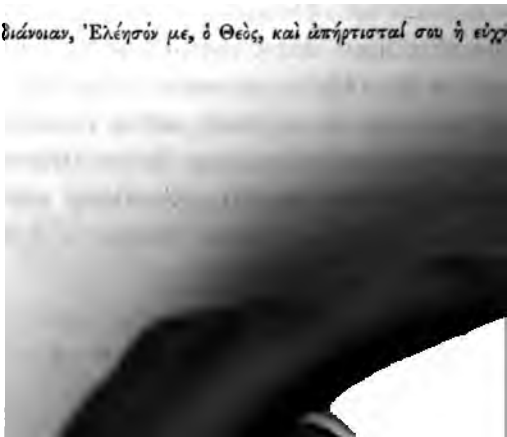
Vid. Chrys.
Orat. v. in
Annam,
tom. v. p.
78, 79.

^b Μημνευτέον γὰρ Θεοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀνακνευστέον· καὶ εἰ οἶόν τε τοῦτο εἰ-
πεῖν, μὴδὲ ἄλλο τι ἢ τοῦτο πρακτέον. Naz. Or. 33.

SERM. cerning God's goodness, and bolt forth a word of
VI. praise for it; but that we may reflect on our sins
 and spend a penitential sigh on them; but that we
 may descry our need of God's help, and despatch a
 brief petition for it: a *God be praised*, a *Lord have*
mercy, a *God bless*, or *God help me*, will nowise
 interrupt or disturb our proceedings^c. As worldly
 cares and desires do often intrude and creep into our
 devotions, distracting and defiling them; so may
 spiritual thoughts and holy affections insinuate them
 selves into, and hallow our secular transactions
 This practice is very possible, and it is no less expe
 dient: for that if our employments be not thus sea
 soned, they can have no true life or savour in them
 they will in themselves be dead and putrid, they will
 be foul and noisome, or at least flat and insipic
 unto us.

There are some other good meanings of this pre
 cept, according to which holy scripture (backed with
 good reason) obligeth us to observe it: but those
 (together with the general inducements to the prac
 tice of this duty,) that I may not further now tres
 pass on your patience, I shall reserve to another op
 portunity.

^c Εἰς κατὰ διάνοιαν, Ἐλέησόν με, ὁ Θεός, καὶ ἀπήρτισται σοὶ ἡ εὐχὴ
 Chrys. *ibid.*



S E R M O N VII.

OF THE DUTY OF PRAYER.

I THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceasing.

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

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

that we should do so. who would not lead a with good as-

SERM. VII.

Dan. viii.
Heb. xiii. 5
Neh. x. 33.

SERM. surance and advantage to prosecute an orderly course
VII. of action, are wont to distribute their time into several parcels; assigning some part thereof to the necessary refection of their bodies, some to the convenient relaxation of their minds, some to the despatch of their ordinary affairs, some also to familiar conversation, and interchanging good offices with their friends^a; considering, that otherwise they shall be uncertain, and *unstable in all their ways*. And in this distribution of time devotion surely should not lack its share: it rather justly claimeth the choicest portion to be allotted thereto, as being incomparably the noblest part of our duty, and mainest concernment of our lives. The feeding our souls and nourishing our spiritual life, the refreshing our spirits with those no less pleasant than wholesome exercises, the driving on our correspondence and commerce with heaven, the improving our friendship and interest with God, are affairs which above all others do best deserve, and most need being secured. They must not therefore be left at random, to be done by the by, as it hitteth by chance, or as the fancy taketh us. If we do not depute vacant seasons, and fix periodical returns for devotion, engaging ourselves by firm resolution, and inuring our minds by constant usage to the strict observance of them, secluding from them, as from sacred enclosures, all other businesses; we shall often be dangerously tempted to neglect it, we shall be commonly listless to it, prone to defer it, easily seduced

^a Cur ipsi aliquid forensibus negotiis, aliquid desiderii amicorum, aliquid rationibus domesticis, aliquid curæ corporis, non nihil voluptati quotidie damus? *Quint. i. 12.*

from it by the encroachment of other affairs, or en-
ticement of other pleasures. It is requisite that our
souls also (no less than our bodies) should have their
meals, settled at such intervals as the maintenance
of their life, their health, their strength and vigour
do require; that they may not perish or languish
for want of timely repasts; that a good appetite
may duly spring up, prompting and instigating to
them; that a sound temper and robust constitution
of soul may be preserved by them.

SERM.
VII.

Prayers are the bulwarks of piety and good con-
science, the which ought to be placed so as to flank
and relieve one another, together with the inter-
jacent spaces of our life; that the enemy (*the sin* Heb. xii. 1.)
which doth so easily beset us) may not come on be-
tween, or at any time assault us, without a force
sufficiently near to reach and repel him.

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

Certain seasons and periods of this kind nature

SERM. itself (in correspondence to her unalterable revolutions) doth seem to define and prescribe : those which

VII.
Psal. xcii. 1,
2. lv. 17.

the royal prophet recommendeth, when he saith, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most high : to shew forth thy lovingkindness every morning, and thy faithfulness every night.* Every day we do recover and receive a new life from God ; every morning we do commence business, or revive it ; from our bed of rest and security we then issue forth, exposing ourselves to the cares and toils, to the dangers, troubles, and temptations of the world : then especially therefore it is reasonable, that we should sacrifice thanks to the gracious preserver of our life, and the faithful restorer of its supports and comforts ; that we should crave his direction and help in the pursuit of our honest undertakings ; that to his protection from sin and mischief we should recommend ourselves and our affairs ; that, by offering up to him the first-fruits of our diurnal labours, we should consecrate and consign them all to his blessing ; that as we are then wont to salute all the world, so then chiefly with humble obeisance we should accost him, who is ever present with us, and continually watchful over us. Then also peculiarly devotion is most seasonable, because then our minds being less prepossessed and pestered with other cares, our fancies becoming lively and gay, our memories fresh and prompt, our spirits copious and brisk, we are better disposed for it.

Every night also reason calleth for these duties ; requiring that we should close our business and wind up all our cares in devotion ; that we should then bless God for his gracious preservation of us from

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

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

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

SERM. from the never-failing storehouse of divine grace ;
 VII.

which may so fortify us, that with due vigour and alacrity we may perform the ensuing duties to God's honour and our own comfort. Thus to practise was the resolution of the Psalmist, that great master of devotion ; *Evening*, said he, *and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud.* And this was the custom of the noble Daniel, from which no occasion could divert, no hazard could deter him : *He kneeled*, saith the story, *upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.*

Psal. lv. 17.

Dan. vi. 10.

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

God indeed did himself in his law, or by his prophets, appoint public and solemn celebrations of worship to himself, in sacrifices (involving prayer and accompanied therewith) constantly to be offered

2 Chron. ii.

4-
1 Chron.

xvi. 40, 41.
xxiii. 30.

Ezr. iii. 3.

every morning and evening : religious princes also did institute services of thanksgiving and praise to be performed at those times : but there doth not appear any direct institution of private devotion, or its circumstances ; but the practice thereof seemeth originally to have been purely voluntary, managed and measured according to the reason, by the choice of each person ; yet so, that the practice of eminently good men leading, and others following, it grew into

a kind of common law, or standing rule, (seeming to carry an obligation with it,) to observe the times specified. SERM. VII.

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

If indeed Jews were so liberal in assigning, so punctual in affording such portions of time for yielding praise, and offering supplications unto God; how much more free and ready, more careful and diligent, should we be in this way of practice! we who have a religion so far more spiritual, and exempt from

SERM. corporeal encumbrances; precepts so much more
 VII. express and clear; so much higher obligations and
 stronger encouragements to this duty; whom God
 in especial manner so graciously doth invite, so
 powerfully doth attract unto himself. But further,

VII. More especially this precept may be sup-
 posed to exact from us a compliance in carefully ob-
 serving the times of devotion ordained by public au-
 Levit. xix. 30. xxvi. 2. authority, or settled by general custom. This in a po-
 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary. pular and legal sense is doing a thing indeseinently,
 Heb. ix. 6. when we perform it so often as is required by law
 or custom. So the apostle to the Hebrews saith of
*the priests, that they went always into the taber-
 nacle, accomplishing the service of God: always,*
 that is, at all the solemn times appointed. And thus
 of the apostles it is affirmed by St. Luke, that *they
 Luke xxiv. 53. were continually in the temple, blessing and prais-
 ing God*; that is, they constantly resorted thither
 at the stated times of concourse for prayer. This
 good reason also plainly doth enjoin: for that the
 neglecting it is not only a disorderly behaviour in a
 matter of high consequence; a criminal disregard
 and disobedience to authority; a scandalous con-
 tempt of our neighbours, from whose laudable fashion
 we discost; a wrongful deserting the public, to whose
 good, mainly promoted by the public worship of
 God, we do owe the contribution of our endeavour;
 but a heinous affront to Almighty God, who thereby
 is plainly dishonoured, and in a manner openly dis-
 avowed; a huge prejudice to religion, the credit and
 power whereof, without visible profession, exemplary
 compliance, mutual consent and encouragement, can-
 not be upheld. Were there times by law or custom
 defined, (as in some places indeed there are,) when

all men should be required in person solemnly to attend on their prince, for professing their allegiance, or deferring any homage to him; would not those, who should wilfully refuse or decline appearance, be justly chargeable as guilty of dishonouring and wronging him? would not their such defaultance pass for sufficient proof, that they do not acknowledge him, that at least they do not much regard or value him? So, by not joining at stated times in celebration of divine worship, we may be well conceived wholly to disclaim God, or greatly to disesteem him; to slight religion, as a thing insignificant and unprofitable. Do we not indeed thereby more than intimate, that we little believe God to be our sovereign Lord and Governor; that we stand in no great awe or dread of him; that we are not much sensible of his benefits and mercies; that we repose small trust or hope in him; that we do not take ourselves much to want his protection, his guidance, his assistance, his favour and mercy? Are we not in effect like to those in Job, who *say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?*^{Joh xxi. 14, 15.} *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? or what profit shall we have, if we pray unto him?* Thus the standers-by commonly (some so as to be much offended at, others so as to be corrupted by our bad example) will interpret this neglect: and so assuredly God himself will take it from us, and accordingly deal with us. As he claimeth this public attendance on him for his due: (*Give, proclaimeth he by the mouth of one of his great heralds, Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength: Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name: worship the Lord in the beauty*^{Psal. xxix. 1, 2. lxvi. 2.}

SERM. *of holiness* :) so if we to his wrong and disgrace re-
 VII. fuse to yield it, we shall certainly find answerable

resentment and recompense from him: that as we are careless to serve him, so he will be unmindful to bless us; as we are backward to avow and glorify him, so he will not be forward to own and grace us; as we do so *deny him before men, so he will deny us before them also.* What other measure indeed

2 Tim. ii.

12.

Matt. x. 33.

Luke ix. 26.

xii. 9.

can we imagine or expect to receive? Will God, think we, be so partial and fond to us, so disregardful and injurious toward himself, that he will vouchsafe to appear in favour to us, when we deign not to appear in respect to him? that he will openly tender our repute, when we apparently disregard his honour? that he will employ his wisdom, or exert his power, in our behalf, when we scarce will think a thought, or stir a step, for his service? Can we hope that he will freely dispense prosperous success to our enterprises, when we either care not or scorn to implore his help? that he will reach forth undeserved blessings to us, when we subtract due praises from him? that he will any wise shew himself bountiful and merciful toward us, when we so palpably are unjust and ingrateful toward him? No, *surely he scorneth the scorers; and, whosoever despiseth him, shall be lightly esteemed:* so he expressly hath threatened; and seeing he is both infallibly true and invincibly able, we may reasonably presume that he will accomplish his word.

Prov. iii. 34.

1 Sam. ii.

30.

VIII. Lastly, *Praying incessantly* may import at large a frequency in devotion. This the words at least do exact or necessarily imply, however expounded. For doing *incessantly* cannot imply less than doing *frequently*: in no tolerable sense can we

be said to do that continually, which we do seldom : SERM. VII.
but it is an ordinary scheme of speech to say that a
man doth that always, which he is wont to do, and
performeth often. As of the pious soldier Cornelius
it is said, that he *gave much alms to the people*, Acts x. 2.
and prayed to God always ; and of Anna the pro-
phetess, that she *departed not from the temple, but* Luke ii. 37.
served God with prayers and fastings night and
day ; that is, she frequently resorted to the temple,
and served God with an assiduous constancy. As
the words may bear and do involve this sense, so
doth the reason of the case enforce it : for very just,
very fit, very needful it is to practise thus. There
is ever at hand abundant reason for, and apposite
matter of, devotion ; therefore no large space of
time should pass without it : there be perpetually
depending many causes thereof ; whence there is not
to be allowed any long vacation from it. As every
moment we from God's mercy and bounty partake
great favours ; so should we often render thanks and
praise for them : for perpetually to receive courtesies,
and rarely to return acknowledgments, is notorious
ingratitude and iniquity. We frequently (and
in a manner continually) do fall into sins ; often
therefore we are obliged to confess sins, we are con-
cerned to deprecate wrath, and beg mercy ; other-
wise we must long crouch under the sore burden of
guilt, the sad dread of punishment, the bitter pangs
of remorse, or the desperate hazard of stupid obdu-
ration. Whatever we design or undertake, toward
the good management and happy success thereof we
(being ignorant and impotent creatures) do need the
guidance, the assistance, and the blessing of God ;
so often therefore it is requisite that we should be

SERM. seeking and suing for them : if not, we do not only
VII. transgress our duties, but fondly neglect or foully
 betray our own concernments. The causes there-
 fore of devotion being so constant, the effects in
 some correspondence should be frequent.

Such frequency is indeed necessary for the breeding, the nourishment, the growth and improvement of all piety. Devotion is that holy and heavenly fire, which darteth into our minds the light of spiritual knowledge, which kindleth in our hearts the warmth of holy desires : if therefore we do continue long absent from it, a night of darkness will overspread our minds, a deadening coldness will seize upon our affections. It is the best food of our souls, which preserveth their life and health, which repair-eth their strength and vigour, which rendereth them lusty and active : if we therefore long abstain from it, we shall starve, or pine away ; we shall be faint and feeble in all religious performances ; we shall have none at all, or a very languid and meagre piety.

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

in discharging our chief duties, and to want the best SERM.
graces. VII.

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

It is, in fine, the frequency of devotion which alone can secure any practice thereof, at least any practice thereof duly qualified: so hearty, so easy, so sweet and delightful as it should be. We have all a natural averseness or indisposition thereto, as requiring an abstraction of thoughts and affections

SERM. from sensible things, and a fastening them upon
VII. objects purely spiritual ; a rearing our heavy spirits
 above their common pitch ; a staying and settling
 our roving fancies ; a composing our vain hearts in
 a sober and steady frame, agreeable to devotion : to
 effect which things is a matter of no small difficulty
 and pain ; which therefore, without much use and
 exercise, cannot be accomplished ; but with it, may ;
 so that by frequent practice, the bent of our heart
 being turned, the strangeness of the thing ceasing,
 the difficulty of the work being surmounted, we shall
 obtain a good propension to the duty, and a great
 satisfaction therein.

This will render the way into God's presence
 smooth and passable ; removing, as all other ob-
 stacles, so particularly those of fear and doubt in
 respect to God, which may deter or discourage us
 from approaching to him. God being most holy and
 pure, most great and glorious, we, sensible of our
 corruption and vileness, may be fearful and shy of
 coming near unto him. But when, coming into his
 presence, we do find that *such as his majesty is,*
such is his mercy ; when we do taste and see that
the Lord is good ; when by experience we feel, that
in his presence there is fulness of joy ; being abund-
antly satisfied with the fatness of his house ; hav-
ing our souls there satisfied as with marrow and
fatness ; finding, that a day in his courts is better
than a thousand spent elsewhere ; perceiving that
 he biddeth us welcome, that he treateth us kindly,
 that he sendeth us away refreshed with sweetest
 comforts, and rewarded with most excellent bene-
 fits ; this will not only reconcile our hearts to devo-
 tion, but draw us into a cordial liking and earnest

Psal. xxxiv.
8.

xvi. 11.

Psal. xxxvi.
8.

lxiii. 5.

lxxxiv. 10.

desire thereof; such as the Psalmist expresseth, **SERM.**
when he saith, *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth,* **VII.**
for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh **Ps. lxxxiv.**
crieth out for the living God. This will engage us **2.**
into strong resolutions of constantly practising it;
such as the same holy person again declareth in
these words; *I love the Lord, because he hath* **Ps. cxvi. 1,**
heard my voice and my supplications: because he **2.**
hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call
upon him as long as I live. Hence, instead of a
suspicious estrangedness, a servile dread, or an hos-
tile disaffection toward God, there will spring up an
humble confidence, a kindly reverence, a hearty love
toward him; which will upon all occasions drive us
to him, hoping for his friendly succour, longing after
his kind embraces. So will the frequency of devo-
tion render it facile and pleasant. Whereas, on the
contrary, disuse thereof will make it at any time
hard and irksome; strengthening and increasing our
natural averseness thereto: performing it seldom, we
shall never perform it well, with that attention, that
affection, that promptitude, that willingness and ala-
cridity, which are due thereto.

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

I. I cannot, saith one, now attend to prayers, be-

SERM. cause I am not at liberty, or at leisure, being urgently called away, and otherwise engaged by important affairs. How much a flaw this apology is we shall presently descry, by asking a few questions about it.

VII.

1. Do we take devotion itself to be no business, or a business of no consideration? Do we conceit, when we pay God his debts, or discharge our duties toward him, when we crave his aid or mercy, when we solicit the main concerns of our soul, (yea, of our body also and its estate,) that we are idle or misemployed; that we lavish our time, or lose our pains?

2. What other affairs can we have of greater moment or necessity than this? Can there be any obligation more indispensable than is that of yielding due respect and service to our Maker, our great Patron, our most liberal Benefactor? Can there be any interest more close or weighty than this, of providing

Luke x. 24.
Job xxiii.
12.

Αἱ σίχλαι
τῶν αἰσῶν
ἐπιγυῖα ἰ-
στὶ ἵππον δι
ἡ θουρίβια.
Const.
Apost. ii.
61.

for our soul's eternal health and happiness? Is not this indeed the great work, *the only necessary matter*, in comparison whereto all other occupations are mere trifling, or unprofitable fiddling about nothing? What will all other business signify, what will come of it, if this be neglected? Busy we may be, we may plod, we may drudge eternally; but all to no end. All our care is in effect improvidence, all our industry may be well reckoned idleness, if God be not served, if our souls are not secured.

3. If we survey and prize all worldly businesses, which among them will appear so importunate as to demand, so greedy as to devour, so worthy at least as to deserve all our time, that we cannot spare a few minutes for maintaining our most pleasant in-

tercourse, and most gainful commerce with heaven? SERM. VII.
What are the great businesses of the world? what but scraping and scrambling for pelf, contriving and compassing designs of ambition, courting the favour and respect of men, making provision for carnal pleasure, gratifying fond curiosity or vain humour? And do any of these deserve to be put into the scale against, shall all of them together be able to sway down our spiritual employments? Shall these images, these shadows of business, supplant or crowd our devotion; that which procureth wealth inestimably precious, pleasure infinitely satisfactory, honour incomparably noble above all this world can afford? If the expense of time be, as the philosopher said, πο-Theophr. *λυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα*, *the most precious expense* that can be; how can it better be laid out than upon the worthiest things, such as devotion alone can afford the purchase and possession of? True virtue, sound wisdom, a quiet conscience, and steady tranquillity of mind, the love and favour of God, a title unto endless joy and bliss, are purely the gifts of Heaven; and thence they will not descend of themselves, but prayer must fetch them down. If nothing then in the world be comparable to those things, how can any time be so well spent as in prayer, which acquireth them; which also best secureth whatever we have, and is the readiest way to procure whatever we want?

4. Should we not further, honestly comparing things, easily discern, that it is no such indispensable business, but rather indeed some base dotage on lucre, some inveigling bait of pleasure, some bewitching transport of fancy, that crosseth our devotion? Is it not often a complimental visit, an ap-

SERM. pointment to tattle or to tipple, a match for sport, a
VII. wild ramble in vice or folly, that so deeply engageth
 us to put off our duty?

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

6. But were there indeed not only a counterfeit or imaginary, but a real competition between devotion and other lawful business, which, in reason, should carry it? in conscience, which of the two should be forborne or suspended? Is it not evidently better, that the pursuit of our temporal interests, whatever they be, should be a little checked, than that our affairs of everlasting consequence should be quite laid aside? that we should venture a small impairing of our estate, than surely endamage our souls? that we hazard to disappoint or displease a

man, than dare to affront and offend the Almighty SERM. VII.
God?

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

Put the case our prince should call for us to speak with him about matters nearly touching his service and our welfare; would it be according unto duty, discretion, or decency, to reply, that we are at present busy, and have no leisure, and must therefore hold ourselves excused; but that if he will stay a while, at another time, when we have less to do, we shall be perhaps disposed to wait upon him? The case is propounded by our Lord in that parable, wherein God is represented as a great man, that had prepared a feast, and invited many guests thereto; but they excused themselves: *One said, that* Matt. xxii. 2, &c.
he had purchased land, and must needs go out to Luke xiv. 16, &c.
see it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and
must go to prove them; another had married a

SERM. *wife, and therefore could not come.* These indeed
VII. were affairs considerable, as this world hath any;

*Ἐπειτα ἵτι
ἐκείναι ταύ-
τα καὶ πρό-
φασαι, &c.
Chrys. in
Joh. Orat.
11.*

but yet the excuses did not satisfy: for, notwithstanding, the great person was angry, and took the neglect in huge disdain.

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

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

^a Πρῶτον μὲν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἔγκλημα οὐ μικρὸν, τὸ κυκλοῦσθαι τοσούτων πραγμάτων πλήθει, καὶ τοῖς βιωτικαῖς ὄντω προσηλωθῆναι διὰ παντός, ὡς μηδὲ μικρὰν εἰς τὰ πάντων ἀναγκαϊότερα ἄγειν σχολήν. Chrys. in Joh. i. 14. (Or. 11.)

10. In truth, attending upon devotion can be no obstacle, but will be great furtherance to all other good business. It is the most sure, most pleasant, most advantageous and compendious way of transacting affairs, to mix prayers and praises with them; it is the best oil that can be, to make the wheels of action go on smoothly and speedily: it not only sanctifieth our undertakings, but much promoteth and exceedingly sweeteneth the management of them. For the conscience of having rendered unto God his due respect and service, of having intrusted our affairs to his care, of having consequently engaged his protection and assistance for us, will dispose us to do things with a courageous alacrity and comfortable satisfaction; will fill us with a good hope of prospering; will prepare us however to be satisfied with the event, whatever it shall be; will in effect procure a blessing and happy success, such as we may truly rejoice and triumph in, as conferred by God in favour to us. Whereas neglecting these duties, we can have no solid content or savoury complacency in any thing we undertake: reflecting on such misbehaviour (if we be not downright infidels, or obdurate reprobates in impiety) will quash or damp our courage: having thence forfeited all pretence to God's succour, and provoked him to cross us, we must needs suspect disappointment: as we have no reasonable ground to hope for success; so we cannot, if success arriveth, be heartily satisfied therein, or take it for a blessing.

He therefore that is such a niggard of his time, that he grudgeth to withhold any part thereof from his worldly occasions, deeming all time cast away that is laid out in waiting upon God, is really most

SERM. unthrifty and prodigal thereof: by not sparing a
VII. little, he wasteth all his time to no purpose; by so
 eagerly pursuing, he effectually setteth back his de-
 signs; by preposterously affecting to despatch his
 affairs, he rendereth them endless, or, which is the
 same, altogether unprofitable.

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

We have also many examples plainly demonstrat-
 ing the consistency of this practice with all other busi-
 ness. Who ever had more or greater affairs to ma-
 nage, and who ever managed them with greater
 success, than David; upon whom did lie the burden
 of a royal estate, and the care over a most populous
 nation; the which *he fed with a faithful and true
 heart, and ruled prudently with all his power;*
 who waged great wars, vanquished mighty enemies,
 achieved many glorious exploits, underwent many
 grievous troubles? Yet could not such engagements
 distract or depress his mind from a constant attend-
 ance on devotion. *I will bless the Lord at all times;*
his praise shall be continually in my mouth. My
mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy
salvation all the day. I will abide in thy taberna-
cle for ever. So he declareth his resolution and his
 practice. Who is more pressingly employed than
 was Daniel, first president over so vast a kingdom,
 chief minister of state to the greatest monarch on
 earth? yet constantly *thrice a day did he pray*
and give thanks unto his God. Who can be more

Ps. lxxviii.
72.

Ps. xxxiv.
1.
lxxi. 6.
cxlv. 2.
xxxv. 28.
lxi. 4.

Dan. vi. 10.

entangled in varieties and intricacies of care, of pains, of trouble, than was he that prescribeth unto us this rule of praying continually? Upon him did lie *the care of all the churches; night and day with labour and toil did he work* for the sustenance of his life, *that he might not* (to the disparagement of the Gospel) *burden any man*; perpetually he was engaged in all sorts of labour and travail, ever conflicting with perils, with wants, with inconveniences numberless: yet did he exactly conform his practice to his rule, being no less indefatigable and incessant in his devotion than he was in his business. Who ever managed a greater empire than Constantine? Yet *every day*, as Eusebius reporteth, *at stated times, shutting himself up, he alone privately did converse with his God*^b. The most pious men indeed have never been idle or careless men, but always most busy and active, most industrious in their callings, most provident for their families, most officious toward their friends, most ready to serve their country, most abundant in all good works; yet have they always been most constant in devotion. So that experience clearly doth evidence, how reconcilable much devotion is to much business; and that consequently the prosecution of the one cannot well palliate the neglect of the other.

II. No better can any man ward himself from blame, by imputing the neglect of devotion to some indisposition within him thereto. For this is only to cover one fault with another, or to lay on a patch

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

SERM. more ugly than the sore. It is, in effect, to say we
VII. may sin, because we have a mind to it, or care not
to do otherwise. Our indisposition itself is criminal; and, as signifying somewhat habitual or settled, is worse than a single omission: it ought therefore to be corrected and cured; and the way to do it is, by setting presently upon the practice of the duty, and persisting resolutely therein: otherwise how is it possible that it should ever be removed? The longer we forbear it, the more seldom we perform it, the stronger surely will our indisposition grow, and the more difficult it will be to remove it. But if (with any degree of seriousness and good intention) we come indisposed to prayer, we may thereby be formed into better disposition, and by continual attendance thereon, we shall (God's grace cooperating, which never is wanting to serious and honest intentions) grow toward a perfect fitness for it: prayer by degrees will become natural and delightful to us.

S E R M O N VIII.

OF THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

EPHES. v. 20.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God.

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

I. First then, concerning the duty itself, *to give thanks*, or rather, *to be thankful*; (for *εὐχαριστεῖν* doth

SERM. not only signify *gratias agere, reddere, dicere*, to
 VIII. *give, render, or declare thanks*, but also *gratias
 habere, grate affectum esse*, to be *thankfully dis-
 posed*, to entertain a grateful affection, sense, or
 memory: in which more comprehensive notion I
 mean to consider it, as including the whole duty or
 virtue of gratitude due to Almighty God for all his
 benefits, favours, and mercies;) I say, concerning
 this duty itself, (abstractedly considered,) as it in-
 volves a respect to benefits or good things received;
 so in its employment about them it imports, re-
 quires, or supposes these following particulars.

1. It implies a right apprehension of, and conse-
 quently a considerate attention unto, benefits con-
 ferred. For he that is either wholly ignorant of his
 obligations, or mistakes them, or passes them over
 with a slight and superficial view, can nowise be
 Ps. cvii. 43. grateful. *Whoso is wise, and will observe these
 things, even they shall understand the lovingkind-
 Ps. lxiv. 9. ness of the Lord. Men shall fear, and shall de-
 clare the work of God; for they shall wisely con-
 sider of his doings. The works of the Lord are
 Ps. cxl. 2. great, sought out of all that have pleasure there-
 in. O taste (first, and then) see that the Lord is
 Ps. xxxiv. good.*
 8.

This is the method that great master of thanks-
 giving prescribes; first experimental notice, then
 wise consideration, then grateful sense, then public
 acknowledgment. And those we find both by him
 and by the prophet Isaias (in the very same words)
 Ps. xxviii. reprehended as wickedly ingrateful persons, who *re-
 5. garded not the work of the Lord, nor considered
 isa. v. 12. the operation of his hands.* 'Tis part therefore of
 this duty incumbent on us, to take notice of dili-

gently, and carefully to consider, the divine benefits ; **SERM.**
 not to let them pass undiscerned and unregarded **VIII.**
 by us, as persons either wofully blind, or stupidly
 drowsy, or totally unconcerned.

'Tis a general fault, that the most common and frequent, the most obvious and conspicuous favours of God, (like the ordinary phenomena of nature, which, as Aristotle observes, though in themselves most admirable, are yet least admired,) the constant rising of the sun upon us, the descent of fruitful showers, the recourse of temperate seasons, the continuance of our life, the enjoyment of health, the providential dispensation of wealth, and competent means of livelihood, the daily protection from incident dangers, the helps of improving knowledge, obtaining virtue, becoming happy, and such like most excellent benefits, we commonly little mind or regard, and consequently seldom return the thanks due for them. Possibly some rare accidents of providence, some extraordinary judgment, some miraculous deliverance, may rouse and awaken our attention : (as it is said of the Israelites, *When he slew them, then they sought him—and remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer* :) but such advertency is not the effect so much of gratitude, as of curiosity or of necessity : the notable rarity invites, or some powerful impulse commands our notice. But the truly grateful industriously design, and are studious to know thoroughly their obligations, that they may be able to render answerable returns for them.

2. This duty requires a faithful retention of benefits in memory, and consequently frequent reflections upon them. For he that is no longer affected with

Ἀχάριστος ὅστις τὸ πᾶν ἁμάρτημα ἔστί.

SERM. a benefit than it incurs the sense, and suffers not
 VIII. itself to be disregarded, is far from being grateful;

Sen. iii. de
 Benef. cap.
 i.

nay, if we believe the philosopher, is ingrateful in the worst kind and highest degree. For, *Ingratus est*, saith he, *qui beneficium accepisse se negat, quod accepit; ingratus est, qui dissimulat; ingratus, qui non reddit: ingratus omnium, qui oblitus est.* He that falsely denies the reception of a benefit, and he that dissembles it, and he that doth not repay it, is ingrateful; but most ingrateful of all is he that forgets it. It is a sign the benefit made no deep impression on his mind, since it left no discernible footstep there; that he hardly ever thought of making recompense, since he hath suffered himself to become altogether incapable of doing it: neither is there any hope of his amending the past neglect; no shame, no repentance, no fair occasion can redeem him from ingratitude, in whom the very remembrance of his obligation is extinguished.

If to be sensible of a present good turn deserved the title of gratitude, all men certainly would be grateful: the Jews questionless were so. When Almighty God, by his wonderful power in extraordinary ways, delivered them from the tyranny and oppression of their prevalent enemies; when he caused streams to gush forth from the bowels of a hard rock to refresh their thirst; when bread descended from heaven in showers, and the winds were winged with flesh, to satisfy their greedy desires; then surely they were not altogether unsensible of the divine goodness; then could they acknowledge his power, and be forward enough to engage themselves in promises of correspondent observance toward him

for the future. But the mischief was, immediately after, as the Psalmist complains, *They forgot his works, and the wonders he had shewed them: They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. They refused to obey, neither were mindful of the wonders that God did among them, as Nehemiah confesses in their behalf. Of the rock that begat them they were unmindful, and forgot the God that formed them,* as it is in Deuteronomy. They distrusted his promises, repined at his dealings, disobeyed his laws, and treacherously apostatised from his covenant. Such were the fruits of their ingrateful forgetfulness; which therefore that people is so often charged with, and so sharply reprov'd for by the prophets.

On the contrary, we find that great pattern of gratitude, the royal prophet David, continually revolving in his thoughts, imprinting upon his fancy, studying and meditating upon, recollecting and renewing in his memory, the results of divine favour. *I will remember, saith he, thy wonders of old; I will meditate of all thy works, and talk of thy doings: and, I remember the days of old; I will meditate on all thy works; I muse on the works of thy hands: and, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: and, My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, because thou hast been my help.* No place unfit, it seems, no time unseasonable for the practice of this duty; not the place designed for rest, not the time due to sleep, but, as David thought, more due to a wakeful contemplation of the divine goodness.

SERM.
VIII.

Whose vigilant gratitude we should strive to imitate, devoting our most solitary and retired, our most sad and serious thoughts (not the studies only of our closet, but the consultations also of our pillow) to the preservation of those blessed ideas; that neither length of time may deface them in our fancy, nor other care thrust them out thence.

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

The middle, we may observe, and the safest, and the fairest, and the most conspicuous places in cities are usually deputed for the erections of statues and monuments dedicated to the memory of worthy men, who have nobly deserved of their countries. In like manner should we in the heart and centre of our soul, in the best and highest apartments thereof, in the places most exposed to ordinary observation, and most secure from the invasions of worldly care, erect lively representations of, and lasting memorials unto, the divine bounty; constantly attending to which we may be disposed to gratitude. Not one

blessing, not the least favourable passage of providence ought to perish with us, though long since past, and removed out of the sphere of present sense. SERM. VIII.

We must not in our old age forget who formed us in the womb, who brought us into the light, who suckled our infancy, who educated our childhood, who governed our youth, who conducted our manhood through the manifold hazards, troubles, and disasters of life. Nor in our prosperity, our affluence of good things, our possession of Canaan, should we be unmindful of him who relieved us in our straits, who supplied our wants, sustained our adversity, who redeemed us from Egypt, and led us through the wilderness. A succession of new and fresh benefits should not (as among some savages the manner is for the young to make away the old) supplant and expunge ancient ones, but make them rather more dear and venerable to us. Time should not weaken or diminish, but rather confirm and radicate in us the remembrance of God's goodness; to render it, as it doth gold and wine, more precious and more strong. We have usually a memory more than enough tenacious of injuries and ill turns done to us: let it never be said, to the disgrace of that noble faculty, that we can hardly forget the discourtesies of man, but not easily remember the favours of God. But further,

Ps. lxxi. 6.
Deut. vi. 12. viii. 11.

3. This duty implies a due esteem and valuation of benefits; that the nature and quality, the measure and quantity, the circumstances and consequences of them be well expended; else the gratitude is like to be none, or very defective. For we commensurate our thankfulness, not so much to

SERM. the intrinsic excellency of things, as to our peculiar
VIII. estimations of them. A cynic perhaps would not return more thanks for a diamond than for a pebble; nor more gratefully receive a talent of gold than an ounce of copper; because he equally values, or rather alike contemns both.

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

Ps. cviii. 3, 4. and by them.) *I will praise thee, O Lord, saith he, among the people, I will sing unto thee among the nations: for thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.* And,

Ps. cv. 7. *Remember the marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth. He is the Lord our God, his judgments are in all the earth.* And again, *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! and, How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O Lord! O how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.* And again, *His work is honourable and glorious, his righteousness endureth for ever: and, The Lord is good to all, and*

Ps. xxxvi. 5, 6, 7.

Ps. cxxix. 17, 18.

Ps. cxi. 3. cxlv. 9.

Ps. lxxviii. 19.

his tender mercies are over all his works: and, Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits. SERM.
VIII.

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

'Tis perhaps somewhat dangerous to affix a determinate value upon any of God's benefits: (for to value them seems to undervalue them, they being really inestimable:) what then is it to extenuate, to vilify, to despise the greatest? We should esteem them, as we measure the heavens with our eye, as we compute the sands upon the shore, as we would prize inexhaustible mines of gold, and treasures of pearl; that is, by confessing heartily their worth surpasses the strength of our imagination to conceive, and of our speech to utter; that they are immense, innumerable, unconceivable, and unexpressible. But still,

4. *Giving thanks* imports, that benefits be received with a willing mind, a hearty sense, a vehement affection. The forementioned particulars are

SERM. VIII. indeed necessary properties, inseparable concomitants, or prerequisite conditions to: but a cheerful and cordial acceptance of benefits is the form, as it were, and soul, the life and spirit, the principal and most essential ingredient of this duty.

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

^a Quoties quod proposuit quis consequitur, capit operis sui fructum. Qui beneficium dat, quid proponit sibi? prodesset ei

Such a benefactor is Almighty God, and such a SERM. tribute he requires of us; a ready embracement of, VIII. and a joyful complacency in his kindness; even such as he expressed, who said, *Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee*: and, *My soul shall be filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips*: and, *I will praise thee with my whole heart*; *I will be glad and rejoice in thee*: and, *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name.* Ps. lxxiii. 3. civ. 33. lxxi. 22. lxxiii. 5. ix. 1, 2. Ps. ciii. 1.

No holocaust is so acceptable to God, as a heart inflamed with a sense of his goodness. He loves not only *ἰλαρὸν δότην*, (*a merry giver*), but *ἰλαρὸν δέκτην* (*a cheerful receiver*) also. He would have us, ² Cor. ix. 7. as to desire his favour with a greedy appetite, so to taste it with a savoury relish. He designs not only to *fill* our mouths with *food*, but *our hearts* also Acts xiv. 17. *with gladness.*

We must not seem to grudge or repine, to murmur or disdain, that we are necessitated to be beholden to him; lest it happen to us as it did to them of whom it is said, *While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them.* Yea, 'tis our duty not to be contented only, but to be delighted, to be transported, to be ravished with the emanations of his love: to entertain them with such a disposition of mind, as the dry and parched ground imbibes the

cui dat, et sibi voluptati esse: non sibi invicem reddi voluit; aut non fuit beneficium, sed negotiatio. Beneficii proprium est, nihil de reditu cogitare. Senec.

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

SERM. soft dew and gentle showers ; as the chill and dark-
VIII. some air admits the benign influences of heavenly
 light ; as the thirsty soul takes in the sweet and
 cooling stream. He that with a sullen look, a dead
 heart, a faint sense, a cold hand, embraces the gifts
 of heaven, is really unthankful, though with deluges
 of wine and oil he makes the altars to overflow, and
 clouds the sky with the steam of his sacrifices. But
 yet further,

5. This duty requires due acknowledgment of our
 obligation, significations of our notice, declarations
 of our esteem and good acceptance of favours con-
 ferred. It is the worst and most detestable of ingra-
 titudes, that which proceeds from pride and scorn :
 and such is he guilty of, who is either unwilling or
 ashamed to confess himself obliged ; who purposely
 dissembles a benefit, or disavows the benefactor ; who
 refuses to render those most manifestly due, and
 most ^b easily discharged, those neither toilsome nor
 expensive oblations of praise and acknowledgment.
 This part of our duty requires, that we offer to
 God, not costly hecatombs, but the *calves* only of

Hos. xiv. 2. *our lips* ; (as the prophet Hosea speaks ;) not the
 fruit of our lands, but καρπὸν χειλέων only, (as the
 apostle to the Hebrews styles it,) *the fruit of our*
Heb. xiii. *lips, confessing to his name* ; that we employ some
^{15.}
 ἡμολογούν-
 ται.
 few blasts of the breath he gave us on the celebra-
 tion of his goodness, and advancement of his repute.

Ps. lxi. 30. *I will praise the name of God with a song, and*
 31. *will magnify him with thanksgiving. This shall*

^b Οὐδὲ γὰρ βαρὺ τι καὶ ἐπαχθὲς ἐπιζητεῖ παρ' ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ ἡμολο-
 γεῖν μόνον τὰς τοσαύτας εὐεργεσίας, καὶ τὰς ἐπὲρ τούτων αὐτῷ εὐχαριστίας
 ἀναφέρειν. Chrys. tom. i. pag. 54.

please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs, saith David. SERM. VIII.

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

Ps. lxxxix.
1. xxvi. 7.
cxlv. 5.
xl. 10.
Vid. Ps. lxxvi.
5. O come hither, and behold the works of God, &c.

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

SERM. pany of all the creatures, to assist and join in concert with us, in celebrating the worthy deeds, and magnifying the glorious name of our most mighty Creator, of our most bountiful Benefactor.

VIII.

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

Ps. lvi. 8.

And, the further to provoke us, we may consider, that it hath been the manner prompted by nature, and authorized by general practice, for men of all nations, and all times, and all ways, by composed hymns and panegyric eulogies, to express their gratitude for the gifts of nature, and for the benefits indulged by Providence; in their public sacrifices and solemn festivities extolling the excellent qualities of their imaginary deities, and reciting the famous achievements of their heroes and supposed benefactors: to whose favourable help and blessing, in their conceit, they owed the fruits of the earth, the com-

^c Ψυχὴ γὰρ, αἶμα, ψυχῆ καὶ πνεῦμα πνεύματι συναπτόμενα κατὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου σποράν, &c. Clem. Alex. Strom. i. p. 270.

forts of life, the defence and patronage of their countries : being indeed mistaken in the object, but not transgressing in the substance of the duty ; paying a due debt, though to false creditors. And I wish we were as ready to imitate them in the one, as we are, perhaps, prone to blame them for the other. For, certainly, acknowledgements of the divine goodness, and solemn testifications of our thankful sense thereof, (whatever the abused world may now imagine,) was always, is now, and ever will be the principal and most noble part of all religion immediately addressed to God. But moreover,

6. This duty requires endeavours of real compensation, and a satisfactory requital of benefits, according to the ability and opportunity of the receiver : that we do not only verbally *dicere*, and *agnoscere* ; but really *agere*, and *referre gratias* : that to him, who hath by his beneficence obliged us, we minister reciprocal assistance, comfort, and relief, if he need them, and be capable to receive them ; however, by evident testimonies to discover our ready disposition to make such real returns ; and withal, to suit our actions to his good liking, and in our carriage to comply with his reasonable desires. For, *as the earth which drinketh the rain often coming upon it, and having been by great labour tilled, and manured with expense, yieldeth yet no meet herbage, or fruit agreeable to the expectation of him that dresseth it, but is either wholly barren, or produceth only thorns and briers, is (as the apostle to the Hebrews tells us) to be reprobated, and nigh unto cursing ; that is, deserves no further care or culture to be employed on it, and is to be reputed desperately worthless : so is he, (that we may apply an*

SERM.
VIII.

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

Heb. vi. 7, 8.

ἄβυσσος βαρῶν.

SERM. *apodosis* to the apostle's comparison,) who, daily
 VIII. partaking the influences of divine providence and
 bounty, affords no answerable return, to be accounted
 execrably unthankful, and unworthy of any further
 favour to be shewed toward him.

Ps. xvi. 2. 'Tis true, our *righteousness* (or *beneficence*, so
 the word there signifies) *doth not extend unto God*:
 his benefits exceed all possibility of any proportion-
 able requital: he doth not need, nor can ever imme-
 diately receive any advantage from us: we cannot
 enrich him with our gifts, who by unquestionable
 right, and in unalterable possession, is Lord and
 Master of all things that do actually or can possibly
 exist; nor advance him by our weak commenda-
 tions, who already enjoyeth the supreme pitch of
 glory; nor any way contribute to his in itself com-
 plete and indefectible beatitude. Yet we may by
 apposite significations declare our willingness to serve
 and exalt him: we may by our obsequious demean-
 our highly please and content him: we may, by our
 charity and benignity to those whose good he ten-
 ders, yield (though not an adequate, yet) an accept-
 able return to his benefits. *What shall I render*
 Ps. cxvi. 12. *unto the Lord for all his benefits?* saith David, in
 way of counsel and deliberation: and thereupon re-
 solves, *I will take the cup of salvation, and call*
 Ver. 13, 14. *upon the name of the Lord: I will pay my vows*
unto the Lord. Seasonable benedictions, officious
 addresses, and faithful performances of vows, he in-
 timates to bear some shadow at least, some resem-
 blance of compensation. And so did his wise son
 Prov. iii. 9. likewise, when he thus advised, *Honour the Lord*
with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thy
increase.

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Almighty God, though he really doth, and cannot SERM. VIII. otherwise do, yet will not seem to bestow his favours

altogether *gratis*, but to expect some competent return, some small use and income from them. He will assert his rightful title, and be acknowledged the chief proprietary, by signal expressions of our fealty, and the payment of some though inconsiderable quit-rent, for our possessions derived from him: he will rather himself be seemingly indigent, than permit us to be really ingrateful. For knowing well that our performance of duty and respect toward him greatly conduceth to our comfort and happiness^e, he requireth of us such demonstrations of them, as we conveniently are able to exhibit; he appoints services expressive of thankfulness, exacts tributes and customs, demands loans and benevolences, encourages and accepts free-will offerings from us. *Thou shalt not appear empty before the Lord*, was a statute to the Jews, qualified and moderated by certain measures: the first-fruits of their lands, the first-born of their cattle and of themselves, the tenths of their annual increase, and a certain allotment from the spoils acquired in wars, did God challenge to himself, as fitting recompenses due for his bounty to and care over them. Exod. xxiii. 15.

Neither did the Gentiles conceive themselves exempted from the like obligation. For the *ἀκροθίνια*, the *top* or *chief of their corn heaps*, they were wont to consecrate unto him who had blessed their fields with increase; and the *ἀκρόλεια*, *the first and best of*

^e Ἀκήρατος γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἀνευθεὶς οἶσα, οὐδενὸς ἑτέρου προσδεῖται· οἱ δὲ αἰνοῦντες αὐτὸν, αὐτοὶ λαμπρότεροι γίνονται. S. Chrys. in Pa. cxliv. p. 885. Savil.

SERM. *the prey*, they dedicated to the adornment of his temple by whose favourable disposal they had obtained the victory. Neither would they sooner begin their meal, and partake of their necessary refreshment, than, by pouring forth their gratulatory libation, they had performed some homage to heaven for it.

Hom. Il. H.
ad finem.

— οὐδέ τις ἔτλη

Πρὶν πίεειν, πρὶν λείψαι ὑπερμενέϊ Κρονίῳ,

was the custom, it seems, in Homer's time. I shall not insist upon their ἀναθήματα, their anniversary or their casual sacrifices; but only observe, (what, if seasonable, might by many sufficient testimonies be evinced,) that those men (at least the most intelligent of them) were not so senseless as to imagine, that the gods, to whom they performed those services, and devoted those oblations, did any wise need, or were truly benefited by them; but that they esteemed it a comely thing, by the most significant means they could invent, to declare their grateful sense of the divine goodness and indulgence toward them.

Vid. Platonis Alcib. ii. Οὐ γὰρ, εἰ μαι, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τὸ τῶν θεῶν, ὅστις ἰσὸς δῶρον παράγισθαι, εἰς κακὴν τοιαυτήν, &c.

And though we are, perhaps, disobliged now from the circumstantial manner, yet are we no wise freed from (but rather more strongly engaged to) the substantial performance of this sort of gratitude. We are to offer still, not dead *bulls and goats*, but, as St. Paul saith, *our own bodies, living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God*. We are excused from material, but are yet bound to yield

Rom. xii. 1.

πνευματικὰς θυσίας,

1 Pet. ii. 5.

spiritual sacrifices unto God, as St. Peter tells us.

We must burn incense still, that of fervent devotion; and send up continually to heaven

Heb. xiii. 15.

θύσιν τῆς αἰνέσεως, that *thank-offering of praise*, which the

apostle to the Hebrews mentions. We must consecrate the first-born of our souls, (pure and holy thoughts,) and the first-fruits of our strength, (our most active endeavours,) to God's service. We must slay our impure desires, mortify our corrupt affections, and abandon our selfish respects for his sake. We must give him our hearts, and present our wills entirely to his disposal. We must vow to him, and pay the daily oblation of sincere obedience. We must officiously attend his pleasure, and labour to content him by an innocent and unblemished conversation. With these things Almighty God is effectually gratified; he approves of and accepts these, as real testimonies of our thankfulness, and competent returns of his benefits.

SERM. VIII.

*Mia ἀρωγή
 συμμαχία
 τῆς ἐκείνου
 χάριτος, ἣν
 δεῖν ἄριστον
 ἀποδοῦν τῷ
 Θεῷ. Clem.
 Alex.
 Strom. vii.
 p. 511.*

Especially our charity and beneficence, our exhibiting love and respect to good men, (his faithful servants and near relations,) our affording help and succour to persons in need and distress, he accounts a suitable retaliation of his kindness, acknowledges to be an obligation laid upon himself, and hath by settled rules and indispensable promises obliged himself to requite them. For, *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, he will pay him again: and, God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister: and, To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased:* and, *I desire fruit,* saith St. Paul to the Philippians, *that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Ephroditus the things which were sent from you,*

Prov. xix.
 17.
 Heb. vi. 10.
 Heb. xiii.
 16.
 Phil. iv. 17,
 18.

SERM. *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable,*
VIII. *well pleasing to God.* And, *Inasmuch as ye have*

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

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

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

And as to those that are immediately concerned therein, it imports more particular regard and goodwill; so, if they be duly sensible thereof, it engages them in mutual correspondence to an extraordinary esteem and benevolence: such as David upon this

account professes to have been in himself toward God, and frequently excites others to. *I will love thee, O Lord my strength. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised. The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. And, (in the gospel,) Because her sins, being many, were forgiven, therefore she loved much.* So true it is, that sense of favour indulged is naturally productive of love.

SERM. VIII.

Ps. xviii. 1. 3. 46.

Ps. cxvi. 1.

Luke vii. 47. *Ἐρρω χάρις γὰρ τῆν χάριν ἴστωσιν* *ἀσὶ.* Soph.

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

II. The object and term to which it is to be directed; we are to give thanks to God. To God, I say; that is, to him, unto whom we are obliged, not for some small and inconsiderable trifles, but for the most weighty and valuable benefits: from whom we receive, not few or some, but all good things; whatever is necessary for our sustenance, convenient for our use, pleasant for our enjoyment; not only those that come immediately from his hand, but what we obtain from others, who from him receive both the will and the power, the means and the opportunities of doing us good: to whom we owe, not only what we ever did or do at present possess, or can hereafter hope for of good; but that we were, are, or shall ever be in capacity to receive any: to the author, upholder, and preserver of our being; without whose

SERM. goodness we had never been, and without whose care
 VIII. we cannot subsist one moment.

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

To him who hath created a whole world to serve us, a spacious, a beautiful, a stately world for us to inhabit and to disport in; who hath subjected so fair a territory to our dominion, and consigned to our use so numerous a progeny of goodly creatures, to be managed, to be governed, to be enjoyed by us.

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

our ears with harmonious sounds, perfumes our nostrils with fragrant odours, cheers our spirits with comfortable gales, *fills our hearts with food and gladness*, supplies our manifold needs, and protects us from innumerable dangers.

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

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

Is there any thing more? Yes: *To him* who, to redeem us from misery, and to advance our estate,

SERM. hath infinitely debased himself, and eclipsed the
VIII. brightness of his glorious majesty ; not disdain-
 ing to assume us into a near affinity, yea, into a perfect
 union with himself ; to inhabit our frail and mortal
 nature, to undergo the laws and conditions of hu-
 manity, to appear in our shape, and converse, as it
 were, upon equal terms with us, and at last to taste
 the bitter cup of a most painful and disgraceful
 death for us.

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

Further yet, *To him*, the excellent quality, the
 noble end, the most obliging manner of whose bene-
 ficence doth surpass the matter thereof, and hugely
 augment the benefits ; who, not compelled by any
 necessity, not obliged by any law, (or previous com-
 pact,) not induced by any extrinsic arguments, not
 inclined by our merits, not wearied with our impor-
 tunities, not instigated by troublesome passions of
 pity, shame, or fear, (as we are wont to be,) not
 flattered with promises of recompense, nor bribed
 with expectation of emolument, thence to accrue
 unto himself ; but being absolute master of his own
 actions, only both lawgiver and counsellor to him-
 self, all-sufficient, and incapable of admitting any
 accession to his perfect blissfulness ; most willingly
 and freely, out of pure bounty and good-will, is our
 Friend and Benefactor ; preventing not only our de-

sires, but our knowledge ; surpassing not our deserts SERM. VIII.
only, but our wishes, yea, even our conceits, in the
dispensation of his inestimable and unrequitable
benefits ; having no other drift in the collation of
them, beside our real good and welfare, our profit
and advantage, our pleasure and content.

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

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

To him that is as merciful and gracious, as libe-
ral and munificent toward us ; that not only be-
stows on us more gifts, but pardons us more debts,
forgives us more sins, than we live minutes ; that
with infinite patience endures, not only our mani-

SERM. fold infirmities and imperfections, but our petulant
VIII. follies, our obstinate perversenesses, our treacherous
 infidelities; overlooks our careless neglects and our
 wilful miscarriages; puts up the exceedingly many
 outrageous affronts, injuries, and contumelies conti-
 nually offered to his supreme Majesty by us base
 worms, whom he hath always under his feet, and
 can crush to nothing at his pleasure.

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

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

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

To this God, to this great, to this only Benefactor

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

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

S E R M O N IX.

OF THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

EPHES. v. 20.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God.

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

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

Which yet is not so to be understood, as if thereby we were obliged in every instant (or singular point of time) actually to remember, to consider, to be affected with, and to acknowledge the divine benefits: for the deliberate operations of our minds being sometimes wholly interrupted by sleep, otherwhile preoccupied by the indispensable care of serving our

natural necessities, and with attendance upon other reasonable employments, it were impossible to comply with an obligation to the performance of this duty so interpreted. And those maxims of law, *Impossibilium nulla est obligatio*, and, *Quæ rerum natura prohibentur, nulla lege confirmata sunt*, (that is, *No law or precept can oblige to impossibilities*;) being evidently grounded upon natural equity, seem yet more valid in relation to his laws, who is the Judge of all the world, and in his dispensations most transcendently just and equal.

SERM.
IX.

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

'Tis, for instance, prescribed in Exodus, that Aaron should *bear the judgment of the children of Israel* (the Urim and Thummim) *upon his heart before the Lord continually*; that is, (not in abso-

Exod.
xxviii. 30.

SERM. lute and rigorous acceptation continually, but) con-
IX. constantly ever when he went into the holy place to
 discharge the pontifical function, as the context de-
 clares. And our Saviour in the gospel saith of him-
 self, Ἐγὼ πάντοτε ἐδίδαξα, *I always taught in the*
 temple; that is, very often, and ever when fit occa-
 sion was presented. And the apostles, immediately
 after Christ's ascension, ἦσαν διαπαντός ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, *were,*
 as St. Luke tells us, *continually in the temple, prais-*
ing and blessing God; that is, they resorted thi-
 ther constantly at the usual times or canonical hours
 of prayer. In like manner those injunctions (of
 nearest affinity) of *rejoicing, of giving thanks al-*
ways, and particularly of praying without ceasing,
 (as I have shewn more largely in another discourse,)
 are to be taken in a sense so qualified, that the ob-
 servance of them may be at least morally possible.

1 Thess. v.
 16, 17, 18.
 Eph. vi. 18.
 Luke xviii.
 1.

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

1. Hereby is required a frequent performance
 thereof: that we do often actually meditate upon,
 be sensible of, confess and celebrate the divine bene-
 ficence. For what is done but seldom or never, (as
 we commonly say,) cannot be understood done al-
 ways, without a *catachresis*, or abuse of words too
 enormous. As therefore no moment of our life wants
 sufficient matter, and every considerable portion of
 time ministers notable occasion of blessing God; as

he allows himself no spacious intervals or discontinuances of doing us good : so ought we not to suffer any of those many days (vouchsafed by his goodness) to flow beside us, void of the signal expressions of our dutiful thankfulness to him ; nor to admit in our course of life any long vacations from this duty. If God incessantly, and through every minute, demonstrates himself gracious unto us ; we in all reason are obliged frequently and daily to declare ourselves grateful unto him.

So at least did David, (that most eminent example in this kind, and therefore most apposite to illustrate our doctrine, and to enforce the practice thereof;) for, *Every day*, saith he, *I will bless thee ; I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Every day.* The heavenly bodies did not more constantly observe their course, than he his diurnal revolutions of praise : every day in his calendar was as it were festival, and consecrated to thanksgiving. Neither did he adjudge it sufficient to devote some small parcels of each day to this service : for, *My tongue*, saith he, *shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long :* and again, *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof.* The benefits of God he apprehended so great and numerous, that no definite space of time would serve to consider and commemorate them. He resolves therefore elsewhere to bestow his whole life upon that employment : *While I live I will praise the Lord : I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being :* and, *I will bless the Lord at all times : his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* No man can reasonably pretend greater

SERM.
IX.

Ps. cxlv. 2.

Ps. xxxv.
28.

Ps. lxxi. 8.
15. 24.

Ps. cxlvi. 2.
civ. 33.

xxxiv. 1.

lxxi. 6.

1 M. impediments, or oftener avocations from the practice
 1. of this duty, than he, upon whom the burden of a royal estate, and the care of governing a populous nation, were incumbent : yet could not they thrust out of his memory, nor extinguish in his heart, the lively sense of divine goodness ; which (notwithstanding the company of other secular encumbrances) was always present to his mind, and, like a spirit, (excluded from no place by any corporeal resistance,) did mingle with and penetrate all his thoughts and affections and actions. So that he seems to have approached very near to the complete performance of this duty, according to the extremity of a literal interpretation, and to have been always, without any intermission, employed in giving thanks to God. The consideration, methinks, of so noble a pattern, adjoined to the evident reasonableness of the duty, should engage us to the frequent practice thereof ^a.

But if the consideration of this excellent example do not, yet certainly that may both provoke us to emulation, and confound us with shame, of Epictetus, a heathen man, whose words to this purpose seem very remarkable : *Εἰ γὰρ νοῦν εἶχομεν*, saith he in Arrian's Dissert. *ἄλλο τι ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν, καὶ κοινῆ, καὶ ἰδίᾳ, ἢ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον, καὶ εὐφημεῖν, καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας ; οὐκ ἔδει καὶ σκάπτοντας, καὶ ἀροῦντας, καὶ ἐσθίοντας ᾄδειν τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν Θεόν ; Μέγας ὁ Θεός, &c.* that is, in our language, *If we understood ourselves, what other thing should we do, either publicly or*

^a *Εἰ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀνὴρ μυρίας βαπτίζομενος φροντίζει, καὶ πανταχόθεν περιελκόμενος, τοσαυτάκις παρεκάλει τὸν Θεόν· τίνα ἂν ἔχομεν ἀπολογία ἢ συγγνώμην ἡμεῖς, τοσαύτην σχολὴν ἄγοντες, καὶ μὴ συνεχῶς αὐτὸν ἱκετεύοντες, &c.* Chrys. tom. v. p. 76.

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

And although neither the admonition of prophets, nor precepts of philosophers, nor the examples of both, should prevail; yet the precedents, methinks,

^b Πάντα τοῦτον τὸν βίω ἐορτὴν ἄγοντες, πάντα πάντοθεν παρεῖναι τὸν Θεὸν πεκεισμένοι, γεωργοῦμεν αἰνοῦντες, πλέομεν ἕμνοῦντες κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην πολιτείαν ἐντέχνως ἀναστρεφόμεθα. Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 517.

SERM. of dumb and senseless creatures should animate us
IX. thereto ; which never cease to obey the law imposed

Psal. xix.
 1, 2, 3.

on them by their Maker, and without intermission glorify him. For, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.* It is St.

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

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

2. *Giving thanks always* may import our appointing and punctually observing, certain convenient times of performing this duty ; that is, of serious meditation upon, and affectionate acknowledgment of the divine bounty. We know that all per-

sons, who design with advantage to prosecute an orderly course of action, and would not lead a tumultuary life, are wont to distinguish their portions of time, assigning some to the necessary refectations of their body, others to the divertisement of their minds, and a great part to the despatch of their ordinary business: otherwise (like St. James's *dou-ble-minded man*) they would be *unstable in all their ways*; they would ever fluctuate in their resolutions, and be uncertain when, and how, and to what they should apply themselves. And so, this main concernment of ours, this most excellent part of our duty, if we do not depute some vacant seasons for it, and observe some periodical recourses thereof, we shall be tempted often to omit it; we shall be listless to do it, apt to defer it, and easily diverted from it by the encroachments of other less-behaving affairs.

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IX.

Jan. 1. 8.

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

Dan. viii.
11.

Heb. xiii.

15.

In determining the seasons and proportions of

SERM. which what other rule or standard can we better conform to, than that of the royal prophet? I shall not

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Ps. cxix. 64.

Ps. xcii. 1,
2. lv. 17.

urge his example so much; (according to which we should be obliged to a greater frequency;) for, *Seven times a day*, saith he, *do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments*: but rather allege his general direction and opinion, proposed to us in these words of his; *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou Most High; to shew forth thy lovingkindness every morning, and thy faithfulness every night. It is a good thing*; that is, a seemly, a convenient, a commendable, a due performance: *every morning*; that is, when our spirits, being recreated with sleep, are become more vigorous, our memories more fresh, our fancies more quick and active: *to shew forth thy lovingkindness*; that is, from a hearty sense of our obligation, to acknowledge the free bounty of him, who, in pursuance of his former kindness, hath been pleased to accumulate new favours to us; to guard us by his watchful care, when we were buried, as it were, in a senseless ignorance, and total neglect of our own welfare; to raise us from that temporary death, and to confer a new life upon us, restoring us to our health, to our means of subsistence, to all the necessary supports, and the desirable comforts of life: *every night* also; that is, when our spirits are exhausted with action, and our minds tired with thoughtfulness; when we are become weary, not of doing only, but almost of being; we should conclude our toils, and wrap up our cares in the sweet sense and grateful memory of his goodness, who hath protected us so many hours from the manifold dangers, and more sins, to which, by our

weakness, and our folly, and our bad inclinations, **SERM.**
 we are through every minute exposed; and withal **IX.**
 hath provided us so easy and so delightful a means
 of recovering our spent activity, of repairing our de-
 cayed strength.

Thus if we constantly begin, and thus close up,
 thus bound and circumscribe our days, dedicating
 those most remarkable periods of time to blessing
 God, and *making*, as the Psalmist speaks, *the out-* **Ps. lxxv. 8.**
goings of the morning and evening to rejoice in
 him: (since beginning and ending do in a manner
 comprehend the whole; and the morning and even-
 ing, in Moses's computation and style, do constitute
 a day;) we may (not incongruously) be supposed and
 said to *give thanks always*. But yet further, this
 may import,

3. A vigilant attendance upon this duty, such as
 men bestow on their employments, whereof though
 the actual prosecution ceases, yet the design conti-
 nually proceeds. As we say, such a one is writing a
 book, building a house, occupying a piece of land,
 though he be at that present peradventure sleeping,
 or eating, or satisfying some other desire; because
 his design never sleeps, and his purpose persists un-
 interrupted. And thus, it seems, we are to under-
 stand our Saviour and the apostles, when they exhort
 us *προσκαρτερεῖν*, to *continue instant in prayer and*
thanksgiving; and *ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει*, **Rom. xii.**
to watch with all perseverance; and *γρηγορεῖν*, **Eph. vi. 18.**
to wake in thanksgiving; and *μὴ παύεσθαι*, **Col. iv. 2.**
not to give over giving thanks: and to perform these duties **Eph. i. 16.**
1 Thess. v.
ἀδιαλείπτως, **Luke xviii.**
incessantly, or without giving off; *μὴ*
ἐκκακεῖν, *not to grow worse, faint, or falter*: (which
 is, in that place, made equivalent to, explicatory of

SERM. IX. doing duty always.) Which expressions denote a most diligent attendance on these duties; that we may make them not a *πάρεργον*, a diversion or by-business of our lives, allowing only a perfunctory and desultorious endeavour on them; but esteem them a weighty business, to be pursued with steadfast resolution and unwearied industry.

As our beings and powers did proceed from the goodness, so the results of them naturally tend to the glory of God; and the deliberations of our will ought to conspire with the instincts of our nature; it should be the principal design which our intention should aim at, and our endeavour always drive on, to glorify our Maker. Which doing, we may be reputed to discharge this duty, and in some sense said *always to give thanks*. But further,

4. This term [*always*] doth necessarily imply a ready disposition, or habitual inclination, to give thanks, ever permanent in us: that our *hearts*, as Ps. cviii. 1. David's was, be *fixed* always (that is, fittingly prepared, and steadily resolved) to thank and *praise* God; that our affections be like tinder, though not always inflamed, yet easily inflammable by the sense of his goodness.

Ps. xxxvii. 26. 'Tis said of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful, and lendeth*: not for that he doth ever actually dispense alms, or furnish his poor neighbour with supplies; but because his mind is ever inclinable to do it when need requires. So a grateful man doth *always give thanks*, by being disposed to do it upon all fit occasions. 'Tis the habit that qualifies and denominates a man such or such in any kind or degree of morality. A good man is in scripture frequently compared to a *tree bringing*

forth fruit in due season; and the root thereof is **SERM.**
 this habitual disposition, which, being nourished by **IX.**
 the dew of heaven, and quickened by the benign influence of divine grace, sprouts forth opportunely, and yields a plentiful increase of good fruit. Though we cannot always sing, our organs may be always rightly tuned for praise; at least they should never be unstrung, and wholly out of kelter.

We should maintain in ourselves a constant good temper of mind, that no opportunity surprise, and find us unprepared to entertain worthily the effects of divine favour: otherwise we shall as well lose the benefit, as God the thanks and glory due to them. That we be always thus disposed, is not impossible, and therefore requisite. But moreover,

5. Lastly, *Giving thanks always* imports, that we readily embrace every opportunity of actually expressing our thankfulness. For so, what in some places of scripture is enjoined to be done *continually*, and *without ceasing*, is in others only required to be done upon all opportunities. Which shews, that πάντοτε is to be expounded, not so much ἐν παντί χρόνῳ, *at all times*, as ἐν παντί καιρῷ, *in every season*. So προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντί καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι, Eph. vi. 18. *praying upon every opportunity in your spirit*: and, Ἀγρυπνεῖτε ὄν ἐν παντί καιρῷ δεόμενοι, *Be watchful, praying in every season*. And this sense^{36.} seems probably to be chiefly intended by this apostle, whenever he hath (as he hath often) this expression, πάντοτε εὐχαριστεῖν, that we embrace every overture or fit occasion of giving thanks.

'Tis true, no time is unseasonable to do it: every moment we receive favours, and therefore every minute we owe thanks: yet there are some especial

SERM. seasons, that do more importunately require them.

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We should be like those trees that bear fruit (more or less) continually ; but then more kindly, and more abundantly, when more powerfully cherished by the heavenly warmth.

When any fresh, any rare, any remarkable benefit happens to us ; when prosperous success attends our honest endeavours ; when unexpected favours fall as it were of their own accord into our bosoms ; (like the grain in the golden age springing up *ἀσκαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα*, without our care or our toil, for our use and enjoyment ;) when we are delivered from straits in our apprehension inextricable, surmount difficulties seeming insuperable, escape hazards (as we suspected) inevitable ; then is a special season presented us of offering up the sacrifice of praise to the God of mercy, help, and victory.

When we revolve in our minds (as we should often do) the favourable passages of providence, that in the whole course of our lives have befallen us : how in our extreme poverty and distress (when perhaps no help appeared, and all hopes seemed to fail us,) God hath raised us up friends, who have commiserated, comforted, and succoured us ; and not only so, but hath changed our sorrowful condition into a state of joy ; hath (to use the Psalmist's expressions) *turned our mourning into dancing* ; hath *put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness* ; hath *considered our trouble, and known our soul in adversity* ; hath *set our feet in a large room*, and furnished us with plentiful means of subsistence ; how in the various changes, and adventures, and travels of our life, upon sea and land, at home and abroad, among friends and

Ps. xxx. 11.

Ps. xxxi. 7.

8.

strangers and enemies, he hath protected us from SERM.
wants and dangers; from devouring diseases, and IX.
the distemperatures of infectious air; from the assaults of bloody thieves and barbarous pirates; from the rage of fire, and fury of tempests; from disastrous casualties; from treacherous surprises; from open mischiefs, that with a dreadful face approached and threatened our destruction: then most opportunely should we with all thankful exultation of mind admire and celebrate *our strength and our deliverer; our faithful refuge in trouble, and the rock of our salvation.*

Also when the ordinary effects of divine providence do in any advantageous manner present themselves to our view; when we peruse the volumes of story, and therein observe the various events of human action; especially the seasonable rewards of virtue, the notable protections and deliverances of innocence, and the unexpected punishments of malicious wickedness: then we should with thankful acclamations celebrate the divine goodness and justice; joining in concert with that heavenly choir, and saying, *Hallelujah; salvation, and glory, and Apoc. xix.
honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for^{1, 2.}
true and righteous are his judgments.*

Or when we contemplate the wonderful works of nature, and, walking about at our leisure, gaze upon this ample theatre of the world, considering the stately beauty, constant order, and sumptuous furniture thereof; the glorious splendour and uniform motion of the heavens; the pleasant fertility of the earth; the curious figure and fragrant sweetness of plants; the exquisite frame of animals; and all other amazing miracles of nature, wherein the glo-

SERM. rious attributes of God (especially his transcendent
IX. goodness) are most conspicuously displayed ; (so that by them not only large acknowledgments, but even gratulatory hymns, as it were, of praise have been extorted from the mouths of Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, and such like men, never suspected guilty of an excessive devotion ;) then should our hearts be affected with thankful sense, and our lips break forth into his praise.

Yea, from every object of sense, from every event of providence, from every common occurrence, we may extract fit matter of thanksgiving : as did our Saviour, when, considering the stupid infidelity of those proud people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, (who were not at all affected by his miraculous works, nor moved to repentance by his pathetic discourses,) and comparing it with the pious credulity of his meaner disciples, he brake forth into that divine ejaculation ; *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς Ἰησοῦς εἶπε, saith the evangelical narration ; *Upon that occasion Jesus thus spake* : he embraced that convenient opportunity of thankfully acknowledging God's wise and gracious dispensation. And frequent occasion is afforded us daily (were our minds suitably disposed) of doing the like.

But so much concerning the time of performing this duty.

IV. We proceed to the matter thereof, *for all things.* St. Chrysostom (in his Commentary upon the 145th Psalm) having enumerated several parti-

culars for which we are bound to thank God ; “Be- SERM.
 “ cause,” (I recite his words punctually rendered,) IX.

“ Because, saith he, he hath made us, who before
 “ had no being, and made us such as we are ; be-
 “ cause he upholds us being made, and takes care
 “ of us continually, both publicly and privately, se-
 “ cretly and openly, with and without our know-
 “ ledge ; for all visible things created for our sake,
 “ the ministry of them afforded to us ; the conforma-
 “ tion of our bodies, the nobleness of our souls ; his
 “ daily dispensations by miracles, by laws, by pu-
 “ nishments ; his various and incomprehensible provi-
 “ dence ; for the chief of all, that he hath not spared
 “ his only-begotten Son for our sake ; the benefits
 “ conferred on us by baptism, and the other holy
 “ mysteries, (or sacraments ;) the ineffable good
 “ things to be bestowed on us hereafter, the king-
 “ dom of heaven, the resurrection, the enjoyment of
 “ perfect bliss ;” having, I say, in these words com-
 prised the things for which we are obliged to thank
 and praise God, he thus despondently concludes :

(*Ἄν γὰρ ἕκαστόν τις τούτων καταλέγη, εἰς πέλαγος ἄφατον ἔμπεσεῖται ἐνεργειῶν, καὶ ὄψεται πόσων ἐστὶν ὑπεύθυνος τῷ Θεῷ.*)

“ If any one shall endeavour to recount par-
 “ ticularly every one of these things, he will but
 “ plunge himself into an unexpressible deep of be-
 “ nefits, and then perceive for how unexpressibly
 “ and inconceivably many good things he stands
 “ engaged to God.” And to the like *non plus* doth
 the devout Psalmist seem to be reduced, when he
 thus exclaims, *How precious are thy thoughts unto*
me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! If I
should count them, they are more in number than
the sand.

Ps. cxxxix.

^{17, 18.}

xxxvi. 5, 6.

SERM. I shall not therefore confound myself by launching too far into this immense ocean, nor strive minutely to compute the incomprehensible sum of the divine benefits; but only observe, that in gross, according to our apostle's calculation, all things, which however happen to us, are ingredients thereof. No occurrence (great or small, common or particular, present or past, pleasant or sad, perpetual or transitory) is excluded from being the subject of our thanksgiving: each one may prove beneficial to us; and we are with a cheerful contentedness and a grateful resentment to receive them all from God's hand. But to observe some little distinction: I say,

1. We are to give thanks, not only for great and notable benefits, but for the least and most ordinary favours of God: though indeed none of God's favours are in themselves small and inconsiderable. Men are wont to bless themselves, if they receive but a transient glance from a prince's eye; a smile from a great personage; any slender intimation of regard from him that is in capacity to do them good. What is it then to receive the least testimony of his good-will, from whom alone every good thing can be expected; upon whose disposal all happy success of our wishes, our hopes, and our endeavours do entirely depend! We repute him unjust, who withholds the least part of what is due from the true owner: and is not he ingrateful then, that omits to render thanks for the least of divine mercies?

1 Cor. xv.
41.

There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars, saith St. Paul. Some works of God indeed excel in lustre; yet all are

glorious, all are to be discerned, all to be esteemed and thankfully entertained by us. The brightness of the one should not wholly obscure the other ; if it do, it argues the weakness of our sense, the dulness of our spiritual faculty. For every beam of light that delights our eye, for every breath of air that cheers our spirits, for every drop of pleasant liquor that cools our thirst, for every minute of comfortable repose, for every step we safely take, for the happy issue of the least undertaking, for escaping the vengeance due to an idle word or a wanton thought, we owe a hymn of praise to God. But,

2. We are to render thanks, not only for new and present benefits, but for all we have formerly, all that we may hereafter receive. We find David not only frequently acknowledging the gracious dispensations of Providence toward him through the whole course of his life, but looking back in his thankful devotions as far as his very original being, and praising God for favours conferred on him beyond his memory, yea before his life. *I will praise thee, saith he, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.* And St. Paul, yet further reflecting his grateful consideration, blesses God for his favour commenced before the beginning of things. *Blessed, saith he, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who*

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Ps. cxxxix.
14, 15, 16.

Eph. i. 3, 4.

SERM. *hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in hea-*
IX. *venly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen*
us before the foundation of the world.

Neither doth the memory only of former, and the enjoyment of present, but the hope and foresight also of future blessings, worthily claim our thanks.

¹ Pet. i. 3. For, saith St. Peter, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for you.* Beasts only, and men not much better than they, are affected with present good turns: but men of honest and generous temper resent indifferently the obligations of all times. Sense doth not confine their gratitude, nor absence remove, nor age wear it out. What once is done, is ever done to them; and what of courtesy is purposed, seems to them performed. But having before discoursed somewhat largely concerning the remembrance of benefits, I leave this point. Furthermore,

3. We should bless God, not only for new, rare, extraordinary accidents of providence, but for the common and daily benefits and indulgences thereof. These favours are usually the greatest and most valuable in their own nature. (For what can be imagined of higher consequence to us, than the preservation of our lives and of our estates, by which they are comfortably maintained; than the continuance of our bodies in good health, and our minds in their right wits; than the knowledge of heavenly truth, the encouragements to virtue and piety, the assistances of divine grace, and the promises of eternal

bliss continually exhibited to us^c?) Shall the commonness and continuance of these exceeding favours, that they are not given us once only, and transitorily, but continued, (that is, given us so often as time hath instants,) and with an uninterrupted perseverance renewed unto us; shall this abate and enervate our gratitude, which in all reason should mainly increase and confirm it? But this point I also touched before, and therefore, forbearing to insist thereon, I proceed.

4. We should give thanks, not only for private and particular, but for public benefits also, and for such as befall others. *I exhort therefore, saith St. Paul, before all things, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men: not prayers only, for good things to be bestowed on others; but thanksgivings also, for the benefits received by others.* (And *ὑπὲρ πάντων* in our text, however otherwise commonly interpreted, may well admit this sense also; and be taken indifferently, *pro omnibus, for all persons, and propter omnia, for all things.*)

We are all citizens of the world, and concerned in its good constitution; and thence obliged thankfully to adore the mighty Upholder and wise Governor thereof, praising him for all the general benefits liberally poured forth upon mankind. We partake in the commodities of civil society; and therefore should heartily thank him, by whose gracious disposal order is maintained, peace continued,

^c Quem vero astrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque vicissitudines, quem mensium temperatio, quemque ea quæ nobis gignuntur ad fruendum non gratum esse cogant; hunc hominem omnino numerare qui decet? *Cic. de Leg. ii.*

SERM. justice administered, plenty provided, our lives made
IX. safe and sweet to us therein. We are members of a church, and highly interested in the prosperous estate and well-being thereof: when unity therefore is preserved, and charity abounds; when knowledge is increased, and virtue encouraged; when piety flourishes, and truth triumphs therein; we are bound to render all possible thanks to the gracious bestower of those inestimable blessings.

We are much mistaken in our account, if we either determine our own concernments, or measure this duty, by the narrow rule of our private advantage: for subducting either the benefits commonly indulged to mankind, or those which accrue from the welfare of public society, what possibility will remain of subsistence, of safety, of content unto us? what but confusion, want, violence, and disquiet?

As we are concerned with our utmost endeavours to promote, to wish and pray for, to delight and rejoice in, the public good of mankind, the peace of our country, the prosperity of Sion; so we are to bless and thank him, by whose gracious help and furtherance they are attained.

If we consult all history, (sacred and civil,) we shall find it to contain hardly any thing else considerable, but the earnest endeavours of good men for public benefit, and their thankful acknowledgments to the divine goodness for it. Moses, David, Nehemiah, St. Paul, all the prophets, and all the apostles, what other things memorable did they do, but serve God in procuring public good, and bless God for conferring it?

Neither only as we are combined with others in common interest, but without selfish respects, purely

out of charity, and humanity, and ingenuous pity, are we obliged to thank God for the benefits he is pleased to impart to others. If upon these accounts we are commanded to *do good to all men ; to rejoice with those that rejoice ; to love even those that hate us, and bless those that curse us ;* 'tis (by fair consequence) surely intended, that we should also bless God for the good issue of our honest endeavours, or of our good wishes for them.

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Gal. vi. 10.
Ro. xii. 15.
Matt. v. 44.

And verily could we become endowed with this excellent quality of delighting in others' good, and heartily thanking God for it, we needed not to envy the wealth and splendour of the greatest princes, not the wisdom of the profoundest doctors, not the religion of the devoutest anchorets, no, nor the happiness of the highest angels : for upon this supposition, as the glory of all is God's, so the content in all would be ours. All the fruit they can perceive of their happy condition, of what kind soever, is to rejoice in it themselves, and to praise God for it : and this should we then do as well as they. My neighbour's good success is mine, if I equally triumph therein : his riches are mine, if I delight to see him enjoy them : his health is mine, if it refresh my spirits : his virtue mine, if I by it am bettered, and have hearty complacence therein. By this means a man derives a confluence of joy upon himself, and makes himself, as it were, the centre of all felicity ; enriches himself with the plenty, and satiates himself with the pleasure, of the whole world : reserving to God the praise, he enjoys the satisfaction of all good that happens to any.

Thus we see David frequently thanking God, not for his favour only and mercy shewed particularly

SERM. to himself, but for his common munificence toward
IX. all; for (to use his own phrases) *his goodness to all,*
 Ps. cxlv. 9. *and his tender mercies over all his works;* for
 cxlvi. 7, 8, *executing judgment in behalf of the oppressed;* for
 9. *feeding the hungry;* for *loosening the prisoners;* for
 Ps. cxlvii. *opening the eyes of the blind;* for *raising them that*
 6. *are bowed down;* for *preserving the strangers,*
 1 Pet. v. 7. *and relieving the fatherless and widow;* for *lifting*
 Ps. v. 11. *up the meek;* for *loving, and caring for, and de-*
 civ. 28. *fending the righteous;* for *opening his hand, and*
 cxlv. 16. *satisfying the desire of every living thing;* for
 cxlvii. 9. *giving to the beast his food, and to the young ravens*
when they cry unto him; in a word, for his goodness
 to every particular creature, not excluding the most
 contemptible nor the most savage of all. And how
 affectionately doth St. Paul every where thank God
 for the growth in grace and spiritual wisdom, for
 the patience in affliction and perseverance in faith,
 of those good Christians he writes unto! So should,
 with an unrestrained exuberance, both our charity
 to men, and our gratitude to God, abound. But
 moreover,

5. We are obliged to give thanks, not only for
 pleasant and prosperous occurrences of providence,
 but for those also which are adverse to our desire,
 and distasteful unto our natural sense; for poverty,
 sickness, disgrace; for all the sorrows and troubles,
 the disasters and disappointments, that befall us. We
 are bound to pay thanks, not for our food only, but
 for our physic also: (which, though ingrateful to
 our palate, is profitable for our health:) we are oblig-
 ed, in the school of providence, not only for the good
 instructions, but for the seasonable corrections also
 vouchsafed unto us, (whereby, though our senses are

offended, our manners are bettered^d.) Whatever proceeds from good purpose, and tends to a happy end, that is graciously designed, and effectually conduces to our good, is a fit subject of thanksgiving: and such may all adversities prove unto us. They proceed usually from love and kind intention toward us: for, *Whom God loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth:* and, *I know, O Lord,* saith David, *that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me: in faithfulness,* that is, with a sincere intention of doing me good. SERM. IX.

God thoroughly knows our constitution, what is noxious to our health, and what may remedy our distempers; and therefore accordingly disposeth to us
— pro jucundis aptissima quæque — ;

instead of pleasant honey, he sometimes prescribes wholesome wormwood for us. We are ourselves greatly ignorant of what is conducive to our real good, and, were the choice of our condition wholly permitted to us, should make very foolish, very disadvantageous elections.

We should (be sure) all of us embrace a rich and plentiful estate; when as, God knows, that would make us slothful and luxurious, swell us with pride and haughty thoughts, encumber us with anxious cares, and expose us to dangerous temptations; would render us forgetful of ourselves and neglectful of him. Therefore he wisely disposeth poverty unto us; poverty, the mother of sobriety, the nurse of industry, the mistress of wisdom; which will make us

^d Τιν θεὸν ὁμοίως ἀνυμνεῖν χρὴ, καὶ κολάζοντα, καὶ ἀνίεντα κολάσεως ἀμφότερα γὰρ κηδεμονίας, ἀμφότερα ἀγαθότητος, &c. Chrysost. in Psal. cxlviii.

SERM. understand ourselves and our dependance on him, and force us to have recourse unto his help. And is there not reason we should be thankful for the means by which we are delivered from those desperate mischiefs, and obtain these excellent advantages ?

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We should all (certainly) choose the favour and applause of men : but this, God also knows, would corrupt our minds with vain conceit, would intoxicate our fancies with spurious pleasure, would tempt us to ascribe immoderately to ourselves, and sacrilegiously to deprive God of his due honour. Therefore he advisedly suffers us to incur the disgrace and displeasure, the hatred and contempt of men ; that so we may place our glory only in the hopes of his favour, and may pursue more earnestly the purer delights of a good conscience. And doth not this part of divine providence highly merit our thanks ?

We would all climb into high places, not considering the precipices on which they stand, nor the vertiginousness of our own brains : but God keeps us safe in the humble valleys, allotting to us employments which we are more capable to manage.

We should perhaps insolently abuse power, were it committed to us : we should employ great parts on unwieldy projects, as many do, to the disturbance of others, and their own ruin : vast knowledge would cause us to overvalue ourselves and contemn others : enjoying continual health, we should not perceive the benefit thereof, nor be mindful of him that gave it. A suitable mediocrity therefore of these things the divine goodness alloteth unto us, that we may neither starve for want nor surfeit with plenty.

In fine, the advantages arising from afflictions are

so many, and so great, that (had I time, and were it SERM.
seasonable to insist largely on this subject) it were IX.
easy to demonstrate, that we have great reason, not
only to be contented with, but to rejoice in, and to
be very thankful for, all the crosses and vexations
we meet with: to receive them cheerfully at God's
hand, as the medicines of our soul, and the condi-
ments of our fortune; as the arguments of his good-
will, and the instruments of virtue; as solid grounds
of hope, and comfortable presages of future joy unto
us.

6. Lastly, we are obliged to thank God, not only
for corporeal and temporal benefits, but also (and
that principally) for spiritual and eternal blessings.
We are apt, as to desire more vehemently, to rejoice
more heartily in the fruition, and more passionately
to bewail the loss of temporal good things; so more
sincerely and seriously to express our gratitude for
the reception of them, than for others relating to our
spiritual good, to our everlasting welfare. Wherein
we misjudge and misbehave ourselves extremely.
For, as much as the reasonable soul (that goodly
image of the divine essence, breathed from the mouth
of God) doth in dignity of nature, and purity of sub-
stance, excel this feculent lump of organized clay,
our body; as the blissful ravishments of spirit sur-
pass the dull satisfactions of sense; as the bottomless
depth of eternity exceeds that shallow surface of
time, which terminates this transitory life; in such
proportion should our appetite unto, our compla-
cence in, our gratitude for spiritual blessings tran-
scend the affections (respectively) engaged about
these corporeal accommodations.

Consider that injunction of our Saviour to his dis-

SERM. ciples: *In this rejoice not, that the spirits are sub-*
 IX. *ject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your*

Luke x. 20. *names are written in heaven. Rejoice not; that*
 is, Be not at all affected with this (although in itself
 very rare accomplishment, eminent privilege, glo-
 rious power of working that indeed greatest of mi-
 racles, subjecting devils; that is, baffling the shrewd-
 est craft, and subduing the strongest force in na-
 ture) in comparison of that delight, which the con-
 sideration of the divine favour, in order to your eter-
 nal felicity, doth afford.

We are, 'tis true, greatly indebted to God for our
 creation, for that he hath extracted us from nothing,
 and placed us in so lofty a rank among his crea-
 tures; for the excellent faculties of soul and body
 wherewith he hath endued us; and for many most
 admirable prerogatives of our outward estate: but
 much more for our redemption, and the wonderful
 circumstances of unexpressible love and grace therein
 declared; for his descending to a conjunction with
 our nature, and elevating us to a participation of
 his; for dignifying us with more illustrious titles,
 and instating us in a sure capacity of a much supe-
 rior happiness. Our daily food deserves well a grace
 to be said before and after it: but how much more
 that constant provision of heavenly manna, the evan-
 gelical verity; those savoury delicacies of devotion,
 whereby our souls are nourished to eternal life? 'Tis
 a laudable custom, when we are demanded concern-
 ing our health, to answer, *Well, I thank God*; but
 much more reason have we to say so, if our con-
 science can attest concerning that sound constitution
 of mind, whereby we are disposed vigorously to
 perform those virtuous functions, due from reason-

able nature, and conformable to the divine law. If SERM. for the prosperous success of our worldly attempts ; IX. for avoiding dangers, that threatened corporal pain and damage to us ; for defeating the adversaries of our secular quiet, we make *Te Deum laudamus* our *επιόμιον*, (our song for victory ;) how much more for the happy progress of our spiritual affairs, (affairs of incomparably highest consequence ;) for escaping those dreadful hazards of utter ruin, of endless torture ; for vanquishing sin and hell, those irreconcilable enemies to our everlasting peace ; are we obliged to utter triumphal anthems of joy and thankfulness !

This is the order observed by the Psalmist : inciting his *soul* to *bless God* for *all his benefits*, he Ps. ciii. 1, &c. begins with the consideration of God's mercy in pardoning his sins ; then proceeds to his goodness in bestowing temporal favours. *Who forgiveth all thy sins*, leads the van ; *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things*, brings up the rear in the enumeration and acknowledgment of God's benefits. That our minds are illustrated with the knowledge of God and his glorious attributes, of Christ and his blessed gospel, of that straight path which conducteth to true happiness ; that by divine assistance we are enabled to elude the allurements, to withstand the violences of temptation, to assuage immoderate desires, to bridle exorbitant passions, to correct vicious inclinations of mind ; requires more our hearty thanks, than for that we were able by our natural wit to penetrate the abstrusest mysteries, or to subjugate empires by our bodily strength. The forgiveness of our sins doth more oblige us to a grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodness, than should

SERM. God enrich us with all the treasures contained in the bowels of the earth, or bottom of the ocean.
IX. One glimpse of his favourable countenance should more enflame our affections, than being invested with all the imaginable splendour of worldly glory.

Of these inestimable benefits, and all the advantageous circumstances wherewith they are attended, we ought to maintain in our hearts constant resentments; to excite our thankfulness, to kindle our love, to quicken our obedience, by the frequent contemplation of them.

Thus have I (though, I confess, much more slightly than so worthy a subject did require) prosecuted the several particulars observable in these words. I should conclude with certain inducements persuasive to the practice of this duty; whereof I have in the tenor both of the former and present discourse insinuated divers, and could propound many more: but (in compliance with the time) I shall content myself briefly to consider only these three very obvious ones.

- I. First therefore, we may consider, that there is no disposition whatever more deeply radicated in the original constitution of all souls endued with any kind of perception or passion, than being sensible of benefits received; being kindly affected with love and respect toward them that exhibit them; being ready with suitable expressions to acknowledge them, and to endeavour competent recompenses for them. The worst of men, the most devoid of all not only piety, but humanity and common ingenuity, the most barbarous and most wicked, (whom neither sense of equity nor respect to law, no promise of reward or fear of vengeance, can anywise engage to

do things just and fitting, or restrain from enormous actions,) retain notwithstanding something of this natural inclination, and are usually sensible of good turns done unto them. Experience teaches us thus much; and so doth that sure oracle of our Saviour: *If, saith he, ye do good to those who do good to you, what thanks is it? for even sinners* (that is, men of apparently lewd and dissolute conversation) *do the same.*

SERM.
IX.

Luke vi. 3.

Vid. Gell.
lib. v. c. 14.

Yea even beasts, and those not only the most gentle and sociable of them, (the officious dog, the tractable horse, the docile elephant,) but the wildest also and fiercest of them, (the untameable lion, the cruel tiger, and ravenous bear, as stories tell us, and experience attests,) bear some kindness, shew some grateful affection to those that provide for them.

Neither wild beasts only, but even inanimate creatures seem not altogether insensible of benefits, and lively represent unto us a natural abhorrence of ingratitude. The rivers openly discharge into the sea those waters, which by indiscernible conduits they derived thence; the heavens remit in bountiful showers what from the earth they had exhaled in vapour; and the earth by a fruitful increase repays the culture bestowed thereon; if not (as the apostle to the Hebrews doth pronounce,) it deserves *cursing* and *reprobation*. So monstrous a thing, and universally abominable to nature, is all ingratitude. And how execrable a prodigy is it then toward God, from whom alone we receive whatever we enjoy, whatever we can expect of good?

The second obligation to this duty is most just and equal. For, (as he said well,) *Beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit; He unjustly requires*

II.

Laberius.

SERM. (much more unjustly receives) *a benefit, who is not minded to requite it.*

IX.

In all reason we are indebted for what is freely given, as well as for what is lent unto us. For the freeness of the giver, his not exacting security, nor expressing conditions of return, doth not diminish, but rather increase the debt. He that gives, indeed, according to human (or political) law, (which, in order to preservation of public peace, requires only a punctual performance of contracts,) transfers his right, and alienates his possession : but according to that more noble and perfect rule of ingenuity, (the law which God and angels and good men chiefly observe, and govern themselves by,) what is given is but committed to the faith, deposited in the hand, treasured up in the custody of him that receives it : and what more palpable iniquity is there, than to betray the trust, or to detain the pledge, not of some inconsiderable trifle, but of inestimable good-will? *Excepta Macedonum gente,* saith Seneca, *non est ulla data adversus ingratum actio : In no nation (excepting the Macedonians) an action could be preferred against ingrateful persons, as so.* (Though Xenophon, no mean author, reports, that among the Persians also there were judgments assigned, and punishments appointed for ingratitude.) However, in the court of heaven, and at the tribunal of conscience, no offender is more constantly arraigned, none more surely condemned, none more severely punished, than the ingrateful man.

Καλὸν δὲ
θεσπέσιον
καμίνην χά-
ρις. De Be-
nef. lib. viii.
cap. 6.

Since therefore we have received all from the divine bounty ; if God should in requital exact, that we sacrifice our lives to the testimony of his truth ; that we employ our utmost pains, expend our whole

estate, adventure our health, and prostitute all our earthly contents to his service; since he did but re-
voke his own, it were great injustice to refuse compliance with his demands: how much more, when he only expects from us and requires some few acknowledgments of our obligation to him, some little portions of our substance, for the relief of them that need, some easy observances of his most reasonable commands!

Thirdly, This is a most sweet and delightful duty. III. *Praise the Lord*, saith the most experienced Psalmist, *for the Lord is good; sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant*: and elsewhere, *Praise the Lord, for it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely*. The performance of this duty, as it especially proceeds from good humour, and a cheerful disposition of mind; so it feeds and foment them; both root and fruit thereof are hugely sweet and sapid. Whence St. James; *If any man be afflicted, let him pray; is any merry, let him sing psalms*. (Psalms, the proper matter of which is praise and thanksgiving.)

Other duties of devotion have something laborious in them, something disgustful to our sense. Prayer minds us of our wants and imperfections; confession induces a sad remembrance of our misdeeds and bad deserts: but thanksgiving includes nothing uneasy or unpleasant; nothing but the memory and sense of exceeding goodness.

All love is sweet; but that especially which arises, not from a bare apprehension only of the object's worth and dignity, but from a feeling of its singular beneficence and usefulness unto us. And what thought can enter into the heart of man more com-

SERM.
IX.

SERM. fortable and delicious than this, that the great Master
IX. of all things, the most wise and mighty King of
 heaven and earth, hath entertained a gracious regard, hath expressed a real kindness toward us? that we are in capacity to honour, to please, to present an acceptable sacrifice to him, who can render us perfectly happy? that we are admitted to the practice of that wherein the supreme joy of paradise, and the perfection of angelical bliss consists? For praise and thanksgiving are the most delectable business of heaven; and God grant they may be our greatest delight, our most frequent employment upon earth.

Vid. Psal.

lxi. 30, 31.

l. 13, 14.

23.

To these I might add such further considerations : That this duty is of all most acceptable to God, and most profitable to us. That gratitude for benefits procures more, disposing God to bestow, and qualifying us to receive them. That the serious performance of this duty efficaciously promotes and facilitates the practice of other duties; since the more we are sensible of our obligations to God, the more ready we shall be to please him, by obedience to his commandments. What St. Chrysostom saith of prayer, It is impossible that he, who with competent promptitude of mind doth constantly apply himself thereto, should ever sin, is most especially true of this part of devotion : for how can we at the same time be sensible of God's goodness to us, and willingly offend him? That the memory of past benefits, and sense of present, confirms our faith, and nourishes our hope of future. That the circumstances of the divine beneficence mightily strengthen the obligation to this duty; especially his absolute freeness in giving, and our total unworthiness to re-

Vid. divi-
niss. Chrys.
locum tom.

v. p. 76.

ceive ; our very ingratitude itself affording strong inducements to gratitude. That giving thanks hath *de facto* been always the principal part of all religion, (whether instituted by divine command, or prompted by natural reason, or propagated by general tradition ;) the Ethnic devotion consisting (as it were totally) in the praise of their gods, and acknowledgment of their benefits ; the Jewish more than half in eucharistical oblations, and in solemn commemorations of providential favours ; and that of the ancient Christians so far forth, that bystanders could hardly discern any other thing in their religious practice, than that they sang hymns to Christ, and by mutual sacraments obliged themselves to abstain from all villainy. But I will rather wholly omit the prosecution of these pregnant arguments, than be further offensive to your patience.

SERM.
IX.

Plin. Epist.

Now the blessed Fountain of all goodness and mercy inspire our hearts with his heavenly grace, and thereby enable us rightly to apprehend, diligently to consider, faithfully to remember, worthily to esteem, to be heartily affected with, to render all due acknowledgment, praise, love, and thankful obedience for all his (infinitely great and innumera- bly many) favours, mercies, and benefits freely conferred upon us : and let us say with David, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things : and blessed be his glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting : and let all the people say, Amen.

Ps. lxxii.
18, 19.

Ps. cvi. 48.

S E R M O N X.

ON THE KING'S HAPPY RETURN.

1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority.

SERM. **X.** **ST. PAUL** in his preceding discourse having insinuated directions to his scholar and spiritual son, 1 Tim. i. 3. Timothy, concerning the discharge of his office, of instructing men in their duty according to the evangelical doctrine; (the main design whereof he teacheth to consist, not (as some men conceited) in fond stories, or *vain speculations*, but in practice of substantial duties, holding a *sincere faith*, maintaining a *good conscience*, performing offices of *pure and hearty charity*;) in pursuance of such general duty, and as a principal instance thereof, he doth here *first of all exhort*, or, doth *exhort that first of all* all kinds of devotion should be offered to God, as for *all men* generally, so particularly for *kings* and *magistrates*. From whence we may collect two particulars. 1. That the making of *prayers for kings* is a Christian duty of great importance. (St. Paul judging fit to *exhort* thereto *πρῶτον πάντων*, *before all other things*; or, to *exhort that before all things* it should be performed.) 2. That it is incumbent on the pastors of the church (such as St.

Παρακαλῶ
οὐκ πρῶτον
πάντων
σκιεῖται.

Timothy was) to take special care, that this duty SERM. should be performed in the church; both publicly in X. the congregations, and privately in the retirements of each Christian: according to what the apostle, after the proposing divers enforcements of this duty, subsumeth in the eighth verse; *I will therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting.*

The first of these particulars, That it is a duty of great importance *to pray for kings*, I shall insist upon: it being indeed now very fit and seasonable to urge the practice of it, when it is perhaps commonly not much considered, or not well observed; and when there is most need of it, in regard to the effects and consequences which may proceed from the conscionable discharge of it.

My endeavour therefore shall be to press it by divers considerations, discovering our obligation thereto, and serving to induce us to its observance: some whereof shall be general, or common to all times; some particular, or suitable to the present circumstances of things.

I. The apostle exhorteth Christians *to pray for kings* with all sorts of prayer: with *δέησεις*, or *deprecations*, for averting evils from them; with *προσευχαι*, or *petitions*, for obtaining good things to them; with *ἐντεύξεις*, or *occasional intercessions*, for needful gifts and graces to be collated on them: as, after St. Austin, interpreters, in expounding St. Paul's words, commonly distinguish; how accurately, I shall not discuss: it sufficing, that assuredly the apostle meaneth, under this variety of expression, to comprehend all kinds of prayer. And to this I say we are obliged upon divers accounts.

Aug. Ep. 59. Beza, Grotius, &c.

SERM. 1. Common charity should dispose us to pray for
 X. kings. This Christian disposition inclineth to uni-

Gal. vi. 10. versal benevolence and beneficence; according to that apostolical precept, *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men*: it consequently will excite us to pray for all men; seeing this is a way of exerting good-will, and exercising beneficence, which any man at any time, if he hath the will and heart, may have opportunity and ability to pursue.

No man indeed otherwise can benefit all: few men otherwise can benefit many: some men otherwise can benefit none: but in this way any man is able to benefit all, or unconfinedly to oblige mankind, deriving on any somewhat of God's immense beneficence. By performing this good office, at the expense of a few good wishes addressed to the sovereign Goodness, the poorest may prove benefactors to the richest, the meanest to the highest, the weakest to the mightiest of men: so we may benefit even those who are most remote from us, most strangers and quite unknown to us. Our prayers can reach the utmost ends of the earth; and by them our charity may embrace all the world.

And from them surely kings must not be excluded. For if, because all men are our fellow-creatures, and brethren by the same heavenly Father; because all men are allied to us by cognation and similitude of nature; because all men are the objects of God's particular favour and care: if, because all men are partakers of the common redemption, by the undertakings of him who is the common Mediator and Saviour of all men; and because all men, according to the gracious intent and desire of

God, are designed for a consortship in the same SERM. blessed inheritance: (which enforcements St. Paul ^{X.} in the context doth intimate:) if, in fine, because ^{1 Tim. ii. 4, 5, 6.} all men do need prayers, and are capable of benefit from them, we should be charitably disposed to pray for them: then must we also pray for kings, who, even in their personal capacity, as men, do share in all those conditions. Thus may we conceive St. Paul here to argue: *For all men*, saith he, *for kings*; that is consequently *for kings*, or particularly *for kings*; to pray for whom, at least no less than for other men, universal charity should dispose us.

Indeed, even on this account we may say, especially *for kings*; the law of general charity with peculiar advantage being applicable to them: for that law commonly is expressed with reference to our neighbour, that is, to persons with whom we have to do, who come under our particular notice, who by any intercourse are approximated to us; and such are kings especially. For whereas the greatest part of men (by reason of their distance from us, from the obscurity of their condition, or for want of opportunity to converse with them) must needs slip beside us, so that we cannot employ any distinct thought or affection toward them: it is not so with kings, who by their eminent and illustrious station become very observable by us; with whom we have frequent transactions and mutual concerns; who therefore in the strictest acception are our neighbours, whom we are charged to love as ourselves; to whom consequently we must perform this most charitable office of praying for them.

2. To impress which consideration, we may re-

SERM. X. flect, that commonly we have only this way granted us of exercising our charity toward princes; they being situated aloft above the reach of private beneficence^a: so that we cannot enrich them, or relieve them by our alms; we cannot help to exalt or prefer them to a better state; we can hardly come to impart good advice, seasonable consolation, or wholesome reproof to them; we cannot profit or please them by familiar conversation. For as in divers other respects they resemble the Divinity; so in this they are like it, that we may say to them, Psal. xvi. 2. as the Psalmist to God, *Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee.* Yet this case may be reserved, wherein the poorest soul may benefit the greatest prince, imparting the richest and choicest goods to him: he may be indebted for his safety, for the prosperity of his affairs, for God's mercy and favour toward him, to the prayers of his meanest vassal. And thus to oblige princes, methinks, we should be very desirous; we should be glad to use such an advantage, we should be ambitious of such an honour.

3. We are bound to pray for kings out of charity to the public; because their good is a general good, and the communities of men (both church and state) are greatly concerned in the blessings by prayer derived on them.

The safety of a prince is a great part of the common welfare; the commonwealth, as it were, living and breathing in him: his fall, like that of a tall ce-

^a Privatorum ista copia est, inter se esse munificos. *Auson. ad Gratian.*

Absit, Auguste, et istud sancta divinitas omen avertat, ut tu a quoquam mortalium expectes vicem beneficii. *Mamerc. ad Julian.*

dar, (to which he is compared,) shaking the earth, SERM. and discomposing the state; putting things out of X. course, and drawing them into new channels; trans-¹Isa. ii. 13. lating the administration of affairs into untried hands, and an uncertain condition. Hence, *Let* ¹1 Kings i. *the king live*, (which our translators render, *God* ²⁵2 Kings xi. *save the king*;) was an usual form of salutation or ¹²2 Chron. prayer: and, *O king live for ever*, was a customary ^{xxiii. 11.}1 Kings i. address to princes, whereto the best men did con- ^{31.}Dan. ii. 4. form, even in application to none of the best princes; ^{iii. 9. v. 10.} as Nehemiah to king Artaxerxes, and Daniel to king ^{vi. 6.} Neh. ii. 3. Darius. Hence not only good king David is called ^{Dan. vi. 21.}2 Sam. xxi. *the light of Israel*; (*Thou shalt not*, said Abishai, ^{17.}2 Kings *any more go out with us to battle, that thou quench* ^{xxiv. 19.} Jer. xxxii. *not the light of Israel*;) but even the wicked and ^{3.} perverse king Zedekiah is by the prophet Jeremy ^{Lam. iv. 20.} himself (who had been so misused by him) styled ^{Zech. xii. 11.} *the breath of our nostrils*. (*The breath*, saith he, *of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits*.) Hence not only the fall of good king ^{2 Chron. xxxv. 24.} Josiah was so grievously lamented; but a solemn mourning was due to that of Saul; and, *Ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep for Saul*, was a strain becoming the mouth of his great successor king David. Hence the primitive Christians, who could not be constrained to swear by the genius of Cæsar, did not yet, in compliance with the usual practice, scruple to swear by their *health* or *safety*^b: that is, to express their wishing it, with appeal to God's testimony of their sincerity therein; as Joseph may be conceived to have sworn *by the life of Pharaoh*. ^{Gen. xlii. 15, 16.}

^b Sed et juramus, sicut non per genios Cæsarum, ita per salutem eorum, quæ est augustior omnibus geniis. *Tert. Apol.* cap. xxxii.

SERM. Hence well might the people tell king David, *Thou art worth ten thousand of us*; seeing the public was so much interested in his safety, and had suffered more in the loss of him, than if a myriad of others had miscarried.

X.
2 Sam.
xviii. 3.

This honour likewise of a prince is the glory of his people; seeing it is founded on qualities or deeds tending to their advantage; seeing it can hardly be supposed that he should acquire honour without their aid and concurrence, or that he should retain it without their support and their satisfaction. And as the chief grace and beauty of a body is in the head, and the fairest ornaments of the whole are placed there; so is any commonwealth most dignified and beautified by the reputation of its prince.

Prov. iv. 9.

The wealth and power of a prince are the supports and securities of a state; he thereby being enabled to uphold and defend its safety, its order, its peace; to protect his people from foreign injuries and invasions; to secure them from intestine broils and factions; to repress outrages and oppressions annoying them.

Psal. lxxii.
4.

The prosperity of a prince is inseparable from the prosperity of his people; they ever partaking of his fortunes, and thriving or suffering with him. For as when the sun shineth brightly, there is a clear day, and fair weather over the world; so when a prince is not overclouded with adversity or disastrous occurrences, the public state must be serene, and a pleasant state of things will appear. Then is the ship in a good condition, when the pilot in open sea, with full sails and a brisk gale, cheerfully steereth on toward his designed port.

Especially the piety and goodness of a prince is **SERM.**
of vast consequence, and yieldeth infinite benefit to **X.**
his country. For, *Vita principis censura est*; the
life of a prince is a calling of other men's lives to an
account. His example hath an unspeakable influ- **Ecclus. x. 2.**
ence on the manners of his people, who are apt in
all his garb and every fashion to imitate him ^c. His
practice is more powerful than his commands, and
often doth control them. His authority hath the
great stroke in encouraging virtue and checking
vice, if it bendeth that way; the dispensation of
honours and rewards, with the infliction of ignomi-
nies and corrections, being in his hand, and passing
from it according to his inclinations. His power is
the shield of innocence, the fence of right, the shel-
ter of weakness and simplicity against violences and
frauds. His very look (a smile or a frown of his
countenance) is sufficient to advance goodness and
suppress wickedness; according to that of Solomon,
A king sitting in the throne of judgment scattereth **Prov. xx. 8.**
away all evil with his eyes. His goodness pleasing
God procureth his favour, and therewith deduceth
from heaven all kinds of blessings on his people.
And if those politic aphorisms of the Wise Man be **Prov. xiv. 3,**
true, that *righteousness exalteth a nation and esta-* **4. xvi. 12.**
blisheth a throne; that *when it goeth well with the* **2 Sam. vii.**
16.
Prov. xi.
10, 11.

^c Flexibiles in quacunque partem ducimur a principe, atque, ut ita dicam, sequaces sumus. Huic enim chari, huic probati esse cupimus; quod frustra speraverint dissimiles. Eoque obsequii continuatione pervenimus, ut prope omnes homines unius moribus vivamus. *Plin. Paneg.*

Vita principis censura est, eaque perpetua; ad hanc dirigimur, ad hanc convertimur; nec tam imperio nobis opus est quam exemplo. *Ibid.*

SERM. *righteous, the city rejoiceth; and the same by the*
 X. *blessing of the upright is exalted:* then upon his

inclinations to virtue the advancement and stability of public welfare do mainly depend. So, for instance, how did piety flourish in the times of David, who loved, favoured, and practised it! and what abund-

ance of prosperity did attend it! What showers of blessings (what peace, what wealth, what credit and glory) did God then pour down upon Israel! How did the goodness of that prince transmit favours and mercies on his country till a long time after his de-

cease! How often did God profess *for his servant*

David's sake to preserve Judah from destruction; so

that even in the days of Hezekiah, when the king of

Assyria did invade that country, God by the mouth

of Isaiah declared, *I will defend this city to save it*

for mine own sake, and for my servant David's

sake.

(1 Kings xi. 32. 34.)

We may indeed observe, that, according to the representation of things in holy scripture, there is a kind of moral connection, or a communication of merit and guilt, between prince and people; so that mutually each of them is rewarded for the virtues, each is punished for the vices of the other. As for the iniquities of a people, God withdraweth from their prince the free communications of his grace and of his favour, (suffering him to incur sin, or to fall into misfortune; which was the case of that incomparably good king Josiah, and hath been the fate of divers excellent princes, whom God hath snatched away from people unworthy of them, or involved with such a people in common calamities; according to the rule propounded in the Law, of God's dealing with the Israelites in the case of their disobedience;

2 Kings xxiii. 25.
 Isa. iii. 1,
 &c.

Deut. xxviii. 36.

and according to that of Samuel, *If ye shall do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king:*) SERM. X.
 so reciprocally, for the misdemeanours of princes, (or 1 Sam. xii. 25.
 in them, and by them,) God doth chastise their people. For what confusions in Israel did the offences (Prov. xxviii. 2.)
 of Solomon create! What mischiefs did issue thereon 1 Kings xi. 33.
 from Jeroboam's wicked behaviour! How did the 1 Kings xv. 30.
 sins of Manasseh stick to his country, since that, 2 Kings xvii. 21.
 even after that notable reformation wrought by Josiah, it is said, *Notwithstanding the Lord turned* 2 Kings xxiii. 26.
not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because 2 Sam. xxi. 1.
of all the provocations wherewith Manasseh had provoked him! And how sorely, by a tedious three years' famine, did God avenge Saul's cruelty toward the Gibeonites!

Nor are only the sins of bad princes affixed to people conspiring with them in impiety; for even of king Hezekiah it is said, *But Hezekiah rendered* (Jer. xxxii. 32.)
not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. 2 Chr. xxxii. 25.
 So the pride and ingratitude of an excellent prince were avenged on his subjects. And when good king David (God averting his grace from him) did fall into that arrogant transgression of counting his forces, that, as Joab prudently foretold, became a 1 Chr. xxi. 3. 7.
cause of trespass to Israel; and God, saith the text, was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.

David indeed seemed to apprehend some iniquity in this proceeding, expostulating thus; *Is it not I* 1 Chr. xxi. 17.
that commanded the people to be numbered? even
I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed: but

SERM. *as for these sheep, what have they done?* But God
 X.

2 Sam.
 xxiv. 1.

had no regard to his plea, nor returned any answer to it; for indeed God's wrath began with the people, and their king's sin was but a judgment executed on them; for *the anger*, it is said, *of the Lord was kindled against Israel*, (by their sin surely, which is the only incentive of divine wrath,) *and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.*

Psal. xxxiii.
 15.
 Prov. xxi.
 1.

So indeed it is that princes are bad, that they incur great errors, or commit notable trespasses, is commonly imputable to the fault of subjects; and is a just judgment by divine Providence laid on them, as for other provocations, so especially for their want of devotion, and neglecting duly to pray for them. For if they constantly, with hearty sincerity and earnest fervency, would in their behalf sue to God,

Isa. lx. 17.

who *fashioneth all the hearts of men*, who especially holdeth *the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth them whithersoever he will*; we reasonably might presume, that God by his grace would direct them into the right way, and incline their hearts to goodness; that he would accomplish his own word in the Prophet, *I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness*: that we might have

Ezr. vii. 27.

occasion to pay thanksgivings like that of Ezra, *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who hath put such things as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.*

We are apt to impute the ill management of things, and the bad success waiting on it, unto princes, being in appearance the immediate agents and instruments of it: but we commonly do therein mistake, not considering that ourselves are most

guilty and blameable for it; that it is an impious **SERM.**
 people which maketh an unhappy prince; that their **X.**
 offences do pervert his counsels and blast his un-
 dertakings; that their profaneness and indevotion
 do incense God's displeasure, and cause him to de-
 sert princes, withdrawing his gracious conduct from
 them, and permitting them to be misled by tempta-
 tion, by ill advice, by their own infirmities, lusts,
 and passions, into courses fit to punish a naughty
 people. So these were the causes of Moses's *speaking* Psal. cvi.
unadvisedly with his lips, and that *it went ill* 32, 33.
Ex. xxxii.
with him for their sakes; of Aaron's forming the
Deut. ix.
 molten calf; of David's numbering the people; of
 Josiah's unadvised enterprise against Pharaoh Neco;
 of Zedekiah's rebellion against the Assyrians, (not-
 withstanding the strong dissuasions of the prophet
 Jeremy;) concerning which it is said, *For through* 2 Kings
the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem xxiv. 20.
and Judah, until he had cast them out from his
presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king
of Babylon.

Considering which things it is apparent, that
 prayer for our prince is a great office of charity to
 the public; and that in praying for his safety, for
 his honour, for his wealth, for his prosperity, for his
 virtue, we do in effect pray for the same benefits re-
 spectively to our country: that in praying for his
 welfare, we do in consequence pray for the good of
 all our neighbours, our friends, our relations, our fa-
 milies; whose good is wrapped in his welfare, doth
 flow from it, doth hang upon it.

We are bound, and it is a very noble piece of cha-
 rity, to love our country, sincerely to desire and earn-
 estly to further its happiness, and therefore to pray

SERM. for it; according to the advice and practice of the

X.

Psal. cxxii.

6. (cxxxviii.

5.) cxxii.

7.

Psalist: *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.* We are

obliged more especially upon the highest accounts, with dearest affection to love the church, (our heavenly commonwealth, the society of our spiritual brethren,) most ardently to tender its good, and seek its advantages; and therefore most urgently to sue for God's favour toward it: being ready to say after

Psal. li. 18. David, *Do good, O God, in thy good pleasure to*

Psal. cii. *Sion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Arise,*

13. 16.

(Isa. lxi. 1.)

O Lord, and have mercy upon Sion: for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come. Now these

duties we cannot more easily, more compendiously, or more effectually discharge, than by earnestly praying for our prince; seeing that if we do by our prayers procure God's favour to him, we do certainly draw it on the state and the church. If God, moved by our devout importunities, shall please to guard

Psal. xxi. 4. his person from dangers, and to *grant him a long*

life; to endue his heart with grace, with the love and fear of himself, with a zeal of furthering public good, of favouring piety, of discountenancing sin; if God shall vouchsafe to inspire him with wisdom, and to guide his counsels, to bless his proceedings, and to crown his undertakings with good success: then assuredly we have much promoted the public interest; then infallibly, together with these, all other blessings shall descend on us, all good will flourish in our land. This was the ancient practice of Christians, and directed to this end. For, *We*, saith Lactantius to Constantine, *with daily prayers do supplicate God, that he would first of all keep thee, whom he*

hath willed to be the keeper of things ; then that he would inspire into thee a will, whereby thou mayest ever persevere in the love of God's name ; which is salutary to all, both to thee for thy happiness, and to us for our quiet^d.

SERM.
X.

4. Wherefore consequently our own interest and charity to ourselves should dispose us to pray for our prince. We being nearly concerned in his welfare, as parts of the public, and as enjoying many private advantages thereby ; we cannot but partake of his good, we cannot but suffer with him. We cannot live quietly, if our prince is disturbed ; we cannot live happily, if he be unfortunate ; we can hardly live virtuously, if divine grace do not incline him to favour us therein, or at least restrain him from hindering us. This is St. Paul's own consideration : *I exhort you, saith he, to make prayers for kings—that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.* Upon such an account God did command the Jews to pray for the welfare of that heathen state, under which they lived in captivity. *And seek, said he, the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it : for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.* And for the like cause the Christians of old deemed themselves bound to pray for the Gentile magistrates ; according to that of Tertullian : *We pray for you, because with you the empire is shaken : and the other members of it*

Nescio an plus moribus confectus, qui rat princeps, qui bonos esse patitur, quam qui cogit. *Plin. Panegy.*

Jer. xxix. 7.

^d Cui nos quotidianis precibus supplicamus, ut te imprimis, quem rerum custodem voluit esse, custodiat ; deinde inspiret tibi voluntatem, qua semper in amore divini nominis perseveres ; quod est omnibus salutare, et tibi ad felicitatem, et nobis ad quietem. *Lact. vii. 26.*

SERM. *being shaken, assuredly even we, how far soever*
X. *we may be thought from troubles, are found in some*
place of the fall^e. Further,

5. Let us consider, that subjects are obliged in gratitude and ingenuity, yea in equity and justice, to pray for their princes. For,

They are most nearly related to us, and allied by the most sacred bands; being constituted by God, in his own room, the parents and guardians of their country; being also avowed and accepted for such by solemn vows, and most holy sacraments of allegiance: whence unto them as such we owe an humble piety, a very respectful affection, a most dutiful observance^f; the which we cannot better express or exercise, than in our heartiest prayers for their welfare.

They by God are destined to be the protectors of the church, the patrons of religion, the fosterers and cherishers of truth, of virtue, of piety: for of the church in the evangelical times it was prophesied, *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers; thou shalt suck the breasts of kings; kings shall minister to thee*: wherefore to them, not only as men and citizens, but peculiarly as Christians, we owe the highest duty; and consequently we must pay the best devotion for them.

Isa. xlix.
23. lx. 16.
10.

^e Vobiscum enim concutitur imperium: concussis etiam cæteris membris ejus, utique et nos, licet extranei a turbis æstimemur, in aliquo loco casus invenimur. *Tert. Apol. cap. xxxii.*

^f Quem sciens (Christianus) a Deo suo constitui, necesse est, ut et ipsum diligat, et revereatur, et honoret, et salvum velit. *Tert. ad Scap. ii*

Jurat per Deum, et per Christum, et per Spiritum S. et per majestatem imperatoris, quæ secundum Deum generi humano diligenda est, et colenda. *Veget. ii. 5.*

To them we stand indebted for the greatest benefits of common life: they necessarily do take much care, they undergo great trouble, they are exposed to many hazards for our advantages; that *under their shadow* we may enjoy safety and quiet, we may reap the fruits of our industry, we may possess the comforts and conveniences of our life, with security from rapine, from contention, from solicitude, from the continual fears of wrong and outrage.

To their industry and vigilancy under God we owe the fair administration of justice, the protection of right and innocence, the preservation of order and peace, the encouragement of goodness, and correction of wickedness: for they, as the apostle telleth us, *are God's ministers, attending continually on these very things*. They indeed so attend as to deny themselves, and so forego much of their own ease, their pleasure, their satisfaction; being frequently perplexed with cares, continually enslaved to business, and subject to various inconveniences, rendering their life to considerate spectators very little desirable.

As therefore, according to our Lord's observation, they are usually styled *benefactors*, so they really are; even the worst of them (such as Claudius or Nero, of whom our apostles speak) in considerable measure; at least in comparison of anarchy, and considering the mischiefs issuing from want of government. Οὐ κολακεία ἐστὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα: *The matter is not flattery*; (saith St. Chrysostom, himself of all men furthest from a flatterer;) *but according to the reason of the case* we must esteem ourselves much obliged to them for the pains they sustain in our behalf, and for the benefits we receive from them. For

SERM.
X.

Lam. iv. 20.

Rom. xiii. 6.

Luke xxii.
25.

Οὐ κολακεία
ἐστὶ τὸ ἀρεῶν
μα, ἀλλὰ
κατὰ τὸν
τοῦ δικαίου
γίνεσθαι λό-
γον. Chrys.
in 1 Tim.
ii. 1.

SERM. he indeed must be a very bad governor, to whom
 X. that speech of the orator Tertullus may not without
 Acts xxiv. glozing be accommodated; *Seeing that by thee we*
 2, 3. *enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds*
are done unto this nation by thy providence, we ac-
cept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix,
with all thankfulness.

However, what Seneca saith of philosophers, that
they of all men are most obliged, and most grateful
to kings and magistrates, because from their care
they enjoy the leisure, quiet, and security of con-
templating and practising the best things; upon
which account, saith he, they could not but reve-
rence the authors of so great a good as parents^s; that is, or should be, far more true of Christians.
That leisure (to use his words) which is spent with
God, and which rendereth us like to God^h; the
 liberty of studying divine truth, and of serving God
 with security and quiet; are inestimable benefits,
 for the which they are indebted to the protection of
 magistrates: therefore in all reason a grateful retri-
 bution of good-will, and of all good offices, particu-
 larly of our prayers, is to be paid to them. *Is it*
not very absurd, saith St. Chrysostom, that they
should labour and venture for us, and we not pray
for them?

Πῶς οὐκ οὖν
 ἀνασταν αὐ-
 τῶν, &c.
 Chrys. ubi
 supra.
 1 Pet. ii.
 13. 17.
 Rom. xiii.
 1. Tit. iii. 1.
 Prov. xxiv.
 21.

6. Whereas we are by divine command frequently

^s Nulli adversus magistratus ac reges gratiores sunt; nec im-
 merito, nullis enim plus præstant, quam quibus frui tranquillo otio
 licet. Itaque hi quibus ad propositum bene vivendi confert secu-
 ritas publica, necesse est auctorem hujus boni ut parentem colant.
 Sen. Ep. 73.

^h Quanti æstimamus hoc otium, quod inter Deos agitur, quod
 Deos facit? *Ibid.*

enjoined to fear and reverence, to honour, to obey **SERM.**
kings; we should look on prayer for them as a prin- **X.**
cipal branch, and the neglect thereof as a notable
breach of those duties. For,

As to honour and reverence, it is plain, that no exterior signification, in ceremonious unveiling or cringing to them, can so demonstrate it, as doth the wishing them well in our hearts, and from thence framing particular addresses to the divine Majesty for their welfare. Than which practice there can be no surer argument, that we hold them in great account and consideration. And how indeed can we much honour them, for whom we do not vouchsafe so much as to offer our good wishes, or to mention them in our intercessions unto him, who requireth us to make them for all men, and particularly for those for whom we are concerned? Doth not this omission evidently place them in the lowest rank, beneath the meanest of our friends and relations? doth it not imply a very slender regard had to them?

And as for obedience, prayer for princes is clearly an instance thereof; seeing it may be supposed, that all princes do require it from their subjects. Not only Christian princes, who believe God the sole dispenser of all good things, and the great efficacy of devotion in procuring them from him, may be deemed to exact this beneficial office from us; but even heathens and infidels, from their dim notion of a sovereign Providence, (which hath ever been common in the world,) have made an account of this practice; as we may see by that decree of the Persian king in Ezra, charging his officers to furnish the Jewish elders with sacrifices, *that, said he, they* Ezra vi. 10.
may offer sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God

SERM. of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of
 X. his sons. And that such was the practice of the
 Romans even in their heathenish state, doth appear
 from those words of Pliny ; *We have*, saith he, *been*
wont to make vows for the eternity of the empire,
and for the welfare of the citizens; yea for the
welfare of the princes, and in their behalf for the
*eternity of the empire*ⁱ.

Not only pious princes with a serious desire will expect this duty from us ; but even profane ones in policy will demand it, as a decent testimony of respect to them, and a proper means of upholding their state ; that they may seem to have place in the most serious regards and solemn performances of their subjects. So that to neglect this duty is ever a violation of our due obedience, and a kind of disloyalty to them. Again,

Deo vel pri-
 vatus, vel
 militans
 servit, cum
 fideliter
 eum diligit,
 qui Deo
 regnat au-
 tore. *Veget.*
 ii. 5.

7. The praying for princes is a service peculiarly honourable, and very acceptable to God ; which he will interpret as a great respect done to himself : for that thereby we honour his image and character in them, yielding in his presence this special respect to them as his representatives ; for that thereby we avow his government of the world by them as his ministers and deputies ; for that thereby we acknowledge all power derived from him, and depending on his pleasure ; we ascribe to him an authority paramount above all earthly potentates ; we imply our persuasion, that he alone is absolute Sovereign of the world, *the King of kings, and Lord of lords*, so

¹ Tim. vi.
15.

ⁱ Nuncupare vota et pro æternitate imperii, et pro salute civium, imo pro salute principum, ac propter illos pro æternitate imperii, solebamus. *Plin. Paneg.*

that princes are nothing otherwise than in subordi- SERM.
 nation to him, can do nothing without his succour, X.
 do owe to him all their power, their safety, their
 prosperity, and welfare ^k; for that, in fine, thereby
 disclaiming all other confidences *in any son of man*, Psal. cxlvi.
 we signify our entire submission to God's will, and ^{3.} cxviii.
8, 9.
 sole confidence in his providence. This service
 therefore is a very grateful kind of adoring our Al-
 mighty Lord; and as such St. Paul recommendeth
 it in the words immediately subjoined to our text,
For this, saith he, is good and acceptable in the 1 Tim. ii. 3.
night of God our Saviour.

8. Let us consider, that whereas wisdom, guiding
 our piety and charity, will especially incline us to
 place our devotion there where it will be most need-
 ful and useful; we therefore chiefly must pray for
 kings, because they do most need our prayers.

The office is most high, and hard to discharge
 well or happily: wherefore they need extraordi-
 nary supplies of gifts and graces from the divine
 bounty.

Their affairs are of greatest weight and import-
 ance, requiring answerable skill and strength to
 steer and wield them: wherefore they need from the
 fountain of wisdom and power special communica-
 tions of light, of courage, of ability, to conduct, to
 support, to fortify them in their managements; they
 need that God should *uphold them* πνεύματι ἡγεμονικῷ, Psal. li. 12.
 with *that princely spirit*, for which king David
 prayed.

They often are to deliberate about matters of

^k Temperans majestatem Cæsaris infra Deum, magis illum
 commendo Deo. *Tert. Apol. cap. xxxiii.*

SERM. dark and uncertain consequence ; they are to judge
X. in cases of dubious and intricate nature ; the which
to resolve prudently, or to determine uprightly, no
human wisdom sufficiently can enable : wherefore
Isa. xi. 2. they need *the spirit of counsel*, and *the spirit of*
xxviii. 6. *judgment*, from the sole dispenser of them, the great
Isa. ix. 6. *Counsellor* and most *righteous Judge*. The wisest
and ablest of them hath reason to pray with Solo-
Psal. vii. 11. mon, *Give thy servant an understanding heart, to*
1 Kings iii. 9. *judge thy people, that I may discern between good*
Wisd. ix. 4. *and bad : for who is able to judge this thy so great*
(Psal. lxxii. 1.) *a people ?* that so what the Wise Man saith may
Prov. xvi. 10. be verified, *A divine sentence is in the lips of the*
king, *his mouth transgresseth not in judgment :*
2 Sam. xiv. 17. *and that of the wise woman, As an angel of God,*
so is my lord the king to discern good and bad.

They commonly are engaged in enterprises of
greatest difficulty, insuperable by the might or in-
dustry of man ; in regard to which we may say
with Hannah, *By strength shall no man prevail ;*
1 Sam. ii. with the Preacher, *The race is not to the swift, nor*
Eccles. ix. 9. *the battle to the strong ;* with the Psalmist, *There*
11. *is no king saved by the multitude of an host :*
Psal. xxxiii. 16. *wherefore they need aid and succour from the Al-*
mighty, to carry them through, and bless their de-
signs with success.

They are most exposed to dangers and disasters ;
(standing like high towers, most obnoxious to the
winds and tempests of fortune ;) having usually
many envious ill-willers, many disaffected malecon-
tents, many both open enemies and close insidiators ;
from whose force or treachery no human providence
can sufficiently guard them : they do therefore need
the protection of the ever-vigilant *Keeper of Israel*

to secure them : for, *Except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh but in vain* ; except the SERM. X.

Lord preserve the king, his guards, his armies sur- Psal. xxi. 4.
xci. 1.
cxxxvii. 1.
xxxiii. 16.
round him to no purpose.

They have the natural infirmities of other men, and far beyond other men are subject to external temptations. The malicious spirit (as in the case of Job, of David, of Ahab, of Joshua the high priest, is expressed) is ever waiting for occasion, ever craving permission of God to seduce and pervert them ; success therein being extremely conducive to his villainous designs. The world continually doth assault them with all its advantages, with all its baits of pleasure, with all its enticements to pride and vanity, to oppression and injustice, to sloth, to luxury, to exorbitant self-will and self-conceit, to every sort of vicious practice. Their eminency of state, their affluence of wealth, their uncontrollable power, their exemption from common restraints, their continual distractions and encumbrances by varieties of care and business, their multitude of obsequious followers, and scarcity of faithful friends to advise or reprove them, their having no obstacles before them to check their wills, to cross their humours, to curb their lusts and passions, are so many dangerous snares unto them : wherefore they do need plentiful measures of grace, and mighty assistances from God, to preserve them from the worst errors and sins ; into which otherwise it is almost a miracle if they are not plunged. Zech. iii. 1.
Eccles. viii.

And being they are so liable to sin, they must consequently stand often in need of God's mercy to bear with them, and to pardon them. 'Ο πλύστα
πράττων,
πλύσι' ἁ-
μαρτάνυ
βροτῶν.

They therefore, upon so many accounts needing

SERM. special help and grace from Heaven, do most need
X. prayers to derive it thence for them.

All princes indeed do need them. Good princes need many prayers for God's help, to uphold and confirm them in their virtue: bad princes need deprecations of God's wrath and judgment toward them, for offending his Majesty; together with supplications for God's grace to convert and reform them: the most desperate and incorrigible need prayers, that God would overrule and restrain them from doing mischief to themselves and others. All princes having many avocations and temptations, hindering them to pray enough for themselves, do need supplemental aids from the devotions of others.

Wherefore if we love them, if we love our country, if we love ourselves, if we tender the interests of truth, of piety, of common good, we, considering their case, and manifold need of prayers, will not fail earnestly to sue for them; that God would afford needful assistance to them in the administration of their high office, in the improvement of their great talents, in the conduct and management of their arduous affairs; that he graciously would direct them in their perplexed counsels, would back them in their difficult undertakings, would protect their persons from dangers, would keep their hearts from the prevalency of temptations, would pardon their failings and trespasses. Again,

9. Whereas God hath declared, that he hath special regard to princes, and a more than ordinary care over them, because they have a peculiar relation to
 Wisd. vi. 4. him, as his representatives, the *ministers of his kingdom*, the main instruments of his providence, where-

by he conveyeth his favours, and dispenseth his justice to men; because also the good of mankind, which he especially tendereth, is mainly concerned in their welfare; whereas, I say, *it is he that giveth salvation unto kings; that giveth great deliverance to his king, and sheweth mercy to his anointed; that hath the king's heart, and his breath, and all his ways in his hand*: even upon this account our prayers for them are the more required. For it is a method of God, and an established rule of divine providence, not to dispense special blessings without particular conditions, and the concurrence of our duty in observance of what he prescribeth in respect to them. Seeing then he hath enjoined, that, in order to our obtaining those great benefits which issue from his special care over princes, we should pray for it, and seek it from his hands; the omission of this duty will intercept it, or bereave us of its advantages; nor in that case may we expect any blessings of that kind. As without praying for ourselves we must not expect private favours from heaven; so without praying for our prince we cannot well hope for public blessings. For, as a profane person (who in effect disavoweth God, by not regarding to seek his favour and aid) is not qualified to receive any good from him; so a profane nation (which disclaimeth God's government of the world, by not invoking his benediction on those who moderate it under him) is not well capable of common benefits. It is upon all accounts true which Ezra said, *The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him: but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him*. If therefore we desire that our prince should not lose God's special regard,

SERM.
X.

Psal. cxliv.
10. xxi. 1.
xviii. 50.
(lxiii. 11.)
1 Kings
xxii. 51.
Prov. xxi.
1.
Dan. v. 23.

Ezr. viii.
22.
Liv. v. 51.
Hor. Od.
iii. 6.

SERM. if we would not forfeit the benefits thereof to ourselves, we must conspire in hearty prayers for him.

X.

10. To engage and encourage us in which practice, we may further consider, that such prayers, offered duly, (with frequency and constancy, with sincerity and zeal,) do always turn to good account, and never want good effect: the which, if it be not always easily discernible, yet it is certainly real; if it be not perfect as we may desire, yet it is competent, as expediency requireth, or as the condition of things will bear.

There may be impediments to a full success of the best prayers; they may not ever prevail to render princes completely good, or extremely prosperous: for some concurrence of their own will is requisite to produce their virtue, God rarely working with irresistible power, or fatal efficacy; and the state of things, or capacities of persons, are not always fitly suited for prosperity. Yet are not such prayers ever wholly vain or fruitless; for God never prescribeth means unavailable to the end: he never would have commanded us particularly to pray for kings, if he did not mean to bestow a good issue to that practice.

And, surely, he that hath promised to hear all requests, with faith and sincerity and incessant earnestness presented to him, cannot fail to hear those which are of such consequence, which are so agreeable to his will, which do include so much honesty and charity. In this case, surely, we may have some confidence, according to that of St. John, *This is the confidence we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will; he heareth us.*

1 Joh. v.
14.

As the good bishop, observing St. Austin's mo-

ther, with what constancy and passionateness she did pray for her son, being then engaged in ways of error and vanity, did encourage her, saying, *It is impossible that a son of those devotions should perish*; so may we hopefully presume, and encourage ourselves, that a prince will not miscarry, for whose welfare many good people do earnestly solicit: *Fieri non potest, ut princeps istarum lacrymarum pereat.*

SERM. X.

Fieri non potest, ut filius istarum lacrymarum pereat. Aug. Conf. iv. 12.

You know in general the mighty efficacy of prayer; what pregnant assurances there are, and how wonderful instances thereof occur in holy scripture, both in relation to public and private blessings: how it is often promised, that *all things, whatsoever we shall ask in prayer believing, we shall receive*; and that *whoever asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened*: how the prayer of Abraham did heal Abimelech, and his family of barrenness; how the prayers of Moses did quench the fire, and cure the bitings of the fiery serpents; how the prayer of Joshua did arrest the sun; how the prayer of Hannah did procure Samuel to her, as his name doth import; how Elias's prayers did open and shut the heavens; how the same holy prophet's prayer did reduce a departed soul, and that of Elisha did effect the same, and that of another prophet did restore Jeroboam's withered hand; how the prayers of God's people frequently did *raise them up saviours*, and *when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivered them out of their distresses*: how the prayers of ^aAsa discomfited a million of Arabians, and those of Jehoshaphat destroyed a numerous army of his enemies by their own hands, and those of Hezekiah brought down an

James v. 16.

Matt. xxi. 22.

Matt. vii. 8.

Gen. xx. 17.

Num. xi. 2.

xxi. 7.

(Ps. cvi. 30. O. T.)

Josh. x. 12.

1 Sam. i. 10.

Luke iv. 25.

Jam. v. 17, 18.

1 Kings xvii. 21, 22.

2 Kings iv. 33.

1 Kings xiii. 6.

Deut. iv. 29.

Neh. ix. 27.

Psal. cvi. 44.

cvi. 6.

13. 19. 28.

Jud. iii. 15.

iv. 3. vi. 7.

x. 21.

^a 2 Chr. xiv. 11. xx. 3.

12. 23.

xxxii. 20.

21. xxxiii. 12, 13.

Esth. iv. 16.

SERM. angel from heaven to cut off the Assyrians, and
 X. those of Manasses restored him to his kingdom, and
 those of Esther saved her people from the brink of
 Neh. i. xi. ruin, and those of Nehemiah inclined a pagan king's
 ii. 4. heart to favour his pious design for reedifying Jeru-
 Dan. chap. salem, and those of Daniel obtained strange visions
 ii. iv. v. vii. and discoveries. How ^bNoah, Job, Daniel, Moses,
 viii. ix. x. and Samuel are represented as powerful intercessors
 xi. xii. with God; and consequently it is intimated, that
^bEzek. xiv. the great things achieved by them were chiefly done
 14- by the force of their prayers.
 Jer. xv. 1.

And seeing prayers in so many cases are so effectual, and work such miracles; what may we hope from them in this, wherein God so expressly and particularly directeth us to use them? If our prayers can so much avail to our personal and private advantage, if they may be very helpful to our friends; how much shall the devotions of many good men, all levelled at one mark, and aiming at a public most considerable good, be prevalent with the divine goodness! However, if God be not moved by prayers to convert a prince from all sin, to make him do all the good he might, to bless him in all matters; yet he may thence be induced to restrain him from much evil, to keep him from being worse, or from doing worse than otherwise would be; he may dispose him to do many things well, or better than of himself he would do; he may preserve him from many disasters otherwise incident to him: which will be considerable effects of prayer.

11. I shall add but one general consideration more, which is this, that prayer is the only allowable way of redressing our case, if we do suffer by or for princes.

Are they bad, or do they misdemean themselves SERM.
in their administration of government and justice? X.

we may not by any violent or rough way attempt to reclaim them; for they are not accountable to us, Eccles. viii. or liable to our correction. *Where the word of a⁴ king is, there is power: and who shall say to him, What doest thou?* was the Preacher's doctrine.

Do they oppress us, or abuse us? do they treat us harshly, or cruelly persecute us? we must not kick against them, nor strive to right ourselves by resistance. For, *Against a king*, saith the Wise Man, Prov. xxx. *there is no rising up:* and, *Who*, said David, 31.
1 Sam. *can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?* and, *They*, saith St. Paul, xxvi. 9.
Rom. xiii. *that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.*

We must not so much as ease our stomach, or discharge our passion, by railing or inveighing against them. For, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler* Exod. xxii.
28. *of thy people*, is a divine law; and, to *blaspheme*, or Acts xxiii. *revile dignities*, is by St. Peter and St. Jude reprehended as a notable crime. 5.
2 Pet. ii.
10.
Jude 8.

We must not be bold or free in taxing their actions. For, *Is it fit*, said Elihu, *to say to a king*, Job xxxiv.
18. *Thou art wicked, and to princes, Ye are ungodly?* Ps. lxxxix. and, *to reproach the footsteps of God's anointed*, is 51. implied to be an impious practice.

We must forbear even complaining and murmuring against them. For murmurers are condemned Jude 16. as no mean sort of offenders; and the Jews in the wilderness were sorely punished for such behaviour.

We must not (according to the Preacher's advice) Eccles. x.
20. so much as *curse them in our thoughts*; or not entertain ill conceits and ill wishes in our minds to- (Isa. viii.
21.) ward them.

SERM. To do these things is not only high presumption
X. in regard to them, (inconsistent with the dutiful affection and respect which we owe to them,) but it is flat impiety toward God, and an invasion of his authority; who alone is *King of kings*, and hath reserved to himself the prerogative of judging, of rebuking, of punishing kings, when he findeth cause.

These were the misdemeanours of those in the late times, who, instead of praying for their sovereign, did clamour and rail at him, did asperse him with foul imputations, did accuse his proceedings, did raise tumults, and levy war against him, pretending by rude force to reduce him to his duty; so usurping on their prince, or rather on God himself; assuming his right, and taking his work out of his hands; discovering also therein great profaneness of mind, and distrust of God's providence; as if God, being implored by prayer, could not, or would not, had it been needful, without such irregular courses, have redressed those evils in church or state, which they pretended to feel or fear.

Nothing therefore in such cases is left to us for our remedy or ease, but having recourse to God himself, and seeking relief from his hand in his good time, by converting our prince, or directing him into a good course; however comforting ourselves in the conscience of submitting to God's will¹.

This is the only method St. Paul did prescribe, even when Nero, a most vile, flagitious man, a sorry and naughty governor as could be, a monstrous ty-

¹ Absit enim ut indigne feramus ea nos pati quæ optamus, aut ultionem a nobis aliquam machinemur, quam a Deo expectamus. *Tert. ad Scap. 2.*

rant, and most bloody persecutor, (the very inventor of persecution,) did sway the empire^m. He did not advise Christians to stand upon their guard, to contrive plots, to provide arms, to raise mutinies and insurrections against him; but to offer supplications, prayers, and intercessions for him, as the best means of their security and comfortⁿ. And this was the course of the primitive Christians, during their hard condition under the domination of heathen princes, impugners of their religion: *Prayers and tears were then the only arms of the church*; whereby they long defended it from ruin, and at last advanced it to most glorious prosperity^o.

Indeed, if, not assuming the liberty to find fault with princes, we would practise the duty of seeking God for his blessing on their proceedings; if, forbearing to scan and censure acts of state, we would earnestly implore God's direction of them; if, leaving to conceive disgusts, and vent complaints about the state of things, we would assiduously petition God for the settlement of them in good order; if, instead of being shrewd politicians, or smart judges in such matters, we would be devout orators and humble solicitors at the throne of grace; our en-

^m Qui non dicam regum, sed omnium hominum, et vel bestiarum sordidissimus, dignus exstitit qui persecutionem in Christianos primus inciperet. *Sulp. Sev. ii. 40.*

ⁿ Ita nos magis oramus pro salute imperatoris, ab eo eam postulantes qui præstare potest. Et utique ex disciplina patientiæ divinæ agere nos, satis manifestum esse vobis potest, cum tanta hominum multitudo, pars pene major civitatis cujusque, in silentio et modestia agimus. *Tert. ad Scap. 2.*

^o Fundendo sanguinem, et patiendo magis quam faciendo contumelias, Christi fundata est ecclesia; persecutionibus crevit. &c. *Hier. Ep. 62.*

SERM. deavours surely would find much better effect toward
 X. public advantage: we certainly might do more good
 in our closets by a few hearty wishes uttered there,
 than by all our tattling or jangling politics in cor-
 ners.

There are great contrivances to settle things: every one hath his model of state, or method of policy, to communicate for ordering the state; each is zealous for his own conceit, and apt to be displeas'd with those who dissent from him: but it is, as the fairest and justest, so the surest and likeliest way of reducing things to a firm composure, (without more ado, letting the world alone, to move on its own hinges, and not impertinently troubling ourselves or others with the conduct of it,) simply to request of Almighty God, the sovereign Governor and sole Disposer of things, that he would lead his own vicegerents in the management of the charge by
 Phil. iv. 6. himself committed to them. *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God,* is a rule very applicable to this case.

As God's providence is the only sure ground of our confidence or hope for the preservation of church and state, or for the restitution of things into a stable quiet; so it is only our hearty prayers, joined with a conscientious observance of God's laws, whereby we can incline Providence to favour us. By them alone we may hope to save things from sinking into disorder, we may assuage the factions, we may defeat the machinations against the public welfare.

12. Seeing then we have so many good arguments

and motives inducing to pray for kings, it is no wonder that, to back them, we may also allege the practice of the church, continually in all times performing this duty in its most sacred offices, especially in the celebration of the holy communion.

SERM. X.
Const. Apost. viii. 13 ii. 57.

St. Paul indeed, when he saith, *I exhort first of all, that prayers be made*, doth chiefly impose this duty on Timothy, or supposeth it incumbent on the pastors of the church, to take special care, that prayers be made for this purpose, and offered up in the church jointly by all Christians: and accordingly the ancient Christians, as Tertullian doth assure us, did always pray for the emperors, that God would grant them a long life, a secure reign, a safe family, valiant armies, a faithful senate, a loyal people, a quiet world, and whatever they, as men or as emperors, could wish^p. Thus, addeth he, even for their persecutors, and in the very pangs of their sufferings, they did not fail to practise. Likewise of the church in his time St. Chrysostom telleth us, that *all communicants did know how every day, both at even and morning, they did make supplication for all the world, and for the emperor, and for all that are in authority*^q.

1 Tim. ii. 8. Polycarp. ad Phil. c. 12.

And in the Greek liturgies (the composure where-

^p Precantes sumus semper pro omnibus imperatoribus vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, quæcunque hominis et Cæsaris vota sunt. *Tert. Apol. cap. 30.*

Hoc agite, boni præsules, extorquete animam Deo supplicantem pro imperatore. *Ibid.*

^q Καὶ τοῦτο ἴσασιν οἱ μύσται, πῶς καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν γίνεται καὶ ἐσπέρα καὶ ἐν πρωΐᾳ· πῶς ὑπὲρ παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ βασιλέων, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ποιούμεθα τὴν δέησιν. *Chrys. in Tim. ii. 1.*

SERM. of is fathered on St. Chysostom) there are divers
X. prayers interspersed for the emperors, couched in terms very pregnant and respectful.

If the offices of the Roman church, and of the churches truckling under it, in latter times, shall seem more defective or sparing in this point of service, the reason may be, for that a superlative regard to the solar or pontifical authority (as pope Innocent III. distinguished) did obscure their devotion for the lunar or regal majesty. But our church hath been abundantly careful, that we should in most ample manner discharge this duty; having in each of her holy offices directed us to pray for our king in expressions most full, hearty, and lively.

She hath indeed been charged as somewhat lavish or over-liberal of her devotions in this case. But it is a good fault, and we little need fear over-doing in observance of a precept so very reasonable, and so important: supposing that we have a due care to join our heart with the church's words, and to the frequency of prayers for our prince do confer a suitable fervency. If we be not dead, or merely formal, we can hardly be too copious in this kind of devotion; reiteration of words can do no harm, being accompanied with the renovation of our desires. Our text itself will bear us out in such a practice; the apostle therein by variety of expression appearing solicitous, that abundance of prayers for kings should be offered in the church, and no sort of them omitted.

There are so many general inducements to this duty at all times; and there are beside divers particular reasons enforcing it now, in the present state and posture of things.

Times of trouble, of danger, of fear, of darkness and perplexity, of distraction and distress, of guilt and deserved wrath, are most seasonable for recourse to the divine help and mercy in prayer^m.

SERM. X.
 Psal. cxlv. 18. xviii. 6. lxxvii. 2. lxxxvi. 7. cxviii. 5. cxlii. 1. cvii. 6. Jam. v. 13. 2 Chr. vi. 36. Psal. lxxxii. 5. Luke xxi. 25, 26. (2 Kings xix. 3.)

And are not ours such? are they not much like to those of which the Psalmist saith, *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course?* or like those of which our Lord spake, when there was *upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth?*

Are not the days gloomy, so that no human providence can see far, no wisdom can descry the issue of things?

Is it not a very unsettled world, wherein all the public frames are shaken almost off the hinges, and the minds of men extremely discomposed with various passions; with fear, suspicion, anger, discontent, and impatience? How from dissensions in opinion do violent factions and feuds rage; the hearts of men boiling with fierce animosities, and being exasperated against one another, beyond any hopes or visible means of reconciliation!

Are not the fences of discipline cast down? Is there any conscience made of violating laws? Is not the dread of authority exceedingly abated, and all government overborne by unbridled licentiousness?

How many adversaries are there, *bearing ill*

Psal. cxxix. 5. lxxxiii. 5.

^m Inops senatus auxilii humani ad deos populum ac vota vertit. Liv. iii. 7. v. 16.

SERM. *will to our Sion!* How many turbulent, malicious,
 X. crafty spirits, eagerly bent, and watching for occasion to subvert the church, to disturb the state, to introduce to confusion in all things! How many Edomites, who say of Jerusalem, (both ecclesiastical and civil,) *Down with it, down with it even to the ground!*

Ps. cxxxvii.
7.

Have we not great reason to be fearful of God's just displeasure, and that heavy judgments will be poured on us for our manifold heinous provocations and crying sins; for the prodigious growth of atheism, infidelity, and profaneness; for the rife practice of all impieties, iniquities, and impurities, with most impudent boldness, or rather with outrageous insolence; for the extreme dissoluteness in manners; the gross neglect or contempt of all duties; the great stupidity and coldness of people generally as to all concerns of religion; for the want of religious awe toward God, of charity toward our neighbour, of respect to our superiors, of sobriety in our conversation; for our ingratitude for many great mercies, and incorrigibleness under many sore chastisements, our insensibleness of many plain warnings, loudly calling us to repentance?

Is not all the world about us in combustion, cruel wars raging every where, and Christendom weltering in blood? and although at present, by God's mercy, we are free, who knows but that soon, by God's justice, the neighbouring flames may catch our houses?

In fine, is not our case palpably such, that for any good composure or reinstatement of things in good order, for upholding truth and sound doctrine, for reducing charity and peace, for reviving the spirit of

piety, and bringing virtue again into request; for preserving state and church from ruin; we can have no confidence or reasonable hope, but in the good providence and merciful succour of Almighty God; *beside whom there is no Saviour*; who alone *is the hope of Israel, and Saviour thereof in time of trouble?* we now having great cause to pray with our Lord's disciples in the storm, *Lord, save us, we perish.*

SERM. X.

Isa. xliii. 11.
Hos. xiii. 4.
Jer. xiv. 8.

Matt. viii. 25.

Upon such considerations, and others whereof I suppose you are sufficiently apprehensive, we now especially are obliged earnestly to pray for our king, that God in mercy would preserve his royal person, and inspire his mind with light, and endue his heart with grace, and in all things bless him to us, to be *a repairer of our breaches, and a restorer of paths to dwell in*; so that *under him we may lead a quiet life in all godliness and honesty,*

Isa. lviii. 12.

I have done with the first duty, (*prayer for kings*;) upon which I have the rather so largely insisted, because it is very seasonable to our present condition.

II. The other (*thanksgiving*) I shall but touch, and need not perhaps to do more. For,

1. As to general inducements, they are the same, or very like to those which are for prayer; it being plain, that whatever we are concerned to pray for, when we want it, that we are bound to thank God for, when he vouchsafeth to bestow it. And if common charity should dispose us to resent the good of princes with complacency; if their welfare be a public benefit; if ourselves are interested in it, and partake great advantages thereby; if in equity and ingenuity we are bound to seek it; then, surely, we

SERM. are much engaged to thank God, the bountiful do-
 X. nor of it, for his goodness in conferring it.

2. As for particular motives, suiting the present occasion, I need not by information or impression of them further to stretch your patience; seeing you cannot be ignorant or insensible of the grand benefits by the divine goodness bestowed on our king, and on ourselves, which this day we are bound with all grateful acknowledgment to commemorate. Wherefore, instead of reciting trite stories, and urging obvious reasons, (which a small recollection will suggest to you,) I shall only request you to join with me in the practice of the duty, and in acclamation of praise to God. . Even so

1 Kings i.
48.

Blessed be God, who hath given to us so gracious and benign a prince, (the experiments of whose clemency and goodness no history can parallel,) to sit on the throne of his blessed father and renowned ancestors.

Psal. xviii.
46. lxxxix.
22, 23.

Blessed be God, who hath protected him in so many encounters, hath saved him from so many dangers and snares, hath delivered him from so great troubles.

Ps. xcvi.
2.

Blessed be God, who in so wonderful a manner, by such miraculous trains of providence, did reduce him to his country, and reinstate him in the possession of his rights; thereby vindicating his own just providence, *declaring his salvation, and openly shewing his righteousness in the sight of all people.*

Blessed be God, who in him and with him did restore to us our ancient good constitution of government, our laws and liberties, our peace and quiet; rescuing us from lawless usurpations and tyrannical

yokes, from the insultings of error and iniquity, from horrible distractions and confusions. SERM.
X.

Ever blessed be God, who hath *turned the captivity of Sion*; hath raised our church from the dust, and reestablished the sound doctrine, the decent order, the wholesome discipline thereof; hath restored true religion with its supports, advantages, and encouragements. Psal. cxlvi.
1.
(Is. xxx.
20.)

Blessed be the Lord, who hath granted us to continue these sixteen years in the peaceable fruition of those blessings.

Praised be God, who hath not cast out our prayer, nor turned his mercy from us. Psal. lvi.
20.

Praised be God, who *hath turned our heaviness into joy, hath put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness.* Psal. xxx.
11.

Let our mouth speak the praise of the Lord; and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever. Psal. cxlv.
21.

The Lord liveth, and blessed be our rock; and let the God of our salvation be exalted. Psal. xviii.
46.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen. Psal. lxxii.
18, 19.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord. Psal. cvi.
48. xli. 13.
lxxxix. 52.
lxviii. 34.
I Chron.
xvi. 8—36.

S E R M O N XI.

On Nov. 5.
1673.

ON THE GUNPOWDER-TREASON.

PSALM lxiv. 9, 10.

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

SERM. XI. **I**F we should search about for a case parallel to that which we do now commemorate, we should, perhaps, hardly find one more patly such than is that which is implied in this Psalm: and if we would know the duties incumbent on us in reference to such an occasion, we could scarce better learn them elsewhere than in our text.

Psal. lxiv.
5.

With attention perusing the Psalm, we may therein observe, that its great author was apprehensive of a desperate plot by a confederacy of wicked and spiteful enemies, with great craft and secrecy, contrived against his safety. *They, saith he, encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?* That for preventing the blow threatened by this design, (whereof he had some glimpse, or some presumption, grounded upon the knowledge of their implacable and active malice,) he doth implore divine protection: *Hide me, saith he, from the se-*

cret counsel of the wicked, from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity. That he did confide in God's mercy and justice for the seasonable defeating, for the fit avenging their machination: *God*, saith he, *shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.* That they should themselves become the detectors of their crime, and the instruments of the exemplary punishment due thereto: *They*, addeth he, *shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.*

Such was the case; the which unto what passage in the history it doth relate, or whether it belongeth to any we have recorded, it may not be easy to determine. Expositors commonly do refer it to the designs of Saul upon David's life. But this seeming purely conjecture, not founded upon any express words, or pregnant intimations in the text, I shall leave that inquiry in its own uncertainty. It sufficeth to make good its pertinency, that there was such a mischievous conspiracy, deeply projected, against David; (a very great personage, in whose safety the public state of God's people was principally concerned; he being then king of Israel, at least in designation, and therefore in the precedent Psalm, endited in Saul's time, is so styled;) from the peril whereof he by the special providence of God was rescued, with the notable disappointment and grievous confusion of those who managed it. The which case (at least in kind, if not in degree) beareth a plain resemblance to that which lieth before us.

And the duties, which upon that occasion are signified to concern people then, do no less now sort to us; the which, as they lie couched in our text, are

SERM. these: 1. *Wisely to consider God's doing*; 2. *To*
XI. *fear*; 3. *To declare God's work*; 4. *To be glad in*

the Lord; 5. *To trust in God*; 6. *To glory*. Of
 which the first three are represented as more generally concerning men; the others as appertaining more peculiarly to righteous and upright persons.

These duties it shall be my endeavour somewhat to explain and press, in a manner applicable to the present case. I call them duties; and to warrant the doing so, it is requisite to consider, that all these particulars may be understood in a double manner; either as declarative of event, or as directive of practice upon such emergencies.

When God doth so interpose his hand, as signally to check and confound mischievous enterprises, it will be apt to stir up in the minds of men an apprehension of God's special providence, to strike into their hearts a dread of his power and justice, to wring from their mouths suitable declarations and acknowledgments; and particularly then good men will be affected with pious joy; they will be encouraged to confide in God, they will be moved to glory, or to express a triumphant satisfaction in God's proceedings. These events naturally do result from such providential occurrences; for production of these events such occurrences are purposely designed; and accordingly (where men are not by profane opinions or affections much indisposed) they do commonly follow.

But yet they are not proposed simply as events, but also as matters of duty: for men are obliged readily to admit such impressions upon their minds, hearts, and lives, from the special works of Providence; they are bound not to cross those natural

tendencies, not to frustrate those wise intents of God, SERM. XI.
 aiming at the production of such good dispositions
 and good practices: whence if those effects do not
 arise, as often notoriously they do not in some
 persons, men thereby do incur much guilt and
 blame.

It is indeed ordinary to represent matter of duty
 in this way, expressing those practices consequent in
 effect, which in obligation should follow, according
 to God's purpose, and the nature of causes ordered
 by him. As when, for instance, God in the law had
 prescribed duty, and threatened sore punishment on
 the disobedient, it is subjoined, *And all the people*
shall hear, and fear, and do no more presump-
tuously: the meaning is, that such exemplary pu-
 nishment is in its nature apt, and its design tendeth
 to produce such effects, although not ever, question-
 less, with due success, so as to prevent all transgres-
 sion of those laws. So also, *When*, saith the Pro-
 phet, *thy judgments are in the land, the inhabit-*
ants of the world will learn righteousness: the
 sense is, that divine judgments in themselves are in-
 structive of duty, it is their drift to inform men
 therein, and men ought to learn that lesson from
 them; although in effect divers there be, whom no
 judgments can make wiser or better; such as those
 of whom in the same Prophet it is said, *The people*
turneth not unto him that smiteth them; and in an-
 other, *In vain have I smitten your children, they*
received no correction. As therefore frequently
 elsewhere, so also here this kind of expression may
 be taken chiefly to import duty. To begin then with
 the first of these duties.

1. We are upon such occasions obliged *wisely to*

SERM. *consider* (or, as the Greek rendereth it, *συνίεναι*, to un-
 XI. *derstand*, or to *perceive*, as our old translation hath

יבסעשדד
 השכלו
 סוהנאס רא
 נאיהמאסא.
 it) *God's doing*. This I put in the first place, as
 previous in nature, and influential upon the rest:
 whence (although in the Hebrew it be knit to the
 rest, as they all are to one another, by the conjunc-
 tive particle *ve*, *and*, yet) we do translate it casually,
For they shall wisely consider, for they shall per-
ceive; because indeed without duly considering and
 rightly understanding such occurrences to proceed
 from God, none of the other acts can or will be per-
 formed: attentive consideration is needful to beget
 knowledge and persuasion; these to breed affection
 and practice.

There are many who, in such cases, are nowise
 apprehensive of God's special providence, or affected
 with it; because they do not consider, or do not con-
 sider wisely and intelligently.

Some are very inobservant and careless in regard
 to things of this nature; so drowsy and heedless, as
 not to attend to whatever passeth, or to mind what
 God acteth in the world: such as those of whom
 the Prophet saith, *The harp, and the viol, the ta-*
 Isa. v. 12.
 Psal. xxviii.
 5. x. 4.
bret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but
they regard not the work of the Lord, nor the
operation of his hands: that is, their minds are so
 amused by wanton divertisements, their hearts are so
 immersed in sensual enjoyments, as nowise to ob-
 serve the most notable occurrences of Providence.

Others (although they do ken and regard what is
 done, as matter of news, or story, entertaining curi-
 osity and talk: yet) out of sloth or stupidity do little
 consider it, or study whence it springeth; content-
 ing themselves with none, or with any superficial

account which fancy or appearance suggesteth : like **SERM.**
beasts they do take in things obvious to their sense, **XI.**
 and perhaps stand gazing on them ; but do not make
 any careful reflection, or inquiry into their original
 causes and reasons ; taking (as a dog, when he biteth
 the stone flung at him, or as a child that is angry
 with the log he falleth on) whatever appeareth next
 to be the principal cause : such as the Psalmist again
 toucheth, when he saith, *A brutish man knoweth* **Psal. xcii. 6.**
not, neither doth a fool understand this : and as
 he doth acknowledge himself on one occasion to
 have been ; *So foolish was I, and ignorant ; I was* **Psal. lxxiii.**
as a beast before thee. **22.**

Others pretend to consider much, and seem very
 inquisitive ; yet (being misguided by vain prejudices
 or foul affections) do not consider wisely, or well un-
 derstand these matters ; the result of their care and
 study about them being to father them on wrong
 causes, ascribing them to the mere conduct and
 agency of visible causes, hurried by a necessary
 swinge, or rolling on by a casual fluctuation of
 things ; not descrying God's hand in them, but pro-
 fanely discarding and disclaiming it : such as those
 in the Psalms, who so reflected on Providence as
 to say, *How doth God know ? and is there know-* **Psal. lxxiii.**
ledge in the Most High ? The Lord doth not see, **11. xciv. 7.**
neither doth the God of Jacob regard it ; such as **x. 11.**
 hath been the brood of Epicurean and profane consi-
 derers in all times, who have earnestly plodded, and
 strained their wits, to exclude God from any inspec-
 tion or influence upon our affairs.

Some indeed there have been so very dull and
 stupid, or so perverse and profane, as not to discern
 God's hand, when it was *made bare, raised up,* **Isa. lii. 10.**
Ex. xiv. 8.

SERM. XI. and *stretched out* in the achievement of most prodigious works; not to read Providence, when set forth

in the largest and fairest print: such as those of whom it is said in the Psalm, ^a *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt*; and those of whom it is observed in the Gospel, ^b *Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not*: such as the mutinous people, who, although they beheld ^c *the earth swallowing up Korah with his complices, and a fire from the Lord consuming the men that offered incense*; yet presently did fall a charging Moses and Aaron, saying, *Ye have killed the people of the Lord*. No wonder then, if many do not perceive the same hand, when it is wrapped up in a complication with inferior causes; when it is not lifted up so high, or so far extended in miraculous performances.

The special providence of God in events here effected or ordered by him, is indeed commonly not discernible without good judgment and great care; it is not commonly impressed upon events in characters so big and clear, as to be legible to every eye, or to any eye not endued with a sharp perspicacy, not applying an industrious heedfulness: the tracts thereof are too fine and subtile to be descried by a dim sight, with a transient glance, or upon a gross view: it is seldom so very conspicuous, that persons incredulous, or any-wise indisposed to admit it, can easily be convinced thereof, or constrained to acknowledge it: it is often (upon many accounts, from many causes) very obscure, and not easily discernible to the most sagacious, most watchful, most willing observers. For, the instruments of Providence being free agents, acting with unac-

Deut. xxvi. 8.

Isa. xvi. 11.

Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, &c.

^a Psal. cvi.

^b Joh. xii.

^c Num. xvi.

32. 35. 41.

countable variety, nothing can happen which may not be imputed to them with some colourable pretence. Divine and human influences are so twisted and knit together, that it is hard to sever them. The manner of divine efficacy is so very soft and gentle, that we cannot easily trace its footsteps. God designeth not commonly to exert his hand in a notorious way, but often purposely doth conceal it. Whereas also it is not fit to charge upon God's special hand of providence any event, wherein special ends of wisdom or goodness do not shine; it is often hard to discover such ends, which usually are wrapped in perplexities: because God acteth variously, (according to circumstances of things, and the disposition, capacity, or state of objects,) so as to do the same thing for different ends, and different things for the same end: because there are different ends, unto which Providence in various order and measure hath regard, which our short and narrow prospect cannot reach: because God, in prosecution of his ends, is not wont to proceed in the most direct and compendious way; but windeth about in a large circuit, enfolding many concurrent and subordinate designs: because the expediency of things to be permitted or performed doth not consist in single acts or events, but in many conspiring to one common end: because we cannot apprehend the consequences, nor balance the conveniences of things in order to good ends: because we are apt to measure things by their congruity to our opinions, expectations, and affections: because many proceedings of God depend upon grounds inaccessible to our apprehension; such as his own secret decrees, the knowledge of men's thoughts, close purposes,

SERM. clandestine designs, true qualifications and merits;
XI. his prescience of contingent events, and what the result will be from the combination of numberless causes: because sometimes he doth act in methods of wisdom, and by rules of justice, surpassing our capacity to know, either from the finiteness of our nature, or the feebleness of our reason, or the meanness of our state and circumstances here: because all the divine administration of affairs hath no complete determination or final issue here; that being reserved to the great day of reckoning and judgment. It is further also expedient that many occurrences should be puzzling to us, to quash our presumption, to exercise our faith, to quicken our industry, to engage us upon adoring that wisdom which we cannot comprehend. Upon such accounts, for such causes, (which time will not give me leave to explain and exemplify,) the special providence of God is often cloudy, is seldom so clear, that without great heed and consideration we can perceive it. But however to do so is plainly our duty; and therefore possible.

For our reason was not given us to be idle upon so important occasions; or that we should be as brute spectators of what God doeth. He surely in the governance of his noblest creature here discovereth his being, and displayeth his attributes: we therefore carefully should observe it. He thereby (and no otherwise in a public way) doth continually *speak*, and signify to us his mind: and fit it is, that we his subjects should hear, should attend to the least intimations of his pleasure. To him thence glory should accrue, the which who but we can render? and that we may render it, we must know the

Psal. 1. 1.
lx. 6. lxii.
11.

grounds of it. In fine, for the support of God's kingdom, for upholding the reverence due to his administration of justice among us, it is requisite, that by apparent dispensation of recompenses duty should be encouraged, and disobedience checked: very foolish therefore we must be, if we regard not such dispensations.

So reason dictateth, and holy scripture more plainly declareth our obligation to consider and perceive God's doings. To do so is recommended to us as a singular point of wisdom: *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord. Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. Who is wise? and he shall understand these things; prudent? and he shall know them. For the ways of the Lord are right, &c.* We are vehemently provoked thereto: *Understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise? They are reproved for neglect and defailance, who do not regard the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hand. The not discerning Providence is reproached as a piece of shameful folly; *A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand: and of woful pravity; O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but how is it that ye cannot discern this time? To contemplate and study Providence is the practice of good men. I will meditate on all thy works, saith the Psalmist, chiefly respecting works of this kind: and, The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure**

Ps. cvii. 43.

Jer. ix. 24.

Hos. xiv. 9.

Psal. xciv. 8.

Psal. xxviii.

5. x. 4.

Isa. v. 12.

Psal. xcii. 6.

(Isa. xvi.

11.)

Lord, when

thy hand is

lifted up,

they will

not see.

Luke xii.

56.

Matt. xvi. 3.

Psal. lxxvii.

12. cxliii. 5.

Psal. cxi. 2.

SERM. *therein*. It is a fit matter of devotion, warranted
 XI. by the practice of good men, to implore God's mani-
 festation of his justice and power this way. *O Lord*
 Psal. xciv. *God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself;*
 1, 2. *lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth.* It is
 Psal. ix. 16. God's manner hereby to notify himself. *The Lord*
is known by the judgment that he executeth. He
 Psal. cix. for this very purpose doth interpose his hand; *that*
 27. *men may know it is his hand, and that the Lord*
 Isa. xli. 20. *hath done it;* that, as it is in Esay, *they may see,*
 (Ezek. vii. *and know, and consider, and understand together,*
 27.) *that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the*
Holy One of Israel hath created it. ^a He manag-
 eth things so that men may be brought to know,
 may be induced to acknowledge his authority, and
 Ps. lix. 13. his equity in the management thereof; that *they*
 lxxxiii. 18. *may know that he, whose name is Jehovah, is the*
 lxvii. 2. *Most High over all the earth: that they may say,*
 Ps. lviii. 11. *Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily*
there is a God that judgeth the earth. In fine,
 the knowledge of God's special providence is fre-
 quently represented as a mean of nourishing our
 faith and hope in him, as a ground of thankfulness
 and praise to him, as an incentive of the best affec-
 tions (of holy joy, and humble fear, and hearty love)
 toward him: wherefore we ought to seek it, and we
 may attain it.

There are consequently some distinctive marks or
 characters by which we may perceive God's hand =
 and such may these be which follow, (drawn from
 the special nature, manner, adjuncts, and conse-

^a God thereby doth support and encourage good men.

He doth thereby convince and confound ill men. Ps. ix. 19, 20.

He thereby doth instruct all men. Isa. xxvi. 9.

of events :) upon which may be grounded **SERM.**
 clarative of special providence, such as com- **XI.**
 will hold, although sometimes they may ad-
 eptions, and should be warily applied.

the wonderful strangeness of events, compared
 the ordinary course of things, or the natural in-
 of causes ; when effects are performed by no
 means, or by means disproportionate, unsuit-
 ous to the effect. Sometimes great ex-
 ce achieved, mighty forces are discomfited,
 ictures are demolished, designs backed with
 ntages of wit and strength are confounded,
 ews how, by no considerable means that ap-
 ature rising up in arms against them ; panic
 izing on the abettors of them ; dissensions
 cheries springing up among the actors ; sud-
 ths snatching away the principal instruments

As, when *the stars in their course fought* Judg. v. 20.
Sisera : when the winds and skies became Aug. de Civ.
 ies to Theodosius : when *the Lord thunder-* Dei, v. 26.
a great thunder upon the Philistines, and 1 Sam. vii.
ted them, and they were smitten before 10.
when the Lord made the host of Syrians 2 Sam. xxii.
a noise of chariots, of horses, of a great 14, 15.
whence they arose and fled : when *the chil-* 2 Kings vii.
Ammon and Moab stood up against the in- 6.
ts of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy
nd when they had made an end of the in-
ts of Seir, every one helped to destroy an-
when the angel of the Lord went forth and
the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men ; Psal. liii. 5.
en they arose early in the morning, be- xlvi. 6.
y were all dead corpses : when the mighty 2 Chr. xx.
 f Antiochus was, as it is said, to be *broken* 23.

SERM. *without hands*: and when, as it is foretold, *a stone*
 XI. *cut out of the mountain without hands should break*

Dan. viii.
 25. ii. 45.

in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold. Such events do speak God to be their cause, by his invisible efficacy supplying the defect of apparent means.

^b So likewise, when by weak forces great feats are accomplished, and impotency triumpheth over might; when, as the Prophet saith, *the captives of the mighty are taken away, and the prey of the*

Isa. xlix.
 25.

Josh. xxiii.
 10.
 Lev. xxvi. 8.
 Deut. xxxii.
 30.

terrible is delivered: when *one man*, as is promised, *doth chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight*: when a *stripling, furnished

* 1 Sam.
 xvii. v. 40.
 Judg. vii. 7.

only with faith and a pebble, shall knock down a monstrous giant, armed with a helmet of brass and a coat of mail, with a huge target, sword, and spear:

1 Sam. xiv.
 6.
 2 Chron.
 xiv. 11. xx.
 12, 17.
 2 Chron.
 xiv. 11.

when successes arrive like those recorded in scripture under the conduct of Joshua, Gideon, Jonathan, Asa, Jehosaphat; wherein very small forces by uncouth means did subdue formidable powers: this doth argue that God doth interpose; *with whom*, as

1 Sam. xiv.
 6.
 2 Cor. xii. 9.
 Job xii. 21.
 xxxviii. 15.
 Ps. x. 15.
 xxxvii. 17.
 xxxv. 10.
 (Ps. lxxvi.
 5.)

it is said, *it is all one to save by many, or by few, and those that have no power; whose power is perfected in weakness; who breaketh the arm of the wicked, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty, and delivereth the poor from him that is too strong for him.*

* Hom. Od.
 ψ. ver. 11.

^a Also, when great policy and craft do effect nothing, but are blasted of themselves, or baffled by simplicity: when cunningly-laid designs are soon thwarted and overturned: when most perspicacious and profound counsellors are so blinded, or so in-

^b Vid. Artabani Orat. apud Herod. Polymn. pag. 246. Hom. Il. π. ver. 688.

fatuated, as to mistake in plain cases, to oversee **SERM.**
things most obvious and palpable: when profane, XI.
 malicious, subtle, treacherous politicians (such as ^{2 Sam. xv.}
 Abimelech, Achitophel, Haman, Sejanus, Stilico, ^{31.}
 Borgia, with many like occurring in story) are not ^{Ruffinus,}
 only supplanted in their wicked contrivances, but ^{S. Paul,}
^{d'Ancre,}
^{de Luna,}
^{&c.}
dismally chastised for them: the occurrences do
more than insinuate divine wisdom to intervene,
countermining and confounding such devices. For
he it is, who, as the scripture telleth us, maketh the ^{Isa. xlv. 25.}
diviners mad; turneth wise men backward, and ^{Job v. 12,}
maketh their knowledge foolish; disappointeth the ^{13.}
devices of the crafty; so that their hands cannot ^{(Ps. xxxiii.}
perform their enterprise; taketh the wise in their ^{10.)}
own craftiness, and turneth down the counsel of ^{βουλήν σο-}
the froward headlong. ^{φροσύνης.}

Whenever a just cause or honest design, without
 any support or succour of worldly means, (without
 authority, power, wit, learning, eloquence,) doth
 against all opposition of violence and art prevail;
 this signifieth him to yield a special countenance
 and aid thereto, who, to depress human pride, and
 advance his own glory, **hath chosen the foolish** ^{1 Cor. i. 27,}
things of the world to confound the wise; and ^{28.}
the weak things of the world to confound the
things that are mighty; and base things of the
world, and things which are despised, and things
that are not, to bring to nought things that are:
 (that are with us in most request and esteem.)

Again, when plots, with extreme caution and
 secrecy contrived in darkness are by improbable
 means, by unaccountable accidents, disclosed and
 brought to light; **a bird of the air,** as the Wise ^{Eccles. x.}
Man speaketh, telling the matter; the stones in the ^{20.}
^{Hab. ii. 11.}

SERM. *wall*, as it is in the Prophet, *crying out* Treason.

XI.

The king cannot sleep: to divert him the chronicle is called for; Mordecai's service is there pitched on; an inquiry is made concerning his recompense; honour is decreed him; so doth Haman's cruel device come out. Pity seizeth on a pitiless heart toward one among a huge number of innocents devoted to slaughter: that he may be saved, a letter must be sent: in that, words inserted suggesting the manner of execution; that carried to the wise king, who presently smelleth it out: so this day's plot was discovered. Such events, whence can they well proceed, but from the all-piercing and ever watchful care of him, *whose eyes, as Elihu said, are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings?*

(Ps.cxxi.4.)

Job xxxiv. 21, 22. *There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity shall hide themselves: for hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.*

Job xxvi. 6. *the workers of iniquity shall hide themselves: for hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.*

Ps. cxxxii. 2, &c.

Heb. iv. 13.

Amos ix. 2.

Also, when ill men by their perverse wiliness do notably befool and ensnare themselves, laying trains to blow up their own designs, involving themselves in that ruin and mischief into which they studied to draw others; as when Saul, exposing David's life to hazard, increaseth his honour; when the Persian nobles, incensing the king against Daniel, do occasion his growth in favour, with their own destruction; when Haman, by contriving to destroy God's people, doth advance them, and rearing a gallows for Mordecai, doth prepare it for himself: when it happeneth according to those passages in the Psalms, *the wicked are taken in the devices that they imagined; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken: He made a pit and digged*

1 Sam. xviii. 25.

Dan. vi. 24.

Psal. x. 2.

ix. 15.

xxxv. 8.

cxl. 5.

Psal. vii. 15.

lvii. 6.

it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made: His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings shall come upon his own pate: SERM. XI. Psal. vii. 16. v. 10.
 these are pregnant evidences of God's just and wise providence; for *the Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand.* Psal. ix. 16.

All such occurrences, containing in them somewhat, if not downrightly miraculous, yet very admirable, in like manner deflecting from the stream of human affairs, as miracles do surmount the course of nature, most reasonably may, most justly should, be ascribed to the special operation of him, who *only doeth wonderful things.* Ps. lxxii. 18. lxxxvi. 10.

2. Another character of special Providence is, the seasonableness and suddenness of events. When that, which in itself is not ordinary, nor could well be expected, doth fall out happily, in the nick of an exigency, for the relief of innocence, the encouragement of goodness, the support of a good cause, the furtherance of any good purpose; (so that there is occasion to acknowledge with the Prophet, *Thou didst terrible things, that we looked not for;*) this is a shrewd indication that God's hand is then concerned; not only the event being notable, but the connection thereof with circumstances of need being more admirable. Isa. lxiv. 3.

Thus in time of distress and despondency, when a man is utterly forlorn, and destitute of all visible relief, when, as the Psalmist speaketh, *refuge faileth him, and no man careth for his soul:* if then *εὐκαιρος βοήθεια, an opportune succour* doth arrive; (Ps. xlv. cviii. 12.) he is then unreasonable and ingrateful, if he doth not avow a special Providence, and thankfully as-

SERM. crite that event unto him who is *our refuge and XI. strength, a very present help in trouble*; ^a *a strength*

Heb. iv. 16. *to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress,*

Psal. xlv. 1.

ix. 9. xlv. *a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat*;

24. xxxvii.

39. xxvii. 5. ^b *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in*

lxix. 14.

xviii. 6. *time of trouble.* This is that, for which, in the ^c 107th

^a Isa. xxv. 4.

Psalm, the divine goodness is so magnificently cele-

xxxiii. 2.

brated; this is the burden of that pathological rapture,

^b Jer. xiv. 8.

Job xxxiii. wherein we by repeated wishes and exhortations are

18.

^c Psal. cvii. instigated to bless God; his wonderfully relieving

8. 15. 21.

the children of men in their need and distress: this

31.

is that, which God himself in the Prophet represent-

Isa. xli. 17,

eth as a most satisfactory demonstration of his provi-

&c.

dence. When the poor and needy seek water, and

there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst,

I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob

will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high

places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys,

&c. that they may see, and know, and consider,

and understand together, that the hand of the

Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel

hath created it.

So also, when pestilent enterprises, managed by close fraud or by impetuous violence, are brought to a head and come near to the point of being executed; the sudden detection or seasonable obstruction of them do argue the ever vigilant eye and the all-powerful hand to be engaged: God ever doth see those deceitful workers of iniquity, laying their mischief in the dark; he is always present at their cabals and clandestine meetings, wherein they brood upon it. He often doth suffer it to grow on to a pitch of maturity, till it be thoroughly formed, till it be ready to be hatched, and break forth in its mis-

chievous effects ; then in a trice he snappeth and crusheth it to nothing. God beholdeth violent men setting out in their unjust attempts, he letteth them proceed on in a full career, until they reach the edge of their design ; then instantly he checketh, putteth in a spoke, he stoppeth, he tumbleth them down, or turneth them backward. Thus was Haman's plot dashed, when he had procured a royal decree, when he had fixed a time, when he had issued forth letters to destroy God's people. Thus was Pharaoh overwhelmed, when he had just overtaken the children of Israel. Thus were the designs of Abimelech, of Absalom, of Adonijah, of Sanballat nipped. Thus when Sennacherib with an unmatched host had encamped against Jerusalem, and had to appearance swallowed it, God did *put a hook into his nose, and turned him back into his own land.* Thus when Antiochus was marching on furiously to accomplish his threat of turning Jerusalem into a charnel, a noisome disease did intercept his progress. Thus when the profane Caligula did mean to discharge his bloody rage on the Jews, for refusing to worship him, a domestic sword did presently give vent to his revengeful breath. Thus also, when Julian had by his policy and authority projected to overthrow our religion, his plot soon was quashed, and his life snapped away by an unknown hand. Thus, *when ever the enemy doth come in like a flood,* (threatening immediately to overflow and overturn all things,) *the Spirit of the Lord doth lift up a standard against him ;* that is, God's secret efficacy doth suddenly restrain and repress his outrage. This usually is the method of divine Providence. God could prevent the beginnings of wicked designs ; he could sup-

SERM.
XI.

Esth. iii.

Exod. xiv.

2 Kings xix.
28.
2 Mac. ix.

Joseph.
xviii. 12.

Chrysost.
in Babyl.
Orat. 2.
Naz Orat.
4.

Isa. lix. 19.

(Job
xxxviii. 11.)

SERM. plant them in their first onsets^c; he could any where
 XI. sufflamine and subvert them: but he rather wink-

eth for a time, and suffereth the designers to go on, till they are^d mounted to the top of confidence, and good people are cast on the brink of ruin; then^e ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, surprisingly, unexpectedly he striketh in with effectual succour; so declaring how vain the presumption is of impious undertakers; how needful and sure his protection is over innocent people; how much reason the one hath to dread him, and the other to confide in him. Then is God seen, then his care and power will be acknowledged, when he

Psal. cxxiv. snatcheth us from the jaws of danger, when *our soul doth escape as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.*
 7.

3. Another character of special Providence is, the great utility and beneficialness of occurrences, especially in regard to the public state of things, and to great personages, in whose welfare the public is much concerned. To entitle every petty chance that arriveth to special Providence may signify lightness; to father on God the mischiefs issuing from our sin and folly may savour of profaneness: but to ascribe every^f grand and beneficial event unto his good hand hath ever been reputed wisdom and justice. *It hath been*, saith Balbus in Cicero, *a com-*

^c Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐκ προσιμίων, μηδὲ εὐθέως, ἔθος αὐτῶν τοιοῦτον, &c. Vid. Chrys. ad Olymp.

^d Ὅταν κορυφωθῆ, ὅταν ἀδελθῆ, &c. Ibid.

^e Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus Inciderit.

^f Magna dii curant, parva negligunt. Cic. ii. de Nat. Deor.

^g Quicquid magnam utilitatem generi adferret humano, id non sine divina bonitate erga homines fieri arbitrabantur. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.

mon opinion among the ancients, that whatever did SERM.
bring great benefit to mankind was never done with- XI.
out divine goodness toward men. And well might
they deem it so, seeing to do so is most agreeable to
his nature, and appertaining to his charge, and may
appear to be so by good argumentation *a priori*.
For, that God doth govern our affairs may be de-
duced from his essential attributes; and, consequen-
tly, that he doth in especial manner order these things,
which are the most proper and worthy objects of his
governance. God indeed doth not disregard any
thing; he watcheth over the least things by his
general and ordinary providence; so that nothing in
nature may deviate from its course, or transgress the
bounds prescribed to it. He thereby *clotheth the* Matt. vi.
grass of the field; he provideth for the raven his Ps. civ. 14.
food, and the young lions seek their meat from him Job xxxviii.
without his care ^a *a sparrow doth not fall to the* Ps. cxlvii. 9.
ground; by it, all the hairs of our head are num- Job xxxviii.
bered. But his more special hand of providence is Psal. civ.
^{21.}
^a Matt. x.
^{29, 30.}
chiefly employed in managing affairs of great mo-
ment and benefit to mankind; and peculiarly those
which concern his people, who do profess to wor-
ship and serve him; whose welfare he tendereth
with more than ordinary care and affection. He Dan. iv. 25.
therefore hath a main stroke in all revolutions and Psal. lxxv.
changes of state: he presideth in all great counsels 7.
and undertakings; in the waging of war, in the set- Psal. xlvii.
tlement of peace; in the dispensation of victory and 9.
good success. He is peculiarly interested in the Prov. xxi.
protection of princes, the chief *ministers of his king-* 31.
dom; and in preservation of his people, the choice Chron.
object of his care, from violent invasions and treach- xxix. 11.
erous surprises; so as to prevent disasters incident, Wisd. vi. 4.

SERM. or to deliver from them. *It is he that, as the Psalmist saith, doth give salvation unto kings ; who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*

XI.

Psal. cxliv.

10.

Eccles. x.

20.

Psal. xviii.

50. xxi. 1.

xxxiii. 16.

cxxi. 4.

Jer. xiv. 8.

Psal. xlv. 5.

xciv. 14.

Isa. li. 17.

Psal. iii. 8.

4. Another like mark of special Providence is, the righteousness of the case, or the advantage springing from events unto the maintenance of right, the vindication of innocence, the defence of truth, the encouragement of piety and virtue. God naturally is the judge of right, the guardian of innocence, the patron of truth, and promoter of goodness.

Psal. ix. 9.

lxviii. 5.

x. 14.

Job xxxvi.

15.

Psal. cxl. 12.

^a Psal. ciii. 6.

ix. 8.

The Lord is a refuge to the oppressed: He is a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow: He will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor: ^a He executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed: He

blesseth the righteous, and compasseth him with favour as with a shield: He preserveth the souls of the righteous, and delivereth them out of the hand of the ungodly: All his paths are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. Whenever therefore right is oppressed, or perilously invaded; when innocence is grossly abused, or sorely beset; when piety is fiercely opposed, or cunningly undermined; when good men for the profession of truth, or the practice of virtue, are persecuted, or grievously threatened with mischief; then may we presume that God is not unconcerned, nor will prove backward to reach forth his succour. And when accordingly we find that signal aid or deliverance do then arrive; it is most reasonable to suppose, that God particularly hath engaged himself, and exerted his power in their behalf. For, seeing it is his proper and peculiar work, seeing it most becometh and behoveth him to appear in such cases, affording his helpful countenance; when he doeth it, we should be ready to acknowledge it. In such a case, *the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies,* saith the Prophet.

5. Another character is, the correspondence of events to the prayers and desires of good men. For seeing it is the duty and constant practice of good men in all exigencies to implore God's help; seeing such prayers have, as St. James telleth us, a mighty energy, it being God's property, by them to be moved to impart his powerful assistance; seeing God most plainly and frequently hath declared, and obliged himself by promise, that he will hear them, so as to perform whatever is expedient in their be-

SERM. XI.

Ps. v. 12.
xcvii. 10.
xxxvii. 12.
xxv. 10.
cxlvi. 6.

Isa. lxi.
14.

Ps. lxix.
13. cii. 1, 2.
cxl. 6. lx.
10. lvi. 1.
Jam. v. 16.
Ps. lvi. 9.
Ps. xxxiv.
15. xci. 15.
cxlv. 18.

SERM. half; seeing we have many notable experiments

XI.

2 Chron.
xiv. 11. xx.
9. xxxii. 20.
2 Kings
xix. 15.
1 Kings
xvii. 1, &c.

recorded in scripture (as those of Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, Elias, Daniel, and the like) of prayers bringing down wonderful effects from heaven, with which the testimonies of all times and the daily experience of good men do conspire^b; seeing the presumption of such efficacy is the main ground and encouragement of devotion: we have great reason, whenever events are answerable to such prayers, to ascribe the performance of them to God's hand: great reason we have in such cases to cry out with David,

Ps. xx. 6. *Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand: just cause have we, according to his pattern, thankfully to acknowledge God's favour in answering our petitions;*

Ps. xxi. 1, 2. *The king, said he, shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he*

Ps. xxx. 2. *rejoice! For thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the requests of his lips.*

6. Again, the proceedings of God (especially in way of judgment, or of dispensing rewards and punishments) discover their original by their kind and countenance, which usually do bear a near resemblance, or some significant correspondence, to the actions upon which they are grounded. *Punishments,*

^{Εκουσίον}
^{παπῶν ἀκού-}
^{σια ἰγυσα.}
Damasc.

saith a father, *are the forced offsprings of willing faults:* and answerably, rewards are the children of

^b Πόσαι μυριάδες ἀνδρῶν καὶ φάλαγγες, ὅσας ἰκετεύοντες μόνου ἡμεῖς, καὶ Θεὸς βουληθεὶς κατεργάσατο. Naz. Orat. 4.

How many myriads and squadrons of men were there, whom we only praying, and God willing, discomfited? saith Nazianzene in reference to the defeating of Julian's design.

good deeds : and God, who formeth both, doth commonly order it so, that the children in their complexion and features shall resemble their parents. So that the deserts of men shall often be legible in the recompenses conferred or inflicted on them : not according to the natural result of their practice, but with a comely reference thereto ; apt to raise in them a sense of God's hand, and to wring from them an acknowledgment of his equity in so dealing with them. So when humble modesty is advanced to honour, and ambitious confidence is thrown into disgrace ; when liberality is blessed with increase, and avarice is cursed with decay of estate ; when craft incurreth disappointment, and simplicity findeth good success ; when haughty might is shattered, and helpless innocence is preserved ; when the calumnious tongue is blistered, *the flattering lips are cut off*, the blasphemous throat is torn out ; when bloody oppressors have *blood given them to drink*, and come to welter in their own gore ; (an accident which almost continually doth happen ;) when treacherous men by their own confidents, or by themselves, are betrayed ; when retaliations of vengeance are ministered, ex-torting confessions like to that of Adoni-bezek, *As I have done, so God hath requited me* ; deserving such exprobrations as that of Samuel to Agag, *As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women* ; grounding such reflections as that concerning Antiochus, *Thus the murderer and blasphemer having suffered most grievously, as he entreated other men, so died he a miserable death* ; by such occurrences the finger of God doth point out and indicate itself ; they speak themselves immediately to come from that just God,

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Τῆς κοιλίας ἡ τρέφεται τῆς ἀμαρτίας τὸν τρέφον μιλῶναι.
Chrys. dōdē.
19.

Psal. xii. 3.

Rev. xvi. 6.

ex-Judg. i. 7.

1 Sam. xv. 33.

2 Macc. ix. 28.

SERM. who doth ἀνταποδίδουαι, render to men answerably to
 XI. their doings; who payeth men their due, sometimes

in value, often *in specie*, according to the strictest
 Luke xiv. way of reckoning. *He*, as the Prophet saith, *is*
 12. Rom. xii. *great in counsel, and mighty in work: for his eyes*
 19. Jer. xxxii. *are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give*
 19. Psal. lxii. *every one according to his ways, and according to*
 12. *the fruits of his doings.* This indeed is a sort of

administration most conformable to God's exact justice, and most conducive to his holy designs of instructing and correcting offenders. He therefore
 Jer. l. 15. hath declared it to be his way. *It is* (saith the
 li. 49. Prophet, directing his speech to the instruments of divine vengeance upon Babylon) *the vengeance of the Lord: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.* And, *the day of the Lord* (saith

Obad. 15. another prophet, concerning the like judgment upon
 Ezek. xxxv. 15. Edom) *is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.* Thereby doth God mean to declare himself the Judge and Governor of
 Ezek. vii. men: For, *I will*, saith he in Ezekiel, *do unto*
 27. Job xxxiv. *them after their way, and according to their deserts*
 11. *will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the Lord.* Further,

7. Another argument of special Providence is, the harmonious conspiracy of various accidents to one end or effect. If that one thing should hit advantageously to the production of some considerable event, it may with some plausibility be attributed to fortune, or common providence: yet that divers things, having no dependance or coherence one with the other, in divers places, through several times, should all join their forces to compass it, cannot well

otherwise than be ascribed to God's special care **SERM.**
 wisely directing, to his own hand powerfully wield- **XI.**
 ing, those concurrent instruments to one good pur- — *δὲ κατὰ*
 pose. For it is beside the nature, it is beyond the *τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ*
 reach of fortune, to range various causes in such *μαρτύρων*
 order. Blind fortune cannot apprehend or catch the *πρώτοι ἰθ-*
 seasons and junctures of things, which arise from *ὕψει κολα-*
 the motions of causes in their nature indifferent and *στήρια, ταῦθ'*
 arbitrary: to it therefore no such event can reason- *ὕπερμαίοντα*
 ably be imputed. So to the bringing about our *δικαιοσύνη*
 Lord's passion, (that great event, which is so parti- *ψάφου.*
 cularly assigned to God's hand,) we may observe the *Euseb. lib.*
 monstrous treachery of Judas, the strange malignity *i. de Vit.*
 of the Jewish rulers, the prodigious levity of the *Const. de*
 people, the wonderful easiness of Pilate, with other *Maximino*
 notable accidents, to have jumped in order thereto. *sub finem.*
 So also that a malicious traitor should conceive kind- *Is oculos*
 ness toward any, that he should be mistaken in the *qui eruerat*
 object of his favour, that he should express his mind *Christianis,*
 in a way subject to deliberate examination, in terms *ipse visu*
 apt to breed suspicion where the plot was laid; that *orbatus.*
 the counsellors should despise it, and yet not smother
 it; that the king instantly, by a light darted into his
 mind, should descry it: these things so happily
 meeting, may argue God (who mouldeth the hearts,
 who guideth the hands, who enlighteneth the minds
 of men) to have been engaged in the detection of this
 day's black conspiracy.

Such are some characters of special Providence; each of which singly appearing in any occurrence would in a considerate man breed an opinion thereof; each of them being very congruous to the supposition of it; no such appearances being otherwise so clearly and cleverly explicable, as by assigning the

SERM. XI. divine hand for their principal cause. But the connection of them all in one event (when divers odd

Vid. Diod. Sic. lib. xv. p. 482.

accidents do befall at a seasonable time, according to exigency for the public benefit, the preservation of princes, the security of God's people, the protection of right, the maintenance of truth and piety, according to the wishes and prayers of good men, with proper retribution and vengeance upon the wretched designers of mischief; such a complication, I say, of these marks in one event) may thoroughly suffice to raise a firm persuasion, to force a confident acknowledgment concerning God's providence, in any considerate and ingenuous person: it readily will dispose such persons upon any such occasion to say, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

Psal. cxviii. 23.

Εἰ μὴ σημεῖα καὶ θαύματα, ἀλλ' ἵσχυρὰ σημεῖα καὶ ἀειμαρτα, δείγματα τοῦ Θεοῦ κερτοῖαι, καὶ ἀντιλήψεις ἀφ' αὐτοῦ.
Chrys. ad Olymp. Ep. i.

Notwithstanding therefore any obscurity or intricacy that sometime may appear in the course of Providence, notwithstanding any general exceptions that may by perverse incredulity be alleged against the conduct of things; there are good marks observable, whereby (if we are not very blockish, drowsy, supine, lazy, or froward; if we will consider wisely, with industrious attention and care, with minds pure from vain prejudices, and corrupt affections) we may discern and understand God's doing. Which to do is the first duty specified in my text: upon which having insisted so largely, I shall (hoping you will favour me with a little patience) briefly touch the rest.

II. It is the duty of us all, upon such remarkable occurrences of Providence, to *fear* God: *All men*, it is said, *shall fear*. It is our duty in such cases to be affected with all sorts of fear; with a fear of

Job xxxvii. 22. xliii. 11. Psal. lii. 6. lxxviii. 35. Dan. vi. 26.

awful dread, with a fear of hearty reverence, with a fear of sober caution; yea, sometimes with a fear of dejecting consternation. When God doth appear *clad with his robes of vengeance and zeal*, denouncing and discharging judgment; when he representeth himself *fearful in praises, terrible in his doings toward the children of men, working terrible things in righteousness*; it should strike into our hearts a dread of his glorious majesty, of his mighty power, of his severe justice, of *his glorious and fearful name*: it should instil into our minds a reverence of his excellent wisdom, his exceeding goodness, his perfect holiness: it should breed in our souls a solicitous care of displeasing and provoking him: it should cause us in our hearts to shake and tremble before him. Then is that of the Psalmist to be put in practice, *Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob*. Such dispensations are in their nature declarative of those divine attributes which do require such affections: they are set before our eyes to cast us into a very serious and solemn frame; to abash and deter us from offending, by observing the danger of incurring punishments like to those which we behold inflicted upon presumptuous transgressors; upon those who do heinously violate right, or furiously impugn truth, or profanely despise piety; who earnestly prosecute wicked enterprises; who persecute the friends of God with outrageous violence, or treacherous subtilty. Upon infliction of such punishments, *all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously*, saith God

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Isa. lix. 17.
Exod. xv. 11.

Psal. lxxvi. 3. 5. lxxv. 5.

(cxxx. 3.)
Deut. xxviii. 58.
x. 17.

Isa. lxxvi. 2.

Psal. xxxiii. 8. cxiv. 7.

Deut. xvii. 13. xiii. 11.
xix. 20.

SERM. himself, declaring the nature and drift of them.

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They do plainly demonstrate, that there is no presuming to escape being detected in our close machinations by God's all-seeing eye; being defeated in our bold attempts by God's almighty hand; being sorely chastised for our iniquity by God's impartial judgment. Extremely blind and stupid therefore must we be, or monstrously sturdy and profane, if such experiments of divine power and justice do not awe us, and fright us from sin. *When the lion roareth, who will not fear? When the trumpet is blown in the city, shall not the people be afraid? Shall he, at whom the mountains quake, and the hills melt; whose indignation the nations are not able to abide; at whose wrath the earth doth shake and tremble; at whose reproof the pillars of heaven are astonished; shall he visibly frown, shall his wrath flame out, shall he shake his rod of exemplary vengeance over us, and we stand void of sense or fear? If so, then surely a brutish dotage, or a gigantic stoutness doth possess us.*

Hos. xi. 10.
Amos iii.
6. 8.
Nah. i. 5.
Jer. x. 10.
Psal. civ.
32. xviii. 7.
ixxvi. 8.
cxliii. 2.
Job xxvi.
11.
(Isa. lxiv. 3.
Ezek. xxi.
10.
Isa. xxv. 3.
lix. 18, 19.)

III. We are in such cases obliged to *declare God's work*: that is, openly to acknowledge and avow, to applaud and celebrate the special providence of God, with his adorable perfections displayed in such events; to the glory of God's name, in expression of our reverence and gratitude toward him, for the common edification of men; for which uses they greatly serve, to which purposes they are designed. We should not view such providential occurrences, like dumb beasts, with a dull or careless silence, as if we did not mind them, or were not concerned in them: we should not suppress or stifle the knowledge of them in our breasts, as if

they were barely matters of private consideration and use; we should not let our observation and re-
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 sentiment of them be fruitless, so as to yield no honour to God, no benefit to man. But we should propagate and convey them into others: in so loud a tone, in so lively a strain we should vent them, as thereby to excite the notice, to inflame the affections of all men within the reach of our voice; provoking them to conspire with us in acknowledgment of God's power and wisdom, in acclamation to his justice and goodness. This is the due improvement of our *glory*; that peculiar excellency, where-
 Psal. lvii. 8.
 in chiefly (except in our reason) we do surpass all creatures; that without which our reason itself is more than half unprofitable; that whereby we put our best member to its best use. For this we have the devout Psalmist's pious resolutions, his exemplary performances, his zealous wishes, his earnest exhortations to guide and move us. *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.* So did he signify his resolution. *I have not hid thy righteousness in my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.* So his conscience testified of his practice. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men: that they would offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare his works with gladness.* So doth he pour forth his desire. *O clap your hands,*

SERM. *all ye people ; shout unto God with the voice of*
 XI. *triumph. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name :*

Ps. xlvii. 1. *shew forth his salvation from day to day. De-*
 xcvi. 2, 3. *clare his glory among the heathen, his wonders*
 cv. 2. lxvi. *among all people. Come and see the works of*
 5. 2. (lxvi. *God. Sing forth the honour of his name, make*
 16.) cv. 1. *his praise glorious. O give thanks unto the Lord ;*
call upon his name ; make known his deeds among
the people. So doth he summon, so doth he urge
us to this practice ; and in his deportment we may
see our duty.

IV. It is peculiarly the duty and practice of good men upon such occasions to feel and to express religious joy. *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord.* Good men indeed then have great matter and much cause, on many accounts, to be glad.

It becometh them to rejoice, as having an universal complacence in God's proceedings, as gratefully relishing all dispensations of Providence. They, as pious, are disposed to bless and praise God for all things incident, and cannot therefore but rejoice ; joy being an inseparable companion of gratitude and praise. Hence, *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* Hence, Ps. cxviii. *The voice of salvation and rejoicing is in the ta-*
 15. *bernales of the righteous.* Hence, *Rejoice in the*
 Ps. xxxiii. 1. *Lord, O ye righteous : for praise is comely for the*
upright ; is an exhortation backed with a very good
reason.

They cannot but find satisfaction in observing God's providence notably discovered, to the confirmation of their faith, and cherishing their hopes ; together with the conviction of infidelity, and confusion of profaneness. *Our heart,* saith the Psalmist,

shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

SERM.
XI.Ps. xxxiii.
21.
xiii. 5.
cvii. 42.

It is to them no small pleasure to behold God's holy perfections illustriously shining forth; and the glory of him (who is the principal object of their love, their reverence, their hope, and confidence) to be conspicuously advanced. Rejoice, saith the Psalmist, O ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth.

Ps. xcvi.
12. xxx. 4.
xcvii. 8, 9.
xlvi. 11.

It is to them ground of exceeding comfort to receive so clear pledges of God's love and favour, his truth and fidelity, his bounty and munificence toward them, expressed in such watchful care over them, such protection in dangers, such aid in needs, such deliverance from mischiefs vouchsafed to them. Such benefits they cannot receive from God's hand, without that cheerfulness which always doth adhere to gratitude^a. I will, saith David, sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me. Because thou hast been my helper, therefore in the shadow of thy wings I will rejoice. My lips shall greatly rejoice in thee; and my soul which thou hast redeemed. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities. The Lord

Ps. xlii. 6.
lxiii. 7.
lxxi. 23.
xxxii. 7.
cxxvi. 3.
v. 11.

^a Sen. de Benef. ii. 22. Cum accipiendum judicaverimus, hilaris accipiamus, profitentes gaudium, &c. Vid. ib. 30.

SERM. *hath done great things for us, whereof we are*
 XI. *glad. Let all those that put their trust in thee*

rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou
defendest them.

They are also greatly refreshed with apprehension of the happy fruits sprouting from such dispensations of Providence; such as are the benefit of mankind, the peace and prosperity of the civil state, the preservation, settlement, enlargement, advancement of God's church, the support of right, the succour of innocence, the maintenance of truth, the encouragement and furtherance of piety; the restraint of violence, the discountenance of error, the correction of vice and impiety. In these things they, as faithful servants of God, and real friends of goodness, as bearing hearty good-will and compassion to mankind, as true lovers of their country, as living and sensible members of the church, cannot but rejoice. Seeing by these things their own best interest, (which is no other than the advantage of goodness,) their chief honour, (which consists in the promotion of divine glory,) their truest content, (which is placed in the prosperity of Sion,)

Ps. cxvii. 6.
 (1 Cor. xii.
 26.)

Ps. xcvi.
 I. 3.

Isa. xlix. 13.
 Ps. xcvi.
 I. 13.

Isa. lxvi. 14.

are highly furthered; how can they look on them springing up, without great delight and complacency? O, saith the Psalmist, *sing unto the Lord —for he hath done marvellous things. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.* And, *Sing, O heavens, crieth the Prophet, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O ye mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted.* And, *When, saith he, ye*

shall see this, (the comfort of God's people,) your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.

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Even in the frustration of wicked designs, attended with severe execution of vengeance on the contrivers and abettors of them, they may have a pleasant satisfaction; they must then yield a cheerful applause to divine justice. *The righteous, saith the Psalmist, shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: and, Let the wicked, saith he, perish at the presence of God; but let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea let them exceedingly rejoice.* Whence, at God's infliction of judgment upon Babylon, it is said in Jeremy, *Then the heaven, and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon;* and at the fall of mystical Babylon, in the Apocalypse it is likewise said, *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.* Further,

Ps. lviii. 10.
Job xxii. 19.
Ps. lxxviii.

2, 3.

Jer. li. 48.

Rev. xviii.
20.

V. The next duty prescribed to good men in such case is, to *trust in God*, that is, to have their affiance in God (upon all such like occasions, in all urgencies of need) settled, improved, and corroborated thereby. This indeed is the proper end, immediately regarding us, of God's special providence, disclosing itself in any miraculous, or in any remarkable way; to nourish in well-disposed minds that faith in God, which is the root of all piety, and ground of devotion. Such experiments are sound arguments to persuade good men, that God doth govern and order things for their best advantage;

(Ps. lxxviii.
7.)

SERM. they are powerful incentives, driving them in all
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exigencies to seek God's help; they are most convincing evidences, that God is abundantly able, very willing, and ever ready to succour them. *They*, saith the Psalmist, *that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* And, *I*, saith he, *will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings: for thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.* It is, indeed, a great aggravation of diffidence in God, that having
 Ps. ix. 10. *tasted and seen that the Lord is good;* having felt so manifest experience of divine goodness; having received so notable pledges of God's favourable inclination to help us; we yet will not rely upon him. As a friend, who by signal instances of kindness hath assured his good-will, hath great cause of offence, if he be suspected of unwillingness in a needful season to afford his relief: so may God most justly be displeased, when we, (notwithstanding so palpable demonstrations of his kindness,) by distrusting him, do in effect question the sincerity of his friendship, or the constancy of his goodness toward us.
 Ps. lxi. 3. *And I will trust in thy mercy, O Lord, for thou hast heard my voice.*
 4, 5. *For thou, O Lord, hast heard my voice, and hast heard my prayer.*
 9, &c. *For thou, O Lord, hast heard my voice, and hast heard my prayer.*
 CXXX. 7. *For thou, O Lord, hast heard my voice, and hast heard my prayer.*
 Ps. xxxiv. 8. *For thou, O Lord, hast heard my voice, and hast heard my prayer.*
 Ecclus. ii. 10. *For thou, O Lord, hast heard my voice, and hast heard my prayer.*

VI. Good men upon such occasions should *glory*: *All the upright in heart shall glory.* Should *glory*, that is, in contemplation of such providences feeling sprightly elevations of mind and transports of affection, they should exhibit triumphant demonstrations of satisfaction and alacrity. It becometh them not in such cases to be dumpish or demure; but jocund and crank in their humour, brisk and gay in their looks, pleasantly flippant and free in their speech,

jolly and debonair in their behaviour; every way SERM. XI. signifying the extreme complacency they take in God's doing, and the full content they taste in their state. They with solemn exultation should triumph Ps. cxvi. 1, &c. in such events, as in victories achieved by the glorious hand of God in their behalf, in approbation of their cause, in favour toward their persons, for their great benefit and comfort. They may (not as proudly assuming to themselves the glory due to God, but as gratefully sensible of their felicity springing from God's favour) *se jactare, se laudibus efferre*, (as the Hebrew word doth signify;) that is, in a sort boast, and commend themselves as very happy in their relation to God, by virtue of his protection and aid. They may (not with a haughty insolence, or wanton arrogance, but with a sober confidence and cheerfulness) insult upon baffled impiety^a, by their expressions and demeanour upbraiding the folly, the baseness, the impotency and wretchedness thereof, in competition with the wisdom, in opposition to the power of God, their friend and patron. For such carriage in such cases we have the practice and the advice of the Psalmist to warrant and direct us. *In God, saith he, we ~~we~~ boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; and I will triumph in the works of thy hands. We will rejoice in thy salvation; and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Sing unto him, sing* Ps. xliv. 8. xcii. 4. Ps. xx. 5. cv. 3. 2. Ps. cvi. 47.

^a Psal. lii. 6, 7. The righteous shall laugh at him, or, deride him, in this manner; Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength.

SERM. *psalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous*
 XI. *works. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather*
us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto
thy name, and to triumph in thy praise. Such
 should be the result (upon us) of God's merciful
 dispensations toward his people.

I shall only further remark, that the word here
 used is by the Greek rendered *ἐκαινεθήσονται*, *they*
shall be praised: which sense the original will
 bear, and the reason of the case may admit. For
 such dispensations ever do adorn integrity, and
 yield commendation to good men. They declare
 the wisdom of such persons, in adhering to God, in
 reposing upon God's help, in embracing such courses
 which God doth approve and bless: they plainly tell

Psal. cxxvi. how dear such persons are to God; how incompar-
 3. cxxiv. 1, ably happy in his favour, how impregnable safe
 &c. under his protection; as having his infallible wis-
 cxxxviii. 1, dom and his invincible power engaged on their side.
 &c.

Ps. cxliv. to profess with the Psalmist, *Happy is the people,*
 15. xxxiii. *which is in such a case; yea, happy is that people,*
 12. *whose God is the Lord.* And of such a people,

Ps. lxxxix. that declaration from the same mouth is verified, *In*
 16, 17. *thy name shall they rejoice all the day long, and*
in thy righteousness shall they be exalted: for
thou art the glory of their strength, and in thy fa-
vour their horn shall be exalted.

Such are the duties suggested in our text, as suit-
 ing these occasions, when God in a special manner
 hath vouchsafed to protect his people, or to rescue
 them from imminent mischiefs, by violent assault or
 by fraudulent contrivance levelled against them. I

should apply these particulars to the present case solemnized by us: but I shall rather recommend the application to your sagacity, than further infringe your patience, by spending thereon so many words as it would exact. You do well know the story, which by so many years repetition hath been impressed on your minds: and by reflecting thereon,

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You will easily discern, how God, in the seasonable discovery of this execrable plot, (the masterpiece of wicked machinations ever conceived in human brain, or devised on this side hell, since the foundation of things,) in the happy deliverance of our nation and church from the desperate mischiefs intended toward them, in the remarkable protection of right and truth, did signalize his providence.

You will be affected with hearty reverence toward the gracious Author of our salvation, and with humble dread toward the just awarder of vengeance upon those miscreant wretches, who *digged this pit, and fell into it themselves.*

You will be ready with pious acknowledgment and admiration of God's mercy, his justice, his wisdom, to declare and magnify this notable work done by him among us.

You must needs feel devout resentments of joy for the glory arising to God, and the benefits accruing to us, in the preservation of God's anointed, our just sovereign, with his royal posterity: in the freeing our country from civil broils, disorders, and confusions; from the yokes of usurpation and slavery; from grievous extortions and rapines; from bloody persecutions and trials, with the like spawn of disastrous and tragical consequences, by this design threatened upon it: in upholding our church (which was so

SERM. happily settled, and had so long gloriously flourished)
 XI. from utter ruin : in securing our profession of God's
 holy truth, the truly catholic faith of Christ, (refined
 from those drossy alloys, wherewith the rudeness and
 sloth of blind times, the fraud of ambition and covet-
 ous designers, the pravity of sensual and profane men
 had embased and corrupted it,) together with a pure
 worship of God, an edifying administration of God's
 word and sacraments, a comely, wholesome, and mo-
 derate discipline, conformable to divine prescription
 and primitive example ; in rescuing us from having
 impious errors, scandalous practices, and supersti-
 tious rites, with merciless violence obtruded upon
 us : in continuing therefore to us the most desirable
 comforts and conveniences of our lives.

You further considering this signal testimony of
 divine goodness, will thereby be moved to hope and
 confide in God for his gracious preservation from the
 like pernicious attempts against the safety of our
 prince and welfare of our country, against our peace,
 our laws, our religion ; especially from Romish zeal
 and bigotry, (that mint of woful factions and com-
 bustions, of treasonable conspiracies, of barbarous
 massacres, of horrid assassinations, of intestine re-
 bellions, of foreign invasions, of savage tortures
 and butcheries, of *holy leagues* and *pious frauds*,
 through Christendom, and particularly among us,) which
 as it without reason dammeth, so it would
 by any means destroy all that will not crouch
 thereto.

You will, in fine, with joyous festivity, glory and
 triumph in this illustrious demonstration of God's fa-
 vour toward us ; so as heartily to join in those due
 acclamations of blessing and praise :

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

SERM. XI.
Psal. cxxiv. 6. (lxxviii. 32.)

Alleluiah; Salvation, and glory, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.

Rev. xix. 1, 2.

Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints.

Rev. xv. 3.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.

Psal. lxxii. 18, 19.

S E R M O N XII.

A CONSECRATION SERMON.

Henry the
Seventh's
chapel,
July 4,
1663. at the
bishop of
Man's con-
secration.

PSALM CXXXII. 16.

I will also clothe her priests with salvation.

SERM. **T**HE context runs thus: *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I WILL ALSO CLOTHE HER PRIESTS WITH SALVATION: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud, &c.*

If all, not only inaugurations of persons, but dedications even of inanimate things to some extraordinary use, hath been usually attended with especial significations of joy and festival solemnity; with great reason the consecration of a person to so high and sacred a function, as that of a Christian bishop, (that is, of a prince, or principal pastor in God's church,) requires most peculiar testimonies of our gratulation and content: the face of things

ought then to be serene and cheerful: the thoughts of men benign and favourable; the words comfortable and auspicious, that are uttered upon such occasion. And that ours at present should be such, the subject as well as the season of our discourse doth require. Words few, but pregnant, and affording ample matter for our best affections to work upon: and which more particularly will engage us, both to a hearty thankfulness for past benefits, and to a confident expectation of future blessings; while they acquaint us with the ancient exhibition of a gracious promise, remind us of the faithful performance thereof hitherto, and assure us of its certain accomplishment for the future. The occasion whereof was this:

King David, moved by a devout inclination to promote God's honour, and benefit the church, had vowed to build a magnificent temple, imploring God's propitious concurrence with, and approbation of, his design. Whereupon Almighty God not only declares his acceptance of that pious resolution, but rewards it with a bountiful promise, consisting of two parts; one conditional, relating to David's children and posterity, that they in an uninterrupted succession should for ever enjoy the royal dignity, in case they did constantly persist in observing his covenant, and the testimonies that he should teach them; the other more absolute, that however, what he chiefly intended concerning God's established worship and the perpetual welfare of the church, God would have an especial care that it should fully and certainly be accomplished: that he would for ever fix his residence in Sion; that he would protect and prosper it, and all that did belong thereto; especially those that did most need his favour and assistance, the poor, the

SERM. priests, and the saints, (or *gentle ones*.) This is
 XII. briefly the importance of the general promise where-

in is comprehended that particular one whereon we
 are to treat : and in which we may observe,

1. The Promiser, *I*.

2. The persons who are especially concerned in
 the promise, *her priests*.

3. The thing promised, *clothing with salvation*.

I. I say, the Promiser, *I* : that is, the Lord ; the
 most true, the most constant, the most powerful
 God ; most true and sincere in the declaration of his
 purpose, most constant and immutable in the prose-
 cution, most powerful and uncontrollable in the per-
 fect execution thereof : whose *words are right, and*
 all whose *works are done in truth* : who *will not*
 break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is
 gone out of his lips : whose *counsel shall stand,*
 and who *will do all his pleasure*. These glorious
 attributes and perfections of his, so often celebrated
 in holy writ, do ground our reliance upon all God's
 promises, and do oblige us, notwithstanding the
 greatest improbabilities or difficulties objected, to
 believe the infallible performance of this.

Psal. xxxiii.
 4. lxxxix.
 34.
 Isa. lxvi.
 10.

II. The persons whom the promise mainly re-
 gards, *her priests*. *Priests*, that is, persons pecu-
 liarly devoted to, and employed in, sacred matters ;
 distinguished expressly from the *poor*, (that is, other
 meek and humble persons ;) and from the *saints*,
 (that is, all other good and religious men.) And, *her*
 priests ; that is, the priests of Sion : of that Sion which
 the Lord hath chosen ; which he hath desired for his
 permanent habitation ; which he hath resolved to
 rest and reside in for ever. Whence it plainly enough
 follows, that the priests and pastors of the Christian

Contra,
 2 Chron.
 vii. 21.

church are hereby, if not solely, yet principally designed. Which interpretation, because it is in a manner the foundation of our subsequent discourse, and by some it may perhaps not be readily admitted, I shall endeavour further to confirm by these few arguments.

SERM.
XII.

1. Because the covenant here mentioned is not, as to the main parts thereof, of a conditional or temporary nature, but absolute and perpetual; and must therefore be understood to respect the Christian church: (that of the Jews being long since rejected, their temple demolished, their Sion utterly forsaken.) Vide 2 Chron. vii. 16. For although one particular contained therein, concerning the continual succession of David's posterity in the regal authority over Israel, hath a condition explicitly annexed; (and, consequently, the effects depending upon the performance of that condition were contingent and mutable;) yet all the rest of this covenant (or promise) is conceived in terms peremptory, and expressly importing perpetuity. *This is my rest for ever*, עַד עַד, that is, as the Greek translators render it, εἰς αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, (*in seculum seculi*), that is, to the end of this world; as εἰς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων denotes the end of all worlds, or the most perfect sempiternity. And that it doth really in this case denote a proper and unlimited perpetuity, is also evident by those explications thereof in the eighty-ninth Psalm, where the very same covenant is, as to some parts thereof, more largely recorded. *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David: his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me: it shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.* Ver. 35, 36, 37. No words can express more fully a per-

SERM. perpetual duration, or at least one coextended with
 XII. the duration of the world, than those do. And the

Jer. xxxiii.
 20, 21.
 Vide 2 Chr
 vii. 16.

prophet Jeremy, referring also to this very covenant, and particularly to this very clause thereof, thus expresses the matter : *Thus saith the Lord ; If you care break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season ; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne ; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.* But further,

2. The completion of this individual promise is both by the prophets foretold, and expressed by the evangelists, to appertain to the times of the gospel. Ye heard even now the words of Jeremy, which are by him applied to those times, when God would cause *the Branch of righteousness* (that is, Jesus of Nazareth, our blessed Saviour) *to grow up unto David, who should execute judgment and righteousness in the land.* In those days, saith he further, *shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely : and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, (or rather, which he shall be called, as not only the vulgar Latin and the Greek interpreters, but the Chaldee also read it,) THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* Likewise in the fifty-fifth of Isaiah, God thus invites the Gentiles : *Incline your ear, and come unto me ; hear, and your soul shall live : and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David :* that is, I will ratify that everlasting covenant, which, in your behalf, I once made with David, and will confer on you those favours which I faithfully promised him ; relating to this very promise also. For both in Solomon's prayer, (2 Chron

Jer. xxxiii.
 15.

- Verse 16.

Isa. lv. 3.

vi.) which in all probability was indited about the same time, and upon the same occasion with this Psalm, and in the eighty-ninth Psalm, the benefits of the same covenant are called *the mercies of David*. *O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed, remember the mercies of David thy servant*, saith Solomon: and, *My mercy*, saith God, *will I keep with him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him: and, My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him*; that is, *my faithful* (or *sure*) *mercy*; τὰ ὄσια πιστὰ, as the LXX. and St. Paul with them in the Acts, render this place of Isaiah. And in the song of Zachary we have one passage of this promise cited, and applied to the times of the gospel: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath visited and redeemed his people; and hath raised up a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets: viz. by the mouth of this prophetic Psalmist here, where it is said, There will I make the horn of David to bud; and in the parallel Psalm lxxxix. In my name shall his horn be exalted*. To omit those many places where our Saviour, in correspondence to this promise, is affirmed to *possess the throne of his father David, and to rule over the house of Jacob for ever*.

SERM.
XII.2 Chron.
vi. 42.Ps. lxxxix.
28.

Ver. 24.

Acts xiii.

34.

Luke i. 68,
69, 70.

Verse 24.

Vide Luke
i. 32. edit.
Curcel.

Moreover,

3. That by the Sion here mentioned is not chiefly meant that material mountain in Judæa, but rather that mystical Rock of divine grace and evangelical truth, upon which the Christian church, the only everlasting temple of God, is unmoveably seated, is very probable, (or rather, manifestly certain,) by the Prophets' constant acception thereof in this sense,

SERM. when they assign the character of perpetual durability thereto. As in Isaiah lx. where he thus prophesies of the Christian church: *The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Sion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shall suck the breasts of kings, &c.* And the Prophet Micah, speaking of the last days, (that is, of the evangelical times, when the mountain of the house of the Lord should be established in the top of the mountains,) saith thus: *And I will make her that halted, a remnant; and her that was cast far off, a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Sion from henceforth even for ever.* And the Prophet Joel, speaking of the same times, (when God would pour out his spirit upon all flesh,) hath these words: *So shall ye know, that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Sion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.* All which places no man can reasonably doubt, and all Christians do firmly consent to respect the Christian church. To which we may add that passage of the author to the Hebrews, (ch. xii. ver. 22.) *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; that is, to the Christian church.*

4. The manner of this covenant's delivery, and

confirmation by the Divine oath, argues the incondi- SERM.
tionate, irreversible, and perpetual constitution there- XII.
of: for to God's most absolute and immutable de-
crees this most august and solemn confirmation doth
peculiarly agree. So the Apostle to the Hebrews
seems to intimate: *Wherein, saith he, God, willing* Heb. vi.
*more abundantly to demonstrate the immutability of*²¹
his counsel, (ἐπιδείξει τὸ ἀμετάβητον τῆς βουλῆς,) inter-
posed an oath.

We may therefore, I suppose, upon these grounds, solidly and safely conclude, that this promise doth principally belong, and shall therefore infallibly be made good, to the Christian priesthood; to those who, in the Christian church, by offering spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, by directing and instructing the people in the knowledge of the evangelical law, by imploring for and pronouncing upon them the divine benedictions, do bear analogy with, and supply the room of, the Jewish priesthood.

From which discourse we may, by the way, deduce this corollary: That the title of *priest*, although it did (as most certainly it doth not) properly and primarily signify a Jewish sacrificer, (or slaughterer of beasts,) doth yet nowise deserve that reproach, which is by some, inconsiderately, (not to say profanely,) upon that mistaken ground, commonly cast upon it; since the holy scripture itself, we see, doth here, even in that sense (most obnoxious to exception) ascribe it to the Christian pastors. And so likewise doth the Prophet Isaiah; *And I will also take of them for priests and for* Isa. lxxvi.
*Levites, saith the Lord: speaking (as the context*²¹
plainly declares) of the Gentiles, which should be

SERM. converted and aggregated to God's church. And
 XII. the Prophet Jeremiah : *Neither shall the priests the*
 Jer. xxxiii. *Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offer-*
 18. *ings, and to do sacrifice continually.* Which prophecy also evidently concerns the same time and state of things, of which the Prophet Malachi thus
 Mal. i. 11. foretels: *For, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering.* It were desirable, therefore, that men would better consider, before they entertain such groundless offences, or pass so uncharitable censures upon either words, or persons, or things. But I proceed to the

III. Particular, which is the matter of the promise, *clothing with salvation.* Where we may observe,

First, that the usual metaphor of being *clothed* doth in the sacred dialect denote a complete endowment with, a plentiful enjoyment of, or an entire application to, that thing, or quality, with which a person is said to be clothed. So is God himself said to
 Ps. xciii. 1. be *clothed with majesty and strength.* And David
 Ps. xxxv. prays, that they might be *clothed with shame and*
 26. cix. 29. *dishonour, that did magnify themselves against*
 Ezek. xxvi. *him.* And in Ezekiel, *the princes of the isles,* being
 16. amazed by the ruin of Tyre, are said *to clothe themselves with trembling.* And that bitter adversary of David (in Psalm cix. 18.) did *clothe himself with cursing, as with a garment.* And Job avouched of himself, *I put on righteousness, and it clothed me ; my judgment was a robe and a diadem.* And St.
 Job xxix. 14. Peter advises us to *put on, or to be clothed with,*
 1 Pet. v. 5. *humility.* Finally, Isaiah introduces our Saviour

speaking thus : *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God : for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness ; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.* So that (as by these instances we may discern) *to be clothed with salvation* is to be perfectly endowed therewith ; to be invested with it as with a garment, which wholly encloseth and covereth the body, so that no part is left unguarded and unadorned thereby.

Secondly, But now what is that *salvation* with which the *priests* of Sion shall be thus clothed ? I answer : *Salvation*, when it is put absolutely, and not conjoined with any particular object, (or term from which,) doth in the Hebrew language properly signify a deliverance from, or remotion of, all sorts of inconvenience ; and, consequently, an affluence of all good things ; and, in effect, the same which other languages call felicity and prosperity, or design by terms equivalent to those : the Hebrews having hardly any other word so properly correspondent to those, as this word, *salvation*. Whence that title of *Saviour*, and *the God of salvation*, so often attributed to Almighty God, imports as much as, the Dispenser of all good gifts ; the great Benefactor, Assister, and Protector of men : and to *save* is promiscuously used for, to relieve the needy, to comfort the sorrowful ; to restore the sick to his health, the prisoner to his liberty, the captive to his country ; to defend the weak from injury, and the humble from contempt ; to deliver the distressed from imminent danger, the innocent from unjust condemnation, the slandered from undeserved reproach : in a word,

SERM.
XII.

Isa. lxi. 10.

Isa. lix. 17.

Deus. Σω-
τήρ σεπε
Platoni.

SERM. all the effects of God's goodness and power, the
XII. whole work of the Divine providence and beneficence,
 are hereby expressed.

We will recite one or two of those many places which confirm this notion, Psalm lxxxv. 9. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. His salvation is nigh*; that is, his loving care attends upon them, to assist and preserve them; which in Psalm cxlv. ver. 19. is thus otherwise expressed: *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will save them.* And again, Psalm cxlix. 4. *The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation*: that is, he will, by his good providence, dispose them into a convenient and decent condition of life. And again, Psalm cxliv. 10. *It is he that giveth salvation unto kings*; that is, by whose gracious disposal they prosper, and are preserved in dignity, plenty, and safety.

I will not, by citation of places, labour to confirm so obvious a notion: it may suffice for that purpose, that the supreme accomplishment of all happiness, the enjoyment of perfect bliss in heaven, is, in agreement with this Jewish acception of the word, most commonly styled *salvation*. But I must add, that, whereas salvation may relate either to the outward estate of a man's body, life, and fortunes, or to the internal dispositions of the mind; to our present condition in this world, or to our future and eternal estate: it doth seem here (I say not, to exclude the latter altogether, yet) more directly and principally to respect the former, viz. that external and temporal welfare, which is conspicuous and visible in this world. My reason is, because the other parts of this

prophetical promise do, in their most natural ex-
ception, signify that outward prosperity wherewith
God would vouchsafe to bless his church: that
abundant *benediction of her store, that satisfying
her poor with bread, that joyful exaltation of her
saints, that clothing her enemies with shame,* being
expressions properly denoting a state of external
good weal and comfort; and, in consonance to them,
require that we thus likewise understand this phrase;
the priests being also questionless designed to par-
take in this glorious felicity of the church. Which
is also confirmed by other prophecies of the same
tenor and intention: as particularly that in Jer.
xxx. concerning the recollection of Israel, and re-
demption of the spiritual Sion, it is said, *I will sa-*
tiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my
people shall be satisfied with my goodness, &c. Verse 14.

Now, although we may adventure safely to inter-
pret the declarations of the Divine favour according
to the most comprehensive sense of which the words
are capable, where they are conceived; (it being the
manner of the immensely-good God, to exceed, ra-
ther than to be deficient, in the performance of his
word; and to surpass the expectations he hath raised
in us, than anywise to disappoint them:) yet, how-
ever, the least we can imagine here promised to the
priests of Sion will comprehend these three things:

1. A free and safe condition of life: that they be
not exposed to continual dangers of ruin; of miser-
able sufferance, or remediless injury: that the bene-
fits of peace, and law, and public protection shall
particularly appertain to them; so that their adver-
saries (if any they happen to have) shall not be in-
cited, by hope of reward or impunity, to hurt their

SERM. persons, rifle their goods, disturb their quiet ; but
XII. that they shall enjoy good degrees of security, liberty, and tranquillity in this world.

2. A provision of competent subsistence for them : that their condition of life be not wholly necessitous, or very penurious, destitute of convenient accommodations, or depending altogether for them upon the arbitrary benevolences of men, which is, at best, but a more plausible kind of beggary ; but that they shall be furnished with such reasonable supplies, as are requisite to encourage them in the cheerful performance of their duty.

3. A suitable degree of respect, and so high a station among men, as may commend them to general esteem, and vindicate them from contempt : that they be not reputed among the dregs and refuse of the people ; that their persons be not base and despicable, their names made the objects of vulgar obloquy, their functions become prostitute to profane irrision ; but that some considerable authority, some more than ordinary regard and veneration accrue unto them from the high relations which they bear, and from the sacred business which they manage.

All this at least (according to the most moderate interpretation of the phrase) that abundant *salvation* doth imply, wherewith God hath promised to *invest the priests of Sion*.

We may therefore presume, or rather not presume, but confidently rely upon, and comfort ourselves in the expectation of God's faithful continuance to fulfil this promise. We may assure ourselves, that neither the secret envy of them who repine at those encouragements which God's providence hath conferred on priests, nor the open malice of those that

furiously oppugn their welfare, shall ever prevail to **SERM.**
overwhelm them with extreme misery, penury, or **XII.**
disgrace; since no endeavour of earth or hell can
ever be able to reverse this everlasting decree of
Heaven, or to defeat that irresistible power which is
engaged to its execution. No inferior force can
strip them naked of that salvation, wherewith the
Supreme Truth hath promised to clothe them.

Which confidence of ours may be improved, by
considering the reasons that might induce Almighty
God to resolve, and promise thus favourably in be-
half of his priests. (For though we cannot pene-
trate the incomprehensible depths of the divine
counsel, nor should ever peremptorily conclude con-
cerning the determinate reasons of his actions: yet,
when the wisdom of his proceedings doth clearly ap-
prove itself to our understandings, we ought readily
to acknowledge it, and humbly to praise him for it.)
Now the reasons why divine Providence should un-
dertake to preserve the priesthood in safety, to pro-
cure for them liberal maintenance, and to raise them
above a state of scorn and infamy, may be especially
these three:

1. It concerns God's honour.
2. The good of the church requires so.
3. Equity and the reason of the case exacts it.

In prosecuting which heads of discourse, I shall
not seem to you, I hope, to transgress the rules of
modesty or decency. There be certain seasons,
wherein confessedly it is not only excusable, but ex-
pedient also, to commend one's self; as when a man
is falsely accused, or unjustly afflicted. And with
greater reason sometime men are allowed to praise
the country where they were born and bred, the

SERM. family to which they are allied, the society to which
 XII. they are more especially related. And if at this
 time I assume the like liberty, the occasion, I hope,
 will apologize for me. It becomes not me to be an
 adviser, much less a reprover, in this audience : may
 I therefore, with your favourable permission, pre-
 sume to be a commender, or, if you please, a pleader
 for the welfare of this sacred order, although myself
 an unworthy and inconsiderable member thereof. I
 say therefore,

I. God's honour is concerned in the safe, comfort-
 able, and honourable estate of his priests ; and that
 upon account of those manifold relations, whereby
 they stand allied, appropriated, and devoted to him-
 self.

Joel ii. 17.
 2 Tim. ii.
 24.

They are in a peculiar manner his servants. *The*
servant of the Lord, saith St. Paul, *must not strive,*
but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach. The ser-
vant of the Lord ; who's that ? are not all men
 God's servants ? is not he Lord of all ? Yes ; but a
 Christian priest, such as Timothy was, is by way of
 excellency so styled. All men owe subjection, obe-

1 Cor. iv.
 1.
 Rom. xv.
 16.

dience, and homage to God : but the priests are (his
ἰπηρετάι, his *λειτουργοὶ*) his ministers, his officers, his
 immediate attendants, his domestics, as it were, and
 menial servants ; that approach his person, that tread
 the courts of his house, that wear his proper badges,
 that are employed in his particular business. And
 is it then for God's honour, to suffer them to be
 abused, to want convenient sustenance, to live in a
 mean and disgraceful condition ? Would it not re-
 bound to the discredit of an earthly prince, to per-
 mit, that the attendants on his person, the officers of
 his court, the executors of his edicts, should have

the least injury offered them, should fare scantily or coarsely, should appear in a sordid garb? Are they not therefore by especial privileges guarded from such inconveniences? And shall the great King and Lord of all the world be deemed less provident for, less indulgent (not to say less just) unto his servants? servants, I say, and those not of the lowest rank, nor appointed to the vilest drudgeries; but such as are employed in the most honourable charges, and are intrusted with his most especial concernments.

They are his stewards. *A bishop*, saith St. Paul, Tit. i. 7. *must be blameless, as the steward of God.* If the church be *οἶκος Θεοῦ*, *God's house, or family*, as it is called, and the priests the *οἰκονόμοι*, the stewards of that house, the comptrollers of that family; it is surely no mean station they obtain therein. The distribution of his bread, (the bread of life, his holy word,) and the dispensation of his most precious goods, (the holy mysteries,) are committed to their care and prudence. *Who then*, saith our Saviour, *is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?* Who but the priests, who are therefore styled both *προεστώτες*, *ἡγούμενοι*, *κυβερνήσεις*, (*presidents, guides, rulers*), and *ποιμένες*, (*feeders or pastors*), of the church.

Yea, they are *οἰκοδόμοι* also, the builders of that house, founding it by initial conversion, rearing it by continued instruction, covering and finishing it by sacramental obsignation of divine grace. *As a wise architect*, saith St. Paul, *I have laid the foundation, and another builds upon it.*

They are *συνεργοὶ Θεοῦ*, *cooperators with God*;

1 Cor. iii. 9.

SERM. XII.

SERM. XII. that manage his business, and drive on his designs : the solicitors of his affairs, the masters of his requests : his heralds, that publish his decrees, denounce his judgments, proclaim his pardons and acts of grace unto his subjects ; that blazon his titles, and defend his rightful authority in the world : yea, his ministers of state ; the ministers (I say, *absit invidia*) of his most glorious spiritual kingdom ; (which is peculiarly denominated the kingdom of God ;) the orderly administration of which, its advancement, its preservation, and its enlargement, are especially commended to their diligence and fidelity.

They are, lastly, God's ambassadors^a, delegated by him to treat of peace, and solicit a fair correspondence between heaven and earth. *Now then*, saith St. Paul, *we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God. As though God did beseech you by us : see, they manage God's concernments, and in a manner represent his person.* At least, if the apostles were more properly God's ambassadors, the present ministers of religion are his agents, and residents here among men, designed to pursue the same negotiations commenced by them. Now you know by the law of nations, and common consent of all men, all manner of security, good entertainment, and civil respect hath been ever acknowledged due to ambassadors, and public ministers : their employment hath been esteemed honourable, their persons held sacred and

2 Cor. v.
20.

^a Vide Mal. ii. 7. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

inviolable; and whatsoever discourtesy hath been shewed unto, or outrage committed upon them, hath been interpreted done to him from whom they derive their commission, whose person they represent. And so truly the bad usage of God's priests, if not directly and immediately, does yet really and truly, according to moral estimation, terminate on God himself, and reflect on his honour, and prejudice his religion; a due regard to which cannot be maintained, without proportionable respect to the ministers thereof. The basest of the people may serve to be priests to Jeroboam's calves, but not become the ministry of the God of Israel.

SERM.
XII.

John xiii.
20. What
you have
done to
these, &c.
Matt. x. 40.
and xxv.
40. He
that re-
ceiveth
you, re-
ceiveth
him that
sent you.

Do we not see the reverence of civil government upheld more by the specious circumstances, than by the real necessity thereof; by the magnificent retinue, and splendid ornaments of princely dignity, than by the eminent benefits of peace and justice springing thence? Shall not (not only the greatest inward worth, but) the highest nobility, if basely attired, badly attended, slenderly accommodated, pass unregarded, yea disregarded by us? men being generally either unable to discern, or unwilling to acknowledge excellency divested of sensible lustre. Religion therefore must be well habited, or it will be ill respected: the priests must wear a comely (if not a costly) livery, or God their master's reputation will be impaired in popular fancy.

Consider David's reasoning; *Lo, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains*; and compare such discourse therewith as this; and judge candidly, whether they have not some parity: Lo, my attendants are clad with the finest purple, God's ministers

1 Chron.
xvii. 1.

SERM. are covered with the coarsest sackcloth ; my people
XII. surfeit with dainties, his servants pine away for
 scarcity ; my courtiers are respectfully saluted, his
 priests scornfully derided ; no man dare offend mine,
 every one may trample on his officers.

And lest we should imagine God himself altogether void of such resentments, or such comparisons impertinent, consider that disdainful expression of his ; *If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil ? Offer it now to thy governor ; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person ? saith the Lord of hosts.* The same testimonies of respect that we shew our governors, God, it seems, expects from us in all kinds, and may reasonably much greater.

Nor is it a matter of slight consideration, how plentiful provision, in the policy devised and constituted by God himself, was made for the priests ; how God assumes the immediate patronage of them, and appropriates the matter of their sustenance unto himself. *The priests, saith the Law, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel ; they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren : the Lord is their inheritance.* So that then, it seems, no man could withhold any part of the priests' maintenance, without sacrilegious encroachment on God's own right, and robbing him of his due : (which is the greatest security of an estate imaginable.) How likewise (next to the prince) the highest dignity and authority was then conferred on the priests : to them the interpre-

tation of law, to them the decision of doubtful cases SERM. XII. did appertain; with severe injunctions to comply with their determinations. See how the business is inculcated. *If there arise a matter too hard for thee, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place, which the Lord shall choose, shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee. According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence, which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken to the priest, that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, even that man shall die, and thou shalt put away evil from Israel.* Observe with how eminent a power God then thought fit to endow his priests^a.

And though we are not in all cases obliged punctually to follow those political prescriptions; yet is the reason of them perpetual, and the example vene-

^a Καὶ γὰρ ἐπέχται πάντων, καὶ δικασταὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητουμένων, καὶ κηλασταὶ τῶν κατεγνωσμένων οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐτάχθησαν, saith Josephus. The priests were constituted supervisors of all things, and judges of controversies, and punishers of offences. 2. in *Apionem*.

SERM. XII. rable : especially since the custom of all times, and the reason of all the world, doth in a sort conspire to back it.

Gen. xiv. The first priest we meet with in scripture is Melchizedek ; a king also ; and such a one, as the patriarch Abraham, (a prince also himself, and, what is somewhat more, just then a conqueror,) in the midst of his triumphal heights, was not ashamed to acknowledge his superior, to honour him with a tribute of his spoils, and to receive a benediction from him.

Gen. xli. 45. The next (if I mistake not) is Potipherah, priest of On, whose daughter was not thought by the king of Egypt an unequal match for Joseph, his chief favourite, and the next in dignity to himself in that flourishing kingdom. (Though such an alliance would perhaps be thought derogatory to the worships of our days.) The third is Revel, or Jethro, priest of Midian, the father-in-law likewise of the illustrious Moses ; a man as of approved wisdom, so doubtless of considerable dignity too. And the next to him (in order of story) is the venerable Aaron, no meaner a man, than the brother of him who was *king in Jeshurun*. Thus all nations, wise and ignorant, civil and barbarous, were by one common instinct (as it were) of natural reason prompted, by conferring extraordinary privileges of honour and convenience on their priests, to express their reverence of the Deity, and their affection to religion ^a.

Dent. xxxiii. 5.

I will not ransack the closets of antiquity, nor with needless ostentation produce the Egyptian hi—

^a Vid. Aristot. Pol. vii. 9. Οὔτε γὰρ γεωργὸν, οὔτε βάνανσον ἱερίᾳ καταστατέον· ἐπὶ γὰρ τῶν πολιτῶν πρέπει τιμᾶσθαι τοὺς θεούς.

erophantæ, the Persian magi, the Gaulish druids, the SER caliphs, and muftis of other nations, to shew what XII preeminences of respect they enjoyed, what power-Porph. Alex. iv. §. 11 ful sway they bore in their respective countries; Cæs. de Bell. Gr. lib. vi. how the most weighty affairs, both of peace and war, were commonly directed by their oracular dictates. It shall suffice to observe, that the gallant Romans, (whose devout zeal to religion Polybius himself, no Lib. vi. especial friend of theirs, could not forbear to admire and applaud,) I say, that the most wise and valiant Romans did set so high a value upon the priestly order, that if their principal magistrates (the pretors and consuls themselves) did casually meet with one of Vesta's priests, they caused immediately those dreadful rods, the ensigns of their authority, to submit; and they themselves respectfully gave place, as if they meant to confess those priests in a manner their betters^b. Nor did they among them of the most noble extraction, and of the highest dignity in the commonwealth, (even after many glorious exploits achieved by them,) scornfully disdain, but did rather ambitiously affect to be admitted into the college of priests: insomuch that, after the dissolution of the republic, the emperors thought good to assume the pontifical dignity to themselves, supposing the office too honourable, the title too magnificent for a subject. For they wisely, it seems, and honestly adjudged it no debasement of their quality, no diminution to their personal excellency, to be employed in the service of the immortal gods; whom they acknowledged the patrons of their country, the

^b Πάντα τὰ πράγματα Ῥωμαίοις εἰς τὸν Θεὸν ἀνήγγο. Plut. in Marcello. Sen. in Controv.

SERM. protectors of their safety : nor that they less deserv-
XII. ed of the public, who rightly ordered their religious
 devotions, than they who prudently advised in the
 senate, or fought valiantly in the field : for that the
 good success of public undertakings did as much, or
 more, depend upon the favourable disposition of
 divine Providence, as upon the careful endeavour of
 human industry.

I cannot forbear to allege that so grave and pertinent speech of Cicero, which is the exordium of his oration *ad Pontifices* : “ *Cum multa divinitus, pontifices, a majoribus nostris inventa atque instituta sunt ; tum nihil præclarior, quam quod vos eosdem et religionibus deorum immortalium, et summa reip. præesse voluerunt : ut amplissimi et clarissimi cives rempubl. bene gerendo, religiones sapienter interpretando, remp. conservarent.*” A wholesome and politic institution he thought it, conducive to the public good and safety, that the civil and sacred authority should be united in the same persons ; that it was as well for the interest of the state, as for the credit of religion, that the priests should be men of honour, or (which is all one) honourable men priests.

All which evinces plainly, that it is in no wise the result of a generous heart, (for what nation ever produced so many brave spirits as that?) but rather proceeds from an inconsiderate delicacy of humour, (or from a profane haughtiness of mind,) to loathe, as now men do, and despise that employment, which in its own nature is of all most noble and most beneficial to mankind. For if to be a courtier in a particular country is of all others the most honourable relation ; and to wait upon a mortal king is ac-

counted a most worthy function: to be peculiarly God's servant, and in religious addresses immediately to attend on him, must consequently be the most excellent preferment in the world, which is God's kingdom^c. And if to supply a man's bodily needs, to restore his liberty, to save his life, he works of generous beneficence; how much more is it so, by good conduct and instruction of men, to adorn their souls with virtue, to free them from the bondage of sin, to rescue them from eternal ruin?

Our magnanimous ancestors, who erected as well trophies of their invincible courage abroad, as monuments of their incomparable piety at home, and equally by both did purchase immortal renown to their ingrateful posterity, (for not to imitate good example is the greatest ingratitude,) they, I say, were otherwise disposed; to whose honest devotion we owe those handsome privileges, and those competent revenues, which the priesthood still enjoys; and which are so maligned by this untoward age, not less degenerate in spirit than corrupt in manners: when all wisdom, and virtue, and religion, are almost in most places grown ridiculous: when the serious use of reason is become (in vulgar opinion) the most impertinent and insignificant thing in the world: when innocence is reputed a mere defect of wit and weakness of judgment; integrity a fond pertinacity of humour; constancy of mind and gravity of demeanour, a kind of sullen morosity or un-

^c *Itane plus decet hominis, quam Dei famulum nominari? ac terreni quam cœlestis Regis officialem, altioris ducitur dignitatis? Qui clero militiam, forum anteponit ecclesiæ, divinis profecto humana, cœlestibus præferre terrena convincitur. Bern. Epist. 78.*

SERM.
XII.

couth affectation of singularity; and all strict practice of Christian duty incurs the imputation of some new-found opprobrious name, one or other. No wonder then, when religion itself hath so much decayed in its love and esteem, if the priests, its professed guardians, do partake in its fortune. Nor is it to be feared, but that, when the predominant vanities of the age are somewhat decocted, and men grow weary of their own inconvenient follies; whenever (not a fierce zeal for some whimsical model, or some paradoxical opinion, but) a sober esteem of, and a cordial affection to virtue and genuine piety do begin to revive in the breasts of men; the love and reverence of the clergy will return. For it will be ever true, what was once said, (though dictated only from the reason and experience of a heathen,) *Qui bona fide colit Deos, amat et sacerdotes*; "He that sincerely worships God, will heartily love his priests." But not to insist longer on this reason.

Statius, E-
pist. Dedic.
in v. lib.
Sylvarum.

II. The good of the church requires, that the priesthood be well protected, well provided for, and well regarded. That men be converted from iniquity, induced to the sincere practice of virtue, is the chief good of the church, that to which the favour of God is annexed, and upon which the salvation of souls doth rely. And this good mainly depends, partly upon the due execution of the priestly office, partly upon the fit disposition of the people to comply therewith: and to both those effects the comfortable estate of the priesthood is conducive and requisite. The priest must be capable to instruct with advantage, and the people disposed to learn with readiness: he must lead, and they follow cheerfully

in the paths of righteousness. Which alacrity how can he be master of, whose mind care and grief, the inseparable companions of a needy estate, do continually distract and discompose? whose spirit is dejected with constant regret and frequent disappointments? Can he be free and expedite in the discharge of his duty, who is perplexed with the difficulties, and encumbered with the varieties of secular business, such as the exigences of a narrow condition do necessarily induce? No; few there be that, with Epictetus, can philosophate in slavery; or, like Cleanthes, can draw water all the day, and study most of the night.

The priests are bound, (for the propagation of truth and right, and for the reclaiming of men from error and sin, that is, for the most important good of the church,) as the apostles are often related to have done, *παρρησιάζεσθαι*, to *speak all out*, (or to use an unconfined liberty of speech;) to exhort to the practice of virtue, as our Saviour did, *μετ' ἐξουσίας*, with *license and authority*; to deter from vice, as St. Paul enjoins Titus, *μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς*, with an *all-commanding* and imperious *strain*; and, (as those faithful brethren did, encouraged by St. Paul's example,) *τολμᾶν ἀφόβως λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον*, to *dare undauntedly to utter the word* of truth: they are obliged to deal impartially with all, to flatter no man; to admonish, yea, and (with prudence, seasonably) to reprove the greatest of men: not to respect the persons of the rich, nor to dread the faces of the most terrible among men. And how shall this necessary courage be engendered, be cherished, be preserved, in the breast of him who grovels upon the ground, and crouches under the depressing loads of want

SERM.
XII.

Acts ix. 27.
xiv. 3. xix.
8. Ephes.
vi. 19, &c.
Luke iv. 32.
Tit. ii. 15.
Phil. i. 14.

SERM. and disgrace ^d? What engines are able to raise the
XII. spirits of men above the ordinary fountains from
 which they spring, their fortunes? What props can
 sustain them at that due pitch, destitute of solid
 strength, wealth, and respect? With what face shall
 a pitiful underling encounter the solemn looks of an
 oppressing grandee? with what hope of success, in
 his forlorn habit, shall he adventure to check the
 vicious extravagances of a ruffling gallant? Will he
 dare to contradict the opinion, or to disallow the
 practice, of that wealthy or this powerful neighbour,
 by whose alms, it may be, he is relieved, and sup-
 ported by his favour?

But admit it possible a man may be both ex-
 tremely indigent and sufficiently resolute: (that is,
 strong without food, and fat by digesting the thin
 air :) with what regard then shall his free and faith-
 ful advice be entertained? Shall not his moderate
 confidence be accounted impudence; his open sin-
 cerity of speech be styled unmannerly presumption;
 his minding others of their duty adjudged a forget-
 fulness of his own condition, or a disorderly trans-
 gressing the due limits thereof: if he be not asham-
 ed of the truth, will not the truth be ashamed of
 him? Shall he not prejudice more by the meanness
 of his garb, than further by the force of his reason—
 that good cause which he maintains? Will men re-
 spect his words, whose person they despise? Wi

^d ——— Plurima sunt que

Non audent homines pertusa dicere læna. *Juven. Sat. v.*

Αἰδώς ται πρὸς ἀνομβίη, θάρσος δὲ πρὸς ἄλβη. *Hes. i. 317.*

Πρὸς ἅπαντα δειλὸς ὁ πένης ἐστὶ πράγματα,

Καὶ πάντας αὐτοῦ καταφρονεῖν ὑπολαμβάνει. *Menand.*

they be willingly counselled or patiently reprov'd SERM. XII.
 by him, whom they esteem, yea, whom they plainly see, so much their inferior? No: the same words, which proceed from the mouths of men in eminent dignity, are not the same when they are uttered by those of base degree^c. Weak and ineffectual are the most eloquent harangues of beggarly orators; obscure, like themselves, and unobserved, the most notable dictates of poor, mercenary pedants. The authority of the speaker doth usually more incline, than the weight of the matter. It was the observation of the wise son of Sirach: *When a rich man slips, he hath many helpers; he speaketh things not to be spoken, and yet men justify him: the poor man miscarried, and they further rebuked him; he spake discreetly, and yet could have no place. When a rich man speaketh, every man holdeth his tongue; and his words they extol to the clouds: but if the poor man speak, they say, Who is this? and if he stumble, they will help to overthrow him.* Eccles. xiii. 22, 23. And Solomon himself notes Κάλλιστα Μουσῶν φθίγγεται σλαυτῶν ἀνίη. the same: *The poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.* Eccles. ix. 16. Not only those that swell with pride and swim in plenty, but even the meanest of the people, will be apt to contemn his instructions, whom they perceive in few or no circumstances of life to excel them. If the preacher's condition be not, as well as his pulpit, somewhat elevated above the lowest station, few will hear him, fewer mind his words, very few obey him.

^c Τὸ δ' ἀξίωμα, καὶ κακῶς λέγη, τὸ σὸν Πείσει· Λόγος γὰρ ἐκ τ' ἀδοξούντων ἰών, Κάκ τῶν δοκούντων αὐτὸς, οὐ ταυτὸν σθένει. Eurip. in Hecuba.

SERM. Job's case deserves well to be considered. While
 XII.

Job xxix.
 9, 10, 11.
 21, 22.

The princes, saith he, refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth: the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again, and my speech dropped upon them. So officiously attentive were all men to Job in his prosperity. But when the scale was turned, and he became depressed in estate, no man minded either him or his discourse,

Job xxx. 1.
 9, 10, 11.

except it were to despise and scorn both. *But now, saith he, they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. I am their song, yea, I am their by-word. They abhor me, they fly far from me, and spare not to spit in my face; because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me*^f. If Job, a person who so equally and mode-

Job xxx.
 25.

rately, yea, so humbly, and courteously, and bountifully used his prosperity, as we find he did, was notwithstanding in his adversity so generally slighted and abhorred; what shall their lot be who never enjoyed those advantages? what regard shall their wholesome advice find? what efficacy their most pathetic exhortations obtain? what passion their faint breath raise in men's benumbed hearts? No

^f Prov. xiv. 20. The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

more, certainly, than their mean condition shall procure among men either of friendship or esteem. SERM.
XII.

We see therefore how Almighty God, that he might conciliate credit unto, and infuse a persuasive energy into the words of his prophets and apostles, was pleased to dignify them with extraordinary gifts of foretelling future events and doing miraculous works: their doctrine, it seems, (though of itself most reasonable and plausible,) being not sufficient to convince the hearers, without some remarkable excellency in the teachers, challenging the people's awful regard, and exciting their attention. Otherwise how pitifully scant a draught those poor fishers of men had caught by the common allurements only of innocent life and rational discourse, I leave you to imagine. And where such extraordinary commendations are wanting, is it not reasonable that the need of them should be supplied by ordinary and probable expedients?

I might further add, how a necessitous and despicable estate doth commonly not only disturb the minds and deject the spirits of men, but distempereth also their souls, and vitiateth their manners; rendering them not only sad and anxious, slavish and timorous, but greedy also and covetous, peevish and mutinous, rude and ignorant; engages them in sordid company, and tempts them to unworthy courses. From which one cause how scandalous effects, and how prejudicial to the church's both honour and safety, have proceeded, I need not for to say, since woful experience too loudly proclaims it.

I might add, moreover, that the priests do confer to the good of the state; which is secured and advanced by the sincere instruction of men in duties

SERM. of obedience, justice, and fidelity; and by maintenance of good conscience among men. So that, if things be rightly considered, it will be hard to find a better commonwealth's man, than a good minister.

Seeing therefore the good of the church, upon various accounts, is so much concerned in the priests' encouragement, welfare, and respect, it is very fitting they should have them. Which consideration I conclude with that serious admonition of the Apostle to the Hebrews, wherein the substance of what hath been spoken on this point is contained: *Obey your rulers, (or guides,) and submit to them: for they watch for your souls, as they that are to give an account; that they may do it with joy, and not with complaint: for this is unprofitable for you.*

Heb xiii. 17. *μὴ στανάζετε* 'Αλυσιτελές γὰρ τοῦτο' that is, *for this pays no taxes, quits no scores; turns to no account, is nowise advantageous for you; but rather (for there is a μέρις in those words) is hurtful and detrimental to you.* But further,

III. Common equity, and the reason of the case exacts, that safety, competent subsistence, and fitting respect be allowed to the priests. If you consider their personal qualities; who, I pray, do [commonly] better deserve those advantages than they? Those qualities, I say, which result from a liberal, a sober, a modest education in the schools of wisdom, and under the influences of good discipline. If birth (that is, at best, an imaginary relation to the gallantry of an ancestor) entitle men to honour; if the cheap favours of fortune be so highly prized and admired; if riches (that is, the happy results of industry in trivial matters) do easily purchase respect:

what may not they pretend to, whose constant (and SERM. XII. not always unsuccessful) endeavour it hath been to deserve well, to cultivate their minds, and regulate their manners?

True worth, indeed, is not confined to any particular order of men; yet I should wrong none, by saying it is no where more plentifully to be found than in this. What is it that doth advance men's nature, that adorns their minds, that commends Vide Orig. contra Cels. l. iii. p. 129. their persons to especial regard? Is it knowledge? *The priests' lips preserve it*; their discourse doth Mal. ii. 7. diffuse it. Is it virtue? Whence have more or greater examples thereof proceeded than from them? Is it piety? It is their proper business: it hath been always, in some measure, their care to promote it: that ignorance and barbarity, dissoluteness and irreligion, have not long since, like a deluge, overspread the face of the world, none, I suppose, will be so unjust as to deny, in greatest part, due to their vigilant endeavours. Even those improvements of wit and eloquence, which are employed to their disgrace and disadvantage, must be acknowledged originally derived from them.

Faults they have had, and will always have; for they are men, and subject to the common imperfections of mortal nature: but that, perhaps, less and fewer than any other distinct sort of men; that as it is their duty, so it hath been their practice, to excel in virtue; and that they have commonly, in effect, made good St. Ambrose's words, *Debet præponderare vita sacerdotis, sicut præponderat gratia*; Epist. 82. were not difficult to demonstrate, if seemly to make comparisons, or to insist upon so invidious a subject. Nor, were they greater than ever really they have

SERM. been, or than ever malice could misrepresent them,
 XII. should it be therefore equal, that the miscarriages of
 some should derogate from the reputation or prejudice the welfare of the whole order.

But to wave this plea ; consider their employment. Is there any office more laborious, more vexatious than theirs ; accompanied with more wearisome toil, more solicitous care, more tedious attendance ? They are deservedly called *watchmen*, being constrained to stand always on the guard, to be always wakeful, attentive, and ready to warn the people of approaching dangers : and *shepherds* likewise, being forced to endure the various hardships of that uneasy life, the inconveniences of all weathers, the nipping frosts and sweltry heats, and all diversities of irksome travail ; they must feed, they must guide, they must defend ; they must seek the lost, and reduce the straying sheep. What assiduity of study, what earnest contention of soul are they obliged to use, in the continual instruction, exhortation, and reprehension of the people ; in rectifying their judgments, satisfying their scruples, removing their prejudices, bearing their infirmities, and sympathising with their afflictions ? It is they that are engaged, with all their might, to withstand the prevailing encroachments of iniquity, to stop the progress of pernicious errors, to detect the false pretences of impostors, to confute the fallacies of sophisters, to repel the assaults of all adversaries to the truth ; yea, if need be, to expose, not only their dearest contents of life, but even their lives themselves, in the defence thereof.

Lib. vi. Eusebius reports thus of Maximinus : Τοὺς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἄρχοντας μόνους, ὡς αἰτίους τῆς κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

διδασκαλίας, ἀκαιρεῖσθαι προστάττει. *He commanded* SERM. XII.
that only the governors of the church (that is, the bishops) *should be slaughtered, as the authors of the growth and prevalence of evangelical doctrine.* Neither was it a singular practice of that bloody tyrant; but, as a thing of course, it constantly follows, that wherever righteousness and truth are violently impugned, the priests are sure to taste deepest of that bitter cup; that their goods be, in the first place, sequestered and spoiled, their reputation stained, their persons misused, their lives sacrificed to the persecutor's outrageous malice.

Is it not reasonable then, and equal, that they, who, for the service of God and benefit of the church, undergo such difficulties, and are objected to so great hazards, should be sustained, should be refreshed by proportionable encouragements? Is it not barbarous usage, to expect so hard duties from them, to impose such heavy burdens on them, and yet to grudge any suitable comforts, any satisfactory rewards to them? Good king Hezekiah surely was not so minded, of whom it is said, *He commanded* Chr. xxxi. *the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord:* that is, they might be heartened to study, to teach, to perform the duties required of them by the divine law. And St. Paul thus rationally expostulates in the priests' behalf: *Who ever goeth to war at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not* 1 Cor. ix. *of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing* Vide Rom. xv. 27. *if we shall reap your carnal things? Is it a great*

SERM. *thing?* do you think much of it? If you do, you
XII. are unreasonable, you are unjust, you are ingrateful.

¹ Thess. v.
12, 13.
^a ἰδιωται.
^b καὶ ὑπε-
ρισταίοντες.

And otherwhere he thus very emphatically admonishes: *We beseech you, brethren, to ^amind them which labour among you, and ^bpreside over you in the Lord, and that admonish you; and to esteem them more than exceedingly (ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ) in love, for their work (or, for their office) sake:* (so ἔργα

¹ Tim. v.
17.

frequently signifies in such cases.) And again: *Let the elders (or priests, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι,) which rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, (or of double recompense: so τιμὴ also imports.)* Priests, as so, for their office sake, have honour and reward due to them; which, according to the good management of that office, are proportionably to be augmented and multiplied.

But further yet, abstracting from both their personal worth and the merit of their service, consider their condition in this world, and see whether it doth not in equity challenge some reasonable provision to be made for them. Are they not, by the nature of their profession, secluded from all ordinary means of temporal advancement? Be not those usual inlets of wealth, the court, the camp, and the exchange, shut upon them, yea, barred against them, by those insuperable obstacles of law and custom? Can they grow rich by trade, or famous by feats of arms? May they plead for others? It is well if they be allowed to do it for themselves before equal judges. Yet are they not men, endued with human passions and resentments? Are they not citizens, partaking in the common interests of the weal public? Are they not sensible of the inconveniences, and capable of enjoying the benefits of this life?

Are they not equally obliged, and would they not be glad, as well as others, to be in a capacity to requite courtesies, to help relations, to gratify friends, to relieve the poor, to express respectively their humanity and their gratitude? Skill they not to use the goods of fortune (or rather the gifts of Providence) with as much discretion, as much sobriety, as much honour as others? Compare things righteously, and let reason judge; let experience be examined; let those eternal monuments of their piety, their charity, their hospitality, declare and testify. Shall, lastly, the fruits of painful study, the improvement of hopeful parts, the flower of vigorous age and strength spent in the public service, tend only hither, to put a man into a state of struggling with extreme contempt and penury? If this be not, what, I pray you, is monstrous iniquity?

Since therefore it appears (upon so many several scores) reasonable, that Almighty God should undertake the protection and assert the honour of his priests, we may not only praise the goodness, but approve also the wisdom of this promise, and by the contemplation thereof strengthen our faith in reliance thereon. To which purpose one consideration more may very much conduce, and withal may provoke our gratitude to celebrate his truth and faithfulness in making good, as well as his goodness and wisdom in making, this promise; viz. the considering how continually hitherto God hath been pleased effectually to *clothe his priests with salvation*, to provide abundantly for their safety, their accommodation, their respect in this world, and to deliver them from the opposite inconveniences.

If we reflect our thoughts on the first ages of

SERM. Christianity, (not more dismal for suffering than glorious for piety,) it is admirable to see how sincerely and passionately the Christian people did then love their priests and pastors; how liberally, out of their slender stock and the shipwrecks of their spoiled fortunes, they contributed to their maintenance; what exceeding veneration they bore them; with what incredible alacrity they submitted to the most severe disciplines enjoined by them; how willingly they followed them, though leading into the jaws of death and cruel torture: so that, although it was then necessary for the Christian priests to undergo the greatest hardships, according to the design of Christian religion, (which was to be propagated, not by terror of power, nor by politic artifice, but by the invincible faith, resolution, and patience, of the professors and teachers thereof;) yet never more may they have seemed to thrive and prosper, than in that juncture of time, when they enjoyed the universal good-will and applause of good people, when they unconstrainedly embraced affliction for righteousness' sake, and acquired thereby the certain fruition of a more excellent salvation.

But in the succeeding times, when Christianity, breaking out of the clouds of persecution, began to shine over all with brightest lustre; of the glorious and happy fruits of that illustrious triumph none did partake more fully than they who had sustained the hardest brunts of the foregoing conflict, and had been the principal causes of the success. Then the joyful acclamations of the faithful people resounded in the praise of their victorious champions: then did the emperors themselves, with arms outstretched and hearts enlarged, with affection embrace the authors

of their happy conversion : then all laws prejudicial SERM.
to their welfare were rescinded, and new ones were XII.
substituted, abundantly providing for their security,
honest livelihood, and due reverence ; which in pro-
gress of time, not in the Roman empire only, but
in all other nations, (that afterwards did entertain
Christianity,) were nowise impaired, but were ra-
ther amplified and fortified by the pious favour of
princes : the barbarous Goths, and Vandals, and
Lombards, being no sooner endued with any degree
of civility, or any sense of religion, than possessed
with a hearty reverence of their bishops and priests.

And ever since, (which is not to be imputed, as
some rashly, if not impiously aver, to the prevalence
of Antichristian iniquity, but rather to the providence
of divine Benignity ; ever since, I say,) till the late
commotions and alterations in Christendom, they
have been the guardians of others' safety, not them-
selves deprived of protection ; have abounded with
wealth, rather than wanted sustenance ; have been
the objects of envy, more than of contempt. Princes
have loved and cherished them, have relied upon
their advice, and intrusted them with their highest
concernments. Nobles have not been ashamed to
yield them place. The sacerdotal robe hath been
often dyed with purple ; and the sons of mighty
monarchs have not thought themselves degraded by
entering into their order. And if in some particular
places (before or since those changes) their condition
hath not been so high and plentiful, yet hath it been
(almost ever) tolerable ; the countenance of authority
and the respect of the people being in good degree
vouchsafed them. Even in those churches, which
till this day groan under the oppression of infidel

SERM. XII. princes, the priests (by the free permission of those princes) retain their jurisdiction in a manner as great as ever; and withal enjoy a maintenance not altogether inconsiderable.

So favourable hitherto hath God been unto his priests, so faithful to his promise: which doth oblige us to thank him; which may encourage us to hope in him; which may arm us with confidence against the present ill-will of those that wish, and against the practices of those that design our ruin.

It is true, this promise is not affixed to all parts of time, to all particularities of place, to all determinate circumstances of things. The priests may, now and then, here and there, in this or that, suffer highly; they may be ejected, be plundered, be degraded, as experience hath shewed us. But they may be also soon restored, repossessed, readvanced, and (I had almost said revenged too, as the like experience doth assure us. It is not impossible, I confess, we may relapse into the same, or into a more calamitous estate; the obstinate disaffections of men threaten it, and our own miscarriages more dangerously: yet the most offensive of these (which many honest men dislike, and most men exclaim against) have been in as bitter terms complained of in almost the first ages. "*Inhiant possessionibus, prædia excolunt, auro incubant, quæstui per omnia student,*" said a devout writer of ecclesiastical history about 1300 years ago. And so much no man (without extreme uncharitableness and falsehood) can in so general terms impute to the present clergy: notwithstanding which, God did continue to vouchsafe his protection to them. They were sometimes, (by the inundations of barbarous people,) and

may again, (by national concussions,) be severely chastised for our faults: yet were not they, shall we be (at least every where and for ever) SERM. XII. rly rejected. God may *visit our transgressions in the rod, and our iniquity with stripes: nevertheless his lovingkindness will he not utterly take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. His covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that he has said of his lips.* God may for a time hide his face from us; but he will not for ever turn his back upon us: the honour of the priesthood may for a while be overclouded in some part of the world; shall never totally be eclipsed, nor swallowed up in perpetual night. While God continues his presence in Sion, and defends his church against *the powers of hell and powers of darkness*; while religion retains any sway in the hearts of men, and religion possesses any room upon earth; the priests shall be left destitute and naked, but everlastingly *be clothed with salvation.* Which that it may (to the glory of God and good of his church) more surely come to pass, let us convert this promise into a 2 Chron. vi. prayer, and say with Solomon, *Now therefore arise, O Lord God, thou and the ark of thy strength: clothe thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.* Amen.

S E R M O N XIII.

NOT TO OFFEND IN WORD AN EVIDENCE OF
A HIGH PITCH OF VIRTUE.

JAMES iii. 2.

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

SERM.
XIII.

THIS sentence stands in the head of a discourse concerning the tongue, (that doubtful engine of good and evil,) wherein how excellent benefits, and how grievous mischiefs, it, as rightly or perversely wielded, is apt to produce, how it is both a sweet instrument of all goodness, and a sharp weapon of all iniquity, is positively laid down, and by fit comparisons illustrated. But secluding all relation to the context, the words may well be considered singly by themselves: and as such they instruct us, asserting a certain truth; they direct us, implying a good duty. They assert that man to be perfect, who offends not in speech; and they consequently imply, that we should strive to avoid offending there-

Deut. xviii. in: for to *be perfect*, and to *go on to perfection*, are precepts, the observance whereof is incumbent on us. We shall first briefly explain the assertion, and then declare its truth; afterwards we shall press somewhat couched in the duty.

Heb. vi. 1. To *offend* originally signifies to *impinge*, that is, to stumble, or hit dangerously upon somewhat lying

cross our way, so as thereby to be cast down, or at least to be disordered in our posture, and stopt in our progress: whence it is well transferred to denote our being through any incident temptation brought into sin, whereby a man is thrown down, or bowed from his upright state, and interrupted from prosecuting a steady course of piety and virtue. By an usual and apposite manner of speaking, our tenor of life is called *a way*, our conversation *walking*, our actions *steps*, our observing good laws *uprightness*, our transgression of them *tripping, faltering, falling*.

SERM.
XIII.

Ps. xxxvii.
23, 24.

By *not offending in word*, we may easily then conceive to be understood such a constant restraint, and such a careful guidance of our tongue, that it both not transgress the rules prescribed unto it by divine law, or by good reason; that it thwarteth not the natural ends and proper uses for which it was framed, to which it is fitted; such as chiefly are promoting God's glory, our neighbour's benefit, and our own true welfare.

By *a perfect man* is meant a person accomplished and complete in goodness, one of singular worth and integrity, a brave and excellent man, who, as to the continual tenor of his life, is free from all notorious defects and heinous faults; like David, *fulfilling all God's will*, and *having respect to all God's commandments*; like Zachary and Elizabeth, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*. Thus was Noah, thus was Abraham, thus was Job perfect. This is the notion of *perfection* in holy scripture: not an absolute exemption from all blemish of soul, or blame in life; for such a perfection is inconsistent with the nature and state of man here,

Jam. i. 4.

Acts xiii.

22.

Psal. cxix.

6.

Luke i. 6.

Gen. vi. 9.

xvii. 1.

Job i. 1.

M. where none with modesty or with truth can say, *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin*;
 L. where every man must confess with Job, *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse*. For,
 ix. 9. *There is not, as the Preacher assures, a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not*; and, as vii. *In many things we offend all*, is our Apostle's assertion immediately preceding my text; which words may serve to expound these. *In many things*, saith he, *we offend all*; that is, there is no man absolutely perfect: but *if any man offend not in word*, (that is, if a man constantly govern his tongue well,) *that man is perfect*; perfect in such a kind and degree as human frailty doth admit; he is eminently good; he may be reasonably presumed upright and blameless in all the course of his practice; *able*, as it follows, *to bridle the whole body*, that is, qualified to order all his actions justly and wisely. So that in effect the words import this; that a constant governance of our speech according to duty and reason is a high instance and a special argument of a thoroughly sincere and solid goodness.

The truth of which aphorism may from several considerations appear.

1. A good governance of speech is a strong evidence of a good mind; of a mind pure from vicious desires, calm from disorderly passions, void of dishonest intentions. For since speech is a child of thought,

Ecclus. xix. which the mind always travaileth and teemeth with, and which after its birth is wont in features to resemble its parent; since every man naturally is ambitious to propagate his conceits, and without a painful force cannot smother his resentments; since
 11. A fool travaileth with a word, as a woman in labour of a child.

especially bad affections, like stum or poison, are impetuous and turgid, so agitating all the spirits, and so swelling the heart, that it cannot easily compose or contain them ; since a distempered constitution of mind, as of body, is wont to weaken the retentive faculty, and to force an evacuation of bad humours ; since he that wanteth the principal wisdom of well ordering his thoughts, and mastering his passions, can hardly be conceived so prudent, as long to refrain, or to regulate their dependance, speech ; considering these things, I say, it is scarce possible, that he which commonly thinks ill, should constantly either be well silent, or speak well. To conceal fire, to check lightning, to confine a whirlwind, may perhaps be no less feasible, than to keep within due compass the exorbitant motions of a soul wherein reason hath lost its command, so that *qua data porta*, where the next passage occurs, they should not rush forth, and vent themselves. A vain mind naturally will bubble forth or fly out in frothy expressions ; wrath burning in the breast will flame out, or at least smoke through the mouth ; rancorous imposthumes of spite and malice will at length discharge purulent matter ; lust boiling within will soon foam out in lewd discourse. If the fountain itself is polluted, or infected, how can the streams be clear or wholesome ? *How can ye, being evil, speak good things ?* saith our Lord ; *for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* *A good man, addeth he, out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things ; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things :* *ἐκβάλλει πομπὰ, he casteth forth ill things,* as a fountain doth its waters by a natural and necessary ebul-

SERM.
XIII.

Matth. xii.
34.

SERM. lition. It is true, that in some particular cases, or at
 XIII. some times, a foul heart may be disguised by fair
 words, or covered by demure reservedness : shame,
 or fear, or crafty design, may often repress the de-
 claration of ill thoughts and purposes. But such
 fits of dissimulation cannot hold ; men cannot abide
 quiet under so violent constraints ; the intestine
 jars, or unkindly truces, between heart and tongue
 (those natural friends) cannot be perpetual, or very
 durable : no man can hold his breath long, or live
 without evaporating through his mouth those steams
 of passion which arise from flesh and blood. *My*
 Ps. xxxix. *heart was hot within me, while I was musing the*
 3. *fire burned ; then spake I with my tongue, saith*
 David, expressing the difficulty of obstructing the
 eruption of our affections into language. Hence it
 is, that speech is commonly judged the truest cha-
 racter of the mind, and the surest test of inward
 worth ; as that which discloseth the *hidden man of*
the heart, which unlocketh the closets of the breast,
 which draws the soul out of her dark recesses into
 open light and view, which rendereth our thoughts
 visible, and our intentions palpable. Hence, *Lo-*
quere, ut te videam, Speak, that I may see you, or
 know what kind of man you are, is a saying which
 all men, at first meeting, do in their hearts direct one
 to another : neither commonly doth any man re-
 quire more to ground a judgment upon concerning
 the worth or ability of another, than opportunity of
 hearing him to discourse for a competent time : yea,
 often before a man hath spoken ten words, his mind
 is caught, and a formal sentence is passed upon it.
 Such a strict affinity and connection do all men sup-
 pose between thoughts and words.

'Ανδρὶς χα-
 ρακτὴρ ἐκ
 λόγου γινώ-
 σκῆται.
 1 Pet. iii. 4.

2. From hence, that the use of speech is itself a **SERM.**
great ingredient into our practice, and hath a very **XIII.**
general influence upon whatever we do, may be in-
ferred, that whoever governeth it well, cannot also
but well order his whole life. The extent of speech
must needs be vast, since it is nearly commensurate
to thought itself, which it ever closely traceth, widely
ranging through all the immense variety of objects ;
so that men almost as often speak incogitantly, as
they think silently. Speech is indeed the rudder
that steereth human affairs, the spring that setteth
the wheels of action on going ; the hands work, the
feet walk, all the members and all the senses act by
its direction and impulse ; yea, most thoughts are be-
gotten, and most affections stirred up thereby : it is
itself most of our employment, and what we do be-
side it, is however guided and moved by it. It is
the profession and trade of many, it is the practice of
all men, to be in a manner continually talking. The
chief and most considerable sort of men manage
all their concernments merely by words ; by them
princes rule their subjects, generals command their
armies, senators deliberate and debate about the great
matters of state : by them advocates plead causes, and
judges decide them ; divines perform their offices, and
minister their instructions ; merchants strike up their
bargains, and drive on all their traffick. Whatever
almost great or small is done in the court or in the
hall, in the church or at the exchange, in the school
or in the shop, it is the tongue alone that doeth it :
it is the force of this little machine that turneth all
the human world about. It is indeed the use of this
strange organ which rendereth human life, beyond
the simple life of other creatures, so exceedingly va-

SERM. rious and compounded ; which creates, such a multi-
 XIII. plicity of business, and which transacts it ; while by
 it we communicate our secret conceptions, transfusing
 them into others ; while therewith we instruct
 and advise one another ; while we consult about
 what is to be done, contest about right, dispute
 about truth ; while the whole business of conversa-
 tion, of commerce, of government, and administra-
 tion of justice, of learning, and of religion, is ma-
 naged thereby ; yea, while it stoppeth the gaps of
 time, and filleth up the wide intervals of busi-
 ness, our recreations and divertisements (the which
 do constitute a great portion of our life) mainly con-
 sisting therein, so that, in comparison thereof, the
 execution of what we determine and all other actions
 do take up small room : and even all that usually de-
 pendeth upon foregoing speech, which persuadeth, or
 counselleth, or commandeth it. Whence the pro-
 vince of speech being so very large, it being so uni-
 versally concerned, either immediately as the matter,
 or by consequence as the source of our actions, he
 that constantly governeth it well may justly be es-
 teemed to live very excellently.

3. To govern the tongue well is a matter of ex-
 ceeding difficulty, requiring not only hearty good-
 ness, but great judgment and art, together with
 much vigilance and circumspection ; whence the
 doing it argues a high pitch of virtue. For since
 the tongue is a very loose and versatile engine, which
 the least breath of thought doth stir, and set on going
 any way, it cannot but need much attention to keep
 it either in a steady rest or in a right motion. Since
 numberless swarms of things roving in the fancy
 do thence incessantly obtrude themselves upon the

tongue, very much application of mind and great judgment are requisite to select out of them those few which are good and fit, rejecting all that is bad and improper to be spoken. Since continually temptations occur provoking or alluring to miscarriage in this kind, (for beside internal propensions and commotions of soul, every object we behold, every company we are engaged in, every accident befalling us, doth suggest somewhat inviting thereto; the condition of our neighbour moving us, if high, to flatter, if low, to insult; our own fortune prompting, if prosperous, to boast, if cross, to murmur; any action drawing from us, if it pleaseth us, fond admiration, if it disliketh, harsh censure: since, I say, we are thus at every turn obnoxious to speak amiss,) it must be matter of huge skill and caution, of mighty industry and resolution, to decline it. We for that purpose need to imitate that earnest and watchful care of the holy Psalmist, which he thus expresseth; *I have, saith he, purposed that my mouth shall not offend:* and, *I said, saith he again, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.* And thus to maintain a constant guard over his heart and ways, thus in consequence thereof to curb and rule his speech well, must assuredly be the mark of a very good person. Especially considering, that,

4. Irregular speech hath commonly divers more advantages for it, and fewer checks upon it, than other bad practice hath. A man is apt, I mean, to speak ill with less dissatisfaction and regret from within; he may do it with less control and less hazard from without, than he can act ill. Bad actions

SERM. are gross and bulky, taking up much time, and having much force spent on them, whence men easily observe and consider them in themselves and others: but ill words are subtile and transient, soon born, and as soon deceased; whence men rashly utter them without much heed before them, or much reflection after them. Bad actions have also usually visible effects immediately consequent on them: but words operate insensibly and at distance; so that men hardly discern what will follow them, or what they have effected. There are also frequent occasions of speaking ill upon presumption of secrecy, and thence of indisturbance and impunity; yea, doing so is often entertained with complacency, and encouraged with applause: the vilest abuses of speech (even blasphemy, treason, and slander themselves) may be safely whispered into ears, which will receive them with pleasure and commendation. Bad language also in most cases is neither strictly prohibited, nor severely chastised by human laws, as bad action is. Whence ordinarily the guilt of this misbehaviour seems little or none; and persons much practising it, both in their own conceit, and in the opinion of others, do often pass for innocent. Men indeed here will hardly discern any rule, or acknowledge any obligation: the tongue they deem is free, and any words may be dispensed with: it is sufficient if they abstain from doing gross wrong or mischief, they have a right and liberty to say any thing: *Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* so are men commonly prone to say, with those in the Psalm. Hence whosoever, notwithstanding such encouragements to offend herein, and so few restraints from it, doth yet carefully forbear it, go-

Psalm. xiii. 4.

verning his tongue according to rules of duty and reason, may justly be reputed a very good man. **SERM. XIII.**

Furthermore,

5. Whereas most of the enormities, the mischiefs, and the troubles, whereby the souls of men are defiled, their minds discomposed, and their lives disquieted, are the fruits of ill-governed speech; it being that chiefly which perverteth justice, which soweth dissensions, which raiseth all bad passions and animosities, which embroileth the world in seditions and factions, by which men wrong and abuse, deceive and seduce, defame and disgrace one another, whereby consequently innumerable vexations and disturbances are created among men; he that by well governing his speech preserveth himself from the guilt, disengageth his mind and life from the inconveniences of all such evils, (from the discreet and honest management thereof enjoying both innocence and peace,) must necessarily be, as a very wise and happy, so a very good and worthy person.

6. His tongue also so ruled cannot but produce very good fruits of honour to God, of benefit to our neighbour, of comfort to himself: it will be sweet and pleasant, it will be wholesome and useful; endearing conversation, cementing peaceful society, breeding and nourishing love, instructing and edifying, or cheering and comforting the hearers. His *tongue is health; his mouth is a well and tree of life; his lips disperse knowledge; he shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth; every man shall kiss his lips.* Such, as the Wise Man telleth us, are the effects of innocent, sober, and well-ordered discourse; the which do much

Prov. xii.
18. x. 11.
xv. 4. xii.
14. xiii. 2.
3. xv. 23.
xxiv. 26.

SERM. commend their author, and declare the excellent
XIII. virtue of that tree from which such fruits do grow.

7. Lastly, the observation how unusual this practice is, in any good degree, may strongly assure the excellency thereof. For the rarer, especially in morals, any good thing is, the more noble and worthy it is; that rarity arguing somewhat of peculiar difficulty in the attainment or the achievement thereof. Nothing is more obvious to common experience, than that persons, who in the rest of their demeanour and dealings appear blameless, yea, who in regard to other points of duty would seem nice and precise, are extremely peccant in this kind. We may see divers, otherwise much restraining and much denying themselves, who yet indulge themselves a strange licentiousness in speaking whatever their humour or their passion dictates. Many, in other respects harmless, (who would not for any thing smite or slay folks,) we may observe with their tongue to commit horrible outrages upon any man that comes in their way. Frequently persons very punctual in their dealings are very unjust in their language, cheating and robbing their neighbour of his reputation by envious detraction and hard censure. They who abhor shedding a man's blood will yet, without any scruple or remorse, by calumnious tales and virulent reproaches, assassinate his credit, and murder his good name, although to him perhaps far more dear and precious than his life. Commonly such as are greatly staunch in other enjoyments of pleasure, are enormously intemperate in speaking, and very incontinent of their tongue: men in all other parts of morality rigorously sober, are often in this very wild and dissolute. Yea, not

seldom we may observe, that even mighty pretend-
ers to godliness, and zealous practisers of devotion,
cannot forbear speaking things plainly repugnant to
God's law, and very prejudicial to his honour. Thus
it is observable to be now; and thus we may sup-
pose that it always hath been. So of his time St.
Hierome, (or rather St. Paulinus, in his excellent
Epistle to Celantia) testifies: **Such a lust* (saith he,
concerning the ill governance of speech) *of this evil*
hath invaded the minds of men, that even those,
who have far receded from other vices, do yet fall
into this, as into the last snare of the Devil. So it
appears, that among all sorts of good practice, the
strict governance of the tongue is least ordinary, and
consequently, that it is most admirable and excel-
lent. And this is all I shall say for confirmation of
the point asserted.

Now then, as it is our duty to aim at perfection,
or to endeavour the attainment of integrity in heart
and life, so we should especially labour to govern
our tongue, and guard it from offence. To which
purpose it is requisite, that we should well under-
stand and consider the nature of those several of-
fences to which speech is liable, together with the
special pravity, deformity, and inconvenience of each:
for did we know and weigh them, we should not
surely either like or dare to incur them.

The offences of speech are many and various in
kind; so many as there be of thought and of action,
unto which they do run parallel: accordingly they

* Tanta hujus mali libido mentes hominum invasit, ut etiam
qui procul ab aliis vitiis recesserunt, in istud tamen, quasi in ex-
tremum diaboli laqueum, incidant. *Ad Celant.*

SERM. well may be distinguished from the difference of
XIII. objects which they do specially respect. Whence,

1. some of them are committed against God, and confront piety; 2. others against our neighbour, and violate justice, or charity, or peace; 3. others against ourselves, infringing sobriety, discretion, or modesty; or, 4. some are of a more general and abstracted nature, rambling through all matters, and crossing all the heads of duty. It is true, that in most, or in all offences of speech, there is a complication of impiety, iniquity, and imprudence; for that by all sorts of ill speaking we sin against God, and break his commandment; we injure our neighbour, at least by contagion and bad example; we abuse ourselves, contracting guilt, and exposing ourselves to punishment: also the general vices of speech (unadvisedness and vanity) do constantly adhere to every bad word: yet commonly each evil speech hath a more direct and immediate aspect upon some one of those objects, (God, our neighbour, or ourselves,) and is peculiarly repugnant to one of those capital virtues (piety, charity, and sobriety) unto which all our duty is reduced. Now according to this distinction, I should, if time would give leave, describe and dissuade particularly all these sorts of offence: but (since I must be respectful to patience, and careful myself not to offend in speech) I shall confine the rest of my present discourse to the first sort, the offences against piety; and even of them I shall (waving the rest) only touch two or three, insinuating some reasons why we should eschew them. These are,

(Ps. lxxviii. I. Speaking blasphemously against God, or re-
 19. Num. xxi. proachfully concerning religion, or to the disgrace of
 5.

piety, with intent to subvert men's faith in God, or SERM. XIII. to impair their reverence of him. There hath been XIII. a race of men (and would to God that race were Job xxxiv. 37.) not even till now continued) concerning whom the Psalmist said, *They speak loftily, they set their mouth against the heavens; who, like the proud Sennacherib, lift up their eyes, and exalt their voice against the Holy One of Israel; who, with the profane Antiochus, speak marvellous things against the God of gods.* Ps. lxxiii. 8, 9. This of all impieties is the most Isa. xxxvii. 23. Chron. xxxii. 19. Dan. xi. 36. prodigiously gigantic, the most signal practice of enmity towards God, and downright waging of war against heaven. Of all *weapons formed against God*, Isa. liv. 17. the tongue most notoriously doth impugn him; for we cannot reach heaven with our hands, or immediately assault God by our actions: other ill practice indeed obliquely, or by consequence dishonoureth God, and defameth goodness; but profane discourse is directly levelled at them, and doth immediately touch them, as its formal objects. Now doing thus argueth an extremity both of folly and naughtiness: for he that doeth it, either believeth the existence of God, and the truth of religion; or he distrusts them. If he doth believe them, what a desperate madness is it in him, advisedly to invite certain mischief to his home, and pull down heaviest vengeance on his own head, by opposing the irresistible power, and provoking the inflexible justice of God! What an abominable villainy and baseness is it thus to abuse God's immense goodness and mercy, offering such despite to the Author of his being, and free Donor of all the good he enjoys! What a monstrous conspiracy is it of stupidity and perverseness in him, thus wilfully to defy his own welfare, to forfeit all capacity

SERM. of happiness ; to precipitate and plunge himself into
XIII. a double hell, that of bitter remorse here, that of
 endless pain hereafter ! But if he that reproacheth
 God and religion be supposed distrustful of their
 being and reality, neither so is he excusable from
 like degrees of folly and pravity : for, beside the wild
 extravagance of such disbelief, against legions of co-
 gent arguments and pregnant testimonies, against
 all the voice of nature and faith of history, against
 the settled judgment of wise and sober persons who
 have studied and considered the point, against the
 current tradition of all ages, and general consent of
 mankind ; all which to withstand, no less demon-
 strateth high indiscretion than arrogance ; beside
 also the palpable silliness which he displays, in
 causelessly (or for no other cause than soothing a
 fantastic humour) drawing upon himself the anger
 and hatred of all men who are concerned for the in-
 terests of their religion, thrusting himself into great
 dangers and mischiefs thence imminent to him both
 from private zeal and public law ; beside, I say, these
 evident follies, there is an unsufferable insolence and
 horrible malice apparent in this practice ; for it is no
 less than the height of insolence, thus to affront
 mankind in matters of highest consideration, and
 deepest resentment with it ; not only thwarting its
 common notions, but vilifying the chief objects of its
 highest respect and affection, of its main care and
 concernment ; so making the fiercest invasion that
 can be on its credit, and charging it with greatest
 fondness. Who can endure that He, whom he appre-
 hends to be his grand Parent, his best Friend and
 Benefactor, his great Patron and Sovereign, should
 in downright terms be defamed or disparaged ? Who

can patiently bear that, wherein he placeth his utmost hopes and supreme felicity, to be expressly slighted or scorned? Who can take the offering to do this, otherwise than for a most injurious reflection upon his judgment and his practice? If he cannot believe in God, he may let them alone who do: if he will not practise religion, he may forbear to persecute it. He cannot pretend any zeal; it is therefore only pride that moves him to disturb us. So may every man with all the reason in the world complain against the profane talker. Seeing also it is most evident, that hearty reverence of God, and a conscientious regard to religion, do produce great benefits to mankind, being indeed the main supports of common honesty and sobriety, the sole curbs, effectually restraining men from unjust fraud and violence, from brutish lusts and passions; since apparently religion prescribeth the best rules, and imposeth the strongest engagements to the performance of those actions, whereby not only men's private welfare is promoted, and ordinary conversation is sweetened, and common life is adorned, but also whereby public order and peace are maintained; since, as Cicero with good reason judged, *piety being removed, it is probable that justice itself* (of all virtues the best guarded and fortified by human power) *could not subsist, no faith could be secured, no society could be preserved among men*; it being manifestly vain to fancy, that assuredly without religious conscience any one will be a good subject, a true friend, or an honest man; or that any other consideration can induce men to prefer duty to their prince, the prosperity of their country, fidelity toward their friends or neighbours, before their own present

SERM
XIII.

Haud scio
an, pietate
adversus
Deos sub-
lata, fides
etiam, et
societas hu-
mani gen-
neris, et
una excel-
lentissima
virtus jus-
titia tolla-
tur. Cic.

SERM. interests and pleasure : since, I say, the credit of religion is so very beneficial and useful to mankind, it is plain that he must be exceedingly spiteful and malicious, who shall by profane discourse endeavour to supplant or shake it. He that speaketh against God's providence hath assuredly a pique at goodness, and would not have it predominant in the hearts of men. He that disparages religion doth certainly take his aim against virtue, and would not have it practised in the world: his meaning plainly is, to effect, if he can, that men should live like beasts in foul impurities, or like fiends in mischievous iniquities. Such an one therefore is not to be taken as a simple embracer of error, but as a spiteful designe against common good. For indeed, were any man assured (as none can upon so much as probable grounds think it) that religion had been only devised by men, as a supplemental aid to reason and force, (drawing them, whom the one could not persuade, nor the other compel, to the practice of things conducive to the public weal;) that it were merely an implement of policy, or a knack to make people loyal to their prince, upright in their dealings, sober in their conversations, moderate in their passions, virtuous in all their doings; it were yet a most barbarous naughtiness and inhumanity in him to assay the overthrow thereof, with the defeating so excellent purposes: he that should attempt it, justly would deserve to be reputed an enemy to the welfare of mankind, to be treated as a pestilent disturber of the world.

Ut quos
ratio non
posset, eos
ad officium
religio duceret. Cic.

II. Another like offence against piety is, to speak loosely and wantonly about holy things, (things nearly related to God or to religion,) to make such

things the matter of sport and mockery, to play and trifle with them. But of this I shall have occasion to speak in another discourse. SERM.
XIII.

III. Another grand offence against piety is, rash and vain swearing in common discourse; an offence which now strangely reigns and rages in the world, passing about in a specious garb and under glorious titles, as a genteel and graceful quality, a mark of fine breeding, and a point of high gallantry. Who, forsooth, now is the brave spark and complete gentleman, but he that hath the skill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a skill! how mad a confidence!) to lard every sentence with an oath or a curse; making bold at every turn to salute God, fetching him down from heaven to avouch any idle prattle, to second any giddy passion, to concern himself in any trivial affair of his; yea, calling and challenging the Almighty to damn and destroy him! But somewhat to repress these fond conceits and vile practices, let us, I pray, consider,

1. That swearing thus is most expressly and strictly prohibited to us. *I say unto you, Swear not at all: but let your conversation be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil: so our Lord forbids it. But above all things, my brethren, swear not—lest you enter into condemnation: so doth St. James warn against it.* And is it not then prodigious, that in Christendom any man should affect to break laws so plain and so severe; that it should pass here not only for a tolerable, but even for a commendable practice, to violate so manifest and so important a duty; that so directly to thwart our Lord himself should be a thing

SERM. not in use only, but in credit and request among
XIII. Christians? What more palpable affront could be offered to our religion, and to all that is sacred among us? For what respect or force can we imagine reserved to religion, while a practice so indisputably opposite thereto, in a high degree, is so current and prevalent?

2. Again, according to the very nature and reason of things, it is evidently an intolerable profaneness, thus unadvisedly to make addresses and appeals to God, invoking his testimony, and demanding his judgment about trifles; far more such, than it were a high presumption and encroachment upon the majesty of a prince, on every petty occasion to break into his presence, and to assail his ears, dragging him to hear and determine concerning it. Whence the very light of nature condemns this practice, and even heathens have loudly declared against it, as derogatory to the reverence of the duty, and unsuitable to the gravity of a worthy man.

3. Swearing indeed is by our holy Oracles worthily represented to us as an especial piece of worship and devotion toward God; wherein, duly performed, we piously acknowledge his chief attributes and singular prerogatives: (his being every where present, and conscious of all we say or do; his goodness and fidelity, in favouring truth and protecting right; his justice, in rewarding veracity and equity, in avenging falsehood and iniquity; his being the supreme Lord of all persons, and last Judge in all causes; to signify and avow these things to God's glory, swearing was instituted, and naturally serveth :) wherefore, as all other acts of devotion, so this grand one especially should never be performed without all se-

rious consideration and humble reverence ; the cause should be certainly just and true, the matter worthy and weighty, the manner grave and solemn, the mind framed to earnest attention, and furnished with devout affections. Those conditions are always carefully to be observed, which the Prophet intimates when he chargeth thus ; *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.* It is therefore horrible mockery and profanation of a most sacred ordinance, when men presume to use it without any care or consideration, without any respect or awe, upon any slight or vain occasion.

SERM.
XIII.

Jer. iv. 2.

4. The doing so is also very prejudicial to human society ; for the decision of right, the security of government, and the preservation of peace, do much depend upon an awful regard to oaths ; and therefore upon their being only used in due manner and season : the same do greatly suffer by the contempt or disregard of them, and consequently by their common and careless use. They are the surest bonds by which the consciences of men are tied to the attestation of truth and observance of faith ; the which as by rare and reverent use they are kept firm and fast, so by frequent and negligent application of them (by their prostitution to every light and toyish matter) they are quite dissolved, or much slackened. Whence the public seems much concerned that this enormity should be retrenched. For if oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance signify ? If men are wont to dally with swearing every where, can they be expected to be strict and serious therein at the bar, or in the church ? Will they re-

SERM. guard the testimony of God, or dread his judgment, in
XIII. one place, or at one time, when as every where continually (upon any, upon no occasion) they dare to confront and contemn them ?

5. This way of swearing is also a very uncivil and unmannerly practice. It is not only a gross rudeness toward the main body of men, who justly reverence the name of God, and loathe such abuses thereof; not only an insolent defiance to the common profession and law of our country, which disallows and condemns it; but it is very odious and offensive to any particular society, if at least there be one sober person therein: for to any such person (who retains a sense of goodness, or is anywise concerned for God's honour) no language or behaviour can be more disgustful; nothing can more grate the ears or fret the heart of such an one, than this kind of talk: to give him the lie were a compliment, to spit in his face were an obligation, in comparison thereto. Wherefore it is a wonder, that any person, having in him a spark of ingenuity, or at all pretending to good manners, should find in his heart or deign to use it.

6. This practice also much derogateth from the credit of him that useth it, rendering the truth of whatever he says in reason and justice suspected. For he that is so void of conscience as to swear vainly, what can engage him to speak truly? He that is so loose in one such point of obedience to God and reason, why should we conceive him in regard to another?

7. It can be surely no wrong to distrust him, since he implies himself not to be, even in his own opinion,

a credible person; since he judges not his own bare affirmation to deserve belief. For why, if he takes his word to be competently good, doth he back it with such asseverations? why unprovoked calls he God to witness, if he thinks his own honesty sufficient to assure the truth of what he says? An honest man, methinks, should scorn thus to invalidate his own credit, or to detract from the authority of his word, which should stand firm upon itself, and not want an oath to support it.

8. To excuse this, the swearer must be forced to confess another ugly fault in speaking, that is, impertinence, or using of waste and insignificant words; to be charged wherewith he is indeed however unavoidably liable. For oaths, as they pass commonly, are mere excrescences of speech, which do nothing else but encumber and deform it: they embellish discourse, just as a wen or a scab does beautify a face; as a spot or a patch do adorn a garment. For to what purpose, I pray, is God's name haled into our idle talk? Why should we so often mention him, when we never mean any thing about him? Into every sentence to foist a dog, or a horse, would altogether be as proper and pertinent. These superfluous words signify nothing, but that the speaker little skilleth the use of speech, or the rule of conversation, but meaneth to prate any thing without wit or judgment; that his fancy is very beggarly, and craves the aid of any impertinency to relieve it. One would think that a man of sense should grutch to lend his ears, or incline his attention, to such putid stuff; that without nauseating he should not endure to see men lavish time, and squander breath so frivolously.

SERM. XIII.

Tantus in te sit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putet. Hier.

Πρὸς ἀνα-
σλήρωσιν
λόγου. Hier.

SERM.
XIII.

9. In fine, this offence is particularly most inexcusable, in that it scarce hath any temptation to it, or bringeth with it any advantage; so that it is unaccountable what (beside mere vanity or perverseness) should dispose men thereto. It gratifieth no sense, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour: for the sound of it is not very melodious, nor surely was any man ever preferred for it, or got an estate thereby; it rather to any good ear maketh a horrid and jarring noise, it rather produceth displeasure, damage, and disgrace. Wherefore of all dealers in sin the swearer is apparently the silliest, and maketh the worst bargains for himself; for he sinneth gratis, and, like those in the Prophet, *selleth his soul for nothing*. An epicure hath some reason, and an extortioner is a man of wisdom, if compared to him; for they enjoy some pleasure, or acquire some gain here, in lieu of their salvation hereafter. But he offends heaven, and abandons happiness, he knows not why, nor for what; a fond humour possesses him, he inconsiderately follows a herd of fops, he affects to play the ape; that is all he can say for himself. Let me be pardoned, if just indignation against a wickedness so contemptible, so heinous, and so senseless, and withal so notorious, and so rife among us, doth extort from me language somewhat tart and vehement.

Isa. lii. 3.

If men would then but a little consider things, surely this scurvy fashion would be soon discarded, much fitter for the scum of the people than for the flower of the gentry; yea rather, much below any man endued with a scrap of reason, not to say with a grain of religion. Could we bethink ourselves,

certainly modest, sober, and pertinent discourse, would appear far more generous and manly, than such wild hectoring God Almighty, such rude insulting over the received laws, such ruffianly swaggering against sobriety and goodness. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their ancestors, (that gallant courage, that solid wisdom, that noble courtesy, which first advanced their families, and severed them from the vulgar,) this degenerate wantonness and dirtiness of speech would return to the dunghill, or rather (which God grant) would be quite banished from the world.

Finally, as to this whole point, about not offending in our speech against piety, we should consider, that as we ourselves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly designed and framed to serve and glorify our Maker; (it being withal the greatest perfection of our nature, and the noblest privilege thereof so to do;) so especially our tongue and speaking faculty were given us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to express our love and gratitude toward him, to celebrate his praises, to acknowledge his benefits, to promote his honour and service. This consequently is the most proper and worthy use thereof; from this it becomes in effect what the Psalmist so often terms it, our *glory*, and the best member we have; as that whereby we far excel all creatures here below; that whereby we consort with the blessed angels above, in distinct utterance of praise to our Creator. Wherefore applying it to any imious discourse, (tending anywise to the dishonour of God, or disparagement of religion,) is a

SERM.
XIII.

Ps. xvi. 9.
xxx. 12.
lvi. 8.
cviii. 1.

SERM. most unnatural abuse thereof, and a vile ingrati-
XIII. tude toward him that gave it to us. From which,
and from all other offences, God in his mercy
preserve us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord, unto
whom for ever with heart and tongue let us strive
to render all glory and praise. *Amen.*

S E R M O N X I V .

—◆—
A I N S T F O O L I S H T A L K I N G A N D J E S T I N G .
—◆—

E P H E S . v . 4 .

nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.

ORAL and political aphorisms are seldom couch-
ed in such terms, that they should be taken as they
stand precisely, or according to the widest extent of
application; but do commonly need exposition, and
in every exception: otherwise frequently they would
not only clash with reason and experience, but in-
terfere, thwart, and supplant one another. The best
masters of such wisdom are wont to interdict things,
by unseasonable or excessive use to be pervert-
ed in general forms of speech, leaving the restric-
tions, which the case may require or bear, to be
determined by the hearer's or interpreter's discretion:
hence many seemingly formal prohibitions are to
be received only as sober cautions. This observa-
tion may be particularly supposed applicable to this
precept of St. Paul, which seemeth universally to
be a practice commended (in some cases and de-
grees) by philosophers as virtuous, not disallowed by
religion, commonly affected by men, often used by
wise and good persons; from which consequently
if our religion did wholly debar us, it would seem
incompatible with somewhat too uncouth austerity

SERM.
XIV.

SERM. and sourness : from imputations of which kind as
 XIV. in its temper and frame it is really most free, (it

οὐ μὴ ἐ-
 σόντες μὴδὲ
 γιλαίον, τὰς
 εἰς λίγους
 δουχισαίνον-
 ται, ἀγγίω
 καὶ σπληροῖ
 δουῶσιν εἶναι.
 Arist. Eth.
 iv. 8.
 a Phil. iv. 8.

never quenching natural light, or cancelling the dic-
 tates of sound reason, but confirming and improv-
 ing them ;) so it carefully declineth them, enjoining
 us, that ^a *if there be any things προσφιλῆ (lovely, or*
grateful to men,) any things εὖφημα, (of good re-
port and repute,) if there be any virtue and any
praise, (any thing in the common apprehensions of
men held worthy and laudable,) we should mind
those things, that is, should yield them a regard an-
swerable to the esteem they carry among rational
and sober persons.

Whence it may seem requisite so to interpret and
 determine St. Paul's meaning here concerning ἐ-
 τραπελία, (that is, facetious speech or raillery, by our
 translators rendered *jesting*,) that he may consist
 with himself, and be reconciled to Aristotle, who
 placeth this practice in the rank of virtues ; or that
 religion and reason may well accord in the case ;
 supposing, that if there be any kind of facetiousness
 innocent and reasonable, conformable to good man-
 ners, (regulated by common sense, and consistent
 with the tenor of Christian duty, that is, not trans-
 gressing the bounds of piety, charity, and sobriety,)
 St. Paul did not intend to discountenance or pro-
 hibit that kind.

For thus expounding and limiting his intent, we
 have some warrant from himself, some fair intima-
 tions in the words here. For first, what sort of fa-
 cetious speech he aimeth at, he doth imply by the
 fellow he coupleth therewith ; *μωρολογία*, saith he, ἢ
ἐντραπελία, foolish talking, or facetiousness : such fa-
 cetiousness therefore he toucheth as doth include

folly, in the matter or manner thereof. Then he further determineth it, by adjoining a peculiar quality thereof, unprofitableness or impertinency; τὰ μὴ ἀνήκοντα, *which are not pertinent*, or conducive to any good purpose: whence may be collected, that it is a frivolous and idle sort of facetiousness which he condemneth.

SERM.
XIV.

But however manifest it is, that some kind thereof he doth earnestly forbid: whence, in order to the guidance of our practice, it is needful to distinguish the kinds, severing that which is allowable from that which is unlawful; that so we may be satisfied in the case, and not on the one hand ignorantly transgress our duty, nor on the other trouble ourselves with scruples, others with censures, upon the use of warrantable liberty therein.

And such a resolution seemeth indeed especially needful in this our age, (this pleasant and jocular age,) which is so infinitely addicted to this sort of speaking, that it scarce doth affect or prize any thing near so much; all reputation appearing now to vail and stoop to that of being a wit: to be learned, to be wise, to be good, are nothing in comparison thereto; even to be noble and rich are inferior things, and afford no such glory. Many at least, to purchase this glory, to be deemed considerable in this faculty, and enrolled among the wits, do not only *make shipwreck of conscience*, abandon virtue, and forfeit all pretences to wisdom; but neglect their estates, and prostitute their honour: so to the private damage of many particular persons, and with no small prejudice to the public, are our times possessed and transported with this humour. To repress the excess and extravagance whereof, nothing

SERM. in way of discourse can serve better, than a plain
 XIV. declaration when and how such a practice is allow-
 able or tolerable ; when it is wicked and vain, un-
 worthy of a man endued with reason, and pretend-
 ing to honesty or honour.

This I shall in some measure endeavour to perform.

But first it may be demanded what the thing we speak of is, or what this facetiousness doth import? To which question I might reply as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, *It is that which we all see and know*: any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, than I can inform him by description. It is indeed a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale: sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound: sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression: sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude: sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting, or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or an acute nonsense: sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counter-

Eadem
 quæ, si im-
 prudenti-
 bus exci-
 dunt, stul-
 ta sunt, si
 simulamus,
 venusta
 creduntur.
 Quint. vi. 3.

feit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it: **SERM.**
 sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a pre- **XIV.**
 sumptuous bluntness giveth it being: sometimes it
 riseth from a lucky hitting upon what is strange,
 sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to
 the purpose: often it consisteth in one knows not
 what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how.
 Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being
 answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and
 windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of
 speaking out of the simple and plain way, (such as Et hercle
 omnis salse
 dicendi ra-
 tio in eo
 est, ut ali-
 ter quam
 est rectum
 dicatur. *Quint.*
 reason teacheth and proveth things by,) which by a
 pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expres-
 sion doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it
 some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto. It
 raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of
 apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a viva-
 city of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar:
 it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that
 one can fetch in remote conceits applicable; a not-
 able skill, that he can dexterously accommodate them
 to the purpose before him; together with a lively
 briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful
 flashes of imagination. (Whence in Aristotle such Eth. iv. 8.
 persons are termed ἐπιδέξιοι, *dexterous* men; and εὐ-
 τροποί, men of facile or versatile manners, who can Εὐτρόποι
 λίγισται ὁ
 παύσιλος, ὁ
 παντοδαμοί,
 ὁ ἄστατος, ὁ
 ὑπελός, ὁ
 πάντα γι-
 νόμιμος.
 easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all
 things to themselves.) It also procureth delight, by
 gratifying curiosity with its rareness or semblance
 of difficulty; (as monsters, not for their beauty, but
 their rarity; as juggling tricks, not for their use,
 but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure;) by
 diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts;
 by instilling gayety and airiness of spirit; by provok-

SERM. ing to such dispositions of spirit in way of emulation
 XIV. or complaisance; and by seasoning matters, otherwise
 distasteful or insipid, with an unusual, and thence
 grateful tang.

But saying no more concerning what it is, and leaving it to your imagination and experience to supply the defect of such explication, I shall address myself to shew, first, when and how such a manner of speaking may be allowed; then, in what matters and ways it should be condemned.

Δασὶ δὲ ἡ
 ἀνάστασις
 καὶ ἡ ἀσπίς
 ἢ τῶν βίῳ
 ἀπὸ ἀνα-
 σίας.
 Arist. Eth.
 iv. 8.

I. Such facetiousness is not absolutely unreasonable or unlawful, which ministereth harmless divertisement and delight to conversation: (harmless, I say, that is, not entrenching upon piety, not infringing charity or justice, not disturbing peace.) For Christianity is not so tetrical, so harsh, so envious, as to bar us continually from innocent, much less from wholesome and useful pleasure, such as human life doth need or require. And if jocular discourse may serve to good purposes of this kind; if it may be apt to raise our drooping spirits, to allay our irksome cares, to whet our blunted industry, to recreate our minds being tired and cloyed with graver occupations; if it may breed alacrity, or maintain good humour among us; if it may conduce to sweeten conversation and endear society; then is it not inconvenient or unprofitable. If for those ends we may use other recreations, employing on them our ears and eyes, our hands and feet, our other instruments of sense and motion; why may we not as well to them accommodate our organs of speech and interior sense? Why should those games which excite our wits and fancies be less reasonable, than those whereby our grosser parts and faculties are

Danda est
 remissio
 animis;
 meliores
 acrioresque
 requieti
 surgent, &c.
 Sen de
 Tranq. 15.

exercised? Yea, why are not those more reason-
 able, since they are performed in a manly way, and
 have in them a smack of reason; seeing also they
 be so managed, as not only to divert and please, but
 to improve and profit the mind, rousing and quick-
 ening it, yea, sometimes enlightening and instruct-
 ing it, by good sense conveyed in jocular expression?

It would surely be hard, that we should be tied
 ever to knit the brow and squeeze the brain, (to be
 always sadly dumpish, or seriously pensive,) that all
 divertisement of mirth and pleasantness should be
 shut out of conversation: and how can we better re-
 lieve our minds, or relax our thoughts, how can we
 be more ingenuously cheerful, in what more kindly
 way can we exhilarate ourselves and others, than
 by thus *sacrificing to the graces*, as the ancients
 called it? Are not some persons always, and all
 persons sometimes, incapable otherwise to divert
 themselves, than by such discourse? Shall we, I
 say, have no recreation? or must our recreations be
 ever clownish or childish, consisting merely in rus-
 tical efforts, or in petty sleights of bodily strength
 and activity? Were we, in fine, obliged ever to talk
 like philosophers, assigning dry reasons for every
 thing, and dropping grave sentences upon all occa-
 sions, would it not much deaden human life, and
 make ordinary conversation exceedingly to languish?
 Facetiousness therefore in such cases, and to such
 purposes, may be allowable.

2. Facetiousness is allowable, when it is the most
 proper instrument of exposing things apparently
 base and vile to due contempt. It is many times
 expedient, that things really ridiculous should ap-
 pear such, that they may be sufficiently loathed and

SERM.
 XIV.

—riden-
 tem dicere
 verum
 Quid vetat?

Θεί ενίς
 Χήρις
 ita Plato
 Xenocra-
 tem moro-
 siorem mo-
 nuit.

SERM. shunned; and to render them such is the part of a
 XIV. facetious wit, and usually can only be compassed

thereby. When to impugn them with downright reason, or to check them by serious discourse, would signify nothing; then representing them in a shape strangely ugly to the fancy, and thereby raising derision at them, may effectually discountenance them. Thus did the prophet Elias expose the wicked superstition of those who worshipped Baal: *Elias*, saith the text, *mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.* By which one pregnant instance it appeareth, that reasoning pleasantly-abusive in some cases may be useful. The holy scripture doth not indeed use it frequently; (it not suiting the divine simplicity and stately gravity thereof to do so;) yet its condescension thereto at any time sufficiently doth authorize a cautious use thereof. When sarcastical twitches are needful to pierce the thick skins of men, to correct their lethargic stupidity, to rouse them out of their drowsy negligence; then may they well be applied: when plain declarations will not enlighten people, to discern the truth and weight of things, and blunt arguments will not penetrate, to convince or persuade them to their duty; then doth reason freely resign its place to wit, allowing it to undertake its work of instruction and reproof.

1 Kings
 xviii. 27.

3. Facetious discourse particularly may be commodious for reprovng some vices and reclaiming some persons; (as salt for cleansing and curing some sores.) It commonly procureth a more easy access to the ears of men, and worketh a stronger impres-

sion on their hearts, than other discourse could do. **SERM.**
Many who will not stand a direct reproof, and can- **XIV.**
not abide to be plainly admonished of their fault,
will yet endure to be pleasantly rubbed, and will pa-
tiently bear a jocund wipe; though they abominate
all language purely bitter or sour, yet they can re-
lish discourse having in it a pleasant tartness: you
must not chide them as their master, but you may
gibe with them as their companion: if you do that,
they will take you for pragmatistical and haughty; this
they may interpret friendship and freedom. Most
men are of that temper; and particularly the genius
of divers persons, whose opinions and practices we
should strive to correct, doth require, not a grave and
severe, but a free and merry way of treating them.
For what can be more unsuitable and unpromising,
than to seem serious with those who are not so them-
selves, or demure with the scornful? If we design
either to please or vex them into better manners, we
must be as sportful in a manner, or as contemptuous
as themselves. If we mean to be heard by them, we
must talk in their own fashion, with humour and
jollity: if we will instruct them, we must withal
somewhat divert them: we must seem to play with
them, if we think to convey any sober thoughts into
them. They scorn to be formally advised or taught;
but they may perhaps be silyly laughed and lured into
a better mind. If by such complaisance we can invei-
gle those dotterels to hearken to us, we may induce
them to consider further, and give reason some com-
petent scope, some fair play with them. Good rea-
son may be apparelled in the garb of wit, and there-
in will securely pass whither in its native homeliness
it could never arrive: and being come thither, it

SERM. with especial advantage may impress good advice ;
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making an offender more clearly to see, and more deeply to feel his miscarriage ; being represented to his fancy in a strain somewhat rare and remarkable, yet not so fierce and frightful. The severity of reproof is tempered, and the reprover's anger disguised thereby. The guilty person cannot but observe, that he who thus reprehends him is not disturbed or out of humour, and that he rather pitieth than hateth him ; which breedeth a veneration to him, and imparteth no small efficacy to his wholesome suggestions. . Such a reprehension, while it forceth a smile without, doth work remorse within ; while it seemeth to tickle the ear, doth sting the heart. In fine, many whose foreheads are braced and hearts steeled against all blame, are yet not of proof against derision ; divers, who never will be reasoned, may be rallied into better order : in which cases raillery, as an instrument of so important good, as a servant of the best charity, may be allowed.

4. Some errors likewise in this way may be most properly and most successfully confuted ; such as deserve not, and hardly can bear a serious and solid confutation. He that will contest things apparently decided by sense and experience, or who disavows clear principles of reason, approved by general consent, and the common sense of men, what other hopeful way is there of proceeding with him, than pleasantly to explode his conceits ? To dispute seriously with him were trifling ; to trifle with him is the proper course : since he rejecteth the grounds of reasoning, it is vain to be in earnest : what then remains but to jest with him ? To deal seriously were to yield too much respect to such a

baffler, and too much weight to his fancies ; to raise the man too high in his courage and conceit ; to make his pretences seem worthy the considering and canvassing. Briefly, perverse obstinacy is more easily quelled, petulant impudence is sooner dashed, sophistical captiousness is more safely eluded, sceptical wantonness is more surely confounded in this, than in the simple way of discourse.

5. This way is also commonly the best way of defence against unjust reproach and obloquy. To yield to a slanderous reviler a serious reply, or to make a formal plea against his charge, doth seem to imply, that we much consider or deeply resent it ; whereas by pleasant reflection on it we signify, the matter only deserves contempt, and that we take ourselves unconcerned therein. So easily without care or trouble may the brunts of malice be declined or repelled.

6. This way may be allowed in way of counterbalancing and in compliance to the fashion of others. It would be a disadvantage unto truth and virtue, if their defenders were barred from the use of this weapon ; since it is that especially whereby the patrons of error and vice do maintain and propagate them. They being destitute of good reason, do usually recommend their absurd and pestilent notions by a pleasantness of conceit and expression, bewitching the fancies of shallow hearers, and inveigling heedless persons to a liking of them : and if, for reclaiming such people, the folly of those seducers may in like manner be displayed as ridiculous and odious, why should that advantage be refused ? It is wit that wageth the war against reason, against virtue, against religion ; wit alone it is that perverteth so

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many, and so greatly corrupteth the world: it may therefore be needful, in our warfare for those dearest concerns, to sort the manner of our fighting with that of our adversaries, and with the same kind of arms to protect goodness, whereby they do assail it. If wit may happily serve under the banner of truth and virtue, we may impress it for that service; and good it were to rescue so worthy a faculty from so vile abuse. It is the right of reason and piety to command that and all other endowments; folly and impiety do only usurp them: just and fit therefore it is, to wrest them out of so bad hands to re-voke them to their right use and duty.

It doth especially seem requisite to do it in this age, wherein plain reason is deemed a dull and heavy thing. When the mental appetite of men is become like the corporeal, and cannot relish any food without some piquant sauce, so that people will rather starve than live on solid fare; when substantial and sound discourse findeth small attention or acceptance; in such a time, he that can, may in complaisance, and for fashion's sake, vouchsafe to be facetious: an ingenious vein coupled with an honest mind may be a good talent: he shall employ wit commendably, who by it can further the interests of goodness, alluring men first to listen, then inducing them to consent unto its wholesome dictates and precepts.

Since men are so irreclaimably disposed to mirth and laughter, it may be well to set them in the right pin, to divert their humour into the proper channel, that they may please themselves in deriding things which deserve it, ceasing to laugh at that which requireth reverence or horror.

It may also be expedient to put the world out of

conceit, that all sober and good men are a sort of such lumpish or sour people, that they can utter nothing but flat and drowsy stuff; by shewing them, that such persons, when they see cause, in condescension, can be as brisk and smart as themselves; when they please, can speak pleasantly and wittily as well as gravely and judiciously. This way at least, in respect to the various palates of men, may for variety sake be sometimes attempted, when other means do fail: when many strict and subtile arguings, many zealous declamations, many wholesome, serious discourses have been spent, without effecting the extirpation of bad principles, or conversion of those who abet them; this course may be tried, and some perhaps may be reclaimed thereby.

7. Furthermore, the warrantableness of this practice in some cases may be inferred from a parity of reason, in this manner: If it be lawful, (as by the best authorities it plainly doth appear to be,) in using rhetorical schemes, poetical strains, involutions of sense in allegories, fables, parables, and riddles, to discoat from the plain and simple way of speech; why may not facetiousness, issuing from the same principles, directed to the same ends, serving to like purposes, be likewise used blamelessly? If those exorbitancies of speech may be accommodated to instil good doctrine into the head, to excite good passions in the heart, to illustrate and adorn the truth, in a delightful and taking way; and facetious discourse be sometime notoriously conducive to the same ends; why, they being retained, should it be rejected? especially considering how difficult often it may be, to distinguish those forms of discourse from this, or exactly to define the

SERM. limits which sever rhetoric and raillery. Some elegant
XIV. figures and tropes of rhetoric (biting sarcasms, sly ironies, strong metaphors, lofty hyperboles, paronomasies, oxymorons, and the like, frequently used by the best speakers, and not seldom even by sacred writers) do lie very near upon the confines of jocularly, and are not easily differenced from those sallies of wit, wherein the lepid way doth consist: so that were this wholly culpable, it would be matter of scruple, whether one hath committed a fault or no, when he meant only to play the orator, or the poet; and hard surely it would be to find a judge, who could precisely set out the difference between a jest and a flourish.

8. I shall only add, that of old even the sagest and gravest persons (persons of most rigid and severe virtue) did much affect this kind of discourse, and did apply it to noble purposes. The great introducer of moral wisdom among the pagans did practise it so much, (by it repressing the windy pride and fallacious vanity of sophisters in his time,) that he thereby got the name of *ὁ εἴρων*, *the droll*: and the rest of those who pursued his design, do by numberless stories and apophthegms recorded of them appear well skilled, and much delighted in this way. Many great princes, (as Augustus Cæsar for one, many of whose jests are extant in Macrobius,) many grave statesmen, (as Cicero particularly, who composed several books of jests,) many famous captains, (as Fabius, M. Cato the censor, Scipio Africanus, Epaminondas, Themistocles, Phocion, and many others, whose witty sayings together with their martial exploits are reported by historians,) have pleased themselves herein, and made it a condiment

Cic. de
Orat. ii.

of their weighty businesses. So that practising thus, **SERM.**
within certain rule and compass, we cannot err with- **XIV.**
out great patterns and mighty patrons ^a.

9. In fine, since it cannot be shewn that such a sportfulness of wit and fancy doth contain an intrinsic and inseparable turpitude; since it may be so cleanly, handsomely, and innocently used, as not to defile or discompose the mind of the speaker, not to wrong or harm the hearer, not to derogate from any worthy subject of discourse, not to infringe decency, to disturb peace, to violate any of the grand duties incumbent on us, (piety, charity, justice, sobriety,) but rather sometimes may yield advantage in those respects; it cannot well absolutely and universally be condemned: and when not used upon improper matter, in an unfit manner, with excessive measure, at undue season, to evil purpose, it may be allowed. It is bad objects, or bad adjuncts, which do spoil its indifference and innocence: it is the abuse thereof, to which (as all pleasant things are dangerous, and apt to degenerate into baits of intemperance and excess) it is very liable, that corrupteth it; and seemeth to be the ground, why in so general terms it is prohibited by the Apostle. Which prohibition to what cases or what sorts of jesting it extendeth we come now to declare.

Τὸ γιγῆναι, καὶ ἄστυϊα λίγισιν, ἐν δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀμαρτήματα ἵναί, ἀγχι δὲ, &c. Chrys. 'Αρ- θρ. ii.

Ὁ ἰσχυρὸς λυόμενος πατήρας ἵσταται σαχῶς. Chrys.

II. 1. All profane jesting, all speaking loosely and wantonly about holy things, (things nearly related to God and religion,) making such things the matters of sport and mockery, playing and trifling with them, is certainly prohibited, as an intolerably vain and

^a The two greatest men and gravest divines of their time (S. Greg. Naz. and S. Basil) could entertain one another with facetious epistles. (*Gr. Naz. Ep. 7. ad Basil.*) Σὺ σκῶπτε &c. et Ep. 8.

SERM. wicked practice. It is an infallible sign of a vain
XIV. and light spirit, which considereth little, and cannot distinguish things, to talk slightly concerning persons of high dignity, to whom especial respect is due; or about matters of great importance, which deserve very serious consideration. No man speaketh, or should speak, of his prince that which he hath not weighed, whether it will consist with that veneration which should be preserved inviolate to him: and is not the same, is not much greater care to be used in regard to the incomparably great and glorious Majesty of heaven? Yes, surely: as we should not without great awe think of him, so we should not presume to mention his name, his word, his institutions, any thing immediately belonging to him, without profoundest reverence and dread. It is the most enormous sauciness that can be imagined, to speak petulantly or pertly concerning him; especially considering, that whatever we do say about him, we do utter it in his presence, and to his very face. *For there is not, as the holy Psalmist considered, a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.* No man also hath the heart to droll, or thinks raillery convenient in cases nearly touching his life, his health, his estate, or his fame: and are the true life and health of our soul, are interest in God's favour and mercy, are everlasting glory and bliss, affairs of less moment? Are the treasures and joys of paradise, or the damages and torments in hell more jesting matters? No certainly, no: in all reason therefore it becometh us, and it infinitely concerneth us, whenever we think of these things, to be in best earnest, always to speak of them in most sober sadness.

Psalm
CXXXIX. 4.

The proper objects of common mirth and sportful **SERM.**
divertisement are mean and petty matters ; any thing **XIV.**
at least is by playing therewith made such : great
things are thereby diminished and debased ; espe-
cially sacred things do grievously suffer thence, being
with extreme indecency and indignity depressed be-
neath themselves, when they become the subjects of
flashy wit, or the entertainments of frothy merri-
ment : to sacrifice their honour to our vain pleasure,
being like the ridiculous fondness of that people,
which, as Ælian reporteth, worshipping a fly, did
offer up an ox thereto. These things were by God
instituted, and proposed to us for purposes quite dif-
ferent ; to compose our hearts, and settle our fancies
in a most serious frame ; to breed inward satisfaction,
and joy purely spiritual ; to exercise our most so-
lemn thoughts, and employ our gravest discourses :
all our speech therefore about them should be *whole-* Tit. ii. 8.
some, apt to afford good instruction, or to excite
good affections ; *good*, as St. Paul speaketh, *for the* Eph. iv. 29
use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the
hearers.

If we must be facetious and merry, the field is
wide and spacious ; there are matters enough in the
world beside these most august and dreadful things,
to try our faculties, and please our humour with ;
every where light and ludicrous things occur : it
therefore doth argue a marvellous poverty of wit,
and barrenness of invention, no less than a strange
defect of goodness, and want of discretion, in those
who can devise no other subjects to frolic upon be-
side these, of all most improper and perilous ; who
cannot seem ingenious under the charge of so
highly trespassing upon decency, disclaiming wis-

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dom, wounding the ears of others, and their own consciences. Seem ingenious, I say; for seldom those persons really are such, or are capable to discover any wit in a wise and manly way. It is not the excellency of their fancies, which in themselves usually are sorry and insipid enough, but the uncouthness of their presumption; not their extraordinary wit, but their prodigious rashness, which is to be admired. They are gazed on, as the doers of bold tricks, who dare perform that which no sober man will attempt: they do indeed rather deserve themselves to be laughed at, than their conceits. For what can be more ridiculous than we do make ourselves, when we thus fiddle and fool with our own souls; when, to make vain people merry, we incense God's earnest displeasure; when, to raise a fit of present laughter, we expose ourselves to endless wailing and woe; when, to be reckoned wits, we prove ourselves stark wild? Surely to this case we may accommodate that of a truly great wit, king

Eccles. ii. 2. Solomon; *I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?*

2. All injurious, abusive, scurrilous jesting, which causelessly or needlessly tendeth to the disgrace, damage, vexation, or prejudice in any kind of our neighbour, (provoking his displeasure, grating on his modesty, stirring passion in him,) is also prohibited. When men, to raise an admiration of their wit, to please themselves, or gratify the humour of other men, do expose their neighbour to scorn and contempt, making ignominious reflections upon his person or his actions, taunting his real imperfections, or fastening imaginary ones upon him, they transgress their duty, and abuse their wits; it is

—solutos
Qui captat
risus homi-
num, fa-
mamque
dicacis, Hic
niger est.
Hor. Sat.
i. 4.

not urbanity, or genuine facetiousness, but uncivil SERM. rudeness, or vile malignity. To do thus, as it is XIV. the office of mean and base spirits, unfit for any the office of mean and base spirits, unfit for any worthy or weighty employments, so it is full of in- humanity, of iniquity, of indecency, and folly. For the weaknesses of men, of what kind soever, (natural or moral, in quality or in act,) considering whence they spring, and how much we are all subject to them, and do need excuse for them, do in equity challenge compassion to be had of them; not complacency to be taken in them, or mirth drawn from them; they, in respect to common humanity, should rather be studiously connived at and concealed, or mildly excused, than wilfully laid open, and wantonly descanted upon; they rather are to be deplor'd secretly, than openly derided.

Ὅτι βωμολόχος ἤσταν ἰστί τοῦ γελίου, καὶ οὐτε ἑαυτοῦ οὐτε τῶν ἄλλων ἀσχημάτος, εἰ γέλωτα ποιῆσι.
Arist. Eth. iv. 8.

The reputation of men is too noble a sacrifice to be offered up to vain glory, fond pleasure, or ill honour; it is a good far more dear and precious, than to be prostituted for idle sport and divertisement. It becometh us not to trifle with that, which in common estimation is of so great moment; to play wantonly with a thing so very brittle, yet of so vast price; which being once broken or cracked, it is very hard, and scarce possible, to repair. A small transient pleasure, a tickling the ears, wagging the tongue, forming the face into a smile, a giggle, or a hum, are not to be purchased with the grievous distaste and smart, perhaps with the real damage and mischief of our neighbour, which attend upon contempt^b. This is not jesting surely, but bad earnest:

Vitreæ facta. Hor.

^b Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. As a mad man, who casteth fire-brands, scowls, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? Οἱ ἐνεδρεῖόντες τοὺς φίλους.—LXX.

SERM. it is wild mirth, which is the mother of grief to
 XIV. those whom we should tenderly love; it is unnatu-
 ral sport, which breedeth displeasure in them whose
 delight it should promote, whose liking it should
 procure: it crosseth the nature and design of this
 way of speaking; which is to cement and ingra-
 tiate society, to render conversation pleasant and
 sprightly, for mutual satisfaction and comfort.

True festivity is called *salt*; and such it should
 be, giving a smart, but savoury relish to discourse;
 exciting an appetite, not irritating disgust; cleans-

Matt. v. 13.
 Nimium ri-
 sus pretium
 est, si pro-
 hitatis im-
 pendio con-
 stat. *Quint.*

ing sometime, but never creating a sore: and, *ἐν*
μωρανθῆ, if it become thus insipid, or unsavoury, it
 is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out,
 and trodden under foot of men. Such jesting

which doth not season wholesome or harmless dis-
 course, but giveth a haut-gout to putid and poison-
 ous stuff, gratifying distempered palates and corrupt
 stomachs, is indeed odious and despicable folly, to

Εἰ κἀλλὸν τὸ
 παῖγμα, τὶ
 τοῖς μίμοις
 ἀφίεται; μί-
 μος γίνῃ;
 καὶ οὐκ
 αἰσχρῶν;
 Chrys.

be cast out with loathing, *to be trodden under foot*
 with contempt. If a man offends in this sort to
 please himself, it is scurvy malignity; if to delight
 others, it is base servility and flattery: upon the
 first score he is a buffoon to himself; upon the last,
 a fool to others. And well in common speech are

Eccles. vii.
 4.

such practisers so termed, the grounds of that prac-
 tice being so vain, and the effect so unhappy. *The*
heart of fools, saith the Wise Man, *is in the house of*
mirth; meaning, it seems, especially such hurtfully-
 wanton mirth: for it is, as he further tells us, the
 property of fools to delight in doing harm: *It is a*
sport to a fool to do mischief. Is it not in earnest
 most palpable folly for so mean ends to do so great
 harm; to disoblige men in sport; to lose friends,

and get enemies, for a conceit; out of a light humour to provoke fierce wrath, and breed tough hatred; to engage oneself consequently very far in strife, danger, and trouble? No way certainly is more apt to produce such effects than this; nothing more speedily inflameth, or more thoroughly engageth men, or sticketh longer in men's hearts and memories, than bitter taunts and scoffs: whence this honey soon turns into gall; these jolly comedies do commonly terminate in woful tragedies.

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Especially this scurrilous and scoffing way is then most detestable, when it not only exposeth the blemishes and infirmities of men, but abuseth piety and virtue themselves; flouting persons for their constancy in devotion, or their strict adherence to a conscientious practice of duty; aiming to effect that which Job complaineth of, *The just upright man* Job xii. 4. *is laughed to scorn*; resembling those whom the Psalmist thus describeth, *Who whet their tongue* Psal. lxi. *like a sword, and bend their arrows, even bitter* ^{3, 4} *words, that they may shoot in secret at the perfect*; serving good men as Jeremy was served, *The word* Jer. xx. 8. *of the Lord, saith he, was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily.*

This practice doth evidently in the highest degree tend to the disparagement and discouragement of goodness; aiming to expose it, and to render men

^c Fools make a mock of sin. Prov. xiv. 9.

Potius amicum quam dictum perdidit.

— dummodo risum

Excutiat sibi, non hic cuiquam parcat amico. Hor. Sat. i. 4.

— dicax idem, et Tiberium acerbis facetiis irridere solitus, quarum apud præpotentes in longum memoria est. Tac. v. Ann. p. 184.

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SERM. ashamed thereof; and it manifestly proceedeth from
XIV. a desperate corruption of mind, from a mind hardened and emboldened, sold and enslaved to wickedness: whence they who deal therein are in holy scripture represented as egregious sinners, or persons superlatively wicked, under the name of *scorners*; (*λοιμοὺς*, *pests*, or pestilent men, the Greek translators call them, properly enough in regard to the effects of their practice;) concerning whom the Wise Man, signifying how God will meet with them in their own way, saith, *Surely the Lord scorneth the scorners.* *Ἐμπαίκτης*, *scoffers*, (or *mockers*.) St. Peter termeth them, *who walk according to their own lusts*; who not being willing to practise, are ready to deride virtue; thereby striving to seduce others into their pernicious courses.

This offence also proportionably groweth more criminal, as it presumeth to reach persons eminent in dignity or worth, unto whom special veneration is appropriate. This adjoineth sauciness to scurrility, and advanceth the wrong thereof into a kind of sacrilege. It is not only injustice, but profaneness to *abuse the gods*. Their station is a sanctuary from all irreverence and reproach; they are seated on high, that we may only look up to them with respect; their defects are not to be seen, or not to be touched by malicious or wanton wits, by spiteful or scornful tongues: the diminution of their credit is a public mischief, and the state itself doth suffer in their becoming objects of scorn; not only themselves are vilified and degraded, but the great affairs they manage are obstructed, the justice they administer is disparaged thereby.

In fine, no jesting is allowable, which is not

Exod. xxii.
28.

Prov. iii. 34.

2 Pet. iii. 3.

throughly innocent^d: it is an unworthy perverting SERM.
of wit, to employ it in biting and scratching; in XIV.
working prejudice to any man's reputation or interest; in needlessly incensing any man's anger or sorrow; in raising animosities, dissensions, and feuds among any.

Whence it is somewhat strange, that any men from so mean and silly a practice should expect commendation, or that any should afford regard thereto; the which it is so far from meriting, that indeed contempt and abhorrence are due to it. Men do truly more render themselves despicable than others, when, without just ground, or reasonable occasion, they do attack others in this way. That such a practice doth ever find any encouragement or acceptance, whence can it proceed, but from the bad nature and small judgment of some persons? For to any man who is endued with any sense of goodness, and hath a competence of true wit, or a right knowledge of good manners, (who knows—*in-Hor. urbanum lepido seponere dicto*.) it cannot but be unsavoury and loathsome. The repute it obtaineth is in all respects unjust. So would it appear, not only were the cause to be decided in the court of morality, because it consists not with virtue and wisdom; but even before any competent judges of wit itself. For he overthrows his own pretence, and cannot reasonably claim any interest in wit, who doth thus behave himself: he prejudgeth himself to want wit, who cannot descry fit matter to divert himself or others: he discovereth a great strait-

^d Πόββω δὲ τοῦτο Χριστιανοῦ, τὸ κωμφοδεῖν. Chrys. in Eph. Or. 17.

Γλώσσαν ἔχεις, οὐχ ἵνα ἕτερον κωμωδήσης, ἀλλ' ἵνα εὐχαριστήσης τῷ Θεῷ.
Idem.

SERM. ness and sterility of good invention, who cannot in
 XIV. all the wide field of things find better subjects of
 discourse; who knows not how to be ingenious
 within reasonable compass, but to pick up a sorry
 conceit is forced to make excursions beyond the
 bounds of honesty and decency.

Neither is it any argument of considerable ability in him that haps to please this way: a slender faculty will serve the turn. The sharpness of his speech cometh not from wit so much as from choler, which furnisheth the lowest inventions with a kind of pungent expression, and giveth an edge to every spiteful word^c: so that any dull wretch doth seem to scold eloquently and ingeniously. Commonly also satirical taunts do owe their seeming piquancy, not to the speaker or his words, but to the subject, and the hearers; the matter conspiring with the bad nature or the vanity of men, who love to laugh at any rate, and to be pleased at the expense of other men's repute; conceiting themselves extolled by the depression of their neighbour, and hoping to gain by his loss. Such customers they are that maintain the bitter wits, who otherwise would want trade, and might go a-begging. For commonly they who seem to excel this way are miserably flat in other discourse, and most dully serious: they have a particular unaptness to describe any good thing, or commend any worthy person; being destitute of right ideas, and proper terms answerable to such purposes: their representations of that kind are absurd and unhandsome; their elogies (to use their own way

^c Obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur: quippe adulationi foedum crimen servitutis, malignitati falsa species libertatis inest. *Tac. Hist. i. init.*

of speaking) are in effect satires, and they can hardly more abuse a man than by attempting to commend him; like those in the Prophet, who were *wise to do ill, but to do well had no knowledge*. SERM. XIV. Jer. iv. 22.

3. I pass by, that it is very culpable to be facetious in obscene and smutty matters. Such things are not to be discoursed on either in jest or in earnest; they must not, as St. Paul saith, be *so much as named among Christians*: to meddle with them is not to disport, but to defile oneself and others. There is indeed no more certain sign of a mind utterly debauched from piety and virtue, than affecting such talk. But further,

4. All unseasonable jesting is blameable. As there are some proper seasons of relaxation, when we may *desipere in loco*; so are there some times and circumstances of things, wherein it concerneth and becometh men to be serious in mind, grave in demeanour, and plain in discourse; when to sport in this way is to do indecently, or uncivilly, to be impertinent, or troublesome^f.

It comporteth not well with the presence of superiors, before whom it becometh us to be composed and modest: much less with the performance of sacred offices, which require an earnest attention, and most serious frame of mind.

In deliberations and debates about affairs of great importance, the simple manner of speaking to the point is the proper, easy, clear, and compendious way: facetious speech there serves only to obstruct and entangle business, to lose time, and protract the

^f Vitandum ne petulans, ne superbum, ne loco, ne tempori alienum, ne præparatum et domo allatum videatur. *Quint.*

SERM. XIV. result^s. The shop and exchange will scarce endure jesting in their lower transactions: the senate, the court of justice, the church do much more exclude it from their more weighty consultations. Whenever it justleth out, or hindereth the despatch of other serious business, taking up the room or swallowing the time due to it, or indisposing the minds of the audience to attend it, then it is unseasonable

Arist. Eth. x. 6. and pestilent. Παιζειν, ἵνα σπουδάξης, *to play, that we may be seriously busy*, is the good rule of Anacharsis, implying the subordination of sport to business, as a condiment and furtherance, not an impediment or clog thereto. He that for his sport neglects his business, deserves indeed to be reckoned among children; and children's fortune will attend him, to be pleased with toys, and to fail of substantial profit.

It is, again, improper (because indeed uncivil and inhuman) to jest with persons that are in a sad or afflicted condition^h; as arguing want of due considering or due commiserating their case: it appears a kind of insulting upon their misfortune, and is apt to foment their grief. Even in our own case, upon any disastrous occurrence to ourselves, it would not be seemly to frolic it thus; it would signify want of due regard to the frowns of God, and the strokes of his hand; it would cross the Wise Man's advice, *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider.*

Eccles. vii. 14.

It is also not seasonable, or civil, to be jocund in this way with those who desire to be serious, and like not the humour. Jocularities should not be forcibly obtruded, but by a kindly conspiracy, or tacit

^s Μη μοι τὰ κόμψ', ἀλλ' ὅν πόλει δεῖ. Eurip. Arist. Pol. ii. 4.

^h Adversus miseris inhumanus est jocus. Quint.

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compact, slip into conversation: consent and complaisance give all the life thereto. Its design is to sweeten and ease society; when to the contrary it needeth offence or incumbrance, it is worse than rain and unprofitable. From these instances we may collect when in other like cases it is unseasonable, and therefore culpable. Further,

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5. To affect, admire, or highly to value this way of speaking, either absolutely in itself, or in comparison to the serious and plain way of speech, and thence to be drawn into an immoderate use thereof, is blameable. A man of ripe age, and sound judgment, for refreshment to himself, or in complaisance to others, may sometimes condescend to play in this or in any other harmless way: but to be fond of it, to prosecute it with a careful or painful eagerness, to loat and dwell upon it, to reckon it a brave or a fine thing, a singular matter of commendation, a transcendant accomplishment, anywise preferable to rational endowments, or comparable to the moral excellencies of our mind, (to solid knowledge, or sound wisdom, or true virtue and goodness,) this is extremely childish, or brutish, and far below a man. What can be more absurd, than to make a business of play, to be studious and laborious in toys, to make a profession or drive a trade of impertinency¹? what more plain nonsense can there be, than to be earnest in jest, to be continual in divertisement, or constant in pastime; to make extravagance all our way, and sauce all our diet? Is not this plainly the life of a child, that is ever busy, yet never hath any thing to do? or the life of that mimical brute, which is always

¹ Σπουδάζειν καὶ ποιεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν, ἡλίθιον φαίνεται, καὶ λαν παιδικόν.
Arist. Eth. x. 6.

SERM. active in playing uncouth and unlucky tricks ; which,
XIV. could it speak, might surely pass well for a professed wit ?

The proper work of man, the grand drift of human life, is to follow reason, (that noble spark kindled in us from heaven ; that princely and powerful faculty, which is able to reach so lofty objects, and to achieve so mighty works ;) not to soothe fancy, that brutish, shallow, and giddy power, able to perform nothing worthy much regard. *We are not, even Cicero could tell us, born for play and jesting ; but for severity, and the study of graver and greater affairs*^k. Yes, we were purposely designed, and fitly framed, to understand and contemplate, to affect and delight in, to undertake and pursue most noble and worthy things ; to be employed in business considerably profitable to ourselves, and beneficial to others : we do therefore strangely debase ourselves, when we do strongly bend our minds to, or set our affections upon such toys.

Especially to do so is unworthy of a Christian ; that is of a person who is advanced to so high a rank, and so glorious relations ; who hath so excellent objects of his mind and affections presented before him, and so excellent rewards for his care and pains proposed to him ; who is engaged in affairs of so worthy nature, and so immense consequence : for him to be zealous about quibbles, for him to be ravished with puny conceits and expressions, it is a wondrous oversight, and an enormous indecency.

He indeed that prefers any faculty to reason, dis-

^k Neque enim ita generati a natura sumus, ut ad ludum jocumque facti videamur ; sed ad severitatem potius, et ad quedam studia graviora atque majora. Cic. *Off.* i.

claims the privilege of being a man, and understands **SERM.**
not the worth of his own nature; he that prizes any **XIV.**
quality beyond virtue and goodness, renounces the
title of a Christian, and knows not how to value the
dignity of his profession. It is these two, reason
and virtue, in conjunction, which produce all that is
considerably good and great in the world. Fancy
can do little; doeth never any thing well, except as
directed and wielded by them. Do pretty conceits
or humorous talk carry on any business, or perform
any work? No; they are ineffectual and fruitless:
often they disturb, but they never despatch any thing
with good success. It is simple reason, as dull and
dry as it seemeth, which expediteth all the grand af-
fairs, which accomplisheth all the mighty works that
we see done in the world. In truth, therefore, as
one diamond is worth numberless bits of glass; so
one solid reason is worth innumerable fancies: one
grain of true science and sound wisdom in real worth
and use doth outweigh loads, if any loads can be, of
freakish wit. To rate things otherwise doth argue
great weakness of judgment, and fondness of mind.
So to conceit of this way signifieth a weak mind;
and much to delight therein rendereth it so: nothing
more debaseth the spirit of a man, or more rendereth
it light and trifling¹.

¹ Ὡς μὴ συμβαίνειν κατὰ ταυτὴν ψυχῆς ἡψιν, καὶ εὐτραπέλειας διάχυσιν.
Bas. Const. Mon. 12.

Πολλοὺς συμβαίνει τοὺς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀσχολουμένους, τοῦ ἔρθεῦ λόγου
διαμαρτάνειν, τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς γελοῖα μὲν διαχεομένης, καὶ τὸ τῆς φρασέως
σύνειν καὶ πεπικνωμένον καταλυούσης. Ibid.

Jocorum frequens usus omne animis pondus, omnemque vim
eripiet. Sen. de Tranq. c. xv.

Ἡ εὐτραπέλεια μαλακὴν ποιεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν, βαθυμὲν, ἀναπεπτωκυῖαν.
Chrys. in Eph. 17.

SERM. Hence if we must be venting pleasant conceits,
 XIV. we should do it *as if we did it not*, carelessly and unconcernedly; not standing upon it, or valuing ourselves for it: we should do it with measure and moderation; not giving up ourselves thereto, so as to mind it, or delight in it more than in any other thing: we should not be so intent upon it as to become remiss in affairs more proper or needful for us; so as to nauseate serious business, or disrelish the more worthy entertainments of our minds. This is the great danger of it, which we daily see men to incur; they are so bewitched with a humour of being witty themselves, or of hearkening to the fancies of others, that it is this only which they can like or savour, which they can endure to think or talk of. It is a great pity, that men who would seem to have so much wit, should so little understand themselves. But further,

6. Vain-glorious ostentation this way is very blameable. All ambition, all vanity, all conceitedness, upon whatever ground they are founded, are absolutely unreasonable and silly: but yet those, being grounded on some real ability, or some useful skill, are wise and manly in comparison to this, which standeth on a foundation so manifestly slight and weak. The old philosophers by a severe father were called *animalia gloriæ*, *animals of glory*; and by a satirical poet they were termed *bladders of vanity*: but they at least did catch at praise from praiseworthy knowledge; they were puffed up with a wind which blowed some good to mankind; they sought glory from that which deserved glory, if they had not sought it; it was a substantial and solid credit which they did affect, resulting from success-

Tertul.

Καυῆς οὐχίτις
 ἱμπλαστοὶ ἀρ-
 νοί. Timon.

ful enterprises of strong reason and stout industry : SERM. XIV.

but these *animalcula gloriæ*, these flies, these insects of glory, these, not bladders, but bubbles of vanity, would be admired and praised for that which is no-wise admirable or laudable ; for the casual hits and emergencies of roving fancy ; for stumbling on an odd conceit or phrase, which signifieth nothing, and is as superficial as the smile, as hollow as the noise it causeth. Nothing certainly in nature is more ridiculous than a self-conceited wit, who deemeth himself somebody, and greatly pretendeth to commendation from so pitiful and worthless a thing as a knack of trifling.

Risus—
tenuissimus
ingenii fru-
ctus. Cic. de
Orat. ii.

7. Lastly, it is our duty never so far to engage ourselves in this way, as thereby to lose or to impair that habitual seriousness, modesty, and sobriety of mind, that steady composedness, gravity, and constancy of demeanour, which become Christians. We should continually keep our minds intent upon our *high calling*, and grand interests ; ever well tuned, and ready for the performance of holy devotions, and the practice of most serious duties with earnest attention and fervent affection : wherefore we should never suffer them to be dissolved into levity, or disordered into a wanton frame, indisposing us for religious thoughts and actions. We ought always in our behaviour to maintain, not only τὸ κρέ- Phil. iv. 8.
πον, a fitting *decency*, but also τὸ σεμνόν, a stately 1 Tim. iii. 8.
gravity, a kind of venerable majesty, suitable to that high rank which we bear of God's friends and children ; adorning our holy profession, and guarding us from all impressions of sinful vanity. Wherefore we should not let ourselves be transported into any excessive pitch of lightness, inconsistent with, or pre-

Tit. ii. 10.
Dictum po-
tius ali-
quando
perdet,
quam mi-
nuet auto-
ritatem.
Quint. vi.

418 *Against foolish Talking and Jestings.*

SERM. judicial to, our Christian state and business. Gravity
XIV. and modesty are the fences of piety, which being
once slighted, sin will easily attempt and encroach
upon us. So the old Spanish gentleman may be in-
terpreted to have been wise, who, when his son upon
a voyage to the Indies, took his leave of him, gave
him this odd advice; *My son, in the first place*
Strad. In- fam. Fami- ani. *keep thy gravity, in the next place fear God: in-*
timating, that a man must first be serious before he
can be pious.

To conclude, as we need not be demure, so must
we not be impudent; as we should not be sour, so
ought we not to be fond; as we may be free, so we
should not be vain; as we may well stoop to friendly
complaisance, so we should take heed of falling into
contemptible levity. If without wronging others, or
derogating from ourselves, we can be facetious; if
we can use our wits in jesting innocently and conve-
niently; we may sometimes do it: but let us, in
compliance with St. Paul's direction, beware of fool-
ish talking and jesting, which are not convenient.

Heb. xiii.
20, 21.

*Now the God of grace and peace make us perfect
in every good work to do his will, working in us
that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through
Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen.*

SERMON XV.

AGAINST RASH AND VAIN SWEARING.

JAMES v. 12.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not.

AMONG other precepts of good life (directing the SERM.
practice of virtue and abstinence from sin) St. James XV.
inserts this about swearing, couched in expres-
sion denoting his great earnestness, and apt to excite
special attention. Therein he doth not mean
universally to interdict the use of oaths; (for that
in some cases is not only lawful, but very expedient,
needful, and required from us as a duty;) but
the swearing which our Lord had expressly pro-
hibited to his disciples, and which thence, question-
less, the *brethren* to whom St. James did write did
understand themselves obliged to forbear, having
been so in the first catechisms of Christian institu-
tion; that is, needless and heedless swearing in ordi-
nary conversation: a practice then frequented in the
world, both among Jews and Gentiles; the which
to the shame of our age, is now so much in
vogue, and with some men in vogue; the invoc-
ation of God's name, appealing to his testimony, and pro-
voking his judgment, upon any slight occasion, in
common talk, with vain incogitancy, or profane
ness. From such practice the holy apostle de-

SERM. horteth in terms importing his great concernedness, and implying the matter to be of highest importance: for, Πρὸ πάντων, saith he, *Before all things, my brethren, do not swear*; as if he did apprehend this sin of all other to be one of the most heinous and pernicious. Could he have said more? would he have said so much, if he had not conceived the matter to be of exceeding weight and consequence? And that it is so, I mean now, by God's help, to shew you, by proposing some considerations, whereby the heinous wickedness, together with the monstrous folly, of such rash and vain swearing will appear; the which being laid to heart will, I hope, effectually dissuade and deter from it.

I. Let us consider the nature of an oath, and what we do when we adventure to swear.

It is (as it is phrased in the Decalogue, and other-
 Exod. xx. 7. where in holy scripture) an *assuming the name of*
 Prov. xxx. 9. *our God*, and applying it to our purpose, to countenance and confirm what we say^m.

Gen. xxxi. 50. It is an invocation of God as a most faithful witness, concerning the truth of our words, or the sincerity of our meaning.
 Judg. xi. 10.
 1 Sam. xii. 5.

Jer. xlii. 5. It is an appeal to God as a most upright Judge, whether we do prevaricate in asserting what we do
 Job xvi. 19. not believe true, or in promising what we are not
 Mal. iii. 5. firmly resolved to perform.
 1 Joh. v. 9.
 Gen. xxxi. 53.
 1 Sam. xxiv. 5.

1 Kings viii. 31, 32. It is a formal engagement of God to be the avenger of our trespassing in violation of truth or faith.
 ii. 23. xix.

2. xx. 10. It is a *binding our souls*ⁿ with a most strict and
 Neh. v. 12, 13.

^m Plurima firmantur jurejurando——diis immortalibus interpositis tum judicibus, tum testibus. Cic. de Leg. ii. p. 326.

ⁿ Num. xxx. 2. Πᾶς ὄρκος εἰς κατάραν τελευτῆ τῆς ἐπιουρκίας. Plut. in capit. Rom. p. 491.

solemn obligation, to answer before God, and to undergo the issue of his judgment about what we affirm or undertake.

Such an oath is represented to us in holy scripture.

Whence we may collect, that swearing doth require great modesty and composedness of spirit, very serious consideration and solicitous care, that we be not rude and saucy with God, *in taking up his name*, and prostituting it to vile or mean uses; that we do not abuse or debase his authority, by citing it to aver falsehoods or impertinences; that we do not slight his venerable justice, by rashly provoking it against us; that we do not precipitantly throw our souls into most dangerous snares and intricacies.

For, let us reflect and consider: what a presumption is it without due regard and reverence to lay hold on God's name; with unhallowed breath to vent and toss that *great and glorious*, that most *holy*, that *reverend*, that *fearful and terrible name* of the Lord our God, the great Creator, the mighty Sovereign, the dreadful Judge of all the world; that name which all heaven with profoundest submission doth adore, which the angelical powers, the brightest and purest seraphim, without *hiding their faces*, and reverential horror, cannot utter or hear; the very thought whereof should strike awe through our hearts, the mention whereof would make any sober man to tremble; Πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἄτακτον, *For how*, saith St. Chrysostom, *is it not absurd, that a servant should not dare to call his master by name, or bluntly and ordinarily to mention him; yet that we slightly and contemptuously should in our mouth toss about the Lord of angels?*

SERM. XV.

Ruth i. 17.
2 Kings vi.

31.
2 Sam. iii.
9. 35. xix.

13.
1 Sam. xiv.
44. iii. 17.
xx. 13.

Psal. xcix.
3. cxl. 9.
cxlviii. 13.

Deut. xxviii. 58.

Isa. vi. 2.
Chrys. Id. 1. 1. 5.
P. 514.

SERM. *How is it not absurd, if we have a garment*
 XV. *better than the rest, that we forbear to use it conti-*
 Id. 'A. d. c. 6. *nually; but in the most slight and common way do*
 P. 525. *wear the name of God?*

How grievous indecency is it, at every turn to summon our Maker, and call down Almighty God from heaven, to attend our leisure, to vouch our idle prattle, to second our giddy passions, to concern his truth, his justice, his power in our trivial affairs!

What a wildness is it, to dally with that judgment upon which the eternal doom of all creatures de—
 Job xxvi. *pendeth, at which the pillars of heaven are aston-*
 11. *ished*, which hurled down legions of angels from the top of heaven and happiness into the bottomless dungeon; the which, as grievous sinners, of all things we have most reason to dread; and about which no sober man can otherwise think, than did that great king, the holy Psalmist, who said, *My flesh trembleth for thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments!*
 Psal. cxix. 120.

How prodigious a madness is it, without any constraint or needful cause to incur so horrible danger, to rush upon a curse; to defy that vengeance, the least touch or breath whereof can dash us to nothing, or thrust us down into extreme and endless woe!

Who can express the wretchedness of that folly, which so entangleth us with inextricable knots, and enchaineth our souls so rashly with desperate obligations?

Wherefore he that would but a little mind what he doeth when he dareth to swear, what it is to meddle with the adorable name, the venerable testimony, the formidable judgment, the terrible ven-

geance of the divine Majesty, into what a case he putteth himself, how extreme hazard he runneth thereby, would assuredly have little heart to swear, without greatest reason, and most urgent need; hardly without trembling would he undertake the most necessary and solemn oath; much cause would he see *σέβεσθαι ὄρκον*, to adore, to fear an oath: which to do the divine Preacher maketh the character of a good man; *As, saith he, is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath.* SERM. XV.
Eccles. ix. 2.

In fine, even a heathen philosopher, considering the nature of an oath, did conclude the unlawfulness thereof in such cases. For, *Seeing, saith he, an oath doth call God for witness, and proposeth him for umpire and voucher of the things it saith; therefore to induce God so upon occasion of human affairs, or, which is all one, upon small and slight accounts, doth imply contempt of him: wherefore we ought wholly to shun swearing, except upon occasions of highest necessity*^c.

II. We may consider, that swearing (agreeably to its nature, or natural aptitude and tendency) is represented in holy scripture as a special part of religious worship, or devotion toward God; in the due performance whereof we do avow him for the true God and Governor of the world; we piously do acknowledge his principal attributes and special prerogatives; (his omnipresence and omniscience, ex-

^c Ὁ γὰρ ὄρκος μάρτυρα τὸν Θεὸν καλεῖ, καὶ μεσίτην αὐτὸν καὶ ἐγγυητὴν ἐφ' οἷς λέγει προτίσχεται. τὸ γοῦν ἐπὶ ἀνθρωπίνους πράγμασι (ταυτὸν δὲ εἰπεῖν μικροῖς καὶ εὐτελέσι) τὸν Θεὸν παράγειν, καταφρόνησιν τινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ὑπογράφει: διὸ χρὴ παραιτεῖσθαι τὸν ὄρκον, &c. Simpl. in Epict. cap. xlv.

SERM.
XV.

tending itself to our most inward thoughts, our secretest purposes, our closest retirements; his watchful providence over all our actions, affairs, and concerns; his faithful goodness, in favouring truth and protecting right; his exact justice, in pratronising sincerity, and chastising perfidiousness;) his being supreme Lord over all persons, and Judge paramount in all causes; his readiness in our need, upon our humble imploration and reference, to undertake the arbitration of matters controverted, and the care of administering justice, for the maintenance of truth and right, of loyalty and fidelity, of order and peace among men. Swearing doth also intimate a pious trust and confidence in God; as Aristotle observeth^d.

Such things a serious oath doth imply, to such purposes swearing naturally serveth; and therefore to signify or effectuate them, divine institution hath devoted it.

God in goodness to such ends hath pleased to lend us his great name; allowing us to cite him for a witness, to have recourse to his bar, to engage his justice and power, whenever the case deserveth and requireth it, or when we cannot by other means well assure the sincerity of our meaning, or secure the constancy of our resolutions.

Yea in such exigences he doth exact this practice from us, as an instance of our religious confidence in him, and as a service conducive to his glory: for it is a precept in his law, of moral nature, and

Dent. x. 20. eternal obligation, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy*
vi. 13.

^d Ἐσοεβὲς τὸ θέλειν τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπιτρέπειν. It is a pious thing willingly to commend our case or controversy to God. *Arist. Rhet.* i. 48.

God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou SERM.
cleave, and shalt swear by his name. It is the XV.
character of a religious man to swear with due re-
verence and upright conscience. For, *The king*, Ps. lxxiii. 11.
saith the Psalmist, *shall rejoice in God; every one*
that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of
them that speak lies shall be stopped. It is a dis-
tinctive mark of God's people, according to that of
the prophet Jeremy, *And it shall come to pass, if* Jer. xii. 16.
they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to
swear by my name—then shall they be built in the
midst of my people. It is predicted concerning the
evangelical times, *Unto me every knee shall bow,* Isa. xlv. 23.
every tongue shall swear: and, That he who bless- lxv. 16.
eth himself in the earth, shall bless himself by the
God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth,
shall swear by the God of truth.

As therefore all other acts of devotion, wherein immediate application is made to the divine Majesty, should never be performed without most hearty intention, most serious consideration, most lowly reverence; so neither should this grand one, wherein God is so nearly touched, and his chief attributes so much concerned: the which indeed doth involve both prayer and praise, doth require the most devotional acts of faith and fear.

We therefore should so perform it as not to incur that reproof; *This people draweth nigh unto me* Matt. xv. 7.
with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, Isa. xxix. 13.
but their heart is far from me.

When we seem most formally to avow God, to confess his omniscience, to confide in his justice; we should not really disregard him, and in effect signify,

SERM. that we do not think he doth know what we say, or
 XV. mind what we do.

Jer. iv. 2. If we do presume to offer this service, we should do it in the manner appointed by himself, according to the conditions prescribed in the Prophet, *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness: in truth*, taking heed that our meaning be conformable to the sense of our words, and our words to the verity of things; *in judgment*, having with careful deliberation examined and weighed that which we assert or promise; *in righteousness*, being satisfied in conscience, that we do not therein infringe any rule of piety toward God, of equity toward men, of sobriety and discretion in regard to ourselves.

The cause of our swearing must be needful, or very expedient; the design of it must be honest and useful to considerable purposes; (tending to God's honour, our neighbour's benefit, our own welfare;) the matter of it should be not only just and lawful, but worthy and weighty; the manner ought to be grave and solemn, our mind being framed to earnest attention, and endued with pious affections suitable to the occasion.

Matt. xv. 7, 8. Otherwise, if we do venture to swear, without due advice and care, without much respect and awe, upon any slight or vain (not to say bad or unlawful) occasion; we then desecrate swearing, and are guilty of profaning a most sacred ordinance: the doing so doth imply base hypocrisy, or lewd mockery, or abominable wantonness and folly; in boldly invading, and vainly trifling with the most august duties of religion. Such swearing therefore is very dishonour-

able and injurious to God, very prejudicial to religion, very repugnant to piety. SERM.
XV.

III. We may consider that the swearing prohibited is very noxious to human society.

The great prop of society (which upholdeth the safety, peace, and welfare thereof, in observing laws, dispensing justice, discharging trusts, keeping contracts, and holding good correspondence mutually) is conscience, or a sense of duty toward God, obliging to perform what is right and equal; quickened by hope of rewards, and fear of punishments from him: secluding which principle, no worldly consideration is strong enough to hold men fast; or can further dispose many to do right, or observe faith, or hold peace, than appetite, or interest, or humour (things very slippery and uncertain) do sway them.

That men should live honestly, quietly, and comfortably together, it is needful that they should live under a sense of God's will, and in awe of the divine power, hoping to please God, and fearing to offend him, by their behaviour respectively.

That justice should be administered between men, it is necessary that testimonies of fact be alleged; and that witnesses should apprehend themselves greatly obliged to discover the truth, according to their conscience, in dark and doubtful cases.

That men should uprightly discharge offices serviceable to public good, it doth behove that they be firmly engaged to perform the trusts reposed in them.

That in affairs of very considerable importance, men should deal with one another with satisfaction of mind and mutual confidence, they must receive competent assurances concerning the integrity, fidelity, and constancy each of other.

SERM. That the safety of governors may be preserved,
XV. and the obedience due to them maintained secure from attempts to which they are liable, (by the treachery, levity, perverseness, timorousness, ambition, all such lusts and ill humours of men,) it is expedient that men should be tied with the strictest bands of allegiance.

That controversies emergent about the interests of men should be determined, and an end put to strife by peremptory and satisfactory means, is plainly necessary for common quiet.

Wherefore for the public interest and benefit of human society, it is requisite that the highest obligations possible should be laid upon the consciences of men.

And such are those of oaths, engaging them to fidelity and constancy in all such cases, out of regard to Almighty God, as the infallible Patron of truth and right, the unavoidable Chastiser of perfidiousness and improbity.

To such purposes therefore oaths have ever been applied, as the most effectual instruments of working them; not only among the followers of true and perfect religion, but even among all those who had any glimmering notions concerning a divine power and providence; who have deemed an oath the safest tie of conscience, and held the violation of it for the most detestable impiety and iniquity. So that what Cicero saith of the Romans, that *their ancestors had no band to constrain faith more strait than an oath*, is true of all other nations; common reason not being

^c Nullum enim vinculum ad adstringendam fidem jurejurando majores arctius esse voluerunt. *Cic. de Off.* iii.

able to devise any engagement more obliging than **SERM.**
 it; it being in the nature of things *τελευταία πίστις*, **XV.**
 and *ὀχυρῶτατον ἀληθείας ἐνέχυρον*, the utmost assurance, **Dion. Ha-**
 the last resort of human faith, the surest pledge that **lic. Procop.**
 any man can yield of his trustiness. Hence ever in **Diod. Sic.**
 transactions of highest moment this hath been used
 to bind the faith of men.

Hereby nations have been wont to ratify leagues **πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἶσαν**
 of peace and amity between each other: (which **ἡμῶν ἔσται,**
 therefore the Greeks called *ὄρκια*.) **καὶ φιλίας.**
Polyb.

Hereby princes have obliged their subjects to loy-
 alty: and it hath ever been the strongest argument
 to press that duty, which the Preacher useth; **I Eccles. viii.**
*counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and*²
that in regard of the oath of God.

Hereby generals have engaged their soldiers to **Veget. ii.**
 stick close to them, in bearing hardships and en-
 counterering dangers.

Hereby the nuptial league hath been confirmed;
 the solemnization whereof in temples before God is
 in effect a most sacred oath.

Hereon the decision of the greatest causes con-
 cerning the lives, estates, and reputations of men
 have depended; so that, as the Apostle saith, **an Heb. vi. 16.**
oath for confirmation is to them an end of all
strife.

Indeed such hath the need hereof been ever ap-
 prehended, that we may observe, in cases of great
 importance, no other obligation hath been admitted
 for sufficient to bind the fidelity and constancy of
 the most credible persons; so that even the best
 men hardly could trust the best men without it. For
 instance,

When Abimelech would assure to himself the

SERM. friendship of Abraham, although he knew him to
 XV. be a very pious and righteous person, whose word

Gen. xxi.
 22, 23.

might be as well taken as any man's, yet, for entire satisfaction, he thus spake to him; *God is with thee in all that thou doest: now therefore swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me.*

Gen. xv. 3.
 xxiv. 2.
 xxiv. 2, 3.

Abraham, though he did much confide in the honesty of his servant Eliezer, having intrusted him with all his estate, yet in the affair concerning the marriage of his son, he could not but thus oblige him: *Put, saith he, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou wilt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites.*

Gen. xxxi.
 49-50-53.

Laban had good experience of Jacob's fidelity; yet that would not satisfy, but, *The Lord*, said he, *watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness between thee and me. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us.*

Gen. 1. 5.
 25.

So did *Jacob make Joseph swear*, that he would *bury him in Canaan*: and *Joseph caused the children of Israel to swear*, that they would *translate his bones*. So did *Jonathan cause his beloved friend*

1 Sam. xx.
 14, 15, 17.

David to swear, that he would *shew kindness to him, and to his house for ever*. The prudence of which course the event sheweth, the total excision of Jonathan's family being thereby prevented; for,

2 Sam. xxi.
 7.

The king, it is said, *spared Mephibosheth the son*

of Jonathan, because of the Lord's oath that was between them. SERM.
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These instances declare, that there is no security (1 Kings i. 51. Ezr. x. 5. Neh. v. 12. xiii. 25.) which men can yield comparable to that of an oath; the obligation whereof no man wilfully can infringe, without renouncing the fear of God, and any pretence to his favour.

Wherefore human society will be extremely wronged and damnified by the dissolving or slackening these most sacred bands of conscience: and consequently by their common and careless use; which soon will breed a contempt of them, and render them insignificant, either to bind the swearers, or to ground a trust on their oaths.

As by the rare and reverent use of oaths their dignity is upheld, and their obligation kept fast: so by the frequent and negligent application of them, by the prostituting them to every mean and toyish purpose, their respect will be quite lost, their strength will be loosed, they will prove unserviceable to public use.

If oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance signify? If men are wont to play with swearing any where, can we expect they should be serious and strict therein at the bar, or in the church? Will they regard God's testimony, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at one time, when every where upon any, upon no occasion they dare to confront and contemn them? Who then will be the more trusted for swearing? What satisfaction will any man have from it? The rifeness of this practice, as it is the sign, so it will be the cause of a general diffidence among men.

Incredible therefore is the mischief which this

SERM. vain practice will bring in to the public; depriving
 XV. princes of their best security, exposing the estates of private men to uncertainty, shaking all the confidence men can have in the faith of one another.

For which detriments accruing from this abuse to the public, every vain swearer is responsible, and he would do well to consider, that he will never be able to make reparation for them. And the public is much concerned that this enormity be retrenched.

IV. Let us consider, that rash and vain swearing is very apt often to bring the practiser of it into that most horrible sin of perjury. For *false swearing*, as the Hebrew Wise Man saith, *naturally springeth out of much swearing*: and *He*, saith St. Chrysostom, *that sweareth continually, both willingly and unwillingly, both ignorantly and knowingly, both in earnest and in sport, being often transported by anger and many other things, will frequently forswear. It is confessed and manifest, that it is necessary for him that sweareth much, to be perjurious.* Ἀμήχανον γὰρ, ἀμήχανον, *For*, saith he again, *it is impossible, it is impossible for a mouth addicted to swearing, not frequently to forswear.* He that sweareth at random, as blind passion moveth, or wanton fancy prompteth, or the

^f Φύεται ἐκ πολυορκίας ψευδορκία. Philo in Decal. Ne quisquam facili juratione etiam ad perjurium decidisset, et in ecclesia populo prædicabat, et suos instituerat, ne quis juraret nec ad modicum quidem. *Posid. in Vit. S. Aug. cap. xxv.*

^g Ὁ διηνεκῶς ὀμνύς, &c. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. ιδ'. p. 553.

Μὴ εἰς ὑπόκρισιν πέσητε, quidam legunt, Jac. v. 12. Vid. Grot.

Ὅτως ἐστὶν ἀμολογημένον καὶ ὄηλον, ὅτι τὸν πολυορκον ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐπιφκόν εἶναι. *Ibid.*

Ἀμήχανον γὰρ, ἀμήχανον, στόμα μεμελετηκὸς ὀμνύναι, μὴ συνεχῶς ἐπιφκείν. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. ιδ'. p. 559.

empter suggesteth, often will hit upon asserting **SERM. XV.**
 that which is false, or promising that which is impos-
 sible: that want of conscience and of consideration
 which do suffer him to violate God's law in swear-
 ing, will betray him to the venting of lies, which
 backed with oaths become perjuries. If sometime
 what he sweareth doth happen to be true and per-
 formable, it doth not free him of guilt; it being
 his fortune, rather than his care or conscience, which
 keepeth him from perjury.

V. Such swearing commonly will induce a man
 to bind himself by oath to unlawful practices; and
 consequently will entangle him in a woful neces-
 sity, either of breaking his oath, or of doing worse,
 and committing wickedness: so that ^hswearing, as
 St. Chrysostom saith, *hath this misery attending it,*
that both transgressed and observed it plagueth
those who are guilty of it.

Of this perplexity the holy scripture affordeth two
 notable instances: the one of Saul, forced to break (1 Sam. xxv. 22. David.)
 his rash oaths; the other of Herod, being engaged
 thereby to commit a most horrid murder. Διὰ τοὺς ἕρκους. Matt. xiv. 9. Vid. Chrys. ἰδ. Ἄνθρ. 1 Sam. xiv. 45.

Had Saul observed his oaths, what injury had he
 done, what mischief had he produced, in slaughter-
 ing his most worthy and most innocent son, the prop
 and glory of his family, the bulwark of his country,
 and the grand instrument of salvation to it; in forc-
 ing the people to violate their cross oath, and for
 prevention of one, causing many perjuries! He was
 therefore fain to desist, and lie under the guilt of
 breaking his oaths.

And for Herod, the excellent Father thus presseth

^h Τοῦτο τὸ δεινὸν ἔχει ὁ ἕρκος, ὅτι καὶ παραβαινόμενος καὶ φυλαττόμενος
 κολάζει τοὺς ἀλίσκομένους. Chrys. Ἄνθρ. ἰδ'. p. 553.

SERM. the consideration of his case : ⁱ *Take, saith he, I beseech you, the chopped-off head of St. John, and his warm blood yet trickling down ; each of you bear it home with you, and conceive that before your eyes you hear it uttering speech, and saying, Embrace the murderer of me, an oath. That which reproof did not, this an oath did do ; that which the tyrant's wrath could not, this the necessity of keeping an oath did effect. For when the tyrant was reprehended publicly in the audience of all men, he bravely did bear the rebuke ; but when he had cast himself into the necessity of oaths, then did he cut off that blessed head.*

Deut. xxiii.

21.

Matt. v. 33.

Psal. lxxvi.

13, 14.

VI. Likewise the use of rash swearing will often engage a man in undertakings very inconvenient and detrimental to himself. A man is bound to perform his vows to the Lord, whatever they be, whatever damage or trouble thence may accrue to him, if they be not unlawful. It is the law, *That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform.* It is the property of a good man, that *he sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*

Deut. xxiii.

23.

Ps. xv. 4.

Wherefore it is the part of a sober man, to be well advised what he doth swear or vow religiously ; that he do not put himself into the inextricable strait of committing great sin, or undergoing great inconvenience ; that he do not rush into that snare of which the Wise Man speaketh, *It is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy,* (or to swallow a sacred obligation,) *and after vows to make inquiry^k, seek-*

Prov. xx.

25.

ⁱ Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου λαβόντας.— Ἄνδρ. ιδ'. p. 552.

^k Ὅσπερ τινὶ παγίδι κατεχόμενοι, καὶ δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις συνδεμένοι, &c. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. ζ'.

ing how he may disengage himself: the doing which SERM. XV.
is a folly offensive to God, as the Preacher telleth Eccles. v. 4.
us; *When, saith he, thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.* God will not admit our folly in vowing, as a plea or an excuse for non-performance; he will exact it from us both as a due debt, and as a proper punishment of our impious folly.

For instance, into what loss and mischief, what sorrow, what regret and repentance, did the unadvised vow of Jephtha throw him! the performance whereof, as St. Chrysostom remarketh, God did permit, and order to be commemorated with solemn lamentation, that all posterity might be admonished thereby, and deterred from such precipitant swearing. Chrys. Anđe. 17.

VII. Let us consider, that swearing is a sin of all others peculiarly clamorous, and provocative of divine judgment. God is hardly so much concerned, or in a manner constrained, to punish any other sin as this. He is bound in honour and interest to vindicate his name from the abuse, his authority from the contempt, his holy ordinance from the profanation, which it doth infer. He is concerned to take care that his providence be not questioned, that the dread of his majesty be not voided, that all religion be not overthrown by the outrageous commission thereof with impunity.

It immediately toucheth his name, it expressly calleth upon him to mind it, to judge it, to shew himself in avenging it. He may seem deaf or unconcerned, if, being so called and provoked, he doth not declare himself.

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There is understood to be a kind of formal compact between him and mankind, obliging him to interpose, to take the matter into his cognizance, being specially addressed to him.

The bold swearer doth importune him to hear, doth rouse him to mark, doth brave him to judge and punish his wickedness.

Zech. v.
2, &c.
Chrys. Adv.
p. 525.
n. p. 565.
d. p. 591.

Hence no wonder that *the flying roll*, a quick and inevitable *curse*, doth surprise the *swearer*, and *cut him off*, as it is in the Prophet. No wonder that so many remarkable instances do occur in history, of signal vengeance inflicted on persons notably guilty of this crime. No wonder that a common practice thereof doth fetch down public judgments; and that, as the prophets of old did proclaim, *because of swearing the land mourneth*.

Jer. xxiii.
10.
Hos. ix. 3.

VIII. Further, (passing over the special laws against it, the mischievous consequences of it, the sore punishments appointed to it,) we may consider, that to common sense vain swearing is a very unreasonable and ill-favoured practice, greatly misbecoming any sober, worthy, or honest person; but especially most absurd and incongruous to a Christian.

For in ordinary conversation what needful or reasonable occasion can intervene of violating this command? If there come under discourse a matter of reason, which is evidently true and certain, then what need can there be of an oath to affirm it, it sufficing to expose it to light, or to propose the evidences for it? If an obscure or doubtful point come to be debated, it will not bear an oath; it will be a strange madness to dare, a great folly to hope the persuading it thereby. What were more ridiculous,

than to swear the truth of a demonstrable theorem? **SERM. XV.**
What more vain, than so to assert a disputable problem? Oaths, like wagers, are in such cases no arguments, except of silliness in the users of them.

If a matter of history be started, then if a man be taken for honest, his word will pass for attestation without further assurance: but if his veracity or probity be doubted, his oath will not be relied on, especially when he doth obtrude it. For it was no less truly than acutely said by the old poet, *Οὐκ ἄνδρος ὄρα* Æschyl.
αὐτίστις, ἀλλ' ἔρκω ἀνὴρ, The man doth not get credit from an oath, but an oath from the man: and a greater author, *° An oath, saith St. Chrysostom, doth not make a man credible; but the testimony of his life, and the exactness of his conversation, and a good repute. Many often have burst with swearing, and persuaded no man: others only nodding have deserved more belief than those who have sworn so mightily.* Wherefore oaths, as they are frivolous coming from a person of little worth or conscience, so they are superfluous in the mouth of an honest and worthy person; yea, as they do not increase the credit of the former, so they may impair that of the latter.

A good man, as Socrates did say, should apparently so demean himself, that his word may be deemed more credible than an oath^f; the constant tenor of his practice vouching for it, and giving it

[°] Οὐκ ὄρκος ἀξιόπιστον ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ βίου μαρτυρία, καὶ πολιτείας ἀκρίβεια, καὶ ἐπέληψις ἀγαθή. πολλοὶ πολλὰκις διεβράγγησαν ἠμύντες, καὶ οὐδένα ἔπεισαν· ἕτεροι δὲ, ἐπειεύσαντες μόνον, ἀξιόπιστότεροι τῶν τῶσαῦτα ὁμολογῶν ἠφάνησαν. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. ζ'. p. 514.

^f Δαὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἄνδρας τρόπον ὄρκου πιστότερον φαίνεσθαι παρεχομένους. Socr. apud Max. Serm. lxxxv. 'O

SERM. such weight, that no asseveration can further corroborate it.
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Clem. Alex.
Strom. vii.
p. 524.

He should τοῖς ἔργοις εὐορκεῖν, *swear by his good deeds*, and exhibit βίον ἀξιώπιστον, *a life deserving belief*, as Clemens Alexandrinus saith: so that no man should desire more from him than his bare assertion; but willingly should yield him the privilege which the Athenians granted to Xenocrates; that he should testify without swearing^e.

He should be like the Essenes, of whom Josephus saith, that every thing spoken by them was more valid than an oath; whence they declined swearing^h.

He should so much confide in his own veracity and fidelity, and so much stand upon them, that he should not deign to offer any pledge for them, implying them to want confirmation.

He should, as St. Hierome saith, *so love truth, that he should suppose himself to have sworn whatsoever he hath said*ⁱ; and therefore should not be apt to heap another oath on his words.

Upon such accounts common reason directed even pagan wise men wholly to interdict swearing in ordinary conversation, or about petty matters, as an irrational and immoral practice, unworthy of sober and discreet persons. *Forbear swearing about any*

Ὁ τοῦ σπουδαίου λόγος ὄρκος ἔστω βέβαιος, ἀκλιηῆς, ἀψευδέστατος.
Philo.

Colendo fidem jurant (Scythæ; apud Curt. vii. 8.)

^e Ἦν δὲ καὶ ἀξιώπιστος σφόδρα ὥστε μὴ ἕξον ἀνάμμετον μαρτυρεῖν, τοῦτω μόνῃ συνεχέουσαν Ἀθηναῖοι. Diog. Laert. in Xenocr.

^h Πᾶν τὸ ῥηθὲν ἐκ' αὐτῶν ἰσχυρότερον ὄρκου, τὸ δὲ ὁμολογεῖν αὐταῖς περιίσταται. Joseph.

ⁱ Tantus in te sit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes.
Hier. Ep. xiv.

matter, said Plato, cited by Clem. Alex.^k *Avoid swearing, if you can, wholly,* said Epictetus^l. *For money swear by no god, though you swear truly,* said Isocrates^m. And divers the like precepts occur in other heathens; the mention whereof may well serve to strike shame into many loose and vain people, bearing the name of Christians.

Indeed, for a true and real Christian, this practice doth especially in a far higher degree misbecome him, upon considerations peculiar to his high calling and holy profession.

Plutarch telleth us, that among the Romans the Flamen of Jupiter was not permitted to swear: of which law among other reasons he assigneth this; *Because it is not handsome, that he, to whom divine and greatest things are intrusted, should be distrusted about small matters*ⁿ. The which reason may well be applied to excuse every Christian from it, who is a priest to the most High God, and hath the most celestial and important matters concredited to him; in comparison to which all other matters are very mean and inconsiderable. The dignity of his rank should render his word *verbum honoris*, passable without any further engagement. He hath opinions of things, he hath undertaken practices inconsistent with swearing. For he that firmly doth

^k "Ορκος περι παντος ἀπίστω. Plato apud Clem. Alex. Str. v. p. 438.

^l "Ορκον παραιτήσαν, ει μὲν ὅλον τε, εις ἅπαν. Epict. Ench. cap. xlv.

^m "Ενεκα χρημάτων μηδένα θεὸν ὀμώσας, μηδ' αὖ εἰσρκεῖν μέλλης. Isocr. ad Demon.

ⁿ Δισπὲ τῆ ἱερῆ τοῦ Διὸς, οὐκ ἔξεστιν ὀμώσαι; ἢ ὅτι περι μικρῶν ἀπιστεῖσθαι τὸν τὰ θεῶα καὶ μέγιστα πεπιστευμένον οὐκ εἰκόσ ἐστιν; Plut. in Qu. Rom. p. 421.

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believe that God is ever present with him, an auditor and witness of all his discourse ; he that is persuaded that a severe judgment shall pass on him, wherein he must give an account for every idle word which slippeth from him, and wherein, among other offenders, assuredly *liars* will be condemned to the burning lake ; he that in a great sacrament (once most solemnly taken, and frequently renewed) hath engaged and sworn, together with all other divine commandments, to observe those which most expressly do charge him to be exactly just, faithful, and veracious in all his words and deeds ; who therefore should be ready to say with David, *I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteous judgments* ; to him every word hath the force of an oath ; every lie, every breach of promise, every violation of faith doth involve perjury : for him to swear, is false heraldry, an impertinent accumulation of one oath upon another ; he of all men should disdain to allow that his words are not perfectly credible, that his promise is not secure, without being assured by on oath.

Col. iii. 9.
Eph. iv. 25.
1 Pet. ii. 1.
Psal. cxix.
106.

IX. Indeed the practice of swearing greatly disparageth him that useth it, and derogateth from his credit upon divers accounts.

It signifieth, (if it signifieth any thing,) that he doth not confide in his own reputation, and judgeth his own bare word not to deserve credit : for why, if he taketh his word to be good, doth he back it with asseverations ? why, if he deemeth his own honesty to bear proof, doth he cite Heaven to warrant it ?

It is, saith St. Basil, a very foul and silly thing

° Omnis sermo fidelis pro jurejurando est. *Hier. in Matt. v.*

for a man to accuse himself as unworthy of belief, SERM.
and to proffer an oath for security P. XV.

By so doing a man doth authorize others to distrust him : for it can be no wrong to distrust him, who doth not pretend to be a credible person, or that his saying alone may safely be taken ; who, by suspecting that others are not satisfied with his simple assertion, implieth a reason known to himself for it.

It rendereth whatever he saith to be in reason suspicious, as discovering him void of conscience and discretion : for he that flatly against the rules of duty and reason will swear vainly, what can engage him to speak truly ? He that is so loose in so clear and so considerable a point of obedience to God, how can he be supposed staunch in regard to any other ? *It being, as Aristotle hath it, the part of the same men to do ill things, and not to regard forswearing.* It will at least constrain any man to suspect all his discourse of vanity and unadvisedness, seeing he plainly hath no care to bridle his tongue from so gross an offence.

It is strange, therefore, that any man of honour or honesty should not scorn, by such a practice, to shake his own credit, or to detract from the validity of his word ; which should stand firm on itself, and not want any attestation to support it. It is a privilege of honourable persons, that they are excused from swearing, and that their *verbum honoris* passeth in lieu of

^P Αλοχρὸν παντελῶς καὶ ἀνόητον, ἑαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖν ὡς ἀναξίου πίστεως, καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄρκων ἀσφάλειαν ἐπιφέρεισθαι. Bas. in Psal. xiv.

^Q Ἦδη γὰρ ὅ γε ἑμὸς εἰς ἀπιστίαν ὑπωσέσται. Philo.

^T Τῶν αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπων τὰ ποηρὰ πράττειν, καὶ μὴ φροντίζειν ἐπιουκῶστας. Arist. Rhet. ad Alex. cap. xviii.

SERM. an oath: is it not then strange, that, when others
 XV. dispense with them, they should not dispense with
 themselves; but voluntarily degrade themselves, and
 with sin forfeit so noble a privilege?

Hierocl.
 Philo.

X. To excuse these faults, the swearer will be forced to confess, that his oaths are no more than waste and insignificant words; deprecating being taken for serious, or to be understood that he meaneth any thing by them; but only that he useth them as expletive phrases, *πρὸς ἀναπλήρωσιν λόγου*, to plump his speech, and fill up sentences. But such pleas do no more than suggest other faults of swearing, and good arguments against it; its impertinence, its abuse of speech, its disgracing the practiser of it in point of judgment and capacity. For so it is, oaths as they commonly pass are mere excrescences of speech, which do nothing but encumber and deform it; they so embellish discourse, as a wen or a scab do beautify a face, as a patch or a spot do adorn a garment.

To what purpose, I pray, is God's name hooked and haled into our idle talk? why should we so often mention him, when we do not mean any thing about him? would it not, into every sentence to foist a dog or a horse, (to intrude Turkish, or any barbarous gibberish,) be altogether as proper and pertinent?

What do these superfluities signify, but that the venter of them doth little skill the use of speech, or the rule of conversation, but meaneth to sputter and prate any thing without judgment or wit; that his invention is very barren, his fancy beggarly, craving the aid of any stuff to relieve it? One would think a man of sense should grutch to lend his ear, or in-

cline his attention to such motley, ragged discourse ; SERM. XV.
that without nauseating he scarce should endure to observe men lavishing time, and squandering their breath so frivolously. It is an affront to good company to pester it with such talk.

XI. But further, upon higher accounts this is a very uncivil and unmannerly practice.

Some vain persons take it for a genteel and graceful thing, a special accomplishment, a mark of fine breeding, a point of high gallantry : for who, forsooth, is the brave spark, the complete gentleman, the man of conversation and address, but he that hath the skill and confidence (O heavens ! how mean a skill ! how mad a confidence !) to lard every sentence with an oath or a curse ; making bold at every turn to salute his Maker, or to summon him in attestation of his tattle ; not to say, calling and challenging the Almighty to damn and destroy him ? Such a conceit, I say, too many have of swearing, because a custom thereof, together with divers other fond and base qualities, hath prevailed among some people, bearing the name and garb of gentlemen.

But in truth there is no practice more crossing the genuine nature of genteelness, or misbecoming persons well born and well bred ; who should excel the rude vulgar in goodness, in courtesy, in nobleness of heart, in unwillingness to offend, and readiness to oblige those with whom they converse ; in steady composedness of mind and manners, in disdain- ing to say or do any unworthy, any unhandsome things.

For this practice is not only a gross rudeness toward the main body of men, who justly reverence the name of God, and detest such an abuse thereof ;

SERM. not only, further, an insolent defiance of the com-
XV. mon profession, the religion, the law of our country, which disalloweth and condemneth it; but it is very odious and offensive to any particular society or company, at least wherein there is any sober person, any who retaineth a sense of goodness, or is anywise concerned for God's honour: for to any such person no language can be more disgustful; nothing can more grate his ears, or fret his heart, than to hear the sovereign object of his love and esteem so mocked and slighted; to see the law of his Prince so disloyally infringed, so contemptuously trampled on; to find his best Friend and Benefactor so outrageously abused. To give him the lie were a compliment, to spit in his face were an obligation, in comparison to this usage.

Wherefore it is a wonder, that any person of rank, any that hath in him a spark of ingenuity, or doth at all pretend to good manners, should find in his heart or deign to comply with so scurvy a fashion; a fashion much more befitting the scum of the people, than the flower of the gentry; yea rather much below any man endued with a scrap of reason, or a grain of goodness. Would we bethink ourselves, modest, sober, and pertinent discourse would appear far more generous and masculine, than such mad hectoring the Almighty, such boisterous insulting over the received laws and general notions of mankind, such ruffianly swaggering against sobriety and goodness. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their ancestors, the founders of their quality; that gallant courage, that solid wisdom, that noble courtesy, which advanced their families, and severed them from the vulgar; this degenerate wantonness and

sordidness of language would return to the dung-SERM.
hill, or rather, which God grant, be quite banished XV.
from the world; the vulgar following their exam-
ple.

XII. Further, the words of our Lord, when he
forbad this practice, do suggest another consideration
against it, deducible from the causes and sources of
it; from whence it cometh, that men are so inclined
or addicted thereto; *Let*, saith he, *your communi-*Matt. v. 37.
cation be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is
more than these cometh of evil. The roots of it he
assureth us are evil, and therefore the fruit cannot be
good: it is no grape which groweth from thorns, or
fig from thistles. Consult experience, and observe
whence it doth proceed.

Sometimes it ariseth from exorbitant heats of
spirit, or transports of unbridled passion. When a
man is keenly peevish, or fiercely angry, or eagerly
contentious, then he blustereth, and dischargeth his
choler in most tragical strains; then he would fright
the objects of his displeasure by the most violent ex-
pressions thereof. This is sometime alleged in ex-
cuse of rash swearing; *I was provoked*, the swearer
will say, *I was in passion*: but it is strange, that a
bad cause should justify a bad effect; that one crime
should warrant another; that what would spoil a
good action should excuse a bad one.

Sometimes it proceedeth from arrogant conceit,
and a tyrannical humour; when a man fondly ad-
mireth his own opinion, and affecting to impose it
on others, is thence moved to thwack it on with
lusty asseverations.

Sometimes it issueth from wantonness and levity^{ἑλαφρία.}
of mind, disposing a man to sport with any thing,
2 Cor. i. 17.

SERM. how serious, how grave, how sacred and venerable
 XV. soever.

Ps. xxxix.
 1. cxli. 3.

Sometimes its rise is from stupid inadvertency, or heady precipitancy; when the man doth not heed what he saith, or consider the nature and consequence of his words, but snatcheth any expression which cometh next, or which his roving fancy doth offer; for want of that caution of the Psalmist, *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*

Sometimes (alas! how often in this miserable age!) it doth spring from profane boldness; when men design to put affronts on religion, and to display their scorn and spite against conscience; affecting the reputation of stout blades, of gallant hectors, of resolute giants, who dare do any thing, who are not afraid to defy Heaven, and brave God Almighty himself.

(Ps. xxvi.
 4.)

Sometimes it is derived from apish imitation, or a humour to comply with a fashion current among vain and dissolute persons.

It always doth come from a great defect of conscience, of reverence to God, of love to goodness, of discretion and sober regard to the welfare of a man's soul.

Matt. vii.
 16.

From such evidently vicious and unworthy sources it proceedeth, and therefore must needs be very culpable. No good, no wise man can like actions drawn from such principles. Further,

XIII. This offence may be particularly aggravated by considering, that it hath no strong temptation alluring to it; that it yieldeth no sensible advantage; that it most easily may be avoided or corrected.

Every sin, saith St. Chrysostom, hath not the same punishment; but those things which may easily be reformed do bring on us greater punishment: and what can be more easy than to reform his fault? *Tell me, saith he, what difficulty, what sweat, what art, what hazard, what more doth it require, beside a little care*^t, to abstain wholly from ? It is but willing, or resolving on it, and it is instantly done: for there is not any natural inclination disposing to it, any strong appetite to detain us under its power.

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It gratifieth no sense, it yieldeth no profit, it procreth no honour; for the sound of it is not very melodious, and no man surely did ever get an estate for it, or was preferred to dignity for it. It rather than any good ear maketh a horrid and jarring noise; rather with the best part of the world produceth displeasure, damage, and disgrace. What therefore beside monstrous vanity, and unaccountable persistence, should hold men so devoted thereto?

Surely of all dealers in sin the swearer is palpably the silliest, and maketh the worst bargains for himself; for he sinneth gratis, and, like those in the prophet, *selleth his soul for nothing*. An epicure without some reason to allege, an extortioner is a man without wisdom, and acteth prudently in comparison to them; for they enjoy some pleasure, or acquire some in here, in lieu of their salvation hereafter: but he is fondling offendeth Heaven, and abandoneth happiness, he knoweth not why or for what. He hath

Isa. lii. 3.

^t Οὐ γὰρ δὴ πᾶν ἀμάρτημα τὴν αὐτὴν φέρει κόλασιν· ἀλλὰ τὰ εὐκατέροισιν αὐτῶν· ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμῖν ἐπάγει τὴν τιμωρίαν. Chrys. 'Ανθρ. ε'. p. 531.

[·] Ἔπε μοι ποίαν δυσκολίαν, &c. Chrys. 'Ανθρ. ιθ'. p. 594. ε'. p. 499. p. 489.

SERM. not so much as the common plea of human infirmity
 XV. to excuse him; he can hardly say that he was tempted thereto by any bait ^u.

A fantastic humour possesseth him of spurning at piety and soberness; he inconsiderately followeth a herd of wild fops; he affecteth to play the ape. What more than this can he say for himself?

XIV. Finally, let us consider, that as we ourselves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly designed and framed to glorify our Maker; (the which to do is indeed the greatest perfection and noblest privilege of our nature;) so our tongue and speaking faculty were given to us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to exhibit our due love and gratitude toward him, to profess our trust and confidence in him, to celebrate his praises, to avow his benefits, to address our supplications to him, to maintain all kinds of devotional intercourse with him, to propagate our knowledge, fear, love, and obedience to him, in all such ways to promote his honour and service. This is the most proper, worthy, and due use of our tongue, for which it was created, to which it is dedicated, from whence it becometh, as it is so often styled, our *glory*, and the best member that we have; that whereby we excel all creatures here below, and whereby we are no less discriminated from them than by our reason; ^xthat whereby we consort with the blessed angels above in the dis-

Ps. xvi. 9.
 xxx. 12.
 lvii. 8. cviii.
 1.

^u Οὗτος δὲ, οὐδεμιᾶς ἀνάγκης αὐτὸν βιαζομένης, ὑπὸ ἀνοίας μόνως εἰς τὸ βάρβαρον καταπίπτει τῆς ἀμαρτίας. Chrys. Ἄνθρ. i. p. 531. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτοι τινα πρέφασιν ἔχουσι προβουλέσθαι, ἀλλὰ καταφρόνησιν μόνων. Ibid.

^x Hoc enim uno præstamus vel maxime feris, quod colloquimur inter nos, et quod exprimere dicendo sensa possumus. Cic. de Orat. i.

utterance of praise, and communication of **SERM.**
our Creator. Wherefore applying this to XV.

pious discourse, with this to profane God's name, with this to violate his holy commands, is to unhallow his sacred ordinance, with this dishonour and indignity to him, is a most abominable abuse, an horrid ingratitude toward him.

that indeed whereby we render this noble use incapable of any good use. For how (as the ^{Πάντες ἠδὲ} ^{πολλοί;} ^{Chrysa.} ^{Arq. N. p.} ^{559. a. p.} ^{538.} fathers doth often urge) can we pray for mercies, or praise God for his benefits, or confess our sins, or cheerfully partake of the

mysteries, with a mouth defiled by impiety and a heart guilty of so heinous disobedience? Not wise, whereas a secondary, very worthy use of speech is, to promote the good of our neighbour and especially to edify him in piety, according

to the wholesome precept of the apostle. *Let no* ^{Eph. iv. 29.} *communication proceed out of your mouth, that which is good to the use of edifying, that minister grace unto the hearers;* the practice of swearing is an abuse very contrary to that purpose, serving to corrupt our neighbour, and to bring into him a contempt of religion; or, how grievously to scandalize him.

I shall add but two words more. One is, we should seriously consider, that our blessed Father, who loved us so dearly, who did and suffered much for us, who redeemed us by his blood, who gave himself up for us, *If ye love me, keep my command-* ^{Joh. xiv. 15.} *ments* he thus positively hath enjoined, *But I say* ^{Matt. v. 34.} *unto you, Swear not at all:* and how then can we let our heart directly to thwart his word?

The other is, that we would lay to heart the rea-

SERM. son whereby St. James doth enforce the point, and
 XV. the sting in the close of our text, wherewith I conclude ; *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath : but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall into condemnation, or, lest ye fall under damnation.* From the which infinite mischief, and from all sin that may cause it, God in mercy deliver us through our blessed Redeemer Jesus, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.

and bring-
on others.

SERMON XVI.

OF EVIL-SPEAKING IN GENERAL.

TITUS iii. 2.

—*To speak evil of no man.*

THESE words do imply a double duty; one incumbent on teachers, another on the people who are to be instructed by them. SERM. XVI.

The teacher's duty appeareth from reflecting on the words of the context, which govern these, and make them up an entire sentence; *Put them in mind*, or, rub up their memory to do thus. It is St. Paul's injunction to Titus, a bishop and pastor of the church, that he should admonish the people committed to his care and instruction, as of other great duties, (of yielding obedience to magistrates, of behaving themselves peaceably, of practising meekness and equity toward all men, of being *readily* disposed to every good work,) so particularly of this, *μηδένα λασφημείν, to revile, or speak evil of no man.*

Whence it is apparent, that this is one of the principal duties that preachers are obliged to mind the people of, and to press upon them. And if this were needful then, when charity, kindled by such instructions and examples, was so lively; when Christians, by their sufferings, were so inured to meekness and patience; even every one, for the honour of his religion, and the safety of his person,

SERM. was concerned in all respects to demean himself in-
XVI. nocently and inoffensively; then is it now espe-
 cially requisite, when (such engagements and re-
 straints being taken off, love being cooled, persecu-
 tion being extinct, the tongue being set loose from
 all extraordinary curbs) the transgression of this
 duty is grown so prevalent and rife, that evil-speak-
 ing is almost as common as speaking, ordinary con-
 versation extremely abounding therewith, that min-
 isters should discharge their office in dehorting and
 dissuading from it.

Well indeed it were, if by their example of using
 mild and moderate discourse, of abstaining from vi-
 rulent invectives, tauntings, and scoffings, good for
 little but to inflame anger, and infuse ill-will, they
 would lead men to good practice of this sort: for no
 examples can be so wholesome, or so mischievous to
 this purpose, as those which come down from the
 pulpit, the place of edification, backed with special
 authority and advantage.

However, it is to preachers a ground of assurance,
 and matter of satisfaction, that in pressing this duty
 they shall perform their duty: their text being not
 so much of their own choosing, as given them by St.
 Paul; they can surely scarce find a better to discourse
 upon: it cannot be a matter of small moment or use,
 which this great master and guide so expressly di-
 recteth us to insist upon. And to the observance of
 his precept, so far as concerneth me, I shall imme-
 diately apply myself.

It is then the duty of all Christian people, (to be
 taught, and pressed on them,) *not to reproach, or
 speak evil of any man.* The which duty, for your
 instruction, I shall first endeavour somewhat to ex-

plain, declaring its import and extent; then, for your further edification, I shall inculcate it, proposing several inducements persuasive to the observance of it. SERM.
XVI.

I. For explication, we may first consider the object of it, *no man*; then the act itself, which is prohibited, *to blaspheme*, that is, to reproach, to revile, or, as we have it rendered, *to speak evil*.

No man. St. Paul questionless did especially mean hereby to hinder the Christians at that time from reproaching the Jews and the pagans among whom they lived, men in their lives very wicked and corrupt, men in opinion extremely dissenting from them, men who greatly did hate, and cruelly did persecute them; of whom therefore they had mighty provocations and temptations to speak ill; their judgment of the persons, and their resentment of injuries, making it difficult to abstain from doing so. Whence by a manifest analogy may be inferred, that the object of the duty is very large, indeed universal and unlimited: that we must forbear reproach not only against pious and virtuous persons, against persons of our own judgment or party, against those who never did harm or offend us, against our relations, our friends, our benefactors; in respect of whom there is no ground or temptation of ill-speaking; but even against the most unworthy and wicked persons, against those who most discoat in opinion and practice from us, against those who never did oblige us, yea those who have most disobliged us, even against our most bitter and spiteful enemies. There is no acception or excuse to be admitted from the quality, state, relation, or demeanour of men; the duty (according to the proper sense, or

SERM. due qualifications and limits of the act) doth extend
 XVI. to all men : for, *Speak evil of no man.*

As for the act, it may be inquired what the word βλασφημεῖν, *to blaspheme*, doth import. I answer, that it is to vent words concerning any person which do signify in us ill opinion, or contempt, anger, hatred, enmity conceived in our minds toward him; which are apt in him to kindle wrath, and breed ill blood toward us; which tend to beget in others that hear ill conceit, or ill-will toward him; which are much destructive of his reputation, prejudicial to his interests, productive of damage or mischief to him. It is otherwise in scripture termed λοιδορεῖν, *to rail or revile*, (to use bitter and ignominious language;) ὑβρίζειν, *to speak contumeliously*; φέρειν βλάβσφημον κρίσιν, *to bring railing accusation*, (or reproachful censure;) καταλαλεῖν, *to use obloquy*, or *obtrectation*; καταρᾶσθαι, *to curse*, that is, to speak words importing that we do wish ill to a person.

Luke xi. 45.
 2 Pet. ii. 11.
 Jude 9.
 Jam. iv. 11.
 Rom. xii.
 14.
 Luke vi. 28.
 (2 Sam.
 xvi. 10.)

Such is the language we are prohibited to use. To which purpose we may observe, that whereas in our conversation and commerce with men, there do frequently occur occasions to speak of men, and to men, words apparently disadvantageous to them, expressing our dissent in opinion from them, or a dislike in us of their proceedings, we may do this in different ways and terms; some of them gentle and moderate, signifying no ill mind or disaffection toward them; others harsh and sharp, arguing height of disdain, disgust, or despite, whereby we bid them defiance, and shew that we mean to exasperate them. Thus, telling a man that we differ in judgment from him, or conceive him not to be in the right, and calling him a liar, a deceiver, a fool; saying that he

doeth amiss, taketh a wrong course, transgresseth the rule, and calling him dishonest, unjust, wicked; (to omit more odious and provoking names, unbecoming this place, and not deserving our notice;) are several ways of expressing the same things: whereof the latter, in relating passages concerning our neighbour, or in debating cases with him, is prohibited; for thus the words *reproaching, reviling, railing, cursing*, and the like, do signify; and thus our Lord himself doth explain them, in his divine sermon, wherein he doth enact this law; *Whosoever*, saith he, *shall say to his brother, Raca*, (that is, vain man, or liar,) *shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*; that is, he rendereth himself liable to a strict account, and to severe condemnation before God, who useth contemptuous and contumelious expressions toward his neighbour, in proportion to the malignity of such expressions.

The reason of things also doth help to explain those words, and to shew why they are prohibited: because those harsh terms are needless; mild words serving as well to express the same things: because they are commonly unjust, loading men with greater defect or blame than they can be proved to deserve, or their actions do import: (for every man that speaketh falsehood is not therefore a liar, every man that erreth is not thence a fool, every man that doeth amiss is not consequently dishonest or wicked; the secret intentions and the habitual dispositions of men not being always to be collected from their outward actions:) because they are uncharitable, signifying that we entertain the worst opinions of men, and make the worst construction of their doings, and are

SERM. XVI. disposed to shew them no favour or kindness : because also they produce mischievous effects, such as spring from the worst passions raised by them.

This in gross is the meaning of the precept. But since there are some other precepts seeming to clash with this ; since there are cases wherein we are allowed to use the harsher sort of terms, there are great examples in appearance thwarting this rule ; therefore it may be requisite for determining the limits of our duty, and distinguishing it from transgression, that such exceptions or restrictions should be somewhat declared.

1. First then, we may observe, that it may be allowable to persons anywise concerned in the prosecution or administration of justice, to speak words which in private intercourse would be reproachful. A witness may impeach of crimes hurtful to justice, or public tranquillity ; a judge may challenge, may rebuke, may condemn an offender in proper terms, (or forms of speech prescribed by law,) although most disgraceful and distasteful to the guilty : for it belongeth to the majesty of public justice to be bold, blunt, severe ; little regarding the concerns or passions of particular persons, in comparison to the public welfare.

A testimony therefore or sentence against a criminal, which materially is a reproach, and morally would be such in a private mouth, is not yet formally so according to the intent of this rule. For practices of this kind, which serve the exigencies of justice, are not to be interpreted as proceeding from anger, hatred, revenge, any bad passion or humour ; but in way of needful discipline for God's service, and common benefit of men. It is not indeed so

much the minister of justice, as God himself, our absolute lord, as the sovereign, God's representative, acting in the public behalf, as the commonwealth itself, who by his mouth do rebuke the obnoxious person. SERM.
XVI.

2. God's ministers in religious affairs, to whom the care of men's instruction and edification is committed, are enabled to inveigh against sin and vice, whoever consequentially may be touched thereby; yea sometimes it is their duty, with severity and sharpness to reprove particular persons, not only privately, but publicly, in order to their correction, and edification of others.

Thus St. Paul directeth Timothy; *Them that sin* ^{1Tim. v. 20.} (notoriously and scandalously he meaneth) *rebuke* ^{2Tim. iv. 2.} *before all, that others may fear*: that is in a manner apt to make impression on the minds of the hearers, so as to scare them from like offences. And to Titus he writes, *Rebuke them sharply, that they* ^{Tit. i. 13.} *may be sound in the faith.* And, *Cry aloud, spare* ^{Isa. lviii. 1.} *not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins,* saith the Lord to the Prophet. Such are the charges and commissions laid on and granted to his messengers.

Thus may we observe that God's prophets of old, ^{Vide Hier. in Pelag.} St. John the Baptist, our Lord himself, the holy ^{i. 9.} apostles did in terms most vehement and biting reprove the age in which they lived, and some particular persons in them. The prophets are full of declamations and invectives against the general corruption of their times, and against the particular manners of some persons in them. *Ah sinful na-* ^{Isa. i. 4.} *tion, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-* ^{Jer. ix. 2, 3.}

SERM. *doers, children that are corrupters! They are all*
 XVI. *adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men; and*
they bend their tongues like their bow for lies.

Isa. i. 23. *Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of*
 Hos. ix. 15. *thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after*
 Ezek. xxii. *rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither*
 6, 27. *doth the cause of the widow come before them.*

Jer. v. 31. *The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule*
 xiv. 14. *by their means. As troops of robbers wait for a*
 Hos. vi. 9. *man, so the company of priests murder in the way*
 Ezek. xxii. *26. by consent, and commit lewdness. Such is their*
 Mic. iii. 11. *style commonly. St. John the Baptist calleth the*
 Zeph. iii. 4. *Scribes and Pharisees a generation of vipers. Our*
 Matt. iii. 7. *Saviour speaketh of them in the same terms; calleth*

Matt. xvi. 4. *them an evil and adulterous generation, serpents,*
 xii. 34, 39. *and children of vipers; Hypocrites, painted se-*
 xxiii. 13. *pulchres, obscure graves, (μνημεῖα ἄδηλα,) blind*
 &c. xv. 7. *guides, fools and blind, children of the Devil. St.*
 14. xvi. 3. *Paul likewise calleth the schismatical and heretical*
 xxii. 18. *teachers, a dogs, false apostles, evil and deceitful*
 Luke xii. 1. *workers, men of corrupt minds, reprobates and*
 xi. 44. *abominable. With the like colours do St. Peter, St.*
 Matt. xxiii. *13. Jude, and other the apostles, paint them. Which*
 24. 17. *sort of speeches are to be supposed to proceed, not*
 Job. viii. 44. *from private passion or design, but out of holy zeal*
 Phil. iii. 2. *for God's honour, and from earnest charity toward*
 2 Cor. xi. *men, for to work their amendment and common*
 13. *edification. They were uttered also by special wis-*
 1 Tim. vi. 5. *dom and peculiar order; from God's authority and*
 2 Tim. iii. 8. *in his name: so that as God by them is said to*
 Tit. i. 16. *preach, to entreat, to warn, and to exhort; so by*
 2 Cor. v. 20. *them also he may be said to reprehend and re-*
 Col. i. 28. *proach.*

3. Even private persons in due season, with dis-

cretion and temper, may reprove others, whom they observe to commit sin, or follow bad courses, out of charitable design, and with hope to reclaim them. This was an office of charity imposed anciently even upon the Jews; much more doth it lie upon Christians, who are obliged more earnestly to tender the spiritual good of those who by the stricter and more holy bands of brotherhood are allied to them. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him,* Lev. xix. 17. was a precept of the old law: and, *νοθετεῖν ἀτάκτους,* 1 Thess. v. 14. *to admonish the disorderly,* is an evangelical rule. 1 Tim. vi. 5. Such persons we are enjoined to shun and decline: Rom. xvi. 17. but first we must endeavour by sober advice and admonition to reclaim them; we must not thus reject them till they appear contumacious and incorrigible, Tit. iii. 10. 2 Thess. iii. 6. refusing to hear us, or becoming deaf to reproof. Matt. xviii. 17. This, although it necessarily doth include setting out their faults, and charging blame on them, (answerable to their offences,) is not the culpable reproach here meant, it being needful toward a wholesome effect, and proceeding from charitable intention.

4. Some vehemency (some smartness and sharpness) of speech may sometimes be used in defence of truth, and impugning errors of bad consequence; especially when it concerneth the interests of truth, that the reputation and authority of its adversaries should somewhat be abased or abated. If by a partial opinion or reverence toward them, however begotten in the minds of men, they strive to overbear or discountenance a good cause, their faults, so far as ruth permitteth and need requireth, may be detected and displayed. For this cause particularly may we presume our Lord (otherwise so meek in

SERM. his temper, and mild in his carriage toward all men)
 XVI. did characterize the Jewish Scribes in such terms,

that their authority (being then so prevalent with the people) might not prejudice the truth, and hinder the efficacy of his doctrine. This is part of that *ἐρα-*

Jude 3. *γωνίζεσθαι τῇ πίστει*, that duty of *contending earnestly for the faith*, which is incumbent on us.

5. It may be excusable upon particular emergent occasions, with some heat of language to express

Matt. xvii. 17. dislike of notorious wickedness. As our Lord doth against the perverse incredulity and stupidity in the

Pharisees, their profane misconstruction of his words and actions, their malicious opposing truth, and obstructing his endeavours in God's service. As St.

Actsviii. 23. Peter did to Simon Magus, telling him, that he *was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*

Acts xiii. 8. 10. As St. Paul to Elymas the sorcerer, when he *withstood him, and desired to turn away the deputy, Sergius, from the faith*; O, said he, stirred with a holy zeal and indignation, *thou full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* The same spirit, which

enabled him to inflict a sore punishment on that wicked wretch, did prompt him to use that sharp language toward him; unquestionably deserved, and seasonably pronounced. As also, when the high priest commanded him illegally and unjustly to be

Acts xxiii. 3. such outrage broke forth, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.* So, when St. Peter presumptuously

would have dissuaded our Lord from compliance with God's will, in undergoing those crosses which were appointed to him by God's decree, our Lord

calleth him Satan ; — *Ἔραγε, Σατανᾶ, Avaunt, Satan,* SERM. **XVI.**
thou art an offence unto me ; for thou savourest not
the things that be of God, but those that are of men. Matt. xvi. 23.

These sort of speeches, issuing from just and honest indignation, are sometimes excusable, oftentimes commendable ; especially when they come from persons eminent in authority, of notable integrity, endued with special measures of divine grace, of wisdom, of goodness ; such as cannot be suspected of intemperate anger, of ill-nature, of ill-will, of ill-design.

In such cases as are above mentioned, a sort of *evil-speaking* about our neighbour may be allowable or excusable. But for fear of overdoing, great caution and temper is to be used ; and we should never apply any such limitations as cloaks to palliate unjust or uncharitable dealing. Generally it is more advisable to suppress such eruptions of passion, than to vent it ; for seldom passion hath not inordinate motions joined with it, or tendeth to good ends. And however it will do well to reflect on those cases, and to remark some particulars about them.

First, we may observe, that in all these cases all possible moderation, equity, and candour are to be used ; so that no ill-speaking be practised beyond what is needful or convenient. Even in prosecution of offences, the bounds of truth, of equity, of humanity and clemency are not to be transgressed. A judge must not lay on the most criminal person more blame, or contumely, than the case will bear, or than serveth the designs of justice. However our neighbour doth incur the calamities of sin and of punishment, we must not be insolent or contemptuous toward him. So we may learn by that law of Moses, backed with

SERM. a notable reason : *And it shall be, if the wicked man*
 XVI. *be worthy to be beaten, that the judge cause him*

Deut. xxv. *to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, ac-*
 2, 3. *ording to his fault, by a certain number. Forty*

stripes he may give him, and not exceed ; lest if he
should exceed, and beat him above those stripes,
then thy brother should seem vile unto thee. Whence

appears, that we should be careful of not vilifying an

offender beyond measure. And how mildly gover-

nors should proceed in the administration of justice,

the example of Joshua may teach us, who thus

examineth Achan, the cause of so great mischief

to the public ; *My son, give, I pray thee, glory to*

the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto

him ; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it

not from me. My son ; what compellation could be

more benign and kind ? I pray thee ; what lan-

guage could be more courteous and gentle ? Give

glory to God, and make confession ; what words

could be more inoffensively pertinent ? And when

he sentenced that great malefactor, the cause of so

much mischief, this was all he said, Why hast thou

troubled us ? the Lord will trouble thee ; words

void of contumely or insulting, containing only a

close intimation of the cause, and a simple declaration

of the event he was to undergo.

Secondly, Likewise ministers, in the taxing sin

and sinners, are to proceed with great discretion and

caution, with much gentleness and meekness ; signi-

fying a tender pity of their infirmities, charitable de-

sires of their good, the best opinion of them, and the

best hopes for them, that may consist with any reason ;

according to those apostolical rules : *Brethren, if a*

Josh. vii.
19, 25.

Gal. vi. 1.

restore such an one in the spirit of meekness ; con- SERM. sidering thyself, lest thou also be tempted : and, XVI.
We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of Rom. xv. 1.
the weak, and not to please ourselves : and more ex- pressly, A servant of the Lord must not fight, but ^{2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.}
be gentle toward all, apt to teach, patient, in meek- ness instructing those that oppose themselves.
 Thus did St. Peter temper his reproof of Simon Magus with this wholesome and comfortable advice ;
Repent therefore from this thy wickedness, and Acts viii. 22.
pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

Thirdly, As for fraternal correction, and reproof of faults, when it is just and expedient to use it, ordinarily the calmest^a and mildest way is the most proper, and most likely to obtain good success : it commonly doth^b in a more kindly manner convey the sense thereof into the heart, and therein more powerfully worketh remorse, than the fierce and harsh way. Clearly to shew a man his fault, with the reason proving it such, so that he becometh throughly convinced of it, is sufficient to breed in him regret, and to shame him before his own mind : to do more, (in way of aggravation, of insulting on him, of inveighing against him,) as it doth often not well consist with humanity, so it is seldom consonant to discretion, if we do, as we ought, seek his health and amendment^c. Humanity requireth, that when

^a *Reprehensio contumelia vacare debet. Neque monitio aspera sit, nec objurgatio contumeliosa. Ambros. de Offic. iii. 16.*

^b *Prov. xvii. 10. A reproof entereth more into a wise man, than a hundred stripes into a fool.*

^c *Ὁ θεὸς, ὅταν λάβῃ τινὰ πλανώμενον, ἤγαγεν ἐπὶ ὄδον τὴν δέουσαν.*

SERM. we undertake to reform our neighbour, we should
 XVI. take care not to deform him; (not to discourage or
 displease him more than is necessary;) when we
 would correct his manners, that we should also con-
 sider his modesty, and consult his reputation; *Cu-
 ram agentes*, as Seneca speaketh, *non tantum sa-
 lutis, sed et honestæ cicatricis*^d; *having care not
 only to heal the wound, but to leave a comely scar
 behind.* *Be*, adviseth St. Austin, *so displeas'd with
 iniquity, as to consider and consult humanity*^e: for,
Zeal void of humanity is not, saith St. Chrysostom,
*zeal, but rather animosity; and reproof not mix'd
 with good-will, appeareth a kind of malignity*^f. We
 should so rebuke those who, by frailty or folly incident
 to mankind, have fallen into misdemeanours, that they
 may perceive we do sincerely pity their ill case, and
 tender their good; that we mean not to upbraid their
 weakness, or insult upon their misfortune; that we
 delight not to inflict on them more grief than is plain-
 ly needful and unavoidable; that we are conscious and
 sensible of our own obnoxiousness to the like slips or
 falls, and do *consider, that we also may be tempted*,
 and being tempted may be overborne. This they
 cannot perceive, or be persuaded of, except we tem-
 per our speech with benignity and mildness. Such
 speech ^sprudence also dictateth, as most useful and

ὠχλὶ καταγελάσας ἢ λαιδορησάμενος ἀπήλθε· καὶ σὺ δεῖξον αὐτῷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν,
 καὶ ἔφηε ὅτι ἀκολουθεῖ, &c. Epict. ii. 12.

^d Sen. de Clem. i. 7. Vide Chrys. in Matt. ix. 8. Or. 29.

^e Ita succense iniquitati, ut consulere memineris humanitatis.

Aug.

^f Ζῆλος φιλανθρωπίας κενός, οὐ ζῆλος, &c.

^s Pleasunt words are as an honey comb, sweet to the soul, and
 health to the bones. Prov. xvi. 24. A

ful for producing the good ends honest re-**SERM.**
 on doth aim at; it mollifieth and it melteth a **XVI.**
 worn heart, it subdueth and winneth a perverse
 it healeth distempered affections. Whereas
 ily handling is apt to defeat or obstruct the
 ; rubbing the sore doth tend to exasperate and
 ne it. Harsh speech rendereth advice odious
 insavoury; driveth from it, and depriveth it of
 cy: it turneth regret for a fault into displeasure
 disdain against the reprovcr: it looks not like
 healing of a kind friend, but like the persecution
 spiteful enemy: it seemeth rather an ebullition
 ill, or a defluxion from rancour, than an expres-
 of good will: the offender will take it for a
 less and pitiless tormenting, or for a proud and
 nical domineering over him. He that can
 a friendly touch, will not endure to be lashed
 angry and reproachful words. In fine, all re-
 fought to be seasoned with discretion, with can-
 ; with moderation and meekness.
 outhly, Likewise in defence of truth, and main-
 nce of a good cause, we may observe, that com-
 ly the fairest language is most proper and ad-
 ageous, and that reproachful or foul terms are
 t improper and prejudicial. A calm and meek
 of discoursing doth much advantage a good
 e, as arguing the patron thereof to have confi-
 ce in the cause itself, and to rely upon his strength;
 he is in a temper fit to apprehend it himself,
 to maintain it; that he propoundeth it as a
 id, wishing the hearer for his own good to follow
 eaving him the liberty to judge and choose for
 soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up
 r. Prov. xv. 1.

2 Thes. iii.
 15.
 Μὴ ὡς ἐχ-
 θρὸν ἠγαπίσθε,
 ἀλλὰ ὡς ἀ-
 δελφοί.

SERM. himself. But rude speech, and contemptuous re-
 XVI. flections on persons, as they do signify nothing to the
 question, so they commonly bring much disadvantage and damage to the cause, creating mighty prejudices against it^b: they argue much impotency in the advocate, and consequently little strength in what he maintains; that he is little able to judge well, and altogether unapt to teach others: they intimate a diffidence in himself concerning his cause, and that, despairing to maintain it by reason, he seeks to uphold it by passion; that, not being able to convince by fair means, he would bear down by noise and clamour; that, not skilling to get his suit quietly, he would extort it by force, obtruding his conceits violently as an enemy, or imposing them arbitrarily as a tyrant. Thus doth he really disparage and slur his cause, however good and defensible in itself¹.

¹ Kings
 xix. 11, 12.

A modest and friendly style doth suit truth; it, like its author, doth usually reside (not in the rumbling *wind*, nor in the shaking *earthquake*, nor in the raging *fire*, but) in the *small still voice*: sounding in this, it is most audible, most penetrant, and most effectual: thus propounded, it is willingly hearkened to; for men have no aversation from hearing those who seem to love them, and wish them well. It is easily conceived; no prejudice or passion clouding the apprehensive faculties: it is rea-

^b Qui, dum dicit, malus videtur, utique male dicit. *Quint.* vi. 2.

Nisi quod imperitos etiam animosos atque iracundos esse manifestum est, dum per inopiam concilii et sermonis ad iracundiam facile vertuntur. *Firmil. apud Cyp. Ep.* 75.

ⁱ — et inhumanum est, et ipsi qui dicit inutile; tum cause contrarium, quia plane et adversarii, fiunt et inimici, et quantumcumque his virium est, contumelia augetur. *Quint.* xii. 9.

dily embraced; no animosity withstanding or obstructing it. It is *the sweetness of the lips*, which, as the Wise Man telleth us, *increaseth learning*; disposing a man to hear lessons of good doctrine, rendering him capable to understand them, insinuating and impressing them upon the mind: the affections being thereby unlocked, the passage becomes open to the reason^k.

But it is plainly a very preposterous method of instructing, of deciding controversies, of begetting peace, to vex and anger those concerned by ill language^l. Nothing surely doth more hinder the efficacy of discourse, and prevent conviction, than doth this course, upon many obvious accounts. It doth first put in a strong bar to attention: for no man willingly doth afford an ear to him, whom he conceiveth disaffected toward him; which opinion harsh words infallibly will produce: no man can expect to hear truth from him, whom he apprehendeth disordered in his own mind, whom he seeth rude in his proceedings, whom he taketh to be unjust in his dealing; as men certainly will take those to be, who presume to revile others for using their own judgment freely, and dissenting from them in opinion.

^k Δεῖ γὰρ τὸν μέλλοντά τι τῶν χρησίμων μαθεῖν, πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἡδέως ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν διδάσκοντα· — ἡδέως δὲ οὐκ ἂν τις σχοίη πρὸς τὸν θρασυτέμονα καὶ τὸν ὑβρίζοντα. Chrys. in 2 Tim. Or. 6.

^l *Ὅτι ἴσως ἐκέρθησας ἂν τῇ χρηστότητι, τοῦτον ἀπολλύεις τῇ θρασυτητι. Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

Ὁὐ γὰρ ἀπαιδεύτως παιδεύομεν, οὐδὲ ταῖς ἕβρεσι βάλλομεν, ὅπερ πάσχωσιν οἱ πολλοὶ, μὴ τῷ λόγῳ μαχόμενοι, τοῖς δὲ λέγουσι, καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειάν ἐστιν ὅτε τῶν λογισμῶν ταῖς ἕβρεσι συγκαλύπτοντες. Naz. Or. 32.

*Ὅταν πρὸς τινα ἀηδῶς ἔχομεν, κἄν ὑγιές τι λέγη, οὐ προθύμως οὐδὲ μεθ' ἡδῆς δεχόμεθα τὰ λεγόμενα. Chrys. Tom. 5. Or. 59.

SERM.
XVI.Prov. xvi.
21.

SERM. Again, this course doth blind the hearer's mind, so
 XVI. that he cannot discern what he that pretends to instruct him doth mean, or how he doth assert his doctrine. Truth will not be discerned through the smoke of wrathful expressions; right being defaced by foul language will not appear; passion being excited will not suffer a man to perceive the sense, or the force of an argument. The will also thereby is hardened and hindered from submitting to truth. In such a case, *non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris*: although you stop his mouth, you cannot subdue his heart; although he can no longer fight, yet he never will yield: animosity raised by such usage rendereth him invincibly obstinate in his conceits and courses. Briefly, from this proceeding men become unwilling to mark, unfit to apprehend, indisposed to embrace any good instruction or advice: it maketh them indocile and intractable, averse from better instruction, pertinacious in their opinions, and refractory in their ways.

Prov. xxiv.
26.

Every man, saith the Wise Man, shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer: but no man surely will be ready to kiss those lips which are embittered with reproach, or defiled with dirty language.

It is said of Pericles, that *with thundering and lightning he put Greece into confusion*^m: such discourse may serve to confound things, it seldom tendeth to compose them. If reason will not pierce, rage will scarce avail to drive it inⁿ. Satirical virulency may vex men sorely, but it hardly

^m Βροντῶν καὶ ἀστράπτων ἐκίκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

ⁿ Chrys. in 2 Tim. ii. 24. Ὁ γὰρ σφοδρὸς ἔλεγχος, ὅταν μετ' ἐπικείας γίνεται, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μάλιστα δακεῖν δυνάμενος ἔνεστι γὰρ, ἔστι μετὰ πρῶτης καθάψασθαι μᾶλλον, ἢ μετὰ θρασύτητος ἐντρέψαι.

ever soundly converts them. *Few become wiser or better by ill words.* Children may be frightened into compliance by loud and severe increpations; but men are to be allured by rational persuasion backed with courteous usage: they may be sweetly drawn, they cannot be violently driven to change their judgment and practice. Whence that advice of the apostle, *With meekness instruct those that oppose themselves,* 2 Tim. ii. 25. doth no less savour of wisdom than of goodness.

Fifthly, As for the examples of extraordinary persons, which in some cases do seem to authorize the practice of evil-speaking, we may consider, that as they had especial commission enabling them to do some things beyond ordinary standing rules, wherein they are not to be imitated; as they had especial illumination and direction, which preserved them from swerving in particular cases from truth and equity; so the tenor of their life did evidence, that it was the glory of God, the good of men, the necessity of the case, which moved them to it^o. And of them also we may observe, that in divers occasions, yea generally, whenever only their private credit or interest were concerned, although grievously provoked, they did out of meekness, patience, and charity, wholly forbear reproachful speech. Our Saviour, who sometimes upon special reason in his discourses used such harsh words, yet, when he was most spitefully accused, reproached, and persecuted, *did not*

^o This case is like the other cases, wherein the practice of good and great men, although excusable, is not yet exemplary: as the heroical acts of David, of Samson, of Ehud, of Phinehas, of Elias, of Moses; David's duel, Samson's suicide, Moses's slaying the Egyptian, Ehud's stabbing the king of Moab, Elias's calling for fire, by extraordinary and peculiar instinct.

SERM. *open his mouth, or return one angry word: Being*
 XVI. *reviled, he did not, as St. Peter, proposing his ex-*

¹ Pet. ii. 23. *ample to us, telleth us, revile again; suffering, he did not threaten.* He used the softest language to Judas, to the soldiers, to Pilate and Herod; to the priests, &c. And the apostles, who sometimes inveigh so zealously against the opposers and perverters of truth, did in their private conversation and demeanour strictly observe their own rules of abstinence from reproach: *Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we suffer it;* so doth St. Paul represent their practice. And in reason we should rather follow them in this their ordinary course, than in their extraordinary sallies of practice.

¹ Cor. iv.

^{13.}

Rom. xii.

^{14.}

In fine, however in some cases and circumstances the matter may admit such exceptions, so that all language disgraceful to our neighbour is not ever culpable; yet the cases are so few and rare in comparison, the practice commonly so dangerous and ticklish, that worthily forbearing to reproach doth bear the style of a general rule: and particularly, for clearer direction, we are in the following cases obliged carefully to shun it; or in speaking about our neighbour we must observe these cautions.

1. We should never in severe terms inveigh against any man without reasonable warrant, or presuming upon a good call and commission thereto. As every man should not assume to himself the power of administering justice, (of trying, sentencing, and punishing offenders,) so must not every man take upon him to speak against those who seem to do ill; which is a sort of punishment, including the infliction of smart and damage upon the persons concerned. Every man hath indeed a commission,

in due place and season, with discretion and moderation to admonish his neighbour offending; but otherwise to speak ill of him, no private man hath just right or authority: and therefore in presuming to do it he is disorderly and irregular, trespassing beyond his bounds, usurping an undue power to himself.

2. We should never speak ill of any man without apparent just cause. It must be just: we must not reproach men for things innocent or indifferent; for not concurring in disputable opinions with us, for not complying with our humour, for not serving our interest, for not doing any thing to which they are not obliged, or for using their liberty in any case: it must be at least some considerable fault, which we can so much as tax. It must also be clear and certain, notorious and palpable; for to speak ill upon slender conjectures, or doubtful suspicions, is full of iniquity. "Ὅσα οὐκ οἶδασι, βλασφημοῦσι, *they rail at things which they know not*, is part of those wicked men's character, whom St. Jude doth so severely reprehend. If indeed, these conditions being wanting, we presume to reproach any man, we do therein no less than slander him; which to do is unlawful in any case, is in truth a most diabolical and detestable crime. To impose odious names and characters on any person, which he deserveth not, or without ground of truth, is to play the Devil; and hell itself scarce will own a fouler practice.

3. We should not cast reproach upon any man without some necessary reason. In charity (that *charity which covereth all sins, which covereth a multitude of sins*) we are bound to connive at the defects, and to conceal the faults of our brethren; ⁴ to extenuate and excuse them, when apparent, so

SERM.
XVI.

Jude 10.

Prov. x. 12.
1 Pet. iv. 8.
1 Cor. xiii.

SERM. far as we may in truth and equity. We must not
XVI. therefore ever produce them to light, or prosecute them with severity, except very needful occasion urgeth : such as is the glory and service of God, the maintenance of truth, the vindication of innocence, the preservation of public justice and peace, the amendment of our neighbour himself, or securing others from contagion. Barring such reasons, (really being, not affectedly pretended,) we are bound not so much as to disclose, as to touch our neighbour's faults ; much more, not to blaze them about, not to exaggerate them by vehement invectives.

4. We should never speak ill of any man beyond measure : be the cause never so just, the occasion never so necessary, we should yet nowise be immoderate therein, exceeding the bounds prescribed by truth, equity, and humanity. We should never speak worse of any man whatever than he certainly deserveth, according to the most favourable construction of his doings ; never more than the cause absolutely requireth. We should rather be careful to fall short of what in rigorous truth might be said against him, than in the least to pass beyond it. The best cause had better seem to suffer a little by our reservedness in its defence, than any man be wronged by our aspersing him ; for God, the patron of truth and right, is ever able to secure them without the succour of our unjust and uncharitable dealing. The contrary practice hath indeed within it a spice of slander, that is, of the worst iniquity.

5. We must never speak ill of any man out of bad principles, or for bad ends.

No sudden or rash anger should instigate us there-

Eph. iv. 31. to. For, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger,*
 Col. iii. 8.

and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, is the apostolical precept: they are all associates and kindred, which are to be cast away together. Such anger itself is culpable, as a work of the flesh, and therefore to be suppressed; and all its brood therefore is also to be smothered: the daughter of such a mother cannot be legitimate. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* SERM. XVI. Jam. i. 20.

We must not speak ill out of inveterate hatred or ill-will. For this murderous, this viperous disposition should itself be rooted out of our hearts: whatever issueth from it cannot be otherwise than very bad; it must be a poisonous breath that exaleth from that foul source.

We must not be provoked thereto by any revengeful disposition, or rancorous spleen, in regard to any injuries or discourtesies received. For, as we must not revenge ourselves, or render evil in any other way; so particularly not in this, which is commonly the special instance expressly prohibited. *Render not evil for evil,* saith St. Peter, *nor railing for railing; but contrariwise bless,* or speak well: and, *Bless them,* saith our Lord, *which curse you; Bless,* saith St. Paul, *and curse not.* Pet. iii. 9. Matt. v. 44. Rom. xii. 14. Deut. xxv. 3.

We must not also do it out of contempt: for we are not to slight our brethren in our hearts. No man really (considering what he is, whence he came, how he is related, what he is capable of) can be despicable. Extreme naughtiness is indeed contemptible; but the unhappy person that is engaged therein is rather to be pitied than despised. However, charity bindeth us to stifle contemptuous motions of heart, and not to vent them in vilifying expres-

He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour. Prov. xi. 12.

SERM. sion. Particularly, it is a barbarous practice out of
 XVI. contempt to reproach persons for natural imperfec-

tions, for meanness of condition, for unlueky disas-
 ters, for any involuntary defects: this being indeed
 to reproach mankind, unto which such things are in-
 cident; to reproach Providence, from the disposal
 Prov. xvii. whereof they do proceed. *Whoso mocketh the poor*
 5. *despiseth his Maker*, saith the Wise Man: and the
 same may be said of him that reproachfully mocketh
 him that is dull in parts, deformed in body, weak in
 health or strength, or defective in any such way.

Likewise we must not speak ill out of envy; be-
 cause others do excel us in any good quality, or ex-
 ceed us in fortune. To harbour this base and ugly
 disposition in our minds is unworthy of a man, who
 should delight in all good springing up anywhere,
 and befalling any man, naturally allied unto him; it
 is most unworthy of a Christian, who should tender
 Rom. xii. his brother's good as his own, and *rejoice with those*
 15. *that rejoice*. From thence to be drawn to cast re-
 proach upon any man is horrible and heinous wick-
 edness.

Neither should we ever use reproach as a means
 of compassing any design we do affect or aim at: it
 is an unwarrantable engine of raising us to wealth,
 dignity, or repute. To grow by the diminution, to
 rise by the depression, to shine by the eclipse of
 others, to build a fortune upon the ruins of our
 neighbour's reputation, is that which no honourable
 mind can affect, no honest man will endeavour.
 Our own wit, courage, and industry, managed with
 God's assistance and blessing, are sufficient, and only
 lawful instruments of prosecuting honest enterprises;
 we need not, we must not instead of them employ

our neighbour's disgrace: no worldly good is worth purchasing at such a rate, no project worth achieving by such foul ways. SERM.
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Neither should we out of malignity, to cherish or gratify ill humour, use this practice. It is observable of some persons, that not out of any formed displeasure, grudge, or particular disaffection, nor out of any particular design, but merely out of a *κακότης*, an ill disposition, springing up from nature, or contracted by use, they are apt to carp at any action, and with sharp reproach to bite any man that comes in their way, thereby feeding and soothing that evil inclination. But as this inhuman and curish humour should be corrected and extirpated from our hearts, so should the issues thereof at our mouths be stopped: the bespattering our neighbour's good name should never afford any satisfaction or delight unto us.

Nor out of wantonness should we speak ill, for our divertisement or sport. For our neighbour's reputation is too great and precious a thing to be played with, or offered up to sport; we are very foolish in so devaluing it, very naughty in so misusing it. Our wits are very barren, our brains are ill furnished with store of knowledge, if we can find no other matter of conversation.

Nor out of negligence and inadvertency should we sputter out reproachful speech; shooting ill words at rovers, or not regarding who stands in our way. Among all temerities this is one of the most noxious, and therefore very culpable.

In fine, we should never speak concerning our neighbour from any other principle than charity, or to any other intent but what is charitable; such as

SERM. tendeth to his good, or at least is consistent there-
 XVI. with. *Let all your things, saith St. Paul, be done*

1 Cor. xvi. 14. *in charity:* and words are most of the *things* we do concerning our neighbour, wherein we may express charity. In all our speeches therefore touching him, we should plainly shew that we have a care of his reputation, that we tender his interest, that we even desire his content and repose. Even when reason and need do so require, that we should disclose and reprehend his faults, we may, we should, by the manner and scope of our speech, signify thus much. Which rule were it observed, if we should never speak ill otherwise than out of charity, surely most ill-speaking would be cut off; most, I fear, of our tattling about others, much of our gossiping would be marred.

Indeed, so far from bitter or sour our language
Prov. xv. 26. should be, that it ought to be sweet and pleasant;
xvi. 24. so far from rough and harsh, that it should be courteous and obliging; so far from signifying wrath, ill-will, contempt, or animosity, that it should express tender affection, good esteem, sincere respect toward our brethren; and be apt to produce the like in them toward us: the sense of them should be grateful to the heart; the very sound and accent of them should
Rom. xv. 2. be delightful to the ear. *Every one should please*
1 Cor. x. 33. *his neighbour for his good to edification.* Our
Col. iv. 6. *words should always be ἐν χάριτι, with grace, seasoned with salt;* ^Pthey should have the grace of courtesy, they should be seasoned with the salt of discretion, so as to be sweet and savoury to the

^P Charitas—cum arguit mitis est, cum blanditur simplex est: pie solet sævire, sine dolo mulcere; patienter novit irasci, humiliter indignari. *S. Bern. Ep. ii.*

hearers. Commonly ill language is a certain sign of inward enmity and ill-will. Good-will is wont to shew itself in good terms; it clotheth even its grief handsomely, and its displeasure carrieth favour in its face; its rigour is civil and gentle, tempered with pity for the faults and errors which it disliketh, with the desire of their amendment and recovery whom it reprehendeth. It would inflict no more evil than is necessary; it would cure its neighbour's disease without exasperating his patience, troubling his modesty, or impairing his credit. As it always judgeth candidly, so it never condemneth extremely.

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II. But so much for the explication of this precept, and the directive part of our discourse. I shall now briefly propound some inducements to the observance thereof.

1. Let us consider, that nothing more than railing and reviling is opposite to the nature, and inconsistent with the tenor of our religion⁹; the which, as even a heathen did observe of it, *nil nisi justum suadet, et lenes, doth recommend nothing but what is very just and mild*: which propoundeth the practices of charity, meekness, patience, peaceableness, moderation, equity, alacrity or good humour, as its principal laws, and declareth them the chief fruits of the divine Spirit and grace: which chargeth us to curb and compose all our passions; more particularly to restrain and repress anger, animosity, envy, malice, and such like dispositions, as the fruits of carnality

Ammian.
Marcell.

⁹ *Lingua Christum confessa non sit maledica, non turbulenta, non convitiis et litibus perstrepens audiatur. Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.*

Convitiis et maledictis quæso vos abstinete; quia neque maledici regnum Dei consequentur; et lingua quæ Christum confessa est, incolumis et pura cum suo honore servanda est. Cypr. Ep. vii.

SERM. and corrupt lust: which consequently drieth up all
 XVI. the sources, or dammeth up the sluices of bad lan-

¹ Pet. iv. 8. guage. As it doth *above all things* oblige us to bear no ill-will in our hearts, so it chargeth us to vent none with our mouths.

2. It is therefore often expressly condemned and prohibited as evil. It is the property of the wicked,
 Ps. lxxiv. 3. a character of those who *work iniquity, to whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*

3. No practice hath more severe punishments denounced to it than this. The railer (and it is indeed a very proper and fit punishment for him, he being exceedingly bad company) is to be banished out of all good society; thereto St. Paul adjudgeth
¹ Cor. v. 11. him: *I have, saith he, now written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one not to eat.* Ye see what company the railer hath in the text, and with what a crew of people he is coupled: but no good company he is allowed elsewhere; every good Christian should avoid him as a blot, and a pest of conversation: and finally he is sure to be excluded from the blessed society above
¹ Cor. vi. 10. in heaven^r; for *neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God:* and, *Without* (without the heavenly city) *are dogs,* saith St. John in his
 Rev. xxii. 15. Revelation, that is, those chiefly who out of currish spite or malignity do frowardly bark at their neigh-

^r Hinc intelligere possumus quam gravis sit et perniciosa maledictio, quando, etiamsi alia bona adfuerint, sola excludit a cælo. *Salv. de Guber. Dei, lib. iii.*

bours, or cruelly bite them with reproachful language. SERM.
XVI.

4. If we look upon such language in its own nature, what is it but a symptom of a foul, a weak, a disordered and distempered mind? It is the smoke of inward rage and malice: it is a stream that cannot issue from a sweet spring: it is a storm that cannot bluster out of a calm region. *The words of* Prov. xv. 26. *the pure are pleasant words, as the Wise Man saith.*

5. This practice doth plainly signify low spirit, ill breeding, and bad manners; and thence misbecometh any wise, any honest, any honourable person. It agreeth to children, who are unapt and unaccustomed to deal in matters considerable, to squabble; to women of meanest rank, (apt by nature, or custom, to be transported with passion,) to scold. In our modern languages it is termed *villany*, as being proper for rustic boors, or men of coarsest education and employment; who, having their minds debased by being conversant in meanest affairs, do vent their sorry passions, and bicker about their petty concerns, in such strains; who also, being not capable of a fair reputation, or sensible of disgrace to themselves, do little value the credit of others, or care for aspersing it. But such language is unworthy of those persons, and cannot easily be drawn from them, who are wont to exercise their thoughts about nobler matters, who are versed in affairs manageable only by calm deliberation and fair persuasion, not by impetuous and provocative rudeness; the which do never work otherwise upon masculine souls, than so as to procure disdain and resistance. Such persons, knowing the benefit of a good name, being wont to

SERM. XVI. possess a good repute, prizing their own credit as a considerable good, will never be prone to bereave others of the like by opprobrious speech. A noble enemy will never speak of his enemy in bad terms^s.

We may further consider, that all wise, all honest, all ingenuous persons have an aversion from ill speaking, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence; that only ill-natured, unworthy, and naughty people are its willing auditors, or do abet it with applause. The good man, in the **Psalm. xv. 3.** fifteenth Psalm, *non accipit opprobrium, doth not take up, or accept, a reproach against his neighbour*: but *A wicked doer, saith the Wise Man, giveth heed to false lips, and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* And what reasonable man will do that which is disgustful to the wise and good, is grateful only to the foolish and baser sort of men? I pretermit, that using this sort of language doth incapacitate a man for to benefit his neighbour, and defeateth his endeavours for his edification, disparaging a good cause, prejudicing the defence of truth, obstructing the effects of good instruction and wholesome reproof; as we did before remark and declare. Further,

6. He that useth this kind of speech doth, as harm and trouble others, so create many great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself thereby. Nothing so inflameth the wrath of men, so provoketh their en-

^s In quo admirari soleo gravitatem et justitiam et sapientiam Cæsaris, qui nunquam nisi honorificentissime Pompeium appellat. *Cic. Epist. tom. vi. 6.*

^t It is always taken as an argument of ill-will. *Maledicus a malefico non distat, nisi occasione. Quint. xii. 9.*

mity, so breedeth lasting hatred and spite, as do con- SERM.
tumelious words. They are often called *swords* XVI.
and *arrows*^u; and as such they pierce deeply, and
cause most grievous smart; which men feeling are
enraged, and accordingly will strive to ²requite
them in the like manner, and in all other obvious
ways of revenge. Hence strife, clamour and tu-
mult, care, suspicion and fear, danger and trouble,
sorrow and regret, do seize on the reviler; and he is
sufficiently punished for this dealing. No man can
otherwise than live in perpetual fear of reciprocal
like usage from him, whom he is conscious of having
so abused. Whence, if not justice or charity toward
others, yet love and pity of ourselves should per-
suade us to forbear it as disquietful, incommodious,
and mischievous to us.

We should indeed certainly enjoy much love, much
concord, much quiet, we should live in great safety
and security, we should be exempted from much care
and fear, if we would restrain ourselves from abusing
and offending our neighbour in this kind: being con-
scious of so just and innocent demeanour toward
him, we should converse with him in a pleasant
freedom and confidence, not suspecting any bad lan-
guage or ill usage from him.

7. Hence with evidently good reason is he that
useth such language called a *fool*: and he that ab-
staineth from it is commended as wise. *A fool's* Prov. xviii.
lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for ^{6, 7.}
strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his

^u The scourge of the tongue, Job v. 21. Prov. xii. 18. There
is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword. Psal. lvii. 4. lix.
7. lxiv. 3. Psal. lii. 2. Sharp rasor. Prov. xxx. 14. Knives.

^x The froward tongue shall be cut out. Prov. x. 31.

SERM. *lips are the snare of his soul. He that refraineth*
 XVI. *his tongue is wise. In the tongue of the wise is*
 Prov. x. 19. *health. He that keepeth his lips keepeth his life:*
 Prov. xii. 18. *but he that openeth wide his mouth* (that is, in evil-
 Prov. xiii. 3. *speaking, gaping with clamour and vehemency) shall*
 Eccles. x. *have destruction. The words of a wise man's*
 12. *mouth are gracious: but the lips of a fool will*
 Prov. xviii. *swallow up himself. Death and life are in the*
 21. *power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat*
the fruit thereof; that is, of the one or the other,
answerably to the kind of speech they choose.

In fine, very remarkable is that advice, or resolution of the grand point concerning the best way of living happily, in the Psalmist: *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.* Abstinence from ill-speaking he seemeth to propose as the first step toward the fruition of a durably-happy life.

Psal. xxxiv.
12, 13.

8. Lastly, we may consider that it is a grievous perverting the design of speech, (that excellent faculty, which so much distinguisheth us from, so highly advanceth us above, other creatures,) to use it to the defaming and disquieting our neighbour. It was given us as an instrument of beneficial commerce, and delectable conversation; that with it we might assist and advise, might cheer and comfort one another: we therefore in employing it to the disgrace, vexation, damage or prejudice in any kind, of our neighbour, do foully abuse it; and so doing, render ourselves indeed worse than dumb beasts^v: for

^v Mutos nasci, et egere omni ratione satius fuisset, quam providentiæ munera in mutuam perniciem convertere. *Quint.* xii. 1.

better far it were that we could say nothing, than **SERM.**
that we should speak ill. **XVI.**

*Now the God of grace and peace make us per-^{Heb. xiii.}
fect in every good work to do his will, working in^{23, 12.}
us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through
Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen.*

SERMON XVII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. x. 18.

He that uttereth slander is a fool.

SERM. XVII. **G**ENERAL declamations against vice and sin are indeed excellently useful, as rousing men to consider and look about them : but they do often want effect, because they only raise confused apprehensions of things, and indeterminate propensions to action; the which usually, before men thoroughly perceive or resolve what they should practise, do decay and vanish. As he that cries out fire doth stir up people, and inspireth them with a kind of hovering tendency every way, yet no man thence to purpose moveth, until he be distinctly informed where the mischief is ; then do they, who apprehend themselves concerned, run hastily to oppose it : so, till we particularly discern where our offences lie, (till we distinctly know the heinous nature and the mischievous consequences of them,) we scarce will effectually apply ourselves to correct them. Whence it is requisite, that men should be particularly acquainted with their sins, and by proper arguments be dissuaded from them.

In order whereto I have now selected one sin to describe, and to dissuade from, being in nature as vile, and in practice as common, as any other whatever

that hath prevailed among men. It is slander, a **SERM.**
sin which in all times and places hath been epide- **XVII.**
mical and rife; but which especially doth seem
to reign and rage in our age and country.

There are principles innate to men, which ever have, and ever will incline them to this offence. Eager appetites to secular and sensual goods; violent passions, urging the prosecution of what men affect; wrath and displeasure against those who stand in the way of compassing their desires; emulation and envy toward those who hap to succeed better, or to attain a greater share in such things; excessive self-love; unaccountable malignity and vanity, are in some degrees connatural to all men, and ever prompt them to this dealing, as appearing the most efficacious, compendious, and easy way of satisfying such appetites, of promoting such designs, of discharging such passions. Slander thence hath always been a principal engine, whereby covetous, ambitious, envious, ill-natured, and vain persons have strove to supplant their competitors, and advance themselves; meaning thereby to procure, what they chiefly prize and like, wealth, or dignity, or reputation, favour and power in the court, respect and interest with the people.

But from especial causes our age peculiarly doth abound in this practice: for, besides the common dispositions inclining thereto, there are conceits newly coined, and greedily entertained by many, which seem purposely levelled at the disparagement of piety, charity, and justice, substituting interest in the room of conscience, authorizing and commending, for good and wise, all ways serving to private advantage. There are implacable dissensions, fierce ani-

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XVII.

mosities, and bitter zeals sprung up; there is an extreme curiosity, niceness, and delicacy of judgment; there is a mighty affectation of seeming wise and witty by any means; there is a great unsettlement of mind, and corruption of manners, generally diffused over people: from which sources it is no wonder that this flood hath so overflown, that no banks can restrain it, no fences are able to resist it; so that ordinary conversation is full with it, and no demeanour can be secure from it.

If we do mark what is done in many (might I not say, in most) companies, what is it, but one telling malicious stories of, or fastening odious characters upon another? What do men commonly please themselves in so much, as in carping and harshly censuring, in defaming and abusing their neighbours? Is it not the sport and divertisement of many, to cast dirt in the faces of all they meet with; to bespatter any man with foul imputations? Doth not in every corner a Momus lurk, from the venom of whose spiteful or petulant tongue no eminency of rank, dignity of place, or sacredness of office, no innocence or integrity of life, no wisdom or circumspection in behaviour, no good nature, or benignity in dealing and carriage, can protect any person? Do not men assume to themselves a liberty of telling romances, and framing characters concerning their neighbour, as freely as a poet doth about Hector or Turnus, Thersites or Draucus? Do they not usurp a power of playing with, of tossing about, of tearing in pieces their neighbour's good name, as if it were the veriest toy in the world? Do not many, *having a form of godliness*, (some of them demurely, others confidently, both without any sense of, or remorse for

what they do,) backbite their brethren? Is it not **SERM.**
 grown so common a thing to asperse causelessly, that **XVII.**
 no man wonders at it, that few dislike, that scarce
 any detest it? that most notorious calumniators are
 heard, not only with patience, but with pleasure;
 and are even held in vogue and reverence, as men of
 notable talent, and very serviceable to their party;
 so that slander seemeth to have lost its nature, and
 not to be now an odious sin, but a fashionable hu-
 mour, a way of pleasing entertainment, a fine knack,
 or curious feat of policy; so that no man at least
 thinketh himself or others to be accountable for what
 is said in this way? Is not, in fine, the case become
 such, that whoever hath in him any love of truth,
 or any sense of justice or honesty, any spark of charity
 toward his brethren, shall hardly be able to satisfy
 himself in the conversations he meeteth; but will be
 tempted, with the holy Prophet, to wish himself se-
 questered from society, and cast into solitude; re-
 peating those words of his, *Oh that I had in the* Jer. ix. 2, 3.
wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; vi. 28.
that I might leave my people, and go from them: Ezek. xxii.
for they are—an assembly of treacherous men, and 9.
they bend their tongues like their bow for lies?
 This he wished in an age so resembling ours, that I
 can see the description with equal patness may suit
 both: *Take ye heed* (said he then; and may we not Jer. ix. 4, 5.
 advise the like now?) *every one of his neighbour,*
and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother
will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will
talk with slanders. They will deceive every one,
his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they
have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary
themselves to commit iniquity.

SERM. XVII. Such being the state of things, obvious to experience, no discourse may seem more needful or useful, than that which serveth to correct or check this practice: the which I shall endeavour to do, 1. by describing the nature, 2. by declaring the folly of it; or shewing it to be very true which the Wise Man here asserteth, *He that uttereth slander is a fool.* The which particulars I hope so to prosecute, that any man shall be able easily to discern, and ready heartily to detest this practice.

I. For explication of its nature, we may describe slander to be the uttering false (or equivalent to false, morally false) speech against our neighbour, in prejudice to his fame, his safety, his welfare, or concernment in any kind, out of malignity, vanity, rashness, ill-nature, or bad design. That which is in holy scripture forbidden and reproved under several names

and notions; of ^a*bearing false witness*, ^b*false accusation*, ^c*railing censure*, ^d*sycophantry*, ^e*take-bearing*, ^f*whispering*, ^g*backbiting*, ^h*supplanting*, ⁱ*taking up reproach*: which terms some of them do signify the nature, others denote the special kinds, others imply the manners, others suggest the ends of this practice. But it seemeth most fully intelligible by observing the several kinds and degrees thereof; as also by reflecting on the divers ways and manners of practising it.

The principal kinds thereof I observe to be these:

1. The grossest kind of slander is that which in the Decalogue is called *bearing false testimony against our neighbour*; that is, flatly charging him with facts the which he never committed, and is no-wise guilty of. As in the case of Naboth, when men were suborned to say, *Naboth did blaspheme*

ⁱ Kings xxi. 13.

^a Exod. xx. 16.

^b Ps. xxxv.

^c Jude 9.

^d Luke iii. 11.

^e Pet. ii. 11.

^f Luke iii. 14.

^g Levit. xix. 16.

^h Prov. xviii. 8.

ⁱ Prov. xxvi. 20.

^j Prov. xvi. 28.

^k Rom. i. 29.

^l 2 Cor. xii. 20.

^m Psal. xv. 3.

ⁿ Rom. i. 30.

^o Jer. ix. 4.

^p Psal. xv. 3.

God and the king: and as was David's case, when he thus complained, *False witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not of.* This kind in the highest way (that is, in judicial proceedings) is more rare; and of all men, they who are detected to practise it are held most vile and infamous; as being plainly the most pernicious and perilous instruments of injustice, the most desperate enemies of all men's right and safety that can be. But also out of the court there are many knights-errant of the post, whose business it is to run about scattering false reports; sometimes loudly proclaiming them in open companies, sometimes closely whispering them in dark corners; thus infecting conversation with their poisonous breath: these no less notoriously are guilty of this kind, as bearing always the same malice, and sometimes breeding as ill effects.

2. Another kind is, affixing scandalous names, injurious epithets, and odious characters upon persons, which they deserve not. As when Corah and his accomplices did accuse Moses of being ambitious, unjust, and tyrannical: when the Pharisees called our Lord an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a glutton and wine-bibber, an incendiary and perverter of the people, one that *spake against Cæsar, and forbade to give tribute*: when the apostles were charged of being ^a pestilent, turbulent, factious and seditious fellows. This sort being very common, and thence in ordinary repute not so bad, yet in just estimation may be judged even worse than the former; as doing to our neighbour more heavy and more irreparable wrong. For it imposeth on him really more blame, and that such which he can hardly shake off: because the charge signifieth habit of evil, and in-

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Psal. xxxv.
11.

Num. xvi.
3, 13, 14.
John xix.

7, 21.
Matt. xxvi.
65. ix. 3.
xii. 24. xi.

19.
Luke xxiii.
2, 5, 14.

John xix.
12.
Luke xxiii.
2.

^a Acts xvii.
6. xxiv. 5.

SERM. cludeth many acts ; then, being general and indefinite, can scarce be disproved. He, for instance, that calleth a sober man drunkard, doth impute to him many acts of such intemperance ; some really past, others probably future ; and no particular time or place being specified, how can a man clear himself of that imputation, especially with those who are not thoroughly acquainted with his conversation ? So he that calleth a man unjust, proud, perverse, hypocritical, doth load him with most grievous faults, which it is not possible that the most innocent person should discharge himself from.

3. Like to that kind is this, aspersing a man's actions with harsh censures and foul terms, importing that they proceed from ill principles, or tend to bad ends ; so as it doth not or cannot appear. *Thus when we say of him that is generously hospitable, that he is profuse ; of him that is prudently frugal, that he is niggardly ; of him that is cheerful and free in his conversation, that he is vain or loose ; of him that is serious and resolute in a good way, that he is sullen or morose ; of him that is conspicuous and brisk in virtuous practice, that it is ambition or ostentation which acts him ; of him that is close and bashful in the like good way, that it is sneaking stupidity, or want of spirit ; of him that is reserved, that it is craft ; of him that is open, that it is simplicity in him : when we ascribe a man's liberality and charity to vain-glory or popularity ; his strictness of life and constancy in devotion, to superstition

^a At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque Sincera cupimus vas incrustare. Probus quis Nobiscum vivit ? multum est demissus homo. Illi Tardo cognomen pinguis damus &c.

Hor. Serm. i. 3. Vid. Sidon. Apoll.

or hypocrisy : when, I say, we pass such censures, or impose such characters, on the laudable or innocent practice of our neighbours, we are indeed slanderers, imitating therein the great calumniator, who thus did slander even God himself, imputing his prohibition of the fruit unto envy toward men ; (*God, said he, doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil ;*) who thus did ascribe the steady piety of Job, not to a conscientious love and fear of God, but to policy and selfish design ; *Doth Job fear God for nought ?*

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Gen. iii. 5.

Job i. 9.
ii. 4.

Whoever indeed pronounceth concerning his neighbour's intentions otherwise than as they are evidently expressed by words, or signified by overt actions, is a slanderer ; because he pretendeth to know, and dareth to aver, that which he no-ways possibly can tell whether it be true ; because the heart is exempt from all jurisdiction here, is only subject to the government and trial of another world ; because no man can judge concerning the truth of such accusations ; because no man can exempt or defend himself from them : so that apparently such practice doth thwart all course of justice and equity.

4. Another kind is, perverting a man's words or actions disadvantageously by affected misconstruction. All words are ambiguous, and capable of different senses, (some fair, some more foul ;) all actions have two handles, one that candour and charity will, another that disingenuity and spite may, lay hold on : and in such cases, to misapprehend is a calumnious procedure, arguing malignant disposition and mischievous design. Thus when two men did witness that our Lord affirmed, he *could demolish*

Jer. xxiii.
36.

Πάντα ἔργον
μα ἰχθυὶ δὲ
λαβάνῃ.
Epict.

Matt. xxvi.
60, 61.

SERM. *the temple, and rear it again in three days*; al-
XVII. though he did indeed speak words to that purpose,

John ii. 19. meaning them in a figurative sense, discernible enough to those who would candidly have minded his drift and way of speaking; yet they who crudely alleged them against him are called false witnesses.

Psal. lvi. 5. *At last, saith the Gospel, came two false witnesses,*
Every day they wrest my words.
Matt. ubi supra.
Acts vi. 13, 14. *and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple, &c.* Thus also when some certified of St. Stephen, as having said, that *Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs that Moses delivered*; although probably he did speak words near to that purpose, yet are those men called false witnesses: *And, saith St. Luke, they set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words, &c.* Which instances plainly do shew, if we would avoid the guilt of slander, how careful we should be to interpret fairly and favourably the words and the actions of our neighbour.

5. Another sort of this practice is, partial and lame representation of men's discourse, or their practice, (suppressing some part of the truth in them, or concealing some circumstances about them, which might serve to explain, to excuse, or to extenuate them. In such a manner easily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievously calumniate. Thus suppose that a man speaketh a thing upon supposition, or with exception, or in way of objection, or merely for disputation sake, in order to the discussion or clearing of truth; he that should report him asserting it absolutely, unlimitedly, positively and peremptorily, as his own settled judgment, would notoriously calumniate. If one should

be inveigled by fraud, or driven by violence, or slip by chance into a bad place, or bad company; he that should so represent the gross of that accident as to breed an opinion of that person, that out of pure disposition and design he did put himself there, doth slanderously abuse that innocent person. The reporter in such cases must not think to defend himself by pretending that he spake nothing false; for such propositions, however true in logic, may justly be deemed lies in morality, being uttered with a malicious and deceitful (that is, with a calumnious) mind, being apt to impress false conceits, and to produce hurtful effects concerning our neighbour. There are slanderous truths, as well as slanderous falsehoods: when truth is uttered with a deceitful heart, and to a base end, it becomes a lie. *He that speaketh truth*, saith the Wise Man, *sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit*.¹⁷ Deceiving is the proper work of slander: and truth abused to that end putteth on its nature, and will engage into like guilt^b.

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Prov. xii.

6. Another kind of calumny is, by instilling sly suggestions; which although they do not downrightly assert falsehoods, yet they breed sinister opinions in the hearers; especially in those who from weakness or credulity, from jealousy or prejudice, from negligence or inadvertency, are prone to entertain them. This is done many ways; by propounding wily suppositions, shrewd insinuations, crafty questions, and specious comparisons, intimating a possibility, or inferring some likelihood of, and

^b Vid. *Herm. Pastor*. Where the Pastor observes, that the Devil doth in his temptations interpose some truths, serving to render his delusions passable.

SERM. thence inducing to believe the fact. Doth not, saith this kind of slanderer, his temper incline him to do thus? may not his interest have swayed him thereto? had he not fair opportunity and strong temptation to it? hath he not acted so in like cases? Judge you therefore whether he did it not. Thus the close slanderer argueth; and a weak or prejudiced person is thereby so caught, that he presently is ready thence to conclude the thing done. Again; he doeth well, saith the sycophant, it is true; but why, and to what end? Is it not, as most men do, out of ill design? may he not dissemble now? may he not recoil hereafter? have not others made as fair a show? yet we know what came of it. Thus do calumnious tongues pervert the judgments of men to think ill of the most innocent, and meanly of the worthiest actions. Even commendation itself is often used calumniously, with intent to breed dislike and ill-will toward a person commended in envious or jealous ears; or so as to give passage to dispraises, and render the accusations following more credible. It is an artifice commonly observed to be much in use there, where the finest tricks of supplanting are practised with greatest effect; so that, *pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes*; there is no more pestilent enemy, than a malevolent praiser^c. All these kinds of dealing, as they issue from the principles of slander, and perform its work, so they deservedly bear the guilt thereof.

7. A like kind is that of oblique and covert reflections; when a man doth not directly or expressly

^c Excusando exprobraret. *Tac. Ann.* i. p. 10.

Καιρός τις εἴρηται τρόπος οὗτος τῆς διαβολῆς, τὸ μὴ ψέγοντας, ἀλλ' ἐπαινοῦντας ὑμναίνεσθαι τοῖς πέλας. *Polyb. lib. iv.*

urge his neighbour with faults, but yet so speak, that he is understood, or reasonably presumed do it. This is a very cunning and very mischievous way of slandering; for therein the sculking calumniator keepeth a reserve for himself, and cutteth from the person concerned the means of defence. He goeth to clear himself from the matter of such insinuations; What need, saith this insidious speaker, what? must I needs mean you? did I name you? do you then assume it to yourself? do you not judge yourself guilty? I did not, but your own conscience it seemeth doth, accuse you. You are so jealous and suspicious, as persons over-wise or guilty to be. So meaneth this serpent out of the hedge surely and unavoidably to bite his neighbour; and in that respect more base and more hurtful than most flat and positive slanderer.

3. Another kind is that of magnifying and aggravating the faults of others; raising any small misdeed into a heinous crime, any slender defect into an odious vice, and any common infirmity into a strange enormity; turning a small *mote in the eye* Matt. vii. 3. of our neighbour into a huge *beam*, a little dimple on his face into a monstrous wen. This is plainly a slander, at least in degree, and according to the surmount whereby the censure doth exceed the fault. He that, upon the score of a small debt, doth exact a great sum, is no less a thief, in regard to that amount beyond his due, than if without any pretence he had violently or fraudulently seized on it; so is he a slanderer, that, by heightening faults and imperfections, doth charge his neighbour with another blame, or loads him with more disgrace than he deserves. It is not only slander to pick a hole

SERM.
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SERM. XVII. where there is none, but to make that wider which is, so that it appeareth more ugly, and cannot so easily be mended. For charity is wont to extenuate faults, justice doth never exaggerate them. As no man is exempt from some defects, or can live free from some misdemeanours; so by this practice every man may be rendered very odious and infamous.

9. Another kind of slander is, imputing to our neighbour's practice, judgment or profession, evil consequences (apt to render him odious, or despicable) which have no dependence on them, or connection with them. There do in every age occur disorders and mishaps, springing from various complications of causes, working some of them in a more open and discernible, others in a more secret and subtile way; (especially from divine judgment and providence checking or chastising sin :) from such occurrences it is common to snatch occasion and matter of calumny. Those who are disposed this way are ready peremptorily to charge them upon whomever they dislike or dissent from, although without any apparent cause, or upon most frivolous and senseless pretences; yea, often, when reason sheweth the quite contrary, and they who are so charged are in just esteem of all men the least obnoxious to such accusations. So usually the best friends of mankind, those who most heartily wish the peace and prosperity of the world, and most earnestly to their power strive to promote them, have all the disturbances and disasters happening charged on them by those fiery *vixons*, who (in pursuance of their base designs, or gratification of their wild passions) really do themselves embroil things, and raise miserable combustions in the world. So it is, that

they who have the conscience to do mischief, will have the confidence also to disavow the blame and the iniquity, to lay the burden of it on those who are most innocent. Thus, whereas nothing more disposeth men to live orderly and peaceably, nothing more conduceth to the settlement and safety of the public, nothing so much draweth blessings down from heaven upon the commonweal, as true religion; yet nothing hath been more ordinary, than to attribute all the miscarriages and mischiefs that happened unto it; even those are laid at its door, which plainly do arise from the contempt or neglect of it; being the natural fruits, or the just punishments of irreligion. King Ahab by *forsaking God's commandments*, and following wicked superstitions, had ^{1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.} *troubled Israel*, drawing sore judgments and calamities thereon; yet had he the heart and the face to charge those events on the great assertor of piety, Elias: *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* The Jews by provocation of divine justice had set themselves in a fair way toward desolation and ruin; this event to come they had the presumption to lay upon the faith of our Lord's doctrine: *If, said they, we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come, and take away our place and nation*: whenas, in truth, a compliance with his directions and admonitions had been the only means to prevent those presaged mischiefs. And, *Si Tibris ascenderit in moenia*, if any public calamity did appear, then *Christianos ad leones*, Christians must be charged and persecuted as the causes thereof. To them it was that Julian and other pagans did impute all the concussions, confusions, and devastations falling upon the Roman empire. The sacking of

SERM.
XVII.

1 Kings
xviii. 17,
18.

Joh. xi. 48.

Tertull.
Apol.

SERM. Rome by the Goths they cast upon Christianity^d: for
 XVII. the vindication of it from which reproach St. Austin
 did write those renowned books *de Civitate Dei*.
 So liable are the best and most innocent sort of men
 to be calumniously accused in this manner.

τὸ ἰσχυρό-
 δικτον ἐστὶ
 διαβολῆς.
 M. Ant.

Another practice (worthily bearing the guilt of
 slander) is, being aiding and accessory thereto, by
 any-wise furthering, cherishing, abetting it. He that
 by crafty significations of ill-will doth prompt the
 slanderer to vent his poison; he that by a willing
 audience and attention doth readily suck it up, or
 who greedily swalloweth it down by credulous ap-
 probation and assent; he that pleasingly relisheth
 and smacketh at it, or expresseth a delightful com-
 placence therein; as he is a partner in the fact, so he
 is a sharer in the guilt^e. There are not only slan-
 derous throats, but slanderous ears also; not only
 wicked inventions, which engender and brood lies,
 but wicked assents, which hatch and foster them.
 Not only the spiteful mother which conceiveth such
 spurious brats, but the midwife that helpeth to bring
 them forth, the nurse that feedeth them, the guar-
 dian that traineth them up to maturity, and setteth

^d Christianis temporibus detrahunt, et mala, quæ illa civitas
 pertulit, Christo imputant. *De Civ. Dei*, i. 1. iii. 31. They (saith
 that great father) detract from the Christian times, and impute
 the evils, which that city suffered, unto Christ.

^e David, Psal. cv. 5. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour,
 him will I cut off: τοῦτον ἐξεδίωκον, him have I driven away, say
 the LXX.

Neque vero illa justa est excusatio, Referentibus aliis injuriam
 facere non possum. Nemo invito auditori libenter refert. Sa-
 gitta in lapidem nunquam figitur; interdum resiliens percutit di-
 rigentem. Discat detractor, dum te videt non libenter audire,
 non facile detrahere. *Hier. ad Nepot. Ep.* ii.

them forth to live in the world; as they do really contribute to their subsistence, so deservedly they partake in the blame due to them, and must be responsible for the mischief they do. For indeed were it not for such free entertainers, such nourishers, such encouragers of them, slanders commonly would die in the womb, or prove still-born, or presently entering into the cold air would expire, or for want of nourishment soon would starve. It is such friends and patrons of them who are the causes that they are so rife; they it is who set ill-natured, base, and designing people upon devising, searching after, and picking up malicious and idle stories. Were it not for such customers, the trade of calumniating would fall^f. Many pursue it merely out of servility and flattery, to tickle the ears, to soothe the humour, to gratify the malignant disposition or ill-will of others; who upon the least discouragement would give over the practice. If therefore we would exempt ourselves from all guilt of slander, we must not only abstain from venting it, but forbear to regard or countenance it: for *He is* (saith the Wise Man) *a* Prov. xvii. *wicked doer, who giveth heed to false lips; and a*⁴

^f Posidonius relateth of St. Austin, that he had upon his table written these two verses;

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,

Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi :

(He that loveth by ill speech to gnaw the life of those who are absent, let him know himself unworthy to sit at this table; or, that this table is unfit for him :) And if any there did use detraction, he was offended, and minded them of those verses, threatening also to leave the table, and withdraw to his chamber. *Posid.* cap. 22.

Ξ Οὐ παραδέξῃ ἀκὴν μάταιαν, Thou shalt not receive (or, take up) a false report, saith the Law, *Exod.* xxiii. 1.

SERM. *liar, who giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* Yea, if
XVII. we thoroughly would be clear from it, we must shew

Hedge thy
ears with
thorns, &c.
Ecclus.
xxviii. 24.
ita legit
Cypr. Ep.
55.

an aversation from hearing it, an unwillingness to believe it; an indignation against it; so either stifling it in the birth, or condemning it to death being uttered^h. This is the sure way to destroy it, and to prevent its mischief. If we would stop our ears, we should stop the slanderer's mouth; if we would resist the calumniator, he would fly from us: if we would reprove him, we should repel him. For, as *the north wind driveth away rain, so (the Wise Man telleth us) doth an angry countenance a back-biting tongue.*

These are the chief and most common kinds of slander; and there are several ways of practising them worthy our observing, that we may avoid them; namely these.

1. The most notoriously heinous way is, forging and immediately venting ill stories. As it is said of Psal. lii. 2. Doeg, *Thy tongue deviseth mischief*; and of another like companion, Psal. l. 19. *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit*: and as our Lord saith of the Devil, Joh. viii. 44. *When he speaketh a lie, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.* This palpably is the supreme pitch of calumny, uncapable of any qualification or excuse: hell cannot go beyond this; the

^h Beatus est, qui ita se contra hoc vitium armavit, ut apud eum detrahere nemo audeat. Hier. ad Celantiam.

ⁱ Prov. xxv. 23. *Αν μάθωσιν οἱ κακῆγοροὶ ὅτι τῶν διαβαλλομένων μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς αὐτοὺς ἀποστρεφόμεθα, καύσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ τότε τῆς πονηρᾶς ταύτης συνηθείας, καὶ διορθώσονται τὸ ἀμάρτημα, καὶ ἐκαινέσονται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὺς, ὡς σωτῆρας αὐτῶν γενομένους, καὶ εὐεργέτας ἀνακηρύξουσιν. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. γ'.

cursed fiend himself cannot worse employ his wit, **SERM.**
 than in minting wrongful falsehoods. **XVII.**

2. Another way is, receiving from others, and venting such stories, which they who do it certainly know, or may reasonably presume, to be false; the becoming hucksters of counterfeit wares, or factors in this vile trade. There is no false coiner, who hath not some complices and emissaries ready to take from his hand, and put off his money: and such slanderers at second hand are scarce less guilty than the first authors. He that breweth lies may have more wit and skill; but the broacher sheweth the like malice and wickedness. In this there is no great difference between the great Devil, that frameth scandalous reports, and the little imps, that run about and disperse them.

3. Another way is, when one without competent examination, due weighing, and just reason, doth admit and spread tales prejudicial to his neighbour's welfare; relying for his warrant (as to the truth of them) upon any slight or slender authority. This is a very common and current practice: men presume it lawful enough to say over whatever they hear; to report any thing, if they can quote an author for it. It is not, say they, my invention; I tell it as I heard it: *sit fides penes authorem*; let him that informed me undergo the blame, if it prove false. So do they conceive themselves excusable for being the instruments of injurious disgrace and damage to their neighbours. But they greatly mistake therein: for as this practice commonly doth arise from the same wicked principles, at least in some degree, and produceth altogether the like mischievous effects, as the wilful devising and conveying slan-

Τί διαφορ-
 μίαις τῶν
 λόγων; &c.
 Chrys. in
 Heb. xi. 3.
 Δίον εὐσεβ-
 ζῆν καὶ συγ-
 κρούσσειν τὰ
 ἰλαττήμα-
 τα τῶν πλε-
 σίων· οὐ δὲ
 ἰνασμομαίαις,
 &c. Ibid.

SERM. der: so it no less thwarteth the rules of duty, and
XVII. laws of equity; God hath prohibited it, and reason

Levit. xix. doth condemn it. *Thou shalt not* (saith God in the
16. Law) *go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy*

Prov. xviii. *people*: as a tale-bearer, (as *Rachil*, that is,) as a
8. xxvi. 22. merchant or trader in ill reports and stories concern-
ing our neighbour, to his prejudice. Not only the
framing them, but the dealing in them beyond reason or necessity, is interdicted. And it is part of a

Psal. xv. 3. good man's character in the fifteenth Psalm, *Non accipit opprobrium, He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbour*; that is, he doth not easily entertain it, much less doth he effectually propagate it: and in our text, *He*, it is said, *that uttereth slander* (not only he that conceiveth it) *is a fool*.

And in reason, before exact trial and cognizance, to meddle with the fame and interest of another, is evidently a practice full of iniquity, such as no man can allow in his own case, or brook being used toward himself, without judging himself to be extremely abused by such reporters. In all reason and equity, (yea in all discretion,) before we yield credence to any report concerning our neighbour, or adventure to relate it, many things are carefully to be weighed and scanned. We should concerning our author consider whether he be not a particular enemy, or disaffected to him; whether he be not ill-humoured, or a delighter in telling bad stories; whether he be not dishonest, or unregardful of justice in his dealings and discourse; whether he be not vain, or careless of what he saith; whether he be not light and credulous, or apt to be imposed upon by any small appearance; whether at least in the present case he be not negligent, or too forward and

rash in speaking. We should also concerning the SERM. XVII. matter reported mind, whether it be possible or probable; whether suitable to the disposition of our neighbour, to his principles, to the constant tenor of his practice; whether the action imputed to him be not liable to misapprehension, or his words to misconstruction. All reason and equity do, I say, exact from us, diligently to consider such things, before we do either embrace ourselves, or transmit unto others, any story concerning our neighbour; lest unadvisedly we do him irreparable wrong and mischief. Briefly, we should take his case for our own, and consider whether we ourselves should be content, that upon like grounds or testimonies any man should believe or report disgraceful things concerning us. If we fail to do thus, we do (vainly, or rashly, or maliciously) conspire with the slanderer to the wrong of our innocent neighbour; and that in the Psalmist (by a parity of reason) may be transferred to us, *Thou hast consented unto the liar, and hast partaken with the author of calumny.* Psalm. l. 18.

4. Of kin to this way is the assenting to popular rumours, and thence affirming matters of obloquy to our neighbour. Every one by experience knows how easily false news do rise, and how nimbly they scatter themselves; how often they are raised from nothing, how soon they from small sparks grow into a great blaze, how easily from one thing they are transformed into another: especially news of this kind, which do suit and feed the bad humour of the vulgar. 'Tis obvious to any man how true that is of Tacitus, how void of consideration, of judgment,

^b Plebi non iudicium, non veritas. *Tac. Ann.* xvi.

Non est consilium in vulgo, non ratio, non discrimen, non di-

SERM. of equity, the busy and talking part of mankind is.
 XVII.

Whoever therefore gives heed to flying tales, and thrusts himself into the herd of those who spread them, is either strangely injudicious, or very malignantly disposed. If he want not judgment, he cannot but know, that when he complieth with popular fame, it is mere chance that he doth not slander, or rather it is odds that he shall do so: he consequently sheweth himself to be indifferent whether he doth it or no, or rather that he doth incline to do it: whence, not caring to be otherwise, or loving to be a slanderer, he in effect and just esteem is such; having at least a slanderous heart and inclination. He that puts it to the venture whether he lieth or no, doth *eo ipso* lie morally, as declaring no care or love of truth. *Thou shalt not* (saith the Law) *follow a multitude to do evil*: and with like reason we should not follow the multitude in speaking evil of our neighbour.

Exod. xxiii.
 2.

5. Another slanderous course is, to build censures and reproaches upon slender conjectures, or uncertain suspicions, (those *ὑπόνοιαι πονηραὶ*, *evil surmises*, which St. Paul condemneth.) Of these occasion can never be wanting to them who seek them, or are ready to embrace them; no innocence, no wisdom can anywise prevent them; and if they may be admitted as grounds of defamation, no man's good name can be secure. But he that upon such accounts dareth to asperse his neighbour is in moral computation no less a slanderer, than if he did the like out of pure inven-

1 Tim. vi. 4.
 Matt. ix. 4.

Ziba.
 2 Sam. xvi.
 3. xix. 27.

ligentia—ex opinione plurima, ex veritate pauca judicat. *Cic. pro Planco.*

Λαβὴ μὴ πιστενεῖ· πολύτροπός ἐστιν ὄμιλος. Phocyl.

Prov. xiv. 15. The simple believeth every word.

tion, or without any ground at all: for doubtful and false in this case differ little; to devise, and to divine, in matters of this nature, do import near the same. He that will judge or speak ill of others, ought to be well assured of what he thinks or says: he that asserteth that which he doth not know to be true, doth as well lie, as he that affirmeth that which he knoweth to be false; (for he deceiveth the hearers, begetting in them an opinion that he is assured of what he affirms :) especially in dealing with the concerns of others, whose right and repute justice doth oblige us to beware of infringing, charity should dispose us to regard and tender as our own. It is not every possibility, every seeming, every faint show or glimmering appearance, which sufficeth to ground bad opinion or reproachful discourse concerning our brother: the matter should be clear, notorious, and palpable, before we admit a disadvantageous conceit into our head, a distasteful resentment into our heart, a harsh word into our mouth about him. Men may fancy themselves sagacious and shrewd, (persons of deep judgment and fine wit they may be taken for,) when they can dive into others' hearts, and sound their intentions; when through thick mists or at remote distances they can descry faults in them; when they collect ill of them by long trains, and subtle fetches of discourse: but in truth they do thereby rather bewray in themselves small love of truth, care of justice, or sense of charity, together with little wisdom and discretion: for truth is only seen in a clear light; justice requireth strict proof: *charity* 1 Cor. xiii. *thinketh no evil,* and *believeth all things* for the 5, 7. best; wisdom is not forward to pronounce before full

SERM. evidence. (*He, saith the Wise Man, that answereth*
 XVII. *a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame*

Prov. xviii.
 13.

unto him.) In fine, they who proceed thus, as it is usual that they speak falsely, as it is casual that they ever speak truly, as they affect to speak ill, true or false; so worthily they are to be reckoned among slanderers.

6. Another like way of slandering is, impetuous or negligent sputtering out of words, without minding what truth or consequence there is in them, how they may touch or hurt our neighbour. To avoid this sin, we must not only be free from intending mischief, but wary of effecting it; not only careful of not wronging one distinct person, but of harming any promiscuously; not only abstinent from aiming directly, but provident not to hit casually any person with obloquy. For as he that dischargeth shot into a crowd, or so as not to look about regarding who may stand in the way, is no less guilty of doing mischief, and bound to make satisfaction to them he woundeth, than if he had aimed at some one person: so if we fling our bad words at random, which may light unluckily, and defame somebody, we become slanderers unawares, and before we think on it. This practice hath not ever all the malice of the worst slander, but it worketh often the effects thereof, and therefore doth incur its guilt and its punishment; especially it being commonly derived from ill temper, or from bad habit, which we are bound to watch over, to curb, and to correct. The tongue is a sharp and parlous weapon, which we are bound to keep up in the sheath, or never to draw forth but advisedly, and upon just occasion; it must ever be wielded with

on and care: to brandish it wantonly, to lay SERM.
t with it blindly and furiously, to slash and XVII.
: therewith any that happeth to come in our
doth argue malice or madness.

It is an ordinary way of proceeding to calum-
, for men, reflecting upon some bad disposition
emselves, (although resulting from their own
cular temper, from their bad principles, or from
ill custom,) to charge it presently upon others;
iming others to be like themselves: like the
ed person in the Psalm, *Thou thoughtest that I* Ps. l. 21. /ut
altogether such an one as thyself. This is to
er mankind first in the gross; then in retail, as
ion serveth, to asperse any man: this is the
of half-witted Machiavelians, and of desperate
bates in wickedness, who, having prostituted
consciences to vice, for their own defence and
e, would shrowd ^d themselves from blame under
helter of common pravity and infirmity; accus-
ull men of that whereof they know themselves
y. But surely there can be no greater iniquity
this, that one man should undergo blame for
l conscience of another.

ese seem to be the chief kinds of slander, and
common ways of practising it. In which de-
tion the folly thereof doth, I suppose, so clearly
, that no man can look thereon without loath-
nd despising it, as not only a very ugly, but a
foolish practice. No man surely can be wise,

remedium poenæ suæ arbitrantur, si nemo sit sanctus, si omni-
trahatur, si turba sit pereuntium, &c. *Hier. ad Asellam, Ep.*

SERM. who will suffer himself to be defiled therewith. But
XVII. to render its folly more apparent, we shall display
it; declaring it to be extremely foolish upon several
accounts. But the doing this, in regard to your pa-
tience, we shall forbear at present.

SERMON XVIII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROV. x. 18.

He that uttereth slander is a fool.

I HAVE formerly in this place, discoursing upon **SERM.**
ext, explained the nature of the sin here con- **XVIII.**
ed, with its several kinds and ways of practising.

I shall now proceed to declare the folly of it ;
to make good by divers reasons the assertion
of a Wise Man, that *he who uttereth slander is a*

Slandering is foolish, as sinful and wicked.

This sin is foolish upon many accounts ; as proceeding
from ignorance, error, inconsiderateness, vanity ;
springing from a weak judgment and irrational choice ; as
contrary to the dictates of reason and best rules of
conduct ; as producing very mischievous effects to
ourselves, bereaving us of the chief goods, and ex-
posing us to the worst evils. What can be more
ridiculously absurd, than to dissent in our opinion
and create discord in our choice from infinite wisdom ; to
take by our actions sovereign justice and immu-
nity ; to oppose almighty power, and offend
against the goodness ; to render ourselves unlike, and
contrary in our doings, our disposition, our state, to
obtain the perfection and felicity? What can be more

SERM. XVIII. desperately wild, than to disoblige our best friend, to forfeit his love and favour, to render him our enemy, who is our Lord and our Judge, upon whose mere will and disposal all our subsistence, all our welfare does absolutely depend? What greater madness can be conceived, than to deprive our minds of all true content here, and to separate our souls from eternal bliss hereafter; to gall our consciences now with sore remorse, and to engage ourselves for ever in remediless miseries? Such folly doth all sin include: whence in scripture style worthily goodness and wisdom are terms equivalent; sin and folly do signify the same thing.

If thence this practice be proved extremely sinful, it will thence sufficiently be demonstrated no less foolish. And that it is extremely sinful, may easily be shewed. It is the character of the superlatively wicked man; *Ps. l. 19, 20. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit: thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.* It is indeed plainly the blackest and most hellish sin that can be; that which giveth the grand fiend his names, and most expresseth his nature. He is *ὁ Διάβολος, the slanderer; Satan, the spiteful adversary; the old snake, or dragon,* hissing out lies, and spitting forth venom of calumnious accusation; *the accuser of the brethren,* a murderous, envious, malicious calumniator; *the father of lies;* the grand defamer of God to man, of man to God, of one man to another. And highly wicked surely must that practice be, whereby we grow namesakes to him, conspire in proceeding with him, resemble his disposition and nature. It is a complication, a comprisal, a collection and sum of all wickedness;

Apoc. xii.

10.

Joh. viii. 44.

opposite to all the principal virtues, (to veracity and SERM. sincerity, to charity and justice,) transgressing all XVIII. the great commandments, violating immediately and directly all the duties concerning our neighbour.

To lie simply is a great fault, being a deviation Eph. iv. 25. from that good rule which prescribeth truth in all 1 Pet. ii. 1. our words; rendering us unlike and disagreeable to Ps. xxxi. 5. God, who is *the God of truth*; (who loveth truth, xxxv. 10. and practiseth it in all his doings, who abominateth lxxxvi. 15. all falsehood;) including a treacherous breach of lxxxix. 14. faith toward mankind; (we being all, in order to cxlvi. 6. the maintenance of society, by an implicit compact, Prov. xii. obliged by speech to declare our mind, to inform 22. vi. 17. truly, and not to impose upon our neighbour;) arguing pusillanimous timorousness and impotency of mind, a distrust in God's help, and diffidence in all good means to compass our designs; begetting deception and error, a foul and ill-favoured brood: lying, I say, is upon such accounts a sinful and blameable thing: and of all lies those certainly are the worst, which proceed from malice, or from vanity, or from both, and which work mischief; such as slanders are.

Again, to bear any hatred or ill-will, to exercise enmity toward any man, to design or procure any mischief to our neighbour, whom even Jews were commanded to *love as themselves*, whose good, by Levit. xix. many laws, and upon divers scores, we are obliged 18. to tender as our own, is a heinous fault: and of this apparently the slanderer is most guilty in the highest degree. For evidently true it is which the Wise Man affirmeth, *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted with it*; there is no surer argument of ex- Prov. xxvi. 28. treme hatred; nothing but the height of ill-will can

SERM. suggest this practice. The slanderer is an enemy
XVIII.

Jam. iii. 8.
Psal. lxiv.
3, 4. Ivii. 4.

Ps. lii. 4.

Prov. xxv.
18. xii. 6.
An ungodly
man dig-
geth up
evil, and in
his lips
there is a
burning
fire.

Prov. xvi.
27. Ecclus.
xxviii. 18,
&c.

as the most fierce and outrageous, so the most base and unworthy that can be : he fighteth with the most perilous and most unlawful weapon, in the most furious and foul way that can be. His weapon is an envenomed *arrow, full of deadly poison, which he shooteth suddenly, and feareth not* ; a weapon which by no force can be resisted, by no art declined, whose impression is altogether inevitable and unsustainable. It is a most insidious, most treacherous and cowardly way of fighting ; wherein manifestly the weakest and basest spirits have extreme advantage, and may easily prevail against the bravest and worthiest : for no man of honour or honesty can in way of resistance or requital deign to use it, but must infallibly without repugnance be borne down thereby. By it the vile practiser achieveth the greatest mischief that can be. His words are, as the Psalmist saith of *Doeg, devouring words, (Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue :)* and, *A man, saith the Wise Man, that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow* ; that is, he is a complicated instrument of all mischiefs : he smiteth and bruiseeth like a *maul*, he cutteth and pierceth like a *sword*, he thus doth hurt near at hand ; and at distance he woundeth like a *sharp arrow*, it is hard any where to evade him, or to get out of his reach. *Many, saith another wise man, the imitator of Solomon, have fallen by the edge of the sword : but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the venom thereof who hath not drawn the yoke thereof, nor hath been bound in its bands. For the yoke thereof is a yoke*

of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of brass. SERM. XVIII.
The death thereof is an evil death, the grave were better than it.

Incurable are the wounds which the slanderer inflicteth, irreparable the damages which he causeth, indelible the marks which he leaveth.

No balsam can heal the biting of a sycophant; no thread can stitch up a good name torn by calumnious defamation; no soap is able to cleanse from the stains aspersed by a foul mouth. *Aliquid adhærebit;* Adversus sycophantæ morsum nullum est remedium.

somewhat always of suspicion and ill opinion will stick in the minds of those who have given ear to slander. So extremely opposite is this practice unto the queen of virtues, *charity*. Its property indeed is, to *believe all things*, that is, all things for the best, and to the advantage of our neighbour; not so much as to suspect any evil of him, without unavoidably manifest cause: how much more not to devise any falsehood against him? It *covereth* all things, studiously conniving at real defects, and concealing assured miscarriages: how much more not divulging imaginary or false scandals? It disposeth to seek and further any the least good concerning him: how much more will it hinder committing grievous outrage upon his dearest good name?

Again, all injustice is abominable: to do any sort of wrong is a heinous crime; that crime, which of all most immediately tendeth to the dissolution of society, and disturbance of human life; which God therefore doth most loathe, and men have reason especially to detest. And of this the slanderer is most deeply guilty. *A witness of Belial scorneth judgment, and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity,* saith the Wise Man. He is indeed, according to just estimation, guilty of all kinds what-

SERM. ever of injury, breaking all the second table of com-
 XVIII. mands respecting our neighbour. Most formally and
 directly he *beareth false witness against his neighbour*: he doth *covet his neighbour's goods*; for 'tis constantly out of such an irregular desire, for his own presumed advantage, to dispossess his neighbour of some good, and transfer it on himself, that the slanderer uttereth his tale: he is ever a thief and robber of his good name, a deflowerer and defiler of his reputation, an ^c assassin and murderer of his honour. So doth he violate all the rules of justice, and perpetrateth all sorts of wrong against his neighbour.

He may indeed perhaps conceive it no great matter that he committeth; because he doth not act in so boisterous and bloody a way, but only by words, which are subtile, slim, and transient things; upon his neighbour's credit only, which is no substantial or visible matter. He draweth, thinks he, no blood, nor breaketh any bones, nor impresseth any remarkable scar: 'tis only the soft air he breaketh with his tongue, 'tis only a slight character that he stampeth on the fancy, 'tis only an imaginary stain that he daubeth his neighbour with: therefore he supposeth no great wrong done, and seemeth to himself innocent, or very excusable. But these conceits arise from great inconsiderateness, or mistake; nor can they excuse the slanderer from grievous injustice. For in dealing with our neighbour, and meddling with his property, we are not to value things accord-

^c Dei episcopos linguæ gladio jugulâstis, fundentes sanguinem non corporis, sed honoris. *Op. lib. ii.* Woe be to them who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. *Isa. v. 23.*

ing to our fancy, but according to the price set on SERM. XVIII.
them by the owner : we must not reckon that a trifle, which he prizeth as a jewel. Since then all men (especially men of honour and honesty) do, from a necessary instinct of nature, estimate their good name beyond any of their goods, yea do commonly hold it more dear and precious than their very lives ; we, by violently or fraudulently bereaving them of it, do them no less wrong, than if we should rob or cozen them of their substance, yea than if we should maim their body, or spill their blood, or even stop their breath. If they as grievously feel it, and resent it as deeply, as they do any other outrage, the injury is really as great to them. Even the slanderer's own judgment and conscience might tell him so much : for they who most slight another's fame, are usually very tender of their own, and can with no patience endure that others should touch it : which demonstrates the inconsiderateness of their judgment, and the iniquity of their practice. It is an injustice not to be corrected or cured. Thefts may be restored, wounds may be cured ; but there is no restitution or cure of a lost good name : it is therefore an irreparable injury.

Nor is the thing itself, in true judgment, contemptible ; but in itself really very considerable. *A good name*, saith Solomon himself, (no fool,) *is rather to be chosen than great riches ; and loving favour rather than silver and gold.* In its consequences it is much more so ; the chief interests of a man, the success of his affairs, his ability to do good, (for himself, Prov. xxii. 1. xv. 30. Eccles. vii. his friends, his neighbour,) his safety, the best comforts and conveniences of his life, sometimes his life itself, depending thereon : so that whoever doth

SERM. XVIII. snatch or filch it from him, doth not only according to his opinion, and in moral value, but in real effect, commonly rob, sometimes murder, ever exceedingly wrong his neighbour. It is often the sole reward of a man's virtue and all the fruit of his industry; so that by depriving him of that, he is robbed of all his estate, and left stark naked of all, excepting a good conscience, which is beyond the reach of the world, and which no malice or misfortune can divest him of. Full then of iniquity, full of uncharitableness, full of all wickedness is this practice; and consequently full it is of folly. No man, one would think, of any tolerable sense, should dare, or deign to incur the guilt of a practice so vile and base, so indeed diabolical and detestable. But further more particularly.

2. The slanderer is plainly a fool; because he maketh wrong judgments and valuations of things, and accordingly driveth on silly bargains for himself, in result whereof he proveth a great loser. He means by his calumnious stories either to vent some passion boiling in him, or to compass some design which he affects, or to please some humour that he is possessed with: but is any of these things worth purchasing at so dear a rate? Can there be any valuable exchange for our honesty? Is it not more advisable to suppress our passion, or to let it evaporate otherwise, than to discharge it in so foul a way? Is it not better to let go a petty interest, than to further it by committing so notorious and heinous a sin; to let an ambitious project sink, than to buoy it up by such base means? Is it not wisdom rather to smother, or curb our humour, than by satisfying it thus to forfeit our innocence? Can any thing in

the world be so considerable, that for its sake we should defile our souls by so foul a practice, making shipwreck of a good conscience, abandoning honour and honesty, incurring all the guilt and all the punishment due to so enormous a crime? Is it not far more wisdom, contentedly to see our neighbour to enjoy credit and success, to flourish and thrive in the world, than by such base courses to sully his reputation, to rifle him of his goods, to supplant or cross him in his affairs? We do really, when we think thus to depress him, and to climb up to wealth or credit by the ruins of his honour, but debase ourselves. Whatever comes of it, (whether he succeeds, or is disappointed therein,) assuredly he that useth such courses will himself be the greatest loser and deepest sufferer. 'Tis true which the Wise Man saith, *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*⁶ PROV. XXI. And, *Woe unto them,* saith the Prophet, *that draw* ISA. V. 18. *iniquity with cords of vanity;* that is, who by falsehood endeavour to compass unjust designs.

But it is not, perhaps he will pretend, for to assuage a private passion, or to promote his particular concernment, that he makes so bold with his neighbour, or deals so harshly with him; but for the sake of orthodox doctrine, for advantage of the true church, for the advancement of public good, he judgeth it expedient to asperse him. This indeed is the covert of innumerable slanders: zeal for some opinion, or some party, beareth out men of sectarian and factious spirits in such practices; they may do, they may say any thing for those fine ends. What is a little truth, what is any man's reputation, in comparison to the carrying on such brave designs? But (to

SERM. omit that men do usually prevaricate in these cases;
XVIII. that it is not commonly for love of truth, but of themselves, not so much for the benefit of their sect, but for their own interest, that they calumniate) this plea will nowise justify such practice. For truth and sincerity, equity and candour, meekness and charity are inviolably to be observed, not only toward dissenters in opinion, but even toward declared enemies of truth itself; we are to *bless them*, (that is, to speak well of them, and to wish well to them,) *not to curse* them, (that is, not to reproach them, or to wish them ill, much less to belie them.) Truth also, as it cannot ever need, so doth it always loathe and scorn the patronage and the succour of lies; it is able to support and protect itself by fair means; it will not be killed upon a pretence of saving it, or thrive by its own ruin. Nor indeed can any party be so much strengthened and underpropt, as it will be weakened and undermined, by such courses: no cause can stand firm upon a bottom so loose and slippery, as falsehood is: all the good a slanderer can do is to disparage what he would maintain. In truth, no heresy can be worse than that would be, which should allow to play the devil in any case. He that can dispense with himself to slander a Jew or a Turk, doth in so doing render himself worse than either of them by profession are: for even they, and even pagans themselves, disallow the practice of inhumanity and iniquity. All men by light of nature avow truth to be honourable, and faith to be indispensably observed. He doth not understand what it is to be Christian, or careth not to practise according thereto, who can find in his heart, in any case, upon any pretence, to calumniate. In fine, to

prostitute our conscience, or sacrifice our honesty, **SERM. XVIII.**
 for any cause, to any interest whatever, can never
 be warrantable or wise. Further,

3. The slanderer is a fool, because he useth improper means and preposterous methods of effecting his purposes. As there is no design worth the carrying on by ways of falsehood and iniquity; so is there scarce any (no good or lawful one at least) which may not more surely, more safely, more cleverly be achieved by means of truth and justice. Is not always the straight way more short than the oblique and crooked? Is not the plain way more easy than the rough and cragged? Is not the fair way more pleasant and passable than the foul? Is it not better to walk in paths that are open and allowed, than in those that are shut up and prohibited? than to clamber over walls, to break through fences, to trespass upon enclosures? Surely yes: *He that* Prov. x. 9.
walketh uprightly walketh surely. Using strict veracity and integrity, candour and equity, is the best method of accomplishing good designs. Our own industry, good use of the parts and faculties God hath given us, embracing fair opportunities, God's blessing and providence, are sufficient means to rely upon for procuring, in an honest way, whatever is convenient for us. These are ways approved, and amiable to all men; they procure the best friends, and fewest enemies; they afford to the practiser a cheerful courage, and good hope; they meet with less disappointment, and have no regret or shame attending them. He that hath recourse to the other base means, and *maketh lies his refuge*, as he re- Isa. xxviii.
15 17.
Jer. xxviii.
 nounceth all just and honest means, as he disclaimeth
 all hope in God's assistance, and forfeiteth all pre- 15.

SERM.
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tence to his blessing; so he cannot reasonably expect good success, or be satisfied in any undertaking. The supplanting way indeed seems the most curt and compendious way of bringing about dishonest or dishonourable designs: but as a good design is certainly dishonoured thereby, so is it apt thence to be defeated; it raising up enemies and obstacles, yielding advantages to whoever is disposed to cross us. As in trade it is notorious, that the best course to thrive is by dealing squarely and truly; any fraud or cozenage appearing there doth overthrow a man's credit, and drive away custom from him: so in all other transactions, as he that dealeth justly and fairly will have his affairs proceed roundly, and shall find men ready to comply with him; so he that is observed to practise falsehood, will be declined by some, opposed by others, disliked by all: no man scarce willingly will have to do with him; he is commonly forced to stand out in business, as one that plays foul play.

4. Lastly, The slanderer is a very fool, as bringing many great inconveniences, troubles, and mischiefs on himself.

Prov. xviii.
7. xiii. 3.
xviii. 21.

First, *A fool's mouth*, saith the Wise Man, *is his destruction, his lips are the snare of his soul*: and if any kind of speech is destructive and dangerous, then is this certainly most of all; for by no means can a man inflame so fierce anger, impress so stiff hatred, raise so deadly enmity against himself, and consequently so endanger his safety, ease, and welfare, as by this practice. Men can more easily endure, and sooner will forgive, any sort of abuse than this; they will rather pardon a robber of their goods, than a defamer of their good name.

Secondly, Such an one indeed is not only odious to **SERM.**
the person immediately concerned, but generally **XVIII.**
to all men that observe his practice, every man pre-
sently will be sensible how easily it may be his
own case, how liable he may be to be thus abused,
in a way against which there is no guard or de-
fence. The slanderer therefore is apprehended a
common enemy, dangerous to all men; and thence
rendereth all men averse from him, and ready to
cross him^d. Love and peace, tranquillity and security,
can only be maintained by innocent and true deal-
ing: so the Psalmist hath well taught us; *What* **Ps. xxxiv.**
man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, ^{12, 13.}
that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil,
and thy lips from speaking guile.

Thirdly, All wise, all noble, all ingenuous and
honest persons have an aversion from this prac-
tice, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance
or complacence. *A righteous man hateth lying,* **Prov. xiii.**
saith the Wise Man. It is only ill-natured and ill-⁵
nurtured, unworthy and naughty people, that are
willing auditors or encouragers thereof. *A wicked* **Prov. xvii.**
*doer, saith the Wise Man again, giveth heed to false*⁴
lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.
All love of truth, and regard to justice, and sense of
humanity, all generosity and ingenuity, all charity
and good-will to men, must be extinct in those who
can with delight, or indeed with patience, lend an
ear, or give any countenance to a slanderer: and
is not he a very fool, who chooseth to displease the
best, only soothing the worst of men?

^d ——— ecquid

Ad te post paulo ventura pericula sentis? *Hor. Lib. i. Ep. 18.*

—— sibi quisque timet, quanquam est intactus et odit. *Idem.*

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Fourthly, The slanderer indeed doth banish himself from all conversation and company, or, intruding into it, becomes very disgustful thereto: for he worthily is not only looked upon as an enemy to those whom he slandereth, but to those also upon whom he obtrudeth his calumnious discourse. He not only wrongeth the former by the injury, but he mocketh the latter by the falsehood of his stories; implicitly charging his hearers with weakness and credulity, or with injustice and pravity.

Fifthly, He also derogateth wholly from his own credit, in all matters of discourse. For he that dareth thus to injure his neighbour, who can trust him in any thing he speaks? What will not he say to please his vile humour, or further his base interest? What (thinks any man) will he scruple or boggle at, who hath the heart in thus doing wrong and mischief to imitate the Devil? Further,

Sixthly, This practice is perpetually haunted with most troublesome companions, inward regret and self-condemnation, fear and disquiet: ° the conscience of dealing so unworthily doth smite and rack him; he is ever in danger, and thence in fear to be discovered, and requited for it. Of these passions the manner of his behaviour is a manifest indication: for men do seldom vent their slanderous reports openly and loudly, to the face, or in the ear of those who are concerned in them; but do utter them in a low voice, in dark corners, out of sight and hearing, where they conceit themselves at present safe from

° Ὁ κακῶς εἰπὼν ἐναγώνιος λοιπὸν ἐστίν, ὑποπτέει τε, καὶ δέδοικε, καὶ μετανοεῖ, καὶ κατεσθλεί τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γλῶτταν, δεδοικὼς, καὶ τρέμων, μήποτε εἰς ἑτέρους ἐξελεχθῆν τὸ ῥῆμα μέγαν ἐπαγάγη τὸν κίνδυνον, καὶ περιττὴν ἔχθραν καὶ ἀνύγητον ἐργάσῃται τῷ εἰρηκόσι, &c. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. γ'.

ing called to an account. *Swords*, saith the SERM. almist of such persons, *are in their lips; Who, XVIII.* *y they, doth hear?* And, *Whoso privily slan-* Psal. lix. 7. *reth his neighbour, him will I cut off,* saith David Psal. ci. 5. ain, intimating the common manner of this prac- e. Calumny is like *the plague, that walketh in* Psal. xcl. 6. *rknness*. Hence appositely are the practisers there- termed whisperers and backbiters: their heart ffers them not openly to avow, their conscience ls them they cannot fairly defend their practice. ain,

Seventhly, The consequent of this practice is com- only shameful disgrace, with an obligation to re- ct, and render satisfaction: for seldom doth can- ny pass long without being detected and con- ed^f. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely:* Prov. x. 9. *he that perverteth his ways shall be known:* and, *the lip of truth shall be established for ever; but lying lip is but for a moment,* saith the great ob- ver of things^g. And when the slander is disclosed, e slanderer is obliged to excuse, (that is, to pal- te one lie with another, if he can do it,) or forced recant, with much disgrace and extreme displea- e to himself: he is also many times constrained, h his loss and pain, to repair the mischief he hath e.

Eighthly, To this in likelihood the concernments men, and the powers which guard justice, will for-

Psal. lxxiii. 11. The mouth of them that speak lies shall be oped.

Prov. xii. 19. (Prov. xxvi. 26.) — Refrain your tongue a backbiting; for there is no word so secret that shall go nought: and the mouth that slandereth, slayeth the soul. d. i. 11.

Et delator habet quod dedit exitium. Vide Tac. An. i. p. 45.

SERM. cibly bring him : and certainly his conscience will
XVIII. bind him thereto ; God will indispensably exact it from him. He can never have any sound quiet in his mind, he can never expect pardon from Heaven, without acknowledging his fault, repairing the wrong he hath done, restoring that good name of which he dispossessed his neighbour : for in this no less than in other cases conscience cannot be satisfied, remission will not be granted, except due restitution be performed : and of all restitutions this surely is the most difficult, most laborious, and most troublesome. It is nowise so hard to restore goods stolen or extorted, as to recover a good opinion lost, to wipe off aspersions cast on a man's name, to cure a wounded reputation : the most earnest and diligent endeavour can hardly ever effect this, or spread the plaster so far as the sore hath reached. The slanderer therefore doth engage himself into great straits, incurring an obligation to repair an almost irreparable mischief.

Ninthly, This practice doth also certainly revenge itself, imposing on its actor a perfect retaliation ; *a tooth for a tooth* ; an irrecoverable infamy to himself, for the infamy he causeth to others. Who will regard his fame, who will be concerned to excuse his faults, who so outrageously abuseth the reputation of others ? He suffereth justly, he is paid in his own coin, will any man think, who doth hear him reproached^b.

^b He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour : but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him. Prov. xi. 27. xxvi. 27.

It was the punishment of slanderers in the Law.—Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother. Deut. xix. 19. A

Tenthly, In fine, the slanderer (if he doth not by **SERM. XVIII.** serious and sore repentance retract his practice) doth banish himself from heaven and happiness, doth expose himself to endless miseries and sorrows. For if none that *maketh a lie shall enter into the heavenly city*; if *without* those mansions of joy and bliss *every one* must eternally abide *that loveth or maketh a lie*; if, *πᾶσι τοῖς ψευδέσι, to all liars their portion is assigned in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*¹; then assuredly the capital liar, the slanderer, (who lieth most injuriously and mischievously,) shall be far excluded from felicity and thrust down into the depth of that miserable place. If, as St. Paul saith, no *railer, or evil-speaker, shall inherit the kingdom of God*; how far thence shall they be removed, who without any truth or justice do speak ill of and reproach their neighbour? If for every *ἀργὸν ῥῆμα, idle, or vain, word* we must *render* **Matth. vii. 36.** a strict account; how much more shall we be severely reckoned with for this sort of words, so empty of truth and void of equity; words that are not only negatively vain, or useless, but positively vain, as false, and spoken to bad purpose? If slander perhaps here may evade detection, or scape deserved punishment; yet infallibly hereafter, at the dreadful day, it shall

A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that telleth lies shall not escape. Prov. xix. 5.

God shall destroy thee for ever, thou false tongue. Psal. lii. 4, 5.

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight. Prov. xii. 22.

¹ Rev. xxi. 8. It is one of those things which God especially doth abominate. Prov. vi. 19. xii. 22. A false witness shall perish. Prov. xxi. 28.

SERM. XVIII. be disclosed, irreversibly condemned, inevitably persecuted with condign reward of utter shame and sorrow.

Is not he then, he who, out of malignity, or vanity, to serve any design, or soothe any humour in himself or others, doth by committing this sin involve himself into all these great evils, both here and hereafter, a most desperate and deplorable fool?

Having thus described the nature of this sin, and declared the folly thereof, we need, I suppose, to say no more for dissuading it; especially to persons of a generous and honest mind, who cannot but scorn to debase and defile themselves by so mean and vile a practice; or to those who seriously do profess Christianity, that is, the religion which peculiarly above all others prescribeth constant truth, strictest justice, and highest charity.

I shall only add, that since our faculty of speech (wherein we do excel all other creatures) was given us, as in the first place to praise and glorify our Maker, so in the next to benefit and help our neighbour; as an instrument of mutual succour and delectation, of friendly commerce and pleasant converse together; for instructing and advising, comforting and cheering one another; it is an unnatural perverting, and an irrational abuse thereof, to employ it to the damage, disgrace, vexation, or wrong in any kind of our brother. Better indeed had we been as brutes without its use, than we are, if so worse than brutishly we abuse it.

Finally, All these things being considered, we may, I think, reasonably conclude it most evidently true, that *he which uttereth slander is a fool.*

S E R M O N XIX.

AGAINST DETRACTION.

JAMES iv. 11.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren.

THE half of our religion consisteth in charity to- SERM.
ward our neighbour; and of that charity much the XIX.
greater part seemeth exercised in speech; for as Μὴ καταλα-
λείναι ἀλλή-
λους, ἀδική-
σαι.
making doth take up the greatest part of our life,
our quick and active mind continually venting its
thoughts, and discharging its passions thereby; all
conversation and commerce passing through it,
having a large influence upon all our practice,) so
each commonly having our neighbour and his com-
miments for its objects, it is necessary, that either
some part of our charity will be employed therein, or that
if we shall most offend against that great duty,
either with its associates, justice and peace.
And all offences of this kind (which transgress
charity, violate justice, or infringe peace) may per-
haps be forbidden in this apostolical precept; for
the word *καταλαλεῖν*, according to its origination, and
according to some use, doth signify all kind of oblo-
quy, and so may comprise slander, harsh censure,
scolding, scoffing, and the like kinds of speaking
against our neighbour; but in stricter acceptation,
and according to peculiar use, it denoteth that par-
ticular sort of obloquy, which is called *detraction*, or

SERM. XIX. *backbiting*: so therefore we may be allowed to understand it here; and accordingly I now mean to describe it, and to dissuade from its practice.

There is between this and the other chief sorts of obloquy (slander, censuring and reviling) much affinity, yet there is some difference; for slander involveth an imputation of falsehood; reviling includeth bitter and foul language; but detraction may be couched in truth, and clothed in fair language; it is a poison often infused in sweet liquor, and ministered in a golden cup. It is of nearer kin to censuring, and accordingly St. James here coupleth it thereto: *He that detracteth from a brother, and he that censureth his brother, backbiteth the law, and censureth the law*: yet may these two be distinguished; for censuring seemeth to be of more general purport, extending indifferently to all kinds of persons, qualities, and actions, which it unduly taxeth; but detraction especially respecteth worthy persons, good qualities, and laudable actions, the reputation of which it aimeth to destroy, or to impair.

This sort of ill practice, so rife in use, so base in its nature, so mischievous in its effects, it shall be my endeavour to describe, that we may know it; and to dissuade, that we may shun it.

It is the fault (opposite to that part of charity and goodness, which is called ingenuity or candour) which, out of naughty disposition or design, striveth to disgrace worthy persons, or to disparage good actions, looking for blemishes and defects in them, using care and artifice to pervert or misrepresent things to that purpose.

An honest and charitable mind disposeth us, when we see any man endued with good qualities, and

pursuing a tenor of good practice, to esteem such a SERM.
XIX.
person, to commend him, to interpret what he doeth

to the best, not to suspect any ill of him, or to seek any exception against him; it inclineth us, when we see any action materially good, to yield it simply due approbation and praise, without searching for, or surmising any defect in the cause or principle, whence it cometh, in the design or end to which it tendeth, in the way or manner of performing it. A good man would be sorry to have any good thing spoiled; as to find a crack in a fair building, a flaw in a fine jewel, a canker in a goodly flower, is grievous to any indifferent man; so would it be displeasing to him to observe defects in a worthy person, or commendable action; he therefore will not easily entertain a suspicion of any such, he never will hunt for any. But, on the contrary, it is the property of a detractor, when he seeth a worthy person, whom he doth not affect, or whom he is concerned to wrong, to survey him thoroughly, and to sift all his actions, with intent to descry some failing, or any semblance of a fault, by which he may disparage him; when he vieweth any good action, he peereth into it, labouring to espy some pretence to derogate from the commendation apparently belonging to it. This in general is the nature of this fault. But we may get a fuller understanding of it, by considering more distinctly some particular acts, wherein it is commonly exercised, or the several paths in which the detracting spirit treadeth; such are these following.

1. A detractor is wont to represent persons and actions under the most disadvantageous circumstances he can, setting out those which may cause them to appear odious or despicable, slipping over

SERM. those which may commend or excuse them. There
 XIX. is no person so excellent, who is not by his circum-

Πολὸν ἐν εὐχ
 ὁμιλοῦνται,
 οὐδὲν ἐξέμε-
 νον ἐν ἰσ.
 Theoph.

stances forced to omit some things, which would become him to do, if he were able; to perform some things lamely, and otherwise than he would do, if he could reach it; no action so worthy, but may have some defect in matter, or manner, incapable of redress; and he that representeth such person or action, leaving out those excusing circumstances, doth tend to beget a bad or mean opinion of them, robbing them of their due value and commendation: thus to charge a man of not having done a good work, when he had not the power or opportunity to perform it, or is by cross accidents hindered from doing it according to his desire; to suggest the action was not done exactly, in the best season, in the rightest mode, in the most proper place, with expressions, looks, or gestures most convenient, these are tricks of a detractor; who when he cannot deny the metal to be good, and the stamp true, he clippeth it, and so would reject it from being current.

2. He is wont to misconstrue ambiguous words, or to misinterpret doubtful appearances of things: let a man speak never so well, or act never so fairly, yet a detractor will say his words may bear this ill sense, his actions may tend to that bad purpose; we may therefore suspect his meaning, and cannot yield him a full approbation.

3. He is wont to misname the qualities of persons or things, assigning bad appellations or epithets to good or indifferent qualities: the names of virtue and vice do so nearly border in signification, that it is easy to transfer them from one to another, and to

give the best quality a bad name^a. Thus by calling a sober man sour, a cheerful man vain, a conscientious man morose, a devout man superstitious, a free man prodigal, a frugal man sordid, an open man simple, a reserved man crafty, one that standeth upon his honour and honesty proud, a kind man ambitiously popular, a modest man sullen, timorous, or stupid, is a very easy way to detract, and no man thereby can scape being disparaged.

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4. He doth imperfectly characterize persons, so as studiously to veil or faintly to disclose their virtues and good qualities, but carefully to expose, and fully to aggravate or amplify any defects or failings in them. The detractor will pretend to give a character of his neighbour, but in so doing he stiflenth what may commend him, and blazoneth what may disgrace him; like an envious painter he hideth, or in dusky colours shadoweth, all the graceful parts and goodly features, but setteth out all blemishes in the briskest light, and most open view. Every face hath in it some mole, spot, or wrinkle; there is no man that hath not, as they speak, some blind place, some blemishes in his nature or temper, some faults contracted by education or custom, somewhat amiss proceeding from ignorance, or misapprehension of things: these (although they be in themselves small and inconsiderable, although they are some of them involuntary, and thence inculpable, although they be much corrected or restrained by virtuous discipline, although they are compensated by greater virtues,

^a At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare. Probus quis Nobiscum vivit? multum est demissus homo. Illi Tardo cognomen pinguis damus, &c.

Hor. Serm. i. 3.

SERM. yet these) the detractor snatcheth, mouldeth, and
XIX. out of them frameth an idea of his neighbour, apt to breed hatred or contempt of him in an unwary spectator; whereas were charity, were equity, were humanity to draw the person, it, representing his qualities with just advantage, would render him lovely and venerable.

5. He is wont not to commend or allow any thing absolutely and clearly, but always interposing some exception, to which he would have it seem liable; the man indeed, saith he, doth seem to have this or that laudable quality; the action hath a fair appearance, but then if he can, he blurteth out some spiteful objection; if he can find nothing colourable to say against it, yet he will seem to know and to suppress somewhat; but, saith he, I know what I know, I know more than I'll say;—so (adding perhaps a crafty nod or shrug, a malicious sneer or smile) he thinks to blast the fairest performance^b.

6. He is ready to suggest ill causes and principles, latent in the heart, of practices apparently good; ascribing what is well done to bad disposition, or bad purpose: so to say of a liberal man, that he is so from an ambitious temper, or out of a vain-glorious design; of a religious man, that his constant exercises of devotion proceed not from a conscientious love and fear of God, or out of intention to please God and work out his salvation; but from hypocrisy, from affectation to gain the favour and good opinion of men, from design to promote

^b Non audes repetere, qui tacendo amplius criminari: et quia non habes quod objicias, simulas verecundiam; ut lector te putet mihi parcere, qui mentiens nec tuæ animæ pepercisti. *Hier. in Ruff.* iii. 6.

worldly interests; this is the way of detraction. **SERM. XIX.**
 He doeth well, saith the detractor, it cannot be denied; but for what reason doeth he so? Is it not plainly his interest to do so? Doth he not mean to get applause or preferment thereby? *Doth Job serve God for nought?* So said the father of detracting spirits.

7. He derogateth from good actions by pretending to correct them, or to shew better that might have been done in their room: it is, saith he, done in some respect well, or tolerably; but it might have been done better, with as small trouble and cost; he was overseen in choosing this way, or proceeding in this manner. Thus did Judas blame the good woman, who anointed our Lord's feet; *Why, said he,* John xii. 5. *was not this ointment sold, and given to the poor?* So did his covetous baseness prompt him to detract from that performance, of which our Saviour's goodness did pronounce, that it was a *good work*, which Matt. xxvi. 10, 13. should perpetually *through the whole world* pass for *memorable*.

8. A detractor not regarding the general course and constant tenor of a man's conversation, which is conspicuously and clearly good, will attack some part of it, the goodness whereof is less discernible, or more subject to contest and blame; as if in a body admirably handsome, one overlooking that curious harmony, that delicate complexion, those fine lineaments and goodly features, which, running through the whole, do conspire to render it a lovely spectacle, should pitch on an eye or a nose to carp at; or as if in a town, elsewhere begirt with impregnable defences, one should search for the weakest place, to form a battery against it.

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9. In fine, the detractor injecteth suggestions of every thing anywise plausible or possible, that can serve to diminish the worth of a person, or value of an action, which he would discountenance; he pryeth into every nook, he bolteth every circumstance, he improveth every pretence, he allegeth any report or rumour, he useth all the tricks imaginable to that end. Such is the nature and way of detraction; in enlarging upon which I am the more sparing, because the arts and methods of detraction being in great part common with those of slander and censure, I have otherwhile in treating upon those offences more fully declared them.

Now for dissuading from its practice, I shall propound to your consideration the causes whence it proceedeth, the irregularities and pravities which it involveth, the effects which it produceth; the which will appear so base and ugly, that whoever shall consider them cannot, I suppose, but loathe the daughter of such parents, the subject of such qualities, and the mother of such children.

I. The causes of detraction are,

1. Ill nature, and bad humour: as good nature and ingenuous disposition incline men to observe, like, and commend what appeareth best in our neighbour; so malignity of temper and heart prompteth to espy and catch at the worst: one, as a bee, gathereth honey out of any herb; the other, as a spider, sucketh poison out of the sweetest flower.

Expedi-
t vo-
bis nemi-
nem videri
bonum,
quasi alie-
na virtus
exprobra-
tio vestro-

2. Pride, ambition, and inordinate self-love: the detractor would engross praise, and derive all glory to himself; he would be the chief, the only excellent person; therefore he would justle another's worth out of the way, that it may not endanger standing

in competition with his, or lessening it by a partnership; that it may not outshine his reputation, or dim it by the lustre thereof.

SERM. XIX.
rum delictorum sit.
Sen. de Vit. B. xix.

3. Envy: a detractor liketh not to see another thrive, and flourish in the good esteem of men, therefore he would gladly blast his worth and virtue; his *eye* is *evil* and sore, therefore would he quench, or cloud the light that dazzleth it.

4. Malicious revenge and spite: his neighbour's good practice condemneth his bad life; his neighbour's worth disparageth his unworthiness; this he conceiveth highly prejudicial to him; hence in revenge he will labour to vilify the worth and good works of his neighbour.

5. Sense of weakness, want of courage, or despondency of his own ability: he that in any kind deemeth himself able, or confideth in his own strength and industry, will allow to others the commendation becoming their ability; for he thinketh himself in capacity to deserve the same, and as he would not lose the fruits of his own deserts, so he taketh it for equitable that another should enjoy them; to deprive another of them he seeth were in consequence to prejudice his own capacity and hope: but he that feeleth himself destitute of worth, and despaireth to arrive to the credit of others, is thence tempted to disparage and defame such persons: this course he taketh as the best allay of his contemptibleness, the only solace for his defects that he can hope for; being he cannot arise to another's pitch, he would bring down that other to his; he cannot directly get any praise, therefore he would indirectly find excuse, by shrouding his unworthiness under the blame of others. Hence detraction is a sign of the weak-

Οι ἰσχυροὶ
καὶ ἀφ' ἑαυ-
τῶν μὴ δύνα-
σθαι φαινε-
σθαι, ἐκ τοῦ
ψέγειν τοὺς
ἑαυτῶν
κρίνοντας
δίκαιον εἶναι
βούλομαι.
Socr. Hist.
Eccl. vi. 13.

SERM. est and basest spirit ; it is an impotent and groveling
XIX. serpent, that lurketh in the hedge, waiting opportunity to bite the heel of any nobler creature that passeth by.

*Remedium
 pœnæ suæ
 arbitran-
 tur, si ne-
 mo sit
 sanctus, si
 omnibus
 detrahatur,
 si turba sit
 pereantium,
 si multitudo pec-
 cantium.
 Hier. ad
 Asellam.
 Ep. 99.*

6. Evil conscience: a man that is conscious to himself of a solid worth and virtue, of having honest intentions, of having performed good deeds, is satisfied with the fruits of inward comfort and outward approbation, which they do yield; he therefore will scorn to seek the bettering himself by the discredit of others; he will not by so mean a practice adulterate that worth, in which he feeleth sufficient complacence; he rather doth like that others should enjoy their due commendation, as justifying his own claim thereto; he willingly payeth it, because he may justly demand it; and because withholding it from another may prejudice his own right thereto: but he that is sensible of no good qualities in himself, that is conscious of no worthy actions that he hath done, to breed a satisfaction of mind, or build a reputation upon, would please himself in making others as little better than himself as he can, would ground a kind of credit upon the ruins and rubbish of another's fame. When he knoweth he cannot shine by his own light, he would seem less obscure by eclipsing the brightness of others, and shutting out the day from about him; conceiving that all things look alike in the dark, and that bad appeareth not bad where no good is near.

As also a good man liketh worth and virtue, because they resemble what he discerneth in himself; so evil men hate them, because they do not find themselves masters of them; they are like the fox, who said the grapes were sour, because he could not

reach them; and that the hare was dry meat, because he could not catch her. A detractor therefore is always a bad man, and wanteth those good qualities which he would disparage. SERM.
XIX.

7. Bad, selfish design : detraction is a common engine, whereby naughty men strive to compass their ends ; when by fair means, by their own wit, industry, courage, worthy behaviour, they cannot promote their interests, they cannot drive on their ambitious or covetous projects, they cannot attain that preferment or that gain which they affect, then they betake themselves to this crooked and foul way of supplanting, by detracting those whom they conceit to stand in the way of their designs. It was the first piece of wicked policy that ever was practised in the world; the Devil, by detracting from the goodness and veracity of God, (misrepresenting his intentions, and misconstruing his commands,) strove to achieve his mischievous design of seducing our forefathers ; and in his footsteps his serpentine progeny (the race of malicious, envious, ambitious, covetous, and crafty politicians) do tread. It is observed to be a fault that usually haunteth courts, wherein there is competition for the favour of a prince, and the consequences thereof, (for dignity, power, wealth, repute,) to get which to themselves they strive to dispossess or prevent others by this instrument of detraction. It is also rife among scholars, that is, among competitors for wit, learning, industry, and the rewards of them, reputation or preferment. From such principles and causes usually doth this practice spring.

II. It doth involve these kinds of irregularity and pravity.

SERM. 1. Injustice: a detractor careth not how he deal-
 XIX. eth with his neighbour, what wrong he doeth him.

Justice obligeth to render every man his due; *honour to whom honour is due*, and praise to him that deserveth praise. There can be no greater injury done a man, than to spoil his best good, his virtue; than to rob him of the best reward of his pains and cares, which is a fair reputation; (I speak of rewards which lie in the reach of men.) No man prizes any thing comparably to his honesty and honour; who therefore by any means blurreth them, is most injurious. *Wo unto them—who take the righteousness of the righteous from him.* Isa. v. 23.

Prov. xvii.
15.

Injurious indeed he is, not only to the virtuous person, but to virtue itself; for commendation is a debt we owe to it, wherever it is found; which conduceth to its encouragement and advancement; and to wrong goodness itself is the most heinous injustice.

2. Uncharitableness: it is evident that the de-
 1 Cor. xiii. tractor doth not love his neighbour; for charity maketh the best of every thing: *Charity believeth every thing, hopeth every thing* to the advantage of its object; charity delighteth to see the beloved to prosper and flourish; and will therefore contribute its endeavour to the procuring it to do so: the detractor therefore (who would defile the best, and display the worst in his neighbour) can have no charity; he indeed manifesteth the greatest hatred, seeing he striveth to do the greatest mischief, to cause the greatest vexation to his neighbour, in bereaving him of his most precious and dear enjoyments.

3. Impiety: he that loveth and reverenceth God,

will acknowledge and approve his goodness, in bestowing excellent gifts and graces to his brethren; when such appear, he will be afraid to disavow or disgrace them, that he may not rob God himself of the glory thence due to his favour and mercy, or through his neighbour's side wound the divine benignity: he will be ready to bless and praise God for all such emanations of his goodness; as those did in the gospel, who, beholding our Saviour's miraculous works of grace, did *glorify God, who had given such gifts unto men*: but the detractor careth not for that; he feareth not to bereave God of the honour of dispensing good gifts, that his brother may not have the honour of receiving them; he will rather deny God to be good, than allow a man to be so by his grace and blessing: so is he no less a detractor from God, than from his neighbour.

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Hence, of all offences, detraction certainly must be most odious to God. He is the God of truth, and therefore detesteth lying, of which detraction ever, especially in moral esteem, hath a spice: he is the God of justice, and therefore especially doth abhor wronging the best persons and actions: he is the God of love, and therefore cannot but loathe this capital violation of charity: he is jealous of his glory, and cannot therefore endure it to be abused by slurring his good gifts and graces; he cannot but hate that offence, which approacheth to that most heinous and unpardonable sin, that consisteth in defaming the excellent works performed by divine power and goodness, ascribing them to bad causes. Matth. xii.

4. Detraction involveth degenerate baseness, meanness of spirit, and want of good manners. All men affect to seem generous, and will say they scorn to

SERM. be base; but generosity is in nothing more seen,
XIX. than in a candid estimation of other men's virtues and good qualities: to this generosity of nature, generosity of education, generosity of principles and judgment, do all conspiringly dispose: it is the noblest kind of courtesy, to tender and further the reputation of others; to be liberal in bestowing commendation on deserving persons; it obligeth men more than any other benefit can do, procuring them commonly real advantage, always cheering and satisfying their mind; for in nothing more do they please themselves, than in reaping this fruit of their good intention and honest industry, the approbation of worthy men; it is therefore a most genteel thing thus to oblige men. But, on the other side, nothing more plainly argueth a degenerate and ignoble heart, ill-breeding and ill-formed manners, a sorry mind and poor judgment, than to disesteem or disparage worth and virtue in others: it is the most savage rudeness, the most sordid illiberality, the most ugly clownishness that can be; of all men therefore it most doth misbecome those who pretend to be gentlemen.

5. In consequence to these things, detraction includeth folly; for every unjust, every uncharitable, every impious, every base person is, as such, a fool: none of those qualities are consistent with wisdom; but the folly of it will particularly appear, together with its pravity, by the bad and hurtful effects which it produceth, both in regard to others, and to him that practiseth it; some of which are these:

III. 1. The practice thereof is a great discouragement and obstruction to the common practice of goodness: for many, seeing the best men thus disparaged, and the best actions vilified, are disheart-

ened and deterred from practising virtue, especially in a conspicuous and eminent degree. Why, will many a man say, shall I be strictly good, seeing goodness is so liable to be misused, seeing thereby I shall provoke the detracting tongue, seeing my reward shall be to have a severe inquisition pass upon me, to have my life defaced, and my name bespattered? Had not I better be contented with a mediocrity and obscurity of goodness, than by a glaring lustre thereof to draw the envious eye, and kindle raging obloquy upon me? Thus men of a weaker spirit, or a bashful temper, (who are not stiff and resolute in their way, who have not the heart or the face to bear up against rude assaults of their reputation,) will be scared and daunted by detraction; so as consequently to be induced,

SERM.
XIX.

— placare invidiam virtute relicta.

Hor.

And when thus the credit of virtue is blasted in its practisers, many will be diverted from it; so will it grow out of request, and the world will be corrupted by these agents of the *evil one*.

It were indeed, upon this consideration, advisable and just, not to seem ever to detract; even not then when we are well assured that by speaking ill we shall not really do it; if we should discover any man to seem worthy, or to be so reputed, whom yet we discern, by standing in a nearer light, not to be truly such, having had opportunity to know his bad qualities, bad purposes, or bad deeds; yet wisdom would commonly dictate, and goodness dispose not to mar his repute. If we should observe, without danger of mistake, any plausible action to be performed out of bad inclinations, principles, or designs; yet ordinarily in discretion and honesty we should

SERM. let it pass with such commendation as its appearance may procure, rather than to slur it by venting our disadvantageous apprehensions about it : for it is no great harm that any man should enjoy undeserved commendation, or that a counterfeit worth should find a dissembled respect ; it is but being over-just, which if it be ever a fault, can hardly be so in this case, wherein we do not expend any cost, or suffer any damage : but it may do mischief to blemish an appearance of virtue ; it may be a wrong thereto to deface its very image ; the very disclosing hypocrisy doth inflict a wound on goodness, and exposeth it to scandal ; for bad men thence will be prone to infer, that all virtue proceedeth from the like bad principles : so the disgrace cast on that which is spurious will redound to the prejudice of that which is most genuine : and if it be good to forbear detracting from that which is certainly false, much more is it so in regard to that which is possibly true ; and far more still is it so in respect to that which is clear and sure.

2. Hence detraction is very noxious and baneful to all society ; for all society is maintained in welfare by encouragement of honesty and industry ; the which, when disparagement is cast upon them, will be in danger to languish and decay : whence a detractor is the worst member that can be of a society ; he is a very moth, a very canker therein.

3. Detraction worketh real damage and mischief to our neighbour ; it bereaveth him of that goodly reputation which is the proper reward of virtue, and a main support to the practice of it ; it often really obstructeth and disappointeth his undertakings, estranging those from him, or setting them against him, who do credulously entertain it.

4. The detractor abuseth those into whose ears he instilleth his poisonous suggestions, engaging them to partake in the injuries done to worth and virtue; causing them to entertain unjust and uncharitable conceits, to practise unseemly and unworthy behaviour toward good men.

5. The detractor produceth great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself.

He raiseth against himself fierce animosity and wrath: for men that are conscious to themselves of their own honest meaning and blameless proceedings, cannot endure to be abused by unjust disparagement; hence are they stirred to boil with passion, and to discharge revenge upon the detractor.

He exposeth himself to general hatred; all good men loathe him as a base and mischievous person, and a particular enemy of theirs, always ready to wrong them; every man is apt to say, he that doth thus abuse another will be ready to serve me in like manner if I chance to come in his way, vilifying the best thing I can do: even the worst men will dislike him; for even such affect to do somewhat laudable or plausible, and would be glad to enjoy approbation for it; and cannot therefore brook those who lie in wait to rob them of the fruit of their good endeavours: so do all men worthily detest and shun the detractor, as a common enemy to goodness first, and then unto men. Further,

6. The detractor yieldeth occasion to others, and a kind of right to return the same measure upon him. If he hath in him a show of any thing laudable, men will not allow him any commendation from it; for why, conceive they, shall he receive that which he will not suffer others to enjoy? How can any man

SERM. admit him to have any real worth or virtue in him-
XIX. self who doth not like it or treat it well in another?
 Hence, if a detractor hath any good in him, he
 much injureth himself, depriving himself of all the
 respect belonging thereto.

7. Again, the detractor, esteeming things ac-
 cording to moral possibility, will assuredly be de-
 feated in his aims; his detraction in the close will
 avail nothing, but to bring trouble and shame upon
 himself; for God hath a particular care over inno-
 cence and goodness, so as not to let them finally to
 suffer: *the good man's righteousness he will bring
 forth as the light, and his judgment as the noon
 day.* Wise men easily will discern the foul play,
 and will scorn it; good men ever will be ready to clear
 and vindicate the truth: worth, however clouded for
 a time, will break through all mists, and gloriously
 expand itself, to the confusion of its most sly op-
 posers.

Ps. xxxvii.
6.

Such are the natural and obvious effects of this
 practice; the consideration whereof (together with
 the causes producing it, and the essential adjuncts
 which it did involve) will, I should think, suffice to
 deter us from it.

I shall only adjoin one consideration, which our
 text suggesteth: *Speak not evil of one another,
 brethren,* saith the apostle: *brethren*; that ap-
 pellation doth imply a strong argument enforcing the
 precept: brethren, with especial tenderness of af-
 fection, should love one another, and delight in each
 other's good; they should tender the interest and
 honour of each other as their own; they should
 therefore by all means cherish and countenance
 virtue in one another, as that which promoteth the

common welfare, which adorneth and illustrateth the dignity of their family. We should rejoice in the good qualities and worthy deeds of any Christian, as glorifying our common Father, as gracing our common profession, as edifying the common body, whereof we are members. *Members we are one of another, and as such should find complacency in the health and vigour of any part, from whence the whole doth receive benefit and comfort : for one brother to repine at the welfare, to malign the prosperity, to decry the merit, to destroy the reputation of another, is very unnatural ; for one Christian anywise to wrong or prejudice another, is highly impious.*

To conclude: it is our duty, (which equity, which ingenuity, which charity, which piety do all concurrently oblige us to,) whenever we do see any good person, or worthy deed, to yield hearty esteem, to pay due respect, gladly to congratulate the person, and willingly to commend the work ; rendering withal, thanks and praise for them to the *donor of all good gifts* : unto whom, for all the good things bestowed upon us, and upon all his creatures, be for ever all glory and praise. Amen.

S E R M O N X X .

—
AGAINST RASH CENSURING AND JUDGING.
—

MATTH. vii. 1.

Judge not.

SERM.
XX. **T**HESSE words, being part of our Saviour's most divine Sermon upon the Mount, contain a very short precept, but of vast use and consequence; the observance whereof would much conduce to the good of the world, and to the private quiet of each man; it interdicting a practice, which commonly produceth very mischievous and troublesome effects; a practice never rare among men, but now very rife; when, with the general causes, which ever did and ever will in some measure dispose men thereto, some special ones do concur, that powerfully incline to it.

There are innate to men an unjust pride, emboldening them to take upon them beyond what belongeth to them, or doth become them; an excessive self-love, prompting them as to flatter themselves in their own conceit, so to undervalue others, and from vilifying their neighbours, to seek commendation to themselves; an envious malignity, which ever lusteth to be pampered with finding or making faults; many corrupt affections, springing from fleshly nature, which draw or drive men to this practice; so that in

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ll ages it hath been very common, and never^a any **SERM.**
rofession hath been so much invaded, as that of the **XX.**
udge.

But divers peculiar causes have such an influence upon our age, as more strongly to sway men thereto: here is a wonderful affectation to seem hugely wise and witty; and how can we seem such more, than in putting on the garb and countenance of judges; canning and passing sentence upon all persons, and all things incident? There is an extreme niceness and delicacy of conceit, which maketh us apt to relish few things, and to distaste any thing; there are dissensions in opinion, and addictedness to parties, which do tempt us, and seem to authorize us in condemning all that differ from us; there is a deep corruption of mind and manners, which engageth men in their own defence to censure others, diverting the blame from home, and shrouding their own under the covert of other men's faults^a; there are new principles of morality and policy become current with great vogue, which allow to do or say any thing subservient to our interests or designs; which also do represent all men so bad, that, admitting them true, nothing hardly can be said ill of any man beyond truth and justice.

Hence is the world become so extremely critical and censorious, that in many places the chief employment of men, and the main body of conversation, is, if we mark it, taken up in judging: ^b every gos-

^a Expedit vobis neminem videri bonum; quasi aliena virtus ex-
robratio vestrorum delictorum sit. *Sen. de Vit. B. xix.*

^b Εἰς τὰ τῶν ἄλλων πολυπραγματεῖν καὶ καταδικάζειν δαπανᾶται ἡμῶν
και ὁ βίος καὶ οὐδένα ἂν εἶροι ταχέως, οὐ βιωτικὸν ἄνδρα, οὐ μοναχὸν

taxed under some scandalous name, or odious character, one or other. Not only the outward and visible practices of men are judged; but retired sentiments are brought under trial, and outward dispositions have a verdict past on them; final states are determined. Whole bodies are thus judged at once, and nothing it is worth the breath to damn whole churches, at one push to damn down whole nations into the bottomless pit. Mankind in a lump is severely censured, as if there were any real goodness or true virtue; so fatally determined as not to be corrigible by any good discipline, nor recoverable even by the grace of God: yet himself is hardly spared, his providence consider the bold obloquy of those, who, as the Psalmist speaketh of some in his time, whose race doth survive, *speaking loftily, and setting their mouth against the heavens.*

Psal. lxxiii.
8, 9.

This being too apparently the present state of things, and obvious practice of men, it were desirable that, in order to their being reclaimed, men should more fully understand the nature of this

your both to describe the nature of the practice forbidden in my text, and to declare the pravity, iniquity, and folly of it. SERM.
XX.

Judge not. As to the word we may observe, that it being in itself according to its primitive sense of a middle and indifferent signification, is yet frequently in the scripture used in the worst sense; so as to import those acts, or those effects of judgment, which pass to the disadvantage of the persons subjected thereto; for condemnation, and for infliction of punishment: and this sense here surely the word doth principally respect, yet not so precisely as to exclude somewhat contained in the larger sense: we are so prohibited the condemning and punishing our neighbour in his good name, that withal some acts antecedent, or concomitant to those, are glanced at in the prohibition: undue application thereto, unjust proceeding therein are also signified unlawful; for the meaning of the word and the reason of the case may be so far extended.

But for the fuller and clearer understanding of the matter, we must observe, that there are divers sorts of judging, or acts resembling judgment, which do not belong to this precept; which it is requisite to distinguish from this judging prohibited.

1. That exercising public judgment, or administering justice, is not here prohibited, I need not to insist, that is necessary; human society could not subsist, right could not be maintained, nor peace preserved without it; God thereby governeth the world, earthly judges being his instruments and substitutes; such judgment is not so much the act of men, as of God himself, by whose authority, in whose name, for whose service it is ministered. As Moses told the

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SERM. judges in his time, *You shall not be afraid of the*
XX. *face of man ; for the judgment is God's.* And in

Deut. i. 17. numberless places of scripture this judgment is allowed and authorized; it therefore is not touched here.

2. That trial and censure, although out of court, and without formal process, which any kind of superiors do exercise upon their inferiors, committed to their inspection and care; such as of parents over children, masters over servants, pastors over their flock, any governors over their charge, their admonitions, reprehensions, and corrections are to be expected hence, as being in themselves needful and warranted, yea enjoined by God.

3. Neither are fraternal correption or friendly reproof, proceeding out of charitable design, upon clear ground, in fit season, within reasonable compass, concerned in this prohibition; this being a wholesome practice, and a duty incumbent on us: *Thou shalt,*
Levit. xix. 17. saith the Law, *not hate thy brother in thine heart;*
1 Thess. v. 14. *thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*

4. All observing and reflecting upon our neighbour's actions, all framing an opinion about them, and expressing our minds concerning them are not forbidden. For we are not bound perpetually to shut our eyes, or go about hood-winked; nor to stop our ears and make ourselves deaf: and how can we forbear to think according to plain evidence? how can we resist the impressions of sense upon our minds? how can we contest notorious experience? how also, barring such apprehensions of obvious and apparent things, could we bear testimony concerning them? how could we signify our approbation or dis-

like of them? how could we for his amendment admonish or reprove our neighbour, as in some cases SERM.
XX.
we are obliged to do?

5. We are not hence obliged to think so well of all men, as without competent knowledge always to rely upon their pretences, or to intrust our interests in their hands; for common experience acquainteth us that we may be deceived in trusting men, prudence biddeth us in matters of importance not to confide in uncertainties; wherefore we shall not be culpable for being wary in such cases: this indeed is not a positive judgment, but only a waving to declare in favour, when sufficient ground of doing so doth not appear; it is only a reasonable suspecting the possibility of miscarriage in some persons, not a downright asserting ill concerning any one man: wherefore to do it as it suiteth discretion, so it doth not thwart justice or charity; and cannot therefore be prohibited here.

6. We are also not hence obliged, in contradiction to plain sense, to judge well of men; accounting him for a saint, or a good man, whom we see living disorderly, or committing scandalous offences, plainly repugnant to the rules of piety, justice, or sobriety.

In fine, there are some special cases and circumstances, wherein good men excusably may in severe terms declare their resentment of manifest wickedness, especially such as is prejudicial to God's honour and public good. Of this there are divers instances, which yet hardly can be reduced to common rules, or proposed for general example; the matter being ticklish, and men being apt to pervert any liberty or pretence of this kind, by indulging to their own bad humours and passions.

SERM. XX. These sorts of allowable judgments being excepted, it is then private, affected, needless, groundless, rash, and harsh censuring the persons or actions of our brethren; such as doth resemble not the acting of a lawful superior, of a needful witness, of a faithful friend, but of a judge acting without competent right, upon no good grounds, or in undue manner, which is here interdicted: the word *judging* doth well imply the nature of this fault, the manner of our proceeding therein, the grounds of its unlawfulness; neither perhaps can we better understand our duty in this matter, than by expending what are the properties and obligations of a judge, and comparing our practice thereto; for thence it may plainly appear how unqualified we are to bear this office, and how unduly we execute it.

1. No judge should intrude himself into the office, or assume a judicial power without competent authority; that is, by delegation from superior powers, or by voluntary reference of the parties concerned. This condition we fail in, whenever without warrant from God, or special reason exacting it from us, we do pry into, scan, and tax the actions of our neighbour. When, I say, we are pragmatically inquisitive into the purposes and proceedings of our superiors, of our equals, of those who are not subject to our charge and care, when we narrowly examine them, when we peremptorily blame them, then do we unduly exalt ourselves above them, and exercise an unwarrantable jurisdiction over them. What sense doth offer, we may receive in; what judgment reason doth extort, we may follow; what testimony public benefit requireth, we may yield; what expression charity doth call for toward our neighbour's

¹ Pet. iv. 15.

¹ Thess. iv.

11.

Prov. xxvii.

16.

¹ Tim. v.

13.

edification, we may seasonably vent: but if we proceed further in this way, the party concerned may appeal from us as incompetent and unlawful judges of his actions or his state; we are arrogant and injurious in presuming to exercise that office. God is the master and judge of men, and without authority from him, we must not presume to judge his servants and subjects: so we are taught by St. Paul, *Who, saith he, art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth:* and St. James in like manner, upon the same ground, expostulateth with the censurer; *There is, saith he, one Lawgiver, who is able to save, or to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?* Our Lord himself for this reason declined intermeddling in the affairs of men; *Who, said he, made me a judge or divider over you?* And shall we constitute ourselves in the office, shall we seat ourselves on the tribunal, without any commission from God or call from men? How many judges, if this proviso were observed, would have their quietus! how many censurers would be voided hence!

2. A judge should be free from all prejudices and all partial affections; especially from those which are disadvantageous to the party in danger to suffer; such as tempt or incline to condemn him; from ill-opinion and ill-will, from anger, envy, revengefulness, contempt, and the like: for he that is possessed with these is nowise qualified to be a judge; his eyes are blinded, or distorted, or infected with bad tinctures, so that he cannot discern what is right, or that he seeth things represented in the wrong place, and under false colours; his mind is discomposed and disturbed, so that he cannot calmly and steadily ap-

SERM. XX.

Quid in potestatem alienam irruis? quid temerarius Dei tribunal ascendis? Opt. lib. 2.

Rom. xiv. 4.

Jam. iv. 11.

Luke xii. 14.

Levit. xix. 15.

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SERM. prehend or consider the just state of the case; his
XX. will is biassed, and strongly propendeth one way, so
that he cannot proceed uprightly in a straight and
even course: being not indifferently affected, but
concerned on one side, he is become a party, or an
adversary, and thence unfit to be a judge; he hath
determined the cause with himself beforehand, so
that no place is left to further discussion or defence;
wherefore before such a judge the best cause will
fall, the clearest innocence shall not preserve from
condemnation. He therefore that will undertake
this office must first divest himself of all prejudices,
must rid himself of all passions, must purify himself
from all corrupt inclinations, taking care not to come
with a condemning mind, or a lust to punish the ob-
noxious party; otherwise a just exception lieth
against him, and reasonably his jurisdiction may be
declined.

Jam. ii. 1.
Matt. xxii.
16.
1 Tim. v.
21.

If this rule were put in practice, there would be little censuring; for few come to it with a free and pure mind; few blame their neighbours without some preoccupation of judgment, or some disaffection toward them.

3. A judge should never proceed in judgment, without careful examination of the cause, so as well to understand it. Even those, who out of indispensable duty, or by a just power, may call others to account, are yet obliged to be wary, and never to pass sentence without due cognizance of the cause; otherwise they will judge blindly and rashly; they will either decide wrongly, or so truly, that doing it must be imputed not to their virtue, but to their fortune; often they will be mistaken, and it is luck that they are not so always: and what plainer iniquity

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can there be, than that the reputation or real interest **SERM.**
of any man should be put to the arbitrement of **XX.**
chance; that he should be defamed, or damnified,
not for a certain fault, but from an unhappy lot? As
things viewed at a distance appear much different in
bigness, shape, and colour, from what they are in
nature and reality; so if we do not look nearly and
narrowly, we shall greatly misapprehend the nature,
the degrees, the right characters of things and of
persons: then be our pretence to judge never so fair,
yet our proceeding is unjust; then if we do unduly
invade the place, it will be a great aggravation of our
misdemeanour: if of our own head and pleasure we
will constitute ourselves judges, yet at least we should
act the judge's part, in patiently attending to, and
heedfully sifting the cause: if we have not a stomach
to hear, if we will not afford the care to mind what
may be alleged in favour of the party concerned; if
we cannot or will not scan every point and circum-
stance which may serve to acquit him, or to excuse
and extenuate his guilt, why do we undertake to be
his judges? why do we engage ourselves into the
commission of so palpable injustice; yea, of so dis-
graceful folly? for, *He that answereth a matter before* **Prov. xviii.**
he heareth it, it is, saith the Wise Man, *a folly and* **13.**
shame unto him. This caution excludeth rash judg-
ment, from which if men would abstain, there would
be little censuring: for nothing is more ordinary,
than for men to do like those of whom St. Jude
saith, "Ὅσα οὐκ οἶδασι βλασφημοῦσι, *they rail at what* **Jude 10.**
they know not; they censure persons with whom
they are not thoroughly acquainted, they condemn
actions whereof they do not clearly ken the reasons;
they little weigh the causes and circumstances which

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SERM. XX. urge or force men to do things; they stand at great distance, and yet with great assurance and peremptoriness determine how things are, as if they did see through them, and knew them most exactly.

4. A judge should never pronounce final sentence, but *ex allegatis et probatis*, upon good grounds, after certain proof, and upon full conviction. Not any slight conjecture, or thin surmise; any idle report, or weak pretence, is sufficient to ground a condemnation upon; the case should be irrefragably clear and sure before we determine on the worst

John vii. 24. side^a: *Judge not*, saith our Lord, *according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* The Jews, seeing our Lord cure an infirm person upon the sabbath day, presently upon that semblance condemned him of violating the Law; not considering either the sense of the Law, or the nature of his performance; and this he termeth unrighteous judgment. Every accusation should be deemed null, until, both as to matter of fact, and in point of right, it be firmly proved true^b; it sufficeth not to presume it may be so; to say, it seemeth thus, doth not sound like the voice of a judge; otherwise seeing there never is wanting some colour of accusation, every action being liable to some suspicion, or sinister construction, no innocence could be secure, no person could escape condemnation; the reputation and interest of all men living would continually stand exposed to inevitable danger. It is a rule of equity and huma-

^a ——— μὴ πρότερον τὰς ψήφους ἐκφέρειν, πρὶν ἂν ἐναργεῖς ἀποδείξαι γένωται. Chrys. in Gen. Hom. 42.

^b Quod probari non potest, mihi infectum est. Bern.

De occultis cordis alieni temere judicare iniquum est, et cum cujus non videntur opera nisi bona, peccatum est ex suspitione reprehendere. Joh. iii. 1. Ep. 1.



nity, built upon plain reason, that rather a nocent SERM.
person should be permitted to escape, than an inno- XX.
cent should be constrained to suffer: for the impu-
nity of the one is but an inconvenience, the suffering
of the other is wrong; the punishment of the guilty
yieldeth only a remote probable benefit; the afflic-
tion of the blameless involveth a near certain mis-
chief: wherefore it is more prudent and more right-
eous to absolve a man, of whose guilt there are pro-
bable arguments, than to condemn any man upon
bare suspicions. And remarkable it is how God in
the Law did prescribe the manner of trial and judg-
ment, even in the highest case, and most nearly
touching himself, that of *idolatry*; *If*, saith the Law,
Deut. xvii. 4. *it be told thee, and thou hast heard
of it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true,
and the thing certain, that such an abomination is
wrought in Israel; then shalt thou bring forth that
man, or that woman, and shalt stone them.* See
what great caution is prescribed, what pregnant evi-
dence is required in such cases; it is not enough
that it be reported, or come to our ear; diligent in-
quiry must be made, it must be found true, it must
appear certain, before we may proceed to condemn,
or execute; it is indeed not fair judgment, but mere
calumny, to condemn a man before he doth, by suffi-
cient proof, appear guilty.

If this rule were regarded, how many censures
would be prevented! For do not men catch at any
shadow of a fault? Are they not ready upon the
least presumption to condemn their neighbour?
Doth not any, even the weakest and vainest testi-
mony, any wandering hearsay, or vulgar rumour,
serve to ground the most heavy sentences?

SERM. 5. From hence is plainly consequent, that there
 XX. are divers causes wholly exempted from our judgment, and which in no case we must pretend to meddle with; such as are the secret thoughts, affections, and purposes of men, not expressed by plain words, nor declared by overt acts; for a capacity of judging doth ever suppose a power of cognizance; and it being impossible for us to reach the knowledge of those things, we cannot therefore pretend to judge of them. As it is the property of God to search the hearts and try the reins, so it is his prerogative to judge concerning the secret motions in them; the which we attempting to do, no less vainly and foolishly, than presumptuously and profanely, do encroach upon.

This point also being regarded, would prevent innumerable rash judgments; for men commonly do no less dive into the thoughts, and reprehend the inward dispositions and designs of their neighbour, than they do his most apparent and avowed actions; it is almost as ordinary to blame men for the invisible workings of their mind, as for their most visible deportment in conversation.

6. Hence also it is not commonly allowable to judge concerning the state, either present or final, of our neighbour in regard to God; so as to take him for a wicked man, or to denounce reprobation upon him: for the state of men is not so much determined by single actions, as by a body of practice, or by a long course and tenor of life, compounded and complicated of actions in number and kind unconceivably various: it dependeth not only upon external visible behaviour, but upon the practice of close retirements, and occult motions of soul; upon the results

Πολλὰ δὲ
 σκεπῆται,
 καὶ καθ' ἑν,
 πρὶν ἄλλου
 καταγνώσει
 δυσίβριαν.
 Greg. Naz.
 Or. 26.

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of natural temper, upon the influence of fortuitous
circumstances; upon many things indiscernible, in-
scrutable, and unaccountable to us; the which God
alone can perceive and estimate throughly: *God seeth*
not, as he did himself tell Samuel, *as man seeth*;
for man looketh on the outward appearance, but
God looketh on the heart: he searcheth our hearts,
and understandeth our thoughts afar off: he com-
passeth our path, and is acquainted with all our
ways: he weigheth our spirits; he knoweth our
frame; he numbereth our steps; he scanneth our
lesigns, and poiseth all our circumstances exactly;
he doth penetrate and consider many things tran-
scending our reach, upon which the true worth of
persons and real merit of actions do depend: he
therefore only can well judge of men's state. As a
specious outside doth often cover inward hollowness
and foulness, so under an unpromising appearance
much solidity and sincerity of goodness may lodge;
a dirty ground doth often contain good seeds within
it: our judgment therefore in such cases is likely, at
least in degree, to be fallacious and unjust; and
therefore it is fit to supersede it, according to the
advice and discourse of St. Paul; *He that judgeth*
me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before
the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring
to light the hidden things of darkness, and make
manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall
every man have praise (that is, a right estimate of
his person and deeds) *from God.*

If this were duly considered, many hard thoughts
and many harsh words would be spared; men would
not be so apt to damn those whom they have no
skill to try.

SERM.
XX.

Ps. cxxxix.

6.

1 Sam. xvi.

7.

Isa. xi. 3.

Ps. cxxxix.

2, 3.

Prov. xvi. 2.

1 Sam. ii. 3.

Ps. ciii. 14.

Job xiv. 16.

1 Cor. iv. 5.

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SERM. 7. Further: a judge should not undertake to proceed against any man, without warning and citing
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him to appear, or without affording him competent liberty and opportunity to defend and justify himself. Judgment should not be administered clancularly, in dark corners, but in open court: not suspiciously, in a muttering or whispering way; but frankly, with a clear and audible voice; not upon surprise, but with allowance of leisure and advice, that the party may be able to apprehend his case and manage his plea for his best defence: for it may justly be presumed, that as he is most concerned, so he is best acquainted with his own proceedings, and may allege reasons for them, which no man can so well perceive as himself; it is therefore fit that he should be heard before he is condemned, that he may not suffer wrong; at least that he may be convinced that he doth not, and that our proceeding may be cleared from misprision; that also the world may be satisfied of justice being done; and that likewise false accusers may be liable to due shame and chastisement. The manner of proceeding used by the Romans, and reported by Festus in St. Paul's case, was full of reason and equity: *It is not, said that governor, the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he, which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him.* Otherwise indeed any innocence may easily be oppressed irrecoverably, without any defence, and consequently without any means of evasion or redress^c. We should never yield both ears

Acts xxv.
16.

^c Χρή τοὺς ἐνόμους δικάζοντας τῷ κατηγορουμένῳ θατέραν ταῖν ἀκοαῖν ἀπεραῖαν φυλάξαι, &c. Theod. Ep. 91.

to the accuser, but reserve one for the accused^d. The end of justice, we may consider, is not to condemn, nor to work mischief to any one, but rather, so far as may be, to acquit and prevent evil to all; at least it aimeth to clear the truth, and state the case indifferently; wherefore it is just, that all advantage that well can be, should be afforded to the obnoxious party for his justification and deliverance; at least that he be not denied equal advantage with his prosecutors; humanity would allow him some favour; the most rigorous justice cannot refuse him leave to contest his cause upon equal terms: wherefore it is fit that he should be acquainted with his case, that competent time and means should be afforded him to prepare for his defence, that his plea should receive, if not a favourable, yet a free audience: the contrary practice is indeed rather backbiting, whispering, supplanting, or sycophantry, than fair and lawful judging.

The observation of this rule would also cut off many censures; for seldom it is that our censurers do charge men to their faces, but rather take all possible care, that what they say may never come to the ears of those whom they accuse; they fear nothing more than being confronted and detected; they decline the shame and the requital due to their sycophantic practice; which is a manifest argument of their foul dealing; and they no less in reality do

^d God himself, as some of the Fathers observe, hath shewed us an example of this equity, *Descendam igitur et videbo, &c.* Gen. xviii. 21.

Καίτοι σαφῶς ἦδει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκείνων τὴν ποτηρίαν. Ἄλλ' ὅμως ἔφη καταβᾶς θύομαι, διδάσκων ἡμᾶς ἀναμένειν τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν πείραν. Theod. Ep. 119. P. Pelagius ad Eliam.

SERM. thence condemn themselves than they would seem
 XX. to condemn others.

8. Moreover, a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the settled rules of judgment, so as never to condemn any man for acting that which is enjoined, or approved, or permitted by them; he must not pronounce according to his private fancy, or particular affection, but according to the standing laws: which as they are the only certain rules of moral action, the only grounds of obligation, the only standards of guilt and innocence; so in reason they should be the sole measures of judging: he that proceedeth otherwise is an arbitrary and a slippery judge; he encroacheth upon the right and liberty of those with whom he meddleth, pronouncing them guilty whom God and reason do proclaim blameless. This is that which St. Paul doth reprove in the 14th to the Romans, and elsewhere. The case was this: some were of opinion, that abstaining from some kinds of meat, and observing some festival times, were matters of duty required by God; others thought it free to eat any thing, and to use any times alike: these, according to such their private opinions, did censure the practices of each other; one party condemned the other as transgressing duty, the other contemned them as weak in judgment: but the apostle reproveth both as irregular in their behaviour, in taxing one another for matters which on both hands were indifferent; the divine Law having clearly neither enjoined those observances, nor prohibited them; so that each man had a liberty to do, or to abstain, as he thought good, or most agreeable to his duty, and conducive to his salvation. So is it culpable in us to blame any

Rom. xiv.
 1 Cor. viii.
 8.
 Col. ii. 16.

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man for doing that which is not repugnant to God's SERM.
express command, or to the plain dictates of rea- XX.
son.

The observing this condition would smother many censures: for do we not commonly reprehend our neighbours for practices wholly blameless, perhaps commendable? Do we not sometimes grievously reproach them for not complying with our desires, for not serving our interests, for not jumping with our humours, for not dancing after our pipe; for dissenting from us in any conceit, although dubious or false; for discosting from our practice, although bad or inconvenient? Say we not ordinarily, he is morose, peevish, singular, rude, because he would not *run with us into the same excess of riot*; he is weak, nice, superstitious, because he constantly and strictly adhereth to his duty; he is negligent, loose, profane, because he useth his liberty in some matters indifferent? Bar such matters of obloquy, into how narrow a compass would it be restrained!

9. Hence further it is to be supposed, that a judge should be a person of good knowledge and ability; well versed and skilful in the laws concerning matters under debate; endued with good mea-
sure of reason, enabling him as to sift and canvass Επιστοι
κρίσι καλῶς
ἢ γνώσει,
καὶ εὐσταί
ιστοι ἀγαθῶς
matters of fact, so to compare them accurately with κρισί. A-
rist. Eth.
lib. iii.
the rules of right: for nothing is more absurd than an ignorant and unskilful judge. Men therefore of weak capacity, of mean education, of small experience, are qualified to judge in few cases, most things being placed above their reach; such never should presume to censure actions, the worth or moral quality whereof depend upon the stating and resolution of abstruse, intricate, or subtle questions.

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SERM. It is not therefore for mechanics or rustics to judge
XX. about difficulties of science, about controversies in religion, about mysteries of policy, or reasons of state; or to censure those who deal in them: in so doing they hugely trespass beyond their calling and sphere; they do strangely misbecome the bench, and will very untowardly misbehave themselves thereon; the decision of such matters is to be reserved to those, who by study and experience have attained peculiar faculties to do it respectively.

Observing this point would draw many down from their usurped seats of judicature, and stop numberless vain sentences; we should have very few judges left, if all men would be so modest and so wise as not to meddle beyond their skill and ability.

10. Again: it is proper for a judge not to make himself an accuser; not to seek for misdemeanours, not to draw more causes under his cognizance than are in course presented before him: he should rather judge as out of constraint, than of choice; rather as sorry to find a necessity, than glad to snatch an occasion of condemning offenders. So should we rather decline than seek the office of censuring our brethren, rather conniving at and concealing their faults, than being forward to expose them; absolute reason only should induce, or indispensable necessity force us thereto.

Sine dubio
in omnibus
statim ac-
cusationi-
bus hoc a-
gendum
est, ne ad
eas libenter
descendisse
videamur.
Quint. xi. 1.

This also greatly would diminish the trade of censuring; for if we should never censure without great reason or necessity, how seldom should we do it! Do we not rather affect to do it causelessly and needlessly? Do we not eagerly search after and greedily embrace all occasions to do it? Is it not a pleasant entertainment to us, to be carping and cavilling at

any body we meet, at any thing we see done? SERM. XX.
Further,

11. He that pretendeth to judge others should himself be innocent; under no indictment, and not liable to condemnation. Is it not very improper for a criminal, for one who is not only in truth and in his own conscience guilty, but who standeth actually convicted of heinous offences, to sit upon the bench, determining about the deeds and the states of others? It is the case of us all, we are all notoriously guilty of heinous crimes before God, we all do lie under the sentence of his law; we do all stand in need of pardon from our Judge, his mercy is our only hope and refuge: and shall we then pretend to be judges, or to be passing sentence on our brethren? If only those who are free and guiltless should judge, who could undertake it? There would surely be no more than there appeared then, when in the case of the woman taken in adultery our Lord propounded the like condition; *Ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ἱμῶν, he that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her:* upon which proposition the sequel was; *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst;* so infallibly should no man be allowed to judge, who were not himself void of like guilt, would every man escape censure.

12. Lastly: it is the property of a good judge to proceed with great moderation, equity, candour, and mildness; as a general friend, a friend to justice, to the public, to mankind, to the party impeached. As a friend to justice, he should be careful that the defendant receive no wrong in him

Cum ipse
sis reus, in
alterum au-
des ferre
sententi-
am? Opt. 2.

Ps. cxliii. 2.

John viii.
7, 9.

SERM. credit or interest ; as a lover of the public, he should
XX. wish that no offences or scandals be found ; out of
 humanity he should desire that no man may incur
 the blemish of guilt, or pain of suffering ; he should
 tender the party's case as compassionate, and desire
 that he may be delivered from the evil threatening
 him : this should render him willing to acquit and
 free the party, apt to apprehend and interpret all
 things favourably, ready to excuse and mollify the
 business what he can ; far from picking faults out of
 obscure surmises or slender pretences, from aggravat-
 ing the miscarriages that are detected, from stretch-
 ing the blame further than it will reach of itself, or
 making the case worse than it needs must be, from
 pronouncing a harsh or heavy sentence thereon.
 He should always be of council to the defendant,
 pleading his cause so far as truth and equity will
 permit ; putting himself in his case, and thence no-
 wise dealing with him more rigorously than he, ac-
 cording to impartial judgment, should in the like
 case deem it equal that himself should be dealt with :
 in fine, however the matter in the result appear to
 stand, he should avoid rigour and extremity, he
 should exercise clemency and mercy.

If this course were observed, innumerable causes,
 which now are severely judged, would never be
 mentioned, or come under trial, but would presently
 be cast out ; many would soon, after small discus-
 sion, be voided ; few would pass that extremity of
 censure, which now, by the cruel asperity of men,
 they are forced to undergo : for do we not accuse
 men for things that are no faults ? Do we not exag-
 gerate the guilt of petty faults ? Do we not insult
 over great miscarriages with too unmerciful se-

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verity, as if they were incorrigible and unpardon-
able? SERM.
XX.

Seeing then few of us, according to those reasonable qualifications and conditions, are capable of being judges; seeing, if those equal rules were observed, most censures would be discarded; seeing hard it is for any man, either warrantably to undertake, or uprightly to discharge this office; great reason there is for this precept, most fit it is that we should be forbidden to judge.

So much for the part explicative and directive; now for the persuasive; and for inducing us to eschew this practice, let us briefly declare the pravity and vanity of it; the performing which will, I suppose, be sufficient to dissuade and deter us from it. Be pleased only first to note, that some considerations which we shall propound will be applicable to some kind of bad censure, some to another, according to the several defects and incapacities we have to judge lawfully, upon the grounds already touched.

1. Censuring is an impious practice in regard to God.

By taking upon ourselves to judge unduly, without authority, or beyond it, we do invade God's office, setting up ourselves as judges in his room; we usurp his right, exercising jurisdiction over his subjects, without order and license from him: it is St. Paul's argument, *Who art thou that judgest another's servant?* Rom. xiv. 4. that is, how intolerably bold and arrogant, how sacrilegiously injurious and profane art thou, to climb up into God's tribunal, and thence to pronounce doom upon his subjects?

By rash judgment in matters not subject to our

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SERM. cognizance, (as when we pronounce concerning the
XX. secret thoughts and intentions of men,) we proudly
and perversely do arrogate to ourselves the incommu-
nicable perfections of God, who alone can know such
things, and determine rightly in such cases; who
therefore hath reserved them to himself, commanding
1 Cor. iv. 5. *us to judge nothing before the time, until the Lord
come.*

By passing sentence about the state of our neigh-
bour, we do anticipate God's judgment, and by pre-
judging strive to frustrate it. We take upon us to
*purge his floor, to sever the chaff from the corn, and
the tares from the wheat, to discriminate the goats
from the sheep*^c; which to perform will be the work
of God's infinite wisdom and justice at *the great
day.*

By censuring our brethren causelessly, for not
complying with our conceits, humours, or prac-
tices, we lay hold upon and appropriate to ourselves
God's legislative power; we subject his law to our
fancy and pleasure; we in effect condemn his law of
error and imperfection; we do at least make our-
selves sharers with him in the enacting laws, and
Jam. iv. 11. dispensing justice. *He, saith St. James, that speak-
eth against his brother, and judgeth his brother,
speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law; that
is, he opprobriously doth imply the law to be defec-*

^c Matt. iii. 12, 13. xxv. 32. *Quantus arrogantiae tumor est, quanta humilitatis ac lenitatis oblivio, arrogantiae suae quanta jactatio, ut quis aut audeat aut facere se posse credat, quod nec apostolis concessit Dominus, ut zizania a frumento putet se posse discernere, aut quasi ipsi paleam auferre, et aream purgare concessum sit, paleas conetur a tritico separare? Cypr. Ep. 52.*

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tive, until he doth complete or correct it; making it a guilt not to satisfy his will or conceit, beside the plain intent of the law; the dispensation of justice is not sufficient, unless he partake therein, taxing whom and why he pleaseth; God without him is not a perfect lawgiver or judge.

We are also very ingrateful in not being favourable towards our brethren in judgment; when as God is in his judgment so benign, patient, and merciful toward us, who *is not extreme to mark what we do amiss*; is not forward to seek or find faults, but rather *waiteth to be gracious, hideth his face from our sins, and passeth by our transgressions*; doth not aggravate our offences, but rather doth excuse them, *remembering that we are flesh*; is not glad of occasion to punish, but *delighteth in mercy, and doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men*; is not severe, but *punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve, and in his wrath remembereth mercy*. And are we not impious if we do so ill requite him, and so little resemble him, in being rigorous and harsh toward our brethren, when they offend, or seem to do so?

In fine, censuring is impious, as involving the violation of those great commandments, of exercising, in all our demeanour and dealing, humility, meekness, pity, and mercy toward our brethren; of pursuing and promoting peace among them.

2. Censuring, in respect to our neighbour, is an unjust practice. It is unjust to meddle in affairs with which we have nothing to do; to draw those persons under our jurisdiction who are not subject to it, but are liable to render their account at another bar; to punish those in their reputation or interest, over

SERM.
XX.

Ps. cxxx. 3.

Isa. xxx. 18.

Psal. li. 9.

Mic. vii. 18.

Ps. lxxviii.

39. ciii. 14.

Mic. vii. 18.

Lam. iii. 33.

Ezra ix. 13.

Hab. iii. 2.

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SERM. whom we have no just authority, *who have their*
XX. *own master, to whom they must stand or fall.*

It is most unjust to judge any man without competent means of knowing, or skill to determine his case; to condemn him without diligent trial, without certain proof, without full conviction of his fault; to punish him without just cause, or beyond due measure.

It is very unjust to usurp an interest in the goods which are to our neighbour most proper and dear, his credit and concerns depend thereon, disposing of them as we please, to his disadvantage and prejudice.

It is also very unjust, when as we do need the candid judgment, the forbearance and pardon of others for many things faulty and offensive that we commit, to refuse the like to others^f.

3. Censuring is also a very uncharitable practice, and so contrary to the principal duty of our religion: it is so eminently in all cases wherein it is unjust; for charity doth virtually contain justice, and transcendeth it; it is so peculiarly whenever it is harsh or rigorous, when it is affected, when it is needless or unprofitable; for charity disposeth us to be gentle, meek, patient, and merciful in all our dealings; it engages us to hide and smother, to diminish and excuse, to pass by and pardon offences: *Charity seeketh no evil, it covereth all things, it beareth all things; it tendereth our neighbour's good and advantage of all kinds, (his credit, his interest, his convenience, and*

¹ Cor. xiii.
5, 7.

^f —æquum est

Peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus.

Hor. Serm. i. 3.

Det ille veniam facile, cui venia est opus. *Sen. Tr.*

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pleasure;) it therefore will inflict no more evil than reason and necessity shall indispensably require^s. SERM.
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A censurer is indeed unjust and uncharitable, not only toward those whom he censureth, but also toward those into whom thereby he doth infuse ill opinion, and ill will toward their neighbour; he is guilty of their injustice and uncharitableness, a mischief more irreparable than his own.

4. Censuring is a very foolish and vain practice in manifold respects; as arguing great ignorance and inconsiderateness, as producing grievous inconveniences and mischiefs, especially to the practiser of it. Est proprium stultitiae aliorum vitia cernere, oblivisci suorum.
Cic. Tusc. 1.

It signifieth that we do not well understand or not well consider the natural impotency and frailty of mankind; how liable others are to mistake and slip, and how prone we ourselves are thereto; how, as St. James saith, *in many things we offend all*; Jam. iii. 2. did we observe, or would weigh this, we should not be so forward to censure, or so vehement and bitter in it; we should see failing and tripping in many things to be a common case, rather demanding commiseration than censure.

It implieth also, that we little consider how our escaping any faults, which our neighbour slippeth into, is nowise imputable to any worth or virtue in us, so much as the good providence and merciful grace of God, guarding or rescuing us from them; if we did apprehend and reflect on this, it would appear our duty rather to bless God for our being protected from miscarriages, than censoriously to insult over those who

^s Οὕτως ἔχω ἐν τοῖς ἀμφιβόλοις, νεύειν χρῆναι πρὸς τὸ φιλόανθρωπον, καὶ ἀπογινώσκειν μᾶλλον, ἢ καταγινώσκειν τῶν ἰκατιῶν. Naz. Or. 21.

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SERM. seem to fall into them. It signifieth we have no
XX. sight or sense of our own defects; for did we clearly
see, did we humbly resent them, that would damp
our heat and earnestness to censure. It declares a
fond self-conceit, that we deem ourselves superior to
our neighbour in wisdom, and less obnoxious to
blame, and therefore fit to be his judges; whereas,
according to a sober esteem of ourselves, we should
appear more fit to stand at the bar than to sit upon
the bench; and should thence more dread the one
than affect the other.

It sheweth likewise, that we do not rightly conceive the nature, or worthily esteem the consequences of this practice: we know not, or regard not, the value of our neighbour's reputation, which by censure we do mean to ruin or impair: we perhaps by no means would rob him of his substance, or of his life; yet we scruple not by grievous censure to bereave him of his good name; which he, the best prizer of his own goods, may esteem beyond his estate or his life itself: we think it nothing, or a slight matter to carp at him; but he feeleth it very painful, and deeply resenteth it.

It argueth in us an untamed fierceness of mind and discomposedness of passion, which can never consist or cohabit with wisdom; for a well-ordered, calm, and free mind will be slow in conceiving offence or dislike, moderate in estimating things, reserved in expressing its sentiments, not easily transported into extremity or excess; it consequently hardly will suffer a man to break forth into rash or harsh censure^h. So many signs and argu-

^h Prov. xii. 16. A fool's wrath is presently known; but a prudent man covereth shame.

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ments of incogitancy and blindness this practice doth involve. SERM.
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5. Furthermore, this practice will produce many great inconveniences and mischiefs to us.

1. We do thereby provoke, and in a sort authorize others to requite us in the same kindⁱ: for nothing more doth excite the indignation, doth inflame the anger, doth engender the hatred of men toward us, than being pragmatical in finding fault, and hasty to censure their doings causelessly or immoderately; nothing seeming to them a more certain argument that we bear them ill-will, or do contemn them; and if we so vex them, they will in requital be as ready, by finding or making faults in us, to vex and trouble us; it engageth their care, and quickeneth their industry, and whetteth their invention to observe or devise matter of recrimination. Men think it not only lawful, but even needful for them, in their own defence, to disparage the censurer, that his judgment may have the less weight to their prejudice: so that it will infallibly come upon us, as our Lord warneth, using it as an argument to dissuade us from this practice, that, *with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.* Matt. vii. 2.
Luke vi.
37, 38. Men take it for allowable to retaliate in this way to the height, and stoutly to load the censorious man with censure.

2. We do by this practice not only expose ourselves to censure, but implicitly, and according to Vid. Chrys.
in Matt.
Or. 36.
p. 249.

Prov. xxix. 11. A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it till afterwards.

ⁱ —at tibi contra

Evenit, inquirant vitia ut tua rursus et illi.

Hor. Serm. i. 3.

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SERM. ready consequence, do pass it upon ourselves, seeing
XX. we seldom, in kind or equivalently, are ourselves

clear of that which we charge upon others ; with our own weapon of sharp censure, we through another's side do imprudently wound ourselves ; and often, as

2 Sam. xii. David did in his parley with Nathan, adjudge ourselves to capital punishment ; so that to any censorious person it may be said, in St. Paul's words;

Rom. ii. 1. *Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*

3. We do by censuring others aggravate our own faults, and deprive them of excuse, and render ourselves incapable of mercy and pardon : ^k for of all men, he that is forward and prone to censure, who is rigorous and severe in judging others, deserveth

Rom. ii. 1, 3. no favour, nor can reasonably pretend thereto. ^l *Inexcusable, saith St. Paul, art thou, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest ; for, thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ?* and, *Μὴ στενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων. Do*

Jam. v. 9. ii. 13. *not, saith St. James, moanfully complain one against another, lest you be condemned ; and, He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy, in his judgment, saith the same apostle^m. Which pas-*

^k Ὁ πικρῶς τὰ ἀλλότρια ἐξετάζων ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἑαυτὸν πλημμελήμασιν οὐδεμιᾶς ἀπολαύσεται συγγνώμης ποτέ. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. γ'.

^l ——— ἀνθρώπων οἱ πλείστοι βραδεῖς μὲν εἰσιν τῶν ἰδίων κριταί, ταχεῖς δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐξετασταί. Naz. Or. 26.

Οὕτω τῶν μὲν ἐτέροις ἀμαρτανομένων πικροὶ καθήμεθα δικασταί, τὰς δὲ ἑαυτῶν δοκοῦς παρορῶμεν. Chrys. ad Demet. tom. vi. Or. 52.

^m Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως τῶν πεπλημμελημένων ἡμῶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς σῆς περὶ ἐτέρων οἴσει τὴν ψῆφον ὁ Θεός. Chrys. ibid.

ⁿ Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ φιλόανθρωπος, καὶ ἡμερος, καὶ συγγνωμονικὸς ὑποτέμνεται τῶν

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sages imply, that to be unmerciful in this kind, will expose us to the severity of judgment in regard to our offences ; or, that if we deal harshly with our brethren now, God will then proceed the more severely toward us, when our great cause doth come under trial.

SERM.
XX.

4. Indeed censuring others is an argument that we do little mind our own case, or consider to what a dreadful judgment we do stand obnoxious : did we think of that, we should see cause rather to employ our leisure and care in stating our own accounts, than in examining those of others ; more advisable it would appear to mind our own case, than to busy ourselves in canvassing and determining the state of our neighbour, finding what great need our actions will have in that day of favourable construction and merciful allowance, we should become candid and mild in reflecting upon the actions of others ; we should not be forward to carp at any thing, we should scarce have the heart to condemn any man ; this St. Paul seemeth to imply, when he thus argueth : *Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ* : that is, why do any of us judge others, seeing we must all be judged ourselves ? It is not seemly, it is not expedient for those, who soon must be arraigned, and put to answer for themselves, to be busy in questioning and prejudging others ; but rather to spend their care and pains in preparing for their own account.

Rom. xiv.
10.

τὰ ἑαυτοὺς
ἐτιμᾶζομεν
καὶ οὐδὲν
ἐρωτοῦμεν πα-
ρ᾽ ἑαυτῶν.

Chrys. in 2
Tim. Or. 2.

5. Nothing indeed more causeth us to neglect our

πλείονα τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ὄγκον, οὕτως ὁ πικρὸς, καὶ ὠμὸς, καὶ ἀπαραίτητος πολὺ ταῖς εἰκείναις ἀμαρτήμασι προστίθησι μέγεθος. Ibid.

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SERM. own case, nothing more engageth us to leave our
 XX. own faults unobserved and uncorrected, than this
 humourⁿ. It is easy to observe, that as they who
 are most sparing and gentle in censure are usually
 most exempt from blame, (for that carefully reflect-
 ing upon their own infirmities and defects, spending
 their heat and activity of spirit upon amending their
 own errors and faults, they have less time, less con-
 cernment, less mind to search out and scan the im-
 perfections and misdemeanours of others; they do
 find less reason also, and therefore have less will to
 be fierce or severe toward them,) so the most censo-
 rious are usually the most stupid in discerning, and
 most careless in retrenching their own faults. And
 needs it must be so, for the actions of other men de-
 vour their leisure, take up the intention of their
 spirits, employ the keenness of their passions upon
 them, so that they cannot and will not attend to
 themselves; they are so much abroad, they are so
 very busy elsewhere, that they little know or care
 what is done at home; while they are *spying* and
 pulling out *motes from their brother's eye*, they *con-*
sider not the beam that is in their own eye, although
 never so gross and obvious^o.

Vid. Chrys.
 Tom. ii. Or.
 42. Sen. de
 Vit. B. 27.
 Ἐραδὸν οὖν ἡ-
 πόνοισιν κα-
 κοῦ τὸ πρὸς
 κακίαν δου-
 κίησιν.
 Naz. Orat.
 8.

Matt. vii.
 3, 4.

ⁿ Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπον κατηγοροῦντα καὶ τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους πολυπραγμο-
 νοῦντα βίους τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιμεληθῆναι ποτε ζῶης. Τῆς γὰρ σπουδῆς ἀπάσης
 αὐτῶ εἰς τὴν ἑτέραν πολυπραγμοσύνην ἀναλισκομένης, ἀνάγκη τὰ αὐτοῦ
 πάντα ἀπλῶς κεῖσθαι καὶ ἡμελημένως. Chrys. Ἄνθρ. γ'.

^o Τὸ κακίας ἐλεύθερον, καὶ ὑφορᾶσθαι κακίαν ἀλλότερον. Naz. Ep. 27.
 Ὁ μὲν γὰρ κακὸς τάχιστα ἂν καταγοῖη καὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὁ ἀγαθὸς δὲ οὐδέ
 τοῦ κακοῦ βραδίως. Naz. Orat. 21.

Ego mi ignosco, Mænius inquit,
 Stultus et improbus hic amor est, dignusque notari.
 Hor. Serm. l. 3.

6. Hence, I say, it is, that commonly the best men SERM.
are the most candid and gentle, and they are most XX.
apt to blame others who deserve worse themselves;
that the sharpest tongues and foulest lives do usually
go together; that they who are the strictest judges
of their own are the fairest interpreters of other
men's actions; and they who will least pardon
others do most excuse themselves; that they who
are strangely acute in descrying other men's faults
are stark blind in discerning their own. Our Sa-
viour therefore chargeth such persons with hypo-
crisy; *Thou hypocrite; first cast the beam out of
thine own eye*; implying, that they do but falsely
pretend a respect for goodness and zeal against sin,
seeing in their own practice they indulge it; that it
is indeed rather pride, peevishness, idleness, spleen,
or selfish design that acteth them.

7. In fine, the censorious humour, as it argueth
ill nature to be predominant, (a vulturous nature,
which easily smelleth out, and hastily flieth toward,
and greedily feedeth on carrion,) as it signifieth bad
conscience; for he that knoweth evil of himself is
most prone to suspect, and most quick to pronounce
ill concerning others, so it breedeth and fostereth
such ill dispositions; it debaucheth the minds of
men, rendering them dim and doltish in apprehend-
ing their own faults, negligent and heedless in regard
to their own hearts and ways; apt to please and
comfort themselves in the evils, real or imaginary,
of their neighbours; which to do is a very barba-
rous and brutish practice.

These considerations may, I hope, suffice to per-
suade the observance of this precept, by the help

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SERM. of God's grace, to which I commend you, and con-
XX. clude.

Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXI.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business. Chrysa. in
2 Cor. Or.

AS frequently between neighbouring states there arise dissensions and contests about the just limits of their territories; so doth it frequently happen between virtue and vice, right and wrong, duty and miscarriage in practice; for although the extreme agrees, and even the middle regions of these things are very distant, yet the borders of them do lie very close together, and are in a manner contiguous; a certain ridge of separation running between them, which commonly, being very narrow, thin, and obscure, it is not easy to discern. So it particularly sheweth out in the matter before us, wherein our text is concerned. Duty and offence do nearly confine, and almost indiscernibly differ one from the other; for there are about this case precepts which seem to contradict; there are duties appearing to thwart one another.

St. Paul here biddeth us to be studious or ambitious of quiet; otherwhere he enjoineth us to be earnestly active, (to be *σπουδῇ μὴ ἄκηροί*, *not slothful* Rom. xii. *in business* :) here he would have us to mind our ^{11.}

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SERM. own affairs; otherwhere he prescribeth, that we
 XXI. should not look every man to his own things, but
 Phil. ii. 4. every man also to the things of others.

According to the general drift of scripture, and the tenor of our religion, we are in charity obliged to concern ourselves heartily for the good of our neighbour, and to strive earnestly in promoting it; we are enjoined so far to interpose and meddle in the affairs of others, as to watch over them for their good; to instruct and advise them, to admonish and excite them, to check and reprove them upon occasion; to offer and yield them succour, to compose differences between them; to promote their edification and peace: *Let us*, saith the apostle to the Hebrews, *consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works.* *Let us*, saith St. Paul to the Romans, *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another; and, Exhort yourselves together, and edify one another;—warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak*, saith he to the Thessalonians in this Epistle.

Κατανοῶμεν
 ἀλλήλους.
 Heb. x. 24.
 Rom. xiv.
 19. xv. 2.
 1 Thess. v.
 11, 14.

To be zealous and earnest in the maintenance and propagation of truth, of virtue, of piety, is a duty incumbent on us, which implieth care and activity concerning others; that we offer to instruct them; that we enter into contest with them; that we examine their words and actions; that we presume to tax and oppose them.

In fine; our religion doth seem by the bands of mutual relation, and obligations of charity, so to unite us together, so to endear us to one another, and to all men, that all things belonging to our brethren do nearly touch us, and should answerably affect us; so

Tit. i. 11.

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that by intermeddling with any thing relating to their welfare, we can hardly be said to meddle with what doth not concern us. SERM.
XXI.

The condition of things also may seem to require, that we so intermeddle; for the duties and affairs of men are so entangled or interwoven, that we can hardly prosecute any concernments of our own, without being engaged in the matters of others: in discharging all offices of society, in pursuance of any traffic or commerce, in all intercourse and conversation, while we transact our own business, we cannot avoid the furthering or obstructing the business of others, who are engaged in the same or contrary designs. Society doth subsist by combinations of care and pain, regarding common interests, so that it seemeth impossible so to mind our own business, as not to meddle with the business of others.

Yet notwithstanding St. Paul enjoineth us so to affect quiet, as simply to mind our own business, or not to be meddlesome in the concernments of others; for that *doing our own business* is meant exclusively to meddling with the affairs of others, is plain enough by the importance of *τὰ ἴδια*, which is emphatical, and signifieth only our own, or our proper business; and because it is joined with *being quiet*, which respecteth others, and importeth not stirring beyond our own bounds; to be so meddlesome, being also a practice expressly condemned by St. Peter, in that prohibition, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a malefactor, or as a busybody in other men's matters*: where pragmatikness is, we see, not only forbidden, but is coupled with the most heinous offences. 1 Pet. iv. 15.

How then shall we reconcile these things? How

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SERM. shall we in the case sever between the bounds of
XXI. duty and blame? It is indeed somewhat difficult to do it precisely, and with distinctions which shall reach all cases. But somewhat I shall endeavour toward it, by propounding some rules and directions, which should commonly be observed in our dealing and intercourse with others: but first let us a little reflect upon the terms in which the precept is couched.

Study to be quiet. *Study*; the word is φιλοτιμῆσθαι, which signifieth to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with the like vehemency of desire and care, as men are wont to pursue reputation, dignity, and power, the objects of ambition: the expression containeth a remarkable emphasis, or a grave acumen; for whereas ambition commonly doth prompt men to be restlessly busy, and engageth them in the concerns proper to others, St. Paul biddeth them to be ambitious the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abstinence from other affairs beside their own.

To be quiet: This doth signify not a physical, but a moral rest; not a total forbearance of action; not a fastidious or drowsy listlessness to do any thing; not a senseless indifferency concerning the matters of others; not an absolute sequestering ourselves from common affairs: this is not quiet or tranquillity, the τὸ ἡσυχάζειν here, but a naughty sloth, stupidity, or savageness: the quiet here meant is opposed to disorderly motion, to turbulency, to contention, to pragmatical curiosity, to all such exorbitant behaviour, whereby the right of others is infringed, their peace disturbed, their just interest or welfare anywise prejudiced. This quiet is a calm, steady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and measures pre-

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scribed by reason, justice and charity, modesty and **SERM.**
sobriety: such a motion as the heavenly bodies do **XXI.**
keep, which so move that they seem ever to stand
still, and never disturb one another: in fine, what a
quiet is meant, the subsequent words and the context
do shew: it followeth,

And *πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια*, *to do our own business*, or to
act things proper and pertinent to us; things which
suit to our condition, our station, our vocation;
whereby we may discharge our own duties, and
supply our own needs; may work benefit to others,
or however avoid being anywise burdensome or
troublesome to them; an instance of which practice
is immediately subjoined; *to work with our own* ^{2 Thess. iif.}
hands—that we may have lack of nothing; ^{12.} in an-
other place St. Paul calleth it *μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργάζεσθαι*,
to work with quiet, opposing it to *περιεργάζεσθαι*, being
over-busy, or pragmatically curious, and to walking
disorderly; that is, beyond the bounds of our call-
ing, or the rules of our duty; so as to encroach upon
the rights, or molest the quiet of others.

The words then, as they do imply an obligation
lying upon us to be industrious in our own business,
so they chiefly design to prohibit our meddling with
the concernments of others; but how to settle the
limits between this quiet minding our own business,
and a culpable neglect of the duties concerning others;
how to distinguish between meddling innocently,
from being blameably meddlesome, *hic labor, hoc
opus est*; this is that hard task which I am to un-
dertake, but cannot hope thoroughly to perform.
However, the method toward it, which I shall ob-
serve, is this: First, I shall touch some cases, in
which it is allowable or commendable to meddle

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SERM. with the affairs of others: then I shall propound
XXI. some general rules, according to which such meddlesomeness is commonly blameable: in the next place, I shall assign some directions proper to some chief and most obvious kinds of meddling: and lastly, offer some considerations to dissuade men from this pragmatistical humour.

1. Superiors may intermeddle with the business of their inferiors, (that is, of such as are subject to their care and charge,) in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office. Magistrates may inspect the carriage, may examine the doings, may reprehend and punish the offences of their subjects: parents may advise, rebuke, and correct their children: spiritual guides and pastors may admonish and reprove their flock. These things while, with due prudence, equity, and moderation, they perform, they do indeed *πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια*, *do their own business*; it is their proper work, to which God hath designed them, and which reason exacteth of them; they are appointed, to use St. Paul's expression, *to attend continually upon this very thing*; their proceedings therefore are not to be charged with culpable pragmatisticalness.

Rom. xiii.
6.

2. In any case, wherein the honour and interest of God is much concerned, we may interpose in vindication and maintenance of them. If any man dareth to blaspheme God's name, we may and ought to stand up in its defence; if any man disparageth religion, we should strive to clear its repute; if any man impugne any divine truth of moment, we should endeavour to assert it; if any man notoriously transgresseth God's law, we may discountenance his presumption, and reprove him for it: every man in

such cases, as God's subject, hath not only a commis- **SERM.**
sion, but an obligation; is indeed by his allegiance **XXI.**

bound to serve God, in maintaining the honour and interest of his empire: it is foul disloyalty, it is pitiful baseness to forbear meddling in such cases^a. Thus have good men, without fear or shame, defended religion and truth against the mightiest powers and most dangerous oppositions that could be: thus *stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment*, not **Ps. cvi. 30.** only checking, but avenging that heinous scandal: thus Elias maintained the true worship of God against all the corrupters of it, the kings and whole nation of Israel: thus the prophets did not forbear to tax the wicked manners of the princes, the priests, and the people in their times: thus St. John Baptist did not stick to reprove king Herod for his unlawful practice: so our Saviour censured the superstitious and hypocritical scribes, and he chastised the profaners of God's house: so, in fine, the holy apostles resolutely did assert God's truth against all the world.

3. When the public weal and safety are manifestly concerned, we may also intermeddle to support or secure them: so may we rebuke him that slandereth or reproacheth our prince; we may check him that would break the peace, we may impeach him that violateth the laws, conducing to public welfare: every man is a soldier against traitors and enemies **Tertull.**

^a Κοινόν ἐστι τὸ ἔγκλημα, δημόσιον τὸ ἀδίκημα· ἕξαστιν ἰκάστω τῶν βουλομένων κατηγορεῖν. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. α'.

Κἄν ἀκούσης τινὸς ἐν ἀμφόδοι, ἢ ἐν ἀγορᾷ μέση βλασφημοῦντος τὸν θεόν, πρόσελθε, ἐπιτίμησον· κἄν πληγὰς ἐπιθεῖναι δέη, μὴ παραιτήσῃ; ῥάπισον αὐτοῦ τὴν ὄψιν, σύντριψον αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα, ἀγίασον σοῦ τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, &c. Chrys. *ibid.*

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SERM. of his country ; every man is born with a commis-
XXI. sion to defend the public against those which plot
its ruin or harm ; every man is a party for his prince
against rebels, for the church against schismatics, for
the law against lawless transgressors, for common
peace against those who outrageously disturb it :
duty to our superiors, justice and charity to man-
kind, just regard to our own welfare, allow and
oblige us to such meddling.

4. We may also meddle for the succour of right
against palpable wrong and outrage : we may help
an honest man against a thief assaulting him ; we
may guard the life of any man against an assassin ;
we may vindicate the reputation of an innocent per-
son aspersed by a slanderous tongue ; as Moses,—*see-
ing one of his brethren suffer wrong, defended him ;
and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote
the Egyptian ;* as the penitent thief rebuked his
companion, unjustly railing upon our Saviour : the
common interest of justice and charity do not only
excuse, but commend meddling in such cases.

5. We may likewise meddle with the proceedings
of others, when our own just defence requireth it :
we may repel those who attack our safety or peace,
who invade or rifle our goods, who traduce our
good name ; we may endeavour to defeat their plots,
and to restrain their violence. This is indeed doing
our own business ; for to preserve our life with its
conveniences and comforts, to maintain our right
and just interest, to keep our honour and reputation
clear from scandal, is incumbent upon us ; we are
naturally the patrons, advocates, and guards of those
considerable goods assigned or intrusted to us by
Providence.

Acts vii. 24.

Luke xxiii.
40.

Cum mo-
deramine
inculpatae
tutelae.

6. When the life or welfare, either spiritual or SERM. temporal, of our neighbour is deeply concerned, and XXI. cannot otherwise than by our aid be supported or relieved, we may lawfully interpose to yield it: if we see him exposing his life to any great hazard, or engaging his soul into any great sin, we may in any fair way, (by admonition, advice, reproof, politic device, harmless force,) without any invitation or license, with or against his will, presume to reclaim or restrain him. We may stop him in his career to ruin or grievous mischief, we may withhold him from running into a snare, or tumbling down a precipice, or drinking in poison; we may, as St. Jude speaketh, *snatch him out of the fire*. In such cases Jude 23. we may reasonably suppose, that our neighbour, in τοῦ πυρὸς ἀφωλόθηρις. being himself, will allow us to meddle, or will not be displeas'd therewith; if he hath not his wits Invito non tribuitur quodcumque pro eo prestatur. Reg. J. Furiosis nulla voluntas est. R. J. about him, we may supply him with ours in such exigence: his present consent and approbation are not then requisite, he not being in condition to yield them; he needeth guardians, and opportunity constituteth us in that office: extreme and evident need will not only excuse the liberty we shall assume, but it obligeth us to use our power to save him; in case of neglect, that surly answer, *Am I Gen. iv. 9. my brother's keeper?* will not serve our turn^b. We may, we should, it is not only innocent, but just and laudable for us to be watchful over our neighbour's concernment and deportment, if we do

^b Μή μοι λέγε τὸ ψυχρὸν τοῦτο ῥῆμα· τί δέ μοι μέλει; οὐδὲν ἔχω κοινὸν πρὸς αὐτὸν, &c. Vid. Chrys. Ἄνθρ. 1. tom. ii. Or. 59. in Matt. Orat. 77, 78. in Joh. Or. 15. in Eph. Or. 19. Chrys. in Tit. Or. 5. in Hebr. Or. 30.

SERM. it out of pure charity, in a discreet, quiet, and gentle
 XXI. manner.

7. In fine, if any signal opportunity of doing our neighbour considerable good, especially to his soul, doth offer itself, we may lawfully, we should in charity embrace it: we may then even obtrude upon him our direction and succour; if he be so blind as not to discern our good will, so peevish as to dislike our proceeding, so ingrateful as not to thank us for our pains, yet our good intent will justify us before God, and at the bar of reason: and we have, to countenance us therein, the common example of good men, who, for doing thus, have worthily been accounted the friends and benefactors of mankind.

In these and the like cases we may, without offending, intermeddle; in doing so we may indeed truly be said to be quiet, and to do our own business; because there is no exorbitancy or disorder in such proceeding, because God's law and sound reason have appropriated these things to us, and made them our concernment. There is no business more proper or pertinent to us, than that wherein we labour to promote the glory of God, or to procure the good of men; this is the principal design of our being, and therefore employment therein cannot misbecome us: but we must however in such cases take heed that our pretences are real and well grounded, that our proceedings are regular and fair: we must not take or use such liberty maliciously; we must never, out of hypocritical pretence to the maintenance of God's honour, of public good, of justice, truth, or peace, be irregularly pragmatical or turbulent: this is to be doubly bad, adding to the irregularity of offence, the wickedness of fraud and malice.

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1. We should never, out of ambition, covetous
ire, or self-conceit, so meddle as to invade any
n's office, or to assume the exercise of it. A pri-
e man should not presume to act the prince or
statesman, offering to control those who are
under him, to deliberate, debate, determine, or
s censure about political affairs or occurrences. A
man should not intrude himself to administer the
red functions of authoritative teaching, of dispens-
the sacraments, of exercising spiritual censures,
defining theological controversies, which are com-
ted to the guides and pastors of the church. No
n should set himself upon the tribunal to judge,
undertake, without license or invitation, to arbi-
te the causes of others: doing thus is to encroach
on God, and to usurp upon man: we encroach
on God, assuming to ourselves powers not derived
m his order, and deserting the station assigned us
his providence; we usurp upon man, exercising
hority over him, which he is not bound to stoop
o.

SERM.
XXI.

2. We should not, without call or allowance,
ddle with our superiors, so as to advise them, to
rehend them, to blame or inveigh against their
ceedings; for this is to confound the right order
things, to trespass beyond the bounds of our call-
and station, to do wrong, not only to them, but
the public, which is concerned in the upholding
ir power and respect: it is indeed a worse fault
n assuming the ensigns of their dignity, or coun-
feiting their stamps; for that is but to borrow the
blance, this is to enjoy the substance of their au-
rity.

Nothing in this busy and licentious age is more

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SERM. usual, than for private men to invade the office, to
XXI. exercise the duties, to canvass and control the ac-
tions of their superiors ; discussing what they ought
to do, and prescribing laws to them ; taxing what is
done by them ; murmuring at their decrees, and in-
veighing against their proceedings : every one is
finding holes in the state, and picking quarrels with
the conduct of political affairs : every one is reform-
ing and settling the public according to models
framed in his own conceit. Things, saith one, are
out of order ; the constitution is very defective,
and ought to be corrected ; such a law in all reason
should be repealed, and such an one enacted ; here
our statesmen were out of their politics, and there
our lawgivers failed in point of equity or prudence.
No, clamours another no less eagerly, all things stand
as well as can be ; nothing can be amended, or ought
to be altered ; our establishment in all respects is
more perfect than Plato's commonwealth, or the state
of Utopia. Thus doth each man appoint himself
counsellor of state, and turns legislator without any
call from the king, or choice of the country : every
one snatcheth at the sceptre, and invests himself
with the senator's robe : every one acteth a prince
and a bishop, or indeed is rather a censor and con-
troller of both orders ; not considering the wrong he
committeth, nor the arrogance he practiseth, nor the
mischiefs which naturally ensue upon such demean-
our : for to direct or to check governors is in effect
to exauctorate or depose them, substituting ourselves
in their room : and what greater injury can we do
them or the public ? To fix or reverse laws belong-
eth to the highest authority and deepest wisdom,
which it is enormous presumption for us to arrogate

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ourselves : by attempting such things we confound
the ranks of men, and course of things ; we ruffle
the world, we supplant public tranquillity ; and what
greater mischief than this can we do among men ?

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XXI.

It is the business and duty of those whom God
hath constituted his representatives and ministers to
eliberate and conclude what is to be done ; and for
the due performance of their charge they are ac-
countable to their master, not to us ; *Nobis obsequii
gloria relicta est*^c ; our duty and our privilege (for
so it is, if we could understand it, it being far more
easy and safe) it is to submit and obey with quiet
and patience ; if we do more, we are therein irre-
gular, and no less undutiful to God than to our su-
periors ; we forget those divine rules and precepts ;
*Where the word of a king is, there is power ; and
who may say to him, What doest thou ? Submit
yourselfes to every ordinance of man for the Lord's
sake. Do all things without murmurings and dis-
sentiments.* We consider not what judgments are de-
nounced upon those whose character it is *to despise
government, to be presumptuous and self-willed, not
to be afraid to speak evil of dignities.*

Eccles. viii.
2 Pet. ii. 13,
18.
Phil. ii. 14.
2 Pet. ii. 10.

We do not weigh the nature of the things we
meddle with, nor the advantages of the persons whom
we tax, nor our own incapacity to judge rightly about
them. There is a kind of sacredness in the mysteries
of state : as the mysteries of faith do surpass natural
reason, so do those of state transcend vulgar capacity :
as priests by special grace are qualified best to un-
derstand the one, so are princes by like peculiar as-

^c Tibi summum rerum iudicium dii dedere ; nobis obsequii gloria relicta est. *M. Terent. apud Tac. Ann. V. C.*

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SERM. XXI. sistance enabled to penetrate the former. He that employeth them in that great work of governing the

Prov. xvi.
10.

world, and maketh them instruments of his providence, is not wanting in affording to them direction and aid needful for the discharge of their duty; whence their judgments of things are somewhat more than human, and their words may with us pass for oracular; *A divine sentence*, the wise king said, *is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.* According to the ordinary reason of things, they are best able to judge of such things, being, by reason of their eminent station, able to discern more and further than others; having by experience and constant practice acquired a truer insight into things, and a better skill to manage them: whereas we being placed beneath in a valley, can have no good prospect upon the grounds and causes of their resolutions and proceedings: we, for want of sufficient use and exercise, cannot skill to balance the contrary weights and reasons of things; to surmount the difficulties and rubs, to unfold the knots and intrigues, which occur in affairs of that kind; we cannot expect those special influences of light and strength from heaven toward judging of affairs, which do not properly concern us: wherefore we are altogether incompetent judges, and impertinent dealers about those things; it is great odds, that in doing so we shall mistake and misbehave ourselves; we consequently do vainly and naughtily to meddle with them. If the love of public good doth transport us, let us restrain ourselves.

3. We should not indeed so much as meddle with the affairs of our equals, (those I mean not who do equal us in dignity or worth, but all such who are

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not subject to our command or charge, however SERM.
otherwise inferior to us: those, I say, we should not XXI.
meddle with,) so as to control or cross them; to
direct, or check, or censure their proceedings against
their will, or without special reason engaging us
thereto: for this is also to usurp an undue authority,
this argueth self-conceit, this containeth immodesty
and arrogance.

4. We should not, without the desire or leave of
parties concerned, intermeddle in the smaller tem-
poral interests of others, upon pretence to further
them, or with design to cross them; for every man
should be left to himself to choose and to manage
his own business, prosecuting it in the method he
best liketh, (consistent with law and justice toward
others,) without interruption or control: every man
hath a right to do so, every man desireth it, every
man commonly hath a capacity sufficient for it; for
each man is apt to study his own business, to weigh
his case, to poise his abilities with the circumstances
in which he standeth; and thence is likely to get
righter notions concerning the state of his affairs, to
descrie better ways of accomplishing them, than
others less regarding them can do: every man is
best acquainted with his own humour and temper,
and thence can pick his business, and wind the
management of it, so that it shall comply with them,
or not grate upon them. However, as every man
in point of interest and honour is most concerned in
the success, and suffereth most by frustration of his
endeavours, so it is equal that a free choice of his
proceedings should be allowed him, without impedi-
ment or disturbance; which enjoying, he will more
contentedly bear any disappointment that shall hap-

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SERM. pen. This especially we say, in respect to matters
XXI. of lesser consequence, (such as most worldly interests are,) by the ill success whereof our neighbour is not extremely damaged or hurt; for in such cases the immodesty and arrogancy of meddling, with the vexation and trouble it is apt to work, do commonly much outweigh any benefit we can presume by our meddling to procure.

5. We should not indeed ever in matters of indifferent and innocent nature so far meddle, as, without considerable reason or need, to infringe any man's liberty, to cross his humour, to obstruct his pleasure, however discordant these may be to our judgment and palate. Every man hath a particular gust for diet, for garb, for divertisements and sports, (arising from particular complexion, or other unaccountable causes,) and fit it is that he should satisfy it; it is enough that what he doeth seemeth good, and relisheth to himself: if we check him therein, we shall seem impertinent and troublesome, and therefore we shall really be so; for it is not our office to be tasters, to be dressers, to be masters of the sports to all men: we in such matters would please our own fancy, and therefore we should not about them offend others; it is incivility, it is injustice to do it.

6. We should never offer to put a force upon any man's inclination, or strive to bend it unto a compliance with ours; in attempting that we shall commonly be disappointed, and we shall never come fairly off: for some are so tough, they will never yield to us; none will comply against the grain, without regret and displeasure: if you extort a compliance with your desire, you thereby do lose their

good opinion and good will; for no man liketh to be overborne with violence or importunity. SERM.
XXI.

7. We should not in conversation meddle so as to impose our opinions and conceits upon others: in conversation with our equals, we have a liberty to propound our judgment, and declare our reasons for it; but if our judgment doth not take, nor our reasons persuade, we should have done; to press further is rude, to be displeas'd for it is vain, to be angry or violent is unjust; for by the law of conversation every man taketh himself to have an absolute right to use and follow his own reason; and he that affects to deprive any man thereof, will pass for a petty tyrant, a clown, or an idiot. To retain the satisfaction which our own persuasion affordeth, is enough to content a just and sober mind, without triumphing over the understandings of others.

8. We should not ordinarily in converse affect or undertake to teach; for this implies a pretence to a kind of superiority, and a preferring ourselves to others in wisdom; which argueth vanity, and is offensive to those with whom we converse, who care not to be dealt with as disciples or underlings. We may with our equals modestly dispute the case upon even ground, as fellow-students of knowledge, or advocates of truth; but we must not peremptorily dictate, or pronounce with authority, like masters or judges.

9. We should indeed be cautious of interrupting any man's discourse, or of taking his words out of his mouth: for this is a rude way of dispossessing men of that which by common law of society they suppose themselves to enjoy, speaking their mind through, and perfecting their discourse; it is an im-

Nec quid
agatur in
alia domus
alia per te
noverit.
Hier. Ep.
2.

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SERM. plicit accusation of impertinency or weakness in their
XXI. speech ; it is an argument that we deem ourselves
wiser than they, or able to speak more to the purpose : it is therefore an unsociable and distasteful practice.

10. We should be careful of intrenching upon any man's modesty in any way, either of commendation or dispraise, so as to put him to the blush, or to expose him unto scorn. Sober men care not to be the subjects of talk ; no man can endure to be the object of sport : we should not therefore thrust any man upon the stage ; it is vexatious, and therefore always discourteous, sometimes very injurious.

11. It is good to be very staunch and cautious of talking about other men and their concernments, in way of passing characters on them, or descanting upon their proceedings for want of other discourse : this is the common refuge of idleness, and the practice of fiddling gossips, who, because they will do nothing themselves, must be reflecting upon the doings of others ; and that they may not say nothing, will talk impertinently : *φλύαροι καὶ περιέρργοι*, St. Paul well coupleth together, that is, frivolous *tattlers and busybodies* ; and *withal*, saith he of such gossiping women, 1 Tim. v. 13. *they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house ; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* To affect talking about others is indeed a great temptation to speaking things which we ought not to speak, words of unjust and uncharitable obloquy.

Vid. Chrys.
in Heb.
xxxii. 3.
Orat. 21.

12. Further ; we should not be inquisitive into the designs of men ; for this, beside the vain curiosity and impertinency of so doing, is to assail their mo-

lesty, and an adventure to vex both them and our- **SERM.**
 selves : thy neighbour, perhaps, as most advised men **XXI.**
 are, is desirous to keep his purpose close to himself ; **Percontato-**
 then by inquiry thou either forcest him unwillingly **rem fu-**
 to disclose what he would not, or to give thee a re- **gito.**
 pulse, which he liketh not to do ; and which when-
 ever he doth, he is displeas'd : what is pumped out
 comes up against nature, and bringeth regret with **Φιλοσυνορία**
 it ; and if we cannot get any thing out, we yet **ταυτ' εν άνω-**
 cause disturbance within ; and ourselves are not **πρίψιι.**
 well satisfied in the disappointment.

13. We should not press into the retirements of
 men ; to do so is not only immodest and rude, but
 unjust : it is immodest to desire to know from any
 man what he is ashamed or unwilling to shew : it is
 rude to disturb any man in the enjoyment of his
 awful freedom, to interrupt him in his conversation **Arcanum**
 with himself, to obstruct his private satisfactions : it **neque tu**
 is unjust to bereave a man of that leisure and oppor- **scrutaberis**
 tunity which he possesseth, of doing that which he **ullius un-**
 best liketh, and perhaps is greatly concerned in ; of **quam,**
 enjoying his own thoughts, of meditating upon his **Commis-**
 concerns, of examining his ways, of composing his **sumque**
 passions, of studying truth, of devotion and inter- **teges, et**
 course with his God, of contriving and carrying on **vino tortus**
 in anywise the welfare of his own soul. Why doth **et ira.**
 he retire, but to shun diversion, or that he may be
 master of his time and thoughts ? Why then are we
 so unkind, or so unjust, as to deprive him of those
 contents and advantages ?

14. We should not pry or peep into men's secrets ;
 it is a practice upon many accounts blameable.

It is commonly impertinent curiosity ; for men
 hide things, because they do not think others con-

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SERM. XXI. cerned to know them ; the concealment argueth their opinion to be such, and consequently that he is fondly curious who would search into them : *Why*, said he well to one, who, seeing him carry a basket covered, did ask what was in it, *dost thou seek to know, when thou seest it covered, that thou mayest not know*^d ?

It is foully discourteous, because offensively depriving men of the satisfaction they take in concealing their matters ; encroaching upon the innocent freedoms which they would enjoy, without rendering account to any ; trespassing upon their bashfulness, or frustrating their discretion ; for therefore men choose to keep things close, because they like not, or judge it not expedient, to declare them. *Take no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.*

Eccles. vii.
21.

It is also grossly injurious to deal thus ; for it is a robbery of what is most dear to men ; which they with more care reserve and guard, than they do their gold or their jewels : so that to break open the closet of a man's breast, to ransack his mind, to pilfer away his thoughts, his affections, his purposes, may well be deemed a worse sort of burglary or theft, than to break open doors, to rifle trunks, or to pick pockets.

It is a practice in the common opinion of men worthily esteemed very dishonest and treacherous ; for men generally do suppose each other to be under a tacit, but well-understood compact, obliged mutually (as they tender greatly the retaining their own secrets, so) to abstain from attempting to discover

^d Τὸ τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου χάριεν πρὸς τὸν ἐρωτῶντα τι φέρει συγκεκαλυμμένον, διὰ τοῦτο συγκεκάλυπται. Plut. περὶ πολυκρ.

the secrets of others; to do otherwise is therefore **SERM.**
taken for an act of perfidious enmity, and a violation **XXI.**
of mutual confidence.

In fine, to peep into chinks, to listen at doors or windows, to mind whispers, to dive into letters and papers, and the like practices, are the practices of insidious eves-droppers, spies, and sycophants, which common humanity will not endure.

Yea, if the knowledge of what our neighbour would conceal doth casually arrive to us, it is advisable to smother it, it is inhumanity to reveal it to his prejudice. *To reveal secrets*, is a practice condemned in scripture as odious and base. *He that* **Prov. xx.**
goeth about as a talebearer, revealeth secrets.^{19.}
A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of **Prov. xi. 13.**
a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Not to take up, or scatter reports prejudicial. **Μηδίωνος**
Εκκλυσ. xix. 7, 10. **διυτρώσις**
λόγον—

A wise man would not willingly anywise know the secrets of others, but gladly would shun them, although offering themselves to his knowledge; that he may be freed from the burden of keeping them, and the danger of venting them, to the distaste, wrong, or prejudice of others: and he is commended for his discretion, who, to a prince asking him, *What of his he should impart to him?* replied, *Whatever you please, except your secrets*^c. Them he well thought unsafe to keep, and dangerous to utter. How foolish then is it voluntarily to intrude, or carefully to search into them!

15. We should not lie in wait to surprise or catch

^c Philippides apud Plut. in Apoph. ad Lysimach. *Τινός σοι, ἔπειν, τῶν ἐμῶν μεταδῶ; κακείνος, οὐ βούλει πλὴν τῶν ἀπερρήτων.*

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SERM. any man at advantage, to overthrow him when he
XXI. trips, to insult upon his mistake or his disaster; to do thus is always ill manners, it is sometimes barbarous inhumanity. Goodness in such cases would dispose a man to support, relieve, and comfort another, if he demandeth, or his case needeth such meddling.

16. Lastly; we should never, at least with much earnestness, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to others, and which we do not, or may not handsomely pretend to understand so well as others: such are affairs beside our profession, which if we understand not, it is a folly, in a peremptory manner, to treat of them; if we do understand them, it is yet undecent to contest or dictate about them, in the presence at least of those who profess them: thus should private men beware, at least in that magisterial or eager way, to meddle with political affairs, illiterate men with scholastical, laymen with theological, unexperienced men with any such matters, the comprehension whereof dependeth upon skill and exercise: no man should be forward to meddle with things extraneous to his way and calling: doing so is wont to create much offence, it hath usually much immodesty and much folly in it; often it containeth much injustice.

These are some more general rules concerning the matter in hand: I should now, if time did permit, insist upon some particular kinds of meddling, *advice, reproof, interposing in contests*; but, in regard to your patience, I shall proceed no further at present.

S E R M O N XXII.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

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

IN a former discourse upon these words, I have already shewed, SERM.
XXII.

I. In what cases it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others.

II. Next, I propounded some general rules concerning this matter, according to which we may discern in what cases meddling with the affairs of others is commonly blameable. Thus far I have proceeded.

III. I shall now give some directions concerning particular kinds of meddling. And because they are many, I shall at present only insist upon three; (referring others to other occasions:) they are, *advice*, *reproof*, *interposing in contests*, and contentions.

I. As to meddling in *advice*, we may do well to observe these directions.

1. Advise not (except upon call) a superior, or one more eminent than thyself in authority, in dignity, or in age: for he that offereth to advise, doth thereby claim to himself a kind of superiority, or excellence, above another; and it is not well consistent with the reverence and respect due to our betters to

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SERM. seem to do so. They should be wiser than we ; at least
XXII. it becometh us not to declare we think they are not.

If they ask advice, we may without presumption give it, supposing it to be not so much their defect of knowledge as prudent caution, which maketh them willing to hear what any man can say to the case : but to obtrude it on them argueth we think them to need it, and ourselves able to direct them ; which is presumption, and will pass for arrogance.

2. We should not indeed, with any violence or importunity, thrust advice upon our equals, or upon any man not subject to our charge, who is unwilling to receive it ; for this is also an exalting ourselves in skill and wisdom above him, and implieth a contemptuous opinion concerning his knowledge ; that he is so weak as to need advice, and yet more weak in not seeking it when needful from us ; which practice consisteth not with modesty, and needs must breed offence : it is indeed unjust ; for every man of right is to be allowed to act by his own advice, and to choose his own counsellors.

3. Be not obstinate in pressing advice : if he that asketh thy counsel do not like it, desist from urging further, and rest content. If thou hast performed the part of a faithful friend, of a good man, of a charitable Christian, in advising what seemeth best to thee, that may abundantly satisfy thee ; for the rest, *ipse viderit*, it is his concernment more than thine : if thou pretendest that he must follow thy advice, or art displeased because he doth not so, thou makest thyself a commander, not a counsellor ; the which to appoint thee was beside his intention ; he meant to seek thy help, not to forfeit his own liberty ; and thou art not just in pretending to so much.

4. Affect not to be a counsellor, nor let any considerations, except of friendship, humanity, or charity, easily dispose thee to accept the office : it is not worth the while to undertake it as a matter of reputation, or because it seemeth to argue a good opinion concerning thy skill and ability ; for it is a critical and dangerous thing to advise, because if the business succeedeth well according to thy advice, the principal usually carrieth away the profit and the praise ; his judgment, his industry, his fortune are applauded ; little commendation or benefit accrueth to the counsellor : but if it prosper not, the main weight of blame is surely laid upon him that advised the course. If you, saith the party, and say the lookers on, had not thus directed, it had not thus fallen out.

SERM.
XXII.

5. Wherefore it is commonly expedient not to advise otherwise than with reservation and diffidence : it is, we may say, the most probable course I know, but I question whether it will succeed ; I hope well of it, but do not thoroughly confide therein. This modest and discreet way, whatever the event shall be, will shelter thee from blame ; yea, will advance the reputation of thy sagacity : for if it fail, thy reason to suspect will be approved ; if it prosper, the goodness of thy judgment will be applauded : whereas the confident director, if success crosseth his advice, is exclaimed upon for his rashness ; if success favoureth, he is not yet admired for his wisdom, because he seemed to be sure ; it being more admirable to guess the best among doubtful things, than to determine that which is certain. So much for meddling about *advice*.

II. For *reproof*, (which is necessary, and a duty

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SERM. upon some occasions,) we may do well to follow these
XXII. directions.

Levit. xix.
17.
Ephes. v.
11.

1. Reprove not a superior; for it is exercising a power over him, and a punishing him; we thereby therefore do soar above our pitch, we confound ranks, and pervert the order settled among men; the practice containeth irreverence and presumption, it seemeth injurious, and is ever odious. What the ministers of God, or spiritual pastors, do in this kind, they do it by special commission, or instinct, (as the prophets in reprehending princes and priests, as St. John Baptist in reprovng Herod;) or as ordinary superiors in the case of spiritual guidance, being *set over us* for that purpose, and *watching for our souls*, for which *they must render an account*: yet they must do it with great moderation and discretion:

Heb. xiii.
17.

1 Tim. v. 1. Πρεσβυτέρω μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς, *Rebuke not an elder*, (or one more aged than thyself,) *but intreat him as a father*, (that is, advise him in the most respectful and gentle manner,) is the charge of St. Paul to B. Timothy. In case of grievance or scandal, it becometh inferiors not proudly or peremptorily to criminate and tax, but humbly to remonstrate and supplicate for redress.

2. Reprove not rashly, and without certain cognizance of the fact; for to reprove for things not done, or, which in moral reckoning is the same, for things not apparent, is both unjust, and argueth a malignant disposition: it is unjust to punish so much as the modesty of any man, without clear evidence and proof; it is malignity to suspect a man of ill, it is calumny to charge blame on him upon slender pretences, or doubtful surmises.

3. Reprove not also rashly as to the point of right,

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or without being able to convince the matter to be **SERM.**
assuredly culpable: to reprove for things not bad, or **XXII.**
not unquestionably such, (for things that are, or per-
haps may be indifferent and innocent,) is also un-
just, and signifieth a tyrannical disposition: it is un-
just anywise to punish a man without clear warrant
of law; it is tyrannical to impose upon men our
conceit, or to persecute them for using their liberty,
following their judgment, or enjoying their humour;
which in effect we do when we reprove them for that
which we cannot prove blameable: it is, St. James
saith, *a judging the law*, or charging it with defect,
when we condemn persons for things not prohibited
by it: *He*, saith the apostle, *that speaketh against* Jam. iv. 11.
his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh
against the law, and judgeth the law.

Both these kinds of rash reproof are very inconven-
ient, as breeding needless offence and endless con-
tention; for whoever is thus taxed will certainly
take it ill, and will contend in his own defence: no
man patiently, for no sufficient cause or sure ground,
will lie under the stroke of reproof, which always
smarteth, but then enrageth when it is supposed
to be inflicted unjustly or maliciously: even those
who contentedly will bear friendly reproof, can
worse brook to be causelessly taxed.

4. Reprove not for slight matters; for such faults
or defects as proceed from natural frailty, from in-
advertency, from mistake in matters of small conse-
quence; for it is hard to be just in such reproof; or
so to temper it as not to exceed the measure of blame
due to such faults: they occur so often, that we
should never cease to be carping, if we do it upon
such occasions; it is not worth the while, it is not

Mitem ani-
mum, et
mores mo-
dicis errori-
bus æquos.
Juv. Sat.
14.

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SERM. handsome to seem displeased with such little things;
XXII. it is spending our artillery upon a game not worth the killing. Reproof is too grave and stately a thing to be prostituted upon so mean things; to use it upon small cause derogateth from its weight, when there is considerable reason for it; friendship, charity, and humanity should cover such offences. In fine, it is unseemly to reprove men for such things as all men, as themselves, are so continually subject unto: it is therefore better to let such things pass without any mark of displeasure or dislike.

5. Reprove not unseasonably; not when a person is indisposed to bear reproof, or unfit to profit thereby; not when there is likely to be no good effect come from it; when thou shalt only thereby conjure up an evil spirit of displeasure and enmity against thyself. Reproof is a thing of itself not good or pleasant, but sometimes needful, because wholesome and good in order to the end; it should therefore be administered as physic, then only when the patient is fit to receive it, and it may serve to correct his distemper; otherwise you will only make him more sick, and very angry.

It is ever almost unseasonable to reprove some persons, as scorers, impudent, incorrigibly profligate persons, who will hate the reprover without regarding the reproof: *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.* To be maligned, to be derided, to be aspersed with reproach and slander, is all one shall get by reprovng such persons; it is both prostituting good advice, and exposing oneself to mischief, as our Saviour intimateth in that prohibition: *Give not*

Prov. ix. 7,
8. xv. 12.

Matt. vii. 6.

that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

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As such men ever, so most men in some seasons are incapable of reproof; so are men in calamity, who are discomposed by grief, the which is rather to be mitigated by comfort than increased and exasperated by blame; so are men in a passion, who have no ears to hear, no reason to judge, no will to comply with advice: reproof is apt to produce rather anger and ill-blood, than any contrition or kindly remorse in persons so affected.

It is also usually not seasonable to reprove men publicly, when their modesty is highly put to it, and their reputation grievously suffereth; for this is an extreme sort of punishment, and is taken for needless; it is extreme, because men had rather suffer any way than in their honour; it is deemed needless, because it may be ministered privately.

6. Reprove mildly and sweetly, in the calmest manner, in the gentlest terms; not in a haughty or imperious way, not hastily or fiercely; not with sour looks, or in bitter language; for these ways do beget all the evil, and hinder the best effects of reproof: they do certainly inflame and disturb the person reprov'd; they breed wrath, disdain, and hatred against the reprover; but do not so well enlighten the man to see his error, or affect him with kindly sense of his miscarriage, or dispose him to correct his fault: such reproofs look rather like the wounds and persecutions of enmity, than as remedies ministered by a friendly hand; they harden men with stomach and scorn to mend upon such occasion. If reproof doth not savour of humanity, it signifieth

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SERM. nothing ; it must be like a bitter pill wrapped in gold,
XXII. and tempered with sugar, otherwise it will not go
down, or work effectually.

7. Affect not to be reprehensive ; seem not willingly to undertake the place of a reprover ; appear to be merely drawn thereto by sense of duty, or exigency of friendship, or constraint of charity and good-will. For to affect reproving is a sign of ill-nature and arrogance, that we delight to observe the faults, that we love to insult upon the infirmities and infelicities of other men ; which is the part of a domineering and cruel humour. A truly good man indeed would be glad to be excused from the office ; it is the most unpleasant thing he can do to be raking in men's sores, and causing smart to his neighbours ; far more gladly would he be commending their good deeds, and cherishing their virtue. Nothing therefore but conscience and charity can put him on this employment. But so much for meddling in re-proof.

III. Another kind of meddling is, *interposing in the contests* and contentions of others. As to this, we may, briefly, do well to observe these directions.

1. We should never meddle, so as to raise dissensions, or to do such things as breed them : we should by no means create misunderstandings, or distastes, between our neighbours : we should not instil jealousies, or surmises : we should not misconstrue words or actions, to an offensive sense or consequence : we should not convey spiteful tales : we should not disclose the secrets of one to another. These practices engender enmity and strife among men ; and are therefore inhuman, or rather diabo-

lical; for the Devil is the great makebate in the world. SERM.
XXII.

2. We should not foment dissensions already commenced, blowing up the coals that are kindled, by abetting the strife, or aggravating the causes thereof; it is not good to strengthen the quarrel, by siding with one part, except that part be notoriously oppressed or abused: in such a case indeed, when justice calleth for them, we may lend our advice and assistance; and may bear the inconvenience of being engaged, as Moses honestly and generously did, when he succoured his brother that suffered wrong; otherwise it is advisable to keep ourselves out of the fray, that we do not encourage it by our taking part, and involve ourselves in the mischiefs of it.

3. Especially we should not make ourselves parties in any faction, where both sides are eager and passionate; for then even they who have the juster cause are wont to do unjust things, in which it is hard for any man engaged not to have share, at least not to undergo the imputation of them: it is wisdom therefore in such cases to hold off, and to retain a kind of indifferency; to meddle with them is, as the Wise Man saith, to *take a dog by the ears*; Prov. xxvi. which he that doth, can hardly take care enough of ¹⁷ his fingers.

4. We should not interpose ourselves (without invitation) to be arbitrators in points of difference: we may cautiously mediate, perhaps, or advise to agreement; but not pretend as judges with authority to decide the controversy: this savoureth of arrogance, this will work trouble to us, and bring the displeasure of both sides upon us; it is hard, in doing so, to avoid becoming parties, and offending one side.

Oi to pison
hous, adoun-
ras a' de-
poussons.
Arist.

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SERM. Our Lord therefore did, we see, wave this office, and
XXII. put off the invitation with a *Who made me a divider or a judge between you ?*

5. If we would at all meddle in these cases, it should be only in endeavouring, by the most fair and prudent means, to renew peace, and reconcile the dissenters; if we can by exhortation and persuasion to peace, by removing misprisions, by representing things handsomely, by mitigating their passions, bring them to good terms, this is a laudable meddling, this is a blessed practice. So I leave this particular, and finish the directive part of my discourse.

IV. I shall now further only briefly propose some considerations inducing to quietness, and dissuasive from pragmatism; such as arise from the nature, properties, causes, and effects of each; serving to commend the one, and disparage the other.

1. Consider that quietness is just and equal, pragmatism is injurious. When we contain ourselves quiet, and mind only our own business, we allow every man his right, we harm no man's reputation; we keep ourselves within our bounds, and trespass not on the place or interest of our neighbour; we disturb not the right order and course of things: but in being pragmatical we do wrongfully deprive others of their right and liberty to manage their business; we prejudice their credit, implicitly charging them with weakness and incapacity to despatch their affairs without our direction; we therefore, upon our own unequal and partial judgment, do prefer and advance ourselves above them; we assume to ourselves in many respects more than our due, withdrawing it from others. In fine, no man loveth that others should invade his office, or intrude into his business;

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therefore in justice every man should forbear doing SERM.
XXII.
so toward others.

2. Quietness signifieth humility, modesty, and sobriety of mind; that we conceit not ourselves more wise than our neighbour; that we allow every man his share of discretion; that we take others for able and skilful enough to understand and manage their own affairs: but pragmatcalness argueth much overweening and arrogance; that we take ourselves for the only men of wisdom, at least for more wise than those into whose business we thrust ourselves.

3. Quietness is beneficial to the world, preserving the general order of things, disposing men to keep within their rank and station, and within the sphere of their power and ability, regularly attending to the work and business proper to them; whereby as themselves do well, so the public doth thrive: but pragmatcalness disturbeth the world, confounding things, removing the distinction between superior, inferior, and equal, rendering each man's business uncertain; while some undertake that which belongeth not to them: one busybody often, as we find by experience, is able to disturb and pester a whole society.

4. Quietness preserveth concord and amity: for no man is thereby provoked, being suffered undisturbedly to proceed in his course, according to his mind and pleasure: but pragmatcalness breedeth dissensions and feuds: for all men are ready to quarrel with those who offer to controul them, or cross them in their way; every man will be zealous in maintaining his privilege of choosing, and acting according to his choice; and cannot but oppose those, who attempt to bereave him of it; whence between

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SERM. the busybody assailing, and others defending their
XXII. liberty, combustions must arise.

5. Quietness, to the person endued with it, or practising it, begetteth tranquillity and peace; for he that letteth others alone, and cometh in no man's way, no man will be apt to disquiet or cross him; he keepeth himself out of broils and factions: but the busybody createth vexation and trouble to himself; others will be ready to molest him in his proceedings, because he disturbeth them in theirs: he that will have a sickle in another's corn, or an oar in every man's boat, no wonder if his fingers be rapped; men do not more naturally brush off flies, which buzz about their ears, sit upon their faces or hands, and sting or tickle them, than they strive to drive away
1 Pet. iv. 15. clamorous and encroaching busybodies. *Let, saith St. Peter, none of you suffer as a busybody in other men's matters*; it is, he intimateth, a practice whereby a man becometh liable to suffer, or which men are apt to punish soundly: and so the Wise
Prov. xxvi 17. Man, implying the fondness and danger of it, *He, saith he, that passeth by, and meddleth with strife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*; that is, without any probable good effect, he provoketh a creature that will snarl at him and bite him.

6. Quietness is a decent and lovely thing, as signifying good disposition, and producing good effects; but pragmatism is ugly and odious. Every man gladly would be a neighbour to a quiet person, as who by the steady calmness and smoothness of his humour, the inoffensive stillness and sweetness of his demeanour, doth afford all the pleasure of conversation, without any cross or trouble. But no

man willingly would dwell by him, who is apt ever to be infesting him by his turbulent humour, his obstreperous talk, his tumultuous and furious carriage; who, upon all occasions, without invitation or consent, will be thrusting in his eyes, his tongue, his hand; prying into all that is done, dictating this or that course, taxing all proceeding, usurping a kind of jurisdiction over him and his actions: no man will like, or can well endure such a neighbour. It is commonly observed, that pride is not only abominable to God, but loathsome to man; and of all prides, this is the most offensive and odious: for the pride which keepeth at home, within a man's heart or fancy, not issuing forth to trouble others, may indeed well be despised, as hugely silly and vain; but that which breaketh out to the disturbance and vexation of others, is hated as molestful and mischievous.

7. Quietness adorneth any profession, bringing credit, respect, and love thereto; but pragmatcalness is scandalous, and procureth odium to any party or cause: men usually do cloak their pragmatcal behaviour with pretences of zeal for public good, or of kindness to some party, which they have espoused; but thereby they do really cast reproach, and draw prejudice upon their side: if it be a good cause, they do thereby wrong it, making it to partake of the blame incident to such carriage, as if it did produce or allow disorder; if it be a bad cause, they wrong themselves, aggravating the guilt of their adherence thereto; for it is a less fault to be calm and remiss in an ill way, than busy or violent in promoting it. Nothing hath wrought more prejudice to religion, or hath brought more disparagement upon truth, than boisterous and unseasonable zeal; pretending in ways

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SERM. of passion, of fierceness, of rudeness to advance them:
 XXII.

a quiet sectary doth to most men's fancy appear more lovely, than he that is furiously and factiously orthodox: the ornament of *a meek and quiet spirit is*, saith St. Peter, *in God's sight, of great price*; and it is also very estimable in the opinion of men.

Τῶ ὄντι φαί-
 νεται ἡ κατὰ
 τὴν ἡσυχίαν
 βίος ἀκινδύ-
 νος ἢ καὶ
 ἀσφαλὲς
 ἔχειν.
 Chrysa. a-
 pud Plat.

8. Quiet is a safe practice, keeping men not only from needless incumbrances of business, but from the hazards of it, or being charged with its bad success: but pragmatism is dangerous; for if things go ill, the meddler surely will be loaded with the blame; the profit and commendation of prosperities will accrue to the persons immediately concerned; but the disaster and damage will be imputed to those who meddled in the business; to excuse or ease themselves, men will cast the disgrace on those who did project or further the undertaking: he therefore that would be secure, let him be quiet; he that loveth peril and trouble, let him be pragmatical.

9. It is consequently a great point of discretion to be quiet, it yielding a man peace and safety without any trouble; and it is a manifest folly to be pragmatical, it being only with care, pains, and trouble, to seek dissatisfaction to others, and danger to himself; it being also to affect many not only inconveniences, but impossibilities.

Is it possible for any man to grasp or compass an infinity of business? Yet this the pragmatical man seemeth to drive at; for the businesses of other men are infinite, and into that abyss he plungeth himself, who passeth beyond his own bounds; by the same reason that he meddles with any beside his own, he may undertake all the affairs in the world; so he is

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sure to have work enough, but fruit surely little
 enough of his pains. SERM.
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Is it imaginable that we can easily bring others to our bent, or induce men to submit their business to our judgment and humour? Will not he that attempteth such things assuredly expose himself to disappointment and regret? Is it not therefore wisdom to let every man have his own way, and pursue his concernments without any check or controul from us?

10. We may also consider, that every man hath business of his own sufficient to employ him; to exercise his mind, to exhaust his care and pains, to take up all his time and leisure. To study his own near concernments, to provide for the necessities and conveniences of his life, to look to the interests of his soul, to be diligent in his calling, to discharge faithfully and carefully all his duties relating to God and man, will abundantly employ a man; well it is, if some of them do not encumber and distract him: he that will set himself with all his might to perform these things, will find enough to do; he need not seek further for work, he need not draw more trouble on him.

Seeing then every man hath burden enough on his shoulders, imposed by God and nature, it is vain to take on him more load, by engaging himself in the affairs of others; he will thence be forced, either to shake off his own business, or to become overburdened and oppressed with more than he can bear. It is indeed hence observable, and it needs must happen, that those who meddle with the business of others are wont to neglect their own; they that are much abroad can seldom be at home; they that know others most are least acquainted with themselves: and the wise Hebrew, *The wisdom of*

Ecclus.
 xxxviii. 26.

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SERM. *a learned man comes by opportunity of leisure, (σφία σοφιστοῦ ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς,) and he that hath little*
 XXII. *business shall be wise; (ὁ ἐλασσούμενος πράξει αὐτοῦ σφισθήσεται.)* Whence it is scarce possible that a pragmatical man should be a good man; that is, such an one who honestly and carefully performeth the duties incumbent on him.

Philosophers therefore generally have advised men to shun needless occupations, as the certain impediments of a good and happy life; they bid us endeavour ἀπλοῦν ἑαυτοὺς, *to simplify ourselves*, or to get into a condition requiring of us the least that can be to do. St. Paul intended the same when he advised us, μὴ ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, *not to be entangled in the negotiations of life*: and our Saviour, when he touched Martha for *being troubled about many things*. So far therefore we should be from taking in hand the affairs of other men, that we should labour to contract our own, and reduce them to the fewest that we can; otherwise we shall hardly attain wisdom, or be able to perform our duty^a.

Tacitus saith of the Stoics sect, —quæ turbidos et negotiorum appetentes facit. 11. But suppose us to have much spare time, and to want business, so that we are to seek for diversion, and must for relief fly to curiosity; yet it is not advisable to meddle with the affairs of other men; there are divers other ways more innocent, more safe, more pleasant, more advantageous to divert ourselves, and satisfy curiosity^b.

^a Ὁ σοφὸς, διοπράγμων, καὶ ἀπράγμων. Democ. Sen. Ep. 72, 22. Tertullian calleth Stoicism, Quietis magisterium. ^cDe Pall. v.

^b Omnium occupatorum conditio misera est, eorum tamen miserima, qui ne suis quidem occupationibus laborant. Sen. de Brev. Vita, xix.

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Nature offereth herself, and her inexhaustible store of appearances to our contemplation; we may, without any harm, and with much delight, survey her rich varieties, examine her proceedings, pierce into her secrets. Every kind of animals, of plants, of minerals, of meteors presenteth matter, wherewith innocently, pleasantly, and profitably to entertain our minds. There are many noble sciences, by applying our minds to the study whereof, we may not only invert them, but improve and cultivate them: the histories of ages past, or relations concerning foreign countries, wherein the manners of men are described, and their actions reported, may afford us useful leisure and pastime; thereby we may learn as much, and understand the world as well, as by the most curious inquiry into the present actions of men; there we may observe, we may scan, we may tax the proceedings of whom we please, without any danger or offence: there are extant numberless books, wherein the wisest and most ingenious of men have laid open their hearts, and exposed their most secret cogitations unto us; in pursuing them we may sufficiently busy ourselves, and let our idle hours pass gratefully; we may meddle with ourselves, studying our own dispositions, examining our principles and purposes, reflecting on our thoughts, words, and actions; striving thoroughly to understand ourselves; to do this we have an unquestionable right, and by it we shall obtain vast benefit, much greater than we can hope to get by meddling in the designs or doings of others. Pragmaticalness then, as it is very dangerous and troublesome, so it is perfectly needless; it is a kind of

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SERM. idleness, but of all idleness the most unreasonable:
XXII. it is at least worse than idleness, in St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion. For, *I had rather*, said he, *be idle more than I should, than over-busy*^d. Other considerations might be added; but these, I hope, may be sufficient to restrain this practice, so unprofitable and uneasy to ourselves, and, for the most part, so injurious and troublesome to others.

Now the God of peace make us perfect in every good word and work, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

^c Ἄνδρὶ Λυδοῖ πράγματα οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐξελεῖν ἐπρίστα. Adag. apud Suidam.

^d Ἄργος εἶναι μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος, ἢ περιέργος δέχομαι. Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

S E R M O N XXIII.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTH. xxii. 37.

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

THIS text is produced by our Saviour out of **SERM. XXIII.** Moses's law in answer to a question, wherewith a learned Pharisee thought to pose or puzzle him; Dent. vi. 5. x. 12. the question was, *Which was the great and first πρώτων αὐτῶν commandment in the Law?* a question which, it ερώτησεν ἑρα- λῆ. seems, had been examined, and determined among the doctors, in the schools of those days, (for in St. Luke, Luke x. 27. to the like question intimated by our Saviour, another lawyer readily yields the same answer, and is therefore commended by our Saviour, with a *recte respondisti, thou hast answered rightly*;) so that had our Saviour answered otherwise, he had, we may suppose, been taxed of ignorance and unskilfulness, perhaps also of error and heterodoxy; to convict him of which seems to have been the design of this Jewish trier or tempter (for he is said to ask *πειράζων αὐτὸν, trying, or tempting, him.*) But our Saviour defeats his captious intent, by answering, not only according to truth and the reason of the thing, but agreeably to the doctrine then current, and as the lawyer himself out of his memory and learning would have resolved it: and no wonder, since common sense dic-

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XXIII.

tates, that the law enjoining sincere and entire love toward God is necessarily the first and chief, or the most fundamental law of all religion; for that whosoever doth believe the being of God, according to the most common notion that name bears, must needs discern himself obliged first and chiefly to perform those acts of mind and will toward him, which most true and earnest love do imply: different expressions of love may be prescribed, peculiar grounds of love may be declared in several ways of religion; but in the general and main substance of the duty all will conspire, all will acknowledge readily, that it is love we chiefly owe to God; the duty which he may most justly require of us, and which will be most acceptable to him. It was then indeed the great commandment of the old (or rather of the young and less perfect) religion of the Jews, and it is no less of the more adult and improved religion which the Son of God did institute and teach: the difference only is, that Christianity declares more fully how we should exercise it; and more highly engages us to observe it; requires more proper and more substantial expressions thereof; extends our obligation as to the matter, and intends it as to the degree thereof: for as it represents Almighty God in his nature and in his doings more lovely than any other way of religion, either natural or instituted, hath done, or could do; so it proportionably raises our obligation to love him: it is, as

1 Tim. i. 5.

St. Paul speaketh, τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας, *the last drift*, or the supreme pitch of the evangelical profession, and institution, to love; to love God first,

Coloss. iii.

14.

and then our neighbour *out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned*: it is the

bond, or knot of that *perfection* which the Gospel SERM. enjoins us to aspire to: it is the first and principal XXIII. of those goodly *fruits*, which *the Holy Spirit* of Matt. v. 48. Galat. v. 22. Christ produceth in good Christians. It is therefore plainly with us also the great commandment and chief duty; chiefly great in its extent, in its worth, in its efficacy, and influence: most great it is, in that it doth (eminently at least, or virtually) contain all other laws and duties of piety; they being all as branches making up its body, or growing out of it as their root. St. Paul saith of the love toward our Rom. xiii. 9, 10. neighbour, that it is *πλήρωμα τοῦ νόμου*, a *full performance* of the laws concerning him; and that *all* Gal. v. 14. *commandments*, *ἀνακεφαλαιῶνται*, are *recapitulated*, or summed up in *this one saying*, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*: and by like, or greater reason are all the duties of piety comprised in the love of God; which is the chief of those two hinges, upon which, as our Saviour here subjoins, *the* Matt. xxii. 40. *whole law and the prophets do hang*. So great is this duty in extent: and it is no less in proper worth; both as it immediately respects the most excellent and most necessary performances of duty, (employing our highest faculties in their best operations,) and as it imparts virtue and value to all other acts of duty: for no sacrifice is acceptable, which is Levit. ii. 13. ix. 24. xx. 1. not kindled by this heavenly fire; no offering sweet and pure, which is not seasoned by this holy salt; no action is truly good or commendable, which is not conjoined with, or doth not proceed from the love of God; that is not performed with a design to please God, or, at least, with an opinion that we shall do so thereby. If a man perform any good work not out of love to God, but from any other principle, or

SERM. for any other design, (to please himself or others,
XXIII. to get honour or gain thereby,) how can it be accept-

able to God, to whom it hath not any due regard? And what action hath it for its principle, or its ingredient, becomes sanctified thereby, in great measure pleasing and acceptable to God; such is the worth and value thereof. It is also the great commandment for efficacy and influence, being naturally productive of obedience to all other commandments; especially of the most genuine and sincere obedience; no other principle being in force and activity comparable thereto: (fear may drive to a compliance with some, and hope may draw to an observance of
² Cor. v. 14. others; but it is love, that with a kind of willing constraint and kindly violence carries on cheerfully, vigorously, and swiftly to the performance of all
¹ Joh. ii. 5. God's commandments: *If any man loves me, saith*
^{Joh. xiv. 23.} our Saviour, *he will keep my word*: to keep his word is a natural and necessary result of love to him:
¹ Joh. v. 3. *This is the love of God, saith St. John, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*; it is the nature of that love to beget a free and delightful obedience:) such then is the subject of our discourse; even the sum, the soul, the spring of all our religion and duty. And because it is requisite, both for our direction how to do, and the examination of ourselves whether we do as we ought, that we should understand what we are so far obliged to; that we may be able to perform it, and that we be effectually disposed thereto, I shall use this method; I will first endeavour to explain the nature of this love commanded us; then, to shew some means of attaining it; lastly, to propound some inducements to the purchase and practice thereof.

I. For the first part; we may describe love in general (for it seems not so easy to define it exactly) SERM.
XXIII.
to be an affection or inclination of the soul toward an object, proceeding from an apprehension and esteem of some excellency or some conveniency herein, (its beauty, worth, or usefulness,) producing hereupon, if the object be absent or wanting, a proportionable desire, and consequently an endeavour to obtain such a propriety therein, such a possession hereof, such an approximation or union thereto, as the thing is capable of; also a regret and displeasure in the failing so to obtain it; or in the want, absence, and loss thereof; likewise begetting a complacency, satisfaction, and delight in his presence, possession, or enjoyment; which is moreover attended with a good-will thereto, suitable to its nature; that is, with a desire that it should arrive unto, and continue in its best state; with a delight to perceive it so to thrive and flourish; with a displeasure to see it suffer or decay in anywise; with a consequent endeavour to advance it in all good, and preserve it from all evil. Which description containing the chief properties of love in common, do in some sort (not to insist upon abstracted notions, or in examples remote from our purpose) all of them well agree to that love which we owe to God, according to the tenor of this law, and in the degree therein expressed; that is, in the best manner and highest degree; for even of this livine love the chief properties (prerequisite thereto, or intimately conjoined therewith, or naturally resulting from it) I conceive are these:

1. A right apprehension and firm persuasion concerning God, and consequently a high esteem of him as most excellent in himself and most beneficial to

SERM. us: for such is the frame of our soul, that the per-
XXIII. ceptive part doth always go before the appetitive,
 that affection follows opinion, that no object other-
 wise moves our desire, than as represented by reason,
 or by fancy, good unto us: what effect will the good-
 liest beauty, or the sweetest harmony have upon him,
 who wants sense to discern, or judgment to prize
 them? This is our natural way of acting; and ac-
 cording to it, that we may in due measure love God,
 he must appear proportionably amiable, and desir-
 able to us; we must entertain worthy thoughts of
 him, as full of all perfection in himself; as the foun-
 tain of all good; as the sole author of all that hap-
 piness we can hope for or receive: as he, in posses-
 sion of whom we shall possess all things desirable;
 in effect and virtue, all riches, all honours, all plea-
 sure, all good that we are capable of; and without
 whom we can enjoy no real good or true content:
 which esteem of him, how can it otherwise than
 beget affection toward him? If the faint resem-
 blances, or the slender participations of such excel-
 lencies (of that incomprehensible wisdom, that un-
 controllable power, that unconfined bounty, that un-
 blemished purity, which are united in him, and shine
 from him with a perfect lustre; if, I say, the very
 faint resemblances, and imperfect participations of
 these excellencies) discerned in other things, are apt
 to raise our admiration, and allure our affection to-
 ward them; if the glimmering of some small incon-
 siderable benefit, the shadow of real profit discovered
 in these inferior empty things, is able so strongly to
 attract our eyes, and fix our hearts upon them, why
 should not from a like, but so much greater cause,
 the like effect proceed? whence can it be that the

apprehension of an object so infinitely lovely, so incomparably beneficial (if not passing cursorily through our fancy, but deeply impressed upon our mind) should not proportionably affect and incline us toward him with all that desire, that delight, that good-will which are proper to love? If we think, as the Psalmist did, that *there is none in heaven or in earth comparable to God*, (comparable in essential perfection, comparable in beneficial influence,) why should we not be disposed also to say with him; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* Such a reverent esteem is the proper foundation upon which true love is built, and which upholds it: whence, as the love of God doth commonly denote all the duties of religion; so doth fear (or reverence to him (likewise in scripture-style comprehend and express them all; it being the root from whence love doth sprout, and by which it is nourished: it being the beginning of that true wisdom by which we embrace and fasten our affection upon the sovereign good. Hence we may observe, that those devout persons, whose hearts were fullest of this love, their minds were most employed in meditation upon the divine excellencies, and upon the beneficial emanations from them in bounty and mercy upon the creatures; their tongues being tuned by their thoughts, and their inward esteem breaking forth into praise. *Every day, all the day long, at all times did they bless God, praise his name, speak of his righteousness, shew forth his salvation,* as the Psalmist expresses his practice, arising from love enlivened by the esteem of God, and the apprehension of his excellent goodness: from whence also that strong faith,

SERM.
XXIII.

Ps. lxxxiix.
6.

Psalm. lxxiii.
25.

Comp. Psal.
cxiii. 17, 18.
Ps. xxxi. 23.
xxxiv. 9.
cxlv. 19, 20.

Ps. cxlvi. 7.
civ. 33.
xxxiv. 1.
lxxi. 15.
cxlv. 2.
xxxv. 28.
lxxi. 8.

SERM. that constant hope, that cheerful confidence they re-
XXIII. posed in him ; that hearty approbation of all his
 counsels and purposes ; that full acquiescence of mind
 in his proceedings ; that entire submission of their
 understanding to his discipline, and resignation of
 their will to his good pleasure ; that yielding up
 themselves (their souls and bodies, their lives and
 goods) to his disposal, with all the like high effects
 and pregnant signs of love did flow : but,

2. Another property of this love is an earnest de-
 sire of obtaining a propriety in God ; of possessing
 him, in a manner, and enjoying him ; of approaching
 him, and being, so far as may be, united to him.
 When we stand upon such terms with any person,
 that we have a free access unto and a familiar inter-
 course with him ; that his conversation is profitable
 and delightful to us ; that we can upon all occasions
 have his advice and assistance ; that he is always
 ready in our needs, and at our desire, to employ
 what is in him of ability for our good and advantage,
 we may be said to own such a person, to possess and
 enjoy him ; to be tied, as it were, and joined to him
 (as it is said *the soul of Jonathan was knit to the
 soul of David, so that he loved him as his own
 soul*). And such a propriety in, such a possession
 of, such an alliance and conjunction to himself, God
 vouchsafes to them, who are duly qualified for so

1 Sam.
xviii. 1.

Heb. xi. 16. great a good. *He was not ashamed*, saith the
 apostle concerning the faithful patriarchs, *to be called
 their God* ; to be appropriated in a manner unto

1 Joh. ii. 23.

Ps. cxix. 2.

Isa. lxxv. 1.

Deut. xi. 22.

Josh. xxiii.

8.

1 Cor. vi. 17.

Acts xi. 23.

them ; and, *He that acknowledgeth the Son*, saith
 St. John concerning good Christians, *καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει,*
hath (or possesseth) *the Father also* : and *to seek* ;
to find ; *to draw near to* ; *to cleave unto* ; *to abide*

with, to abide in; and such other phrases frequently do occur in scripture, denoting that near relation which good men stand in toward God; implying that he affords them a continual liberty of access and coming into his especial presence, that he admits them to a kind of converse and communion with himself, full of spiritual benefit and delight; that bearing an especial good-will and favour toward them, he is disposed to exert his infinite wisdom and power in their behalf; is ready to impart all needful and convenient good unto them (help in their needs, supply in wants, protection in dangers; the direction, assistance, and comfort of his Holy Spirit; pardon of sins and peace of conscience; all the blessings of grace here, and all the felicities of glory hereafter); such an interest, as it were, in God and a title unto him, such a possession and enjoyment of him we are capable of obtaining: and as that enjoyment is in itself infinitely above all things desirable; so, if we love God, we cannot surely but be earnestly desirous thereof: a cold indifferency about it, a faint wishing for it, a slothful tendency after it, are much on this side love; it will inflame our heart, it will transport our mind, it will beget a vigorous and lively motion of soul toward it: for love, you know, is commonly resembled unto, yea even assumes the name of fire; for that it warms the breast, agitates the spirits, quickens all the powers of soul, and sets them on work in desire and pursuance of the beloved object: you may imagine as well fire without heat or activity, as love without some ardency of desire. *Longing and thirsting of soul; fainting for, and panting after; crying out, and stretching forth the hands toward God*; such are the expressions signifying the

SERM.
XXIII.Joh. xv. 4.
xvii. 21.

1 Joh. ii. 24.

Psal. lxxxiv.
2. xliii. 1.
lxiii. 1.
cxliii 6.

SERM. good Psalmist's love ; by so apt and so pathetic resemblances doth he set out the vehemency of his desire to enjoy God. I need not add concerning endeavour ; for that by plain consequence doth necessarily follow desire : the thirsty soul will never be at rest till it have found out its convenient refreshment : if we, as David did, do *long after God*, we shall also with him *earnestly seek God* ; nor ever be at rest till we have found him. Coherent with this is a

3. Third property of this love, that is, a great complacency, satisfaction, and delight in the enjoyment of God : in the sense of having such a propriety in him ; in the partaking those emanations of favour and beneficence from him ; and consequently in the instruments conveying, in the means conducing to such enjoyment : for joy and content are the natural fruits of obtaining what we love, what we much value, what we earnestly desire. Yea, what we chiefly love, if we become possessed thereof, we easily rest satisfied therewith, although all other comforts be wanting to us. The covetous person for instance, who dotes upon his wealth, let him be pinched with the want of conveniences ; let his body be wearied with toil ; let his mind be distracted with care ; let him be surrounded with obloquy and disgrace—*at mihi plaudo ipse domi* ; he nevertheless enjoys himself in beholding his beloved pelf : the ambitious man likewise, although his state be full of trouble and disquiet ; though he be the mark of common envy and hatred ; though he be exposed to many crosses and dangers ; yet while he stands in power and dignity, among all those thorns of care and fear, his heart enjoys much rest and pleasure. In like manner we may observe those pious men, whose hearts were en-

dued with this love, by the present sense, or assured SERM.
 hope of enjoying God, supporting themselves under XXIII.
 all wants and distresses; *rejoicing, yea, boasting and* Luke vi. 23.
exulting, in their afflictions; and no wonder, while 1 Pet. iv. 13.
 they conceived themselves secure in the possession Rom. v. 3.
 of their hearts' wish; of that which they incomparably valued and desired above all things; which by Col. i. 24.
 experience they have found so comfortable and delicious: *O taste and see,* exclaims the Psalmist, in- Psal. xxxiv.
 spired with this passion, *O taste and see, that the* 8. xxxvi. 7.
Lord is good: How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! They (they who enjoy it) *shall be*
abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house,
and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy
pleasures: A day in thy courts is better than a Psal.
thousand: My soul shall be satisfied as with mar- lxxxiv. 1,
row and fatness: so did those devout practisers of 10. lxiii. 5.
 this duty express the satisfaction they felt in God, and in those things whereby he did impart the enjoyment of himself unto them. So did *the light of* Neh. ix. 25.
God's countenance cheer their heart; so did *his* Psal. iv. 6.
loving-kindness appear *better than life itself unto* lxiii. 3.
them. Hence do they so frequently enjoin and ex- xxxiii. 1.
 hort us *to be glad; to delight ourselves; to glory;* xxxii. 11.
to rejoice continually in the Lord; in the sense of cv. 3. cvii.
 his goodness, in the hope of his favour; the doing 12. xxxvii.
 so being an inseparable property of love; to which we adjoin another.

4. The feeling much displeasure and regret in being deprived of such enjoyment; in the absence or distance as it were of God from us; the loss or lessening of his favour; the subtraction of his gracious influences from us: for surely answerable to the love we bear unto any thing will be our grief for

SERM.
XXIII.

the want or loss thereof: it was a shrewd argument which the poet used to prove that men loved their monies better than their friends, because—*maiore tumultu plorantur nummi, quam funera*—they more lamented the loss of those than the death of these: indeed, that which a man principally affects, if he is bereaved thereof, be his condition otherwise how prosperous and comfortable soever, he cannot be contented; all other enjoyments become unsavoury and unsatisfactory to him. And so it is in our case, when God, although only for trial, according to his wisdom and good pleasure, hides his face, and withdraws his hand; leaving the soul in a kind of desolation and darkness; not finding that ready aid in distress, not feeling that cheerful vivacity in obedience, not tasting that sweet relish of devotion, which have been usually afforded thereto; if love reside in the heart, it will surely dispose it to a sensible grief; it will inspire such exclamations as those of the Psalmist: *How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy face? Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble: Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies: Draw nigh unto my soul and redeem it.* Even our Saviour himself in such a case, when God seemed for a time to withdraw the light of his countenance, and the protection of his helpful hand from him, (or to frown and lay his heavy hand upon him,) had his soul *περίλυπον ἕως θανάτου*, *extremely grieved and full of deadly anguish*; neither surely was it any other cause than excess of love, which made that temporary desertion so grievous and bitter to him, extorting from his most meek and patient heart that woful complaint, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* But especially,

Psal.
lxxxix. 46.
lxix. 16.
xxx. 7.
xlii. 3.

Matt. xxvi.
38. xxvii.
46.

when *our iniquities have*, as the Prophet expresseth SERM. XXIII.
it, separated between our God and us; and *our sins have hid his face from us*: when that *thick cloud* hath eclipsed the light of his countenance, Isa. lix. 2. Jer. v. 25. Isa. xlii. 26.
 and intercepted his gracious influences; when by wilfully offending we have, as the Israelites are said to have done, *rejected our God, cast him off*, and *driven him from us*; so depriving ourselves of propriety in him, and the possession of his favour; 1 Sam. viii. 7. x. 9.
 then if any love be alive in us, it will prompt us, with those good men in their penitential agonies, to be grievously sensible of, and sorely to bewail that our wretched condition; there *will not*, if we so heartily love God, and value his favour as they Psal. vi. xxxv. xxxviii. li. cii. cxxx. cxliii.
did, be any soundness in our flesh, or rest in our bones; *our spirit will be overwhelmed within us*, Ps. xxxviii. 3. cxliii. 4. cii. 4.
and our heart within us desolate. Our heart will be smitten and withered like grass, upon the consideration and sense of so inestimable a loss. Love will render such a condition very sad and uneasy to us; will make all other delights insipid and distasteful; all our life will become bitter and burdensome to us; neither, if it in any measure abides in us, shall we receive content, till by humble deprecation Psal. vi. 4. xxxviii. 21. li. 11. cii. 2. cxliii. 7.
 we have regained some glimpse of God's favour, some hope of being reinstated in our possession of him. Further yet,

5. Another property of this love is, to bear the highest good-will toward God; so as to wish heartily and effectually, according to our power, to procure all good to him, and to delight in it; so as to endeavour to prevent and to remove all evil, if I may so speak, that may befall him, and to be heartily displeased therewith. Although no such benefit or advantage

SERM. can accrue to God which may increase his essential
XXIII. and indefectible happiness; no harm or damage can
 arrive that may impair it, (for he can be neither
 really more or less rich, or glorious, or joyful than he
 is; neither have our desire or our fear, our delight
 or our grief, our designs or our endeavours any ob-
 ject, any ground in those respects;) yet hath he de-
 clared, that there be certain interests and concern-
 ments, which, out of his abundant goodness and con-
 descension, he doth tender and prosecute as his
 own: as if he did really receive advantage by the
 good, and prejudice by the bad success, respectively
 belonging to them; that he earnestly desires, and is
 greatly delighted with some things, very much dis-
 likes, and is grievously displeased with other things:
 for instance, that he bears a fatherly affection toward
 his creatures, and earnestly desires their welfare;
 and delights to see them enjoy the good he designed
 them; as also dislikes the contrary events; doth
 commiserate and condole their misery; that he is
 consequently well pleased, when piety and jus-
 tice, peace and order (the chief means conduc-
 ing to our welfare) do flourish; and displeased,
 when impiety and iniquity, dissension and disorder
 (those certain sources of mischief to us) do prevail;
 that he is well satisfied with our rendering to him that
 obedience, honour, and respect, which are due to him;
 and highly offended with our injurious and disre-
 spectful behaviour toward him, in the commission of
 sin and violation of his most just and holy command-
 ments: so that there wants not sufficient matter of
 our exercising good-will both in affection and action
 toward God; we are capable both of wishing, and
 (in a manner, as he will interpret and accept it) of

Psal. xvi. 2.
Job xxii. 3.

Jer. ix. 24.

doing good to him, by our concurrence with him, SERM. XXIII.
 in promoting those things which he approves and delights in, and in removing the contrary. And so surely shall we do, if we truly love God: for love, as it would have the object to be its own, as it intends to enjoy it, so it would have it in its best state, and would put it thereinto, and would conserve it therein; and would thence contribute all it is able to the welfare, to the ornament, to the pleasure and content thereof. *What is it, saith Cicero, to love, but to will or desire, that the person loved should receive the greatest good that can be?* Love also doth reconcile, conform, and unite the inclinations and affections of him who loves, to the inclinations and affections of him who is beloved; *eadem velle, et eadem nolle, to consent in liking and disliking of things*, if it be not the cause, if it be not the formal reason or essence, as some have made it, it is at least a certain effect of love. If then we truly love God, we shall desire that all his designs prosper, that his pleasure be fulfilled, that all duty be performed, all glory rendered to him: we shall be grieved at the wrong, the dishonour, the disappointment he receives: especially we shall endeavour in our own practice, with holy David, *to perform πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ, all that God wills, desires, or delights in;* Acts xliii. 22. to eschew whatever offends him. Our desire, our delight, our endeavour will conspire with and be subordinate to his; for it would be a strange kind of love that were consistent with the voluntary doing of that which is hurtful, injurious, or offensive to that we love; such actions being the proper effects, the natural signs of hatred and enmity: *If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar,* 1 John iv. 20. iii. 17.

SERM. saith St. John; and, *If any man seeth his brother*
 XXIII. *need, and shutteth his bowels toward him, how doth*
the love of God abide in him? He that in his af-
 fections is so unlike, so contrary unto God; he that
 is unwilling to comply with God's will in so reason-
 able a performance; he that in a matter wherein God
 hath declared himself so much concerned, and so af-
 fected therewith, doth not care to cross him, to dis-
 please and disappoint him; how can he with any
 show of truth, or with any modesty pretend to love
 God? Hence it is, that keeping of God's command-
 ments is commonly represented to us as the most
 proper expression, as the surest argument of our love
 to God: *shewing mercy to thousands of them that*
love me, and keep my commandments; they are
 joined together as terms equivalent, or as insepar-
 able companions in effect: *He that hath my com-*
mandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth
me: Ye are my friends, (that is, not only objects of
 my affection, but actively friends, bearing affection
 unto me,) *if ye do whatsoever I command you,* saith
 our Saviour: and, *Whoso keepeth his word, in him*
is the love of God truly perfected: (he hath the
 truth and sincerity; he hath the integrity and con-
 summation of love: without it love is wholly false and
 counterfeit, or very lame and imperfect; so the loving
 and beloved disciple teaches us.) For by doing
 thus, as we signify our esteem of God's wisdom
 which directeth us, our dread of his power and jus-
 tice that can punish us, our hope in his goodness and
 fidelity to reward us, our regard to his majesty and
 authority over us; so especially thereby (if our obe-
 dience at least be free and cheerful) we express our
 good-will toward him; shewing thereby, that we are

Exod. xx.6.

John xiv.
21, 23. xv.
14.

1 John. jv.
12.

disposed to do him all the good and gratify him all we can; that his interests, his honour, his content are dear and precious to us. And were indeed our hearts knit unto God with this bond of perfection, we could not in our wills, and consequently in our practice, be so severed from him; we should also love heartily all virtue and goodness, the nearest resemblances of him, and which he chiefly loves; we should do what David so oft professes himself to do, *love his law, and greatly delight in his commandments.* With our Saviour, we should *delight to perform his will*; it would (as it was to him) *be our meat and our drink to do it; his yoke would be easy* indeed, *and his burden light* unto us; his yoke so easy, that we should wear it rather as a jewel about our necks than as a yoke; his burden so light, that we should not feel it as a burden, but esteem it our privilege. We should not be so dull in apprehending, or so slack in performing duty; for this sharp-sighted affection would presently discern, would readily suggest it to us; by the least intimation it would perceive what pleaseth God, and would snatch opportunity of doing it; we should not need any arguments to persuade us, nor any force to compel us, love would inspire us with sufficient vigour and alacrity; it would urge and stimulate us forward not only *to walk in*, but even, as the Psalmist expresseth it, *to run the ways of God's commandments.*

But let thus much serve for explication of the nature of this duty; in order, as was before said, to the direction of our practice, and examination thereof: the particular duties mentioned being comprehended in, or appertaining to the love of God, if we perceive that we practise them, we may to our satisfaction and

SERM.
XXIII.Ps. lxxxvi.
11.
Col. iii. 14.Psal. xi. 7.
Psal. cxix.
163, 165,
113, 16, 35,
70, 47, 24,
17.
Psal. i. 2.
cxii. i. xl.
8.
Heb. x. 7.
John iv. 34.
v. 30.
Prov. iii. 22.Psal. cxix.
32.

SERM. comfort infer, that proportionably we are endued with
 XXIII. this grace ; if not, we have reason (such as should beget remorse and pious sorrow in us) to suspect we abide in a state of disaffection or of indifferency toward him. If we find the former good disposition, we should strive to cherish and improve it ; if the second bad one, we should (as we tender our own welfare and happiness, as we would avoid utter ruin and misery) endeavour to remove it.

II. To the effecting of which purposes I shall next propound some means conducive ; some in way of removing obstacles, others by immediately promoting the duty.

Of the first kind are these ensuing :

1. The destroying of all loves opposite to the love of God, extinguishing all affection to things odious and offensive to God : mortifying all corrupt and perverse, all unrighteous and unholy desires*. It agrees with souls no less than with bodies, that they cannot at once move or tend contrary ways ; upward and downward, backward and forward at one time : it is not possible we should together truly esteem, earnestly desire, bear sincere good-will to things in nature and inclination quite repugnant each to other. No man ever took him for his real friend, who maintains correspondency, secret or open, who joins in acts of hostility with his professed enemies : at least we cannot, as we ought, love God with our whole heart, if with any part thereof we affect his enemies ; those, which are mortally and irreconcilably so ; as are all iniquity and impurity, all inordinate lusts both of flesh and spirit : *the carnal mind* (the minding or affecting of the flesh) is, St. Paul tells us, *enmity toward God ; for it is not*

*Psal.xcvil.
10.
Ye that love
the Lord,
hate evil.

τὸ φρόνημα
τῆς σαρκός.
Rom.viii.7.

subject to the law of God, nor can be ; it is an **SERM.**
 enemy, even the worst of enemies, an incorrigibly **XXIII.**
 obstinate rebel against God ; and can we then, re-
 taining any love to God or peace with him, comply
 and conspire therewith ? And, *the friendship of the* Jam. iv. 4.
world (that is, I suppose, of those corrupt princi-
 ples, and those vicious customs which usually pre-
 vail in the world) *is also*, St. James tells us, *enmity*
with God ; so that, he adds, *if any man be a friend*
to the world, he is thereby constituted (he immedi- καθίσταται.
 ately *ipso facto* becomes) *an enemy to God.* St. John ii.
 John affirms the same ; *If any man love the world,* ^{15.}
the love of the Father is not in him ; explaining
 himself, that by the world he means those things,
 which are most generally embraced and practised
 therein : *the lust*, or desire, *of the flesh*, (that is, sen-
 suality and intemperance,) *the lust of the eyes*, (that καθημερία τῶν
 is, envy, covetousness, vain curiosity, and the like,) σεμνῆς, κατι-
the ostentation, or boasting, *of life*, (that is, pride, θυμία τῶν
ἰφθαιμῶν,
ἢ ἀλαζονεία
τοῦ βίου.
 ambition, vain-glory, arrogance,) qualities as irrecon-
 cileably opposite to the holy nature and will of God,
 so altogether inconsistent with the love of him ; be-
 getting in us an aversion and antipathy towards
 him ; rendering his holiness distasteful to our affec-
 tions, and his justice dreadful to our consciences ; and
 himself consequently, his will, his law, his presence
 hateful to us : while we take him to be our enemy
 and to hate us, we shall certainly in like manner
 stand affected toward him : this indeed is the main
 obstacle, the removal of which will much facilitate
 the introduction of divine love ; it being a great
 step to reconciliation and friendship, to be disen-
 gaged from the adverse party : we should then easily
 discern the beauty of divine goodness and sanctity,

SERM. when the mists of ignorance, of error, of corrupt
 XXIII. prejudice, arising from those gross carnal affections,
 were dissipated; we should better relish the sweet
 and savoury graces of God, when the palate of our
 mind were purged from vicious tinctures; we should
 be more ready to hope for peace and favour in his
 eyes, when our consciences were freed from the sense
 of such provocations and defilements. But,

2. If we would obtain this excellent grace, we
 must restrain our affections toward all other things,
 however in their nature innocent and indifferent.

ἐξου.
 Matt. xix.
 20.
 Mark x. 21.

The young gentleman in the Gospel had, it seems,
 arrived to the former pitch; having through the
 course of his life abstained from grosser iniquities
 and impurities; so far, that our Saviour, in regard
 to that attainment of his, conceived an affection for
 him, (he loved him, it is said,) yet was not he suf-
 ficiently disposed to love God; being *in one thing*
deficient, that he retained an immoderate affection
 to his wealth and worldly conveniences; with which
 sort of affections the love of God cannot consist: for
 we much undervalue God, and cannot therefore duly
 love him, if we deem any thing comparable to him,
 or considerable in worth or usefulness when he
 comes in competition: if we deem, that the posses-
 sion of any other thing beside him can confer to our
 happiness, or the want thereof can prejudice it, and
 make us miserable: no other love should bear any
 proportion to the love of him; no other object should
 appear (as indeed none really is) simply good, desir-
 able, or amiable to us. What value St. Paul had
 of his legal qualifications and privileges, the same
 should we have concerning all other things in ap-
 pearance pleasant or convenient to us; they ought,

ἀγίαστος
 αὐτίς.
 Luke xviii.
 22.

Phil. iii. 8.

in regard to God, to *seem damage and dung*; not only mean and despicable, but even sordid and loath-
 some to us; not only unworthy of our regard and desire, but deserving our hatred and abhorrency; we should, I say, even hate the best of them; so our Saviour expresseth it: *If any man doth not hate his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters, and even his own soul*, (or his own life,) *he cannot be my disciple*; that is, if any man retain in his heart any affection not infinitely, as it were, less than that which he bears to God; if any thing be in comparison dear and precious to him, he is not disposed to entertain the main point of Christ's discipline, the sincere and entire love of God. To *love him*, as he requires, *with all our heart*, implies, that our heart be filled with his love, so that no room be left for any other passion to enter or dwell there. And indeed such, if we observe it, is the nature of our soul, we can hardly together harbour earnest or serious affections toward different objects; one of them will prevail and predominate; and so doing will not suffer the other to remain, but will extrude or extinguish it: no heart of man can correspond with two rivals, but, as our Saviour teacheth us, *it will hate and despise one, will love and stick to the other*; whence he infers, that *we cannot serve* (that is, affectionately adhere to) *both God and mammon*. If we have, according to the Psalmist's phrase, *set our hearts upon wealth, and will be rich*; (are resolved to be, as St. Paul expresseth it;) if we eagerly aspire to power and honour, with the Pharisees, *preferring the applause of men before the favour of God*; if any worldly or bodily pleasure, or any cu-

SERM.
XXIII.ζημία, ενύ-
βαλα.Luke xiv.
26.

Matt. vi. 24.

Psal. lxii.

10.
1 Tim. vi.9, 17.
Johu xii.

43.

SERM. riosity how plausible soever, hath seized upon our
XXIII. spirits and captivated our affections; if any inferior

2 Tim. iv. object whatever, with its apparent splendour, sweet-
10. ness, goodness, convenience, hath so inveigled our
fancy, that we have an exceeding esteem thereof,
and a greedy appetite thereto; that we enjoy it with
huge content, and cannot part from it without much
regret; that thing doth at present take up God's
place within us; so that our heart is incapable, at
least in due measure, of divine love: but if we be
indifferently affected toward all such things, and are
unconcerned in the presence or absence of them; es-
teeming them as they are, mean and vain; loving
them as they deserve, as inferior and trivial; if, ac-
cording to St. Paul's direction, *we use them as if*
1 Cor. vii. *we used them not*; it is another good step toward
31. the love of God: the divine light will shine more
brightly into so calm and serene a medium: a soul
void of other affections will not be only more capa-
ble to receive, but apt to suck in that heavenly one;
being insensible, in any considerable degree, of all
other comforts and complacences, we shall be apt to
search after, and reach out at that, which alone can
satisfy our understanding and satiate our desires;
especially if we add hereto,

3. The freeing of our hearts also from immoderate
affection to ourselves; (I mean not from a sober de-
sire or an earnest regard to our own true good; for
this, as nature enforces to, so all reason allows, and
even God's command obligeth us to; nor can it be
excessive; but a high conceit of ourselves as worthy
or able, a high confidence in any thing we have
within us or about us;) for this is a very strong bar
against the entrance, as of all other charity, so espe-

ially of this; for as the love of an external object
 loth thrust, as it were, our soul outwards towards it;
 o the love of ourselves detains it within, or draws it
 nwards; and consequently these inclinations cross-
 ng each other cannot both have effect, but one will
 abdue and destroy the other. If our mind be—*ipsa*
uis contenta bonis—satisfied with her own (taking
 hem for her own) endowments, abilities, or fancied
 efections; if we imagine ourselves wise enough to
 erceive, good enough to choose, resolute enough
 o undertake, strong enough to achieve, constant
 ough to pursue whatever is conducive to our real
 appiness and best content; we shall not care to go
 urther; we will not be at the trouble to search
 broad for that which, in our opinion, we can so
 eadily find, so easily enjoy at home. If we so ad-
 nire and doat upon ourselves, we thereby put our-
 selves into God's stead, and usurp the throne due to
 him in our hearts; comparing ourselves to God, and
 in effect preferring ourselves before him; thereby
 onsequently shutting out that unparalleled esteem,
 hat predominant affection we owe to him; while
 ve are busy in dressing and decking, in court-
 ng and worshipping this idol of our fancy, we shall
 e estranged from the true object of our devo-
 ion; both we shall willingly neglect him, and he
 n just indignation will desert us. But if as all
 ther things, so even ourselves do appear exceed-
 ngly vile and contemptible, foul and ugly in com-
 arison to God; if we *take ourselves* to be (as truly
 Gal. vi. 3.
 ve are) mere *nothings*, or somethings worse; not
 nly destitute of all considerable perfections, but full
 f great defects; blind and fond in our conceits,
 rooked and perverse in our wills, infirm and un-

SERM.
 XXIII.

Τῆ γὰρ ἑνὶ
 ἰξ αἰνοῦ τις
 ἴχει σπου-
 σθε, καὶ μά-
 ταιος παρ'
 ἄλλου λαμ-
 βάνων.
 Epict. i. 9.

SERM. XXIII. stable in all our powers, unable to discern, unwilling to embrace, backward to set upon, inconstant in prosecuting those things which are truly good and advantageous to us; if we have, I say, this right opinion and judgment of ourselves, seeing within us nothing lovely or desirable, no proper object there of our esteem or affection, no bottom to rest our mind upon, no ground of solid comfort at home, we shall then be apt to look abroad, to direct our eyes, and settle our affections upon somewhat more excellent in itself, or more beneficial to us, that seems better to deserve our regard, and more able to supply our defects. And if all other things about us appear alike deformed and deficient, unworthy our affection and unable to satisfy our desires; then may we be disposed to seek, to find, to fasten and repose our soul upon the only proper object of our love; in whom we shall obtain all that we need, infallible wisdom to guide us, omnipotent strength to help us, infinite goodness for us to admire and enjoy.

These are the chief obstacles, the removing of which conduce to the begetting and increasing the love of God in us. A soul so cleansed from love to bad and filthy things, so emptied of affection to vain and unprofitable things, so open and dilated by excluding all conceit of, all confidence in itself, is a vessel proper for the divine love to be infused into; into so large and pure a vacuity (as finer substances are apt to flow of themselves into spaces void of grosser matter) that free and moveable Spirit of divine grace will be ready to succeed, and therein to disperse itself. As all other things in nature, the clogs being removed which hinder them, do presently tend with all their force to the place of their

rest and well-being; so would, it seems, our souls, **SERM. XXIII.**
 being loosed from baser affections obstructing them, willingly incline toward God, the natural centre, as it were, and bosom of their affection; would resume, as Origen speaks, that *natural philter* (that intrinsic spring, or incentive of love) *which all creatures have toward their Creator*; especially, if to these we add those positive instruments, which are more immediately and directly subservient to the production of this love; they are these:

Φίλτρον
ἀναλαμβάνειν φυσικὸν
τὸ πρὸς τὸν
κτίσαντα.
Orig. in
Cels. p.135.

1. Attentive consideration of the divine perfections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehension of them.

2. The consideration of God's works and actions; his works and actions of nature, of providence, of grace.

3. Serious regard and reflection upon the peculiar benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed to ourselves.

4. An earnest resolution and endeavour to perform God's commandments, although upon inferior considerations of reason; upon hope, fear, desire to obtain the benefits of obedience, to shun the mischiefs from sin.

5. Assiduous prayer to Almighty God, that he in mercy would please to bestow his love upon us, and by his grace to work it in us.

But I must forbear the prosecution of these things, rather than further trespass upon your patience. Let us conclude all with a good Collect, sometimes used by our Church.

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent

SERM. *gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all*
XXIII. *virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted*

dead before thee; grant this for thine only Son
Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

S E R M O N XXIV.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTH. xxii. 37.

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

WHICH is the great commandment? was the SERM. XXIV. question, in answer whereto our Saviour returns this text; and that with highest reason, (discernible by every man,) for that of necessity the love of God is the principal duty we owe unto him: the great duty indeed, as being largest in extent, and comprehending in a manner all other duties of piety; as that which exceeds in proper worth and dignity, (employing the noblest faculties of our souls in their best operations upon the most excellent object,) as that which communicates virtue unto, and hath a special influence upon all other duties; in fine, as that, which is the sum, the soul, the spring of all other duties: in discoursing whereupon, I did formerly propound this method; first, to declare the nature thereof; then, to shew some means apt to beget and improve that excellent virtue in us; lastly, to propose some inducements to the practice thereof.

The first part I endeavoured to perform, by describing it according to its essential properties (common to love in general, and more particularly to this)

SERM. of duly esteeming God, of desiring, according as we
XXIV. are capable, to possess and enjoy him, of receiving
 delight and satisfaction in the enjoyment of him, of
 feeling displeasure in being deprived hereof, of bear-
 ing good-will unto him, expressed by endeavours to
 please him, by delighting in the advancement of his
 glory, by grieving when he is disserved or disho-
 noured.

The next part I also entered upon, and offered
 to consideration those means, which serve chiefly to
 remove the impediments of our love to God ; which
 were,

1. The suppressing all affections opposite to this ;
 all perverse and corrupt, all unrighteous and unholy
 desires.

2. The restraining or keeping within bounds of
 moderation our affections toward other things, even
 in their nature innocent or indifferent.

3. The freeing of our hearts from immoderate
 affection toward ourselves ; from all conceit of, and
 confidence in, any qualities or abilities of our own ;
 the diligent use of which means I did suppose would
 conduce much to the production and increase of
 divine love within us.

To them I shall now proceed to subjoin other in-
 struments more immediately and directly subservient
 to the same purpose : whereof the first is,

Καθόλου μὲν
 ἢ τῶν καθ' ἑ-
 αυτὴν διὰ
 τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ
 ἀγνοοῦν, ἢ
 ἀδύναμον
 γινώσκον ἰγγί-
 νισται. Basil.
 de Jud.
 Dei, tom. ii.
 p. 261.

1. Attentive consideration upon the divine per-
 fections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear
 apprehension of them : as counterfeit worth and
 beauty receive advantage by distance and darkness ;
 so real excellency,—*si propius stes, te capiet magis*
 —the greater light you view it in, the nearer you
 approach it, the more strictly you examine it, the

more you will approve and like it : so the more we think of God, the better we know him, the fuller and clearer conceptions we have of him, the more we shall be apt to esteem and desire him ; the more excellent in himself, the more beneficial to us he will appear. Hence is the knowledge of God represented in holy writ not only as a main instrument of religion, but as an essential character thereof: as equivalent to the being well affected toward God : *O continue*, saith the Psalmist, *thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee* ; that is, to all religious people. And, *This*, saith our Saviour, *is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent* ; knowledge of them implying all good affections toward them : as on the other side, ignorance of God denotes disaffection or want of affection toward God : *Now the sons of Eli*, it is said, *were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord* : and, *He that loveth not*, saith St. John, *doth not know God* ; the want of love to God is an evident sign, a natural effect of ignorance concerning him : indeed considering the nature of our mind, and its ordinary method of operation, it seems impossible, that such perfection discerned should not beget answerable reverence and affection thereto : if beautiful spectacles, harmonious sounds, fragrant odours, delicate savours do necessarily and certainly please the respective senses ; why should not with the like sure efficacy the proper objects of our mind affect it, if duly represented and conveyed thereto ? If the wit of the most ingenious artists, the cunning of the deepest politicians, the wisdom of the sagest philosophers are but mere blindness and stupidity in comparison to the wisdom of God ; the lowest instance or expres-

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2 Pet. ii. 20.

Psal. xxxvi.

10. ix. 10.

Isa. v. 13.

xi. 9.

Hos. ii. 10.

John xvii. 3

Jer. xxii.

16. xxiv. 7.

xxxi. 34.

2 Cor. x. 5.

Isa. i. 3.

Jer. xix. 3.

6. x. 25.

1 Thess. iv.

5. 1 Sam. ii.

12. 1 John iv. 8.

SERM. sion of whose wisdom (his τὸ μωρὸν, *his folly*, as St. XXIV. Paul speaks) *is wiser than men*, doth excel the re-

1 Cor. i. 25. sults of man's highest wisdom; yet them we admire and commend in men, why then do we not much more adore the divine wisdom? If the abilities of them who dexterously manage great business, or achieve prosperously great exploits are indeed mere impotency in regard to God's power; *whose weakness* (that is, the smallest effects of whose power) is, as St. Paul again tells us, *stronger than men*, surpasses the utmost results of human endeavours: yet those things in men we extol and celebrate, how can we then forbear to reverence the divine power? If the dispensers of freest and largest bounty among men, the noblest patriots, the most munificent benefactors, the most tenderly affectionate friends be in respect of God unworthy to be counted or called good, (as our Saviour tells us; *If ye being bad know to give good things*; and, *There is none good but God*;) yet such persons are much beloved and applauded: how then can we abstain from paying the like measure of affection and respect to the divine goodness? If good qualities so inferior and defective obtain so much from us, whence comes it that the infinitely superior and most perfect excellencies of God do not beget in their proportion a suitable regard and veneration in us toward him? whence, if not either from our not firmly believing them, or not rightly apprehending them, or not attentively considering them? Our belief of them in gross and at large we may suppose, as connected with the belief of God's existence, and included in the very notion of God; the defect therefore must proceed from the remaining causes, want of a right appre-

Matt. vii.

11.

Luke xi. 13.

Matt. xix.

17.

hension, or neglect of attentive consideration about them: as to the first of these; it is common for men to have confused, imperfect, and wrong conceptions about the divine attributes, especially in the recesses of their mind; which although they spare to utter with their mouths, yet they vent in their practice: if we, for instance, imagine that we can comprehend the extent of God's designs, or fathom the depth of his counsels; if we measure and model his reasons of proceeding according to our fancy, (as *if his thoughts were as our thoughts, and his ways as our ways*; or, as if he did *see as man sees*;) if we can *bleſs ourſelves in following our own imaginations,* counsels, and devices, although repugnant to the reſolutions of divine wiſdom; taking theſe not to befit, or not to concern us, as we find many in the ſcripture reprov'd for doing; we greatly miſtake and undervalue that glorious attribute of God, his wiſdom; and no wonder then, if we do not upon account thereof duly reverence and love God: likewise if we concerning the divine power conceit, that, notwithstanding it, we ſhall be able to accompliſh our unlawful deſigns; that *we* may, as it is in Job, *harden our hearts againſt him and proſper*; that we can anywiſe either withſtand or evade his power, (as alſo many are intimat'd to do, in ſcripture; even generally all thoſe who dare preſumptuouſly to offend God,) we alſo miſconceive of that excellent attribute; and the contempt of God, rather than love of him, will thence ariſe. If, concerning the divine goodneſs and holineſs, we imagine that God is diſaffected toward his creatures, (antecedently to all demerits, or bad qualifications in them,) yea indifferent in affection toward them; inclinable to do them harm, or

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Isa. lv. 8.
1 Sam. xvi.
Deut. xxix.
7.
19.
Pſal. lxxxi.
12. cvii. 11.
Isa. lxx. 2.
liii. 6.
Jer. xviii.
12.
Hos. x. 12.
viii. 12.
Pſal. lxxiii.
11. x. 11.
xciv. 7.
Job ix. 4.
Isa. xlv. 9.
x. 15. liv.
17.
1 Cor. x. 22.
Deut.
xxxiii. 8.
Dan. v. 23.
Amos ix. 2.
Isa. ii. 19.
Jer. xvi. 16.
Deut.
xxviii. 29.
Num. xiv.
41.
2 Chron.
xiii. 12.

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Τὸν γὰρ θεὸν
οὐ βλάπτει
ἰχθυὶν ἢ βοῶν
ποιῶντων, ὅτι
τι μὲν εἶς
μισοῖ. Plat.
de Leg. x.

not propense to do them good ; if we deem him apt to be harsh and rigorous in his proceedings, to exact performances unsuitable to the strength he hath given us, to impose burdens intolerable upon us ; will not such thoughts be apt to breed in us toward God (as they would toward any other person so disposed) rather a servile dread, (little different from downright hatred,) or an hostile aversation, than a genuine reverence, or a kindly affection toward him ? If we fancy him, like to pettish man, apt to be displeas'd without cause, or beyond measure, for our doing somewhat innocent, (neither bad in itself, nor prejudicial to public or private good,) or for our omitting that, which no law, no good reason plainly requires of us ; what will such thoughts but sour our spirits toward him, make us fearful and suspicious of him ; which sort of dispositions are inconsistent with true love ? If, on the other side, we judge him fond and partial in his affections ; or slack and easy, as it were, in his proceedings ; apt to favour us although we neglect him ; to indulge us in our sins, or connive at our miscarriages ; will not such thoughts rather incline us in our hearts to slight him, and in our actions insolently to dally with him, than heartily and humbly to love him ? If we conceit his favour procur'd, or his anger appeas'd by petty observances, perhaps without any good rule or reason affected by ourselves ; when we neglect duties of greater worth and consequence, *the more weighty matters of the Law* ; what is this but instead of God to reverence an idol of our own fancy ; to yield unto him (who is only pleas'd with holy dispositions of mind, with real effects of goodness) not duties of humble love, but acts of presumption and flattery ? But if, contrari-

wise, we truly conceive of God's wisdom, that his counsels are always throughly good, and that we are concerned both in duty and interest to follow them, although exceeding the reach of our understanding, or contrary to the suggestions of our fancy; concerning his power, that it will certainly interpose itself to the hinderance of our bad projects, that it will be in vain to contest therewith, that we must submit unto, or shall be crushed by his hand; concerning his goodness, that as he is infinitely good and benign, so he is also perfectly holy and pure; as he wisheth us all good, and is ready to promote it, so he detesteth our sins, nor will suffer us to do himself, ourselves, and our neighbour any wrong; as most bountiful in dispensing his favours, so not prodigal of them, or apt to cast them away on such as little value them, and do not endeavour to answer them; as a faithful rewarder of all true virtue and piety, so a severe chastiser of all iniquity and profaneness; as full of mercy and pity toward them, who are sensible of their unworthiness, and penitent for their faults, so an implacable avenger of obstinate and incorrigible wickedness: in fine, as a true friend to us, if we be not wilful enemies to him, and desirous of our welfare, if we do not perversely render ourselves incapable thereof; so withal jealous of his own honour, resolute to maintain and vindicate his just authority, careful to uphold the interests of right and truth, and to shew the distinction he makes between good and evil; if we have, I say, such conceptions of God, (agreeable to what his word and his doings represent him to us,) how can we otherwise than bear a most high respect, a most great affection unto him? A prince surely endued with such qualities; wise

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Isa. v. 4.
Hab. i. 13.
Psal. v. 4.
xi. 5, &c.

SERM. XXIV. and powerful, good and just together ; tendering the good of his people, yet preserving the force of his laws ; designing always what is best, and constantly pursuing his good intentions ; tempering bounty and clemency with needful justice and severity ; we should all commend and extol as worthy of most affectionate veneration ; how much more then shall we be so affected toward him, in whom we apprehend all those excellencies to concur without any imperfection or allay ? especially if by attention we impress those conceptions upon our hearts ; for how true and proper soever, if they be only slight and transient, they may not suffice to this intent ; if they pass away as a flash, they will not be able to kindle in us any strong affection. But if such abstracted consideration of the divine perfections will not alone wholly avail, let us add hereto as a further help toward the production and increase of this divine grace in us,

2. The consideration of God's works and actions ; his works of nature, his acts of providence, his works and acts of grace ; the careful meditating upon these will be apt to breed, to nourish, to improve, and augment this affection. Even the contemplation of the lower works of nature, of this visible frame of things, (upon which indeed many perspicuous characters of divine perfection, of immense power, of admirable wisdom, of abundant goodness are engraven,) hath in many minds excited a very high degree of reverence and good affection toward God : the devoutest persons (the holy Psalmist particularly) we may observe frequent in this practice, inflaming their hearts with love, and elevating them in reverence toward God, by surveying the common works of God, by

Psal. viii.
xix. cxlv.
civ. cxlvii.

viewing and considering the magnificent vastness and variety, the goodly order and beauty, the constant duration and stability of those things we see; in remarking the general bounty and munificence with which this great *Paterfamilias* hath provided for the necessary sustenance, for the convenience, for the defence, for the relief, for the delight and satisfaction of his creatures: even in the contemplation of these things being ravished with admiration and affection, how often do they thus exclaim: *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy! Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite: All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord:* with such reflections, I say, upon those common, yet admirable and excellent works of God (which we perhaps with a regardless eye unprofitably pass over) did those good men kindle and foment pious affections toward God. The same effect may also be considered in the very common proceedings of divine providence beget in us; such as are discernible to every attentive mind both from history and daily experience; considering God's admirable condescension in regarding and ordering human affairs both for common benefit, and for relief of particular necessities, his supplying the general needs of men, relieving the poor, succouring the weak and helpless, protecting and vindicating the oppressed, his seasonable encouraging and rewarding the good, restraining and chastising the bad: even such observations are productive of love to God in those, who, according to that duty intimated by the prophet, *do regard the*

SERM.
XXIV.Psal. xxxiii.
5. cxix. 64.
cxlv. 10.
cxlvii. 4,
&c.

Isa. v. 12.

SERM. *works of the Lord, and consider the operations*
 XXIV. *of his hands ; They who are wise, and will ob-*

serve these things, they, as the Psalmist tells, shall
 Psal. xxviii. *understand the loving-kindness of the Lord ; un-*
 5. cvii. 43.
 lxiv. 9. cxl. *derstand it practically, so as to be duly affected*
 2. lxxvii.
 11. cxliii. 5.

thereby ; and so accordingly we find the consideration of these things applied by the great guides and patterns of our devotion. . But especially the study and contemplation of those more high and rare proceedings of God, in managing his gracious design of our redemption from sin and misery, wherein a wisdom so unsearchable and a goodness so astonishing declare themselves, are most proper and effectual means of begetting divine love : if the consideration of God's eternal care for our welfare, of his descending to the lowest condition for our sake, of his willingly undertaking and patiently undergoing all kinds of inconvenience, of disgrace, of bitter pain and sorrow for us ; of his freely offering us mercy, and earnestly wooing us to receive it, even when offenders, when enemies, when rebels against him ; of his bearing with exceeding patience all our neglects of him, all our injuries towards him ; of his preparing a treasure of perfect and endless bliss, and using all means possible to bring us unto the possession thereof ; if, I say, considering those wonderful strains of goodness will not affect us, what can do it ? How miserably cold and damp must our affections be, if all those powerful rays (so full of heavenly light and heat) shining through our minds cannot inflame them ? how desperately hard and tough must our hearts be, if such incentives cannot soften and melt them ? Is it not an apathy more than stoical, more than stony, which can stand immoveable before so mighty inducements

to passion? Is it not a horridly prodigious insensibility to think upon such expressions of kindness without feeling affection reciprocal? But if the consideration of God's general and public beneficence will not touch us sufficiently, let us further hereto adjoin,

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3. Serious reflections upon the peculiar (personal or private) benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed unto ourselves. There is, I suppose, scarce any man, who may not, if he be not very stupid and regardless, have observed, beside the common effects of God's universal care and bounty wherein he partakes, even some particular expressions and testimonies of divine favour dispensed unto him by God's hand, (apt to convince him of God's especial providence, care, and good-will to him particularly, and thereby to draw him unto God,) both in relation to his temporal and to his spiritual state; in preventing and preserving him from mischiefs imminent, in opportune relief, when he was pressed with want, or surprised by danger; in directing him to good, and diverting him from evil. Every man's experience, I say and suppose, will inform him that he hath received many such benefits from a hand, invisible indeed to sense, yet easily discernible, if he do attend to the circumstances wherein, to the seasons when they come; it is natural to every man being in distress, from which he cannot by any present or visible means extricate himself, to stretch forth his hand and lift up his voice toward heaven, making his recourse to divine help; and it is as natural for God to regard the needs, to hearken to the cries, to satisfy the desires of such persons; for, *The Lord is nigh* Psal. cxlv. 16, 18. *to all that call upon him: he openeth his hand, and*

SERM. *satisfieth the desire of every living thing: He will*
 XXIV. *be a refuge to the oppressed, a refuge in times of*

Ps. cvii. 8. *trouble: He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth*
 xxxiv. 6, 10. *the hungry soul with goodness: They that seek*
 ix. 9. *the Lord shall not want any good thing: Look at*

Ecclus. ii. *the generations of old and see; did ever any trust*
 10. *in the Lord and was forsaken? or whom did he*

ever despise that called upon him? This poor

man (this, and that, any poor man,) cried, and

the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all

his troubles: since then no man in all likelihood

hath not some occasion of God's especial favour and

assistance, and God is always so ready to afford

them, we may reasonably presume that every man

doth sometime receive them, and is thereby obliged

to return a grateful affection to him, not only as to

a common benefactor, but as to his particular friend

and patron. However there is none of us who may

not perceive himself singularly indebted to God's pa-

tience in forbearing to punish him, to his mercy in

pardoning and passing over innumerable offences

committed against him: the renowned penitent in

Luke vii. *the Gospel did love much, because much was for-*
 47. *given her: and who is there of us, that hath not*

the same reason to love much? Who is there that,

at least according to God's inclination and intention,

hath not had much forgiven him? Whom have not

Rom. ii. 4. *the riches of divine goodness and long-suffering*

attended upon in order to his repentance? Who

hath not been in so great degree ungrateful, unfruit-

ful, and unprofitable, that he hath not abundant rea-

Luke xvii. *son to acknowledge God's especial grace in bearing*
 10. *with him, and to confess with Jacob, that he is less*

Psal. cxxx. *than the least of all God's mercies? If any such*

3. *Gen. xxxii.*

10. *than the least of all God's mercies? If any such*

there were, he should have no less cause to be affected with the abundance of that grace, which so preserved him from sins and provocations. For if we stand, it is he that *upholdeth us*; if we fall, it is he that *raiseth us*; it is his especial favour that either we avoid sin, or sinning escape punishment. Now then God having by many real evidences declared such particular affection toward us, can we, considering thereon, do otherwise than say to ourselves, after St. John, *Nos ergo diligamus Deum, quoniam prior dilexit nos; Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us*: surely in all ingenuity, according to all equity, we are bound to do so; the reason and nature of things doth require it of us: all other loves, even those of the baser sort, are able to propagate themselves; (to continue and enlarge their kind;) are commonly fruitful and effectual in producing their like: how strangely then unnatural and monstrous is it, that this love only, this so vigorous and perfect love, should be barren and impotent as it were? *If you love those that love you*, saith our Saviour, *what reward have you?* (what reward can you pretend to for so common, so necessary a performance?) *do not even the publicans do the same?* (the publicans, men not usually of the best natures, or tenderest hearts, yet they do! thus.) And, again saith he, *If you love those who love you, what thank is it? for even sinners love those that love them*; (sinners, men not led by conscience of duty, or regard to reason, but hurried with a kind of blind and violent force, by instinct of nature, do so much, go so far.) If thus men, both by nature and custom most untractable, the least guided by rules of right, of reason, of ingenuity; yea, not only the most bar-

SERM.
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Ps. xxxvii.
23. cxlvi. 8.

1 John iv.

19.

<sup>Εὐρεὶ χάρις
γὰρ τὸν Χά-
ρις τὸν Χά-
ρις τὸν Χά-
ρις.</sup> Soph.

Matt. v. 46.

Luke vi. 32.

SERM. barous men, but even the most savage beasts are
 XXIV. sensible of courtesies, return a kind of affection unto
 them who make much of them, and do them good; what temper are we of, if all that bounty we experience cannot move us; if God's daily *loading us with his benefits*, if his *crowning us with loving-kindness and tender mercies*, if all those *showers of blessings*, which he continually poureth down upon our heads, do not produce some good degree of correspondent affection in us? It cannot surely proceed altogether from a wretched baseness of disposition, that we are so cold and indifferent in our affection toward God, or are sometimes so averse from loving him; it must rather in great part come from our not observing carefully, not frequently calling to mind, not earnestly considering what God hath done for us, how exceedingly we stand obliged to his goodness, from our following that untoward generation of men, who were not, it is said, *mindful of the wonders which God did among them; who remembered not his hand, nor the day that he delivered them*; rather following, I say, such careless and *heartless people*, (so they are termed,) than imitating that excellent person's discretion, who constantly did *set God's loving-kindness before his eyes*, who frequently did thus raise his mind, and rouse up his affections; *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases, &c.* It is not for want of the like experience, or the like obligation, but for want of the same wisdom, of the same care, of the same honest consideration and diligence, that we do not the like.

Psal. lxxviii.
 19. ciii. 14.
 Ezek.
 xxxiv. 26.

Neh. ix. 17.
 Psal.
 lxxviii.
 10, 42.

Dent. v. 29.
 xxix. 4.

Ps. xxvi. 3.

Ps. ciii.

To these means I add that,

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4. A special help to breed in us this holy disposition of soul will be the setting ourselves in good earnest, with a strong and constant resolution, to endeavour the performance of all our duty toward God, and keeping his commandments, although upon inferior considerations of reason, such as we are capable of applying to this purpose; regards of fear, of hope, of desire to avoid the mischiefs arising from sin, or attaining the benefits ensuing upon virtue. If we cannot immediately raise our hearts to that higher pitch of acting from that nobler principle of love, let us however apply that we can reach unto practice, striving as we are able to perform what God requires of us; exercising ourselves, as to material acts, in keeping a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; the doing which, as it may in time discover the excellency of goodness to our mind, so it will by degrees reconcile our affections thereto; then, by God's blessing, (who graciously regards the meanest endeavours toward good; who *despiseth not the day of small things*; who will *Isa. xlii. 1. not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed,*) from doing good out of a sober regard to our own welfare, we shall come to like it in itself, and consequently to love him, unto whose nature, and to whose will, it renders us conformable: for as doing ill breeds a dislike to goodness, and an aversion from him who himself is full thereof, and who rigorously exacts it of us; as a bad conscience removes expectation of good from God, and begets a suspicion of evil from him, consequently stifling all kindness toward him; so, doing well, we shall become acquainted with it, and friends thereto; a hearty approba-

SERM. tion, esteem, and good-liking thereof will ensue;
XXIV. finding by experience, that indeed the ways of wisdom, virtue, and piety are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; that the fruits of conscientious practice are health to our body and to our soul, security to our estate and to our reputation, rest in our mind, and comfort in our conscience: goodness will become precious in our eyes, and he who commends it to us, being himself essential goodness, will appear most venerable and most amiable, we shall then become disposed to render him, what we perceive he best deserves, entire reverence and affection.

5. But I commend further, as a most necessary mean of attaining this disposition, assiduous earnest prayer unto God, that he would in mercy bestow it on us, and by his grace work it in us: which practice is indeed doubly conducive to this purpose; both in way of impetration, and by real efficacy: it will not fail to obtain it as a gift from God; it will help to produce it as an instrument of God's grace.

Upon the first account it is absolutely necessary; for it is from God's free representation of himself as lovely to our minds, and drawing our hearts unto him, (although ordinarily in the use of the means already mentioned, or some like to them,) that this affection is kindled; our bare consideration is too cold, our rational discourse too faint: we cannot sufficiently recollect our wandering thoughts, we cannot strongly enough impress those proper incentives of love upon our hearts, (our hearts so damped with sensual desires, so clogged and pestered with earthly inclinations,) so as to kindle in our souls this holy flame; it can only be effected by a light shining

from God, by a fire coming from heaven: as all others, so more especially this queen of graces must proceed from the Father of lights, and Giver of all good gifts: he alone, who is love, can be the parent of so goodly an offspring, can beget this lively image of himself within us: it is the principal *fruit of God's holy Spirit*, nor can it grow from any other root than from it; it is called the *love of the Spirit*, as its most signal and peculiar effect: in fine, *the love of God*, as St. Paul expressly teaches us, *is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us*; given, but that not without asking, without seeking; a grace so excellent God, we may be assured, will not dispense, a gift so precious he will not bestow on them, who do not care to look after it, who will not vouchsafe to beg it: if we are not willing to acknowledge our want thereof; if we refuse to express our desire of it; if we will not shew that we regard and value it; if, when God freely offers it, and invites us to receive it, (he doth so by offering his holy Spirit, the fountain thereof, unto us,) we will not decently apply ourselves to him for it, how can we expect to obtain it? God hath pounded this condition, (and it is surely no hard, no grievous condition,) *if we ask we shall receive*; he hath expressly promised that *he will give his Spirit* (his Spirit of love) *to them who ask it*: we may be therefore sure, performing the condition duly, to obtain it; and as sure, neglecting that, we deserve to go without.

Prayer then is upon this account a needful means; and it is a very profitable one upon the score of its own immediate energy or virtue: for as by familiar converse (together with the delights and advantages

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Πολλὰς μὲν
φίλις ἀ-
προσηγορίῃ
δύλως.

attending thereon) other friendships are begot and nourished, so even by that acquaintance, as it were, with God, which devotion begets, by experience therein how sweet and good he is, this affection is produced and strengthened. As want of intercourse weakens and dissolves friendship; so if we seldom come at God, or little converse with him, it is not only a sign, but will be a cause of estrangement and disaffection toward him: according to the nature of the thing, prayer hath peculiar advantages above other acts of piety, to this effect: therein not only as in contemplation the eye of our mind (our intellectual part) is directed toward God; but our affections also (the hand of our soul by which we embrace good, the feet thereof by which we pursue it) are drawn out and fixed upon him; we not only therein behold his excellences, but in a manner feel them and enjoy them; our hearts also being thereby softened and warmed by desire become more susceptible of love. We do in the performance of this duty approach nearer to God, and consequently God draws nearer to us, (as St. James assures; *Draw near, saith he, unto God, and he will draw near to you,*) and thereby we partake more fully and strongly of his gracious influences; therein indeed he most freely communicates his grace, therein he makes us most sensible of his love to us, and thereby disposeth us to love him again. I add, that true (fervent and hearty) prayer doth include and suppose some acts of love, or some near tendencies thereto; whence, as every habit is corroborated by acts of its kind, so by this practice divine love will be confirmed and increased. These are the means, which my meditation did suggest as conducing to the production

Jam. iv. 8.

and growth of this most excellent grace in our souls. SERM.
XXIV.

III. I should lastly propound some inducements apt to stir us up to the endeavour of procuring it, and to the exercise thereof, by representing to your consideration the blessed fruits and benefits (both by way of natural causality and of reward) accruing from it; as also the woful consequences and mischiefs springing from the want thereof. How being endued with it perfects and advances our nature, rendering it in a manner and degree divine, by resemblance to God, (who is full thereof, so full that he is called love,) by approximation, adherence, and union, in a sort, unto him: how it ennobles us with the most glorious alliance possible, rendering us the friends and favourites of the sovereign King and Lord of all, brethren of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; enriches us with a right and title to the most inestimable treasures, (those which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath prepared for them that love him,*) 1 Cor. ii. 2. a sure possession of the supreme good, of all that God is able to bestow, all whose wisdom and power, whose counsel and care it eternally engageth for our benefit; how all security and welfare, all rest and peace, all joy and happiness attend upon it; for that *the Lord preserveth all them that love him,* Psal. cxlv. 20. (preserveth them in the enjoyment of all good, in safety from all danger and mischief,) and that *to those who love God all things cooperate for their good:* Rom. viii. 28. how incomparable a sweetness and delight accompany the practice thereof, far surpassing all other pleasures; perfectly able to content our minds, to sustain and comfort us even in

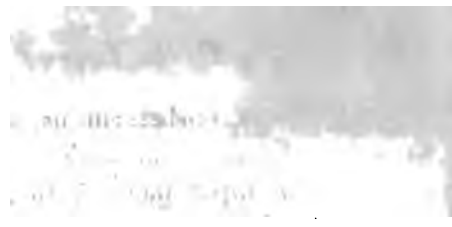
SERM. the want of all other satisfactions, yea under the
XXIV. pressure of whatever most grievous afflictions can
befall us. How contrariwise the want thereof will
depress us into a state of greatest imperfection and
baseness, setting us at the greatest distance from
God in all respects, both in similitude of nature, and
as to all favourable regard, or beneficial communica-
tion from him; casting us into a wretched and dis-
graceful consortship with the most degenerate crea-
tures, the accursed fiends, who, for disaffection and
enmity toward God, are banished from all happiness;
how it extremely impoverisheth and beggareth us,
divesting us of all right to any good thing, rendering
us incapable of any portion, but that of utter dark-
ness; how it excludeth us from any safety, any rest,
any true comfort or joy, and exposeth us to all mis-
chief and misery imaginable; all that being deprived
of the divine protection, presence, and favour, being
made objects of the divine anger, hatred, and severe
justice, being abandoned to the malice of hell, being
driven into utter darkness and eternal fire doth im-
port or can produce. I should also have commended
this love to you by comparing it with other loves,
and shewing how far in its nature, in its causes, in
its properties, in its effects it excelleth them: even
so far as the object thereof in excellency doth tran-
scend all other objects of our affection; how this is
grounded upon the highest and surest reason; others
upon accounts very low and mean, commonly upon
fond humour and mistake; this produceth real, cer-
tain, immutable goods; others at best terminate only
in goods apparent, unstable, and transitory; this is
most worthy of us, employing all our faculties in
their noblest manner of operation upon the best

object; others misbeseem us, so that in pursuing them we disgrace our understanding, misapply our desires, distemper our affections, mispend our endeavours. I should have enlarged upon these considerations; and should have adjoined some particular advantages of this grace; as, for instance, that the procuring thereof is the most sure, the most easy, the most compendious way of attaining all others; of sweetening and ingratiating all obedience to us; of making the hardest yoke easy, and the heaviest burden light unto us. In fine, I should have wished you to consider, that its practice is not only a mean and way to happiness, but our very formal happiness itself; the real enjoyment of the best good we are capable of; that in which alone heaven itself (the felicity of saints and angels) doth consist; which more than comprehends in itself all the benefits of highest dignity, richest plenty, and sweetest pleasure. But I shall forbear entering upon so ample and fruitful subjects of meditation, and conclude with that good Collect of our church:

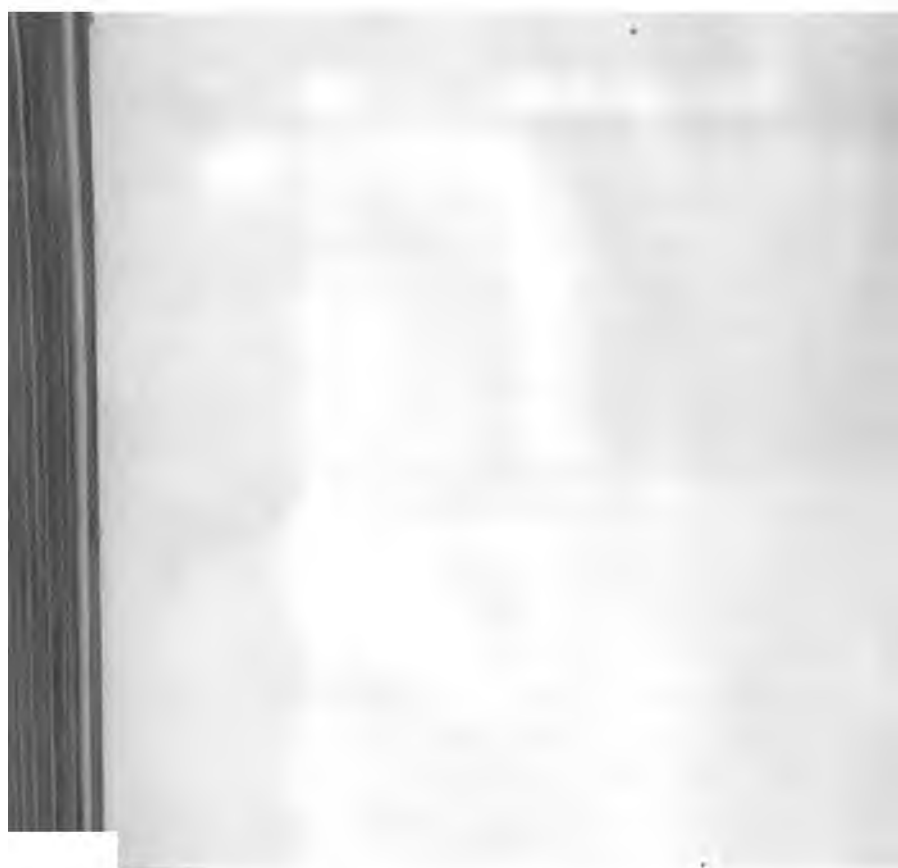
SERM.
XXIV.

O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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