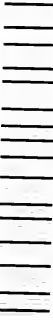


TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 1761 02743194 9

# Standard Works

IN

THEOLOGY, BIBLICAL CRITICISM, &c.

---

**BAXTER'S (R.) SAINTS' EVERLASTING REST,**

With a Preliminary Essay by John Morison, D.D., 8vo. cloth, 7s.

**BLAIR'S SERMONS,**

With the Life by James Finlayson, D.D., 8vo. cloth, 7s.

**BLUNT'S (REV. J. J.) HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION,** 12mo. cloth, 3s. 6d.

**BRIDGE'S THEOLOGICAL WORKS,**

Principally Sermons, 5 vols. 8vo. cloth, £1 4s.

**BROWN'S CONCORDANCE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,** 24mo. cloth, 1s. 6d.

**BROWN'S DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE,**

8vo. cloth, 9s.

**BUCK'S THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY,**

New Edition, 8vo. cloth, 10s.

**BUNYAN'S PILGRIM'S PROGRESS,**

With Life, by Dr. Adam Clarke, 18mo. cloth, 2s. 6d.

**BURDERS (REV. G.) VILLAGE SERMONS,**

New Edition, by Ingram Cobbin, fcp. 8vo. cloth, 3s.

**BURNET'S (BISHOP) EXPOSITION OF THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES,** 8vo. cloth, 6s.

**BUTLER'S (BISHOP) WORKS,**

Theological Works, 12mo. cloth, 3s. 6d.

Analogy of Religion, 12mo. cloth, 2s.

**CALMET'S DICTIONARY OF THE HOLY BIBLE,**

By Taylor, illustrated, 8vo. cloth, 15s.

**CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS,**

3 vols. 8vo. cloth, 18s.

**CALVIN'S INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELI-**

GIION, by Allen, 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 13s. 6d.

**CAMPBELL'S (DR. GEORGE) LECTURES ON ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,** 8vo. cloth, 6s.

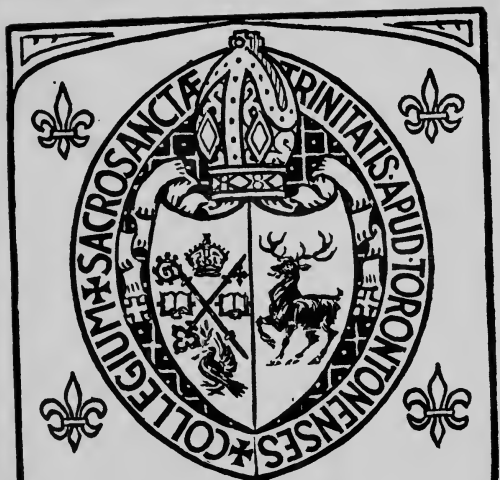
---

W. Tegg and Co., 85, Queen Street, Cheapside, London.

- CAMPBELL'S (DR. G.) TRANSLATION OF THE FOUR GOSPELS, 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 16s.
- CARPENTER'S BIBLICAL COMPANION, Imp. 8vo. cloth, 10s. 6d.
- CLARKE'S (DR. ADAM) MISCELLANEOUS WORKS, 13 vols. 12mo. cloth, £2 5s. 6d.
- CLARKE'S (DR. A.) SERMONS, 4 vols. 12mo. cloth, 14s.
- COLE'S (ELISHA) PRACTICAL DISCOURSE ON GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY, fcp. 8vo. cloth, 2s. 6d.
- CRUDEN'S CONCORDANCE OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, imp. 8vo. cloth, 12s.
- CUDWORTH'S INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM OF THE UNIVERSE, with a Translation of Mosheim's Notes, 3 vols. 8vo. cloth, £1 4s.
- DIBDIN'S (REV. T. F.) SUNDAY LIBRARY, With Portraits, fcp. 6 vols. 8vo. cloth, 16s.
- DODDRIDGE'S FAMILY EXPOSITOR, Imp. 8vo. cloth, 15s.
- DWIGHT'S (DR.) SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY, 5 vols. 8vo. cloth, £1 7s. ; or 5 vols. 18mo. cloth, 10s. 6d.
- EDWARDS'S (REV. J.) DEVOTIONAL EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS, 8vo. cloth, 4s.
- ELLIS'S (DR. JOHN) KNOWLEDGE OF DIVINE THINGS, 12mo. cloth, 4s. 6d.
- FARINDON'S (REV. ANTHONY, B.D.) SERMONS, Life by Rev. T. Jackson, Indices, Translations, &c., 4 vols. 8vo. cloth, £2 8s.
- FINNEY'S (REV. C. G.) LECTURES ON SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, 8vo. cloth, £1 16s.
- FLEURY'S MANNERS OF THE ISRAELITES, Translated by Dr. Adam Clarke, 12mo. cloth, 3s. 6d.
- GODWIN'S (DR. JOHN) REDEMPTION REDEEMED, New Edition, 8vo. cloth, 5s.
- GOOD (J. MASON, M.D.) LIFE AND WRITINGS. By Olinthus Gregory, LL.D, fcp. 8vo. cloth, 3s.
- GURNEY'S DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE, 24mo. cloth, 2s. 6d.
- HERVEY'S (REV. JAMES) MEDITATIONS, New Edition, 8vo. cloth, 3s. 6d.
- HILL'S VILLAGE DIALOGUES, With New Dialogues, and the Author's final Corrections, 12mo. cloth, 4s.
- HORNE'S (BISHOP) COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS, 8vo. cloth, 7s.

---

W. Tegg and Co., 85, Queen Street, Cheapside, London.



FROM THE LIBRARY OF  
TRINITY COLLEGE TORONTO



1914

THE SERMONS

OF

THE REV. ANTHONY FARINDON, B.D.

WITH HIS LIFE,

BY THOMAS JACKSON, S.T.P.



# THE SERMONS

OF

THE REV. ANTHONY FARINDON, B.D.

DIVINITY READER OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPEL ROYAL, WINDSOR :

PREACHED PRINCIPALLY IN THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ST. MARY  
MAGDALENE, MILK-STREET, LONDON.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE REV. THOMAS JACKSON, S.T.P.

AUTHOR OF THE LIFE OF JOHN GOODWIN, &c.

WITH COPIOUS INDICES, AND A TRANSLATION OF ALL THE  
GREEK AND LATIN QUOTATIONS.

SOME indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will. Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.—Philippians i. 15, 18.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON :  
WILLIAM TEGG AND CO., CHEAPSIDE.

---

MDCCCXLIX.

BX

5133

.F3

1849

Vol. 3

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY JAMES NICHOLS,  
HOXTON-SQUARE.

A2477

23. III. 83



## CONTENTS.

---

SERMON LVII.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.		Page.
But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew vi. 33.....	5	1
LVIII.—GOD'S KINGDOM AND RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE SOUGHT.		
But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew vi. 33.....		16
LIX.—FIRST SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD.		
But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew vi. 33.....		29
LX.—THE PROMISE TO THOSE WHO SEEK.		
But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew vi. 33.....		44
LXI.—A DEHORTATION FROM ERROR.		
Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Galatians vi. 7. ....		59
LXII.—GOD'S WISDOM VINDICATED, AND HIS JUSTICE DECLARED.		
Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Galatians vi. 7. ....		74
LXIII.—DUTY OF COMFORTING ONE ANOTHER.		
Wherefore comfort one another with these words.—1 Thessalonians iv. 18. ...		98
LXIV.—DUTY OF COMFORTING ONE ANOTHER.		
Wherefore comfort one another with these words.—1 Thessalonians iv. 18. ...		112
LXV.—A MIRACLE THE OBJECT OF DERISION.		
And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.—Acts ii. 12, 13. ....		126
LXVI.—A CERTAIN WOMAN'S COMMENDATION OF CHRIST.		
And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.—Luke xi. 27, 28.		140

15 1/2

## SERMON LXVII.—A CERTAIN WOMAN'S COMMENDATION OF CHRIST.

	Page.
And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, &c.—Luke xi. 27, 28. ....	166

## LXVIII.—THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.—Colossians iii. 1. ....	178
--	-----

## LXIX.—ST. PAUL'S DOUBT AND DESIRE.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. ( <i>Or</i> , For I am greatly in doubt on both sides, desiring to be loosed, and to be with Christ; which is best of all.)—Philippians i. 23.....	193
---	-----

## LXX.—IMITATE CHRIST AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.—1 Corinthians xi. 1. ....	205
---	-----

## LXXI.—THE DANGER OF COVERING OUR SINS.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.—Proverbs xxviii. 13. ....	225
--	-----

## LXXII.—PREDICTION OF CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT.

Behold, I have told you before.—Matthew xxiv. 25. ....	239
--	-----

## LXXIII.—THE PHARISEE AND HIS PERFORMANCES.

I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.—Luke xviii. 12. ...	252
--	-----

## LXXIV.—CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.—James i. 25. ....	267
--	-----

## LXXV.—CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, &c.—James i. 25. ....	282
--	-----

## LXXVI.—CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, &c.—James i. 25. ....	296
--	-----

## LXXVII.—CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, &c.—James i. 25. ....	311
--	-----

## LXXVIII.—CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN INDEED.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer; but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.—James i. 25. ....	327
--	-----

## LXXIX.—CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN INDEED.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, &c.—James i. 25. ....	334
--	-----

## SERMON LXXX.—CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN INDEED.

Page.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, &amp;c.—James i. 25. .... 347

## FIFTY SERMONS.

TO THE READER..... 362

TWO SERMONS PREACHED AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE, MILK-STREET, LONDON, BY A FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S, UPON HIS BEING IN THE LATE TROUBLES SILENCED.

## THE FIRST SERMON.

Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk (*or* reason the case) with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?—Jeremiah xii. 1. .... 363

## THE SECOND SERMON.

Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.—Philippians iv. 17. .... 379

## LXXXI.—PREACHED BY THE AUTHOR UPON HIS BEING RESTORED TO THE EXERCISE OF HIS MINISTRY.

Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am: for I am as ye are; ye have not injured me at all.—Galatians iv. 12. .... 399

## LXXXII.—ON THE NATIVITY.

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: (*or*, into a fleece of wool :) as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.—Psalm lxxii. 6, 7. .... 419

## LXXXIII.—THE NATURE AND SUBJECT OF MEEKNESS.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—Matthew v. 5. .... 435

## LXXXIV.—THE OBJECTS OF MEEKNESS.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—Matthew v. 5. .... 448

## LXXXV.—THE NECESSITY OF MEEKNESS.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—Matthew v. 5. .... 463

## LXXXVI.—NECESSITY AND REWARD OF MEEKNESS.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—Matthew v. 5. .... 478

## LXXXVII.—THE DUTY AND OBJECT OF A CHRISTIAN'S IMITATION.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.—Ephesians v. 1. .... 494

SERMON LXXXVIII.—MOTIVES FOR A CHRISTIAN TO IMITATE GOD.	
Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.—Ephesians v. 1. ....	Page. 511
LXXXIX.—THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.	
At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?—Matthew xviii. 1. ....	528
XC.—HOPE AND CHARITY.	
Hopeth all things.—1 Corinthians xiii. 7.....	547
XCI.—DAVID'S REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION.	
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.—Psalm li. 12.....	563
XCII.—RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.	
We then, as workers together with him, ( <i>or</i> , as helpers,) beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.—2 Corinthians vi. 1. ....	572
XCIII.—ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CHRIST'S PROMISED ADVENT.	
And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.—Luke xxi. 28. ....	586
XCIV.—DUTY OF THE MAGISTRATE.	
He beareth not the sword in vain.—Romans xiii. 4. ....	609
XCV.—CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT.	
Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.—1 Peter ii. 13—16. ....	629
XCVI.—THE DESTRUCTION OF GOD'S ENEMIES.	
Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish in the presence of God.—Psalm lxxviii. 1, 2. ....	641
XCVII.—ADAM'S VAIN EXCUSE FOR HIS SIN.	
And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.—Genesis iii. 12. ....	662

*1 Serb*

# SERMONS.

---

## SERMON LVII.

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ;  
and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew vi. 33.*

#### PART I.

THE Decalogue is an abridgment of morality, and of those precepts which direct us in the government of ourselves, and in our converse with others : and this sermon of our Saviour is an improvement of the Decalogue. Herein you may discover honesty of conversation, trust in God, and the love of "his kingdom and his righteousness" mutually depending on each other, and linked together in one golden chain, which reacheth from earth to heaven, from the footstool to the throne of God. Our conversation will be honest, if we trust in God ; and we shall trust in God, if we seek "his kingdom and his righteousness." For why is not our Yea Yea, and our Nay Nay ? Why are not we so ready to "resist evil ?" Why do we not "love our neighbour ?" Why do we not "love our enemy ?" Why do we arm ourselves with craft and violence ? Why do we first deceive ourselves, and then deceive others ? The reason is, because we love the world. Why do we love the world ? Because we are unwilling to depend on the providence of God. Why do we not trust in God ? Because we love not "his kingdom and his righteousness." He that loveth and seeketh this, needeth no lie to make him rich ; feareth no enemy that can obstruct his way ; knoweth no man that is not his neighbour, nor no neighbour that is not his friend ; layeth up no treasure for the moth or rust ; serveth not Mammon ; nor needeth to be sent to school to learn the providence of God from the fowls of the air or the lilies of the field. This is the sum and conclusion of the whole matter : "The kingdom of God and his righteousness" is all, comprehendeth all, is the sole and adequate object of our desires : and therefore our Saviour calleth back our thoughts from wandering after false riches, taketh off our care and solicitude from

that vanity which is not worth a thought, and levelleth them on that which hath not this deputative and borrowed title of riches, even that kingdom and righteousness which is riches and honour and pleasure and whatsoever is desirable: for even these are of her retinue and train, and she bringeth them along with her as a supplement or overplus. Do you fear injury? this shall protect you. Do you fear disgrace? this shall exalt you. Do you fear nakedness and poverty? this shall clothe and enrich you. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

In these words our Saviour setteth up,

I. An object for his disciples and all Christians to look on: First: "The kingdom of God;" the price and prize of our high calling: which we need not speak of: we cannot conceive it; the tongue of men and angels cannot express the glory of it. Secondly. "His righteousness:" this is the way to God's kingdom.

II. Next, you have the dignity of the object; it must be "sought."

III. Then, the pre-eminence of it; it must be sought "first."

IV. And, last of all, the motive, or promise, or encouragement to make us seek it; which answereth all objections which the flesh or the world can put in: "All these other things shall be added to you."

These be the parts of the text: and of these in order.

I. "The kingdom of God" is the end; and we must look on the glory of that, to encourage us in the way. "Righteousness" is the way; and we must first know what it is before we can seek it. And it is not at such a distance that we cannot easily approach it. It is not in heaven, that we should ask what wings we should take to fly unto it: neither is it beyond the sea, that we should travel for it. *Non nos per difficiles ad beatam vitam questiones vocat Deus*, saith Hilary:\* God doth not hide himself, and bid us seek him: he doth not make darkness a pavilion about that righteousness which he biddeth us seek; but he hath brought it near unto us, and put it into our very mouths and hearts: and as he "brought immortality and eternal life to light," so he hath also made the way unto it plain and easy; so that no mist can take it from our eyes but that which we cast ourselves, no night can hide it from us but that which our lusts and affections make. It is a good observation of Seneca the philosopher: *Nullius rei difficilis inventio, nisi cujus hic unus*

\* "God does not call us, through a course of difficult questions, to a life of blessedness."—EDIT.

*inventæ fructus est, invenisse* : God hath so settled and ordered the course of things, that “there is nothing very hard to find out but that of which after all our labour we can reap no other fruit but this, that we can say we have found it out.”\* *Quod supra nos, nihil ad nos*, as Socrates was wont to say : “Those curious speculations which are above us and out of our reach, commonly pay us back nothing for that study and weariness of the flesh which we undergo in the pursuit of them,” but a bare sight and view of them, which may bring some delight perhaps, but no advantage, to our minds. As Favorinus in Gellius well replied to a busy and talkative critic : *Abundè multa docuisti, quæ quidem ignorabamus, et scire haud sanè postulabamus* : † “Sir, you have taught us too, too many things, which in truth we were ignorant of, but of that nature that we did not desire to know them, because they were of no use at all :” so, many questions there have been started in divinity which have no relation to “righteousness, or to the kingdom of God,” which we study without profit, and may be ignorant of without danger. And when men stand so long upon these, they grow faint and weak in the pursuit of righteousness ; lose the sight of that which they should seek, whilst they seek that which profiteth not ; as the painter, who had spent his best skill in painting of Neptune, failed in the setting forth of the majesty of Jupiter. *In hoc studio multa delectant, pauca vincunt*, as the philosopher speaketh : in the study of divinity “we may meet with many things which may touch our thoughts with some delight ; but the number of those is not great which will forward and promote us to our end.”

Righteousness is the object here, the way ; and who understandeth it not ? Whose mouth is not full of it ? The very enemies of righteousness know it well enough, and bear witness to it ; but, through the corruption of men’s hearts, it cometh to pass that, as sometimes we mistake one object for another, set up pleasure for an idol, and Mammon for a God, so we do many times not so much mistake as wilfully misinterpret that which is proposed unto us as most fit and worthy of our desires. When the duty is hard, and frighteth us with the presentment of some difficulty, proposeth something which our flesh and sensual appetite distasteth and flieth from, then *malum interpretari quàm exsequi*, “we had rather descant and make a commentary upon it than fully express it in the actions of our life and conversation.” As the Etrurian, in the poet, bound living and dead bodies together, ‡ so do we join that righteousness (which is

\* *De Beneficiis*, lib. vii. cap. 1.

† *Noctes Atticæ*, lib. iv. cap. 1.

‡ VIRGILII *Æneis*, lib. viii. 485.

indeed the way to "the kingdom of God") to our dead and putrefied conceits, to our lukewarmness, to our acedy\* and sloth, nay, to our sacrilege and impiety, to our disobedience and want of natural affection, to our high contempt of God's majesty: or, as Procrustes dealt with his guests upon his bed of iron, we either violently stretch it out, or cut it shorter in some part or other, that if our actions cannot apply themselves to it, it may be brought down and racked and forced to apply itself to our actions.

If righteousness excludeth superstition, yet it commendeth reverence; and even idolatry itself shall go under that name. It forbiddeth the love of the world, but it biddeth us "labour with our hands;" and this labour shall commend our tormenting care and solicitude, and make covetousness itself a virtue! It dulleth the edge of revenge, and maketh my anger set before the sun; but it kindleth my zeal, and that fire shall consume the adversary! Thus we can be righteous, and idolaters; we can be righteous, and covetous; we can be righteous, and yet wash our feet in the blood, not of our enemies, but our brethren; we can be what we will, and yet be righteous; and that is righteousness, not which the wisdom of God hath laid before us as our way, but that which flesh and blood shall set up with this false inscription, "Holiness to the Lord!"

And our weakest, nay, our worst, endeavours, though they stretch beyond the line, or though they will not reach home, but come far too short, yet we call them by this name, and they must go for "righteousness." Not the way we should, but the way we do, walk in, though it be out of the way, though it lead to death,—*that* is the way! We can take God's honour from him, and do it with reverence; we can be covetous, and not love the world; we can breathe forth the very gall of bitterness, and spit it in our brother's face, and yet be meek! So what Hilary speaketh, in another but the like case, is most true: *Multi fidem ipsi potius constituunt quàm accipiunt*: "Many there be, even too many, even the most, who rather frame a religion to themselves, and call it righteousness, than receive one." What they will, is righteousness; and what is righteousness, they will not: *cùm sapientiæ hæc veritas sit, interdum sapere quæ nolis*; "when this is the greatest part of true wisdom, to be wise against ourselves, against the wisdom of our flesh," to condemn our appetite and our fancy of extreme folly, when they put-in for their share, and would divide with righteousness.

To be wise against this wisdom, is to be wise unto salvation; to make haste to that object, not which flattereth our sense, but

\* From ἀκηδεια, "negligence, carelessness."—EDIT.



which is most proportioned to our reason; to seek that which we would not have, the strait and narrow and rugged way, which leadeth to this kingdom; to seek the truth, though it imprison us, and bind us to a stake; temperance, though it wage war with our appetite; chastity, though it shut up our eyes; self-denial, though it take us from ourselves, and in a manner cut us off from the land of the living, and divide us from those pleasures and contents without which life itself to most men is as terrible as death. The sum of all is: Many call that "righteousness" which is not worth the seeking, which we should run and fly from. *Nec tamen mutatur vocabulis vis rerum*, as the father well speaketh: "Yet the name will not change or alter the nature of things," no more than Socrates can be another man if we should call him Plato.

Since then righteousness, as it is used, is an ambiguous term, we will distinguish it, that so by the many counterfeits we may at last discover the true coin, even that righteousness which hath the stamp and image of Christ upon it, and so may seek it, and "sell all that we have and buy it."

1. First. There is *justitia philosophorum*, "the righteousness of the philosophers;" which is nothing else but uprightness and honesty of conversation; *ut foris ita et domi, ut in magnis ita in parvis, ut in alienis ita in suis agitare justitiam*, as the orator\* speaketh, "to do that which is just in great matters and in small, at home and abroad, in that which concerneth ourselves and in that which concerneth others." Without this commonwealths are nothing else but *magna latrocinia*, but "as the mountains of prey, where the stronger man bindeth and spoileth him who is not so strong as himself." This righteousness the very Heathen by the light of nature attained to. Our Saviour telleth us that "even the publicans" (whom Tertullian ranketh amongst the Heathen, though many of them were Jews) "did love those that loved them." (Matt. v. 46.) They who made use only of that light which they brought with them into the world, did walk near unto the truth. *Planè non negabimus*, saith the father, *philosophos juxta nostra sensisse*: "We cannot deny but that the Heathen philosophers did many things which Christ commanded." And though upon an uncertain adventure, and in a storm, yet they did touch upon the haven, which, having no further light, they could not arrive at. Yea, they did love many times virtue for itself, *et studium potius quàm fructum*, "the study of it rather than the fruit and reputation and honour which they reaped." Cato was so famous that his name became

\* PLINII *Epistolæ*, lib. viii. ep. 2.

a name of virtue rather than of a man. Aristides was not just only, but justice itself. And what temperance, what chastity, what natural conscience of justice and honesty did adorn and beautify not only the writings but the lives of many of the philosophers! Yet *Tekel*, "Weigh them in the balance, and they are found too light;" nor did all these add one hair to their stature, to bring them nearer to life and immortality. If we number up all the wise precepts they have delivered, all the glorious examples they have shown and transmitted to posterity, we may peradventure find enough to shame many who profess Christianity, but not that righteousness which is required of Christians, and which would have raised them to the kingdom of heaven. They not being built upon the true foundation, all their righteousness was to them but as the rainbow before the flood, for show, and for no saving use at all. For these virtues may be in those men *qui justitiam nesciunt*, saith Lactantius, "who know not what true righteousness is;" as they have been at all times, by the help and concurrence of nature and careful education. Yet this righteousness, though it come short, is commended to us in Scripture: "Having your conversation honest amongst the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you," for your profession of Christianity, "as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold," and which themselves approve by the light of nature, be drawn to the love of Christianity itself, and so "glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter ii. 12.) This righteousness is not enough; but this is required. *Absit ut sic!* saith St. Augustine; *sed utinam vel sic!* "God forbid a Christian should stay here! but would to God many Christians had attained so far!" God forbid it should be so; but, if we look upon the many, we may wish it were but so. And what a sad wish is this we are put to, that Christians were but as good and righteous as Heathens!

2. Secondly. There is *justitia Judæorum*, "the righteousness of the Jews:" a great part whereof, I may almost say, God did rather indulge than command. Had they been able to bear it, he had laid a far heavier burden upon them than he did; and had not their eye been so weak, he had "showed them a more excellent way." But, as a tender Father, he had regard to their persons and condition when he prescribed them that form of righteousness; and the weakness and unqualifiedness of the persons was the occasion of that defect which was in their law. Many things were permitted to them, both in respect of outward impurity and inward purity of mind, which afterwards God would not make lawful to those which were "to fulfil all righteousness."

(Matt. iii. 15.) And yet between that righteousness which he then commended, and that which he after under the gospel exacted, there is no repugnancy and contrariety, but diversity only. For he that did omit that which he was permitted to do, did not take "an eye for an eye, nor a tooth for a tooth," (Matt. v. 38,) was so far from doing any thing against the law, that he did that which the law especially intended, which was not *fomes* but *limes furoris*, "did not nourish or provoke, but set bounds to, their malice." *Quod permittitur, suspectam habet permissionis suæ causam*: "That which is permitted is to be suspected for that very cause for which it is permitted." *Possum dicere*, saith the father, *Quod permittitur, non est bonum*: "I may say, That which is permitted is not good." For that which is good commendeth itself by its proper and native goodness, as justice, temperance, self-denial, and the like. These are good in themselves and for themselves; these tend to good; these will end in good, and will bring us thither through all the troops and armies of evils which may assault us in the way. But that which is permitted only, supposeth some defect in those for whose sakes it is indulged. Usury, revenge, divorce, and the like, were permitted; but the reason why they were indulged is a plain reproof and accusation of them to whom they were indulged. The words are plain; it "was for the hardness of their hearts." (Matt. xix. 8.) *Sunt aliqua quæ non oportet fieri, etiamsi licet*, could the Heathen say: "There be some things which we may with more commendations omit than do, though they be lawful to be done." This righteousness, then, of the Jew will not reach home; unless we can imagine that the business of a Christian is to seek after shadows and ceremonies, and to rest in that which nothing but weakness and imperfection, nay, nothing but hardness of heart, can make lawful for us; unless we will conclude, that the law can "make us perfect," and that which is so "weak and unprofitable" bring us to the kingdom of God. (Heb. vii. 18, 19.)

3. There is a Third kind of righteousness mentioned in scripture, *δικαιοσύνη τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων*, "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees," the learnedest amongst the Jews, and those who were most famous for sanctity and strictness of life. Christ himself speaketh of their righteousness; and the righteousness of some of them was true according to the law. For where our Saviour telleth us, that "except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. v. 20,) "he meaneth not hypocritical but real righteousness," saith Chrysostom. Otherwise he had compared not righteous-

ness with righteousness, but righteousness with hypocrisy, which is the greatest unrighteousness. And yet all this will not reach home, nor make up that which the Christian is to seek. For even these wise and righteous persons did come short of true wisdom and righteousness. "The sons of Levi," who did purify others, were "to be purified" themselves, "that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii. 3.) St. Paul himself, who was a Pharisee, and had sate at the feet of Gamaliel, where he learned the law, telleth us, that he was "unblamable but touching the righteousness which is by the law." (Phil. iii. 6.) And what Seneca speaketh is true in this case also, *Angusta est innocentia, ad legem bonum esse*; "that righteousness is but of a narrow compass which looketh no further than the laws, which restraineth no more than the outward man." Therefore the apostle in many places calleth the law "the law of works," not only in opposition to "the law of faith," but to that better and more perfect law, which doth not only bind the hand, but the thought. The righteousness which was by the law was indeed justifiable but before men; and had no other reward but of the basket, of temporal blessings: and, in plain terms, we read of none else. But the righteousness which "hath the promise of this life and of that which is to come," (1 Tim. iv. 8,) whose reward is eternity of bliss, is more spiritual, and offereth up no other sacrifice than the man himself, is busy in purging and cleansing the soul; in rooting out those evils which are visible and naked to God, though the eye of flesh cannot behold them; in curing those diseases which neither Jew nor Gentile were sensible of, but rejoiced in them as in health itself. For this is it with which Christ, and his blessed servant St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, upbraided the Jews, that they would not yield their necks to Christ's "yoke," though it were "easy," nor put their shoulders to his "burden," though it were "light;" (Matt. xi. 30;) that they would not be obedient to "the righteousness of God," which is spiritual, but set up and "established" and gloried in one of "their own." (Rom. x. 3.) The righteousness, then, neither of the Heathen, nor of the Jew in general, nor of the strictest sect of them, the Scribes and Pharisees, is meant here in this place; nor indeed doth it deserve that name.

4. There is then a Fourth kind, *justitia Christianorum*, "the righteousness of Christians:" which was revealed by the most exact Master that ever was, and commanded by that Majesty which pierceth the very heart and reins, and which cannot be contemned. Now even Christians themselves do not agree

about this righteousness, but have made and left the word ambiguous.

Some stand much upon an *imputed righteousness*; and it is true which they say, if they understood themselves: and upon *Christ's righteousness imputed to us*; which might be true also, if they did not interpret what they say. For this in a pleasing phrase they call *to appear in our elder Brother's robes and apparel*, that, as Jacob did, we may steal away the blessing. Thus the adulterer may say, "I am chaste with Christ's chastity;" the intemperate, "I am sober with Christ's temperance;" the covetous, "I am poor with Christ's poverty;" the revenger, "I am quiet with Christ's meekness:" and, if he please, every wicked person may say, that with Christ he is crucified, dead, and buried; and that, though he did nothing, yet he did it; though he did ill, yet he did well, because Christ did it. For no better use can be drawn out of such doctrines as do not *offer themselves* unto us, but *are forced* out of the word of God. We have a story in Seneca of one Calvisius Sabinus, who thought he did himself what any servant of his did.\* *Putabat se scire quod quisquam in domo sua sciret*: "Such an opinion possessed

\* *Epist.* xxvii. The whole account is a curious description of human vanity; and as it contains a good elucidation of Farindon's argument, I here subjoin the translation of it by Dr. Thomas Morell:—"This puts me in mind of Calvisius Sabinus, one who, in our memory, was rich, having a fine and gentleman-like patrimony and understanding; but I never saw a man so ridiculously happy. He had so treacherous a memory, that he often forgot the names of Ulysses, Achilles, and Priam; names which every well-educated man remembers as well as we do our first schoolmasters. No old nomenclator, who is apt to impose upon his master with a false name, ever made such blunders, as when he pretended to talk of the Greeks and Romans. And yet he affected to be thought a profound scholar. He took, therefore, this compendious method: he bought servants at an extravagant price; one who understood Homer; another who was master of Hesiod; and to the nine lyric poets he assigned a several servant. You need not wonder at his great expense; for if he could not find such as were suitable at hand, he placed them out to be instructed, and duly qualified: and, having thus made up his family, he was continually making entertainments, and impertinently troubling his guests with his second-hand learning; for he had always some one at his feet to prompt him every now and then with verses, which endeavouring to repeat, he would often break off in the middle of a line or word. Whereupon Satellius Quadratus, a smell-feast, or sharker on such fools, and who consequently was a jester, and, as it generally follows, a scoffer, advised him one day to hire some grammarians as his scrap-gatherers or remembrancers: when Sabinus told him that every servant that he had stood him in an hundred pounds: 'You might have bought,' says he, 'for less money, so many cases of books,' as he took it in his head that he knew all that any of the family knew, or was contained in his house. The same Satellius, therefore, would fain have persuaded him to enter himself in the list of wrestlers, thin, pale, and sickly as he was. And when Sabinus answered, 'How is that possible, when I am scarce alive?' 'Never mind that,' says Satellius: 'do you not see what strong and brawny servants you have got?' A good understanding is not to be hired or purchased; and I really think, was it put to sale, there would be but few bidders; whereas a bad one is often purchased, and paid dearly for."—EDIT.

him, that he thought himself skilled in that which any of his family knew." If his servant were a good poet, he was so too; if his servant were well-limbed, he could wrestle; if his servant were a good grammarian, he could play the critic. Now Christ, we know, "took upon him the form of a servant;" (Phil. ii. 7;) "he came not to be served, but to serve:" (Matt. xx. 28:) and some men are well content to be of Sabinus's mind, to think that whatsoever Christ did they do also, or at least that they may be said to do it. If he fasted forty days and forty nights, they fast as long, though they never abstained from a meal. If he overcame the devil when he tempted him, they are also victorious, though they never resist him. If Christ was "as a sheep which opened not his mouth," (Isai. liii. 7,) they also are sheep, though they open theirs as a sepulchre. Therefore what the Stoic speaketh of that man, [Calvisius Sabinus,] (*Nunquam vidi hominem beatum indecentius,*) "I never saw man whose happiness did less become him," will fit and apply itself to these men. This righteousness, if they have no other, doth but ill become them, because it had no artificer but the fancy to make it. For that Christ's righteousness is thus imputed to any, we do not read; no, not so much as that it is imputed; though in some sense the phrase may be admitted. For what is done cannot be undone, no, not by Omnipotency itself: for it implieth a contradiction. *Deo qui omnia potest, hoc impossibile,* saith Jerome: "God, who can do all things, cannot restore a lost virginity, or make that to be no sin which was a sin." He may forgive it, blot it out, bury it, not impute it, account of it as if it had never been; but a sin it was. We read, indeed, that "faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 3.) And the apostle interpreteth himself out of the thirty-second psalm: "Blessed is the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;" that is, as followeth, "whose sins are forgiven, to whom the Lord imputeth no sin." (Verses 7, 8.) And, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." (Gal. iii. 6.) And, "We are made the righteousness of God in him;" (2 Cor. v. 21;) that is, we are counted righteous for his sake. And it is more than evident, that it is one thing to say that "Christ's righteousness is imputed to us;" another, that "faith is imputed for righteousness," or, which is the very same, "our sins are not imputed unto us:" which two, imputation of faith for righteousness, and not-imputation of sin, make up that which we call "the justification of a sinner." For *therefore* are our sins blotted out by the hand of God, *because* we believe in Christ, and Christ in God.

That place where we are told that "Christ, of God, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification," (1 Cor. i. 30.) is not such a pillar of Christ's imputed righteousness, in that sense which they take it, as they fancied when they first set it up. For the sense of the apostle is plain, and can be no more than this,—That Christ, by the will of God, was the only cause of our righteousness and justification; and that, for his sake, God will justify and absolve us from all our sins, and will reckon or account us holy and just and wise;—not that he who hath loved the error of his life is wise, or he that hath been unjust is righteous in that wherein he was unjust, or he that was impure in that he was impure is holy, because Christ was so; but because God will, for Christ's sake, accept and receive and embrace us as if we were so: unless we shall say, that as we are wise with Christ, and holy, and righteous, so with Christ also we do redeem ourselves: for he who is said to be our righteousness, is said also to be our redemption in the next words. I would not once have thought this worth so much as a salute by the way, but because I see many understand not what they speak so confidently; and many more, and those the worst, are too ready to misapply it, and will be every thing in Christ, when they are not in him; are well content he should fight it out in his own gore, that they, though they fall under the enemy, in him may be styled "conquerors." Why should not we content ourselves with the language of the Holy Ghost? That certainly is enough to quiet any troubled conscience; unless you will say, "It is not enough for a sinner to be forgiven, not enough to be justified, not enough to be made heir of the kingdom of heaven." But yet I am not so out of love with the phrase as utterly to cast it out; but wish rather that it might either be laid aside, or not so grossly misapplied as it is many times by those presumptuous sinners who die in their sins. If any eye can pierce further into the letter, and find more than "imputation of faith for righteousness," and "not-imputation of sins for Christ's righteousness' sake," let him follow it as he [may] please to the glory, but not to the dishonour, of Christ: let him attribute what he will unto Christ, so that by his unseasonable piety he lose not his Saviour; so that he neglect not his own soul, because Christ was innocent; nor take no care to bring so much as a mite into the treasury, because Christ hath flung-in that talent which at the great day of accounts shall be reckoned as his. So that men be wary of those dangerous consequences which may issue from such a conceit, *quisque abundet sensu suo*, "let every man think and speak as he [may] please," and add this imputation of Christ's

righteousness to this, which I am sure is enough, and which is all we find in scripture,—forgiveness and not-imputation of sins, and the imputation of faith for righteousness.

5. I pass then to this righteousness, the righteousness of faith, which indeed is properly called “evangelical righteousness,” because Christ, who was the publisher of the gospel, was also “author and finisher of our faith.” And here we may sit down, and not move any further, and call all eyes to behold it, and say, Εὐρηχα,\* “This is it.” *Nec curiositate opus est post Jesum Christum*: “When Christ hath spoken, and told us what it is, our curiosity need not make any further search.” The righteousness of faith is that which justifieth a sinner: for “the just shall live by faith,” or, as some render it, “the just-by-faith shall live.” (Rom. i. 17.) “If thou canst believe,” saith our Saviour: (Mark ix. 23 :) and, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy household,” saith St. Paul to the gaoler. (Acts xvi. 31.) “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to these waters; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money or money-worth.” (Isai. lv. 1.) I doubt not but every man is ready to come; every man is ready to say, “I believe; Lord, help my unbelief.” (Mark ix. 24.) But here it fareth with many men as it doth with those who first hear of some great place fallen unto them, but afterwards find it is as painful as great. The latter part of the news soureth and deadeth the joy of the former, and the trouble taketh off the glory and dignity. “Believe, and be saved,” is a message of joy; but, “Believe, and repent,” or, “Repent, and believe,” is a bitter pill. But we must join them together; nor is it possible to separate them: they both must meet and kiss each other in that righteousness which is the way to “the kingdom of God.” It is true, faith is imputed for righteousness; but it is imputed to those who forsake all unrighteousness. Faith justifieth a sinner, but a repentant sinner. It must be *vera fides, quæ hoc quod verbis dicit, moribus non contradicit*; “a faith which leaveth not our manners and actions as so many contradictions to that which we profess.” Faith is the cause and original of good actions, and naturally will produce them: and if we hinder not its causality, in this respect it will have its proper effect, which is to justify a sinner. This effect, I say, is proper to faith alone; and it hath this royal prerogative by the ordinance of God: but it hath not this operation but *in subjecto capaci*, “in a subject which is capable of it.”

In a word: it is the righteousness of a sinner, but not of a sinner who continueth in his sin. It is a sovereign medicine,

\* “I have found it.”—EDIT.



but will not cure his wounds who resolveth to bleed to death. For, to conceive otherwise, were to entitle God to all the uncleanness and sins of our life past, to make him a lover of iniquity, and the justifier, not of the sinner, but of our sins. Christ was "the Lamb of God which took away our sins." (John i. 29.) And he took them away, not only by a plaster, but also by a purge; not only by forgiveness, but also by restraint of sin. He suffered those unknown pains, that we should be forgiven, and sin no more; not that we should sin again, and be forgiven. He fulfilled the law, but not to the end that we should take the more heart, break it at pleasure, and add rebellion to rebellion, because he hath put a pardon into our hands. We must therefore seek out another righteousness. And we may well say we must seek it; for it is well-near lost in this. Imputed righteousness is that we hold by; and inherent righteousness is Popery or Pelagianism. We will not be what we ought, because Christ will make us what we would be: we will not be just, that he may justify us; and we will rebel, because he hath made our peace: as men commonly never more forfeit their obedience than under a mild prince. But if the love of the world would suffer us to open our eyes, we might then see a law even in the gospel, and the gospel more binding than ever the law was. Nor did Christ bring-in that righteousness by faith, to thrust out this, that we may do nothing, that we may do any thing, because faith can work such a miracle. No, saith St. Paul, "he establisheth the law." (Rom. iii. 31.) He added to it, he reformed it, he enlarged it, made it reach from the act to the look, from the look to the thought. Nor is it enough for the Christian to walk a turn with the philosopher, or to go a sabbath-day's journey with the Jew, or make such a progress in righteousness as the law of Moses measured out. No: Christ taught us a new kind of righteousness; and our burden is not only reserved, but increased, that this righteousness may abound; a righteousness which striketh us dumb, when the slanderer's mouth is open and loud against us; which boundeth our desires, when vanity wooeth us; setteth a knife to our throat, when the fruit is pleasant to the eye; giveth laws to our understanding, chaineth up our will, when kingdoms are laid at our feet; shutteth up our eyes, that we may not look upon a second woman, whom a Jew might have embraced; calleth us out of the world, whilst we are in the world; and maketh us spiritual, whilst we are in the flesh: *justitia sincera*, "a sincere righteousness," without mixture or sophistication; and *justitia integra*, "an entire and perfect righteousness," righteousness like to the love of our Saviour,

*integros tradens integrum se danti*, “a righteousness delivering up the whole man, both body and soul, unto him who ‘offered up himself a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.’”

## CONCLUSION.

For conclusion of this point, and to make some use of it: Beloved, this is the object we must look on; and we must use diligence, and be very wary, that we mistake it not, that we take not that to be our Juno which is but a cloud, that to be righteousness which flesh and blood, our present occasions, our present necessities, our unruly lusts and desires may set up, and call by that name. This is the great and dangerous error in which many Christians are swallowed up, and perish,—not to take righteousness in its full extent and compass, in that form and shape in which it is tendered, and so “fulfil all righteousness;” but to contract and shrink it up, to leave it in its fairest parts and offices, and to work all unrighteousness, and then make boast of its name. And thus the number of the righteous may be great, the goats more than the sheep, the gate wide and open that leadeth unto the kingdom of God! Thus the hypocrite, who doth but act a part, is righteous; the zealot, who setteth all on fire, is righteous; the schismatic, who teareth the seamless coat of Christ, is righteous; he whose hands yet reek with the blood of his brethren, is righteous; righteous Pharisees, righteous incendiaries, righteous schismatics, righteous traitors and murderers! not Abel, but Cain the righteous! All are righteous! For this hath been the custom of wicked men, to bid defiance to righteousness, and then comfort themselves with her name.

We will not mention the righteousness of the Heathen: for they being utterly devoid of the true knowledge of Christ, it might perhaps diminish the number of their stripes, but could not add one hair to their stature, or raise them nearer to the kingdom of God. Nor will we speak of the righteousness of the Jew: for they were “in bondage under the elements of the world;” (Gal. iv. 3;) “nor could the law make any of them perfect.” (Heb. x. 1.) We Christians, on whom the Sun of Righteousness hath clearly shined, depend too much upon an imputed righteousness. “*An imputed righteousness?* why, that is all!” It is so, and will lift us up unto happiness, if we add our own, not as a supplement, but as a necessary requisite; not to seal our pardon, (for that it cannot do,) but to further our admittance. For we never read that the Spirit did “seal” an unrighteous person, that continued in his sin, “to the day of his redemption.” (Eph. iv. 30.) No; imputed righteousness must

be the motive to work in us inherent righteousness: and, "God will pardon us in Christ," is a strong argument to infer this conclusion, "Therefore we must do his will in Christ." For pardon bringeth greater obligation than a law. "Christ died for us," is enough to win Judas himself, those that betray him, and those that crucify him, to repentance. The death of Christ is *verbum visibile*, saith Clement, "a visible word." For in the death of Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and righteousness. If you look upon his cross, and see the inscription, "JESUS OF NAZARETH KING OF THE JEWS," you cannot miss of another, "HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THE LORD." There hung his sacred body, and there hung all those bracelets and ornaments, as Solomon calleth them, (Prov. i. 9,) those glorious examples of all virtues. There hung the most true and most exact pictures of patience and obedience and unparalleled love; and if we take them not out, and draw them in ourselves, imputed righteousness will not help us, or rather it will not be imputed. What! righteousness imputed to a man of Belial? Christ's love imputed to him that hateth him? his patience to a revenger? his truth to the fraudulent? his obedience to the traitor? his mercy to the cruel? his innocency to the murderer? his purity to the unclean? his doing all things well to those who do all things ill? God forbid! No: let us not deceive ourselves. Let us not sleep in sin, and then please ourselves with a pleasant dream of righteousness, which is but a suggestion of the enemy, whose art it is to settle that in the fancy which should be rooted in the heart, and to lead us to the pit of destruction full of those thoughts which lift us up as high as heaven. Assumed names, false pretences, forced thoughts, these are the pillars which uphold his kingdom, and subvert all righteousness. *Vera justitia hoc habet, Omnia in se vertit*: "True righteousness complieth with nothing that is contrary or diverse from it." It will not comply with the Pharisee, and make his seeming a reality; it will not comply with the schismatic, and make his pride humility; it will not comply with the prosperous traitor, and make him a father of his country; it will not fit our ambition in the eager pursuit of honour, nor our covetousness in grasping of wealth, nor our luxury in doting on pleasures. Righteousness treadeth all these imaginations under her feet, and will at last rise up against those impostors who work these lying wonders in her name. She changeth and trans-elementeth all into herself; the love of the world, the love of honour, the love of pleasure, into the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. To conclude: this is the object we are to look on; and if we receive and em-

brace it, if we seek it and seek it first, it will supply us with all things necessary for us in the way, and at last bring us to the kingdom of God.

---

## SERMON LVIII.

### GOD'S KINGDOM AND RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE SOUGHT.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.*—Matthew vi. 33.

#### PART II.

IN our former discourse we have lifted up the object, that you might behold the beauty and majesty of it, and so fall in love with it, that your desires may be on the wing, and that you may seek it with your whole heart ; which is my next part, and cometh now to be handled : “ But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”

II. Let us now see what it is to seek it. For as we mistake one object for another, set up pleasure for an idol and Mammon for a god, and call that righteousness which is as distant from it as the heavens are from the lowest pit ; so we are willingly deceived in our seeking of it, and make it but the sudden flight of the soul, the business of the fancy, the labour or rather the lust of the ear. As David speaketh, there is *generatio quærentium*, “ a generation of them that seek ” righteousness. (Psalm xxiv. 6.) Some seek it in their bed ; have, peradventure, a pleasant dream of it ; talk of it as men do in their sleep. Some seek it, and sit still and gaze. Some seek it, and are unwilling to find it ; bound and limit their desires, which in the pursuit of righteousness should admit no bounds. Our desires after it may be too weak and faint ; they cannot be too vehement. Some never think themselves wiser stewards for God and themselves than when they favour themselves, and say, “ This is too much ; ” *benigni Dei interpretes*, “ too, too favourable interpreters of God and his commands,” boldly concluding he is not so hard a taskmaster as he maketh show of ; and, with the false steward in the gospel, when the debt is “ an hundred measures of oil, taking the bill, and writing fifty.” (Luke xvi. 6.) Commonly, when we fail and fall short in our performance, we make not that use we ought of the rule, to quicken and enliven our endeavours, but by our weak endeavours judge the rule itself ; and whatsoever, how little soever, we do, this is it which God

requireth. If we do but think of righteousness, if we do but speak of it, if we do but look after it, or faintly pray for it, that with us is to "seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Every groan is repentance; Agrippa's *modicum*,\* our "altogether;" every "Lord, Lord," that violence which taketh the kingdom of heaven; (Matt. xi. 12;) every look, a liking; every inclination, a desire; and every desire, a seeking of righteousness.

Now there are three duties in which the formal Christian seemeth so to please himself as if to pass over them were to finish his course, and enter into heaven, and of which he maketh his boast all his life long: 1. Public profession of the gospel; 2. Hearing of the word; and, 3. Tendering of his prayers unto God: naming of Christ, hearing what he will say, and speaking to him that he may hear. These three are all by which we can discover his desire or endeavour; and in the strength of these he walketh on, and that securely, all the days of his life, thinking not that bitterness will be at the end. Let us stay awhile and take a view of them.

1. And, First, if we send our eyes abroad, and take a survey of the conversation of most Christians, we may be persuaded that the mere profession and naming of righteousness, the speaking well of it, is all the pains they take in seeking it. For what can we discover in most men's lives but noise and words? "What a place is heaven! What manna is righteousness! how happy they are that seek it!" and no more. But this is too short: so far from seeking, that it may consist with loathing; and it may proceed from some other cause than a desire or love of righteousness. Some speak well of it, because they are convinced, and cannot think otherwise. For not only "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," but even out of the mouths of wicked men, "hath God ordained strength." (Psalm viii. 2.) And righteousness is "justified," not only "by her children," but also by her enemies. (Matt. xi. 19.)

Again: some are righteous in a throng, applaud righteousness for very shame, dare not with open face oppose it, lest the multitude of those they live with should confute and silence them. *Si nomen justitiæ in tanto honore non esset, tot professores hodiè non haberet*: "If the name of righteousness were not glorious in the world, she would fall short in her reckoning and number of professors," whereof many make but a proffer † and approach towards her for company's sake. Besides, the desire doth not always

\* "His moderate expression: 'Almost thou persuadest me.'"—EDIT. † See the note in vol. ii. p. 59.—EDIT.

sympathize and keep time with the voice, but often is dull and heavy when our songs of praises are loudest. The voice may be for Diana, the desire for gain; the voice for a new discipline, the desire for pre-eminence; the voice for liberty, the desire for dominion; the voice for the glory of God, the desire for our own; the voice for the good of the church, the desire for the wealth of the church; the voice for righteousness, the desire for the things of this world. O miserable disproportion and contradiction of voice and desire, of what we approve and what we would have! Foolish men that we are, to say, "Righteousness is the fairest object," and yet to loathe it! to profess the gospel is true, and yet to live as if we were certain it were false! I did not well to mention this, for this hath nothing of desire in it; this is not to seek, but to run from, righteousness. At best, it is but a beam cast from the light of reason, an acknowledgment against our wills, an echo from a hollow cave or sepulchre of rotten bones, which, when all the world crieth up righteousness, resoundeth it back again into the world; of so little activity, that we may truly say, *Vox est, et præterea nihil*: "It is a voice, an echo, and no more." This then is not to seek righteousness.

2. In the Second place, St. Paul hath told us of "itching ears." (2 Tim. iv. 3.) And we may observe some to have a greedy desire to hear of righteousness; and their listening after it, their attention, may seem to come near it: yet righteousness dwelleth not in their heart or hand, but only in their ear: who, for fear they should not find it, get them "a heap of teachers," as St. Paul prophesieth of them, but it is "according to their own lusts;" teachers, whom they must teach, as a master doth his scholar that lesson which he must but repeat again. The preacher and the hearers may seem to abound in charity: for they are always of the same mind in all things. He is our preacher; we have made him ours: and then how do we love his errors! how do we applaud his ignorance! how do we cry up those frivolous toys and that witless wit which little conduce to righteousness, and are far below the majesty of the word of God! *O pudor!* would the father have cried: "What a shame is this!" Can we conceive any thing more ridiculous? Nay, what a grief is this, that so many should take such pains, and be at such charge to be deceived! that so many should please and flatter themselves to their own destruction!

I will therefore grow further upon you, and be bold to conclude, that in this formality of hearing (I say, "in this formality of hearing," because I would not be mistaken; for, hearing of itself is the ordinary means of salvation; but in this formality) we

betray more vanity than we do in any other action of our life. For, tell me, is it not a vain thing to take up water in a sieve? to let in and out? nay, to let in and loathe? and, in this reciprocal intercourse of hearing and neglecting, to spin out the thread of our life, and at the end of it to look for the kingdom of heaven? to come so oft to hear of righteousness with a resolution to let it pass no further than the ear? to give righteousness no larger space to breathe in than from the pulpit to our pew, from the preacher's mouth to our ear? to come in all our vanity to hear a declamation against vanity? nay, to make a sermon of righteousness a prologue to that unrighteousness which a Heathen would have cursed? to have the ear full of righteousness, and the hands full of blood? Certainly if those actions be vain which are not driven to a right end, then this hearing is in vain.

Did I call it "a vain action of our life?" I will yet increase upon you, and be bold to pronounce it a sin; and that of the greatest magnitude. Will you have it in plain terms? It is no less than a mockery of God. For do we not in a manner tell God to his face? (for our very thoughts are words to him:)—"Lord, we will come into thy courts to hear of righteousness, and leave that and the church together behind us. We will hear the burden of pride, and make it a garment to clothe us; of temperance, and drink down the thought of it; of chastity, and defile it. We will hear of righteousness, and set up all the faculties of our souls and all the members of our bodies against it, except the ear." What is this but to be learning our alphabet all the days of our life, and never put the letters together to make up one word or syllable towards righteousness? What is this but to think to please God with a piece of service which doth most please our sense? What is this but to mock God? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." (Gal. vi. 7.) Righteousness is *res morosa*, "a coy and severe thing," and will not dwell in the hollow of the ear, but must be seen in the world; in our houses, in the education of our children; in the streets, in our modest deportment; in the church, in our reverence; in the commonwealth, in our peaceable conformity. Every place must be a shrine for righteousness, nor is she confined to the church alone. Therefore St. Basil will tell us, that hearing in Scripture is of another nature from that which we so much delight and pride ourselves in. For when God biddeth us hear, his meaning is, we should obey. "He that hath ears to hear," saith our Saviour, "let him hear." (Matt. xi. 15.) Why, speak, Lord, and thy servant must needs hear. But, "let him hear,"

that is, let him seek righteousness. Bare hearing, then, will not reach home.

3. There is yet a Third thing behind. Though our profession and frequent hearing do not, yet the breathing forth of our prayers and supplications to God may, reach home. As I do not derogate from hearing, but hearing only; so I cannot attribute enough to prayer. Hearing may seem to be a duty conditional and respective, in respect of the weak condition of our nature. If we could obey without it, hearing were of no use at all. But prayer is absolute and necessary, to which we should be bound, were we again in Paradise. For even the saints and angels tender their prayers; and Christ himself, in whom there was no sin, "in the days of his flesh offered up strong supplications," (Heb. v. 7,) and doth yet intercede and pray for us. This then may come near it. When we are on our knees, and breathe forth our desires to God, we may seem to be like the dry and parched ground, and to open ourselves, that the dew from heaven, this righteousness, may distil upon us and fill us. But yet we must not be too hasty to determine and conclude this is it. For that may befall praying which doth hearing: it may be alone; and our prayers may be loud and frequent when our desires are asleep; nay, our desires may run contrary to them, and deny our prayers. We may ask for fish,\* when we would have a serpent; (Matt. vii. 10;) ask for righteousness, when we desire riches; and beg for eternity in heaven, when we had rather dwell and delight ourselves with the children of men. Many times we do *κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν περιπλανᾶσθαι*, "wander from ourselves, and follow our flying thoughts," to that vanity which we pray against. Our understandings are taken up with two contrary objects: now a sigh, anon a burning thought; now an eye lifted up to heaven, anon "full of the adulteress;" (2 Peter ii. 14;) now a strong abjuration of sin, and, before the Amen be said, as strong a resolution to retain it. We grind the face of the poor, and desire God to instil thoughts of mercy into us. We every day break his law, and are every day earnest with him that we may keep it. We pray for righteousness, which God is readier to give than we to ask, and upon the fairest proffer† turn our backs, and (which is an extremity of folly) will not have that which we so oft beg upon our knees.

We are then yet to seek what it is to seek righteousness. For, our profession we may carry with us, when we run from righte-

\* In quoting this passage, Farindon omits the indefinite article before fish, which was likewise the practice of his friend Dr. Pearson, in his celebrated "Exposition of the Creed, Article I."—EDIT. † See the note in vol. ii. p. 59.—EDIT.



ousness; our frequent hearing is but a listening after it, or rather after something which may be as music to the ear; and, last of all, we may pray for it, and seek the contrary. You will ask then, "What is it to seek righteousness?" I deny not but there may be great use of these, but these do not reach home. Well said St. Jerome, *Nisi vim feceris, regnum caelorum non capies*: "Righteousness is not found, nor the kingdom of heaven taken, but by violence." Will you have it in a word? *Velle justitiam, est querere justitiam*: "To have a will ready to entertain it, a heart ready to leap out and meet it, to love and embrace it, to express it in every part of it, is to seek it." This setteth a seal, and ratifieth our profession. This maketh our hearing fruitful. This giveth wings to our prayers, that they make haste and fly to the mercy-seat. This seasoneth and giveth a sweet-smelling savour to every sacrifice. *Si volueritis*, saith the prophet, "If you consent and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land." (Isai. i. 19.) If you will, you shall find and taste what sweetness is in righteousness. And this we may suppose is as soon done as said: for, who is unwilling? Who is so wicked, as not to say he will be righteous? "I will be righteous," is a promise made and broken almost every moment. It may be made by Balaam as well as by Moses, by Judas as well as by Peter. "I would be righteous, but I love the world," saith the covetous. "I would be righteous, but I fulfil my lusts," saith the wanton: that is, "I would be righteous, but I will be wicked." In the way every man saith he will, till he cometh to his journey's end, till that sad time when his will itself shall be a punishment. Have you seen a meteor twinkle like a star, and then shoot and fall? or a taper blazing, and then out? Have you seen some creatures swelling into some bulk and greatness, and at a touch or breath contracting and shrinking-in themselves to nothing? Then have you seen an emblem and resemblance of that which we call "to will:" a charge, and a flight; a venture, and a retreat; a proffer,\* and a falling back; a lap, and away. This is our willing, this is our seeking, of righteousness. I dare not say, that to will is an act of the understanding; but if we define it by the practice of the major part of Christians, it is no more. And this is one of Satan's wiles and enterprises, this is the subtlest engine he hath to undermine and blow up the greatest part of mankind,—to persuade them that they then lift up their hearts when they do but lift up their voice, that they truly desire that which they would not have, and seek that which they would not find; seek righteousness, when they would loathe it! "I do not the good which I would; but the evil which I would not do, that do I:"

\* See the note in vol. ii. p. 59.—EDIT.

they are the words of St. Paul (Rom. vii. 19.) But how are they made an apology for sin! For he that knoweth little of St. Paul doth easily remember this, though he understand it not: and we may observe it familiar in *their* mouths *who* say they would be righteous, when they will be wicked; who pretend they desire one thing, when they resolve the contrary. But we may say of these words as Job did of his friends, "They are but 'miserable comforters.'" (Job xvi. 1.) For, St. Paul speaketh as in his own person, but not of himself; by this modest way to insinuate the truth which he intended. He doth here, as himself speaketh, (1 Cor. iv. 6,) μετασχηματίζειν, "as in a figure transfer" that to himself which indeed cannot belong but to the unregenerate man: and for this we have the joint testimony of the fathers of the three first ages of the church. For to will here is no more than to approve, nor can it be. And the reason is plain: for he that doth truly will, cannot but do those things which show a willing mind. He that will be rich doth not gather wealth by saying he will be rich, but "doth rise up early, and lie down late, and eat the bread of carefulness." He that will marry a wife is not made a husband by that intention, by saying he will be married. 'Εὰν ὡς χρὴ θέλῃς, καὶ τὰ τοῦ θέλοντος ποιῆς, saith Chrysostom; "If thou dost will indeed, thou canst not but do those things which manifest and demonstrate that will." For *nihil aliud quàm ipsum velle, est habere quod volumus*: It is St. Augustine's: "Truly to will a thing is to have it." We cannot say, *he* ever would be righteous *who* is not. When we speak to Christ, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make us righteous;" Christ returneth no other answer but this, "I will, I command it;" and "tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul" that is not righteous. (Rom. ii. 9.) Never did *any* yet set forth with a willing mind *whom* God brought not to their journey's end. It is but, "Open thy mouth wide, and he will fill it." (Psalm lxxxi. 10.)

But, further yet, simply to will doth not reach home, nor fully express what is meant by seeking. Though to will is indeed to seek, yet more is here meant; to wit, a free and cheerful will, a will subjugated and subdued to the will of Christ, a will begot of love unfeigned; which is nothing else but a vehement and well-ordered will. And this is, in St. Augustine's phrase, *invictissimè et perseverantissimè velle*, "a cheerful, persevering, unconquered will;" a resolution made once for all, like the decrees of God himself, which cannot alter, whose word is immutable; like his promises, "Yea and Amen," from which "neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, nor any other creature," shall ever move us. (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

1. And, First, it must be a cheerful and ready will, like the motion of the angels, instantaneous and in a moment, as sudden as their will. Zech. i. 8, they are described in the posture of "standing," as in readiness to do God's will; and Isai. vi. 2, with "wings flying," with "naked feet;" and they are said to "go forth like lightning;" (Ezek. i. 13;) which charactereth out τὸ εὐπειθὲς καὶ εὐήγιον, "their prompt and ready alacrity and speed" in executing all God's commands. Their constant office is to be ready at God's beck: and therefore the father conceiveth that they have οὐράνια γράμματα, "the heavenly characters" of God's will always before their eyes. Behold, here is the object, righteousness; and we cannot move towards it *nisi in quantum cœperimus esse angeli*, "but so far forth as we begin to be like unto the angels," whose elogium is, that they "do his will." (Psalm ciii. 21.) Our desires should be on the wing, our devotion cheerful and active, our feet naked to run the way of God's commandments. For, as the Schools tell us that the motion of the angels is sudden and instantaneous, because they are moved only *per suum velle*, "by their will;" so here, if our will truly move, our righteousness "will break forth as the morning, and spring forth speedily." (Isai. lviii. 8.) *Quicquid volui, illic potui*: "Whatsoever I will do, I presently may do." Nay, if I truly will it, I have done it already. Delay is a strong argument of an unwilling mind. It may perhaps be joined with that will which we call *communem et nudam*, "a common and naked will," or rather a faint and feeble desire, or a forced approbation of righteousness; but it is of a poisonous nature, and infecteth the whole soul, and at last leaveth not so much as an inclination; lameth and crippleth us, and turneth our weak desire to righteousness into a strong resolution against it. At first we applaud the precept as just, and we think we are bound to do it; nay, perhaps faintly determine to betake ourselves to action: but, as water taken from the fire groweth colder and colder, and at last by some circumsistent cold is congealed into ice; so this resolution waxeth fainter and fainter, and in the end, *per frigus temptationum*, as Gregory calleth it, "by the chill cold of some temptation," is bound up; and we who before had righteousness in our wish, have it not now in all our thoughts, but set up all the powers of our soul against it. If the will be not cheerful, it is not angelical, it is no will at all.

2. Again: it must be constant, as also the angels' is. They are pictured out unto us in those mystical wheels (Ezek. i. 15—21) to show αἰσιδίνητον κίνησιν, "their perpetual and constant motion," and in the shape of young men, to express the vigorous force

and continual instauration of their obedience. For an angel cannot wax old, or weary and faint: he doth not minister to-day, and to-morrow slack his obedience; is not to-day an angel of light, and to-morrow a devil; but is ἀμετάπτωτος ἐν τῷ καλῷ, "constant and immovable in his ministerial office," which is his righteousness. So should our will to righteousness be constant and ever the same; not a good intention, and then flag. We must not have those μεταβάσεις and μετακλίσεις, "immutations" and "reflexions" in our proposals and desires, which Nazianzen observed in Julian the Apostate; to-night passing a just sentence, and the next morning reversing it; not to-day fasting, and to-morrow thirsting after blood; not setting the knife to our own throats now, and anon to our brother's; *heri in ecclesiâ, hodie in theatro*, "yesterday in the church, and to-day in the theatre;" now humbling ourselves, and, within a while, swelling above measure. For if we have these ebbings and flowings in our pursuit of righteousness, now swelling towards it, and anon falling back, it is manifest we never sought it. *Quæ modò sunt, modò non sunt, is qui verè est non acceptat*, saith the father: "He that is truly and everlastingly, doth not accept of those desires which now are, and anon are not," of those fits in devotion, those transitory offers, which, like some creatures, appear not but at some times of the year. For if we look towards righteousness, if we begin to move towards it, and some black or smiling temptation strike as it were the hollow of our thigh, and put our desires out of joint, that they either move not at all, or move irregularly, we may flatter ourselves that we are still in our quest after righteousness, but indeed we are posting to the gates of death. Did I say, our will should resemble the will and motion of angels? Our seeking of righteousness should be like God's seeking of us, which is real and hearty, and ever the same. For he would save us, when we will perish; and it is not he but we that in a manner alter his decrees, change his counsels, reverse his purposes, break his promises. For, how oft would he, and we would not! (Matt. xxiii. 37.) We talk much of God's decrees. I am sure he hath decreed, it shall be to us even as we will. If we will be saved, he is ready to crown us. But if, instead of righteousness, we "seek death in the error of our life," if we will perish, we perish; but it is against his first and primitive will, which was serious and without dissimulation to save us. And such should our wills be to righteousness. For if we can flatter ourselves, and think that God will be content with our faint desires and feeble wishes, we cannot in any reason expect any other comfort from him, than that he should tell us

that he also did desire our salvation, did wish that we would be wise. If we pretend we are willing to be gathered into his garner, what other answer can he give but this, "O how oft would I have gathered you, and you would not!" How willing was I to have set the crown of glory upon your heads, which yet I will not do against your wills!" O that there were that proportion and analogy which is meet, and which even common reason requireth, between our desire of righteousness and God's desire of our happiness, between his will to do us good and our will to do our duty! O that we were as willing to be righteous as he is we should be glorious! What a shame is it that he should bow the heavens and come down, and we run into holes and caverns, and with Dathan and his complices bury ourselves quick in the earth; (for so every covetous man doth, saith Origen;) that he should appear in his glory and beauty, and we should dote on that which is of near alliance to the worm and rottenness; (for so every lustful man doth;) that he should look upon us and woo us in our blood, and we wallow still, and not once look up upon him; (for this every unrepentant sinner doth;) that he should wait, and we delay; that he should bid us live, and we love death; that he should be sorry for our sin, and we triumph in our sin; that he should long, and we loathe; that his bowels should yearn, and our hearts be stone; that righteousness should spread her beams, display all her beauty, and we turn away from it, and join ourselves with deformity and death; that God should bid us seek him, and we should seek Bethel and Gilgal, the vanities of the world, which shall come to nought! This, this is it which will draw the handwriting against us in capital letters, and be as terrible as hell itself.

That we may then raise our desires, and level them with the object, that we may not deceive ourselves, and think we seek righteousness, when our desires are carried another way, let us, as the Stoics admonish, *δοκιμάζειν τὴν φαντασίαν*, "check and stay our fancy, prove and examine it by the right rule." "By this men may know you are my disciples," saith our Saviour; (John xiii. 35;) and by this you may know you do indeed seek righteousness.

1. First. There will be in us a sense and feeling of vacuity. The fuller we are of righteousness, the more sensible we are of want. Nor do any more earnestly seek it than they who have made it theirs, and hold it as it were in possession. "I have not yet attained," saith St. Paul when he had attained; "but I press forward." (Phil. iii. 12, 14.) The Pharisee is ever full, but to the righteous ever something is wanting. And this put-

teth a difference between our spiritual and our carnal desires. The body is mortal and changeable; decayeth, and is repaired; and therefore hath an appetite which is soon dulled or changed. The soul is of a more refined essence, and hath an appetite fitted and proportioned to it, infinite and unsatiable, and made so by its very object, which raiseth a desire when it is received, which is favourable and benevolent, and admitteth at once of content and desire. The more righteousness we have, the more we desire; and when we have found most, we seek most. Therefore the philosopher's rules of moderation have here no place. For when the desire is turned towards the right object, there can be no excess, nor can we give it wing enough. Our love cannot be too ardent, nor our sorrow too great, nor our anger too loud; nor can we fear that should be too much, which cannot possibly be great enough. We cannot knock too hard at the gates of heaven, nor seek too earnestly after righteousness. "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," was the boast of lukewarm Laodicea, who was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.) "I sit as a queen, and shall know no sorrow," was the boast of Babylon. (Rev. xviii. 7.) "I have fulfilled the commandment of the Lord," was the voice of Saul, a rejected king. (1 Sam. xv. 13.) "I am, and I alone; I am more righteous than thou; I am a saint," is commonly the language of those who are children of the father of lies. These sounds we hear not but from empty vessels. But the holy language is not so high and lofty; nor do we hear from the righteous what they are, but what they would be. When they are rich, then are they poor; when they are strong, then are they weak; when they are full, then are they empty; and when they have found, then they seek. How have the perfectest men in Christ Jesus, the fairest plants in the Paradise of righteousness, deplored their want and emptiness! How, when they embrace this object, do they look upon it as if it were at distance, almost quite out of sight! How they still bargain for the rich pearl in the gospel, even when they have bought it! *Nihileitas mea*, "My nihility, my nothingness," saith one. *Postremissimus omnium*, "The last of the last, even behind the last of all," saith another; a superlative of a superlative! "The least of the apostles, the chiefest of sinners," saith another, the best servant that Christ Jesus ever had upon earth. (1 Cor. xv. 9; 1 Tim. i. 15.) "Lord, how long have I been absent from this beauty of holiness! How little have I enjoyed it! How ignorant is my knowledge! How feeble my devotion! How cold my charity! How far am I from being like unto an angel!

but then how far am I from being like unto God! How much do I want of that righteousness which becometh the gospel of Christ!" In a word, when we truly seek righteousness, we seek it with that heat and eagerness as if we had never sought it, never panting more after the water of life than when we are full.

2. For, in the Second place, where there is this desire, there is a taste and a savour of the power of righteousness. What we seek, we seek for some good we find in it. The philosopher calleth it "a preguotation;" as, in a new-born babe, of milk, which maketh it so greedy of the teat. *Ex quibus sumus, ex illis nutrimur*: "We are nourished with something which is congruous and proportionable to that of which we consist." And that is the reason why one man is affected with this, another with that, and every object doth not please every eye alike. It is so with the body, and it is so with the soul. In the ways of evil we find it. The envious man hath "an evil eye," an evil disposition; (Prov. xxiii. 6;) and if "full of envy," then followeth, "murder, deceit, malignity." (Rom. i. 29.) The wanton hath "an eye full of the adulteress," (2 Peter ii. 14,) and "he waiteth for the twilight." (Job xxiv. 15.) The revenger hath a sanguine soul, and he "thirsteth for blood." And it is so in the ways of righteousness. For as "they who are after the flesh savour the things of the flesh, so they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 5.) They that have ὑγρόν καὶ μέλιχρον ἦθος, "a soft and sweet disposition," are ever pouring themselves forth in mercy, and seeking the opportunity to do good. They that have a broken heart breathe forth nothing but groans and prayers and supplications. David was described to be "a man after God's own heart;" (Acts xiii. 22;) and Procopius telleth us, that was seen in his bounty and liberality. For where the heart is of a divine constitution, there will follow the labour and pain, or, as Tertullian calleth it, "the operation," of love. *Nihil incongruum appetitur*: "We seek and desire that most which is most proportioned and agreeable to our disposition," to the κρᾶσις and "temper" of our soul. If "the same mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus," (Phil. ii. 5,) if "Christ," as Paul speaketh, "be fully formed in us," (Gal. iv. 19,) we shall seek the things of Christ, which have near relation to "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God;" (Col. iii. 1;) and every thing which standeth in opposition to Christ, will be as distasteful to us as if it were Antichrist. In a word, if we love righteousness, we shall seek it.

3. For, in the Last place, this will force a boldness upon us to

venture upon any thing, how terrible soever, which the world and the devil can place between us and righteousness. Be it pleasure, we slight it; be it wealth, we count it dung; be it honour, we disgrace it. We shall lose all that we have rather than our honesty, be poor rather than perjured, forfeit our life rather than our fidelity, deliver up our blood to the persecutor rather than our conscience, be any thing that his power can make us rather than be those unrighteous persons which none can make us but ourselves. We shall seek righteousness "through good report and evil report, through honour and dishonour," (2 Cor. vi. 8,) through the valley of tears and shadow of death, through hell itself, even that hell which wicked men and atheists make upon earth. Righteousness is most amiable and lovely and attractive in itself; but it doth not appear so to flesh and blood, but to men of divine constitution, who can receive it with the greatest horror [that] can be put upon it, with poverty and contempt, with mockings and scourgings, with imprisonment and death itself.

When we are carnal, and our wills perverse, then we turn away from the precepts of righteousness, our spirits fail us, and our hearts are dead within us, as if righteousness were a Medusa's head to turn us into stones. Then we begin to paint it over, to make restrictions and limitations, that we may seem to come near unto it: we call evangelical precepts "counsels," we make that which is necessary arbitrary, and call great plagues "peace." What lesser sin do we not dispense with? what greater do we not favour? What art have we to fit righteousness to our blackest designs, to make it comply with faction, sedition, and sacrilege! For have not these strutted abroad in state and majesty under this name? Hath not the devil thus showed himself as an angel of light? What a swinge have we given to covetousness and revenge, which the law of Christ hath tied up short to a contempt of the world and love of our enemies! How are we afraid of a ceremony, and rejoice in a sin! How doth the devil seem to roar in an organ, and what music is there in a drum! How slow are we to lift them up who lie in the dust, and how swift to shed blood! How unwilling is the conscience to be touched, and how ready to be seared! How tender is the conscience to be offended, and how soon is it polluted! a sign that we do but talk of righteousness for our present advantage, and not seek it for our eternal good. Did we love and seek it indeed, we should love the thing, and not only the name; we should love it in every part, we should embrace it all at once. *Desiderium est motus quidam*, saith the



philosopher: "Desire is a kind of motion of the soul, by which it maketh its approaches to the object;" or rather, an instantaneous motion, by which it flieth and joineth with it in a moment. But the soul of man doth often look towards righteousness when we cannot say it moveth that way: for, meeting with some distaste and opposition, some fear within or terror without, some misery, some cross, it standeth at gaze, and turneth and maketh a most dishonourable retreat. Many "begin in the Spirit," but, at the sight of some light temptation, which to them is as "a lion in the way," they slip aside, and end in "the flesh:" (Gal. iii. 3:) and all this because the desire was not strong enough which first led them on. For, to conclude, when that is cheerful and vehement and constant, it marcheth on valiantly in the ways of truth and of righteousness, goeth forth in its power, treadeth under foot that pleasure which flattereth, triumpheth over those evils which bring terror, maketh way through divers temptations, and so buildeth and rooteth itself in righteousness, so seeketh it that it findeth it and never loseth it, but by its guidance and conduct passeth by all flatteries and affrightments into the kingdom of heaven and everlasting glory.

---

## SERMON LIX.

### FIRST SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*—Matthew vi. 33.

#### PART III.

WE have already presented you with the object, and the dignity or beauty thereof, and showed you what this righteousness is, and what it is to seek it. We come now to show you the excellency and pre-eminency of the object, of "righteousness," before "all these" other "things."

III. And, behold, our Saviour here prescribeth and tieth us to a method in our search: we must "seek it FIRST; and these things shall be added." Where our Saviour seemeth to speak with some kind of scorn and indignation, that our infirmity should force him to name the things of this life (as we commonly say) the same day with the things of the life to come. Wherefore, having expressly named "the kingdom of God and his righteousness," he passeth slightly over the rest, as disdain- ing to name them, otherwise than by the general name of "these

things." As Hezekiah, pulling down the brasen serpent, calleth it no otherwise than by the scornful name of *Nehushtan*, "brasen stuff;" (2 Kings xviii. 4;) so Christ, willing to pull down in us the things of this life, (after which we have run a-whoring more than ever the Jews did after the brasen serpent,) telling us of divine matters, willeth us "first to seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and then shall all these things," this brass, this *Nehushtan*, this leaden, pewter, or at the best brasen, stuff of the world, "be cast in upon us."

This is the method which is prescribed; and this we must follow. If the first stone in our building be righteousness, then will the things of this life come in: otherwise, no: or, if they do come, they come not because of God's promise, but from some other cause; and it had been better they had never come. As it is with those who build: some things they provide for the main wall and foundation, other things only for ornament and furniture. Now that building must needs prove weak, where that is laid for the foundation which was only provided for garnish. These outward things are but a seeming kind of furniture for this life; but the main wall is righteousness. Her "foundations," saith the Psalmist, "are in the holy hills." (Psalm lxxxvii. 1.) Now St. Paul, telling us of some builders, who, having laid a good foundation, lay upon it hay and stubble, showeth what great damage they shall sustain for so doing. (1 Cor. iii. 12—15.) And if this be the case of those builders whose foundation is supposed to be good, what can we imagine shall be the loss of those whose very foundation is hay and stubble, who have made the things of this world their prime and corner-stone, and "bring it forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it?" (Zech. iv. 7.) First, then, seek righteousness.

And "first" is a word of order: and order is *θεῖόν τι*, saith the philosopher, "a divine thing," of wonderful force and efficacy. For cost may be laid out, matter provided, labour bestowed, and all to no purpose, if there be not a set course and order observed in our proceedings. *Nihil negligentia operosius*, said Columella well: "There is nothing putteth us upon more business than negligence," and nothing doth more entangle and turmoil than disorder. For if we begin amiss, we must begin again, or else our work will fail and be lost between our hands, will die and perish, as some infants do, in the very womb. The experience of the meanest artist amongst you is able to tell you thus much. Whosoever goeth to practise his trade, cannot begin where he [may] list. Something there is to be done in the first place, without which he cannot go unto the second; something in

the second place, which will not be done, except something be done before it. Some order there is, which prescribeth a law and manner to his action; which being not observed, nothing can be done. As in all other businesses, so in this great business of Christianity, we must not think that we may, hand over head, huddle up matters as we please; but we must *ὁδοῦ βαδίζειν*, “keep a method, an order, a course in our proceedings:” not first these things, and then his righteousness; but first his righteousness, and then these things.

They who have commended to us the great use of method and order in our studies, tell us that if a man could assure himself thirty years of study, he might with more advantage spend twenty of them in finding out some course and order in study, and the other ten in studying according to this order, than spend the whole though in very diligent study, if with disorder and confusion. Howsoever it may be with method and order in our academical studies, certainly in our study which concerneth the practice of righteousness it cannot choose but be with great loss of labour and industry, if we do not observe that order and method which here our Saviour prescribeth. Simplicius, in his Comments upon Aristotle, maketh a question whether youths in the reading of Aristotle’s books should begin with his Logics, where he teacheth men to dispute and reason, or with his Ethics, where he teacheth civility and honesty. “For if they begin,” saith he, “from his Logics without morals, they are in danger to prove but wrangling sophisters; and if from his Morals without logic, they will prove but confused.” Thus, indeed, it fareth in the knowledge of nature, where all things are uncertain; thus with those students who have Aristotle for their god: scarcely will all their logic show them where they should begin, or where they should end. But in Christianity all things are certain; the end certain, and the way certain: and our best Master, Christ, hath written us a spiritual Logic, hath showed us a method and order, what first to do, what next, and how to range every thing in its proper place. And he that shall follow this method may be secure of his end; nor is it possible he should lose his pains. Never was any true student in righteousness an unproficient. Now the excellency of this method will appear by comparing the one with the other, the soul with the body, and the temporal things of this life with spiritual.

1. First. What is this body of ours but *ὁσμῆς ἐργαστήριον*, as Nyssen calleth it, “a prison, an ill-savoured sink,” a lump of flesh which mouldereth away and draweth near to corruption whilst we speak of it? But the soul is *divinæ particula auræ*,

“a beam as it were of the Divinity,” which in this dark body of ours is as the sun to the earth, enlivening, quickening, and cheering it up; *phiala, in quâ non includitur manna, sed Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus*, as Ambrose; “a golden vessel, to receive—not manna,” which, if you lay it up till the morning, will stink and breed worms, “but—the Father, and the Son, and the graces of the Spirit,” which are eternal. It was a speech of St. Augustine’s, *Domine, duo creâsti; alterum prope te, alterum prope nihil*: “Lord, thou hast created two things; the one, divine, celestial, of infinite worth; the other, base and sordid; the soul, and the body; the one, near unto thyself; the other, next unto nothing.” Now our care should carry a proportion to the things we care for. We are not so diligent to keep a counter as a diamond. Alexander, when amongst the spoils of Darius he found a rich and precious box, thought nothing to be good enough to be laid up in it but Homer’s works. And the sacred writings were decked and adorned with jewels and gold and precious gems, saith Zonaras; by which the Christians expressed their reverence and love to those sacred volumes. But what cabinet can we find for the soul? Where should that be laid up, but in the bosom of God? Shall we leave that poor and naked, when ourselves abound in wealth? Shall our bodies rest in a house of cedar, and our soul in a nasty sty? How many Heathen philosophers have flung away their wealth to enrich their nobler part! How have they been ashamed to think their souls were in their bodies! as Eunapius speaketh of Jamblichus. One flingeth his gold into the sea; another strippeth himself; a third ἐκινδύνευε τὸ φαινόμενον σῶμα ψυχῇ καὶ νοῦς εἶναι, “did macerate his body, and keep it down, that he seemed to have made it his labour to have turned it into soul.” And shall Christians make it their study and delight to immerse the soul in the body, and to turn it into flesh; to take such care of their flesh as if they were nothing but flesh, and had no soul at all? No: as the soul is more excellent than the body, so it must be first in our care, first in our devotion.

Look upon all the commendable actions which purchase us praise with God; and what are they but acts of open war and hostility against the body? Temperance and continence,—what are they but the subduing of our “fleshly lusts, which fight against the spirit?” (1 Peter ii. 11.) Care and diligence,—what are they but a perpetual war with sloth and idleness, upon which this dull and earthy mass of our bodies is prone to relapse? Piety and devotion,—what are they but a neglect [of,] or rather an open defiance unto all things which seem to savour of love

and care for, the body? so that here love were treason, and agreement nothing but conspiracy, and peace *pactio servitutis*.\* For if we entertain any covenant of peace with our flesh, it can be but such a one as Nahash the Ammonite offered to make with the men of Jabesh-Gilead,—upon condition we will pull out our eyes. (1 Sam. xi. 2.) The flesh,—the more we suppress it, the more we love it; the more we beat it down, the more we exalt it; and when we mortify it, we do even spiritualize it, and in a manner upon “this corruptible put on incorruption.” (1 Cor. xv. 53.) Our first care must be to subdue the body, and keep it under, which is indeed to honour it. If our affections be levelled aright, if we keep a true and exact method in our search, we shall not talk so much of riches as of righteousness: we shall be inquiring what news from heaven, what the state of that court is, what place, what degree we shall have there; of faith and “holiness” and obedience, “without which no man shall see God.” (Heb. xii. 14.)

2. For, in the next place, what comparison can we make between spiritual and temporal blessings? the one of inestimable price, the other not worth the naming. St. Hilary, commenting upon the first Psalm, speaketh of some who, interpreting the Book of Psalms, thought it some discredit to that book that terrene and secular matter should so often interline itself, and therefore all their interpretations they made respectively to spiritual things and God himself. Which conceit, though an apparent error, yet that father condemneth not, but mildly pronounceth of it, *Hæc eorum opinio argui non potest*: “This opinion of theirs cannot be condemned:” for it is the sense of a mind piously and religiously affected; and it is a thing unblamable, by favourable endeavour to strive to fit all things to Him by whom all things were made. For what, if we were not told of “a land flowing with milk and honey?” (Exod. iii. 8.) What, if we saw not “riches” and plenty in God’s “left hand,” and “length of days in his right?” (Prov. iii. 16.) What, if we were not told of riches and honour and prosperity? Could we think there were nothing to be sought for? All the gold in Ophir is not to be compared with one religious thought, nor can there be any greater preferment than to be a saint.

Indeed, “these things” are nothing. *Nihil habent solidi, nihil firmi*: “There is no solidity, no hold-fast in them.” When we see them, we do not see them: when we feed on them, we are not satisfied: when they are, they are not. *Vanæ spes hominum*: “The hopes of men are vain, when they seek these things,

\* “A compact of servitude.”—EDIT.

that are not, as if they were." *Vana rerum species*: "The species and show of these things are vain." They appear to us as in a dream: they come, and are gone; they stand by us, and vanish; and, behold, when we awake, all is but a dream. No glory on honour, no brightness on gold, no lustre on beauty; but that which in my dream was all, when my eyes are open is nothing but "vanity of vanities; all is vanity." (Eccles. i. 2.) *Excude aliquid quod sit perpetuò tuum*, said Pliny to his friend: "If thou wilt spend thy time upon any thing, spend it upon that which shall be always thine."\* Now temporal things are neither ours, nor are they lasting. *Apud te sunt, sed tua non sunt*: "They are with thee, but they are not thine." *Dum placent, transeunt*: "When they most please thee, they pass away." In thy youth they please thee, and that dieth into age: in thy age they please thee more; for covetousness, as it increaseth with our heaps, so it doth with our age; and we then love riches most, when they are even upon the wing, ready to fly away. And then death unladeth the ass, taketh thee from thy wealth, when thy soul is even bound up with it; cutteth off a thousand hopes, defeateth a thousand purposes; and, when thou art joining land to land, leaveth thee no more than will serve to bury thee: and then, "Earth to earth!" All thy huggings of thyself, all thy pride, all thy busy and forecasting thoughts, all thy delights perish. Our lands and possessions are but the way in which we set our foot; but keep footing we cannot: others come apace after us, and take them up.

*Nunc ager Umbreni sub nomine, nuper Ofelli*

*Dictus, erit nulli proprius; sed cedit in usum*

*Nunc huic, nunc alii.*†—HORATII *Serm.* lib. ii. sat. ii. 133.

He that hath a lordship or a manor, hath but his footing there; possession he hath not: another cometh after, and after him another, whilst that remaineth like the way, and delivereth up all alike to their last home. Only righteousness is that jewel which none can rob us of; *nec unquam desinit esse nostra postquam cæperit*, "nor will it ever leave us, when we have once made it ours."

There are little stones, we are told, lying in some fields, which philosophers call *lapides speculares*,‡ which at some distance

\* *Epist.* lib. i. ep. 3.

† "That farm which by Ofellus' name once pass'd,  
Is now Umbrenus's;—the use alone,  
Not property, which can to none belong:  
For neither him, nor me, nor any one,  
Hath Nature truly form'd proprietor  
Of what he holds."—DUNCOMBE'S Translation.

‡ "Transparent stones." *Vide* PLINII *Nat. Hist.* lib. xxxvi. cap. 22.—EDIT.

sparkle and send forth light, but when we come near them have no appearance at all, nor can they be found. Like to those are "these things;" our Saviour would not name them. Riches and honour, when we stand at distance, and do not enjoy them, present themselves in glory and in a shape of allurements; but when we come near them, when we are possessed of them, they have not the same countenance, nor are so glorious. A crown hath cares, honour hath burden, and riches anxiety and danger. Envy and malice wait close upon them, ready to sweep them away. *Tedet adeptos quod adepturos torsit* :\* "That which set my desires on fire, bringeth smoke enough with it to smother them." That which I bowed to as to a god, I am now ready to run from. I looked upon them as upon a staff; but when I had taken them up into my hand, they proved a serpent.

3. But, in the Third place, there is great danger in seeking them at all: and though we seek them, as we think, in the second place, we may seek them too soon. For our advancement in temporal things may prove a hinderance to our improvement in spiritual. But if the last be first, the first will be none at all. *In illis opera luditur* : "We lose time in getting them;" † and when we have got them, we lose them; or if we do retain them, *non sunt subsidia, sed onera*, "they are rather burdens than helps," and *ἄσβεστίας ὄργανα*, "the instruments of sin." St. Basil, asking the question why God made Adam naked in Paradise, and withal gave him no sense of his nakedness, telleth us the reason was, "that he might not be distracted, nor called away from meditating upon God. For these arts," saith he, "which provide for the flesh, have been occasion of care and business, than which nothing could have been more noxious to that state in which then Adam was. Had it so pleased God," saith he, "it had been much better that the soul had been left naked in the day of her creation, and never been clothed with this garment of flesh: for from hence hath proceeded that swarm of cares and business with which our life is over-run, which draweth us from divine speculation and meditation upon the things of God, which is the proper work of the soul." For, consider the soul in itself, and what relation or reference hath it to any earthly thing? Care for meats and drinks and apparel, for posterity, to heap up riches, to be ambitious of honours,—all these rigid publicans, which demand and exact so much of our time and labour,—befell the soul upon the putting on of this clothing of the body.

At what time the earth received the curse, that it should

\* "We are disgusted when we gain possession of the object which tormented us with desire previous to its attainment."—EDIT. † *TERENTII Phormio*, act. ii. 18.

bring forth briars and thorns, at the same time sprang there up this abundance of arts and trades, this variety of callings and occupations, with which the world is over-run as with briars and thorns : for, had we stood in our original integrity, we had had but one care, but one art, one common trade and calling, the worship and service of God. *Cain ædificavit civitatem, pessimum more, stabile hujus seculi domicilium putantium*, saith Gregory : “Cain was the first that built a city, upon a groundless conceit, which possesseth the hearts of many, that the houses they build are not of clay, but to stand and last for ever.” Josephus telleth us, he was the first that ever found out weights and measures ; and he passeth this severe censure upon it, that by this he did *pristinam sinceritatem, ignaram talium artium, in novam quandam versutiam depravare*, “corrupt the former innocency and sincerity by bringing-in a new kind of providence and craft ; which before, as it stood in no need, so was it altogether ignorant, of any such art.”\* The philosopher will tell us that the use of these common things is *ἐμπόδιον πρὸς θεωρίαν*, “an hinderance to contemplation ;” and St. Basil, that we cannot well pray for spiritual graces, unless the mind be *ἀνεπισκόπητος μερίμναις βιωτικαῖς*, “unclouded of the mist and fog of the cares of this world.” *Hæc sunt vincula, hæ catenæ*, saith St. Cyprian : “These be the bonds and chains with which the soul is still clogged, that she cannot mount, and seek those things which are above ; our faith oppressed, our understanding bound, and our mind shut up.”

Why, then, should we seek so earnestly for that which is not ours, and which pertaineth not to us ; not for that which maketh us men, and by which we are capable of happiness ? and so faintly look after true riches, as if we were afraid to find it ? Nay, why should we shun it, and run from it, as if it were a lion in the way to devour us, and to ravish from us all that which we delight in as most convenient for us ? Why do we take the one as it were on a knife’s point, and greedily swallow down and devour the other ? *Talibus bonis non fiunt homines boni ; sed aliunde facti boni, benè utendo faciunt ut ista sint bona* : “You call them ‘goods ;’ but I tell you,” saith the father, “by such goods men are not made good ; but, being made good by righteousness, by using them well they make them good.” And therefore the “desires” of temporal goods before spiritual are not only *ἐπιθυμίαι ἀνόητοι*, as the scholiast mistook, “unprofitable ;” but *ἀνόητοι*, as it is in the text, “vain and foolish.”

You will say, perhaps, that you know all this, that wisdom is

\* JOSEPHI *Antiq. Judaic.* lib. i. cap. 3.



better than wealth ; that you are not ignorant of the method of the Lord's Prayer ; that every child can tell that *Fiat voluntas tua* is before *Da nobis*,\* the petition for obedience before that for bread. Nor do I think that any man saith his *Pater-noster* backwards. It is true, in the church we pray orderly ; but how is it in our closet ? This method twangeth upon the tongue, but not upon the heart-strings. There, *quæ turba phantasmatum* ! " what troops of phantasms ! what multitudes of suggestions ! " Do we not wish for wealth, when we pray for righteousness ? Are we not willing that God should mistake us, and give us the one for the other ? How is the mind lost every moment, *in ipso conatu elabens*, " of such lubricity that it slideth away from that which it seemed to lay hold on ! " We may call this a " seeking," if we please ; and we may put-in the *πρῶτον*, and persuade ourselves that we seek it " first," because we commend it, as we may do a man whom we mean to tread under our foot : but we cannot be so wicked as to think that God doth hear us when we bring *pias preces*, " holy prayers," and *animam triticeam*, as the father speaketh, " a soul kneaded up, as it were, of corn" and wine and wealth. For this is to thwart that method which God hath drawn out, to blot out his *πρῶτον*, and not " *first* to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness," nor in our desires to prefer spiritual graces before temporal blessings. This is *in domo Jesu Jesum non quærere*, " in Christ's house not to seek for Christ ;" to study the world in the church ; to seek for transitory, mortal, fading blessings in the temple of eternity.

Christ, therefore, in this text hath showed us a method and order, what first to seek, what next, and how to range every thing in its proper place. If we follow this method, we lay hold on, not only spiritual, but also temporal, promises. For " these things" are annexed as a promise to " righteousness," not righteousness as a promise to these. All things necessary follow that *unum necessarium*, that " one thing necessary." But if we break this method, by a strange *ὑστερον πρότερον* placing wealth above righteousness, we have forfeited our hopes to both. For if we like best of our own method and our own courses, God dealeth with us no otherwise than parents do with their children who forsake their rules, and like best of their own ways : they think it meet that they should take the event and fortune of them, and leave them to themselves ; which is indeed utterly to forsake them. And what is a Mammonist in the midst of his heaps, what is a man of power in the midst of his triumphs, what is a tyrant on the throne, without God ? Yea, so much the

\* " ' Thy will be done ' is before ' Give us this day our daily bread. ' "—EDIT.

more dangerous is our error in not observing that order which Christ hath given us, because it cannot afterward be remedied, but we have for ever lost the claim both to "righteousness" and "these things." As Cato said of errors committed in battle, *Præliorum delicta emendationem non recipiunt, quia pœna statim sequitur errorem*: "Errors in other kinds may be afterwards amended; but the error of a battle cannot possibly be remedied, because the inconveniency immediately followeth the mistake:" so in this case the error admitteth of no amendment. For if we have not observed this method of our Saviour, if any thing have possessed our thoughts above the thought, and study, and care of heavenly and spiritual things, we lie open to the inconvenience to have a writ of outlawry against us, to be fugitives and vagabonds upon the earth, and (which is the worst of evils, though we make it the least) to be shut out of the kingdom of heaven.

4. For, in the Fourth place, if we do not seek righteousness first, we may flatter and deceive ourselves as we please, but we seek it not at all. For who will think *that* merchant doth traffic for diamonds, *who* is most careful to gather up apes and peacocks? Who will think *he* loveth Penelope, *that* maketh his first and most ceremonious addresses to her maids? Our Saviour in this chapter hath laid down the reason of this in a plain axiom: "No man can serve two masters;" (Matt. vi. 24;) no more than you can draw a straight line to two diverse points, and terminate it in them both. You cannot "swear by the Lord and by Malcham." (Zeph. i. 5.) It is not, *Non oportet*, "You ought not to do it;" but, *Non potestis*, "You cannot do it." It is a thing most impossible; not only *ὡς οὐκ εὐλογον*, as Nazianzen speaketh, "as inconvenient and incongruous;" but *κατὰ δυνάμειος ἔλλειψιν*, "for want of strength and ability." We who are so quick and active in the service of Mammon, must needs be dull and heavy in the service of Christ. We who grasp the world, have not a hand to give. When so many thoughts are thronging and pressing after the world, what a poor, feeble imagination is that which is left to entertain Christ! When our desires are on the wing in the pursuit of vanity, what heart can there be for the kingdom of heaven, if it should bow itself towards us? or what would we give for righteousness, though we have the price in our hand? When our understanding is made as the mint, and our memory the counting-house, there can be no fit place for Christ to take his rest in. When we have dulled all the faculties and powers of our souls in the raising and erecting this idol, how shall we use them as instruments to make

a statue for Christ? It is impossible. If I am ready to rise up early when covetousness calleth, it is very likely I shall fall fast asleep at the voice of Christ.

The reason is plain and evident. For it is not with the will and affections as it is with the understanding. The understanding can easily sever one thing from another, and apprehend them both; yea, it hath power to abstract and separate things really the same, and consider the one as different from the other; but it is the property of the will and affections *in unum ferri, et se in unitatem colligere*, "to unite and collect themselves, to make themselves one with the object;" so that our desires cannot be carried to two contrary objects at one and the same time. We may apprehend Christ as just and holy, and the world and the riches of it as vanity itself: but we cannot at once love Christ as just and holy, and adhere and cleave to the world and the vanities thereof. Our Saviour hath fully expressed it, where he telleth us, we shall "hate the one, and love the other; or else lean to the one, and despise the other." (Matt. vi. 24.) If it be a love to the one, it will be at best but a liking of the other; if a will to the one, but a velleity and faint inclination to the other; if a look on the one, but a glance on the other. And this glance, this velleity, this inclination, are no better than hatred and contempt. For these proceed from my understanding, but my love from my will, which is fixed, not where I approve, but where I choose. For what is it to say, "This is beauty," and then spit upon it? to say, "Righteousness is *hominis optimum*," as Augustine calleth it, "the best thing that man can seek," and yet choose a clod of earth before it? What is it to call Christ "Lord," and crucify him? For reason will tell us, even when we most dote upon the world, that wisdom is better than rubies, (Prov. iii. 15,) that Christ is to be preferred to Mammon, that it is better *cum Christo affligi quàm cum aliis deliciari*, "to be afflicted with Christ than to enjoy the pleasures of this life and sport away our time with others:" but this will not make it love, which joineth with the object, which swalloweth it up, and is swallowed up by it. What love is that to righteousness, which putteth it *post principia*, "in the second file," behind the world, and in this placeth all its hope of happiness? seeing righteousness, if it be not sought *πρῶτον*, "in the first place," is lost for ever.

5. For, Last of all, if we seek any thing before righteousness, that must needs be predominant, and give laws to righteousness, square and fashion religion as it pleaseth; and so religion, being put behind, will be put also to vile offices, to swell our heaps, to

promote our lusts, to feather our ambition, to enrage our malice, to countenance that which destroyeth her, to follow that which driveth her out of the world. And whereas righteousness should be as the seal to be set upon all our intendments and upon all the actions of our life, that they may go for warrantable, being stamped and characterized as it were with the image of the King of glory, Christ Jesus; righteousness will be made as wax to receive the impression of the world, and whatsoever may prove advantageous will go current for righteousness, and every thing will be righteousness but that which is. Whereas righteousness should be fixed as a star in the firmament of the soul, to cast its influence upon all we think or speak or do; we shall draw-up a meteor out of the foggy places of the earth, a blazing and ill-boding comet, and call it by that sacred name.

This, this hath been the great corrupter of religion in all ages of the church. This was that falsary which did *παραχαράττειν*, “adulterate” the truth of the gospel. This hath made that desolation which we see upon the earth. For if the eye be first fixed on the things of this world, it will be so dazzled as not to see righteousness in her own shape, nor discern her unless she be gilded over with vanity. My covetousness now looketh like Christian providence: for my love of “these things” must christen the child. My ambition now is the honour of God. My malice cannot burn hot enough: for I “seek the Lord” in the bowels of my brethren. My sacrilege is excessive piety: for though it is true that I fill my coffers with the shekels of the sanctuary, yet I “beat down Baal and superstition.” But if we did *ζητεῖν πρῶτον*, “first seek” righteousness, our covetousness would not dig and drudge with such a fair gloss; our ambition would flag and stoop to the ground; our malice would die, never to be raised again; and our sacrilege would find no hand to lay hold on the axe and the hammer: the power of righteousness, and not her bare name, would manifest itself in our actions, and all excuses and pretences and false glosses would vanish as a mist before the sun: the world would be but a great dunghill; honour, but air; malice, a fury; and the houses of God would stand fast for ever. But this misplacing the *πρῶτον* [“first”] hath put all out of order; divided the church, shaken the pillars of the earth, ruined nations, and left nothing of righteousness but the name: when that which indeed is righteousness doth make and preserve a church, uphold the world, and is the alone thing which can perpetuate a government, and continue a commonwealth, to last so long as the moon endureth. If this did prevail, there could be no wars, nor rumours of wars,

no violence in the form of a law, no injury under pretence of conscience, no beating of our fellow-servants, no murdering of our brethren, in the name of the Lord.

I say, The casting religion behind, and making it wait upon us in all our distempers, is that which hath well-near cast all religion out of the world. This hath raised so many sects, which swarm and buzz about us like flies in summer. This is the coiner of heresies, which are nothing else but the inventions of worldly-minded men, working out of the elaboratory of their fancy some new doctrine which may favour and keep pace with their humour, and lift them up and make them great in the world. This built a throne for the Pope, and a consistory for the disciplinarian. This hath stated many questions, and been president at most councils. For be the man what he will, private interest is commonly the doctor, and magisterially determineth and prescribeth all. If a thing be advantageous, it must also be orthodox, and hath on the one side written, "Righteousness unto the Lord;" on the other, "From hence we have our gain."

We cannot be too charitable; yet, you know, charity may mistake. Peradventure weakness of apprehension may leave some naked to error; conscience may sway and bow others in some things from the truth: but, let me tell you, in that which is plain and evident, in the open and bright way of righteousness, the conscience never did, never can err. Did ever any man's conscience persuade him against a manifest law? Did reason ever tell any, "Thou mayest kill, thou mayest be perjured, thou mayest bear false witness?" No: it is not conscience, but the love of this world, that maketh a negative precept affirmative. That is the tribune that setteth us at liberty, and letteth us loose against the law itself, though it be written with the sun-beams; before which we draw a cloud of excuses or pretences, and fight against righteousness with its name. From the corruptions of men's lives have corruptions crept into religion, which carry with them a near likeness and resemblance to those lusts and desires which are mighty and prevalent in us, to carry us with a swinge into those enormities and irregularities which righteousness forbiddeth. *Ut in vitâ, sic in causis, spes improbas habemus*, saith Quintilian:\* "Those unlawful hopes and foul affections which sway us in our lives, appear again and show themselves as full of power to pervert and mislead us, in point of" doctrine, and for a while to take all scruple from the conscience. Conscience may err, and persuade me *that* is super-

\* *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, lib. xii. cap. 1.

stitution *which* is indeed devotion: but when I raise my own house upon the ruins of God's house, it is not conscience, but covetousness, that is the architect. Conscience may incite me to redeem my brother from error, when he is as free as the truth can make him. But it is the love of the world that is the persecutor which strippeth him of his possessions. For if he were guilty, yet a tender conscience would shrink at such an intrusion. Conscience may check at the gold of the temple; but it is the love of "these things" which putteth it into the bag. Conscience not well-informed may startle at the one; but it would run from the other, did not the love of the world draw it back, and lay it asleep with the music it maketh. But it will awake again, if not with a pinch from a tedious disease or some other calamity, yet most certainly at the sound of the last trump, and be that worm which shall gnaw the dreamer for ever.

Let us not deceive ourselves: "the kingdom of God and his righteousness" were the alone desirable object, and first to be sought after, before that faction and schism did rend and divide the church, before it mouldered into sects, and crumbled into conventicles, before the Pope kinged it and the disciplinarian popped it in the house of God, beating their fellow-servants, not for being unrighteous, but for not being righteous after their form and prescript, for not setting their religion to their mode and fashion. For when men did look and like and delight in the things of this world, then was this *πρῶτον*, this "first," blotted out, and righteousness left behind; and in the place thereof succeeded ceremony, formality, superstition, faction: then godliness was gain, and private interest conscience: then that divided voice was heard, "Lo, here is Christ," and, "There is Christ;" (Matt. xxiv. 23;) here in this congregation, or there in that conventicle; here in this government, or there in that, or here in no government; here in this secret chamber, and there in that desert, in that wilderness of beasts, of tigers and bears, which bite and devour each other. Then did men lie down and sleep on those heaps which they had gathered in the name of righteousness; then did they batten in their wealth; then did they bless and say an *Ave*, a "Hail," to themselves, as "highly favoured;" then did they flatter themselves, when this golden shower fell into their laps, as if righteousness had poured it down, and God himself were in it; then injustice was counted "righteousness," faction "zeal," and human policy "religion."

This mischief, this ruin hath *ἀμεθοδία*, "want of method," beginning where we should end, wrought amongst Christians, and made our very name to be loathed of those who are without,

the Turk and the Jew ; who can say no worse of us than this, and think that this they may say truly,—that we follow Christ to gain the world, and give righteousness the fairest title, but the lowest place.

———— *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis*

*Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.*—OVIDII *Metamorph.* i. 758.

“ And is it not a shame for us that this may be said, and said truly,” that Christianity should be thus scorned and blasphemed for their sakes who profess it ?

For conclusion, then : Let us not think ourselves wiser than Wisdom itself ; let us not count ourselves better methodists than our Saviour : but let us keep the *πρῶτον* [“first”] where it should be, and where Christ hath placed it,—on righteousness. Let us observe exactly in our spiritual building what Vitruvius requireth in architecture, *τάξιν καὶ διάθεσιν*, “ order and disposition ;” that in our religion there may be nothing *κακοσύνθετον*, “ ill-placed.” Why should “ righteousness ” come after “ these things,” and God after Mammon ? There is not, there cannot be, a greater absurdity, a greater solecism than this ; an absurdity which maketh men, and angels, and God himself ashamed of us ; a thriftless, destructive absurdity, which maketh us poorer by making us rich, more vile by making us honourable, and which, when we think it lifteth us up, tumbleth us down into the lowest pit. For as the Schoolman telleth us, to follow too much the sway of our sensuality, and to neglect the direction of reason, which is the best methodist, *tam sensualitatem quàm rationem extinguit*, “ doth not only put out the eye of our reasonable part, and leave that dark, but at last extinguisheth the very power of sense itself :” so our devotion and desires, if they waste and consume themselves where they should not show themselves, if we place them on “ these things,” on temporal and not spiritual, or on temporal before spiritual, they never fly to the mark, but miss of both ; they neither fill our hands with plenty, nor our souls with that spiritual manna which should nourish us to eternal life : or, if they do come home, and reach “ these things,” they serve us to no other purpose than the tyrant’s daggers of silver and ropes of silk, *ut cariùs pereamus*, “ that we may fall and perish with more state and cost and pomp than other men.”

But Christ’s method is *de scholâ cæli*, “ from heaven,” heavenly, and will lead us thither, through poverty and riches, through honour and dishonour, and never fail. In a word, righteousness, if it be *πρῶτον*, “ first,” in our desires, if it have the upper room and a throne in our heart, bringeth with it both “ the promises of this life and of that which is to come,” (1 Tim. iv. 8.) and will

make us happy here, “in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.” It will open the gates of heaven, and let us in to that happiness which is everlasting in the kingdom of God.

---

## SERMON LX.

### THE PROMISE TO THOSE WHO SEEK.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*—Matthew vi. 33.

#### PART IV.

YE have already heard what “the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” is; what it is to “seek” it; and that it must be “first” sought. And indeed it is first.

1. It hath the priority of nature. *Christianis cælum patuit antequàm via*, saith the father: “Happiness is first, and then the way to it;” the end before the means, righteousness before “these things,” the condition to be made good before the promise. “Seek first, and” then “these things shall be added.”

2. And it hath priority of dignity; not that which Cæsar aimed at,—to have no superior; but that of Pompey,—to have no equal. For what is all the gold of Ophir to one good thought? What is this clod of earth to an immortal soul? What are pearls and diamonds and all the glory of the world to the kingdom of heaven? And being thus exalted in itself, it should have the same elevation in our desires; or rather our desires and endeavours should raise themselves to that height where alone they are at rest.

*Eleganter divina sapientia ordinem instruxit, ut post cœlestia terrenis locum faceret*, saith Tertullian: “Christ hath drawn out an elegant and exact order, that after heavenly things he might make room for those which we stand in need of here upon earth.” First let us “seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” and then we may securely expect “these things.” We may expect them *ad sustentationem corporis*, “to uphold this mouldering and ruinous tabernacle of ours.” Therefore it is called “the staff of bread,” (Lev. xxvi. 26,) a chief staff, such an one as is set in the midst to bear up all the tent. Or else we may expect them *ut instrumenta virtutis*, “as instrumental to



the soul, that she may accomplish those virtues" in herself which are the means and way to happiness and the kingdom of heaven.

1. And, First, "Doth God take care for oxen?" saith the apostle. (1 Cor. ix. 9.) Doth God take care for this beast of ours, the body, which so often groweth wanton, and kicketh up the heel, and throweth the rider? Yes: he made the body as well as the soul, and his providence watcheth over both. We are not such Manichees as to think the devil made the body. *Certè domus animæ caro est*, saith the father; *et inquilinus carnis, anima*: "The flesh is the house of the soul, and the soul is the inmate of the body." *Desiderabit igitur inquilinus ex causâ et necessitate hujus nominis profutura domui*: "Whilst the soul is dwelling in the body, she naturally desireth and procureth those things which may uphold the building." Not that the soul is thus supported, but only contained; and it is impossible she should be contained, unless the house wherein she dwelleth be upheld from ruin.

The body, indeed, is of another substance and condition from the soul; but it was added *ut supellex et instrumentum in officinâ vitæ*, saith the father, "as an implemēt and instrument in the shop of life." If we clothe it not, if we feed it not, if we prop it not up with meats and drinks, with cordials and physic, within a few hours it will throw out the tenant, and fall to the ground. And therefore that God who placed all things before us, and yet bounded and confined our desires, who hath given us more than enough, yet biddeth us "take heed of surfeiting," (Luke xxi. 34,) hath taught us also *non contemnere carnem*, "not to neglect and despise our flesh;" not to give it too many stripes, for fear it become despicable in our eyes. (Deut. xxv. 3.) He hath a hand which filleth all things, and he is ready to open it when we open our hearts and desires unto him. *Creatorem non in cælo tantùm miramur*: "He is not therefore a Creator only because he made the world, and 'the heavens are the works of his fingers;'" (Psalm viii. 3;) but his Deity and providence is seen in "feeding the young ravens which call upon him:" (Psalm cxlvii. 9:) much more is it then seen in feeding those creatures which are "food for the use of man," which are "good, and not to be refused, but received with thanksgiving." (1 Tim. iv. 4.) For he it is who, when the heavens are as brass, and the earth as iron, "sendeth a gracious rain upon his inheritance, and refresheth it when it is dry;" that "watereth abundantly the furrows thereof." (Psalm lxxviii. 9; lxxv. 10.) "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the

fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon : and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth." (Psalm lxxii. 16.)

It is true, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats ; and God shall destroy both it and them." (1 Cor. vi. 13.) And other creatures are called *βοσκήματα*, saith Basil in his *Hexaëmeron*, from "feeding ;" but man was never termed so ; who must learn, with the father, to use meat not *ὡς ἔργον*, "as his work," *ἀλλ' ὡς παρέργον*, "as a thing which he doth take, but so as if he had rather not take it ;" and to receive it, as Augustine said he did, *non ut nutrimentum, sed ut medicamentum*, "not as food and nourishment, but as physic." But yet we must consider that every thing is useful in its place and for that end for which it was ordained. The knowledge of one conclusion in philosophy is of itself of more worth than all the viands of the earth ; yet philosophy will not do that which a morsel or two of bread will do,—preserve me from famishing. "I had rather," saith Tully, "be author of that defence which Crassus made for Curius, than ride in triumph for the taking-in of any fort or castle in the world ; yet it had been far better that Curius should fall from his cause, and lose the day, than that the commonwealth of Rome should not have taken-in the castle of the Ligurians. I had rather be a Phidias than a carpenter ; yet when the ivory statue of Minerva will but at most delight my eye, a house raised by a carpenter will keep me warm and healthful."\* And when we speak of meats and drinks and temporal good, we do not weigh what they are, but what is their use. "The fruit of wisdom is better than gold, and her revenue than choice silver." (Prov. viii. 19.) What are all the pearls and diamonds and riches of the world to one good thought ? And yet that thought which lifteth me up to heaven, that wisdom which crowneth me, will not feed me or preserve me from falling. Every thing is useful for that end for which it was made. "The staff of bread" was made to uphold me, the temporal blessings of this world to comfort and sustain me, that I may move in my sphere and place, "walk before the Lord in the land of the living," (Psalm cxvi. 9,) and with cheerfulness and alacrity study that wisdom which will make me "wise unto salvation."

2. For, in the next place, they are not only given *in usum vitæ*, "to support the outward man ;" but they may also be instrumental to the soul in her proper acts, in her endeavours and approaches to the First Good. They may be made the weapons of righteousness. *Non enim auri vitium est avaritia* : "Covetousness is not the fault of gold," nor gluttony of meat,

\* CICERO *De claris Oratoribus*, cap. lxxiii.

nor intemperance of wine; but they are the faults of men, who abuse these blessings, which God hath not shut us out from, nor placed any cherubin or flaming sword to keep us from them. *Deficitur non ad mala, sed malè*, saith Augustine: "These things are not evil in their own nature; but our defect is in this,—that even against the order of nature we abuse these things to evil which are naturally good." All the riches in the world cannot raise a cloud, saith Basil; but yet, we see, the widow's two mites did purchase heaven. All the dainties in the world cannot bring us back into Paradise; yet "a cup of cold water shall not lose its reward." (Matt. x. 42.) To this end, saith Tertullian, God hath opened the windows of heaven, and rained upon us his temporal blessings, *ut per licentiam utendi continentia experientia procederet*, "that, having free liberty to use the creature, we may manifest our temperance, and continency, and chastity," and all those virtues which make mortal men like unto their Creator.

Necessity was that which first did clothe us; but afterwards ambition and vanity succeeded, and brought-in *ingenia vestificinae*, "those many unnecessary arts of making garments of several fashions," and most of them for show only, and of no use at all. God hath made us whole ears, saith Cyprian, but vanity hath bored them: he hath made us bare necks, but luxury hath chained them: he hath given us white sheep, but ambition hath dyed them: he hath created us free bodies, but the devil hath bound them: he hath made us natural faces, but wantonness hath painted them: he hath made us men and women, and we have made ourselves walking pictures. Did we bate but the tenth part of superfluities in this kind, we might have enough for ourselves and our brethren; we might feed and clothe ourselves, and Christ too, wheresoever we see him naked and hungry. When we seek these, we leave righteousness behind, which should turn them into blessings, and pursue those excesses which are of no use at all. For who is the stronger for a peruke? Whose face is the fairer for painting? unless I will call that "beauty" which I may lay upon a post or a rotten stick. Whose head acheth the less for a feather? What gallant is so warm in his silks as a shepherd is in his frieze? Or are my feet the nimbler for my jingling spurs? *Nec tegunt ista corpus, sed detegunt animam*: "These vanities do not cover the body, but discover the mind, and disclose the inward man," a naked soul in a tricked-up body, a vessel of more sail and flag than bulk and burden. Be not so proud of it: for it is an argument more than probable, that the inside is but coarse, even a torn and ragged and ill-shapen soul.

We may say of our superfluities in this kind as Pliny speaketh of those famous pyramids in Egypt: They are nothing else but *otiosa et stulta pecuniæ ostentatio*,\* “the vaunting proclamations of wealth and abundance, of so much that we know not how to use it.” We may well say what Judas spake out of covetousness, *Ad quid perditio hæc?* “‘To what end is this loss?’ These superfluities had better ‘been sold, and given to the poor.’” (Matt. xxvi. 8, 9.) To that end we may desire them, and yet leave righteousness in its place. For to seek any thing in reference to righteousness, is to “seek righteousness first.” Christ is poor in the beggar; but the rich man supplieth him: he is stripped with the naked; but the rich man clotheth him: he lieth wounded by the way-side; but the rich man hath oil, and wine, and a piece of money, for his cure. This is the only end why Christ hath permitted us to seek “these things,” that they may wait upon righteousness, and, when she saith, “Go,” be ready to go to that poor cottage, that house of mourning, that prison, and at her command to “strengthen the weak knees and the hands that hang down.” Not that we should *querere summa in infimis*, “place our heaven on earth,” our happiness in vanity: but *per corporalia ad incorporalia venire*, as Augustine speaketh, “by these corporal things ascend higher and nearer to eternal, and by a religious chymistry extract manna out of meat, the water of life out of drink, grace out of riches, and perfection out of plenty.” Therefore Augustine recanted what he once had said, *sensibilia penitus esse fugienda*, “that temporal things were utterly to be avoided;” because they may be to us as the Gibeonites were to the Israelites, drawn to the service of virtue and righteousness; they may be as the ground, where we may “sow plenteously, and reap plenteously.” (2 Cor. ix. 6.)

For the soul of man is placed *in medietate quâdam*, “as it were in a middle region,” having below it the corporeal and sensible creature, and above it the Creator both of body and soul. And it may make use of temporal blessings, if it do not make an idol of them, if it do not yield up itself to the creature so as to forget the Creator, and so handle that which is from the earth, earthy, as to loathe that which is from heaven, heavenly. For as all is good which God hath made, from the soul to the atoms in the air; so the soul cannot miscarry amongst these, if she can distinguish, and weigh, and choose them; give to every thing its own place; place lesser things under greater, corporal under spiritual; and so, ordering her love aright, make use of the body to safeguard herself, and with temporal things purchase

\* PLINII *Historia Naturalis*, lib. xxxvi. cap. 12.

eternal. *Deus largiendo terrena suadet ad cœlestia*: "When God openeth his hand to give us earthly blessings, he openeth his mouth too, and bespeaketh us," ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τῆ ψυχῆ φιλοπονῆσαι, "to make the body a work-house for the good of the soul," and by these houses of clay gain a title to that lasting "city, whose builder and founder is God." (Heb. xi. 10.) For sensible things are τύποι τῶν νοητῶν, saith Basil, "a kind of types and representations of spiritual." Paradise may put us in mind of heaven: my money may put me in mind that I am God's coin, and must bear no image nor superscription but his: my treasure on earth, which a thief may steal, may mind me of that treasure which no "moth nor rust can corrupt," which no craft or power can take from me. (Matt. vi. 19.) I may see grace in riches, piety in health, holiness in a garment, and eternity in earth.

This we *may* do, this we *must* do,—look first upon righteousness, and there meet "these things;" and then look through all "these things" upon righteousness, as counting them but dung in respect of it, in which alone we rest; and look through righteousness upon "these things," as that which seasoneth and sanctifieth every part of our life, every action, every thought of ours; without which all our endeavours are but as so many approaches to death, and with which they are so many advantages and promotions to life. And this is ὁδῶν βαδίξειν, "to keep a method, an order, a right course in our proceedings." These outward things are but *impedimenta*, "the baggage" of righteousness, which cannot, as one speaketh, well be spared or left behind, but many times hinder the march: and therefore great care must be taken that they lose not nor disturb the victory. We must, then, first make good the victory, as Alexander once told Parmenio when his carriage was in danger. We must by righteousness overcome the world; and then our baggage will be safe, and "these things" will follow us, as captives do victors in their triumphs.

IV. Let us "first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto us;" which is the promise annexed, my last part, and cometh now in a word to be handled.

In this promise God may seem to deal with us as indulgent fathers do with their children: If we do what we should, he will give us that which we desire. By an argument drawn from gain and profit, he laboureth to win our love to himself; and, as Rebecca dealt with old Isaac, he provideth us "such meat as our soul loveth." (Gen. xxvii. 9.) Profit and commodity is a lure that calleth the greatest part of the world after it. Most

that we take in hand to do is copied out according to that pattern of Judas, "What will you give me?" (Matt. xxvi. 15.) "What profit, what commodity will accrue unto me?" is the preface and way to all our actions. This is the price of good and evil: men are hardly induced to do either but by the way of bargain and sale. It was the devil's question unto God concerning Job, "Doth Job serve God for nought? Hast thou not hedged him in on every side?" (Job i. 9, 10.) Indeed in this the devil mistook Job's mind: for Job served not God for this, but for another, cause. Yet there might be some reason to ask the question. For who is there amongst the sons of men that can content himself to serve God for nothing?

Aristotle, discoursing concerning the qualities and conditions of man's age, telleth us that young men for the most part consider not so much profit as equity and duty, as being led by their natural temper and simplicity, which teacheth them rather to do what is good than what is profitable. And we may observe natural conscience more strong and prevailing in youth than in age. But old men have ends of their actions: their minds run more upon profit and gain, as being led by advice and consultation, whose property it is to have an eye to conveniency, and not so much to goodness, when it cometh towards them naked and bare. I will not deny but there may be some found that are but young in the world, men that are children in evil, to whom it may be said as one sometime told Amphiaraus, that they have not tasted how sweet gold is, nor know how pleasant a savour gain hath: yet, no doubt, most men, even in their youngest days, are old and expert enough in the world. For we bring with us into the world the old man; whose wisdom and policy it is to have an ear *πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον*,\* not to enterprize any thing but for some further end than itself, either pleasure, or profit, or honour. "These are thy gods, O Israel:" these are the gods of the world: these, like God, sit at the top of Jacob's ladder, and all our actions are but steps and rounds to go up unto them. God and righteousness is not reward enough to draw men on.

Now God, who is *πολύφρων καὶ πολύτροπος εἰς σωτηρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων*, as Clemens speaketh, "even studieth ways to save us, and is witty in inventing means to bring us unto him," amongst other ways of his, hath made this weakness of ours a means to draw us home. And as the husbandman in the gospel would not have the tares pulled up, for fear the wheat should come up with them; (Matt. xiii. 29;) so God doth in a manner tolerate these

\* "To that which contributes to our advantage."—EDIT.

tares in us, lest the rooting out of our affections to the things of this life might draw a little too near the quick, and quite choke up the love of God. Or, as a skilful artificer, that worketh upon ill materials, if he cannot make what he would, yet he maketh that which the stuff and matter will afford.

The New Testament, indeed, is not so frequent in mentioning earthly blessings: and the reason that they are not there so fully taught may be, because they are supposed to be learned and known, as being sufficiently stood upon in the Old. In the Old there is scarce any page which doth not entitle righteous men to the possession of some temporary good. Yet even under the gospel righteousness hath its part of the blessings of this world, whether of soul, or body, or goods. And what the Son of Sirach spake of those excellent men who lived before his time, we have seen true in Christian commonwealths: 'The noble "famous men reigned in their kingdoms; they bare excellent rule in their wisdom; wise sentences were found in their instructions: they were rich also, and could comfort; they lived quietly at home."' (Ecclus. xlv. 1—6.) Be it therefore power, or wisdom, or riches, or peace, or any other of those apples of Paradise which seem to the world so fair and lovely and so much to be desired, God hath not rained them down upon the cities of men so as that he hath left his own dry and barren and utterly unfurnished with them. I will not dispute unto whom of right these blessings belong, whether to the reprobate or the righteous. They who have moved this question have styled themselves "righteous," and to gain "these things" have committed those sins which none but a reprobate could do. For did ever any righteous person oppress or rob his brother? But in this they do the same which the old Romans did, who, when two cities, contending for a piece of ground, did make them their judge and umpire, wisely gave sentence on their own behalf, took it from them both, and adjudged it to themselves. First, they are "righteous;" (and a saint is soon made up in their fancy;) and then every man is a "a wicked person" whom they intend to spoil. The thief is "righteous," and the oppressed innocent "a reprobate."

But let the title to "these things" rest where it will. Of this we may safely presume, that God, who is Lord of all the earth, and in whom originally all the right to "these things" is, doth so put forth his hand and dispose them as that they who "first seek righteousness" cannot doubt of that portion of them which shall be sufficient for them. Only let us be sure to keep our condition, and God will make good his promise. It is not our

great care for them, our early rising or late sitting up, our sweating and thronging and bustling in the world, that bringeth them in. Christ's method certainly is the best, nor can Wisdom itself err. The best and surest way to have "these things" is, not to seek them, not too earnestly to ask them. For when our Saviour telleth us "all these things shall be cast in upon us," he chalketh out unto us the true way to make ourselves possessors of them, and in effect telleth us that, if we ask as Solomon did, we shall be rewarded as Solomon was. When God had said to Solomon, "Ask what I shall give thee," and Solomon had asked only "an understanding heart, to discern between good and evil;" "Because," saith God, "thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, or the life of thy enemies; lo, I have done according to thy words." Thou hast thy desire. But I will do more than this, and "give thee that which thou askedst not, even riches, and honour: so that among the kings there shall be none like unto thee all thy days." (1 Kings iii. 5—13.) Here, then, is the true method (though little followed in the world) of prevailing with God for temporal blessings. As, when Jacob had got him Leah and Rachel to be his wives, Laban gave him Zilpah and Bilhah as handmaids to wait on them; a gift which Jacob never requested: (Gen. xxix. 24, 29:) so doth God give some blessings like to Leah and Rachel,—principal and excellent blessings; some he addeth like Zilpah and Bilhah,—earthly blessings, of an inferior and baser nature, as handmaids and attendants on the former. If we sue unto him for the former, for Leah and Rachel, "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" he will give us the latter, Zilpah and Bilhah, these earthly things, these handmaids and servants to piety, though we never ask them.

I know it is a hard matter to persuade the world of the truth of this doctrine. For what is righteousness to the world? Is it not as an art teaching not to be rich, not to be great, not to thrive in proportion to the rest of the world? As St. Peter telleth us, there would come mockers, who should ask, "Where are the promises of his coming?" and, "Do not all things continue alike since the creation?" (2 Peter iii. 3, 4;) so there may be who will ask, "Where is this promise of adding these things made good to the righteous? Is it not with them as it is with other men? Nay, is it not worse with them than with any men? Is any man poor, and are not they poor? Is any man weak, and are not they weak? Is any persecuted, and are not they persecuted? Are they not spoiled every day of these things? and are they not spoiled because they are righteous?"



We must, then, remove some errors which are like motes in the eyes of common Christians, that they cannot see God's hand open, and pouring down blessings, even "these things," upon them.

1. We are too prone to mistake the nature and quality of God's promises. When he telleth us he will "add these things," we presently conceive that he will come down unto us in a shower of gold; that he will open the windows of heaven, and fill our garners; that he is obliged by this promise to exempt us from common casualties, to alter the course of things for our sakes, and, when "poverty cometh" towards us "as an armed man," (Prov. vi. 11,) to fight against it and tread it down under our feet; when common calamities overflow as an inundation, to provide for us an ark, as he did for Noah, to float in till the waters abate. But the promise of God giveth us no ground thus far to presume: nor is there any way of avoiding common casualties but by preparing ourselves to bear our part. As the sword devoureth, so poverty seizeth on, one as well as another. Nor is it any new thing in the world to see that Lazar at the rich man's door who within a while shall be in Abraham's bosom. "Many are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord shall deliver him out of all." (Psalm xxxiv. 19.) This comfort the righteous have above all the world beside, that in all general deluges, of famine, captivity, pestilence, God doth extraordinarily take care of those who are his, and that in such a manner as the world useth not to do. When his own people were led into captivity, the Psalmist telleth us, that he gave them grace and favour in the eyes of their enemies, and "made all those who had led them away captive to pity them," (Psalm cvi. 46,) which was to make them mighty and victorious in their chains.

When the Goth had taken Rome, he gave security by public proclamation to all those who fled into the temples of the blessed apostles, and made it death for any man to molest them. In which example St. Augustine justly triumpheth, and challengeth all the ethnic antiquity of the world beside to show where ever it was heard that the temples of the gods did give security to those who fled unto them. And then he maketh it evident that all the distress and infelicity which befell the city of Rome at the time of sacking it, was but out of the common casualties and custom of war; but all the graces and mercies by which men found refuge and security, came only for righteousness' sake, and through the power of the name of Christ. In these common miseries, therefore, which befall cities and commonwealths we may easily read, not so much this edict of the Goth, as the

proclamation of God himself: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." (Psalm cv. 15.) God can make good his promise when it seemeth to be broken, *καὶ πόρον ἐν ἀπόροις*, "can find out means when all men's inventions fail." He doeth more than we can challenge, when he seemeth to do less than he doth promise; and sometimes openly, sometimes secretly, but always most certainly, is as good as his word.

2. Many times this promise is made good unto the righteous, when yet his present misery weakeneth his faith so, and so dulleth its eye, that he perceiveth it not. For as the Jews would not *παραλαμβάνειν ἄδοξον Χριστόν*, "receive Christ, because he came not in that pomp and state" in which they expected their Messiah; so if God come not home to our desires, we are ready to think that his hand is shortened, or that he hath withdrawn himself: whereas we ought to consider that, be it little or much that he affordeth us, it is sufficient to make good his promise. For that a righteous man thriveth at all, that he hath any footing in the world, is merely from God, and not the will of the world. For the righteous man, like Scæva, must stand up against a whole host: he hath the prince of this world, and all that is in the world, for his enemy; and if God should permit them once to their proper swinge, the condition of the righteous were most miserable. But he striketh off the chariot-wheels of those Egyptians that pursue them, and putteth a hook into their nostrils, so that against their wills they become instruments of good to them whom they most hate. Besides, the righteous, because of righteousness, are in a manner proscribed the world, debarred of many of the thriving arts that are there taught. They cannot flatter for a reward, nor lie for advantage; they cannot worship the golden calf, supple and humour the rich man for his countenance and favour; they cannot tread those paths which lead to honour and preferment: and therefore if "these things" come, it must needs be that God himself doth pour them on them. The ravens feed Elijah: (1 Kings xvii. 6:) an angel bringeth him meat. (ix. 6.) A prophet is taken up by the hair of the head to carry a mess of pottage for Daniel's dinner. (Bel 36.) Now whether God send his ravens or his angels, whether the rarest dainties or but a mess of pottage, the care of God is the same, and the miracle as great.

3. This promise is not absolute, but made over to us upon condition. "These things shall be added," not to exclude righteousness, or thrust it from its seat, but to be as an handmaid to wait upon it and serve it. And therefore if God see that "these things" will slug and retard us in the pursuit of

righteousness, he will withdraw them. When he addeth them, it is "because his mercy endureth for ever:" and when he withdraweth them, it is "because his mercy endureth for ever." (Psalm cxxxvi.) That love which opened his hand, doth shut it up; and that which gave us "these things," will leave us nothing. His love fitteth and applieth itself to our condition: "for his mercy endureth for ever." How many things doth he give us which we would not have, because he loveth us! How many things doth he withhold from us which we would have, because he loveth us! Better it is, and more honour, to lie on the dunghill with righteousness, than to sit on the throne without it. If the competition be between "the kingdom of God" and "these things," then, *Domine, nolo hanc misericordiam*, saith Bernard: "Lord, I will have none of this kind of mercy," this pleasing, killing mercy; none of these riches that will undo me; none of these temporal blessings, that will make eternity itself a curse. Then God is liberal in denying me, is better than his promise when he seemeth not so good as his promise. For when he promised to "add these things," he did not mean to destroy us.

4. In the last place: If God do not "add all these things," and so make good the promise in the letter, yet righteousness itself will supply all defects, and make even nothing itself "all these things" unto us. In respect of righteousness it is alike gainful either to enjoy the things of the world, or not to enjoy them. And no man can doubt of this but he that knoweth not, or will not know, what religion is; who is divorced from righteousness and married to the world. Nay, if I may use the word, I may be bold to say, it is as meritorious, and as great a part of righteousness, to know how to want "these things" for God's sake, as it is to know how to abound and use them to his service.

We read of Epaminondas, a noble Theban, that when the people in scorn had put him into a base office, he did rather rejoice in it than disdain it; and told them, that he would manage it with that wisdom and resolution that he would make it a place of as great honour and credit as any was in the state. And *this* righteousness can much more do: it can make the lowest and basest estate equivalent unto the most honourable calling in the world; and by the grace of God, who made us out of nothing, is able [to] and doth make nothing as beneficial unto us as if we were made lords of all the creatures. That is not honour, that is not riches, which unrighteous men call by that name. For is an ass honourable in purple, or rich when he

is laden with gold and diamonds? Yes; he is as honourable as a raging tyrant, as Herod in all his royalty, as an unjust judge, as he that will be great and not be righteous. For they both, both the ass and the man, bear their honour and riches alike; but the ass more innocently. Beloved, neither to enjoy nor to want is a thing of any worth with God, nor doth he consider or esteem it: but to know how to use, and how to want, this becometh beneficial unto us. For who is poorer than he that hath, and enjoyeth not; that swimmeth in rivers of milk and honey, and cannot taste them? And he that hath nothing in this world, if he hath not this art of enjoying nothing, *perdidit infelix totum nil*, "hath utterly lost the benefit of this nothing." When Job from so great an estate had fallen to nothing, nay, to worse than nothing in this world,—to misery, which is a whip; and under contempt, which to a generous mind is a scorpion,—by patience and humble submission under the hand of God, by receiving calamities and giving thanks, he purchased a greater measure of glory than if he had never tasted of them: nay, he made his poverty a purchase; for his estate, his sheep, his camels, his oxen, and his asses, were doubled to him. Whatsoever was transitory and perishing he received with interest, and the greatest interest; and but the just number of his children, (it is Basil's observation,) because they still lived in their better part, and would all be restored at the resurrection. Such purchases doth righteousness make, such advantages and improvements doth she find. It is for want of righteousness that many do want, and make their want a greater increase of evil unto them. For the sting of poverty is impatience. Repining at God's providence, secret indignation and envy against those that abound,—these are the furies which pursue them, and make their misery more malignant; these heap up wrath against the day of wrath; these make them unfit either to live or die, and deliver them from one hell into another. Or, if they can quiet and compose their minds, and make show of calmness and contentedness, it is rather senselessness and wretched stupidity than religious discretion: as little children laugh at their fathers' funerals, because they do not understand their loss. But to resign ourselves into the hands of God, whose we are; to make his will ours, though it be to make us a proverb of misery; to be thoroughly contented to be any thing, to suffer any thing, which he will have us; to want without repining; this is the work of righteousness, this is a part of piety as great as giving our bodies to the fire, as entertaining of Christ and his prophets, as founding of churches, or building of hospitals, or doing whatsoever else is

commended to us. A man thus qualified is fitted for the highest employment in the church, even for the glory of martyrdom : yea, he is a martyr already *sine sanguine*, "though he come not under the sword, nor shed his blood." This is an addition indeed, greater than that in kind : this maketh our very poverty as rich as the greatest wealth, a dungeon more honourable than the highest place, and that a heaven upon earth which carnal men tremble at and run from even into hell itself. In a word : this blesseth our store, promoteth our counsels, maketh profit itself profitable ; this taketh away the name of "rich" and of "poor," and maketh them both the same. For betwixt rich and poor in this world, in respect of our last landing, as it were, and entrance into our haven, it is but as in St. Paul's broken ship : Some by swimming, "some on broken parts of the ship," some this way, some that, some in one condition, some in another, but all by the conduct of righteousness, "come safe to land." (Acts xxvii. 43, 44.) Rich and poor, high and low, weak and strong, the brethren of low degree and they in the highest seat, all, at last, meet together in the haven, in the kingdom of heaven.

#### APPLICATION.

For conclusion, then : You have seen righteousness, what it is, and that it is desirable in itself, that it is desirable before all things, and that it draweth all things after it ; not only "the dew of heaven," but "the fatness of the earth ;" (Gen. xxvii. 28 ;) in her womb, like Rebecca, bearing twins, a Jacob and an Esau, spiritual and temporal blessings, the kingdom of heaven, and the world, with all that therein is, as an appendix or addition. This is the object : and this is Christ's method,—that righteousness should be first in our desires, because it is all in all, and bringeth the rest along with it. And this method we must exactly follow.

For why should not we think Christ a perfect methodist ? Why should the flesh and the world so prevail with us as to persuade us that Wisdom itself may be deceived ? Our own experience might easily confute us. For we see men are never more fools, never more foully fail of their ends, than when they will be wiser than God, and prescribe to Wisdom itself : then they "seek out many inventions," (Eccles. vii. 29,) follow their uncertain providence through the many turnings and windings and mazes and labyrinths which it hath made, please themselves in their own ways, dream of happiness, and in the end meet with ruin and destruction. They seek for meat, and are more hungry than before ; they pursue honour, and lie in the dust ;

they are greedy of riches, and become beggars ; they cry, they fight for liberty, and are made slaves. Their craft deceiveth them, their policy undoeth them, their wisdom befooleth them, their strength ruineth them. They think they are making a staff to lean on, and, when they have shaped and fashioned it, behold, it is a rod to scourge them.

This we have seen with our eyes,—folly shamed and defeated in her own ways, and confounded in her method and course of proceeding. The thoughts of men are perverse, and their method contrary to that which true Wisdom prescribeth. For it proceedeth *ab apparentibus ad vera*, “from apparent” good things “to real” evils ; from that which may satisfy my envy, or feed my covetousness, or flatter and fulfil my lusts, to that which will destroy both body and soul. It beginneth in honour, and endeth in dishonour ; it beginneth in pleasure, and endeth in torment ; it beginneth in visions, and dreams, and pleasant speculations of what may be, and endeth in bitterness, and horror, and amazement. The method of this world is no method, and “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” (1 Cor. iii. 19.) And it would appear so to us too, if it had not first blinded us, and put out our eyes. For how do “the children of this world, who are wise in their generation,” (Luke xvi. 8,) every day fail under their own wisdom, fall under their own strength, and that before the sun and the people !

Let us, then, forsake our own ways and method, and follow that which is prescribed by Wisdom itself, which proceedeth *ab asperis ad læta*, “from that which appeareth irksome to that which is truly delightful,” which leadeth us through rough and rugged ways into a paradise of pleasure, through the valley of death into the land of the living, through many tribulations into heaven. This, one would think, were a strong motive and inducement to follow it. But there is more yet. Our Saviour doth even *blandiri*, condescend to “flatter” our infirmity, and provideth for our bodies as well as our souls. For the same method will serve both. The love of “righteousness” is our purveyor here for “these things,” and our harbinger for “the kingdom of God.” Would you see this miracle wrought ? It is daily wrought : and if it be not wrought on you, it is because of your unbelief. Faith is required as a condition, not only for the working of miracles, but also for the procuring of every blessing of God. And if we believe, if we distrust not, if we question not the providence and promise of God, it will be made good upon us ; and we shall have enough here, and more than we can desire hereafter ; we shall receive “these things,” and make of

them such friends as, when “all these things” shall “fail, will receive us into everlasting habitations.” (Luke xvi. 9.) Which God grant unto us for Jesus Christ’s sake!

---

## SERMON LXI.

### A DEHORTATION FROM ERROR.

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Galatians vi. 7.*

#### PART I.

WE shall not take these words in that reference they bear to the foregoing verse, in which they that are “taught in the word” are exhorted to “communicate to those who teach them in all good things.” For this is a doctrine not so suitable to these times: and were St. Paul now alive to preach it, he would be set to his old trade of making of tents; his practice would be turned upon him to confute his doctrine, and that made a duty which was but a charitable yielding and condescension for the church’s sake. If, for their sakes, and to take off all scandal and offence from the gospel of Christ, he will labour with his hands, this his voluntary submission shall be made a law to bind him and his posterity for ever. Teach he should, and labour he should with his hands. He that teacheth must labour, and every labourer may teach. Every man may teach, and none communicate. So that text of communicating is lost quite, and the duty of teaching left to every one that will take it up. Every man may be a teacher, every man a St. Paul, though he never sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

We will not then take our rise here, but call your thoughts rather to a view of my text as it looks forwards to the next verse: “He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;” which presents the show of a reason, but is indeed no more than a plain commentary on this verse. And in this sense my text is *προφυλακτικόν*, a precious “antidote against” error, against those errors which are most fatal and dangerous to the soul, the errors in our life and conversation. “In many things,” saith St. James, “we offend” and err “all.” (James iii. 2.)

For, 1. Few men have learnt that precept of Pythagoras, to “reverence themselves;” to give that reverence to their own judgment and reason which they will to the beck of a superior, the voice of a custom, or the vote of the beast of many heads, the

multitude. And though error have a foul name, yet we are never better pleased than when we put a cheat upon ourselves, bowing to our sense, and as stiff as adamant to our reason: never lying more grossly than when we speak to ourselves, and bear both the parts in the dialogue. How easily do we persuade and win ourselves to that which if a prophet should commend unto us, we would not receive him in that name, and for which we should anathematize an angel!

2. Being deceived, and making a kind of sport and pastime in our error, we are very ready to entertain a low conceit even of God himself, as if blindness might happen to his all-seeing eye, and he might also be deceived and mocked. When through negligence or wilfulness we cannot raise ourselves to be like unto him, so far as possibility will permit; we make him like unto us, smiling upon us and favouring us in all our undertakings. Men asleep in sin dream of a sleeping God, and men who have blinded themselves fancy a God that will not see. Lastly: Having made darkness as a pavilion round about us, we drowse on securely, and dream of life in the very shadow of death, *securi adversus Deos hominesque*, "fearing neither God nor man;" little heeding what we sow, and not weighing well what we shall hereafter reap.

Now to men thus asleep, running willingly into error, and then delighting themselves in it, our apostle lifts up his voice: "Awake you that thus sleep: 'Be not deceived.'" And this precept he strengthens and doubles by two infallible positions: the one grounded on the wisdom of God, Θεὸς οὐ μωκτηρίζεται, "God is not mocked;" the other on his justice, which gives to every man κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον, "according to his work." (1 Cor. iii. 8.) "For what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." In sum thus: "Be not deceived;" that is, Deceive not yourselves in those plain and obvious duties of Christianity: for as God's wisdom cannot subscribe to this wilful error, so his justice will punish it. There is no deluding the eye of the one, nor avoiding the stroke of the other. It is a foolish error to think you may do what you list, and have what you list; that you may sow tares, and reap good corn; that you may sow to the flesh, and reap from the Spirit.

The parts then are three:

I. A dehortation from error: "Be not deceived." In which we shall point first to the nature, and then to the danger, of the error we must fly from.

II. A vindication of the wisdom of God: Θεὸς οὐ μωκτηρίζεται, "God is not mocked." I call it "a vindication of God's wis-



dom," not that God hath need of any to stand up and speak for him,—for God's wisdom will justify itself; and he that denies him to be wise, denies him to be God,—but in respect of a secret persuasion which finds place and lurks in the hearts of those who deceive themselves, that God will not be so severe as he gives himself out for, but will measure their actions by the same rule and line which themselves make use of. And to strive to shake and remove this persuasion will be a sufficient discharge of this point.

III. The last is a declaration of the justice of God proportioning the harvest to the seed. And this shall serve only for conclusion, and as a motive to enforce the rest, that upon the wings of hope or of fear we may make haste and fly away from this den of error.

I. "Be not deceived." These words have the form of a general dehortation from all error, but must be taken in a more restrained and limited sense. For to be free from all error is not to put off the old man, but to put off our humanity.

1. There be some truths to which common understandings are not equal, which either stand at such a distance that we cannot ken them, or want a fit medium to convey their *species* and "representations." For the understanding, like the bodily eye, is not of the same quickness and sharpness in all. One man discovers the star itself, when another scarce sees my finger that points to it. Nor need we draw it to fundamental truths in such a manner as to go in quest to find out the exact number of them, and to deliver it by tale to them who are so vain as to demand it at our hands; as now of late, being put to their shifts, they of the church of Rome have learnt to do; as if, after sixteen hundred years and more, Christians were at loss and to seek for that without which they cannot be Christians. It may suffice that the will of God is the main fundamental point of our religion, the several branches whereof he hath spread abroad, and most plainly revealed in his gospel. The will of God contained in his word is plain, though the mysteries are great, delivered to us as oracles, but not as riddles; his will, I say, not only concerning what he will do in Christ for us, but also concerning what he will have us to do ourselves, "as he hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. i. 4.) Now whethersoever of these two we look upon, "Be not deceived," is a good caveat, the errors on both sides being dangerous. But the metaphor of sowing in the text, which implieth an outward act, directeth our discourse to the last. And matters of faith are like those

ἰδιόμματα, those *initia mathematicorum*, as Tully calleth them, “the beginning and principles of that science.” St. Paul termeth them the “principles of the doctrine of Christ.” (Heb. vi. 1.) These must be taken for granted: for we speak not to infidels, but to such as have already given up their names unto Christ.

“Be not deceived,” then, is in effect, Deceive not yourselves in the common actions of your life: which then befalls us when, contrary to the evidence which we already have, and which fairly offers itself if we would entertain it, we proceed to action, and venture upon that which, we know, or may easily know, is unlawful, if we will but pause and consult with reason; and so wander in the region of light, deceive ourselves when the day is brightest, and so lose ourselves in the mist which we ourselves cast; when at once we proffer:\* and check ourselves, and yet resolve to condemn what we embrace, and embrace what we were afraid of; when we drink down sin for some pleasant taste it hath, when we know it will be our poison. The prophet David plainly expresseth it, *Nolunt intelligere*, “They will not understand, and seek God.” (Psalm lxxxii. 5.)

The error, then, in practice is from the will alone, which is swayed more by the flatteries and sophistry of the sense than by the dictates of the understanding; as we many times see that a parasite finds welcome and attention, when we stop our ears to “seven wise men that can render a reason.” (Prov. xxvi. 16.) An error of a foul aspect; and therefore we look upon it but at distance, through masks and disguises: we seek out divers inventions; and out of a kind of fear that we may not err at all, or not err soon enough, we make sin yet more sinful, and help the devil to deceive us. Sometimes we comfort ourselves with that which we call “a punishment;” and being born weak, we are almost persuaded it is our duty to fall. Sometimes the countenance of the law is too severe, and we tremble and dare not come near; and because we think it hard to keep, we are the more active to break it. Sometimes we “turn the grace of God into wantonness;” (Jude 4;) and since he can do what he [may] please, we will not do what we ought. Sometimes we turn our very remedy into a disease; make the mercy of God a kind of temptation to sin, and that which should be the death of the sin the security of the sinner. Sometimes we hammer out some glorious pretence, propose a good end, and then drive furiously towards it, though we perish in the way; to defend one law, break all the rest; pluck the church in pieces, to fit her with a

\* See note in vol. ii. p. 59.—EDIT.

new garment, a new-fangled discipline ; fight against the king, for the good of the commonwealth ; tread law and government under foot, to uphold them ; say it is necessary, and do it, as if there could be an invincible necessity to sin.

This is *μεθοδεία τοῦ διαβόλου*, as Basil calleth it, "the devil's method" to bring-in God himself pleading for Baal, and to suborn the truth as an advocate for error. For, to make up the cheat, he paints our error in a new dress, makes it a lovely, majestic error, that we begin to bow and worship it. *Similitudo creat errorem* : "Error," saith Tully, "hath its being from the resemblance which one thing bears to another."\* It is presumption, but it is like assurance : it is sacrilege, but it is like zeal : it is rebellion, but it is like the love of our country. For as the common principles of truth may be discovered in every sect, even in those opinions which are most erroneous ; so the common seeds of moral goodness have some show and appearance in those actions which are wholly evil. There is something of love in effeminacy, something of zeal in fury, some sound of fidelity in the loudest treason, something of the saint in the devil himself.

There are *fomenta erroris*, these "breed and nourish error" in us ; these bring forth the brat, and nurse it up : St. Paul's *νοήματα*, certain wandering and stubborn "imagnations," the vapours of a corrupt heart, exhaled and drawn up into the brain, where they hang as meteors, irregularly moving and wheeled about by the agitation of a wanton fancy ; and St. Paul's *λογισμοί*, strong "disputes" and subtle "reasonings" against God and our own souls. (2 Cor. x. 5.) The Vulgar translates it *consilia*, "deliberate counsels" to undo ourselves. We consult and advise, we hold a kind of Parliament within us ; and the issue is, we shake and ruin that state which we should establish. Nor do these *minuere voluntatem*, "make our error less wilful," but aggrandize it : for of themselves they have no being, no reality ; but are the creation of the mind, the work of a wanton fancy, created and set up to sanctify and glorify our error. There is no such terror in the law, till we have made it a "killing letter ;" (2 Cor. iii. 6 ;) no difficulty, which our unwillingness frames not ; no pretence, which we commend not ; no deceiving likeness, which we paint not. Still that is true, *Cor nostrum nos decepit*, "Our heart hath deceived us." Our reason is ready to advise, if we will consult : and it is no hard matter to divest an action of those circumstances with which we have clothed it, and to wipe out the paint which we ourselves have

\* *De Divinatione*, lib. ii. cap. 26.

laid on. But as St. Augustine well observes, *Impia mens odit ipsum intellectum*: "When we forsake our reason and understanding, we soon begin to distaste and hate it;" and because it "doth not prophesy good unto us, but evil," are unwilling to hear it speak to us any more. (1 Kings xxii. 8.) From thence we hear nothing but threatenings, and menaces, and the sentence of condemnation. It exhorteth, and corrects, and instructs: it is a voice behind us, and a voice within us; and we must turn back from the pleasing paths of error, if we listen to it. *Timemus intelligere, ne cogamur facere*: "We are afraid to understand our error, because we are unwilling to avoid it; we are afraid to hear of righteousness, who are resolved to be unjust." And what was an apology for Ovid, may be applied to us to our condemnation: *Non ignoramus vitia, sed amamus*: "We are not ignorant of the errors of our life, but we do love them," and will be those beasts which we know must be thrust through with a dart.

I have now brought before your eye the error we must fly from; and the apostle exhorts us to make haste: *Μὴ πλανᾶσθε*, "Be not deceived." It is tendered as good counsel, but indeed is a law. For, as Tertullian speaks, if the ground of every law be reason, *lex erit omne quod ratione constiterit, a quocunque productum est*, "whatsoever reason commends must be a law to us, though it be not written in tables of stone, nor proclaimed by the voice of the herald." So, had not this exhortation been apostolical, yet it might well carry with it the force of a law, because nothing is more opposite to reason than error. I may say, it is not only a law, but *compendium totius evangelii*, "the sum of all the precepts of the gospel," or rather a pillar to preserve them all; pressing upon us a duty which, if well observed, will fit and qualify us for all the duties of our life. And therefore what the Pope usurps upon weak grounds or none at all, is the prerogative, or rather the duty, of every Christian in those things which concern his peace,—to be infallible. One is no further a Christian *nisi in quantum cœperit esse angelus*, "than so far forth as, by casting off error more and more, he begins to have a taste of an angelical estate."

## APPLICATION.

And now we should descend to application. And I could wish I could not apply it. But if I should apply it, I must make use of the rhetoric of the ancients, who in a copious subject were wont to tell their auditors that they were impoverished with plenty, straitened with abundance, dulled and cloyed with too

much matter ; and cry out with them, " Where should I begin ? or how should I end ? " For we may behold the world as a theatre or stage, and most men walking and treading their paces as in a shadow, all in show and visor, nothing in substance ; masked and hidden from others, and masked and hidden from themselves ; fond of themselves, and yet enemies to themselves ; loving, and yet hating, flattering, and yet wounding, raising, and yet destroying, themselves ; in their forehead, " Holiness to the Lord ; " in their heart, a legion of devils ; breathing forth " Hosannas, " when they are a-nailing their Saviour to the cross ; canonizing themselves " saints, " when the devil hath them in his snare ; hugging their error, proud of their error, glorying in their shame ; wiser than the law, wiser than the gospel ; above command, nauseating and loathing all advice and counsel, whatsoever reason or revelation breathes against them, as the smoke of the bottomless pit. We may behold the covetous grasping of wealth, smiling at them that love not the world, and counting them fools because they will not be so. But this man is sick and dieth, this man perisheth, and where is he ? We may behold the ambitious in his ascent and mount, and in his height, looking down with scorn upon those dull and heavy spirits who will not follow after : and yet every step he rises is a foul descent, and he is never nearer to the lowest pit than when he is at his height. This man falls, and is dashed to pieces, and where is he ? Behold the seditious, who moves, and walks, and beats up his march in the name of the Lord of hosts, and thinks God beholding to him when he breaks his law. This man dieth, and perisheth, and where is he ? Where is the saint, when the covetous, the ambitious, the seditious man are in hell ? O beloved, would we could see this, and beware of it betimes, before the Son of man comes, who will pluck off our masks and disguises, and make us a woful spectacle to the world, to men, and to angels ! O what a grief is it that we should never hear nor know ourselves till we hear that voice, " Depart from me : I know you not ; " (Matt. xxv. 12, 41 ; ) that we should deceive ourselves so long, till Mercy itself cannot redeem us from our error ; that we should never see ourselves but in hell, never feel our pain till it be eternal ! O what a sad thing is it that we should seal-up our eyes in our own blood and filth ; that we should delight in darkness, and call it light, that we should adore our errors, and worship our own vain imaginations, and in this state and pomp and triumph strut on to our destruction ! " To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. " (Psalm xciv. 7, 8.) *Hic meus est, dixere, dies* : " This is our

day" to look into ourselves, to examine ourselves, to mistrust ourselves, to be jealous of ourselves, *vereri omnia opera*, as Job speaks, "to be afraid of every work we do," of every enterprise we take in hand, to hearken to God when he speaks to us by ourselves, (for reason is his voice, as well as scripture: by the one he speaks in us, by the other to us,) to consult with our reason and the rule, to hear them speak in their own dialect, not glossed and corrupted by our sensual affections; to strive with ourselves, to fight against ourselves, to deny ourselves, and in this blessed agony and holy contention to lift up our hearts to the God of light; to take up that of the prophet David, and make it our prayer, "Lord, deliver us from the deceitful man," (Psalm xliii. 1.) that is, from ourselves.

I need not stand any longer upon this: for even they that deceive themselves will willingly subscribe to all that I have said: and commonly none defy error louder than they who call it unto them both with hands and words.

2. We will therefore rather, as we proposed, discover the danger which men incur by joining with it, that we may learn by degrees to shake it off, to detest and avoid it.

(1.) In the first place, this wilful deceiving of ourselves, this deciding for ourselves against ourselves, for our sense against our reason, this easy falling upon any opinion or persuasion which may bring along with it pleasure, or profit, or honour, all things but the truth, is that which lays us open to every dart of Satan; which wounds us the deeper, because we receive it as an arrow out of God's quiver, as a message from heaven. For we see, a false persuasion will build up in us as strong resolutions as a true one. Saul was as zealous for the law as Paul was for the gospel; heretics are as ready for the fiery trial as the orthodox; the Turk as loud for his Mahomet as the Christian for his Christ. In a word: error produceth as strange effects as truth. *Habet et diabolus suos martyres*: For "the devil hath his martyrs as well as Christ." That which is a sin now, and so appears, a crying mortal sin, and we stand at distance, and will not come near it; anon, profit or pleasure, those two parasites which bewitch the soul, plead for it, commend it, and at last change the shape of it; and it hath no voice to speak against us, but bids us, "Go on and prosper." It was a monster; but now it is clothed and dressed up with the beauty of holiness, and we grow familiar with it. It was as menstruous rags; but now we put it on, and clothe ourselves with it as with the robes of righteousness. A false persuasion hath the same power which the canonists give the Pope, to make evil good, and vice virtue. "It is a sin; but

if I do it not, I shall lose all that I have :” and then I do it, and then it is no sin. It was oppression ; it is now law : it was covetousness ; it is now thrift : it was sacrilege ; it is now zeal : it was perjury ; it is now wisdom.

Persuasion is a wheel on which the greatest part of the world are turned and circled about, till they fall several ways into several evils, and do but touch at the truth by the way. Persuasion builds a church, and persuasion pulls it down : persuasion formeth a discipline, and persuasion cancels it : persuasion maketh saints, and persuasion thrusts them out [of] the calendar : persuasion makes laws, and persuasion abolisheth them. The Stoics call it *πρόληψιν*, a kind of “pre-occupation” of the mind, the source and original of all the actions of our life, as powerful when we err as when the truth is on our side, and commonly carrying us with a greater swinge to that which is forbidden than to that which we are bound to by a law. This is the first mover in all those irregular motions of a wanton and untamed will : this is the first wheel in the devil’s *αὐτόματα*,\* in his devices and enterprises. From this in evil, as from God’s grace in good, proceed both the will and the deed. (Phil. ii. 13.) For when this persuasion is wrought in us ; when by degrees we have lessened that horror and detestation of sin which God hath imprinted in the mind of every man ; when we have often tasted those delights which are but for a season ; when this false inscription, “From hence is our gain,” hath blotted out the true one, “The wages of sin is death ;” (for we seldom take down this sop but the devil enters ; ) when either fear of inconvenience or hope of gain hath made us afraid of the truth, and by degrees driven us into a false persuasion, and at last prevailed with us to conclude against our own determinations, and to approve what we condemn ; then every part of the body and faculty of the soul may be made a weapon of unrighteousness ; then we rejoice like giants to run our race, though the way we go be the way that leads unto death.

Good Lord ! what a world of wickedness may be laid upon a poor, thin, and groundless persuasion ! What a burden will self-deceit bear ! What mountains and hills will wilful error lie under, and never feel them ! Hamor and Shechem must fall by the sword, and their whole city must be spoiled ; and what is the ground ? Nothing but a mongrel persuasion, made up of malice and religion : “Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot ?” (Gen. xxxiv. 26, 27, 31.) Joseph must be sold ; and what is the reason ? “Behold, the dreamer cometh.” (Gen.

\* “Self-moving contrivances.”—EDIT.

xxxvii. 19.) Absalom would wrest his father's sceptre out of his hand. What puts him in arms? Ambition, and that which commends ambition,—a thought that he could manage it better: "O that I might do justice!" (2 Sam. xv. 4.) King, and nobles, and senators, all must perish together at one blow: for, should heretics live? Holy things must be devoured: for, should superstition flourish?

Such inconsequences and absurdities doth self-deceit fall upon, having no better props and pillars to uphold her than open falsehood, or mistaken or misapplied truth. For as we cannot conclude well from false premisses, so the premisses may be true, and yet we may not conclude well. "For he that saith, Thou shalt not commit adultery, hath said also, Thou shalt not kill." (James ii. 11.) He that condemns heresy, hath made murder a crying sin: he that forbids superstition, abhorreth sacrilege. All that we call adulterers are not to be slain; all that we term heretics are not to be blown up; all that is or seems to be abused is not presently to be abolished: for adulterers may be punished, though not by us; heretics may be restrained, though not by fire; and things abused may be reserved, and put to better uses. And yet see upon what a nothing this self-deceit upholds itself! For neither were they all adulterers that were slain by those brethren in evil; (Gen. xlix. 5;) nor were they heretics who were to be blown up; nor is that superstition which appears so to them whom the prince of this world hath blinded. O what a fine subtle web doth self-conceit spin to catch itself! What a prophet is the devil in Samuel's mantle! How do our own lusts abuse us when the name or thought of religion is taken in to make up the cheat! How witty are we to our own damnation! O self-deceit, from whence art thou come to cover the earth? the very snare of the devil, but which we make ourselves; his golden fetters, which we bear with delight, and with which we walk pleasantly, and say, "The bitterness of death is past:" (1 Sam. xv. 32:) and so we rejoice in evil, triumph in evil, boast of evil, call evil good, and dream of Paradise when we are falling into the bottomless pit.

(2.) Secondly. This self-deceit which our apostle forbiddeth hath brought an evil report upon our profession, upon Christianity itself, there having scarce been found any of any religion who have so wilfully mistaken and deceived themselves in the rules of their profession as Christians. Christianity is a severe religion; and who more loose than Christians? Christianity is an innocent religion, and full of simplicity and singleness; and who more deceitful than Christians? The very soul of Christi-



anity is charity; and who more malicious than Christians? The Spirit that taught Christianity came down in the shape of a dove; and who more vultures than Christians? What an incongruity, what a solecism is this,—the best religion, and the worst men! men who have learned an art to make a promise overthrow a precept, and one precept supplant another; sometimes wasting and consuming their charity in their zeal, sometimes abating their zeal with unseasonable meekness; now breaking the second table to preserve the first, and defying the image of God in detestation of idolatry; now losing religion in ceremony, and anon crying down ceremony when all their religion is but a compliment. *Invenit diabolus quomodò nos boni sectationibus perdat*, saith Tertullian: “By the deceit of the devil we take a fall many times in the pursuit of that which is good, and are very witty to our own damnation.” What evasions, what distinctions do we find, to elude the precepts of our Saviour and his apostles! As it hath been observed of those god-makers, the painters and statuaries of the Heathen, that they were wont to paint their goddesses like their mistresses, and did then think them most fair when they were most like that which they most loved; so hath it been with many professors of Christian religion: they temper the precepts of it to their own fancy and liking; they lay upon them glosses and interpretations, as it were colours, to make them look like unto that which they most love: so that, as Hilary observes, *quot voluntates, tot fides*, “there be as many religions as there be tempers and dispositions of men, as many creeds as humours.” We have *annuas et menstruas fides*: “We change our religion with our almanack, nay, with the moon;” and the rules of holiness are made to give attendance on those sick and loathsome humours which do pollute and defile it. If I will set forth by the common compass of the world, I may put-in at shore when my vessel is sunk; I may live an atheist, and die a saint; I may be covetous, disobedient, merciless, I may be factious, rebellious, and yet religious still; a religious Nabal, a religious schismatic, a religious traitor,—I had almost said, a religious devil.

“For this,” saith St. Paul, “the name of Christ is evil spoken of,” (Rom. ii. 24,) “that worthy name,” as St. James calleth it, (James ii. 7,) by those who by our conversation should be won to reverence that name. For this that blessed name is blasphemed, by which they might be saved. *Omnes in nobis rationes periclitantur*, that I may use Tertullian’s words, though with some change: “We are in part guilty of the blood of those deceived Jews and Pagans, who, now perishing in their error, might have been converted to the faith, had not the Christian

himself been an argument against the gospel." It might well move any man to wonder, that well weighs the simplicity and severity of Christian religion, from whence it should come to pass that many Christians surpass even Turks and Jews in fraud, deceit, and cruelty. And the resolution is almost as strange: for by the policy of Satan our very religion is suborned to destroy itself; which freely offering mercy to all offenders, many hence take courage to offend more and more, pardon being so near at hand. They dare be worse than Turks upon this bare encouragement, that they are Christians. So that to that of St. Paul, "Sin took an occasion by the law," (Rom. vii. 7, 8,) we may add, "Sin takes an occasion by the gospel, and so deceiveth us."

It is possible for an atheist to walk by that light which he brought with him into the world: even Diagoras *κατὰ φύσιν* ["by nature"] might have been an honest man. For that wisdom which guides us in our common actions of morality is nothing else, saith Tully, but *ratio adulta et perfecta*, "reason improved and perfected."\* But the Christian hath the advantage of another light, another law, a light which came down from heaven, and a "royal law," (James ii. 8,) to which if he take heed, he cannot go astray. Miserable *error* shall I call it? It is too good a name. It is folly and madness, thus to be bankrupt with our riches, to be weaker for our helps, to be blinded with light, *in montes impingere*, as St. Augustine speaks, "having so much light, to run upon such visible, palpable, and mountainous evils;" to enter the gates of our enemies as friends, and think ourselves in Dothan when we are in the midst of Samaria. (2 Kings vi. 19, 20.) Let us not deceive ourselves, who "were bought with a price," and redeemed from error: (1 Cor. vii. 23 :) let us not flatter ourselves to destruction. It is not the name of Christian that will save us, no more than Epictetus's lamp could make a philosopher. Nay, it is not the name of Christ that can save us, if we dishonour it, and make it stink amongst the Canaanites and Perizzites, among Turks and Jews and infidels. "Behold, thou art called a" Christian, "and retest in the" gospel, "and makest thy boast of" Christ (Rom. ii. 17.) If thou art a Christian, then know also thou art the temple of Christ, not only in which he dwells, but out of which he utters his oracles to instruct others in the ways of truth. If thou art a Christian, thou art a member of Christ; a member, not a sword, to wound thy sick brother unto death. The folly of thy ways, thy confidence in error, doth make the Turk smile, and the Jew pluck the veil yet closer to his face.

It is a sad truth, but a truth it is, This stamping religion

\* *De Legibus*, lib. i. cap. 7.

with our own mark, and setting upon it what image and super-  
 scription we please, hath done more hurt to Christianity than all  
 the persecutions for Christ to this day. These by diminishing  
 the number of Christians have increased it, and by the blessing  
 of God have "added to the church from day to day such as  
 should be saved." (Acts ii. 47.) The sword and the flame have  
 devoured the Christian; but this is a gulf to swallow up  
 Christianity itself. What Seneca spake of philosophy is true of  
 religion, *Fuit aliquando simplicior inter minora peccantes* : \*  
 "When men did frame and square their lives by the simplicity  
 and plainness of the rule, it was not so hard and busy a thing;  
 and there were fewer errors, when the greatest error was impiety."  
 But after by degrees it began to spend and waste itself in hot  
 and endless disputations, one faction prescribing to another,  
 and promulging their dictates as laws, (which many times were  
 nothing else but the trophies of a prevailing side,) "waxing  
 worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (2 Tim. iii. 13.)  
 And now all is heat and words; and our religion for the most  
 part (if I may so speak) is a negative religion, hath no positive  
 reality in it at all. Not to be a Papist is to be a Christian; not  
 to love the picture, is to be a saint; not to love a bishop, is to be  
 a royal priesthood; not to be a Brownist or Anabaptist, is to be  
 orthodox. Should a Pagan stand by, and behold our conversa-  
 tion, he might well say, "Where is now their God?" Where is  
 their religion?" Thus hath the church of Christ suffered from  
 her own children, from those who suck her breasts. She had  
 stretched her curtains further, to receive in those who were  
 without, had they not been frightened back by the disconsonancy  
 and horror of *their* lives *whom* they saw in her bosom; and she  
 had had many more children, had not they who called her  
 "mother" been so ill-shapen and full of deformity: and that is  
 verified in her which was said of Julius Cæsar, *Plures illum  
 amici confoderunt quàm inimici*: "She hath received more  
 wounds from her friends than from her enemies."

(3.) Last of all: This error in life and conversation, this wilful  
 mistake of the rule we should walk by, is an error of the foulest  
 aspect, of greater alloy than any other. For in some things *licet  
 nescire quæ nescimus*, † it is lawful to err; error in itself having  
 no moral, culpable deformity. In some things *oportet nescire  
 quæ nescimus*, ‡ we must not be too bold to seek, lest we lose  
 our way. Some things are beside us, some things are above  
 us, some things are not to be known, and some things are  
 impertinent. In some things we err, and sin not: for, *Errantis*

*Epistola* xciv.

† "We may remain in ignorance of what we do not

know."—EDIT

‡ "We must not know that of which we are ignorant."—EDIT.

*nulla est voluntas*, saith the law: "He that hath no knowledge hath no will." But self-deceit in the plain and easy duties of our life is so far from making up an excuse, that it aggravates our sin, and makes it yet more sinful. For we blind ourselves, that we may fall into the ditch; we will err, that we may sin with the less regret; we place our reason under the inferior part of our soul, that it may not check us when we are reaching at the forbidden fruit; we say unto reason, as the legion of devils said to our Saviour, "'What have we to do with thee? art thou come to torment us before our time?'" (Matt. viii. 29.) Art thou come to blast our delights? to take the crown of roses from off our heads? to retard and shackle us, when we are making forward towards the mark? to remove that which our eye longeth after? to forbid that which we desire, and to command us to hate that which we best love?" We persuade down reason, we chide down reason, we reason down reason, and will be unreasonable, that we may be worse than the beasts that perish. First we wash our hands with Pilate, and then deliver up Jesus to be crucified.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that" thus deceivest thyself. (Rom. ii. 1.) Yea, so far is this self-deceit from making up an excuse, that it deserveth no pity. For who will pity him who is willing to be deceived, who makes haste to be deceived, who makes it his crown and glory to be deceived? Had it been an enemy that deceived me, or had it been a friend that deceived me, every man would be ready to say, "Ah my brother! or, Ah his glory!" (Jer. xxii. 18:) but when it is I myself deceive myself, when I myself am the cheater and the fool, and never think myself wiser than when I beguile myself, it is a thing indeed to be lamented with tears of blood, but yet it deserves no pity at all. *Nulla est eorum habenda ratio qui se conjiciunt in non-necessarias angustias*,\* saith the civilian: The law helps not those who entangle themselves with intricate perplexities; nor doth the light of the gospel shine comfortably upon those who will not see it. It is a true saying, "He that will not be saved must perish." "Died Abner as a fool dieth?" saith David. (2 Sam. iii. 33.) Doth this man err as a fool erreth? or is he deceived for want of understanding, or because of the remoteness and distance of the object? Then our Saviour himself will plead for him: "If you were blind, you should have no sin." (John ix. 41.) But in the self-deceiver it is not so. "His hands are not bound, nor his feet tied in fetters" of brass. (2 Sam. iii. 34.) His eye is clear; but he

\* "No regard is to be paid to those who heedlessly precipitate themselves into unnecessary difficulties."—EDIT.

dims it. The object is near him, even in his mouth and his heart; but he puts it from him. The law is quick and lively; but he makes it a dead letter. He turns the day into darkness, gropeth at noon as at midnight, and turns the morning itself into the shadow of death.

We have a worthy writer, who himself was ambassador in Turkey, that hath furnished us with a polite narration of the manners of the people, and the customs of the places. Amongst the rest he tells us what himself observed, that when the Turks did fall to their cups, and were resolved to fill themselves with such liquor as they knew would intoxicate and make them drunk, they were wont to make a great and unusual noise, with which they called down their soul to the remotest part of their bodies, that it might be as it were at distance, and so not conscious of their brutish intemperance. Beloved, our practice is the very same. When we venture upon some gross, notorious sin, which commends and even sanctifieth itself by some profit or pleasure it brings along with it, we straight call down our reason, that it may not check us when we are reaching at the prey, nor pull us back when we are climbing to honour, nor work a loathing in us of those pleasures which we are drinking down as the ox doth water. We say unto it, "Art thou come to blast our riches, and to poison our delights? Shall we now part with the wedge of gold? Shall we fly the harlot's lips as a cockatrice? Shall we lay our honour in the dust? Shall every thing which our soul loveth be like the mounta'n which must not be touched? Avoid, Reason; not now Reason, but Satan, to trouble and torment us. What have we to do with thee? 'Thou art an offence unto us,' a stone of offence, a scandal." (Matt. xvi. 23.) And now if there be a *Dixit Dominus* against us, if "the Lord say it," he doth not say it; if a prophet speak it, he prophesies lies; if Christ speak it, we bid him "depart from us, for" we will be "sinful men." (Luke v. 8.) And hence it comes to pass that our error is manifest, and yet not seen; that our error is known, but not acknowledged; that our error is punished, but not felt. Hence it comes to pass that we regard not the truth, we are angry with the truth, we persecute the truth; that admonitions harden us, that threatenings harden us, that judgments harden us; that both [in] the sunshine and [in] the storm, when God shines upon us, and when he thunders against us, we are still the same; knowing enough, but basely prostituting our knowledge and experience to the times and our lusts; false to God and ourselves, and so walking on triumphantly in the errors of our life; dreaming of eternity, till at last we meet with what we never dreamt of, death and destruction.

Read 2 Kings viii., and see the meeting of Elisha and Hazael. The text saith, "The man of God wept." And when Hazael asked him, "Why weepeth my lord?" the prophet answered, "Because I know the evil that thou wilt do to the children of Israel: their strongholds thou wilt set on fire, and their young men thou wilt slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child." What did Hazael now think? Even think himself as innocent as those children. "What, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" (Verses 11—13.) Should the same weeping prophet have wept out such a prophecy to some of after-ages, and have told them, "Thus and thus you shall do; actions that have no savour of man or Christian; actions which the angels desire not to look upon, and which men themselves tremble to think on;" would they not have replied as Hazael did, "Are we dogs and devils, that we should do such things?" And yet we know such things have been done.

I might here enlarge myself, and proceed to discover yet a further danger. For error is fruitful, and multiplies itself. It seldom ends where it begins, but steals upon us as the night, first in a twilight, then in thicker darkness. Only the difference is, it is commonly night with us when the sun is up and in our hemisphere. We run upon error when light itself is our companion and guide. First we deceive ourselves with some gloss, some pretence of our own: our passion, our lust, our own corrupt heart deceiveth us. And anon our night is dark as hell itself, and we are willing to think that God may be of our mind, well-pleased with our error. Now against this we must set up the wisdom of God: "Be not deceived:" it is not so:  $\Theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\ \mu\upsilon\chi\tau\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ , "God is not mocked," saith our apostle. This I call "the vindication of God's wisdom," my second part: of which in the next place.

---

## SERMON LXII.

GOD'S WISDOM VINDICATED, AND HIS JUSTICE DECLARED.

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Galatians vi. 7.*

### PART II.

II. HAVING done with the first part of the text, a dehoration from error, in these words, "Be not deceived;" I proceed to the second, which I call "a vindication of God's wisdom," in the next words, "God is not mocked,"  $\Theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\ \mu\upsilon\chi\tau\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ . This is

ἀνελεγκτος λόγος, "an undeniable position." "The eyes of the Lord," saith the prophet, "run to and fro throughout the whole earth." (2 Chron. xvi. 9.) *Deus videt*, and *Deus judicat*,\* are common notions which we receive *e censu nature*, "out of the stock and treasury of nature;" there being such a sympathy betwixt these principles and the mind of man, that so far forth as the acknowledgment of these will bring us, the soul is *naturaliter Christiana*, "a Christian by nature itself," without the help of grace. There was no man ever who acknowledged a God, but gave him a bright and piercing eye. This is a seed which may be sown in any ground, and will grow up even in Epicurus's garden; who denied indeed the providence, but not the foreknowledge, of God, as thinking the events and motions of things on earth rather below his care than out of his sight; and though he had the confidence to deny the administration, he had not the power to deny the nature, of God. In a word: it is a principle of nature written in our hearts by the finger of God himself, and we must first lose ourselves before we can blot it out. And yet as undeniable as it is, St. Peter foretells that "there will come mockers in the last times," even mockers of God. (2 Peter iii. 3.) And the words here are not a bare negative proposition, and no more, but a silent reprehension, and, being urged and preached as it were, a plain intimation that some there might be who, deceiving themselves in their religion, would take courage at last to question a principle of nature. "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity," saith David: (Psalm x. 7:) and then it follows in the close, "God hath forgotten: he hideth his face, and will never see it, nor require it." (Verses 11, 13.) "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not." (Ezek. ix. 9.) They say, as the fool doth "in his heart, There is no God;" (Psalm liii. 1;) say it rather by rote, as that they would have, than make an article of their faith. For none believe that there is no God, but they for whom it were better there were none indeed. None believe he doth not see, but those who do those works of darkness which he cannot look upon but in anger. May we then conclude that there be some who attempt to cozen God, as the Cererians did their Jupiter; who think they can baffle him, and put a trick upon him; obtrude dross for silver, and a gilded sin for true holiness and righteousness?

\* "God sees," and "God judges."—EDIT.

“ A hard saying, this ; who can bear it ? ” (John vi. 60.) Yet such no doubt there are, and, we have just cause to fear, not a few, who are secretly possessed of such a fancy. For this “ their folly is manifested unto all men,” as the apostle speaketh. (2 Tim. iii. 9.) And it shows itself, 1, *In vitâ hominum*, “ in men’s lives.” 2. *In votis hominum*, “ in the wishes of wicked men.” 3. *In studio*, “ in their desire and study ” to make themselves believe it.

1. And, First, if we look into the lives and conversations of men, we shall find the whole course and order thereof to be nothing else but *ἔρῃμα*, “ a kind of scene, and as it were an action upon a stage.” What masks and disguises do they put on ; and all *populo ut placeant*, “ that they may deceive the people,” who indeed are delighted with shows, and will swallow down any pill, be it to their own ruin and destruction, if it be gilded over with a fair pretence ; who cannot think themselves wise but by being constant, or rather stubborn, fools. Thus first they deceive and mock themselves, then they deceive and mock others ; come forth in this show and saint-like majesty, as Herod in his royal apparel, that they may be taken for gods, not men. (Acts xii. 21, 22.) And now they dare tell any prophet in the world (though they peradventure will not call him “ Blessed of the Lord”) that they “ have fulfilled the commandment of the Lord.” (1 Sam. xv. 13.) For, having gained this applause, they tread their measures with more state and majesty ; they begin to feel themselves to be those persons whom they did present ; as Quintilian observes of some players, that they put on that affection which they were but to express, and went weeping off the stage.\* Now they are “ holy,” now they are “ just,” now they are “ Defenders of the Faith ;” and by degrees work in themselves a belief that God also is of their opinion, delighted in shows and apparitions : and therefore in this habit, which at first they did put on but for a purpose, they commend themselves to God himself ; like the pantomime or dancer in Seneca, who, because he pleased the people well, was wont every day to go up into the Capitol, and dance before Jupiter, and thought he did the god great pleasure in it.

Did I say this folly was seen in the course of men’s lives ? You may think it is rather hid there. It is true ; but so hid as the bee was in the gum ; *et latet, et lucet* ; “ hid, but so hid that with half an eye we may see it well enough.” For the hypocrite, though he carry-on his actions with that art and subtle continuance as if he would deceive the eyes of the sun and of justice,

\* *Institutiones Oratoriae*, lib. vi. cap. 2.



yet some one thing or other there will be which shall discover and unmask him. "I have performed the commandment of the Lord," said Saul to Samuel. "And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (1 Sam. xv. 13, 14.) "I am just and holy," saith the hypocrite. What meaneth then this loud oppression, this raging malice, this devouring covetousness, which are as the "bleating of the sheep, and lowing of the oxen," to discover all, and make this angel of light as full of horror as the devil himself? And as it is seen in close and painted iniquity, so is it most visible in open profaneness, in those sins which we commit before the sun and the people. And in these we do not so much mock God as laugh him to scorn; think that he will keep silence at our oaths, shut his eyes at our uncleanness, fall asleep whilst we watch whole nights in prodigious intemperance, and be at last a Father of mercy to those rebellious children who defy him to his face. Such mockers the world is full of: these locusts swarm, and cover the face of the earth, and corrupt the whole land. *Quæ regio in terris?* "What corner of the earth is there where these do not quarter?"\*

Look into the court. There the king is the preacher, and his example a lasting sermon. I doubt not but there be many who do *sub larvâ servire aulæ*, as Nazianzen spake of his brother Cæsarius, who "wait upon the king to do service to the King of kings," and make their place here but a step to a better in heaven: yet if we may prophesy, in the king's court we may discover some who by their colour and complexion do not make show as if they had lived so near the sun, or within the beams and influence of so resplendent an example.

Look into the camp. I cannot think but there be many there *qui sub paludamento alterius alteri militant*, "who in their coat-armour serve the Lord of hosts, and so live as those that fight his battles:" but are there none whose very words are clothed with death, and whose swords are instruments of violence? God grant there be no *legio fulminatrix* in this sense, no "thundering regiment," to call down the tempest of God's wrath, not upon their enemies, but themselves.

Look into the temple. There God is present, we may be sure, as present as in heaven itself; and no doubt many come to it as to the place of his habitation: but we may with the cast of an eye discover not a few, who come disguised indeed, as if they meant to hide themselves from God, but of so irreverent deport-

\* VIRGILII *Æneis*, lib. i. 464.

ment as if the place were not dreadful, and God were not here. (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.)

Look into the city. That is Jerusalem, the faithful city : but “ how is the faithful city become an harlot ! ” (Isai. i. 21.) What is her religion but a mockery ? What mock fasts, when she fasts to turn away God’s judgment, and is herself the greatest judgment God hath sent upon the land ! What mock prayer, whilst she prays for that she will not have ! prays for peace, and beats up the drum ! I should not indeed have given her her portion with the hypocrite, but that her show of holiness is too thin a scarf, and her wickedness is too transparent.

Look into the country. I know there is *sancta rusticitas* ; \* that God may be served with the hammer in the hand, and will hearken to a hallelujah sung at the plough-tail : but what coldness do we find amongst many ! what indifferency ! what halting between God and Baal ! I hope there are not many (but a few are too many) of those who can salute Anthony or Cæsar as occasion serves, and will be very good subjects when the king prevails.

And now, last of all, look into the church. That indeed is “ made a spectacle unto the world, unto angels, unto men ; ” (1 Cor. iv. 9 ;) and hath been looked upon with such an evil eye that now we can scarce see it unless we will seek it in a conventicle which they call a synod, a great part whereof scarce understands the word. Yet look upon this heaven in its beauty, before the powers of it were shaken ; and we fear we might have seen some angels fallen from their estate, some “ wandering stars,” (Jude 6, 13,) some reaping plentifully that did sow nothing, that indeed had nothing to sow, many striving to enter in, but not at the strait gate. Go, “ run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem : ” (Jer. v. 1 :) look into that part of the world which we call Christendom, and there you shall see religion follow and lackey it to the world, to “ the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life ; ” (1 John ii. 16 ;) varying in its shape and complexion as that alters and changes, running along in the same stream and channel ; looking towards one haven, but carried as it were with the tide into another ; carried captives according to the will of the enemy, and yet triumphing in the name of the Lord. There you may see men that call themselves “ the temples of the Holy Ghost,” like those Egyptian temples, of a fair and glorious fabric without, but having nothing but cats and crocodiles within instead of gods. There you may observe the same men professing Christ, sighing

\* “ Pious rusticity.”—EDIT.

and groaning out Christ, and yet putting him to open shame ; making this poor Christ a way to riches, this humble Christ a way to honour ; making this meek Lamb a butcher ; bringing him, as the Jesuit doth, as a patron and promoter and abettor of all the cruelty they practise upon their brethren ; of all their unjust designs, not an accessory, but principal ; for they are begun and ended in his name ;—the same Christians ravished at the glory of his promises, and crest-fallen at the voice of his command ; confessing themselves sinners, yet not sensible of their sin ; proclaiming heaven the only blessed estate, and yet never moving towards it ; bound to the haven of rest, and yet steering their course into the gulf of destruction ; calling Christ, with one prophet, “ the desire of all nations,” (Haggai ii. 7,) and yet looking upon him with so small regard as if, as another prophet speaketh, there were nothing to be seen in him “ that we should desire him ;” (Isai. liii. 2;) begging life most importunately, and yet most passionately making love to death ; made up of so many contradictions, that it might pose a considering man, and make him at one view resolve, as the cynic did when he beheld the philosopher, Μηδὲν γενναιότερόν ἐστι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, “ Man is the most generous plant in nature,” and at another view, with the same cynic, when he saw the soothsayers, Μηδὲν γελοϊότερον, pronounce man “ the most ridiculous creature in the mass.” Run, I say, to and fro through the world, by the wonderful frame whereof we might learn to know God ; but we turn away our eye from Christ, and learn to mock him by its vanities. These are “ the last days,” and St. Peter’s prophecy is fulfilled. (2 Peter iii. 3.) It is become the language of the world, an economical language, “ Tush ! God doth not see.” (Psalm xciv. 7.) Atheism and profaneness will certainly bring this gray-headed world “ with sorrow to its grave.” (Gen. xlii. 38.) For, as Demodocus said of the Melesians that “ they were not fools, but did the same things which fools used to do,” so may we of these profane mockers : “ atheists ” we will not call them, but most plain it is they do the very same things for which we call men so. And thus much of the first point,—that the conversation of men for the most is but a mockery of God.

We see, then, that this disease doth *eructare se ab animo in superficiem*, as Tertullian speaks, “ exhale and breathe itself forth, and is visible in the outward man.” And the behaviour of many, profess what they will, is but a mocking of God.

2. But further yet, in the Second place, it may be *in votis*. We may not only live as if God did not see, but we may “ wish ” from our hearts that he had no eye at all. For we never make

worse wishes than when we are the servants of sin, our wishes commonly being proportioned to our actions. Lust brings forth the one, and fear the other. If we sin, we fear; and if fear be the mother and midwife of our wish, the wish that it brings forth will prove a monster. Take us in any state, in any condition, but this, *et non satis patemus Deo*, "we are never open enough to God." Fling us into prison, and we desire our sighs may come before him: lead us into captivity, we cry out with the prophet, "Behold, Lord; for we are in distress:" (Lam. i. 20:) lay us on our bed of sickness, and we call upon him to look upon us, and to come so near as to "turn our bed:" (Psalm xli. 3:) lay us in our grave, and our hope is he will breathe upon our dust. But when we sin, and our conscience presents unto us the countenance of an angry God, then we put him far from us; we are willing he should depart from us, who have departed from him; we wish for some rock to hide us, or some mountain to cover us, from his sight; then we could be content, and it is even our wish, that he had no eye at all. We have an author who hath written a book *De Arte nihil credendi*, "Of the Art of believing nothing;" and he lays it down as a tried conclusion, *Oportet prius Calvinistam fieri qui atheus esse vult*, "He that would be an atheist must first turn Calvinist:" which Maldonate the Jesuit receives as he would an oracle. But [we] know from what coasts it breathes; and may name it a profane scoff, and a malicious speech, *merum pus et venenum*.\* Yet this use we may make of it,—that we watch the serpent's head, and beware the beginnings of evil: for if we once serve in the devil's tents, we may be engaged further than we ever thought we should; and by going from our God we may learn to slight and mock him. For there be steps and degrees and approaches to atheism; nor is any man made an atheist in the twinkling of an eye: and this wilful deceiving of ourselves leads apace that way, even to a distaste of God. We first mock ourselves, and then are willing to mock him. For we never hate God till we have given him just reason to hate us. *Odium timor spirat*, saith Tertullian: "Hatred is an exhalation from fear:" and we then begin to wish he had no eye, when we have cause to fear the weight of his hands. This is a sad declination, even to the condition of the damned spirits, nay, of the devil himself; whose first wish was, to be as God; the next, that there should be no God at all. And thus much of the second point,—that we may have it *in voto*, "in our wish and desire," to delude and mock God.

3. But now, in the Third and last place, we may yet descend a

\* "Mere corruption and venom."—EDIT.

step lower, even to the gates of hell itself. I may say, lower yet : for as we may have it *in voto*, so we may have it *in studio* ; as we may “ wish it were so,” so may we “ strive and study to believe it,” and use all means to make it present itself unto us as an article of our creed ; which the damned cannot do. We may strive to blot out those characters which are indelible, to rase out those afflicting thoughts of God out of our memory, to drown the cry of one sin with the noise of more, to feed our love of the world with more wealth, our lust with more uncleanness, and our revenge with more blood, make a sin a virtue, a crying sin an advocate, by committing it often, and answer our chiding conscience with a song. There be, saith the prophet, that “ put far from them that evil day ;” and to this end they “ chant to the sound of the viol, and invent instruments of music, like David.” (Amos vi. 3, 5.) They bespeak the vanities of the world to come in and make their peace ; call in the pleasure of the flesh to abate the anguish of the spirit ; work out the very thought of evil by the content and profit they reap in doing it ; laughing and jesting sin out of their memory ; adding sin unto sin, till their “ conscience be seared as with a hot iron,” as the apostle speaks. (1 Tim. iv. 2.) *Magnis sceleribus etiam jura naturæ intereunt*, saith the orator : “ Whilst we are thus familiar with the works of darkness, the light of nature begins to wax dim, and by degrees to vanish out of sight.” First, as Bernard speaketh, a spiritual chilness possesses the soul, and, finding no resistance, seizeth on the inward man, infects the very bowels of the heart, chokes up the very ways of counsel : and then these domestic and inward remembrances, the voice of nature, and the principles of reason, fail, and speak in a broken and imperfect language. In a word : they are to us as we would have our God be, not “ at hand,” as the prophet speaketh, but “ afar off.” (Jer. xxiii. 23.) The historian will tell us that thievery and piracy were so frequently practised in some part of Greece that they were accounted no crimes at all. And we read of those African parents, that they made it a sport, nay, a religion, to sacrifice their children, and could not be dissuaded from that inhuman custom ; and long it was before, being conquered, they were forced to lay it down. And if we look abroad into the world, we shall find some few indeed of those tender consciences, who frame a law to condemn themselves by, and so make more sins than there are : but *quocunque in populo, quocunque sub axe*, “ in every nation, in every corner of the earth,” we meet with those who “ frame mischief by a law,” (Psalm xciv. 20,) take a pride to quarrel at articles of their faith, and are as

active to nullify the law of works. Is blasphemy a sin? They speak it as their language. Is sacrilege a sin? All things are alike to them, as unholy as themselves. Is revenge a sin? It is a heroic virtue. Is adultery a sin? It was a sin, a mortal sin; but in these latter and perilous times it hath spoken better things to them who are bold to present it as pleasing to their understanding as to their sense. Is rebellion a sin? There be that call it by another name. "If the Son of man come, shall he find *sin* upon the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8.) Certainly, admit our glosses, apologies, distinctions, evasions, take us in our big, triumphant thoughts, there will be none that do evil, no, not one. For what we read of the men of the first age, that they knew not what it was to die, but fell to their graves as men use to fall upon their beds, is true of many now in respect of their spiritual estate: they fall into sin as if it were nothing but to lie down and rest, to satisfy the sense and please the appetite; as if to sin were as natural as to eat. And now all is night about us: but even in this darkness there is sometimes a scintillation, a beam of light darted in upon us, which waxeth and waneth as the hand of God is upon us or removed. In our ruff and jollity it seems well-near extinct: but in our misery and afflictions it revives many times and begins to move; and at last, when God strikes us to the ground, when our feather is turned into a night-cap, when death comes towards us on his pale horse, it kindles and blazes as a comet that foretells our everlasting destruction.

Now "this our way" uttereth our "foolishness." (Psalm xlix. 13.) For what a folly is it to follow a meteor exhaled from the earth, and not that light which is from heaven, heavenly! to be driven about with a lie, and unmovable as a rock when the truth speaketh! to prefer a wandering thought before an everlasting principle! to embrace a suborned, deceitful solicitation, and turn ourselves from those native and importunate suggestions, from the dictates and counsel of the Spirit of God, and, though they haunt and pursue us, run from them as from our enemies; as if we were like to that fabulous rock in Pliny, which you could not stir with all your strength, but yet might shake with the touch of your finger! We may say of this as the father doth of idolatry, It is *summus seculi reatus, tota causa judicii*: "It is a vocal crying sin, which, like the importunate widow in the gospel, will not suffer the judge to rest till he do justice." This filleth the world with the evil of sin and of punishment; not so much a firm opinion that God may be deceived and mocked, as a bold presumption by which we make him such a God as we

would have him, a God that may be trifled with, a God that, like the heathen gods, may be taken by the beard; that those fierce astonishing speeches which we find in scripture are but words of art, *καὶ τῆς οἰκονομίας*,\* spoken to affright men, rather than words of intended truth, which will bring effect according to their natural meaning; as indulgent fathers many times threaten their children with much hard language, which they never intend to make good. And this conceit of God's facility and easiness, that he so quickly admits of excuse, is the principal ground and occasion of all the sins in the world.

To make it plainer yet, and point out to some particulars in which we mock God when we imagine no such thing, and so to conclude this point: I cannot imagine, when I consider that Majesty which no mortal can comprehend, that dust and ashes, the works of God's hand, should be able to put a trick upon him, and mock him. This were to set his creature in his throne, and place extreme weakness and folly above Wisdom itself. "Thou verily thoughtest I was like unto thee," saith God to the hypocrite. (Psalm l. 21.) It was but a thought, a wavering imagination, which enters, and goes out, and never remains at one stay. God is not, cannot be, mocked. For if he had believed there was a God, Diagoras himself would not have mocked him, nor ever thought it possible. But the truth is, as the relation stands betwixt God and his creature, man is said to do that which he doeth not, which he cannot do; to fight with him who is omnipotent; to dispute with him whom we "cannot answer one of a thousand;" (Job ix. 3;) to contend, to grieve him who cannot be moved; to weary him, to "press him as a cart is with sheaves," (Amos ii. 13,) who by his word made, and by his word beareth, all things, who is to himself an everlasting sabbath and rest. *Non ille minus peccat, cui sola deest facultas*, saith the casuist: "We do not do it the less because we cannot do it, because we would do it if we could." *Ipsa sibi imputatur voluntas*, saith the father: "To will it is to do it." To "look upon a woman, and lust after her," is to "commit adultery;" (Matt. v. 28;) yet the woman as chaste as before: so God cannot be mocked, yet we may mock him. As, in the rape of Lucrece, [Lucretia,] two are in the fact, yet but one, as Augustine speaks, committed adultery. For if Tully could truly say, that to resist the law of nature, and to walk contrary to that light which we brought with us into the world, is nothing less than *gigantum more bellare cum diis*, "to wage war with the gods as the giants did;" † then may we as truly affirm, that to dissemble with God,

\* "And economical" or conventional.—EDIT.

† *De Senectute*, cap. ii.

to flatter him with our lips when our heart is far from him, to fall down before him in a compliment when we break his laws, to act our part as upon a stage, to wish he had no eye, to study to believe it, is to mock him.

To be more particular yet: for yet you may ask wherein we mock him. For we are very slow and unwilling to believe any evil of ourselves, and are hardly induced to think we ever did that which we do every day. "*Mock God!* nay, God forbid!" And that "God forbid," that prayer, is but a mock. God calls to the Jews, "Return unto me;" and they reply, "Wherein shall we return?" (Mal. iii. 7;) as if they never had been averse from him, but had been always with him, even in his bosom. And, "Ye have robbed me," saith God; and they say, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" (verse 8;) as if they were utterly ignorant of any such matter, but had been wholly employed in bringing tithes into his storehouse and meat into his house. They forsook him, they robbed him, and yet are innocent. They did, and did not; and God himself is made no better than a calumniator. So that this position is true in this sense also, "God is not mocked;" for no man thinks, no man will acknowledge, no man dares profess, that he mocks him.

But we cannot thus shake off the guilt, nor put it from us. For when we do those things to God which we do to men when we mock them, this is enough to put us into the seat of mockers, and enrol us amongst the mockers of God. When Laban gave Jacob blear-eyed Leah for beautiful Rachel, it was a mock. "What hast thou done?" saith Jacob: "Did not I serve thee for Rachel? Why hast thou mocked me?" (Gen. xxix. 25.) When Michal laid an image in the bed for David, and said he was sick, it was a mock: for "Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me?" (1 Sam. xix. 13—17.) When God requires justice and righteousness, and we bring him "vain oblations;" (Isai. i. 13;) when he calls for the heart, and we lift up our voice; when he calls for a working, fighting, conquering faith, and we give him a dead faith; when God calls for faith, which is a stone, a corner-stone, to build that obedience upon which shall reach to heaven, and we make faith a pillow to sleep on, and sin the more securely because we believe; when God bids us "strengthen our hands that hang down," (Heb. xii. 12,) and we open our ears; when God bids us, "Up and be doing," and we count all done in hearing; when God calls for a new creature, and we return him circumcision and uncircumcision, empty sacraments, and lazy formalities; when God requires a sacrifice without blemish, and we offer up that which is lame or blind;



(Deut. xv. 21;) when God requires perfection, and we give him our weak, blind, halting endeavours; when God seeks a man, and we give him a picture; what are we but “hypocritical mockers?” (Psalm xxxv. 16.) For what are *hypocrites* but “players,” the zanies of religion, whose art it is to deceive, who are so long conversant in outward performances that they rest in them as in the end of the law, are content with shows and expressions, and at last think there is no service, no religion, but in these? As the poor Spartan, travelling into another country, and seeing the beams and posts of houses squared and carved, which he had never seen before, asked if trees did grow so in those countries: so these mockers of God, these formal professors, having been long acquainted with a form of godliness, squared and carved, and set out with show and advantage, considering what eloquence there is in an attentive ear, a turned eye, an angel’s tongue, a forced sigh, to win applause, and make them glorious in the eyes of men, fall at last upon this Spartan’s conceit, and think that trees grow so, and that there is no other natural shape and face of God’s service but that; which is to deceive themselves and mock God. These are *ludibria scenæ et pulpito digna*, “mockeries fitter for the state and theatre” than the churches of Christ, in which we present the all-seeing eye of God with one thing for another; with a masquer, and say he is a king; with a slave, and say he is a conqueror; with a dreamer, and say he is a believer; with a man of Belial, and say he is a Christian; with a devil, and say he is a saint.

We must now resume our text. For all this, though we desire to mock God, though we do that which is but a mockery of God, though we care not for God, though we contemn God, though we slight his counsels, resist his will, tender him one thing for another, or something which he would have, but not all, though we abate the terror of the law by some fair pretence; yet “God is not mocked,” is an everlasting truth, as everlasting as himself; and therefore, saith a learned writer, it is to be understood *cum effectu*:\* “God is not mocked,” that is, God will not let such mockers go unpunished. For as he sees their thoughts before they are shapen, hears their words before they are spoken, beholds their actions before they are done; and his clear and piercing eye follows them through every grot and cave, sees them through all their windings and turnings, through those meanders and labyrinths in which they think to lurk and hide themselves; so he will ἀντιμυκτηρίζειν, “return the mock” upon them. If they mock God, God will laugh them to scorn: his

\* “With reference to the consequences.”—EDIT.

justice shall demonstrate his providence, and the weight of his hand make them feel that he had an eye.

I cannot better conclude this second part, than with that with which the Psalmist concludes his fiftieth Psalm: "O consider this, ye that forget God," ("ye that mock God;" for he that forgets him, mocks him,) "lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." (Psalm l. 22.) What a mock was that of the Athenians to Anthony, which cost them a thousand talents! What a mock was that of Callisthenes to Alexander, which cost him his life! But then what a mock will that be which mocks both body and soul into hell-fire! And this is the difference between *our* mock and *God's*: Ours doth not, cannot, reach him we aim at: his mock, as the Wise Man speaks, flies like an arrow to the mark. (Wisdom v. 12, 21.) In our mock there is nothing but folly and vanity: in his, there is reeking indignation, fire and brimstone; the scorching heat whereof who may abide? Our mock is as a dart shot upwards; and his mock returns it upon our own pates. We mock him, and he remains the same for ever: he mocketh us, and that is our misery, our hell, for evermore. O, then, forget him not, mock him not; rather "kiss," that is, worship, him. Kiss him, not with a Judas's kiss; worship him, not as the Pharisee, with an outward, ceremonious, empty, insignificant worship; but fall down before him in simplicity and singleness of heart. Worship him, as God speaks to you, and lie not: "Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice in him with reverence." (Psalm ii. 11, 12.) For "tribulation and anguish" to them that mock him; but "glory and honour" and immortality to them who "worship him in spirit and truth." (Rom. ii. 9, 10.)

III. Both these are joined together in the last part of my text: "For whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap:" which words, as I told you, declare the justice of God in proportioning the harvest to the seed, and come now to be handled.

This is a strong motive. And it is the method of God to cure us by something which is contrary unto us, to check one passion with another, and, when we love ourselves so well as to undo ourselves, to awake our fear, and so control and silence our love. It is a high-flown fancy, or rather a bold phrase, of the physician, who makes it a part of his religion to think that there was never any man scared into heaven: "I cannot tell what chariot he may get up in; nor yet do I think that every man is struck to the ground as St. Paul, to be lifted up to heaven." But no doubt many a saint hath a mansion there, who took their first rise, and continue that motion, upon the wings of fear, and, that it might not slack and abate, borrowed some heat from the

fire of hell. Fear takes us by the hand, and is a schoolmaster unto us. And when fear hath well catechised us, then love takes us in hand, and perfects the work. So that in St. Basil's judgment we pass from fear to love, as from a school to an university. O that men were wise! Would they were so wise as to fear the great day of retribution! Nay, would they did believe it! Glorious things are spoken of faith. We call it "a full assent;" and we call it *πληροφορία*, "a full assurance." (Heb. x. 22.) The Holy Ghost hath called it "the evidence of things not seen:" (Heb. xi. 1 :) is ours so? Is ours within the compass of this definition? Would to God it were! Nay, would to God many of us did but believe that such a time of reaping there will be as firmly as we do a story out of our own chronicle; nay, as many times we believe a lie! Would our faith were but as a grain of mustard-seed! Even such a faith, if it did not remove mountains, yet would chide down many a swelling thought, would silence many a proud word, would restrain us from those actions which have nothing of pain, but are as loathsome as hell itself. I will not give it so hateful a name as "infidelity," (for then how many Christian infidels should we have!) but it is *languor fidei*, as Tertullian speaks: "The faith of many is very weak, sickly, and feeble." For whether good or evil, we sow the one so sparingly, the other so plentifully, as if we should never reap.

These words might yield us many useful observations; but we will handle them only in reference to our former parts, as they look back and cast an eye of terror upon the deceivers of themselves and mockers of God, that is, upon wicked men.

And, First, We shall take notice of the metaphor of sowing; which requires not only air and water and earth, but industry also, as Palladius tells us; and then our observation will be, that wickedness, though it have a fair countenance, and promises much ease and delight, yet is a painful and distracting thing. It doth not always come up of itself: it is sown, and much cost and labour we bestow upon it.

Secondly. We shall look upon the harvest; a harvest not worth the looking on, a harvest not worth the reaping; and, did not my text imply so much, I should not call it by that name. For what a harvest is damnation! And yet you know in the gospel there is a harvest foretold for the tares as well as for the wheat. *Pœna sequitur culpam*, "Punishment follows close upon sin." And this is God's mocking of us, which consists in giving "every seed its own body:" (1 Cor. xv. 38 :) if we sow to the flesh, he clothes it with death. And herein consists his justice and his

providence, (1.) In punishing of sin : (2.) In fitting and proportioning the punishment to it.

1. First. Sowing implies labour and industry. This phrase is often used. "They have sown the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind : " (Hosea viii. 7 :) they have laboured much to little purpose. And, " They that plough wickedness, and sow iniquity, reap the same : " (Job iv. 8 :) as they that expect the year and a good harvest, first manure and plough the ground, then scatter their seed upon it ; so do wicked men first turn their thoughts, as the husbandman doth the earth, *lutosas cogitationes*, saith Bernard, " earthly, dirty thoughts," busily tending the flesh, as if it were a field to be tilled, racking their memory, calling up their understanding, debauching their reason, fitting their instruments, watching opportunities, putting all things in readiness to bring their purposes about ; which is as it were their ploughing : and then they break forth into action, which is their sowing : and then springs up either adultery, or murder, or oppression. " Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, he hath conceived mischief : " he is in as great pain as a woman with travail : and all this trouble is to " bring forth a lie." (Psalm vii. 14.) Scarce any sin but costs us dear.

For, First, as there is *lucta*, a kind of " contention," in doing a good work, a holding back of the flesh when the spirit is ready ; for when " the spirit is ready, the flesh is weak," saith our Saviour : (Mark xiv. 38 :) so in the proceedings of wicked men there is also *lucta*, some secret " struggling " and complaining of the spirit when the flesh is ready. When the hand is held up to strike, the eye open to gaze, and the mouth to blaspheme, there be " fightings within, and terrors without ; " (2 Cor. vii. 5 ;) there is a law staring in our face, like a tribune with his *Veto*, to " forbid " us ; a conscience chiding, a Judge frowning, a hell opening its mouth to devour them : all which must be removed, as Amasa's body ; (2 Sam. xx. 12 ;) or else they will stand still, and not pass and venture on to that which they intended. These fightings must cease, these terrors be abated, their conscience slumbered, the law nulled, the Judge forgot, hell-fire put out ; or sow they cannot. For if these did appear in their full force and vigour, did they look upon these as truths, and not rather as our mormoes and illusions, how could they put such seed into the ground ?

Again : Secondly. Though their will have determined its act, yet there may be many hinderances and retardances, many cross accidents intervene, to hinder the work. The child may be " brought to the birth," and there may be " no strength to bring forth : " (Isai. xxxvii. 3 :) the seed may be ready to be sown, and

the hand too weak to scatter it. For the will is not always accompanied with power: God forbid it should! It was but a weak argument which Luther brought against the freedom of the will from the weakness and inability of performance. *Ostendant*, saith he, *magni illi liberi arbitrii ostentatores*: "Let them," saith he, "who boast of free-will, show any power they have to kill so much as a fly." For a limited power is no argument of a limited will. He that cannot get his bread may wish for a kingdom; and he that cannot kill a fly may will the destruction of the whole world. Now this limitation of their power, this "weakening their strength in the way," (Psalm cii. 23,) makes them go forth with sorrow, carrying their seed of iniquity, and not able to scatter it. This makes them mourn and cover the head, as Haman; flings them on the bed, with Ahab; makes them hang themselves, as Ahithophel did. This many times puts them on the rack, strikes them with care and anxiety, fills them with distracted thoughts, which choke one another. The covetous man would be rich; but he must "rise up early, and lie down late, and eat the bread of sorrow." (Psalm cxxvii. 2.) The ambitious would climb; but he must first lick the dust. The seditious would trouble the waters, but is afraid they may drown him. *Nemo non prius peccat in seipsum*: "There is no man sins, but first he offends and troubles himself, before he conveys the poison of his sin on others." He that hurts his brother, felt the blow first in his own bosom. We read of "the *work* of faith, and *labour* of charity:" (1 Thess. i. 3 :) and it is true, it is not so easy a matter to believe, nor so easy a matter to be charitable, as many suppose, who cannot be brought to study either, but must have them on gift. *Virtus duritiâ exstruitur*: A Christian is a temple of the Holy Ghost; but it is "hardness and industry that must help to build him up." But yet we cannot but observe that there is as much care taken (I am unwilling to say, more) in the sweeping and garnishing a habitation for Satan. What Gibeonites are we in the devil's service, and what lazy dreamers in the family and house of God! More cost is bestowed in sowing to the flesh than in sowing to the Spirit. It is the service of Christ, but drudgery of Satan: both are sowing; but we make that of the flesh the more laborious of the two.

To apply this in a word: We read in our books of a devout abbot, who, beholding what cost and art a woman had bestowed in attiring herself, fell a-weeping, and, "O," said he, "what a misery is this, that a woman should bestow more labour upon the dressing of her body, than we have done in the adorning of our souls! that she should put more ornaments on her head,

than we have been careful to put into our hearts!" What a misery is it, that we should wish for heaven, and contend for earth! that Mary's part should be the better, but Martha's the greater! O, what a sad contemplation is it, that many men will not be persuaded to take so much pains to go to heaven and eternal rest, as many thousands do to go to hell and everlasting torments! that we should sweat for the bread that perisheth, and but coldly and faintly ask for the bread of life! that we should "heap up riches," which will "eat our flesh as it were fire," (James v. 3,) and be ever afraid of that grace which will raise us from the dead! that we should watch for the twilight, an opportunity to do evil, and let so many opportunities of doing good fly by us not marked nor regarded; lay hold on any opportunity to destroy our brother, and let pass any that prompts us to help him! that we should labour and travail and spend ourselves in the one, and be so weary and faint and dead in the other! that we should take more delight to feed with swine than to eat at Christ's table! that the way to death should be to us as the strait and narrow way, and that only broad and easy which leadeth to life! in a word, that we should sow so sparingly in the one, and so plentifully in the other; so cheerfully in the one, and so grudgingly in the other; when the harvests are so different; when the one shall bring us full sheaves of comfort, the other yield us nothing but corruption, and that corruption which is worse than nothing!

2. And so I pass from the labour of the wicked in sowing to their harvest. I would not call it so; but something it is they shall receive answerable to their labour: "For whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

The seed is sown; "lust hath conceived, and brought it forth," and with it "brought forth death," something answerable to it. (James i. 15.) *Generat mortem*, "It begetteth death," as a mother bringeth forth a child like unto herself. And what more natural and more congruous than that a mock should beget a mock; and laughter, scorn; and neglect, anger; and sin, death? If "you set at nought all my counsel, I also will laugh at your calamity," saith the Wisdom of God. (Prov. i. 25, 26.) "If you forsake him, he will forsake you," saith Azariah. (2 Chron. xv. 2.) "If you will walk contrary to me, I will walk contrary to you also in fury," saith God by Moses. (Lev. xxvi. 27, 28.) If they stand out with him, he "will set his face against them." (Jer. xlv. 11.) Such a reciprocation there is between the seed and the harvest, between sin and punishment. *Γέγονε τρόπον τινὰ ὁσῶς καὶ λῆψις*, saith the philosopher: As in all contracts, "there

is a giving and receiving." He that receiveth by these, *dat pœnas*, (that is the phrase,) "must give punishment." *Ipsè te subdidisti pœnæ* : It is the style of the imperial law : "You have sinned, and brought yourself under punishment : you have sinned, and must pay for it." He that tastes the lips of the harlot must feel "the biting of the cockatrice." (Prov. xxiii. 32.) He that eateth "stolen bread" shall find it "gravel" in his mouth to break his teeth. (Prov. xx. 17.) It was *suavis*, "sweet;" it will in the end be *lapidosus*, as Seneca renders it, "stony" bread. "Pride goeth before destruction," saith Solomon; (Prov. xvi. 18;) goeth before it, and ushereth it in. "The wages of sin is death," saith St. Paul; *ὁψώνιον*, a metaphor taken from war, which is a kind [of] servitude for which they received *diarium*, "bread every day:" so that punishment is the sinner's allotted "daily bread." The Latin word is *merces*, "wages," as due to the sinner as hire is to the labourer, and follows as naturally as harvest doth the seed-time. Sin and punishment are bound up as it were in the same volume,—in the beginning sin, in the close punishment,—as the seed-time and the harvest are in the compass of the same year. (Rom. vi. 23.)

Nay, sin carries punishment in its very womb, and can be delivered of nothing else : so that when the sinner is punished, that is but done which in a manner is done already. The Hebrew doctors say, *Molitur farina molita*, "That corn is ground which was ground before ; a dead lion is killed ; and a burning torch is put to the city which is on fire already." And if we observe it, the metaphor of sowing doth speak so much. For the seed-time is but a kind of prophecy, or rather an expectation, of the harvest. The husbandman is said *expectare annum*, "to expect the year;" *in proximum annum dives*, "rich upon the next year." For "he that ploughs ploughs in hope," saith St. Paul; (1 Cor. ix. 10;) and he that sows, sows in hope. The seed lies in the womb of the earth, and sin in the womb of time; and yet a little while, and the harvest will come. Only the one is more certain than the other, and here the metaphor will not hold. For he that sows corn doth not always reap. The heavens may be as brass, and the earth as iron. *Terra eunucha*, as one speaks : "The earth may be barren, and not bring forth." But "he that sows to the flesh shall certainly reap corruption." (Gal. vi. 8.) "He smote the people in his wrath, and none hindereth." (Isai. xiv. 6.) Some time there is indeed between the stripe and the punishment; but what is some time to eternity? For as sinners mock God, so God may seem in a manner to "mock their security with his delay," *admonendi dissimulatione*

*decipere*, “not to favour them so much as to be angry with them,” as to give them any warning; to use the same method in punishing which they do in sinning. They defer their repentance, and God deferreth his punishment. They say, “Tush, he doth not see;” (Psalm lxxiii. 11;) and he is as still and silent as if he did not see indeed. They are stubborn in their ways; and he prepares his deadly weapons. *Cum perversis perversè ages*, saith the prophet David by a kind of a catachrestical metaphor: “With the froward thou wilt show thyself froward,” or “perverse and obstinate,” as they. (Psalm xviii. 26.) He will deal with them by [the] law of retaliation, that there shall be a kind of analogy and proportion of conveniency and likeness between the fact and the punishment; that as their ways were crooked, though they seemed straight, so the punishment which he inflicts shall be just, though it seem perverse, as being of another hue and colour from his behaviour to them in the time of their ruff and jollity; that as they once judged their actions good because they felt no smart, so now they shall know them to be evil by the smart which they shall feel, and find what seed they sowed by the harvest which they shall reap.

And in this is seen, First, the justice, and, Secondly, the providence, of God.

(1.) For, First, though God delight not in the death of a sinner; though he made not hell for men, nor men for hell; yet he is delighted in his own justice, according to which punishment is due to sinners. For is it not just that he that sows should reap? I say, God is delighted in his justice: he clothes himself with it as with a garment, as with a robe of honour, is “clad with zeal as with a cloak;” he “puts it on as an helmet of salvation upon his head:” (Isai. lix. 17:) he rouseth himself up “as a mighty man;” he cries out, “Ah, I will be avenged of my enemies!” (Chap. xlii. 13.) Though the pillars of the earth shake, and the world be burnt with fire, and the heavens gathered together as a scroll; yet God’s justice is as eternal as himself, and stands fast for evermore. Dives’s wealth cannot bribe it, Tertullus’s eloquence cannot charm it, Herod’s glory cannot bow it, all the power and wealth and eloquence of the world cannot move it; but it is levelled at sin, and through all these sends its arrow to it as to a mark: and “neither God nor man deny but that it is just,” saith Plato, “that he that sins should be punished,” that he that sows should reap.

(2.) Secondly. Here is manifestly seen God’s providence, which brings sin itself, the most disorderly thing in the world, into order, and maketh that which standeth up against his law



to meet with his justice, and that which runs from the order that his mercy hath set up to be driven to the order of equity. For sin is an offence against the creation, a breach and inversion of that order which the wisdom of God did at first establish in the world. My adultery defileth my body, my oppression grindeth the poor, my anger rageth against my brother; my particular sins have their particular objects, but they all strike at the universe, and at that order which was at first set up. "Father, I have sinned against thee, and against heaven," saith the prodigal; (Luke xv. 21;) against thee and against thy power, and that order which thou hast established in the highest heavens. And therefore his providence ruleth over all, to reduce this inequality to an equality, and this confusion into order; to show what harmony it can work in the greatest disorder, what beauty he can raise out of the deformed and unnatural body of sin; striking them down by his hand who would not bow to his will. Sin and punishment are nothing of themselves; but in us, or rather, in the ways of God's providence, they are something. The one is voluntary; that is sin: the other penal; that is smart. That which is voluntary, sin, is a foul deformity in nature and in that course which God hath set up: and therefore the penal is added, to order and place it there where it may be forced to serve for the grace and beauty of the whole; that the punishment of sin may wipe out the dishonour of sin; that he who against the will of God would taste the pleasure of sin may against his own will drink deep of the cup of bitterness. *Interest mundo*, Therefore "it concerns the world," and all that therein is, that sin be punished, and that every thing be set in its own place. This the whole creation seems to "groan" for; this it "earnestly expects:" this is the creatures' jubilee; it is "deliverance from the bondage of corruption." (Rom. viii. 19—23.) *Turpis est pars quæ suo toti non convenit*: "It is an ill member for which the whole body is the worse." *Ut in sermone litteræ*: "As letters in a word or sentence," so men are the principles and parts which concur to make up a church. "Ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις, "For" men are the world, and "men are the city," and men are the church. Now every impertinent and unpunished sinner is a letter too much, or rather a blur, in that sentence: let the hand of Providence therefore blot it out. Let the whip be on the fool's back, and the sword in the murderer's bowels. Let Dives be in hell. Let every seed have its own body, and every work its proper wages; and then every thing is in its own order and place: and then the world is the work of God's hands, the church is the body of Christ, and the composition is entire. So

this is an everlasting truth : God's justice requires it, his providence works it, the very creature groans for it. And deceive we ourselves, if we will ; and mock God, if we dare ; if we " do not well, sin lieth at the door," (Gen. iv. 7,) ready to break in with a whip and vengeance upon us. " For whatsoever a man sows, that also shall he reap."

For, in the next place, God doth not only punish sin, but fits and proportions the punishment to the sin, both in this life, and in that which is to come. He observes a kind of arithmetical proportion, and draws both parts together ; that the one may not crack of his purchase, nor the other complain of his loss ; that the sinner may not boast of his sin, nor God lose any part of his glory. The prophet David hath fully expressed it : " He made a way to his anger ;" (Psalm lxxviii. 50;) *Libravit iter*, " He weighed it as by the scales." " As they increased, they sinned against me : therefore I will change their glory into shame." (Hosea iv. 7.) As they " changed the truth of God into a lie," so " God delivered them up." (Rom. i. 24, 25.) An arithmetical and just proportion : they took away God's glory, and they pay him with shame, with the shame of a sinner, which is God's glory. God under the law did appoint particular punishments for particular sins ; as famine by drought for detaining of tithes ; pestilence for injustice, to destroy those that would not destroy the wicked, nor plead the cause of the oppressed ; fierce and devouring beasts for perjury and blasphemy ; and captivity for idolatry. Nadab and Abihu " offered strange fire," and were consumed by fire from heaven. (Lev. x. 1, 2.) Adoni-bezek had " his thumbs cut off and his great toes ;" and in the next verse he confesseth, " Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table : as I have done, so God hath requited me." (Judges i. 6, 7.) Absalom's heart's desire was to get his father's crown ; and you may behold him with three darts thrust through his heart. (2 Sam. xviii. 14.) So in all ages it hath been observable, that men have been taken in their own net, and been buried in the pit which they digged. (Psalm ix. 15.) For " this," saith St. Basil, " is not only a punishment, but the very nature of sin, to make a net and to dig a pit for itself." The thief twists the halter that hangs him ; the envious eateth out his own heart ; the angry man slayeth himself ; the wanton beast is burnt up with his own heat ; the ambitious breaketh his own neck ; the covetous pierceth his own soul, and is choked, as Crassus was, with his own gold ; the proud man breaks with his own swelling ; the seditious is burnt with the fire he made. So near doth punishment follow

sin at the heels that in scripture often one name and word serveth to signify both, and "sin" is taken both for the guilt and the punishment.

And this in this world : but in the next "Tophet is ordained and prepared of old," (Isai. xxx. 33,) fitted and proportioned to every one that goes on in his sin ; as fit for an unrepentant sinner as a throne is for a king, or heaven for an angel. For as there is some analogy between the joys a good conscience yields on earth, and those which we shall have at the right hand of God ;—the apostle calls it " a taste of the heavenly gift : " (Heb. vi. 4 :) and the Schoolmen tell us, that glory is the consummation of grace, which looked towards it, and tended to it ;—so is sin an emblem of hell, carrying with it nothing but disorder, confusion, and torment. Anselm thought it the uglier hell of the two, and more to be abhorred. In hell there is stench : what more unsavoury than sin ? In hell there is pain : what more tormenting than sin ? In hell there is weeping : what more lamentable than sin ? In hell there is a worm : what more gnawing than sin ? Sin entered in, and then hell was created. Had there been no sin, there had been no hell at all. And therefore, as it resembles it, so it tends to it as naturally as a stone doth to the centre. Against the righteous the gates of hell will not open ; but they are never shut to the wicked, ever ready to receive him, and take him in as his due and portion.

For, again, is it not fit that they who have " made an agreement " with it, (Isai. xxviii. 15,) that with their words and works have called it to them, that have studied and laboured for it all their life long, that have made it their business, that have broken their sleep for it, that have had it in their will and desire, should at last be thrown into that place which they have chosen, and which they have made such haste to, all the days of their life ? Is it not fit that what they sow, that they should also reap ? You will say, " This is impossible, impossible that any man should will it, should desire it, should be ambitious of that place of horror, and count it a preferment. " But, beloved, as much as it may be, this is the case and condition of every obstinate and unrepenting sinner. For he that counts sin a preferment, must count punishment a preferment too, which can no more be separated from sin than poison from a serpent. When thou first sinnest, thou bowest towards hell ; when thou goest on in thy sin, thou runnest to destruction ; and to die, and to be in hell, are the same period and term of thy motion. When thou lovest sin, thou " lovest death. " (Prov. viii. 36.) When thou drawest-in sin as the ox doth water, thou drawest-in the flames of hell.

When thou thinkest thyself in Paradise, thou art falling into the pit of hell. The philosopher gives the reason, 'H ἀρχὴ ἐν αὐτῷ,' "The beginning is from thyself:" if therefore the end is from thyself, the cause is from thyself, and therefore the effect is from thyself. For will any man say that the glutton is sick, the wanton rotten, the sluggard poor, against his will, when they greedily do those things which naturally bring along with them sickness, rottenness, and poverty? Will you say *he* had "a mischance" that wilfully leaped into the sea? We will death, we love death. Nay, further yet, *Exsultamus rebus pessimis*, "We rejoice to do evil:" (Prov. ii. 14:) we are in an ecstasy, transported beyond ourselves, in our third heaven, as St. Paul was in his: (2 Cor. xii. 2:) we talk of it, we dream of it, we sweat for it, we fight for it, we travail for it, we embrace it, we have a kind of exultation and jubilee in sin. And what is this but to hoist up our sails and make forward towards the gulf of destruction and the bottomless pit? So that, to conclude this, by the justice of God, by the providence of God, by our own wills, as by so many winds, by the tempest of our passions, as well as that of God's wrath, we are driven to our end, to the place prepared and fitted for the devil and his angels, and for all those who have loved their temptations, and embraced them with more affection than they have the oracles of God. For if we thus deceive ourselves and mock God, God will mock us to our own place: still it is, "What a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

We will but look back, and so hasten to our journey's end; add one word of application, and so conclude.

#### APPLICATION.

1. And, that we be not deceived, let us, as St. Augustine exhorts, *operam dare rationi*, let us therefore "diligently observe the dictates of reason," and be attentive to the Spirit speaking in the scripture; not neglect the light of the one, nor quench the heat of the other. The scripture cannot deceive us but when we are willing to deceive ourselves. When we are averse from that it bids us love, and place our love where it commands our hatred, then we are not interpreters but fathers of the word, (as he spake of Origen,) and put what shape and sense we please upon it. Nor can we urge the obscurity of the text, especially *in agendis*, "in matters of practice;" for I never thought it a matter of wit and subtilty to become a Christian. And if we weigh the plainness and easiness of scripture, and the time and leisure which most have, but mis-spend upon their lusts and the world; I might bespeak them as Chrysostom bespake his audi-

tory, Τί δεῖ ὁμιλητοῦ; "What need have you of a preacher?" For why should our wit serve us rather to make us rich than good? Why may we not try out as many conclusions for saving knowledge, as we do for riches and honour and the things of this world?

2. Let us not "seek death in the error of our lives." Let us not plunge ourselves in error, and then study to believe that which we cannot believe without fear and trembling. Let us not present God unto us in a strange and aliene shape, in that monstrosity which we affect, and so make him like unto ourselves. *Quid tibi cum Deo, si tuis legibus?* "What hast thou to do with God, if thou wilt be thy own lawgiver, and wilt live and be judged by no other laws but those which thyself makest?" This is indeed to take the place of God, whilst we give him but the name. O beloved, it is ill trying conclusions with Him who "trieth both the heart and the reins." (Psalm vii. 9.) From him no cloud can shadow us, no deep can cover us, no secret grot or cave can hide us. And if we act by our own laws, yet we shall be judged by his. And what paint soever we put upon our sins, he that numbereth the stars will number them all, and call them by their right names. What we call "religion," shall be with him profaneness; what we call "faith," with him shall be but fancy; what we call "the cause of God," shall be the cause of our damnation. *Quantascunque tenebras superfuderis, Deus lumen est:* "Cast what mists you will, build what labyrinths you please, God is light," and will find out thy sin, that monster, that Minotaur. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked," but is rather more jealous of his wisdom than of his power. At the very sight of sin his anger waxeth hot; but when we would hide our sin from his sight, his jealousy burneth like fire. For he that sinneth dallieth with God's power; but he that pallieth his sin playeth with his wisdom, and trieth whether he can fraudulently circumvent and abuse him. He who sinneth would be "stronger than God;" but he who shifteth a sin into the habit of holiness by a pretence, "would be wiser than God," *potior Jupiter quàm ipse Jupiter*; than which no impiety can be greater.

3. And, Last of all, let us remember the end; when we sow, look forward toward the harvest. Say we within ourselves, "What may this which I now sow bring forth? Will light grow up here and joy? or shall I reap nothing but darkness and corruption and desolation? This fancy pleaseth me now, this thought ravisheth me, this action is my crown, my joy; it is sown in honour, in pleasure, in applause: but what will it be when it riseth again? What will it be at the harvest? Will a gloss or pretence alter the nature of the seed, and change it, as

we ourselves shall be, ‘in a moment and in the twinkling of an eye?’” (1 Cor. xv. 52.) Let us never build a resolution but upon this of the apostle, “What a man sows, that shall he also reap.” *O quanta subtilitas judiciorum Dei!* saith Gregory: “O the subtle and exact method of the justice of God, which gives ‘every seed its own body!’” (Verse 38.) The eye, which would not look upon God, shall be filled with horror; the understanding, which would not receive light, shall receive no impression but of darkness and everlasting separation; and the will, which made the sin, shall itself be made a punishment. It is now a wanton thought; it will then be a gnawing worm: it is now lust; it will be a burning flame: it is now blasphemy; it will be howling and gnashing of teeth.

We must now conclude; and we cannot better conclude than with that of St. Peter: “Brethren, if these things be so,” if you believe there be such things, “be diligent that” at the great harvest “you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless,” (2 Peter iii. 14,) free from self-deceit, walking and trembling before your God; not ploughing the wind to reap the whirlwind, but sowing seed in righteousness and sincerity, that you may reap peace and joy in this life, a fair promising spring, which gives a full assurance of a rich harvest of glory and immortality in the life to come. Both which God grant us through Jesus Christ our Lord!

---

## SERMON LXIII.

### DUTY OF COMFORTING ONE ANOTHER.

*Wherefore comfort one another with these words.—*

1 Thessalonians iv. 18.

#### PART I.

THE words are plain and easy. They are as the use of that doctrine of the coming of the Lord which is set down at large in the precedent verses: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord:” (verses 16, 17:) a doctrine seasonably opened and applied to the Thessalonians, now hanging down their heads with grief, and weeping over the graves of their friends as men without hope, *inter præcepta virtutum et spem resurrectionis*

even "then when St. Paul's doctrine and the hope of the resurrection" should have armed them against all assaults, even then languishing and falling away, and bating from their spiritual growth, as if they had almost forgotten that article of their belief, the coming of the Lord, and lost, not only their friends, but their faith. It was fitted for them, and in this case: but it may serve for any meridian, for any who are brought low by oppression, evil, and sorrow. It was preached in the first age of the church, when she began to be militant, which was as soon as she began: and it is an antidote, as it were, put into her hands which she may use even in her last age; which she must use till she be triumphant. And therefore we will not bind and confine it to this present case of the Thessalonians, but propose it as a preservative against all evil whatsoever. And since the two affections which weigh down the afflicted are sorrow and fear, we will set up this to remove them both. For, be sorry, why should they? Let the Heathen be so, who are without hope. And fear, what need they? Have they lost their friends? They do but sleep. (Verses 13, 14.) Have their goods been torn from them? They shall receive an hundred-fold. Is their life in jeopardy? It is in his hands who is coming, who "shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

These words I called a use of that doctrine which St. Paul had formerly preached at Thessalonica: and it lieth in the form of an exhortation, in these black and gloomy days, in these last and perilous days, in these days of misery and mourning, most necessary, when so many weak hands are to be held up, and so many feeble knees to be strengthened. (Heb. xii. 12.) Herein briefly I observe the matter, and the manner; the action, and the rule or square of that action. The matter, "Comfort you one another:" the manner how this duty must be performed, "with these words."

But, for our more plain and orderly proceeding, we will speak,

First, Of the object, or persons: *alii alios*, "one another." And these we shall look upon, First, in their common nature and condition, as they are of the same passions, subject to the same infirmities, "falling upon," as the Wise Man speaks, *ὁμοιοπαθεῖ γῆν*, "the earth which is of like nature." (Wisdom vii. 3.) All men have the like entrance into life, and the like going out; and, I may say, are subject to the same depressions and miscarriages, which even life, that we are so unwilling to part with, hath wrapped up in her, and carries as in her womb; a short

life, and full of misery. Next, we will look upon them in that near relation which they have one to another, and that as they are either men or Christians. For the second doth not take away, but establish, the first ; grace doth not destroy nature, but perfect it ; and if the last be upheld, the former can never fall to the ground. And this *alii alios*, the persons, will afford us : “ Comfort you one another.”

Secondly. This habitude and mutual dependence doth even invite the act ; which will be our next consideration,—what it is to “ comfort one another.”

And this, in the Third place, requires the rule and method how we should perform it, “ with these words ;” with the words of truth, with the words of the gospel : which is indeed to “ draw the waters ” of comfort “ out of the wells of salvation.” (Isai. xii. 3.)

You have, then, I. The persons, “ one another :” II. The act, “ Comfort :” III. The method, “ with these words.” “ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

I. First. Of the persons, “ one another.”

1. And indeed one man is the image of another, because the same image of God is on all. Every man is as the text, and every man is as the commentary. Every man is what he is ; and yet one man interprets another, and declares what he is. We be as glasses each to other ; and one sees in another, not only what he is, but what he may be. The beggar is a glass for a king, and a king for a beggar. The sheep-hook hath been turned into a sceptre, and the crowns of mighty kings have been cast to the ground. “ These things I write to thee,” saith Plato, “ of man, who is ” *φύσει εὐμετάβολος*, “ by nature and condition mutable ;” now on the wing for heaven, anon cleaving to the dust ; now sporting in the sunshine of prosperity, and anon beaten down with a storm ; now rejoicing with his friends, and anon bewailing them ; now with a shining, anon with a cloudy, countenance ; now with a cheerful, anon with a dropping, eye ; now filling his mouth with laughter, and anon roaring for the very grief of his heart. “ Men are happy,” saith Aristotle, “ but ” *ὡς ἄνθρωποι*, “ as men ;” as men, who are turned upon the wheel of change, now looking towards heaven, and anon on the ground. Such is man, and such is every man : and every man may see himself in every man.

He may see himself in another’s fear ; which betrays the soul,—I may say, scarce leaves a soul ; leaves not, as Augustine speaks, *cor in corde*, “ a heart in a heart ;” betrays it of all its succours, of those helps which reason or scripture brings :



and therefore in scripture it is said to "lay hold on" us, to "come upon" us, to "fall upon" us, to fall upon us as a mountain or hill. (Psalm xlviii. 6; Luke i. 12, 65, &c.) A burden certainly it is; and we lie buried under it, not able to move hand or foot, not able to look towards that which might rid and ease us of it, but looking towards some hill to hide us, or mountain to cover us. Doth any man lie under this weight? Every man may. One tells another what his condition is.

Again: one may see himself in another's grief, which is another burden that presseth down. "Why art thou cast down," saith David, "O my soul?" (Psalm xlii. 5, 11;) bowed down as with a burden: and, "Innumerable evils have taken hold of me." (Psalm xl. 12.) "I feel the weight upon my head:" for so the phrase signifies. For "heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop," saith his son Solomon; (Prov. xii. 25;) *incurvat*, "bows it, crookeneth it," casts it down. It dries the bones, it dims the eyes, it dulls the spirits, it deads the heart, it weakens the memory, it takes the man from the man, and makes him like unto those who have been dead long ago. In grief we know not what to do; we do we know not what. The hands hang down, the knees are weak, the eye is on the ground. What part is there of the body, what faculty of the soul, that can look up? And such is man; such is every man. Is any man?—then every man may be—thus cast down. *Alii alios*; "one" tells "another" what his condition is.

Yet further: one may see himself in another's complaints and repinings. Fear and sorrow are the mother and the nurse that begin and foment all murmuring, which is nothing else but a kind of distaste and grudging of the mind. "Why dost thou set me up as a mark?" saith Job. (Job vii. 20.) "Why do thy terrors affright me?" "Why hast thou cast me off?" saith David. "Why go I so heavily all the day long?" (Psalm xliii. 2.) *Imperari dolori silentium non potest*: "Fear and grief will be asking of questions, cannot be silent." This is the foul ill-favoured issue of fear and grief, a giant that fights against heaven, a monster that breathes its poison in the very face of God. I call it "a monster;" for it is begotten of divers passions, which, meeting and engendering in the heart, bring it forth to quarrel the wisdom and question the providence of God, to censure his counsels and condemn his proceedings. "Why should the Heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" (Psalm ii. 1.) Why should my enemy live, and my friend die? Why should wicked men prosper in their ways, and the righteous be trodden under foot? Why should Pharaoh sit on a throne,

and the Israelites labour at the brick-kiln? This doth fear and grief force out of the heart; and "out of this abundance the mouth speaketh." (Matt. xii. 34.) And such is man; such is every man. Doth one man complain and murmur? another may. And he that speaks to his heart to comfort him, may have the same luctations and swellings in his, which may at last break forth into the like murmurings and complaints. One man sees the changeableness of his mortal condition in another; sees that he may be every thing, and that, as the Psalmist speaks, he is "nothing." (Psalm xxxix. 5.) In his best condition and in his worst condition another man is his glass. In another's sickness he may see that disease which may seize on himself; in another's poverty he may behold his own riches with wings; in another's disgrace he may perceive his own honour falling to the ground; and in another's death he may read his own mortality, and look upon himself as a living, dying man. In what appearance or representation soever he beholds another, he sees either a picture or prophecy of himself. When he sees a man, a man of sorrows, a man of fears, a man breathing forth complaints, a man washing his couch with his tears, those streams of blood which issue forth from a wounded heart, he beholds himself. One man's necessities are but a lesson and an argument which plainly demonstrate what another man may be. They are also a silent and powerful appeal to his compassion, and a secret beseeching him to do unto him as he would be done unto in the like case, to be of the same mind [of] which certainly he will be when with this lazarus he lies at the gates of another.

"One another" is of a large extent and compass, takes-in the whole church,—I may say, takes-in the whole world; makes it a church, without which it were but a scattered multitude; makes it a world, without which it were but a chaos and a confusion. One is diverse from another; and yet we can hardly distinguish them, they are so like; a circle, whose every part is like unto every part, and whose every part should be united in love as in a point.

I need not carry this consideration further. It is so obvious and visible that every eye sees it which the God of this world hath not blinded. We may run and read it in that relation in which men stand one to another as men. Nature itself hath hewed and fashioned out all mankind as it were out of the same quarry and rock, into a body or society, as a city compact within itself. "Look unto the rock out of which you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence you are digged." (Isai. li. 1.) Look

to the common seed-plot and matter out of which you were all extracted, and there you shall see that near relation which is between "one" and the "another;" how one man, and every man, (which makes one man as every man, and every man as that one,) is not only a child of corruption, and kin to the worm and rottenness, but the workmanship of an immortal hand, of an unlimited power, who hath built up one and every one in his image, and according to his likeness; which image, though it may be more resplendent and improved in one than another, yet 'is that impression which is stamped on all. One man and every man hath the same image and superscription. From the same rock and vein are hewn out the weak and feeble man, and *וְאִישׁ, ish*, "the man of strength." From the same hand is the face we turn away from, and the face which we so gaze on. Of the same extraction are the poor and the rich: for we are neither poor nor rich by nature. He that made that face which gathers blackness, made also that face that shines: he that made the idiot, made the scribe: he that made Dives, made the Lazar at his door. And here "one another" is but one; the strong as the weak, the wise as the simple, the rich as the poor. For he that made thee casts an equal eye on them all. And "who made all these? Have not I the Lord?" And if he hath made them all, and linked them together in one common tie of nature, *quis discernet?* "who shall divide and separate" them one from another, the wise from the simple, the strong from the weak, the rich from the poor? One is as another; and all is but "one another." Some distance, some difference, some precedency may show itself to the eye of flesh; and yet even an eye of flesh may see how to gather and re-unite them together as one and the same in their original. Look unto the rock and vein out of which they were cut, and one and another are the same.

But now, besides this common extraction, the God of nature, who hath built us out of the same materials, hath also imprinted those principles and notions and inclinations in every man which may be as so many buttresses and supporters to uphold one another, and make us dwell together as one man. He hath left a law within us which we call "the law of nature," which is the same in one man and in another. St. Paul calls it "a law." (Rom. ii. 14, 15.) And one would think it were as superfluous and needless to make any law to bind us one to another, as to command children to love their parents, or parents to be indulgent to their children. But a law it is within us, and our natural bent and inclination carries us to this, to love and comfort one another.

Ὡς χαρίεν ἔστ' ἄνθρωπος, ἐὰν ἄνθρωπος ᾖ \*

could the ancient comedian say: "How gracious and how helpful a creature is one man to another, if he continue a man," and receive no other new form, no other new impression by self-love and these transitory vanities below, if he be not biassed and wheeled from his natural motion by the world! And in this relation all men stand one to another by nature. One man is as another: and every man by himself is a weak, indigent creature, a tottering, sinking house; if standing, yet ready to fall; if rich, in a possibility to be poor; if lifted up on high, in the way to a fall; if walking delicately, yet near to his death; subject to danger, when he hath escaped it; and open to injuries, when he offers them; when his heart is merry, near to that evil which may swallow him up and fill him with sorrow: and therefore by his very temper and natural disposition he is a sociable creature; as needing, so desirous of, those mutual offices by which we support and uphold each other. *Fac nos singulos*, "take us asunder by ourselves," and what are we? but as a mark for every venomous shaft; as a tottering wall, in danger of every touch; as a reed, to be shaken with every wind. Therefore nature hath supplied this noble but weak creature, man, with those helps which shall uphold and strengthen him against all these. First, with reason, by which he may discover evil in its approach, and prepare against it; or take away its terror and smart, when it is come: and, Secondly, with the society of others, which may be as so many seconds, and as a guard, mutually to help and assist each other. And here their being divers makes them more one. For as there are divers men, so there are divers gifts and divers administrations. (1 Cor. xii. 4, 5.) One man exceeds in wisdom, another abounds in wealth; one man surpasseth in strength, another in providence; one man is rich, another is poor. And, whatsoever distinguisheth them on earth, sets them one above another, nature hath made them equal, nay, servants one to the other, to "serve one another in love." (Gal. v. 13.) The poor man may assist the rich with his wisdom, and the rich relieve the poor with his wealth. The strong man may carry the lame, and the lame direct the strong; the one may be as eyes, the other as legs, and so make up each other's defect. So "one another," that is, all men, may be as one.

2. But now, in the next place, there is a nearer relation which binds men together in a bond of peace,—their relation in Christ. *Major est fraternitas Christi quàm sanguinis*: "The fraternity

\* *Ex incerto Comico. Vide GROTII Excerpta, p. 911.—EDIT.*

and brotherhood they have by Christ is a greater and nearer tie than that they have by nature." In him they are called to the same faith, baptized in the same laver, led by the same rule, filled with the same grace, sealed with the same seal, ransomed with the same price, comforted with the same glorious promises, and shall be crowned with the same glory. And being one in these, they are to be as one in all duties and offices which are required to the perfect accomplishment of these. They must join hand in hand to uphold one another on earth, and to advance one another to that glory which is prepared for one as well as for another in heaven. And thus they are linked together in one by charity, which is *copulatrix virtus*, as Cyprian calls it, "that coupling, uniting virtue," which as a command lies on every man. Thus our blessed Saviour, in his answer to the lawyer, though he calls that commandment which binds us to the love of God "the first and greatest commandment," yet adds, "The second is like unto it." (Matt. xxii. 38, 39.) "'Like unto it' in respect of the same act," say some, "because by one and the same act of charity we love both God and our neighbour." "In respect of the same object," saith Chrysostom, "because I therefore love my neighbour because I love God: for if I love him not for God and in God, I love him not at all. God is the principal object of my love, because he is good, and goodness itself: but this goodness I see shining in his creature, which he hath also made capable of glory; and I cannot truly fall down and worship him, unless I love and adore him also in his creature." For as there is an invisible union of the saints with God, by which God hath joined to himself and made one, as it were, his church in his Son by the virtue of the Holy Ghost; so is there also an union of the saints amongst themselves, consisting in a sweet and brotherly uniting of their souls together, which is the cementing of God's holy temple, the constituting and building of Christ's church. Now this union, though the eye of flesh cannot behold it, yet it must appear and shine and be resplendent in those duties and offices which must attend it. As the head infuseth life and vigour into the whole body, so must the members also anoint each other with this oil of gladness. Each member must be busy and industrious to express that virtue without which it cannot be so. Thy charity must be active in thy hands, in "casting thy bread upon the waters;" (Eccles. xi. 1;) vocal in thy tongue, in ministering a word of comfort in due season; compassionate in thy heart, leading thee to the house of mourning, and making thee mourn with them that mourn, and lament with them that lament. It

must be like the sun, which casts its beams and influence on every man. *Semper debeo charitatem, quæ cum impenditur debetur*, saith Augustine: "Love is a debt we owe one to another, that we may be one; a debt every man owes to every man; a debt which, though I always pay, I always owe; and even when I pay it, I remain still a debtor."

For, again, if we be Christians, then, though we are "many members," yet are we "many members of that body," which is "one," (1 Cor. xii. 12,) partakers of the same bread of life; nay, "being many we are one bread, and one body." (1 Cor. x. 17.) That which was dispersed into many, being gathered thus, is but one. Partakers of the same sacraments, which our Saviour did not only institute as memorials of his death, and as channels and conveyances of comfort to our sick and weary souls, but also as remembrances unto us of that debt of charity which, unless we will forfeit our title of Christian, we are bound with cheerfulness to pay one to another. *Multa sunt, sed illa multa sunt hoc unum*: "'One another' includes many, but those many are but this one mystical body." Each member is lame and imperfect by itself, and stands in need of this uniting. What the hand is, that is the foot; and what the eye is, that is the hand, in that respect it is a member: for all are members. St. Paul in the pulpit was no more a member than the Thessalonians to whom he writ. He that is a perfect man is no more a member than he that is a new-born babe in Christ: and he that is least holds his relation as well as he that is greatest in the kingdom of Christ. Now if all be members and the same body, each must concur to cherish each other, that the whole may be preserved. Take but an arm from the body, but a hand from that arm, but a finger from that hand, and the blemish is of the whole. In the church of Christ *communis metus, gaudium, timor*: Here we are all one, and "all men's joys and sorrows and fears are one and the same." As each man, (as I told you before,) so each Christian, is as a glass to another; and they are mutually so. I see my sorrow in my brother's tears, and he sees his tears in my sorrow: he sees my charity in my alms, and I see his devotion in his prayers: I cast a beam of comfort upon him, and he reflects a blessing upon me. There is a preposition *σύν* in scripture which joins men together, makes "one another" as one, and draws a multitude to unity. *Συνδακρύωμεν*, "Let us weep with them that weep," and lament with them that lament. (Rom. xii. 15.) *Συγχαρήτε μοι*, saith the woman in the parable, "Rejoice together with me; for I have found my groat." (Luke xv. 9.) And *συμπολίται*, we are "fellow-citizens with the saints."

(Eph. ii. 19.) They are  $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ , "together," upholding and rejoicing one another, in every function. Phinchas is meek with Moses, and Moses is zealous with Phinchas. A Christian is chaste with Joseph, and repents with Peter; is rich with his brother's wealth, prudent with his brother's wisdom, mighty with his power, and immortalized with his eternity. The angels rejoice at our conversion, and we praise God for the angels' joy: they ministering to us on earth, and we converse with them in heaven.  $\Sigma\upsilon\nu$ , we are "together" in what estate soever; in joy together, and in grief together, rising and drooping both alike; suffering together, mourning together, praying together.

And if we observe that form of prayer which Christ hath taught us, our prayer is not then private when we pray in private. "Our Father" takes in "one another," even the whole church. We cannot pray for ourselves, unless we pray for others also. Nay, "He prays not well," saith Calvin, "that begins not with the church." The church prays for every man, and every man for the whole church. *Quod est omnium, est singulorum*, "That which is all men's is every man's, and that which is every man's belongs unto the whole." And thus much we have found in the object, in "one another," even enough to draw-on the act: for on these three,—our common condition, our relation as men, and our relation as Christians,—as on a sure foundation, doth our Saviour and his blessed apostles build us up in our holy love, build us up as so many parts mutually upholding one another, and growing up into a temple of the Lord.

II. These are the principles and the premisses; and from these they draw this conclusion,—that being thus linked and united and built together, we should uphold and "comfort one another:" which is my Second part, the act itself, to "comfort," and offers itself next to your Christian consideration: *Consolamini alii alios*, "Comfort one another."

To "comfort" is a word of a large and much-extended sense and signification, spreading itself equally with all the army of sorrows and with all the evils in the world, and opposing itself to all. To comfort may be to be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, to clothe the naked and feed the hungry, and to put the hand to uphold that which is failing. *Sustentanda domus jam ruitura*, saith Tully: "It is as the underpropping of a house ready to sink." "Comfort you, comfort you my people, saith God. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem," *Loquimini ad cor*, "Speak to the heart of them." (Isai. xl. 1, 2.) Speak and do something which may heal a wounded heart, rouse a drooping spirit, give it a kind of resurrection, and restore it to its former

estate; which may work light out of darkness, content in poverty, joy in persecution, and life in death itself. To renew, restore, quicken, lift up, refresh, encourage, sustain,—all those are in this one word Παρακαλεῖτε, “Comfort ye.” For, “Alas, my brother! or, Ah his glory!” (Jer. xxii. 18,) are but words, *verba sine penu et pecuniâ*, as he in Plautus speaks,\* “words without help,” prescripts without medicine, most unactive and insignificant words. To a man naked and destitute of food, “Depart in peace, be warmed, be filled,” (James ii. 16,) are but words, but faint and lifeless wishes, especially if they proceed from him who can do more, and yet will do no more, than speak and wish. They are the dialect of the hypocrite, whose religion floats on his tongue, or is written in his forehead; whose heart is marble, when his words are as soft as butter; whose charity is only in picture and show, and whose very mercy is cruelty. For, what greater cruelty can there be than to have a box of ointment in our hand, and not to pour it forth on him that languisheth, but leave him dying, and say we wish him well? No: to “comfort” is to restore and set one another at rights again; the erring by counsel, the weak by assistance, the poor by supply, the sorrowful by sweet and seasonable argument and persuasion. Otherwise it is not comfort. For what comfort is that which leaves us comfortless? which leaves the ignorant in his darkness, the poor in want, the weak on the ground, and the sorrowful man in his gulf? *Loquimini ad cor*, “Speak to the heart.” If we speak not to the heart, to lift up that, our words are wind. Comfort by counsel is very useful for those who mourn in Sion. *Rei infinitatem ejicere, optima medicina*: “To bound the cause of men’s grief, to remove those many circumstances which increase and multiply it, and so to bring it in as it is, and show what little cause men have to grieve, is the best physic in this particular.” Our present and future condition, our mortality and our resurrection, are of force enough to wipe all tears from our eyes, and to make our grave appear as a house of rest rather than as a pit of destruction.

But this is but one particular in which we are obliged to this duty, “comforting one another.” Charity hath more hands than Briareus, and more eyes than Argus: she hath an eye on every one that is, as the canonist speaketh, *persona miserabilis*, “a miserable and wretched person.” She hath a hand on every sore and malady. And yet she hath but one hand and one eye, but reached forth and rolling on every corner of the earth; where storms arise, ready to slumber and becalm them. Now

\* *Captivi*, act. iii. sc. i. 12.



to comfort is a work of charity : and charity hath a double act, *actum elicited*, and *actum imperatum*, “an inward act, and outward ;” and the latter is the perfecting and consummation of the former. For what a poor, empty thing is a thought or a word without a hand ! and what an uncharitable thing is comfort without compassion ! Then I truly comfort my brother, when my hand is active as well as my heart. And yet if they be true, they are never severed : for if the bowels yearn, the hand will stretch itself forth ; and those comforts which are sincere and real are nothing else but the largess and donatives of the heart. It was a speech of a churl in Plautus, *Familiam alere non possum misericordiâ* : “Compassion and charity will not feed a family.” But the Christian is the better husband : *Qui spargit ecclesiæ, colligit sibi* : “He that scattereth his comforts to the distressed, gathereth for himself, and in a religious policy by emptying his store filleth his garners.” This was the practice and the policy of the first and purest times, *verba in opera vertere*, “to turn words into works,” that they might be *λόγοι ὑπὲρ τῆς πράξεως ἐψυχωμένοι*, “words” of comfort, but “quickened and enlivened with action.” Frequent visitation of the sick, sustentation of the needy, gratulations and benedictions, speak plainly the quickness and the heat of their charity, and upbraid the verbal religion of these latter times, which breathes forth air instead of comfort, and talks of the way to heaven, but never treads in it. That was comfort indeed which clothed the naked, and fed the hungry, made the dry stick blossom, and revived the drooping spirits, as Jacob’s were revived when he saw the chariots which his son Joseph had sent. (Gen. xlv. 27.)

To draw towards a conclusion : We must well consider from what principle this act is wrought, from what spring it moves. For we may think we do it when we do not so much as think to do it. We may give scorn and contempt for comfort, or comfort with scorn and contempt ; which is *panis lapidosus*, “bread made up with gravel,” that will trouble us in taking it down. Our comfort may proceed from a hollow heart ; and then it is but a sound, and the mercy of a bloody Pharisee. It may be ministered through a trumpet ; and then it is lost in that noise. Nay, it may be an act of cruelty, to make cruelty more cruel : as we read of an emperor that did never pronounce sentence of death *sine præfatione clementiæ*,\* “but with a preface of clemency,” a well-worded, mild prologue before a tragedy. Lastly, comfort may be the product of fear. We may be free in our comforts for fear of offence, and help one that we displease not another.

\* SÆTONIUS, in *Vitâ Domitiani*, cap. xi.

And what pity is it that so free and noble a virtue as charity should be enslaved! But indeed charity is not bound; nor is that charity which is beat out with the hammer, and wrought out of us by force. All these are false principles,—pride, hypocrisy, vain-glory, fear; and charity issues from these as water through mud, and is defiled in the passage. Therefore it is best raised on the law of nature and on the royal law of grace. These are pillars that will sustain it. “Remember them that be in adversity, as being yourselves also in the body,” (Heb. xiii. 3,) in a body “mortal and corruptible,” (1 Cor. xv. 53,) a body of the same mould, like to that which you cherish and uphold. And then we are to “love and comfort one another, even as Christ loved us,” saith the apostle. (Eph. v. 2.)

Christ is our pattern, our motive, the true principle of charity: and what is done, though it be but the gift of a cup of cold water, should be done in his name. (Mark ix. 41.) Then the waters of comfort flow kindly and sweetly when they relish of a bleeding heart and the blood of a merciful Redeemer. Then this act is mightily performed when we do it as the sons of Adam and as the members of Christ, when we do it as men “of one blood” and of one “common faith.” (Acts xvii. 26; Titus i. 4.)

And now to conclude: Let us do it; yea, let us be ambitious to do it. For as we have great motives, so we have many occasions, sad occasions, to draw it forth. “Day unto day uttereth knowledge.” (Psalm xix. 2.) Every day presents us with some object or other. And “occasion,” they say, “will make a thief;” why should it not make a comforter? If it can work out evil out of a corrupt, I see no reason why it should not work out this good out of a compassionate, heart, why it should not work that compassion in us which will stream forth in rivers of comfort. Shall occasion be nowhere powerful but in evil? I remember, Chrysologus speaking of the rich man in the gospel tells us that God did on purpose cast Lazarus down at his gate, that he might be *pietatis conflatorium*, “as a forge to melt his iron bowels.” *Tot erant pauperis ora, quot vulnera*: “He had so many mouths to bespeak and admonish the rich man as he had sores and wounds.” His whole body, and his ulcerated flesh, was as a stage prepared and fitted for compassion and piety to act their parts on. “Here is water,” saith the eunuch to Philip: “what now hindereth but that I may be baptized?” (Acts viii. 36.) Here is a fair opportunity, here is a Lazarus at the gates; what hindereth? Why doth not compassion “break forth as the morning,” and comfort “spring forth suddenly?” (Isai. lviii. 8.) Here are sores; why do we not dress them?

Here is an empty mouth; why do we not fill it? Here is a naked body; why do we not part with our vain superfluities (I might say, with our own garment) to cover it? Here God speaks, and man speaks, and misery speaks; and are our hearts so hard that they will not open, and so open the mouth, and open the hands? Shall our pride and scorn, and not our piety, make an answer?

Beloved, God hath laid many lazars at our gates, presented us many sad and bleeding spectacles, laid them down at our feet, before our very eyes: it is pity we should not be as much affected with them as we are with those we never saw; that a relation from afar should pierce us, and the lamentations which bring-in our cares should leave us such rocks as no Moses, no prophets of the Lord, can force one drop of water from; that we should gush out in the one, and be dry in the other. I could show you many such spectacles: I need not show you; for you see them every day. I could show you naked and miserable men; I could show you a naked and miserable church, stripped of all her ornaments, of all the glory wherewith her mother, the peerless charity of former times, had clothed her. Her light is well-near put out, yet the apple of our eye resteth; (Lam. ii. 18;) God hath thundered, but our earth is not melted; (Psalm xlvi. 6;) he hath poured forth his indignation, yet his arm is not revealed unto us. Where are our sighs and lamentations? Who hath "sat down, and wept at the remembrance of Sion?" (Psalm cxxxvii. 1.) Nay, where was not the garment of joy, the bed of ivory, and the sound of the viol? (Amos vi. 4, 5.) Where hath vanity more displayed itself than in the midst of those evils which were sent from God to pull it down? When were our eyes more wanton than in the midst of those ruthless objects which might put them out? When were we worse than under that discipline which should make us better?

And, indeed, what comfort can we look for here from proud, covetous, wanton men? You may look as well for liberty in a prison, or for joy in hell. Beloved, "let the same mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus;" (Phil. ii. 5;) and then, and not till then, are you fit for this duty. Shake off the love of the world, which he came to overcome; crucify the flesh, for which he was crucified: and then you will love those men for whom he died. Then will you weep over Jerusalem, as he did; strive to make up the breaches of it, and cement it even with your tears and blood. Then will you have so much piety, as to bewail the decay of it. Then will you be ready to reach forth the hand to them who lie in the dust: and if ye cannot help them up, ye

will at least pity them. And where we cannot help, compassion is "comfort." Then shall we lay hold on every occasion of doing good, and bless God for it. Then shall we live together as men, as brethren, as angels; pouring forth this oil, and receiving it; "watering," as Solomon speaketh, and "being watered again." (Prov. xi. 25.) And in this mutual dispensation of blessings and comforts, helping and supporting one another, we shall be carried along in the same stream towards the haven where we would be, and press forward as it were hand in hand to those joys and comforts which are laid up for those who "comfort one another" by the God of consolation in the kingdom of heaven.

And now I should pass to my last part,—the rule or method we must use in this duty: but of that in the afternoon.

---

## SERMON LXIV.

### DUTY OF COMFORTING ONE ANOTHER.

*Wherefore comfort one another with these words.—*  
1 Thessalonians iv. 18.

#### PART II.

WE have spoken of the persons, "one another;" and of the duty, "comfort."

III. We now pass to our last part, the manner or method how the duty must be performed: "With these words." Hence we may gather, 1. That we must observe a rule and method in this duty. Every box will not yield us physic. We cannot find this balm in every place, nor draw this water of comfort out of every well. 2. That this is *methodus de caelo*, that "this method is taught, not in the school of nature, but of Christ." No words will produce comfort but the words of Wisdom itself. To take it more generally and by way of deduction: We shall find it in the word of God; and, more particularly, in these words concerning the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead: so we shall "draw the waters" of comfort "out of the wells of salvation." (Isai. xii. 3.) With these we shall exercise your Christian devotion at this time.

1. First. In every action we must look to the manner, and observe a right method in our proceeding. For he that is out of

the way, though he walk and walk on all the days of his life, shall never come to his journey's end. He that begins amiss is yet to begin; and the further he goes, the further he is from the end. As St. James speaks of prayer: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss;" (James iv. 3;) so we seek comfort, and find not, because we seek amiss. Lord, in what errors and perplexities do we entangle ourselves! What mazes and labyrinths do we toil in! What dangerous precipices do we venture on! How do we mistake poison for physic, hell for heaven, a prison for Paradise! How many evils do we run and bruise ourselves upon, to fly the face of one, and yet carry it along with us! *Quàm operosè perimus!* "What pains do we take" to ease, that is, "to trouble and vex and undo, ourselves!" When we are in restraint, we seek liberty, and more enslave ourselves. When we are in pain, we seek ease, and our torment is increased. When we are sick, we take physic, and die. Our eyes run to and fro through the earth; we seek comfort in every place and under every leaf; and under every leaf we find a serpent. Our fancy is our physician, and other men's fancies are our physicians. We ask ourselves counsel; and they are fools that give it. We ask other men counsel; and they are deceitful, flattering, miserable comforters. We would be at ease, and seek out many inventions, and pass by that which is so easy to be found. For want of method and a right progress in our ways, our life is nothing else but a continuation of error. *Nec tam morbis quàm remediis laboramus:* "Nor do our diseases trouble us so much as our remedies." And as they will say, "Lo, here is Christ," and, "Lo, there is Christ," (Matt. xxiv. 23,) so they will say, "Lo, here is comfort, and there is comfort." But as those are false Christs, so are these false and deceitful comforts; as those Christs are antichrists, so these comforts are curses greater than those we fly from. In poverty we seek for wealth; and that makes us poorer than we were. In prison we seek for enlargement; and enlargement fettereth us more, binds us hand and foot with the cares of this world. In the dust we look up unto the highest place; and we no sooner fill it but we are filled with care. These are not fit remedies: Wealth is no cure for poverty, nor enlargement for restraint, nor honour for discontent. This is not the true method: but we walk as in a vain shadow, as in a dream. We dream that we eat, and when we awake we are hungry: we dream of abundance, and still we want: we dream of honour, and are lower than he that is on the dunghill: we dream of liberty, and are slaves; of pleasure and comfort, and are miserable. Thus it is in temporal evils, in those evils which are

not so until we make them so. And thus it is, and much more, in those evils which are truly so, and which make us evil. When it thundereth, we hide ourselves. When God comes towards us in the cool, in the wind, of the day, we run into the thicket. When our conscience holds up the whip, we fly from it; when it is angry, we flatter it. We comfort ourselves against God's jealousy, till it burn like fire; against the checks and bitings of conscience, till it be a worm that will gnaw us everlastingly. When the tempest is loudest, we lull ourselves asleep. We are as willing to forget sin as to commit it. And the devil is not more subtle in his temptations than in suggesting those *æda peccandi solatia*, as St. Jerome calls them, "those foul and dangerous refreshments" of a perishing soul. Either he casts our sins behind us; or, if they be before us, we look upon them as Lot did upon Zoar: "Are they not little ones? and our soul shall live." (Gen. xix. 20.) Thus we comfort ourselves, that either it is a first sin, or that it is a small sin, or that others have committed a greater sin. "We pollute ourselves in every high way, and under every green tree;" (Jer. iii. 6;) and every thing we see casts a shadow to comfort us. We comfort ourselves by ourselves, and by others; by our own weakness, and by others' weakness: and we comfort ourselves by sin itself. We find comfort not only in heaven above, but in the earth below, and in the depth of hell itself. We comfort ourselves by the mercy of God, by the vanity of the creature, by the subtilty of Satan. And thus we find out *antidotum adversus Cæsarem*,\* "an antidote against" vengeance and the wrath of God. But this antidote is poison, these remedies are vexations, these comforts are as devils to torment us more. *Tranquillitas ista tempestas est*, saith St. Jerome. "This calm is more dangerous than a tempest." This haven [that] we fly to shipwrecks and overwhelms a soul which, if we took a right method, and applied that medicine which the true Physician hath prescribed, might, though through a storm, have seen that light by which it might escape and fly away and be at rest. (Psalm lv. 6, 8.) For the best comfort is that which is wrought out of the sense of sin, as that joy is most ravishing which we gain out of sorrow; *cùm consoletur dolor*, when, as St. Augustine speaketh, "grief itself is made a comforter." *Ægra anima Deo proxima*, saith Nazianzen: "The sick soul"—and not that soul only which is sick, but which groans and complains in its sickness—"God is best acquainted with." He will descend and

\* SÆTONIUS, in *Vitâ Caligulæ*, cap. xxix. "When Caligula was about to kill his brother, who was suspected of having secretly fortified himself against the effects of poison by preventive potions, he insolently asked, 'Is there any antidote against the will of Cæsar?'"—EDIT.

visit that soul, and make it glad with the joy of his countenance. It is good and safest to observe a method in this, as we do exactly also in all things else. The tradesman hath his way to gather wealth; and he calls it his "craft or mystery:" and he will not fail in the least minim or punctilio; for if he do, he may prove a bankrupt. The soldier hath his art and discipline, his military rules: for there is a method observed even in killing of men: and to mistake or fail in any one of them, is to commit an error that can never be recalled or remedied. Not to fight according to rule is to lose the victory. *Ars, non virtus indocta, præstat victoriam*: "It is art and method, not rude and boisterous valour, which wins the day, and crowns the conqueror." The philosopher hath his method. Yea, philosophy itself is nothing else but method, and an orderly carrying the mind of man from one thing to another, from one conclusion to another. As there is "a time," so there is a way, "for every thing under the sun." (Eccles. iii. 1.) There is a certain means for every purpose, a certain order in coming to every end we set up: and so there is in this, in comforting ourselves or others; which if we observe not, the more waters we draw, the more foul and bitter they will be; the more physic we take, the sicker we are; the more we comfort ourselves, the more we stand in need of comfort; and thus to keep off our hell, makes it burn more ragingly than before. And how have we failed in the true method of comfort! How have we drawn this water out of every puddle and sink! We go not to "Jacob's well," to the true fountain of comfort; or, if we do, "we have nothing to draw with." (John iv. 11.) Our vessels are broken, not a sherd left that will hold this water; no understanding, and less will, they being taken up with fallacious hopes and comforts of this world. Can we draw this "water out of the wells of salvation?" (Isai. xii. 3.) We had rather draw blood out of the hearts of our oppressors, and wash our feet in their blood, and so be at rest! A comfort it would be to see every Nebuchadnezzar, every tyrant, turned into a beast, and driven into the field; to see them that trouble us cut off, and made as dung for the earth; to see the sacrilegious person struck dead! "Let thine enemies perish, O Lord! let thine enemies perish!" (Judges v. 31;) that is our prayer, and it would be our comfort to see it; and till we see it we will not be comforted. Thus we err; and such immethodical Christians we are. For God's providence is not to wait upon our wills and affections, but our wills and affections must bow and submit to it, and wait upon it "as the eye of the servant looks upon the hand of his master;" (Psalm cxxiii. 2;) not to guide it, but to obey

and kiss it, as well when he withdraws it from us as when he stretcheth it out to help us. The hope of enemies' destruction might have been a comfort under the law, because then it was a promise that "one should chase a thousand:" (Joshua xxiii. 10:) "They shall come out one way, and flee seven ways." (Deut. xxviii. 7.) Then they could say, "Lo, thine enemies shall perish, thine enemies shall perish," even in this world. (Psalm xcii. 9.) But there is no such promise under the gospel, and therefore no such comfort to be looked for. This affords us no other strength and supply than that of grace, nor arms us against any enemies but those of our soul. It makes us valiant, not against our enemies according to the flesh, but against impatience, and distrust, and murmuring, which fight against our peace. By this we are exalted and even triumph over those enemies which tread us under their feet. This is all our strength, all our artillery: and this is enough. For, though God help us not, but leave us under the harrow, and to the will of our enemies; yet he is still a God of consolation. He is thy Physician; why then shouldest thou be turned after thy own way and method, who art never better pleased than with that which will hurt thee? Behold, he hath "shown thee a more excellent way;" (1 Cor. xii. 31;) a way to find comfort, not by the removal of the thorn, but by keeping it in thy flesh; not by taking away the cup of bitterness, but by sweetening it; by helping thee when thou hast no help, and delivering thee when he doth not deliver thee. He hath broken open the treasury of comfort; he hath opened the fountains above: he will comfort thee with his truth; "his word is truth."

2. This is his way, this is his method; and it will be our greatest wisdom to observe it: "Wherefore comfort you one another with these words."

(1.) In general, with the word of God. For the scripture is *ιατρῆϊον κοινόν*, "a common shop of comfort;" and here thou mayest buy it without money, or money-worth. Here thou mayest buy it; and, if not here, thou wilt never find it. That comfort which thou gainest out of other shops—out of that shop of vanity, the world, or that shop of shadows, thy own fancy, or that shop of lies, the mouth of the parasite—is but vain, but vanishing, but false wares; *bestia pharmacopolæ* that Julian the Pelagian upbraids St. Augustine with, "like that beast the apothecary promised his patient" of wonderful virtue, which before the morning came had eaten up herself. All these comforts die in themselves; and out of them, when they perish, nothing is begotten but woe and bitter lamentation. A man in



trouble who stands in need of this physic is as "a bowed wall and tottering fence;" (Psalm lxii. 3;) and nothing can comfort him but that which can settle him. When we have wearied ourselves in vain, racked our imaginations, busied our thoughts, studied remedies, we still remain in our shaking and trembling condition. Call-in all the glories of the world, "invent instruments of music, like David," (Amos vi. 5,) bring the merry harp and the lute: these may refresh us for a while; but the evil spirit will come again upon us, as it did upon Saul. (1 Sam. xvi. 23.) These are but weak props to uphold and settle a tottering fence. Let us call-in the arm of flesh, make use of our own strength: that may ruin us. But "wisdom is better than strength;" (Eccles. ix. 16;) call in that: this is but "sensual and earthly," and will soon moulder away. All our "turning of devices" will be but as the potter's clay, which will break and crumble between our fingers. We shall "kindle a fire, and be compassed about with the sparks; and walk in the light of our own fire;" and then what shall we have? "We shall lie down," saith the prophet, "in sorrow." (Isai. l. 11.) Upon these we walk as on the ice; *magis tremimus quàm imus*, "and do rather tremble than go." Now we lift up ourselves upon them, and anon we fall and are bruised upon them: they glide away from us, and they can neither settle us, nor we fix and be settled upon them. That on which we must settle as in our place of rest, must be itself immovable. And no such thing is to be found in the world, in this shop of change, where every thing is in a continual flux, whose very being is hastening to its end, *toties mutata, quoties mota*, "changed almost in every motion;" the same, and not the same; fitting to-day, and contrary to-morrow; comfort to-day, and bitterness to-morrow; now an oracle, and anon a lie, a displeasing, killing lie; now the joy, and anon the anguish, of the heart; now making it leap, and next morning turning it into a stone! "Why should we seek for the living amongst the dead?" (Isai. viii. 19.) Why should we cheapen certainty in this shop of change? Why should we seek for constancy in a decaying world? Why should we seek for ease in that which is, and, whilst I say so, is no more? Why should we seek for true and substantial comfort in a region of shadows? This is "to disquiet ourselves in vain;" (Psalm xxxix. 6;) to make us gods of clay to go before us, which will moulder and fall to nothing in our hands; to lose all comfort in the seeking it. *Quærite quod quæritis, sed non ubi quæritis*, as Augustine: "Seek that you seek for," consolation, "but not where you seek it,"—in the world, in the inventions of men,

which are more mortal than themselves. But we may "hear of it in Ephratah," or we may "find it in the fields of the wood," (Psalm cxxxii. 6,) in "the city of woods," where the ark was and the testimony; (1 Sam. vii. 2;) we may find it in the word of God, which is "as mount Sion, and will stand fast for evermore." (Psalm cxxv. 1.)

For, again, as our Saviour tells Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" is of the same nature, fading and mortal; "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," is heavenly and divine: (John iii. 6:) so whatsoever is of God, all those ἀπορροιαί, those "emanations and defluxions" from him, savour of him, of his wisdom, of his goodness, of his immortality. His word is an "incorruptible word, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.) It is from an immortal God, and leads to immortality. His hope is "a lively hope," quickening us to eternity; (1 Peter i. 3;) his "joy, such as no man can take away;" (John xvi. 22;) his peace a lasting "peace, lasting as long as the moon endureth;" (Psalm lxxii. 7;) his promises, and so his comforts, "Yea and Amen." (2 Cor. i. 20.) All other comforts are "of the earth, earthy," of a fading and perishing condition. As our thoughts, they perish with us; nay, they perish before us; as shadows, falling with those bodies that cast them; as bubbles raised out of our flesh, blown up and lost; as very nothings as ourselves. But the comforts of God have their rise from eternity, and so have a solid constant being, subject neither to wind nor tempest, to the injuries neither of times nor men, but in the pit and in the gulf of sorrows they buoy us up, and lift us above them, that we can walk upon the surging waves, and not sink for fear. As they spring from immortality, so they grow up and are ever green; they begin in time, and never end, but are carried on along in the infinite and immense gyre and circle of eternity. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

And herein is the excellency of those comforts which we gather in this Paradise, the word of God, above those we rake up in the wilderness, the vain and vast inventions of the world. First: They are more general; as the light they shine from one end of the world to the other, upon the whole microcosm, the whole "little world of man;" upon the whole mass of evil, and body of sin. Nothing, no evil, is hid or removed from the light and influence of them. They reach David in his flight, and they reach him in his bed of tears. They refresh the lazar at the gate, and they refresh the sinner at the mouth of hell. They raise us from the dunghill; and when sin hath taken hold of

us, they lift up our head. Some faint and shallow comforts even the Heathen found out, and that but for some miseries; but here is an amulet against all. These comforts do ἐν κύκλῳ περιπεύειν, “run round the whole army of miseries, and defeat them all.” “A wounded spirit who can bear?” (Prov. xviii. 14.) And a wounded spirit what philosopher could ever cure? What Gillead, what balm had they to heal it? Being without this word, they were “without God in the world.” (Eph. ii. 12.) They hung as it were upon a cross, tormented as it were between these two, fear of punishment and a miserable ignorance how to avoid it, between some light and utter darkness. The medicine which must cure a wounded spirit is to be found not *in scholâ Platonis*, “in Plato’s school,” but *in porticu Solomonis*, “in the porch of Solomon,” in the temple, in the word of God, where *he* is manifested in *whom* all the treasures of comfort and peace are hid, “the Mediator, Christ Jesus, who died to reconcile us to God.” (Rom. v. 10.) Secondly: Comforts drawn from scripture are solid and true, being built upon a surer foundation, upon the unchangeable and everlasting will of God, who as he hath made us fit for such impressions, obnoxious and liable to all those evils which either he sends or permits to fall upon us, so he hath also fitted and proportioned a salve for every sore, a remedy for every evil, and hath made ourselves the elaboratories and alembics to extract and distil them. He hath made us both the patients and physicians, and hath directed us to this garden of Eden, this fruitful seed-plot, the scripture, even to this “tree of life, whose leaves are to heal the nations.” (Rev. xxii. 2.) The philosophers’ comforts were, like their virtues, faint and void of life, but paper-comforts, begotten either by meditation, or by a continual habit of sufferings; by abandoning all natural affections; by comparing a less evil with a greater,—“they had lost something, but retained something still;” by comparing of times, the present with the future, “It is now evil, it will be better,” and so leaping over their misery, and carried beyond it on the wings of hope, Ἔσται πάντα καλῶς;\* in a word, by example, by the end, by fatal necessity, by contingency and chance, which are but idols, and so “nothing in this world.” These were their topics,—a thin and bare shelter for a man to repose himself in when the storms of misery beat upon him. But the word of God, which is his will and mind evermore attended with his omnipotency, chaseth them all away, as the sun doth a mist; pulls out the sting of death and the sense of every evil; makes afflictions the messengers and angels of God, sent and commanded and

\* “All will end well.”—ED1T.

directed by him, swayed and governed νόμῳ προνοίας, “by his hand of providence,” which first tempers them to our strength, (1 Cor. x. 13,) and then maketh them as the weapons of righteousness to destroy sin, and such evils as prevent a greater evil; for “we are therefore chastened that we may not be condemned;” (1 Cor. xi. 32;) and, lastly, makes them in this span of time, this “moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. iv. 17.) These are the divine topics, or rather demonstrations. The goodness, the wisdom, the providence of God are premisses *æternæ veritatis*, “eternally and unchangeably true.” And out of them, if we depend upon them, we can draw no other conclusion but comfort. Other comforts are but phantasms and apparitions; these are angels: others are but as lightning; *dum micant, extinguuntur*, “they are extinguished in the very flash:” these are those everlasting burnings which never go out. Others are as deceitful as the serpent which suggests them, like the forbidden fruit: we take them that we may not die, and we die by taking them: but these are as God himself; true, as he is true; and lasting, as he is lasting. Other waters soon are turned into blood; but this retains both its colour and nature, and springs up into everlasting life.

And thus you see what a storehouse of comfort, what a Paradise, the scripture is. But yet we must be very careful how we gather comforts from thence, and how we apply them: and we must fit and prepare ourselves to receive them. The wisdom of God is the best guide; but it will not sustain him who delights to walk in slippery places. The providence of God reacheth unto all; but it will not protect him who loveth danger. His “mercy is over all his works;” (Psalm cxlv. 9;) but it will not cover a stubborn, unrepentant sinner. As Jehu said to Joram’s horseman, “What hast thou to do with peace?” (2 Kings ix. 19;) so what comfort can the foolish man find in the wisdom, the careless in the providence, or he that is cruel to himself in the mercy, of God? Yet God remains still the same, the wise, the provident, the merciful God, “the Holy One of Israel.” When we need comfort, here it is to be found; but it will not fit every one that needs it. It is the property of men in any perplexity to seek for ease and comfort, *et, si non inveniant, facient*, “if they find none, they will frame some to themselves,” and cull out that part of scripture which will not fit them, as men in distress will lay hold on that which will not help them. There be very few Rachels in the world, that “will not be comforted:” (Jer. xxxi. 15:) the most either seek out false comforts, or apply true ones falsely, and so make that their poison which well

and rightly applied would have been an antidote. Judas would not make use of the rich and precious balm of mercy ; yet how many misapply it, and so break their necks, and forfeit their souls, and fall into the same place into which he did ! Many will not say what St. James says they ought to say, " If the Lord will, we will do this or that ; " (James iv. 15 ; ) and yet will do what the Lord hateth, upon this presumption that he wills it ! How many walk safely under the canopy of God's providence, and how many doth their presumption tumble down when they think they are under it ! How many will not be wise nor provident, how many are ungracious, upon no other motive than this, that God's wisdom and providence and grace are sufficient for them ! We are too bold with scripture, and with the precepts and comforts it contains. When we are unwilling to do what we should, or in trouble for what we have done, we are like men pent up, and yet eager after liberty, who strive to make a way to escape, though they beat out their brains at the door of the prison. The covetous man comforts himself by the laborious ant in the Proverbs ; (Prov. vi. 6 ; ) the ambitious, by that " good ointment " in Ecclesiastes. (Eccles. vii. 1.) The hypocrite hath his text too, " Let your light so shine," though his doth but blaze. (Matt. v. 16.) The contentious man is glad to see Saul and Barnabas at odds. (Acts xv. 39.) The bloody gallant sleeps with David in his tent. (2 Sam. xi.) The schismatic is bold upon his Christian liberty. The lethargic Christian walks along in the strength of God's mercy : and he that hath no part in the first resurrection challenges as great an interest as Abraham and Isaac in the second. (Matt. xxii. 32, 33 ; Rev. xx. 6.) " Few there be," saith our Saviour, yet all believe they shall be saved. (Luke xiii. 23.) " The gate is strait ; " (verse 24 ; ) yet all enter, the miser with his bags, the ambitious with his train, the revenger with his sword, the wanton with his lusts, the hypocrite with his mask, Balaam with his wages, Corah with his complices, the covetous in his sweat, the schismatic in fire, the tyrant in blood. All have sinned ; and all are saved. All fall, and all rouse themselves up with some misapplied text of scripture. And if this were true, if it were as they thought, we might conclude with Pliny : *Major cœlitum populus quàm terræ*, that " heaven was better peopled than the earth." But it is ill walking through a painted Paradise into torment, ill pleasing ourselves with those thoughts which will perish, and leave us to destruction. It is ill building up a heaven in our fancy, and losing of that which " hath a foundation, whose builder and maker is God ; " (Heb. xi. 10 ; ) to be happy in a flying thought, and then to dwell with

misery for ever. O that so many should be saved in this world, and yet so many perish in the next ! These are *solatia deceptoria*, as the father calls them, truly, though barbarously, “deceitful” rather lies than “comforts;” the devil’s *ναρκώτικα*, “by which he doth stupify us,” and take from us all pain and sense of evil; comforts that betray us; tormenting easements; David’s music to remove the fit that will return again. And in carking after these we are as foolish as the shipwrecked person in Hierocles, who, instead of a plank of the ship, laid hold on the anchor, which sunk him with a swinge and violence into the bottom of the sea. The scripture, it is most true, is full fraught with the waters of comfort; but we must be very wary how we draw them. Sometimes we draw them out of curiosity, to pry into the closet of God’s secrets: sometimes out of pleasure and delight; for not only the story, but the precepts therein contained, must needs please our reason, being so fitted and proportioned to it. But they are never more deadly than when we make that a cordial which we should use as a purge. The comforts of the gospel are milk and honey to the humble soul, but deadly poison to him that runs on in his sin. Experience will teach us, that a foul, corrupt stomach turns that which should nourish the body into a disease. And as it is in our bodies, if they be distempered, good diet is so offensive to them, and our appetite is only to trash and fantastical diet; so if the *crasis* and constitution of our soul be vitiated and overthrown, the comforts of the gospel will be but like the sop which Christ gave Judas, occasions of diseases and death. To think of these as comforts, is but to deceive ourselves: for, though we seem to relish and maintain some show of life, yet these false and misapplied comforts are but as physical and confectionary diet: with it we cannot continue long, and there is but a span between us and death.

Thus then you see the comforts drawn out of scripture be best, but not unless they be well used and fitly applied. We have some reason to be afraid of our comforts as well as to desire them; for they may come too soon, when we are not fit for them; or we may draw those to us that are not fit for us. We may take them, as the Stoic speaks, *ex adverso situ*, “on the wrong side,” by a wrong handle, and so sink under them as under a burden. As it was said of the Fountain of all comfort, Christ himself, “we may fall upon them, and be broken; and they may fall upon us, and grind us to powder.” (Matt. xxi. 44.) And so we shall walk delicately to our death, and die in our physician’s arms, with our cordials about us. We conclude: “From all evil and mischief, from the crafts and assaults of the

devil, and from all false and misapplied comforts, good Lord, deliver us !”

(2.) And thus much be spoken in general and by way of deduction, and *in sensu quem faciunt*, “in that sense which the words will naturally yield.” We come now to take them *in sensu quo fiunt*, “in that sense in which the apostle took them in this particular ;” and we will but touch upon it by way of conclusion. “Comfort you one another” with this article of your faith, the coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of the dead. And, to speak truly, this is the ground of all comfort, and without this all the rest were but a fancy : all the promises, all our hopes, our “faith itself were vain,” and “we were yet in our sins ;” (1 Cor. xv. 17 ;) under a burden, and none to help us ; under misery, and none to comfort us. Virtue indeed and piety are amiable in themselves, being the beauty of that image in which we were made. If there were no future estate, yet they would be the fairest garment that a reasonable creature could be seen in, they would be still what they are, but of small use. *Malo nullum bonum quàm vanum*, saith the father : “I had rather have no good at all, than that which is in vain.” *Quid prodest esse, quod esse non prodest ?* “What profit is it that that thing should be *which* when it is doth not profit us at all ?” But the coming of Christ will bring us to the vision of God, which, like Aristotle’s *sophia* in his “Ethics,” *αὐτάρκειαν*, *suam in se continet*, “contains all contents and comforts, and is to be desired for itself alone !” This is the true fountain, then, of consolation ; but it is like the pool of Bethesda, which was not medicinal till an angel had stirred it. Our fancies and humours may be as so many evil angels, and defile and take away the virtue from it. We may a little change St. Paul’s words, “Why should it be thought a thing” so desirable with some men, that Christ should come again ? (Acts xxvi. 8.) For, should he come to meet the adulterer in the twilight, the murderer with his sword in his hand, the sacrilegious person with his axes and hammers ? Should he come and find thee chipping and commixing his coin, abusing his comforts, should he come and find thee drawing him on to countenance those sins which he first came to destroy ? Shall he come and find thee more hypocrite than the Pharisees that opposed him, more bloody than the Jews that crucified him ? Shall he come and see thee “not casting out devils,” but doing their works, “in his name ?” (Matt. vii. 22.) Can there be any comfort now to hear “the voice of the archangel and the trump of God ?” (1 Thess. iv. 16.) Can there be comfort in that “fire” which shall “devour before him,” or in that “tempest”

which shall be "round about him?" (Psalm l. 3.) Hilary mistook that place of David, "My soul breaketh for the desire it hath to thy judgments always:" (Psalm cxix. 20:) yet his sense is good: *Non desiderat judicium David, sed ut desideret concupiscit*: "David doth not here desire that the day of judgment should come, but his desire is that his innocency may so qualify him that he may safely desire it:" he doth not so much comfort himself that it will come, as he longs to be prepared that it may come with comfort.

That these words then, that all the comforts of the gospel, which are upheld by this of "the coming of the Lord," may prove comfortable and physical, we must use them as physic, be very wary in applying them. We talk much of applying the promises and comforts of the gospel; and I should not much mislike the phrase, if either men understood what they said, or did not so dangerously abuse it. But how easy is it to bring that to us by our fancy which will never come near us! How easy to apply that which will not fit us! May not a beggar fancy himself into the royal apparel of a king? Fancy makes saints every day more than the truth doth, and yet heaven is never a whit the fuller. Men may think they have a place there, may say they are assured of it, who, if they shake not off their presumption, and fall down in all the humility of repentance, will never come there. The truth is, if we perform the condition, the promises and comforts will apply themselves, and be made good unto us. If we be righteous, God will not suffer us to perish; if we faint, he will uphold us; if we be troubled, he will comfort us; if we believe, comfort is at hand; if we be risen with Christ here, we shall leave our miseries behind us, and rise with him in glory. Then we may wait upon his descent with joy, and make the "shout and the voice of the archangel" music, and the doctrine of his coming cordial and comfortable to our souls; we may then "comfort ourselves with these words," which breathe nothing but majesty and terror to others.

#### APPLICATION.

For conclusion: Let us seek comfort *in loco suo*, "in its proper place." Let us draw it out of its true fountain: *E caelo misericordia*: "The seal of mercy is heaven," and from thence are all those comforts derived which refresh a weary soul labouring under the burden of misery and sorrow, even from the wisdom and goodness and providence and justice of God, who preserves our tears, registers every groan, can tell the number of our sufferings, looks on and beholds us stemming the waters of bitterness, and



struggling with injuries, and “will not forget the work and labour of our love.” (Heb. vi. 10.) Let us not seek it in the earth, that sends forth nothing but noisome vapours and corruption, the region of change and uncertainty. The comfort that grows there is but *herba solstitialis*, “springs up, and blossoms, and fades, and all in the twinkling of an eye.” Let us not dig for it in the minerals, seek for it in the riches and glory of the world; for they have wings, and all the comfort they bring flies away faster than they. When our sins shall compass us about, when our conscience shall pursue us, and death come towards us, when we bear about with us the sharp rebukes of the one, and fear the terrors of the other, it will yield us but small comfort to sit down and think that we are rich. Let us not place it in hopes, in hopes that our misery will end: for this is rather to delude than comfort ourselves. Hope sees afar off, not that which is, but that which may be; and most times falls off from the object, whilst it looks on it; as it is in the picture of a battle,—not a stroke struck, nothing gained. What redemption is that which is made in a thought? Let us not seek it in the bowels of our enemies, and wish them out: for what will it profit us to see them spoiled who spoiled us, them destroyed who destroyed us? This is but the comfort of devils, and will but torment us more, as it doth them. They would bring others to the same condemnation, and are deeper in themselves. But let us seek for it in the bowels of that Lamb “which took away the sins of the world,” (John i. 29,) in the bowels and mercy of a “God of consolation.” (Rom. xv. 5.) Let us wait upon his justice, his wisdom, his providence with patience, till our appointed time shall come: and if in our span of time it come not, yet this is comfort enough, that “our redemption draweth very near;” (Luke xxi. 28;) and that comfort will come when there will be no span, no measure of time, when “time shall be no more.” Here if we fix our hope, it will be *spes viva*, “a living substantial hope:” but if we fix it not here, it will be but a faint representation of comfort, that will pass away like a shadow, and be no more. Here then let us build it up, let us lay it upon this “foundation,” upon “the apostles and prophets,” the word of God, “Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone;” (Eph. ii. 20;) who shall descend and come again, *malè judicata rejudicaturus*; “who shall reverse every false sentence, and condemn the judge that gave it;” and manifest his justice and providence in setting all at rights, in the punishment of the triumphant sinner, and the exaltation of the innocent who is trodden under feet; in changing the scene and face of things, and showing

Dives in hell, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. Here we may find physic for every disease, and comforts for all maladies. Here the sick may find a bed, the feeble a staff, the hungry bread, the prisoner liberty. Here the disconsolate may find what the philosopher professed, but could not teach, *τέχνην ἀλυπίας*, "an art to forget all grief." "With these words" well-understood and well-applied we may bathe ourselves in our tears, we may feed ourselves with hunger, clothe ourselves with nakedness, and make ourselves rich with nothing: we may descant on our misery, and make each sigh and groan musical. "With these words we may comfort one another:" the rich may comfort the poor, that he shall want nothing; and the poor the rich, that he shall have more than he can desire: the blind may comfort the deaf, that he shall hear the trump; and the deaf the blind, that he shall see his Saviour come again in glory. The church that is now militant may comfort herself that she shall be triumphant. Here we converse with dust and ashes, with the shapes of men, and malice of devils, or, if with saints, with saints full of imperfection. Here are Nimrods, and Neros, and, worse than Neros, men who do but what mischief they can, and the devil himself can do no more. *Illic apostolorum chorus, et martyrum populus*: "There are the apostles and martyrs." This is but "the valley of tears;" there "all tears shall be wiped from our eyes;" and we shall need no comfort, because we shall feel no sorrow, but serve God day and night, and with the glorious company of the apostles, and the noble army of martyrs, with the whole church, sing praises to the God of consolation for evermore. To which place of everlasting consolation [may] he bring us who purchased our peace with his blood, "Jesus Christ the righteous."

---

## SERMON LXV.

### A MIRACLE THE OBJECT OF DERISION.

*And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.—Acts ii. 12, 13.*

OF all the expressions of our distaste, a scoff is the worst. Admonition may be physic, a reproof may be balm, a blow may be ointment; but derision is as poison, as a sword, as a sharp arrow. It was the height of Job's complaint, that contemptible persons made jests on him: and it was the depth of Samson's

calamity, that when "the Philistines' hearts were merry, they called for Samson to make them sport." (Judges xvi. 25.) That which raises our anger, presents some magnitude to our eyes; but that which we entertain with scorn, is of no appearance, not worth our thought, less than nothing. But now every thing is not always as it appears, especially to the eye of the scoffer: for we see, things of excellency, and such as are carried about in a higher sphere, may be depressed, and submitted to jests. We cannot cull out a better instance than that which we have here,—the miracle of this feast of Pentecost, not done in a corner, but in a full assembly and the face of the world. In a general congregation of "men out of every nation under heaven," (Acts ii. 5,) "a wind rusheth in:" *Flatus, qui non inflavit, sed vegetavit*, saith St. Augustine: "A blast, which did not blow them up, but quicken, and make them lusty and strong:" "Tongues as of fire, which sate upon them;" (verse 3;) *ignis, qui non cremavit, sed suscitavit*; "a fire, which did not burn and consume, but enliven and refresh, them." The wind was "violent," and the Spirit was in the wind; the tongues were "as of fire," and the Spirit was in that fire; they were "cloven," and the Spirit was in the cleft.

Christ was as good as his word: this sound was the echo of his promise; this *Repleti sunt*, "They were filled with the Holy Ghost," a commentary on *Ego mittam*,\* and the fulfilling of their hope. Christ's *Ascendit* endeth in *Dona dedit*,† and his promise in a miracle. *Τὸ μυστήριον ὡς μέγα τε καὶ σεβάσμιον*. "How high a mystery is this!" saith Nazianzen; "how venerable!" Christ had finished his work; his birth, his circumcision, his temptation, his passion, his resurrection, his ascension; which he calls *τὰ σωματικὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, "the corporeal things of Christ." These being all past, *τὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἄρχεται*, "now the Spirit begins" to move, but not as it did on the face of the waters and (as the nature of a spirit is) invisible, but in state, in things sensible, in "a rushing wind" to the ear; in "tongues of fire" to the eye, both heard and seen. Certainly a great mystery, a great miracle it was. And miracles should not be the subject of scorn, but admiration; they should check and suppress our mirth in silence and astonishment.

But, to press this further yet: This miracle is most seen in the gift of tongues. For whether they spoke but one language, and God worded it in the ear so that it was heard of every man, as his own proper dialect; or whether they spake in the several

\* "I will send." (John xv. 26.)—EDIT.  
hath given gifts unto men." (Eph. iv. 8.)—EDIT.

† "He hath ascended," "He

language of every nation,—to the Persians in theirs, to the Medes in theirs, and to the Elamites in theirs,—as is very probably gathered out of the text by Nazianzen and others; a miracle it was, and could not be wrought by any other hand than that of Omnipotency. Commonly, knowledge, whether of things or languages, is the daughter of time and industry. *Quis unquam de noviter plantatis arbusculis matura poma quæsit?* “Who ever looked for fruit from a branch scarcely yet ingrafted in the stock?” *Est etiam studiis sua infantia*, saith the orator.\* “As the bodies of the strongest men, so even studies have their infancy and their growth;” and slowly, after long time and much care and attendance, they ripen and improve by degrees to perfection. But here the course and natural order of things was strangely altered. For, men not learned, “Galilæans,” not of the best capacity, “began to speak with other tongues on a sudden,—Greek, Persian, Arabic, Parthian; and not common and vulgar things, but *magnalia Dei*, “the wonderful works of God.” (Acts ii. 11.) Their skill and knowledge was as sudden as the wind or fire. Put now these together, and you will wonder as much to see any countenance framed to laughter as to see the tongues and the fire, and be amazed at the scoff and mock as much as at the miracle. But the observation is old and common, That where the finger of God is most visible, there the devil will put-in his claw, to deface the beauty of God’s work, to alter the face and complexion of the greatest miracles, that they may appear as trifles and merriments. If God send his fiery tongues upon his apostles, the devil will also set the tongues of men on fire. If God send a mighty wind, there shall another blow out of the devil’s treasury, to blast and scatter all the marks and characters of God’s power. If the apostles speak with tongues, there shall be tongues as active as “the pen of a ready writer” to scoff and disgrace them, and to pour contempt on that which God hath made wonderful in our eyes; tongues that shall call the breathing of the Spirit “a frenzy,” and the speaking of languages “the evaporation and prating of drunkards,” and that shall make the greatest miracle mere mockery. You may hear them speak in my text: “Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.”

In which words briefly we observe these particulars:

I. The object of their derision, and what it was they mocked at.

II. The persons, not all, but ἑτεροί, “others,” some of them.

III. The scoff itself, “These men are full of new wine.”

Out of the first we may learn thus much,—that even miracles

\* QUINCTILIANI *Institut. Orator.* lib. i. cap. i. sect. 4.

may be scoffed at. Next, we may observe what manner of persons scoffers are, ἕτεροι, but "some" of them, some of the rout; or if of higher place, none of the best. For the last, when we have more nearly looked upon it, and brought it to the touch and trial, we shall find it to be but a lie, coined out of the devil's mint, bearing his image and superscription, even the stamp and character of malice, envy, and ignorance.

Of these in their order.

I. We are to speak, First, of a miracle, and that briefly. In every miracle, as Aquinas saith, there are two things, *quod fit*, and *propter quod fit*, "the thing done," which must transcend the course of nature, and "the end," which is also supernatural. Indeed, in respect of the power of God there is no miracle at all, it being as easy for him to make one man speak all languages on the sudden, as by degrees to teach him one; but in his divine goodness he was pleased to work wonders, not for show, but for our instruction. And as he had borne witness to his Son by power and great miracles, so doth he here to the Holy Ghost, now visibly descending upon his apostles to no other end but this, to consecrate his church, to seal the gospel, and so to fulfil that as Christ had fulfilled the law. This was the end of this miraculous operation: The Holy Ghost comes "in a mighty wind," to rattle their hearts together; he comes in "fire," to inflame their breasts; and in "cloven tongues," to cleave their hearts asunder. He teacheth one man to speak all kind of tongues, that Christ might become the language of the whole world.

II. Now, in the next place, let us view the persons; ἕτεροι, "others." What entertainment finds the miracle? What welcome hath the Holy Ghost? No other than what befalls all unusual and extraordinary events. Every man lays hold of it and shapes it in such a form as he [may] please. To some, you see, it is a matter of wonder; to others, of mirth; and this the father calleth *Judaicum opprobrium*, "a reproach cleaving fast to the Jew." So was it here to them, and it may be laid to many among us this day as a just imputation, not to consider *mirabilia Dei*, "the wonderful things of God." Some render it *separata Dei*, "those works of his which are set apart to this very purpose," to elevate our thoughts; if not to beget, yet to confirm, our faith, at least to work a disposition to it. We should account it a strange stupidity in any one not to be more affected at the sight of the sun than of a small candle or taper, and to esteem the great palace of heaven but as a furnace. But when God stretcheth forth his hands to produce effects which follow not the

force of secondary causes, to make nature excel herself, to improve her operations beyond the sphere of her activity; then, not to put-on wonder, not to conclude that it is for some great end, is not folly, but infidelity, the daughter of malice and envy and affected ignorance.

Miracles are signs; and if they signify nothing, it is evident that a stubborn heart and froward mind corrupt their dialect, and will not understand the meaning of them. And then what are miracles but trifles, matter of scoff and derision? "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles," (Acts ii. 22,) a juggler; his sceptre, a reed; his crown, of thorns; a knee, a mock; a voice from heaven is but "thunder;" to make the blind to see, the lame to go, and the deaf to hear, "a kind of witchcraft or sorcery;" to be baptized with the Spirit, is "to be full of drink;" and to speak divers languages, "to be drunken!" When Julian the Apostate had read a book presented unto him in defence of Christianity, all the reply he made was this: *Ἀνέγνων, ἔγνων, κατέγνων*. "I have read, understood, and condemned it." To which St. Basil most fitly and ingeniously replied: *Ἀνέγνως, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔγνων· εἰ γὰρ ἔγνων, οὐκ ἂν κατέγνως*. "You have read it indeed, but not understood it: for had you understood it, you would never have condemned it." The same befalls men prepossessed and too far engaged in the world, and with business no whit compliable with the operations of the Spirit. They behold the great things of God, and straight think they understand them; and their censure is as sudden as their thought: but the father's reply to that apostate will reach home to them:—Did they truly understand them, they could not possibly slight them; they could not slight those doctrines of universal obedience, self-denial, necessity of good works, the deadness (nay, the danger) of faith without civil honesty; for the confirmation of which all miracles were wrought. We need not now wonder to see wonders slighted: for from this root spring all the errors of our life. This doth, what the Pope is said by some to do, make virtue vice, and vice virtue. This makes fools prophets, and Christ a deceiver. This makes us neither see virtue in others, nor the most visible and mountainous sin in ourselves. By this rule the innocent are murderers, and murderers saints. From hence it was that Christ appeared to some no more than "the carpenter's son." Some slighted his person as contemptible, others his precepts as ridiculous, his gospel as foolishness, his disciples as idiots.

To this day our behaviour is little better than mocking. Our lust, which waits for the twilight, mocks at his Omniscience:

“Tush, God seeth not!” (Psalm lxxiii. 11.) Our distrust argues against his power: “The waters gushed out. Can he give bread also?” (Psalm lxxviii. 20.) “If the windows of heaven should be opened, can this be done?” (2 Kings vii. 2.) Our impatience questions his truth: that which he doeth not yet, we think he will never do. He is *πάνσοφος*, “most wise,” say, Wisdom itself: yet how many think he will not make inquisition for blood, nor punish it with eternal fire! and these frame their lives as if this were a very truth. God is bountiful, and hath nothing so proper to him as to be good and liberal to all; yet some there be who have imputed all to destiny and the stars. And those who acknowledge him to be the Giver of life, have confined and impropriated his goodness to a few. His mercy *κατακαυχᾶται*, “triumpheth over” his justice; yet Novatian made every fall as low as hell: and what is despair but a mocking of God’s mercy?

The miracle of this feast, if you will admit St. Augustine’s conceit, is still visible in the church, where every man speaks all the languages of the world, inasmuch as he is a member of that catholic church where all languages are spoken: and yet this *χλευασμός*, this “scoffing and derision,” is the most usual figure in the world’s rhetoric; and he that cannot answer an argument can break a jest. The ground of all is infidelity, the proper issue of obstinate and wilful ignorance, which brought forth these men here, not Isaacs, you may be sure, but yet children of “laughter.” I will give you a reason of this from a Heathen man. Plato well observeth, that none can taste and judge of that sweetness which truth affords but the philosopher, because they want that organ or instrument of judgment which he useth. And that organ which he useth cannot be applied by covetousness, ambition, and lust, which are the only Jacob’s staves the many use to take the altitude of truth by: *Λόγος δὲ τούτου μάλιστα ὄργανον*, “The philosopher’s instrument is reason.” So in divine mysteries and miracles, we cannot reach the sense and meaning of them, we cannot raise ourselves to them, without a humble, pure, free, and unengaged spirit, which is the best instrument of a Christian. When our taste faileth us, and we cannot distinguish that which is sweet from that which is sour, nor relish meats as they are, it is a sure symptom and indication of some acrasia and distemper in the body; and when God’s blessings and graces are not relished, when his manna is gall, when we cannot digest his miracles, we may be sure the soul wants that temper and disposition which is *salus*, nay, *anima*, *animæ*, “not only the health, but the very soul, of the soul.” Indeed, reason might have taught these men that this was a miracle. For rude and illiterate men

to speak on a sudden all languages, was more than all the linguists in the world could teach. And I persuade myself, that from no other principle arose that question of those amazed doubters, "What meaneth this?" (Acts ii. 12.)

But, to "read the riddle, we must plough with another heifer" than reason. (Judges xiv. 18.) To dive into the sense of the miracle can proceed from no other Spirit than that whose miracle it was, even him who enlightens them that sit in darkness, and who makes the humble and docile soul the seat of his habitation, both his school and his scholar. Reason is a light, but obnoxious to damps and fogs and mists, till this great light dispel and scatter them. Julian was a man as well furnished with natural endowments as any emperor of them all; yet we see, he used it as a weapon against the truth, and wounded religion more with his scoffs than with his sword. "His comical part," saith the father, "was far worse than his tragical." When he had received his death's wound, as some have thought, by a dart from heaven, he confessed that wound came from the hand and power of Christ, and he did it in a phrase of scorn, *Vicisti, Galilee*: "The day is thine, O Galilean!" Indeed the greatest scoffers at religion have been men for the most part eminent in natural abilities, whose reason, notwithstanding, could not show them their own fluctuations, the storms and tempests of their souls, she being eclipsed with her own beams. Passions and private concerns make her not a servant but an enemy to the truth, not to give sentence for, but to plead against, it, nay, to make it ridiculous.

Some think, these mockers here were Pharisees, the great doctors, and interpreters of the law: and of them the question was asked, "Do any of the Pharisees believe in Christ?" (John vii. 48.) And the reason is most pregnant; for though the acts of the understanding be natural and not arbitrary, and though it apprehend things necessarily in those shapes in which they are represented, yet when a perverse will rejects those means which are offered, when by-respects call loud upon us to be heard, then the mist falls, and darkness is as a pavilion round about us; then the object is removed out of sight, or appears in that false shape which must needs deceive us by pleasing us, because it is that shape which we ourselves have given it. From hence it is that as it is in the deformity of the body, so it is also in that of the soul: nothing is so deformed in the one but some man loves and dotes upon it; as we read of one that did love and imitate the distortion of his friend's countenance: so nothing is so false in the other but some man hath put it into his creed; as it was noted of the philosophers, the great wizards and clerks of the world,



that there was no opinion so absurd and dissonant from reason that found not amongst them some to defend it, who would φυλάττειν τὴν θέσιν, “keep the conclusion,” and maintain it against all evidence whatsoever.

The miracle here was done before the sun and the people, yet malice could find nothing but matter of mirth in it. They did not only deny, but slight it, against evidence as clear as the day itself. Now that men bear themselves so stiff upon their opinion beyond the strength of evidence, is from the will overlaid with passions. Hence proceeds the strength of faction in all decisions, the continuance and growth of error; this is it which enlarges the curtains of its habitation, every man supplying by his will what is wanting in his evidence. Hence it is that the most plain truths meet with contradiction, that great plagues are called “peace,” that absurdities are revered, that miracles are ridiculous, that most things are unlike themselves, and appear in new shapes every day, and seldom in their own. Hence is all error, all misprision, all derision, all blasphemy. Hence evil is good, and good evil; truth falsehood, and falsehood truth; that which is not worth a thought is deified; and that which is divine is contemned. With this fire from hell were these scoffers inflamed; and whilst this fire burned, they spake with their tongues, χλευάζοντες ἔλεγον, “others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” And so we come to our last part, to examine the mock itself.

III. This was not only a scoff, but an accusation. And the orator will tell us, that there be divers reasons which make men take upon them the person of an accuser. Sometimes ambition draws the libel, sometimes hatred, sometimes hope of reward. And if we inquire what moved the scoffers here to lay this foul imputation on the apostles, Œcumenius will tell us that it was nothing else but perverseness and averseness of disposition, which commonly takes *non-causam pro causâ*, and indifferently passeth censure upon any cause, or “no cause at all.” And this is bred by opinion, and not by truth. If they understood not what the apostles spake, how could they say they were drunk? and if they did understand, why did they scoff? They were men settled in the very dregs of error and malice; and, having taken up an opinion, they would not let it go, no, not at the sight of a miracle. Could that fire be from heaven which must consume the law? Can that wind blow out of God’s treasury which scatters their ceremonies? Can those tongues be touched with a coal from the altar which prophesy against the altar? Do you wonder? At what do you wonder? It is λήρησις

ᾠάροισι, but “the gibberish of men cupshot.” When the fit is over, and their heads composed, they will be silent enough, and speak neither Greek nor Persian, but be as very idiots as before. *Perniciosissimum humano generi*, saith Augustine: “It is most dangerous both to men and manners,” *cùm veritas imperitorum populorum irrisione sordescit*, “when the truth confirmed by a miracle, or which is so open and manifest that it needs no miracle to confirm it, shall be cried down and laughed and hooted out of the world by the scorns and jests of malicious and ignorant people;” when piety itself shall be driven out of the world by a scoff; when that which may lift us up to heaven must be trodden under foot, because fools like it not. We will therefore *præscribere accusatoribus*, as the civilians speak, “put-in our exception in its right place, against these mockers.”

1. And, First, *κατὰ τὸ πιθανόν*, truth, or at least “probability, should be the rule.” And what probability, nay, what show of probability, was there that the apostles were drunk? It was their great feast; and then it was a constant custom, as Josephus relates it, for the Jews to fast till the sixth hour; and now it was but “the third hour,” about eight or nine of the clock in the morning. Besides, they were altogether in private for fear of the Jews: and, *rebus attonitis*, “in the midst of fears and terrors,” men use rather to ask advice of their reason than to drown it in liquor. Who takes the cup into his hand when his enemy is at his elbow, and ready, for aught he knows, to mingle his blood with the wine?

2. Again: others wondered: Jews, and proselytes, and Romans, (perhaps some of them who crucified Christ,) and some of all nations, confessed in plain terms that “they heard them speak every one in his own language:” (Acts ii. 6:) so that we may be sure we have a major, if not the better, part against them.

3. Lastly. It was the feast of Pentecost, too early in the year, if Chrysostom’s observation be true, for them to have new wine to fill them. But malice and ignorance run over all, regard not circumstances, forget all probabilities that may make against them. What speak we of customs? Though they used to fast till noon, yet now they may be drunk in the morning, and drown their fears in wine. If all the world give-in evidence, they laugh on; they consider not national customs, they oppose a cloud of witnesses: they invert the order of nature, and make it autumn at Whitsuntide.

But yet though there were no reason nor probability to justify their scoff, some show and some appearance there was to countenance it. The apostles, after this gift of tongues, talked much:

they were fervent and hot, "and peradventure their countenance was cheerful and of a ruddy colour," saith Gregory, "they being filled with joy, though not with wine." *Mysticum est, ut quod per ludibrium dicitur rei ipsæ conveniat*: "They made a mockery of the mystery; but there was a mystery in their very mock." The disciples were "full indeed with new wine," with the wine of the New Testament; and, as drunken men, they were merry and cheerful; they publish secrets, they fear no face, they regard no power, they regard not themselves; being free, they run into bondage; before hid in a chamber, now preaching on the house-tops; before affrighted with the voice of a silly damsel, now boldly speaking *in omni pratorio, in omni consistorio*, "before every tribunal, in every consistory," lifting up their voices before kings, and not ashamed. *Cupiunt esse quod antè despexerunt, et odisse incipiunt quod erant*: "They begin to be what they despised, and to despise what they were." Drunk indeed any Jew might think them, that chose misery before content, fasting before delights, watching before rest, dangers before safety, and poverty before the glory of the world. *Hoc spiritali mero calebant*: "This was the wine that filled them;" this was the intoxicating cup that overcame them, and transported them beyond themselves: *sic inebriabat ut magis sobrios faceret*: "It so overcame them that it made them more wise and sober than before."

Some show, some resemblance, then, these mockers had, which might help to prompt their malice, and make up a scoff. Something they observed in the apostles which they thought with the people might well pass under the name of "drunkenness;" the people, I say, which are the only paper to print a lie on, which they sell to one another for nothing. There you may imprint, or sow, or engrave as you please; they will soon learn a lie, and as soon teach it; and anon it multiplies, and every valley and obscure corner is ready to echo it back again. "Behold," saith St. James, "how great a matter a little fire kindles." (Chap. iii. 5.) And he might well call the tongue "a fire:" for we find it is like that of a beacon, which not only burneth itself, but occasioneth the firing of others, and at last sets the whole commonwealth in an uproar and combustion. At first it is but a mock, at last it cuts like a sword. At first it doth but offend the ear, at last it draws blood. At first it strikes at a ceremony, at last it beats down a church. At first it sports with the man, at last it cuts off his head.

The persecution of the apostles began, you see, in a scoff. At first they are "drunk;" anon they are "setters forth of new doctrine," "babblers," "heretics," not fit to breathe in the

world. This hath always been, and to this day is, the great error of the world,—to make shadows substances, similitudes identities, the faintest representations truth. “Hannah’s lips moved when she poured out her soul before God;” and old Eli tells her she was “drunk.” (1 Sam. i. 13, 14.) David in great joy danced before the ark, and in his wife Michal’s eyes he was but a “vain fellow.” (2 Sam. vi. 20.) What speak we of David? Behold Christ himself, a greater than David, when the multitude followed him, when he taught them, and confirmed his doctrine by miracles, *οἱ παρ’ αὐτοῦ*, “his friends,” his kinsmen, seeing him laying himself open to the malice of his enemies, “went to lay hands on him: for they said, He is besides himself.” (Mark iii. 21.) And to this day this argument *a simili* holds strong; and what is “but like,” nay, what is not like, but seems so to us, we conclude to be the very same.

Upon this ground faith was called “presumption” by the Heathen, because it is like it; Christianity is called “madness;” for when we mortify the flesh, and estrange ourselves from the world, most that behold us think us not well in our wits. At this day true devotion goes for fancy, reverence for superstition, bowing for idolatry. The Litany is “conjuring,” because it is like it;—as like it as a saint is to a murderer, as hearty and well-grounded devotion is to babbling and blasphemy and nonsense! True pastors are “Baal’s priests;” for both are men. The pulpit (as the Anabaptist called it) is “a prescript place or a tub;” for both are wood. Our fasts are “stage-plays,” wherein one acteth sin, another judgment, a third repentance, and a fourth the gospel. And the sacrament of the Lord’s supper is “a two-penny feast.” Our comfort it is, that it is not so; it is “but like” it at the most: and it is not like it neither. This likeness is not in truth, but *opus intellectus*, “a resemblance made up in the brain” of those who, all the world knows, are none of the wisest, unless it be in their generation. Sure, every gesture that will bear a resemblance is not Popery. It is not so because we have so drawn it in our fancy, because we make it so, and because we will have it so for our own ends. For thus every man may be an idolater whom we mean to strip. Our Saviour’s counsel is, “Judge not according to the appearance,” *κατ’ ὄψιν*, “according to the face and countenance of things.” (John vii. 24.) For how easy is it to paint and present them as we please! Many times an evil eye makes an evil face, puts horror upon religion itself, and, where devotion shines out in the full beauty of holiness, draws a Pope or a devil. As “charity covers a multitude of sins,” (James v. 20,) so doth malice cover

a multitude of virtues with the black mantle of vice: she covers devotion with frenzy, honesty with folly, and reverence with superstition: and that only is seen which may at once offend and delight the mocker. O what a scandal is a college or a church! What an abomination are holy things when they are sought for as a prey!

But commonly scoffers have ill luck: for though they would hide themselves in noise and formality, yet are they seen well enough in their furious march to the honours and wealth of this world, and can bring but slender evidence to confirm what they say. Though they lift up their voice, and speak never so loud, "They are drunk! This is superstition! These are idolaters!" when this is spoken, they have no more to say; and they need not say more. For if they be backed with power, though reason and argument forsake them, you shall be forced to take them at their word. *Quàm sapiens argumentatrix videtur sibi ignorantia humana!*\* Good God! what subtle disputers do ignorance and malice account themselves, (for these are "disputers of this world,") where fancy goes for reason, humour for the Spirit, and a scoff for an impregnable argument; where we see *ridicula potius quàm firma tela*, "weapons to be laughed at rather than to be feared," rather bulrushes than spears; syllogisms truly destructive, which may ruin us indeed, but can never convince us; may shake our estates and lives, but not our faith. "These are drunk!" "This is superstition." What should we say? Even "lay our hand upon our mouth," with Job, "and proceed no further." (Job xl. 4, 5.)

We see here St. Peter takes no great pains to avoid these scoffers; he useth no convincing demonstrative argument, but only *a probabili*. He tells them it was not probable they should be drunk so soon, at such a feast, "at the third hour of the day." The philosopher will tell us, *Non est disputandum cum quovis*, "Every man is not to be disputed with." For that which should free some from error, confirms them in it: "nothing will be restrained," not any thing will be cut off from them, "which they imagine to do." When you undertake pertinacy, you do but beat the air. Nazianzen observes, that Christ himself did not give an answer to every question. We will then answer the scoffers of these times as St. Peter did these here, with a *non probabile*: "It is not probable" that a reverent gesture or some few ceremonies should reconcile *him* to Rome *whose* doctrine is orthodox, that a knee make *him* superstitious *who* is devout in his heart. It is more probable that it is reverence rather than

\* "What an astute reasoner does human ignorance appear in its own eyes!"—EDIT.

superstition, devotion rather than idolatry: or if it were not apparently probable, yet, where no evidence is brought to the contrary, there true Christian charity, which is no scoffer, we may be sure is very active to make and frame such probabilities. *Sperat omnia, credit omnia*, saith the apostle: If she be not certain for the best, she will not be certain and positive for the worst: if she be not certain, yet she will "hope and believe" that all things are well. (1 Cor. xiii. 7.) Nor will she cry "Superstition" at the sight of reverence, nor "Idolatry" at the mention of an altar. Charity, that "never fails," will never fall at the bowing of a knee; nor will ever conclude so absurdly, "These men fall down and worship, therefore they are idolatrous;" no more than thus, "These men are full of new wine," when at that time there was none to fill them.

To conclude, then: These scoffers are dead, and Lucian is dead, and Julian is dead, and are gone to their place; yet the Spirit breathes still, and the church of Christ stands firm upon the same foundation. The blessed Spirit, though he be "grieved," yet cannot be destroyed; though he be "quenched," yet it is but in scoffers. *Magna vis veri; impelli potest, extinguui non potest*: "Great is the truth, and at last it prevaleth; you may oppress it, you cannot extinguish it." All the power and rage and malice of bloody hypocrites can never so chase it away but it will find some humble and devout hearts to dwell and rest in. As fire cast into the water is straightway put out, saith Tully; so scoffs and detraction and wilful and malicious misinterpretations soon vanish into nothing. *Crepitant, et solvuntur*: "These hailstones rattle for a while on the house-top, and make a noise, and are then dissolved into air." Suppose "a man of fire," *ἄνθρωπον πυρίνον*, (it is St. Chrysostom's resemblance,) should fall into a field of stubble, of flax or straw: he can receive no hurt, but must needs show his force and activity, and consume whatsoever is combustible before him. Shall flax or straw stand up against fire? This man of fire cannot suffer by such thin materials, which are as fuel to nourish and uphold him. What can they do? If they venture, they destroy themselves. Beloved, every apostle of Christ, every true Christian, is *ἄνθρωπος πυρίνος*, "a man of fire." Scoffs are but straw, detraction but as flax, which, coming too near him, can consume themselves, or, as thorns, crackle awhile and make a noise in this fire, and no more. And when the day of lustration shall come, when that day shall come which is *spectaculum*, as Tertullian calls it, "the great spectacle of the world," when all things shall be *γυμνά καὶ τετραχλισμένα*, "naked and anatom-

ized, as a beast cut down the back," then all thoughts shall be discovered, all veils removed, all visors plucked off. Then spiritual joy shall not be madness, the breathings of the Spirit shall not be the ebullitions of men distempered with wine, nor true honesty folly, nor reverence superstition. Then φιλοσοφμανία, as Plato calls it, or rather this πνευματομανία, "this unusual behaviour of wise and spiritual men," which is so dissonant to the ways of those who are deeply immersed and drenched in the world, and which by them is in esteem as madness or drunkenness, shall receive the reward of soberness and truth. O how happy were it for these mockers if they were thus distempered, thus superstitious! if they took this cup of the Lord, and did "add drunkenness to thirst," and even fill and glut themselves with it! They cannot be too reverent, too spiritual, too absurd and ridiculous to the world and worldly men. He that seems wise to these, must needs be near of kin to a fool; and he whom they admire, must be ridiculous. *Aliud est judicium Christi, aliud anguli susurronum.*\* Whom the world laughs at, Christ will honour; whom they make their slaves, with Christ [they] are kings; and whom they scorn, he will crown. And then these scoffers shall be had in derision; and they who are "filled with the Spirit" shall for ever "drink of the river of his pleasures;" (Psalm xxxvi. 8;) and shall "sit down with him at his table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob," and these apostles here, (Luke xxii. 30; Matt. viii. 11,) and drink that "new wine" with him, καινὸν, νοητὸν, that "spiritual" immortal joy, "in the kingdom of his Father," (Matt. xxvi. 29,) in the presence of God, where "there are pleasures for evermore." (Psalm xvi. 11.) To which [may] he bring us who sent his Spirit down upon us, Jesus Christ the righteous.

\* St. Jerome says, "The judgment of the Son of God, and that of whisperers at the corners of streets, are very different."—EDIT.

## SERMON LXVI.

## A CERTAIN WOMAN'S COMMENDATION OF CHRIST.

*And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.—Luke xi. 27, 28.*

## PART I.

WE cannot say more of our Saviour in the days of his flesh than this, "He went about doing good." (Acts x. 38.) "He was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame," and health to the sick. (Job xxix. 15.) And as he cured men's bodies of diseases, so he purged their souls from sin. As he went, his steps dropped fatness. Scarce proceeded there a word from his blessed lips that breathed not forth comfort. In this chapter he "cast out a devil which was dumb, and the people wondered." (Luke xi. 14.) But such is the rancour and venom of envy and malice that no virtue, no miracle, no demonstration of power can castigate or abate it. What is virtue to a Jew, or what is a miracle to a Pharisee? "When the devil was gone out," saith the text, "the dumb spake;" a work not to be wrought but by the finger of God. But if a Pharisee look upon it, it must change its name, and be said to be done by the claw of the devil: for some of them said, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils. Others tempting him, sought from him a sign from heaven;" (verses 15, 16;) as if this were not such a one, but rather proceeded from the pit of hell and from the power of darkness. It is the character of an evil and envious eye to look outward, *extrà mittendo*, not to receive the true species and forms of things, but "to send out" some noxious spirits from itself, which discolour and deface the object. Hence envious men are thought, as St. Basil saith, δι' ὀφθαλμῶν μόνων τὴν βλάβην ἐπιβάλλειν, "to infect every thing they look upon, and, like the basilisk, to kill with a very look." What do they cast their eye upon that they do not poison and corrupt? Is it temperance? They call it "stupidity." Is it justice? They call it "cruelty." Is it wisdom? They call it "craft." Is it honesty? They call it "folly, and want of foresight." Is it a miracle? They call it magic and sorcery, and a work of Beelzebub." "Wherefore," saith the father, "was our Saviour made a mark for every venomous dart? Wherefore was he so sorely laid-at by the Jews, by the scribes and Pharisees?" Διὰ



τὰ θαύματα. "For nothing else but his wondrous works." And what were they? His curing of the sick, feeding of the hungry, restoring of the dead to life, casting out of devils.

And therefore as he confirmed his doctrine by miracles, so malice putteth him to another task,—to make good his miracles by reason and argument. And this he doth, 1. *Argumento ducente ad absurdum*, "by an argument which" will either bind them to silence, or "drive them upon the face of an open absurdity." For what an absurd thing were it for Satan to drive out himself! And, 2. *Argumento ducente ad impossibile* :\* for if Satan be divided against himself, it is impossible his kingdom should stand. *Proficit semper contradictio stultorum ad stultitiæ demonstrationem*, saith Hilary: "The contradiction of sinners and fools striveth and struggleth to gain ground, and to over-run the truth; but the greatest proficiency folly maketh is but to make herself more open and manifest;" like Candaules's wife, who was seen naked of all but herself. But truth is as unmovable as a rock, which (as the father speaketh of the church) *tunc vincit cùm læditur, tunc intelligitur cùm arguitur, tunc obtinet cùm deseritur*, "then conquereth when it receiveth a foil, is then understood when it is opposed, and is then safe when it is forsaken." Let the Jews "rage," and the Pharisees "imagine a vain thing," let envy cast a mist, and let malice smoke like a furnace, yet Christ's miracles shall be as clear as the day wherein they were wrought, and "the mouth of iniquity shall be stopped." Out of his own mouth shall the Pharisee be convinced, and Christ shall be as powerful in his words as in his works, so powerful in both that even *e turbâ*, "out of that multitude" which did oppose him one witness or other shall rise to bear testimony to the truth, to point out to the finger of God by which this miracle was wrought, to magnify and bless not only our Saviour, but even the very "womb that bare him, and the paps that he had sucked." For "it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed," &c.

My text divideth itself between the woman and Christ. First, the woman taketh occasion from what she had heard and seen to magnify Christ: then Christ taketh occasion from her speech to instruct her, and set her at rights. She calleth Christ's mother "blessed;" he showeth her a more excellent way, by which she may come to be as blessed as his mother. She talketh of blessedness; he telleth her what it is. He condemneth not her affection, but directeth and levelleth it to the right object; and (as the Pythagoreans' method of teaching was) he indulgeth

\* "By an argument conducting to an impossibility."—EDIT.

something, that he may gain the more. Be it so: "Blessed is the womb that bare *me*, and the paps that gave *me* suck:" *Quinimo*, "But much rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." To be my mother is but a temporal privilege; but to hear and keep my word is eternal happiness. He taketh not away the first, but he doth "establish the second."

Briefly, then, we may observe these two parts: I. The woman's attestation: II. Christ's reply; the woman's *dictor*,\* and Christ's. In the First, "Wisdom is justified of one of her children" against all the gainsayings of the Jews and "contradiction of sinners;" in the Second, Wisdom herself pointeth out to true happiness, openeth her treasuries to all who will receive her instructions, and proclaimeth an everlasting jubilee to those "who hear the word of God, and keep it."

In the handling of the former part we shall pass by these steps: First: We will point out the occasion of the speech: "As he spake these things, it came to pass." Next: We will take notice of the person who took hold of the occasion, and made so good use both of Christ's miracles and doctrine. We find no name at all; but some, upon no ground, conjecture that it was Martha's maid. The text saith no more but, *τις γυνή ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου*, "a certain woman of the company," but "one of a multitude," and that an unknown, obscure woman, not those learned clerks the scribes and Pharisees. Thirdly. We shall propose to your Christian imitation the vehemency and heat of her affection. "Her heart was hot within her, and the fire burned," and at last it burst forth into a pure flame, and "she spake with her tongue." (Psalm xxxix. 3.) She did not conceal and suppress her thoughts, nor whisper them into the ear of a stranger, but "lifted up her voice," that the deadliest enemies of Christ, even the Pharisees, might hear. Lastly. We will weigh and consider the speech itself: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked;" and tender it to you, as near as we can, in its full weight. And all these particulars will amount to this sum,—That a poor silly woman saw more of the excellency of Christ than did all the doctors and masters of Israel. These materials our first part affordeth us to work upon.

Now as the woman from what she had heard and seen took occasion to magnify Christ, so from her affection and free testimony Christ taketh occasion further to instruct her. "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," saith the woman. "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it," saith

\* This word, in both the folio editions, is *dictor*; and in page 165, at the close of this sermon, it is *diction*; both being printed in Italics, and both obvious misprints.—EDIT.

Christ : which maketh our second part. Wherein we shall consider, 1. The form : 2. The matter and substance of the words. For the form, some would have the words adversative ; others, merely affirmative. Some place them in opposition to the woman's affection : others, too jealous of that honour which is given to the blessed mother of Christ, make them a plain and naked affirmation, willing rather that Christ's words should want of their weight than that one jot or tittle of the woman's honour should fall to the ground. I will not be too solicitous to take-up the quarrel between them : nor indeed is it worth the while. The very first words, "Yea, rather," make it plain that the woman's "Blessed" was defective and wanted weight ; and therefore Christ, who is the Wisdom of the Father, filleth it up. He doth not (which is the best kind of redargution) with any bitterness deny what she saith, but by a gentle corrective setteth her at rights. She commendeth and magnifieth a *corporal*—he preferreth a *spiritual*—birth. For as there is *fructus ventris*, "the fruit of the womb," so is there *partus mentis*, "a conception and birth of the mind." We conceive Christ by our "hearing the word:" but when we "keep it," Christ is fully formed in us, and we "bring forth fruit meet for repentance." (Matt. iii. 8.) The woman, then, commendeth one birth, and Christ enjoineth another ; and, as Socrates taught his scholars, so our Saviour leadeth the woman, ἀφ' ὁμοίων ἐπ' ὁμοια, "from like to like," from the admiration of a temporal to the knowledge of the spiritual birth, from one blessedness to another. And thus the matter and substance of Christ's words affordeth us these three things : 1. *Conceptum*, a kind of "conception," by hearing of the word. 2. *Partum*, a kind of "birth or bringing-forth," by keeping it. 3. *Gaudium*, "joy after the delivery," not temporal, but spiritual, even that blessedness which every good Christian is as capable of as the mother of Christ, and which is laid up not only for her who bare him in her womb, but also for all those who keep him in their heart. "Yea, rather," saith Christ, "blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

These be the parts of my text ; and of these in order.

I. "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," &c., saith the woman.

1. And that which occasioned and moved her thus to lift up her voice was the power of Christ's works and words. When she saw him mighty in both ; when she saw the wonders that he wrought, and how mightily he convinced the scribes and Pharisees ; when he had confirmed his doctrine by miracles, and his miracles by reason ; she plainly discovered the finger by which they were wrought, and without any further deliberation she

pronounceth him a most divine and excellent person. To cure diseases with a word or with a touch, to cast out devils, to raise the dead, could not proceed from any other power than his who "doeth whatsoever he will both in heaven and in earth." (Psalm cxxxv. 6.) And to this end it hath pleased God to give testimony to his truth as it were by a voice from heaven, that we might believe and acknowledge that truth for the confirmation whereof such things were wrought before the sun and the people as none but God can do. For what our Saviour speaketh of that "voice from heaven" which was as "thunder," is most true of this outward testimony: "This voice from heaven cometh not because of him, but for our sakes," (John xii. 28, 30,) who are *βραδείς τῇ καρδίᾳ*, "slow of heart to believe," (Luke xxiv. 25,) and will not be induced to subscribe to the truth unless we see it written with the sunbeams, unless it be made plain and manifest by "signs and wonders." (John iv. 48.)

And such a plain and clear testimony the Jew had need of. For all changes, especially of religion, are with difficulty; it being proper to men to be jealous of every breath, as of an enemy, if it blow in opposition to aught they have already received; and, though it be the truth, to suspect it, because it breatheth from a contrary coast. And therefore he that will remove the mind from that which it hath once laid hold on, and wherein it is already settled, must bring with him more than ordinary motives and inducements, even such as may work a kind of conquest upon the understanding. Now the end of Christ's coming was to make such a change, to alter what long before had been established by God himself, to rend the veil of the temple in twain, to abolish the law of ceremonies which God by the hand of Moses had given, *vetera concutere*,\* to sound the trumpet, and with it to shake the walls of Jerusalem, to disannul the law, and to establish the gospel; *magni opus moliminis*, "an enterprise of great difficulty," and therefore to be wrought with might and main, by wonders and great signs. As the law was promulged with thunder and lightning, so must the gospel also by a voice from heaven, even by great miracles, which are the dialect and language of power, and are from heaven, heavenly. For in every miracle there are two things, as Aquinas saith, *Quod fit*, and *Propter quod fit*; 1. "The thing done;" which must exceed the power of nature and that order which God hath settled and established in the world: and, 2. "The end for which it is done;" which is always supernatural, for confirmation of some necessary truth.

\* "Violently to shake ancient institutions."—EDIT.

Indeed if we consider the omnipotency of the agent, properly there is no miracle at all; it being as easy for the Creator of all things to alter the course of nature as at first to establish it; to bid the sun stand still, as to command it to run its race; to put out the stars, as to light them in their spheres; to give sight to the blind, as at first to give them eyes; to unloose the tongue, as to make it. *Deus ita magnus est in operibus magnis, ut minor non sit in minimis*, saith St. Augustine: "God is so great in his greatest works, that he is no whit less in his least," as great in the making of a fly as of an angel. The divine hand is always like itself, even in the production of those things which are most unlike: but to us some works are wonderful, *quia inordinatè veniunt*, "because they transcend the common course and order of things." And it hath pleased God in his divine goodness to be *πολύφωτος καὶ πολύτροπος εἰς τὴν σωτηρίαν*, "for our sakes and for our salvation to be various and manifold in the expression of his power;" and when we cannot behold him, as we should, in those obvious and plain but wonderful characters engraven in the book of nature, to present us with those which the hand of nature cannot draw. He openeth the eyes of the blind, that we, who sat in darkness, may see the true light; he multiplieth the loaves, that we may hunger after righteousness; he maketh the dumb to speak, that we may sing his praises; he casteth out the devil, that we may acknowledge him to be God.

*Quot miracula, tot documenta*: "Every miracle was a lesson; not only for show, but for instruction," and to work in us the obedience of faith. For though God alone be the author of our faith, yet he worketh it in us by this means. By his wonders, as by a kind of irradiation from himself, he illuminateth the understanding, and maketh the will pliable, so that we readily embrace the truth, which before we were afraid of. He who having been born blind received his sight, "wondered" that the Pharisees should "not know whence he was who had opened his eyes," and thought their blindness almost as great a miracle as his recovery. (John ix. 30.) By this light, and by the gracious and wonderful speeches which flowed from him, the woman here in the text saw those excellences that were in Christ, and discovered him to be no common and ordinary person: she made a right use of the light whilst it shone in its brightness. As Christ did and spake these things, "it came to pass," saith the text. Her free acknowledgment did as it were keep time with the miracle: for no sooner had Christ ended his speech but she "lifted up her voice."

Now, as the apostle saith of Abel, this woman "being dead

yet speaketh." (Heb. xi. 4.) She bespeaketh us, to have Christ's wondrous works in remembrance, to lay hold on all occasions which may either beget or confirm our faith, *et, dum ventus operam dat, vela explicare*, "whilst the wind bloweth, whilst the Spirit breatheth, to unfold our sails," that we may be carried on in a straight and even course to the knowledge and practice of the truth which will make us happy. This is indeed to make the right use of God's works and words, and to drive them to the right end. *Unumquodque propter suam operationem*, saith the philosopher: "Every thing is and hath its being for its proper operation," for the work it hath to do. If miracles work no alteration in us, they are no miracles to us. If God's words prevail not, we nullify them: by our infidelity and disobedience, as much as in us lieth, we make the works and words of God of none effect, and shorten the arm and weaken the hand of the Almighty. What were all the beauty in the world, if there were no eye to descry it? What are all the riches of the gospel without faith? What were the greatest miracle, if all the world were Pharisees? *Non videt, qui non credit, miracula*, saith St. Augustine: "To him that believeth not, miracles have lost their force, and are not wonderful."

But ye will say perhaps, that miracles are now ceased: "We see no sign, we behold no wonder; no blind receive their sight; no dumb spirits are cast out in our streets." It is true; nor is it necessary there should; not so necessary, now the church hath "stretched forth the curtains of her habitation," (Isai. liv. 2,) as when she scarce had a being. That watering is not requisite now she "is grown and become a tree" that was when she was "like a grain of mustard-seed." (Matt. xiii. 31, 32.) Of the miracles of these times we may say what Livy saith of the prodigies of his: *Quò magis credebant simplices et religiosi homines, eò plura nuntiantur*:\* The forward credulity of simple and devout souls hath much increased their number. The legend had not been so full, had men been slower of belief, and not so ready to credit what every impostor hath been active to invent: But yet though miracles are ceased, and we see no more signs, though Christ cast not out devils, nor raise the dead, yet still "he speaketh these things," and still he teacheth us: and we may say, we see him curing diseases, giving sight to the blind, ears to the deaf, feet to the lame, a tongue to the dumb, casting out devils, and raising the dead, because "his word endureth for

*Hist. lib. xxiv. cap. 10.* "This year many prodigies were talked of; and, as simple superstitious people grew more apt to credit them, there were daily more and more reported."—PHIL. HOLLAND'S Translation, 1686.

ever," and, as St. Peter saith, is *firmior sermo*,\* and the surest testimony we can have. (2 Peter i. 19.) And if we will not believe his word, neither would we believe though we saw him now raising up one from the dead. Further, I may say with St. Gregory, *Quod corporaliter tunc faciebat Christus, illud sancta ecclesia spiritualiter quotidie facit*: "What Christ did in person then, he doth every day now spiritually by the church." When by our ministry the covetous is brought to stretch forth his hand to help the poor, then Christ hath recovered a dry hand; when the ignorant learn his statutes, he giveth sight to the blind; when we open our lips, which fear had sealed up, so that we dare "speak of him before tyrants and not be ashamed," then he hath cast out a spirit which was dumb.

But I rather keep me to the words of the text: "As he spake these things." Doth he not still speak the same things? "Jesus Christ is yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.) *Nec refert*, saith the father, *per quem, sed quid, et a quo*: "It is not material whose tongue is made use of, so it be Christ that speaketh these things." And how often doth he speak these things! But where is the *Factum est*? That which "cometh to pass" is scarcely discernible. *Auditus, laudatis*: "Ye hear him speak, and perhaps ye commend him." *Deo gratias*: "God be thanked for that yet." But when this is done, nothing "cometh to pass." *Semen accipitis, verba redditis*: "Ye receive the seed of the word, and all the harvest we see is but weeds." We see it not in the extension of your hands, in the largeness of your alms: in the lifting up of your hands, in your devotion at prayers; we see it not in your reverence, meekness, and patience. "Well," saith the father, *Toleramus illa, et tremimus inter illa*, "We suffer it, and tremble at it." Your words are but leaves: it is fruit and increase that we require. Be not deceived: Every good lesson should be unto you as a miracle to move you to give sentence for Christ against the Pharisees and all the enemies he hath; against the pride that despiseth him, the luxury that defileth him, the disobedience that trampleth him under foot. Every good motion (for therein Christ speaketh to us) should beget a resolution; every resolution, a good work; every good work, a love of goodness; and the love of goodness should root and stablish and build us in the faith. In a word: Every *Dixit* of Christ's should be answered with a *Factum est* from us; "every work, every word" of his should be a sufficient motive and a fair occasion to us to magnify the power of the Speaker in our souls, and in our bodies, and

\* "A more sure word."—EDIT.

with this woman here, in the very face of the enemy, in the midst of all the noise detraction can make, to lift up our voice, and give testimony unto Christ, who is so powerful both in word and deed.

2. And so I pass from the motive and occasion to the person, who from what she saw and heard gave this free attestation.

“A certain woman of the company.” Here are two circumstances that may seem to weaken and infringe the testimony, and take from the credit of the miracle: (1.) That she was “a woman;” and, (2.) That she was but “one of the multitude.”

(1.) St. Gregory will tell us, *Mulier tam pro infirmitate ponitur quàm pro sexu*, that “this word *woman* in scripture sometimes noteth the sex, and sometimes signifieth infirmity.” And in the ancient comedians, *Mulier es*, is a term of reproach. For as the Schoolman hath observed, *Feminarum aviditas pertinacior in affectu, fragilior in cognitione*; “The affections of women commonly outrun their understanding, and they are then most in flame when they have least light.”

(2.) Again: This circumstance, that she was but “one of the multitude,” might have been laid hold on by the Pharisees as an argument against Christ. Might they not have reviled her as they did the man who was born blind and received his sight, and said unto her, “Thou art but one, ‘and dost thou teach us?’” (John ix. 34.) But such is the nature of truth that it can receive no prejudice, but will prevail against all contradiction, though it have but one witness, and find no better champion than a woman. *Suis illa contenta est viribus, nec spoliatur vi sua, etiamsi nullum habeat vindicem*, saith Arnobius: “She resteth upon her own basis, and is content with her own strength, which she cannot lose, though she find no undertaker.”

Truth doth not fail, though a Pharisee oppose it, but is of strength sufficient to make the weakest of its champions conqueror. For “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (1 Cor. i. 25.) Neither number nor sex hath so much power upon truth as to alter its complexion. Whether they be many or few, weak or strong, that profess it, truth is still the same, *μόνотροπος*, “of one and the same hue and colour.” As it was said of Gad, “A troop may overcome it,” may silence and suppress it for a while; “but it shall overcome at the last.” (Gen. xlix. 19.) Yet a conceit hath possessed the world, that there is a kind of virtue or magic in number, and the truth breatheth only in those quarters where there are most voices to proclaim it. And many are so bewitched that they think it a gross absurdity for one man in the defence of truth to stand up against a multitude; and they will make



this advocate, because he is but one, an argument against the truth. What would these men have thought of Christ, had they seen him among the Pharisees, or heard the shout of the people crying aloud, "Not this man, but Barabbas?" (John xviii. 40.) Indeed neither the paucity nor the number of professors is an argument to demonstrate the truth: these pillars do not support her. We have rather great reason to suspect the doctrine that is cried up by the voice and hum of the multitude.

I have much wondered that they who talk so much of the church, have made this a note and mark whereby we may know it. For experience hath sufficiently taught us that, were it to be put to the vote of the multitude, we should scarce have any face of a church at all. It never went so well with the world that the most should be best: therefore St. Jerome is peremptory, that multitudes of associates demonstrate rather a heretic than a Catholic. We may be then well content to hear the Church of Rome boast and triumph, that she hath enlarged her dwelling, and spread herself from one end of the world unto the other; and to lay it as an imputation upon us, that our number is so small that we scarce are visible,

————— *sed illos*

*Defendit numerus, junctæque umbone phalanges.*—JUVEN. Sat. ii. 45.\*

The whole world is theirs, *præter Italiam et Hispaniam totam*: "all Italy and all Spain is theirs." And besides these, and many other kingdoms which the cardinal reckoneth up, they may take-in the New World for advantage: a happiness which we heretics cannot hope for! *Non enim debet nunc incipere ecclesia crescere, cum jam senuerit*, saith he: "For the church cannot increase now she is old and hide-bound and past growth." Who would ever have thought that so sick and loathsome meditations should have dropped from so learned a pen? Might not the ancient heretics have taken-up the same plea when the whole world, as St. Jerome speaketh, was become Arian? And himself confesseth that if one province alone hold the true faith, that one province may be truly stiled "catholic." Some reason perhaps they may have to rely upon number, because indeed they have neither reason nor authority to uphold the state and supremacy of their church. Therefore, having no better forces, they make use of this their forlorn hope; like men who, having a bad cause, care not what aid they take-in. The orator said well of the three hundred Spartans now doubting to go up

\* "Though number to their sect protection yield  
A phalanx firm of shield lock'd-in with shield."

BADHAM'S Translation altered.

against the numerous army of Xerxes, *Lacones se numerant, non æstimant*, "that the Spartans did number, not esteem, themselves:" and it might be justly said of us, if this mormo should affright us, if we should distrust our cause because there be so many that oppose it. What, though a troop cometh? Yet, if the truth be on our side, one of us shall be able to chase ten thousand. "Be not afraid of the words which ye have heard," as the prophet said to Hezekiah. (Isai. xxxvii. 6.) Be not afraid of their number, nor ashamed of the truth when her retinue is but small. "The multitude may perish that are born in vain," as the Lord said to Esdras. And we say of it as Tertullian doth of the unveiling of virgins: *Id negat quod ostendit*: multitude is so far from being a note of the church that "it doth rather deny than demonstrate it."\* For, see, amongst so many men in comparison, but few there are who profess the name of Christ; amongst so many professors, but few orthodox; amongst so many orthodox, but few righteous persons; "amongst the multitude," but "one woman that lifteth up her voice" in the behalf of Christ.

And as it was no prejudice to the truth that she was but *one*, no more was it that she was a *woman*. For why might not a woman, whose eye was clear and single, see more in Christ than the proudest Pharisee who wore his phylactery the broadest? All is, not in the miracle, but in the eye, in the mind, which, being goggle or mis-set, or dimmed with malice or prejudice, beholdeth not things as they are, but, through false mediums, putteth upon them what shape it pleaseth, receiveth not the true and natural species they present, but vieweth them at home in itself as in a false glass, which returneth back by a deceitful reflection. And this is the reason why not only miracles, but doctrinal precepts also, find so different entertainment. Every man layeth hold on them and wresteth them to his own purpose, worketh them on his own anvil, and shapeth them to his own fancy and affections; as out of the same mass Phidias could make a goddess, and Lysippus a satyr.

Do ye wonder to hear a woman bless "the womb that bare Christ," and the Pharisees blaspheme him? It is no wonder at all. For, though the acts of the understanding depend not on the will, and the mind of man necessarily apprehendeth things in those shapes in which they present themselves; yet when the will rejecteth those means that are offered, when anger raiseth a storm, and malice and prejudice cast up a mist, then the understanding groweth dim, and receiveth not the natural shapes

\* *De Virg. veland. cap. ii.*

of things, but those false appearances which the affections tender to it. When the will is perverse, *non permittit intellectum diu stare in dictamine recto*, saith Scotus: "The understanding followeth her planetary motion, and, having no better guide, runneth into the very den of error." Therefore the complaint in scripture is, "They will not understand." Experience will teach us how common a thing it is in the world, for men to stand stiff in their opinions against all evidence whatsoever, though it be as clear as the day. St. Augustine observeth of the Manichees, *Scio esse quosdam qui quanquam bono ingenio ista videant, malâ tamen voluntate quâ ipsum quoque ingenium sunt amissuri, pertinaciter negant* :\* "I know," saith he, "many of you who have sharp and quick understanding, and cannot but see the truth; but your will is evil, which betrayeth the understanding, and leadeth you to that pertinacy that will never consent to the truth," but seeketh out rather what probably may be said against it. And this very reason Arnobius giveth of the Heathen's obstinacies: *Quid facere possumus considerare nolentibus*, &c., saith he: "What can we do or say, or how can we convince them who will not be induced once to deliberate, and weigh things as they are, nor condescend to speak and confer with themselves and with their own reason?"

This I take to be the meaning of that in Hilary, *Quot voluntates, tot fides*; every man frameth his belief by his disposition and his will. "So many wills, so many faiths." He might as well have said, "There be as many creeds as passions." For the passions are *subversivæ rationis*, apt and ready to captivate the will and "to overthrow the reason," even when she standeth most erect against error, and looketh most steadfastly on the truth. While reason hath the command, they are profitable servants; but when she yieldeth, they are cruel tyrants, and put out her eyes. It is wonderful to see what a power they have in changing the face and countenance of objects. Fear maketh a shadow a man, and a man a hobgoblin; anger mistaketh a friend for an enemy; love of the world putteth horror upon virtue; and obstinate malice can see nothing but the devil's face in a miracle. Common reason no doubt did persuade the Pharisees here, that Christ had wrought a miracle; and we cannot but think that they saw as much of the beauty of Christ's excellences as the woman. But their gross conceit of the Messiah, and their love of Moses's law, made them find no room to entertain him who came in a posture so contrary to their expectation; no, though even "in the midst of them God approved him by

\* *Liber De Moribus Manich.*

miracles, wonders, and signs, as they themselves knew." (Acts ii. 22.) It was their knowledge that kept them ignorant, and their wisdom made them fools. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise," saith St. Paul. (1 Cor. i. 26, 27.) Not that God did reject and cast men off because they were wise, or mighty, or noble; and choose others only for this cause,—because they were poor. We must not think so, saith Œcumenius. No:

*Tros Tyriusve fuat, nullo discrimine habetur.*—VIRG. *Æneis*, lib. i. 577.\*

Wise or ignorant, mighty or mean, noble or ignoble, all are one to God, neither is there with him any respect of persons. But "the poor received the gospel;" and the rich and mighty and wise did not, because it brought with it a check to their wisdom, cast disgrace on their riches and a slur on their nobility, with which they were so filled that there was no room for Christ. *Nec enim vult æterna Sapientia haberi, nisi ubi habens nihil de suo tenuit, ut illam haberet*: "The eternal Wisdom of God will keep residence in that soul only which emptieth itself to receive it." Nor can we purchase "the pearl," a clear sight of Christ, but we must "sell all that we have," (Matt. xiii. 46,) our wisdom, our riches, our nobility, our self-love, and our corrupt affections.

It is not riches nor wisdom that invites Christ. It is not simplicity nor poverty that excludes him. Humility and self-denial usher him in; and enter he will, if we make him room. He will manifest himself, you see, to a poor silly woman, and the quick-sighted Pharisee shall not see him. And the reason was, because she was meek and humble, did not so dote on what she had already learnt as to be unwilling to learn any more, but brought a mind well-prepared to receive instruction. The Pharisees, on the contrary, were so possessed and blinded with prejudice that they saw not the virtue in Christ which was manifest to this woman. It was prejudice that shut the door against the truth, and that would by no means admit of those works which came-in to bear witness to it. Certainly, a most dangerous disease this. It maketh a man angry with his physician, and to count his physic poison; it maketh him loath to acknowledge, yea, even to hear, that evidence which may convince him.

This malady is very common in the world: yea, the church is not purged from it to this day. For though we have no Pharisees, yet we have such, *qui quicquid dicunt, legem Dei putant*,

\* "My city shall be yours: unrig your fleet:

Troy shall with Tyre my equal favour meet."—SYMMONS'S Translation.

“who call their very errors ‘the law of God,’ and ‘dictates of the Spirit;’” who cannot endure the least show of opposition, but, like wanton lovers, stick closest to their beloved error when it is exploded. Some lessons they so abhor that they cannot endure so much as the name and mention of them: and is it probable *they* will ever come so near as to woo and buy the truth *who* are afraid of her very shadow? We complain many times of the weakness of our capacities, of the abstruseness of the teacher, and of the obscurity of the scripture; and this we think a sufficient apology for our ignorance: but none of these, nor all of these, will make up a just excuse. The truth is, we will not hear the truth; and the reason why we are no better scholars is, because we will not learn. If it were not so, why should any truth displease us? why in any dress? why should we take it upon the point of a knife so tenderly, as if we were afraid it would hurt us? *Quid dimidiamus veritatem?* “Why do we take it down by halves?” It is an easy matter to observe how men’s countenances and behaviour, yea, and their affections, alter, in hearing of that doctrine which suiteth with their humour, and that which seemeth to be levelled against some fond opinion of theirs long resolved upon. Their stomach riseth straight against this; but the other is sweet in their mouths, and they devour the whole roll, though in itself it be as bitter as gall. Do we preach Christian liberty? Ye kiss our lips.—But do we bound it with charity to our neighbour, and obedience to government? That note ye think is harsh and tuned too near the ruggedness of the times.—Do we build up to the saints of God an assurance of salvation? Ye are in heaven already.—But do we tell you, that this assurance cannot be had at pleasure, but must be “wrought out with fear and trembling?” (Phil. ii. 12.) Do we tell you that *that* which ye call “assurance” may be not security but stupefaction? Do we beseech you not to deceive yourselves? Behold, we are not the same men, but “setters-out of new doctrine?” and *verso pollice vulgi*,\* “with the turning of your finger,” we are in the dust, and stabbed with a censure. He who clothed not truth to others’ phantasy, he who presenteth more of truth than can be easily digested, shall be shut out of doors *cum veritate sua*, “naked and destitute, and shall have none but truth to keep him company.” Though he speak these things, even the same truth that Christ did, the Pharisees will cry him down; and well it is if one woman, some one witness of the multitude, bless his lips that speaketh it.

\* JUVENALIS *Satir.* iii. 36. ——— “At the will  
Of the base rabble, raise the sign—to kill.”—GIFFORD’S Translation.

Prejudice will make a man persuade himself *that* is false *which* he cannot but know is most true. That which to a clear eye is a gross sin, and appeareth horror, to a corrupted mind may be as the beauty of holiness. For, where covetousness and self-love have taken up the heart, and conceived, and brought forth prejudice, it is an easy matter for a man to dispute himself into sin and infidelity. For the fancy hath a creating power to make what she pleaseth or what she list, to put new forms and shapes upon objects, to make gods of clay, to make that delightful which in itself is grievous, that desirable which is loathsome, that fair and beautiful which is full of horror, to set up a golden calf, and say it is a god. And many times *habeantur phantasmata pro cognitione*, these shadows and apparitions are taken for substances, "these airy phantasms for well-grounded conclusions;" and the mind of man doth so apply itself unto them, that what is but in the fancy is supposed to be seen by the eye of the understanding. And thus many times we place our hatred on that which we should love, and our love upon that which we cannot hate enough; we fear that which we should hope for, and hope for that which we should fear; we are angry with a friend, and kiss an enemy. Thus one man trembleth at that which another embraceth; one man calleth that "sacrilege" which another calleth "zeal;" one man looks upon it as striking at God himself, another as pleading his cause; one man calls it "murder," another "the work of the Lord." What beauty can there be in Christ if a Pharisee look upon him? We read "of the leaven of the Pharisees;" and sure this is it. For it "leaveneth the whole lump:" all our opinions, all our actions, —all have a kind of taste of it. Whatsoever come in to strengthen an anticipated opinion, whatsoever walks within the compass of our desires, or complies with our covetousness, or ambition, or lustful affections, we readily embrace; and believe it to be true because we wish it so, and because it is conduible and behoofful for those ends which we have set up. Every fallacy is a demonstration; every prosperous event is a voice from heaven to confirm us. But if it thwart our inclination, if it run counter to our intendments, then truth itself, though manifested with signs and wonders, will enrage us; and we shall first disgrace him that brings it, and then nail him to the cross. We see here Christ "cast out a devil which was dumb, and the dumb spoke, and the people wondered." The Pharisees saw it, and the woman saw it: the one saw nothing but that which could not be seen, one devil casting out another; the other saw the finger and mighty power of God, and when she saw it, "she lifted

up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked."

3. And so we descend to that which we proposed in the Third place, the vehemency and heat of her affection, which could not contain itself in her heart, but brake forth at her mouth. And herein we shall consider, (1.) That she spake. (2.) What she spake. "She lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked."

(1.) "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," saith our Saviour. (Matt. xii. 34.) When that is full, it cannot contain itself, *sed emanat in habitum, eructat a conscientia in superficiem, ut et foris inspiciat quasi supellectilem suam*: "It evaporateth itself into the outward habit, breaks forth into voice, opens her shop and wares, that she may behold her own provision and riches abroad." Hence the fathers call the motion of the mind *κυκλικόν*, "circular," by which the soul of man is carried from the object into itself; where, after some pause, or rather upon the first impression, she calls all her faculties together, and then takes-in the members of the body, and by them conveyeth herself to the very eye and ear, and in a manner is both heard and seen. It is so in evil, and it is so in good. *Habent suas voces affectus*: "Every affection hath its proper language and dialect." If we be afraid, we lift up our voice, and cry, "Whither shall we fly?" If we grieve, we break forth into threnodies and lamentations. If we hope, we ask, "How long? how long?" If we be angry, we breathe forth hailstones and coals of fire. *Se, cum nolit, cor prodit*: "The heart, when it is full, cannot but open itself: and though it would conceal itself, yet it must vent."

The angry man speaks nothing but swords and challenges, the language of Cain. For so the Septuagint, to make the sense plain, add this clause: *Διέλθωμεν δε εις το πεδιον*, "Let us go into the field." (Gen. iv. 8.) Where St. Peter giveth the character of profane and unclean persons, amongst other marks he setteth this as one, that "they have eyes full of adultery," *μεστούς μοιχαλίδος*, "full of the adulteress;" as if they carried her about in their very eyes, and had always her image before them, and therefore must needs "speak swelling words of vanity." (2 Peter ii. 14, 18.) The covetous person converseth with gold as with his god; he speaks of it, he dreams of it, he commits idolatry with it; *dum tacet, hoc loquitur*, "when he is silent, he talks of it within himself." In every place of scripture, wickedness is brought forth not only with a hand, but with a tongue. "Come, lie with me, my sister," saith Amnon. (2 Sam. xiii. 11.)

“Give, give,” saith the covetous. (Prov. xxx. 15.) “Come, let us cast-in our lots together,” saith the wicked. (Prov. i. 14.) “Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds,” say they. (Wisdom ii. 8.) “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

And so it is in the ways of goodness : First it fills the heart, then it makes the tongue “as the pen of a ready writer.” First it speaks within us, and then we “preach it on the house-top.” “My heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared,” saith David. (Psalm lvii. 7.) And then it follows, “I will sing, and give praise.” First his heart is full, and then he speaks to his glory (his tongue) to awake. (Verse 8.) And, Psalm xlv. 1 : “My heart hath indited a good matter :” *Eruclavit*, or *Ebulliit*, “My heart hath fried, or boiled, a good matter :” a similitude taken from the meat-offering, or *mincah*,  $\text{מִנְחָה}$  in the law, which was dressed in the pan. (Lev. ii. 5.) First it is but prepared in the prophet’s heart, and then “grace is poured out in his lips,” by which he presenteth it. “For we sacrifice our voice to God as we do our bodies,” saith Nazianzen. When the priests and the Sadducees did straightly threaten the apostles, that “they should speak thenceforth no more in the name of Christ,” Peter and John answered, “We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” (Acts iv. 17, 18, 20.)  $\text{Ὁ δυνάμεθα}$ , “It is impossible,” as the law calls that “impossible” which ought not to be done. Nay, it cometh near to a physical impossibility, it is almost impossible in nature, to love the truth, and not to publish it. “The love of Christ constraineth us,” saith St. Paul : (2 Cor. v. 14 :)  $\text{συνέχεις}$ , “we are in travail,” as it were, with the truth, and long to be delivered. It is a grievous thing for a man at liberty to be bound ; and one would think the same fetters would serve for the feet and hands and tongue, and tie them up all at once ; yet, saith St. Paul, “I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, even unto bonds ; but yet the word of God is not bound.” (2 Tim. ii. 9.) The mind is free, and the tongue is free, and I speak as boldly as if I were at liberty. Such a symphony, such a fair correspondence there is between the heart and the tongue, that they send up the same hymn and song of praise unto God.

The love of the truth tuneth the heart, and the heart the tongue. *Inter cor et linguam totum salutis humanæ geritur sacramentum*, saith Chrysologus : “Between these two the business of our salvation moveth and is carried about.” “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. x. 10.)



For what is faith in the heart if it have no tongue nor hand? The father calls it "a sacrament or mystery:" for a divine power is [in] the midst of them. The heart speaks unto God; for he understands the language of our thoughts. The mouth and the tongue satisfy men. Or, to speak truly, they must join together, both for the service of God and edification of men: for on these two, as on two golden hinges, not only faith, but charity, and all those other virtues which encircle and compass her about as with a crown, hang and turn about in that order and glory which is delightful to God, to angels, to men.

And this is the advantage that love hath of knowledge. Knowledge may be idle and unactive, but love is a restless thing, and will call up and employ every part of the body and every faculty of the soul to compass its end. Love is active, and will pace it on where knowledge doth but stand at gaze. Knowledge doth not always command our tongue; nay, many times, we speak and act against our knowledge: but who speaks against that which he doth love? Who will trample that under his feet? Speculation may be but a look, a cast of the eye of the understanding, and no more; but love hath already taken in the object, and devoured it, and made it one with the soul. Knowledge many times begets but a purpose of mind, a faint velleity, a forced and involuntary approbation; but love joins the will and the tongue and the hand together, and indeed is nothing else but a vehement and well-ordered will. Knowledge may be but a dream; but love is ever awake, up and doing. I may so know the truth that I may be said not to know it; but I cannot so love the truth that I may be said to hate it. (1 John ii. 3.) For though the scripture sometimes attributeth knowledge of the truth to them who so live as if they knew it not, yet it never casts away the precious name of "love" on those who so live as if they loved it not. A Pharisee, a hypocrite, may know the truth; but it was never written that they loved it; but that "they loved the praise of men more than of God." (John xii. 43.) And this was the reason that "they had eyes, and saw not; ears, and heard not, nor understood;" (verse 40;) that they had tongues, and spake not; that they would not be persuaded when they were convinced, and withstood the truth when they were overcome. In a word: knowledge may leave us, like unto the idols of the Heathen, with hands that handle not, and mouths that speak not: Love only emulateth the power of our Saviour, and works a miracle, casts out the spirit which is dumb. For "when he spake these things," not the Pharisees, but "a woman of the company lifted up her voice."

And thus her heart was truly affected, and she lifted up her voice. As the prophet speaks, the love of Christ "was in her heart as a burning fire shut up in her bones, and she was weary of forbearing, and she could not stay." (Jer. xx. 9.) It was like that coal of the seraphins, which being laid on her mouth, she spake with her tongue. (Isai. vi. 7.)

(2.) Now, in the next place, what was it that begat her love, but the admiration of Christ's person, his power, and his wisdom? This was it which kindled that heat within her which broke out at her lips. Plato calls admiration "the beginning of philosophy." We admire and dwell upon the object, and view it well, till we have wrought the idea of it in our minds. Whence Clement citeth this saying out of "the Gospel according to the Hebrew:" *Qui admiratus fuerit, regnabit; qui regnabit, requiescet*: "He that at first admires that which to him is wonderful, shall at last reign; and he that reigns shall be at rest," shall not waver or doubt, or struggle, *formidine contrarii*, "with fear that the contrary should be true," and that *that* which he saw should be but a false apparition and a deception of the sight. This woman here saw, and wondered, and loved. She saw more than the Pharisees, to whom a sign from heaven appeared in no fairer shape than the work of Beelzebub. She saw, Christ's miracles were as his letters of credence that he came from God himself.

She had heard of Moses and his miracles; but beholds a greater than Moses here. For, (i.) Christ's miracles breathed not forth horror and amazement, as those of Moses did in and about the mountain of Sinai. Nor, (ii.) Were they noxious and fatal to any, as those which Moses wrought in Pharaoh's court and in Egypt. He did not bring-in tempest and thunder, but spake the word, and men were healed. He did not bury men alive, but raised men out of their graves. He brought upon men no fiery serpents, but he cast out devils. If he suffered the devils to destroy the hogs, yet he tied them up from hurting of men; and what is a hog to a man? In a word: Moses's miracles were to strike a terror into the people, that he might lead them by fear; but Christ's were to beget that admiration, which might work love in those whom he was to lead with "the cords of men, with the bonds of love." All Christ's miracles were benefits: for "he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with him." (Acts x. 38.) Christ's miracles were above the reach and power of nature. (i.) Nature had no hand in the production of any of them. All that we wonder at are not miracles: Not an

eclipse of the sun, which the common people stand amazed at, because they know not the cause of it. Nor is that a miracle which is besides the ordinary course of nature; for then every monster should be a miracle: nor that which is done against nature; for so every child that casteth a stone up into the air doth work a miracle. But that is a miracle which is impossible in nature, and which cannot be wrought but by a supernatural hand. (ii.) Christ's miracles were done not in a corner, but before the sun and the people. This woman here heard the dumb speak, she saw the blind see, the lame go, and the lepers cleansed. Miracles, when they are wrought, are not the object of our faith, but of our sense. They are signs and tokens to confirm that which we must believe. (iii.) Christ's miracles were done, as it were, in an instant. With a touch, at a word; he cured diseases, which nature cannot do, though helped by the art of the physician. All the works of nature, and of art too, are conceived and perfected in the womb of time. (iv.) Last of all: Christ's miracles were perfect and exact. When he raised Jairus's daughter, he presently "commanded them to give her meat." (Luke viii. 55.) When he cured Peter's wife's mother, forthwith she was so strong that "she arose, and ministered unto them." (Matt. viii. 15.) He gave his gifts in full measure; nor could more be desired than he gave. And shall not these miracles and these benefits appear wonderful in our eyes? Shall not his power beget admiration, and admiration love, and love command our voice? Shall a woman see his wonders, and shall we be as blind as the Pharisees? Shall "she lift up her voice," and shall we still keep in us the devil that is dumb? "It came to pass as he did and spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said." And now we should pass to what she said; but I see the time passeth away. Let us therefore make some use of what hath already been said, and so conclude.

## APPLICATION.

And, first, let us learn from this woman here to have Christ's wonderful works in remembrance, to look upon them with a steadfast and a fixed eye, that they may appear unto us in their full glory, and fill us with admiration. For admiration is a kind of voice of the soul. *Miracula obstupuisse, dixisse est*, saith Gregory: "Thus silence itself may become vocal, and truly to wonder at his works is to profess them." This motion of the heart, stirred up with reverence to the ears of the uncircumscribed Spirit, is as the lifting up of the voice which speaks

within us by those divers and innumerable forms and shapes of admiration, which are the inward expressions of the soul. When the soul is in an ecstasy, when it is transported and rapt up above itself with admiration, then it speaketh, nay, it crieth, unto the Lord. When St. Paul was caught up into Paradise, and heard those "unspeakable words" which he could not utter, his admiration supplied that defect, and was as the lifting up of his voice unto God. (2 Cor. xii. 4.) For, what is a miracle if it be not wondered at? Or is it fit a miracle should pass by us, as a shadow, unregarded? Is it fit that that which was done "for us men and for our salvation" should not move us so much as those common things which are done before our eyes every day? that we should be little affected with that gospel which was thus confirmed by signs and wonders? that nothing should be wonderful in our eyes, but that which is not worth a thought?

For what is that we wonder at? Even that from which we should wean our affection. We wonder at those things in the pursuit of which we ourselves become monsters. We wonder at wealth, and are as greedy as the horse-leech. We wonder at beauty, and become worse than "the beasts that perish." We wonder at honour, and are those chameleons that live on air. We "have men's persons in admiration," (Jude 16,) and make ourselves their horse or mule, which they may ride at pleasure. We wonder at power, and become stocks or stones, and have no more motion of our own than they. These appear to us in glory, these dart their beams upon us, and we are struck with admiration: but *mirabilia legis*, "the wonderful things of the law," the wonderful things of the gospel,—we scarce open our eyes to behold them, and but faintly desire God to do it for us. His wonderful counsel in sending his Son we do but talk of: the mystery of our redemption is hidden still. God's eternal will, "that is our sanctification," we scarce spare an hour to think on; (1 Thess. iv. 3;) his precepts are not in so much esteem as "the statutes of Omri." (Micah vi. 16.) What a glorious spectacle is a clod of earth, and what a nothing is heaven!

Behold, these are the wonderful things of Christ,—to unite God and man, to tie them together by a new covenant, to raise dust and ashes to heaven: this is a great miracle indeed! To draw so many nations and people to the obedience of faith, to convert rich men by poor, learned men by illiterate, and by those whom they persecuted and put to death, so that they brought-in their riches and honours and usual delights, and laid them down as it were at the feet of those poor instructors whom

they counted as "the offscouring of the world;" to make not only his precepts, but the meekness, the patience, the silence, the very death of his professors, as so many apostles and messengers to win them to the faith:—this if we did truly consider and weigh as we should, would busy and intend\* our thoughts, and raise and improve them into that amazement and admiration which would join us to that innumerable company of just men, and make us of the number of those who shall be saved. "Many things," saith Hilary, "Christ hath done for the sons of men, the blessed effect of which is open as the day, though the cause be hid;" and where nature comes short, faith steps forward and reacheth home. *In his quoque quæ ignoro, non nescio*: "Even in those which my understanding is too narrow to receive, I am not utterly ignorant," but walk by faith, and admire that which my good Master doeth and yet will not let me know. It is no miracle, no mystery at all, which deserveth not admiration.

Secondly. By her lifting up her voice, and blessing the womb that bare Christ, which was a kind of adoration, (for admiration had not so shut-up her devotion and love but that it was vocal and reverent,) we are taught to magnify our Saviour with the tongue, and hand, and knee, and every member we have, as David speaketh. For these also have their voice, and we may confess Christ not only with the tongue, but with our adorations and genuflexions and those outward expressions which are equivalent to it. *Auditur philosophus, dum videtur*: "Though he hold his peace, yet the philosopher's very gesture is a lecture of morality." Therefore where we read, that "man was made a living soul," (Gen. ii. 7,) the Chaldee renders it, *Et factus est in spiritum loquentem*: "He was made a speaking soul," to speak the praises of his Maker with every faculty and part he hath. For as God made both body and soul, so he requires both the inward devotion of the one and the outward expressions of the other; "a soul," saith Isidore, "which may" τὴν θεϊαν παρουσίαν φαντάζεσθαι, by its operative devotion call down God from heaven, and in herself "frame the resemblance of his presence;" and a body, which may make that devotion and love visible to the very eye. It is St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, that "God would sanctify them wholly, that the soul and body may be blameless" in the day of the Lord; (1 Thess. v. 23;) that holiness might be as an impression which from the soul might work upon the body, and give force and motion to the whole man. This is to "sanctify them" ὁλοτελεῖς, not in part, but "all of them," not to sprinkle but to baptize them

\* In the signification of "stretching" or "expanding."—EDIT.

with holiness. *Profanus* and *non-integer* are the same in Tertullian: and “it is profaneness, not to give God all.” Athanasius makes the soul as a musician, and the body, which consists of the tongue and other members, as a harp or lute; which she may tune and touch till it yield a celestial harmony, a song composed of divers parts, of spirit and flesh, of soul and body, of every faculty of the soul and every part of the body, [which] must accord with the elevation of the soul. Certainly a sweet note! But then the lifting-up of the voice mends it, and makes it far more pleasant. An ejaculation from the soul, yea, and the sound thereof from the tongue and hands and knees; a holy thought, yea, and a zealous and reverent deportment:—these make a man *ὀλόκληρον*, as the apostle speaks, “perfect and complete.” (James i. 4.) Otherwise, as the poet spake of the beggar half-rotten and consumed, he is but *ὄργανον ἡμίτονον*, “an half-strung and half-tuned instrument.”

Look back unto former and purer times, and you shall see devotion visible in every gesture, in their walking, in their sitting, in their bowing, in their standing up. You shall hear it in their hymns and psalms, in their Hallelujahs and Amens, which were, saith Jerome, “as the voice of many waters, or as a clap of thunder.” You shall hear the priest blessing the people, and the people echoing it back again unto the priest; the priests praying, and the people answering the priests, which they called *ᾠδὰς ἀντιφώνους*, their “antiphones” or “responsals.” *Στάμεν καλῶς*: “Let us stand decently:” they spake it, and they did it. *Στάμεν μετὰ φόβου Θεοῦ*: “Let us stand with the fear of God:” they spake it, and they did it. *Στάμεν ἐπιστημόνως καὶ νηφαλέως*: “Let us stand wisely and soberly, and with great care and vigilant observation:” they spake it, and they did it. And St. Chrysostom giveth the reason: “Because God is present with us invisibly, and marks every motion of the body, as well as every inclination of the mind.”

But, I know not how, the face of Christendom is much altered; and what was religion and devotion then, hath now changed its name, and in this latter age must needs go under that much-loathed name of “superstition and idolatry.” For, tell me, are we not ashamed almost to say our prayers? Are we not afraid to say “Amen?” Is it not become a disgrace to bear a part in the public service of God? A *Te Deum* or a Hallelujah would be indeed as a clap of thunder to fright us from the church: for we lift up our hearts so high that we have no voice at all. Superstition, I confess, is a dangerous sin, but yet not so dangerous as profaneness, which will talk with God in private,

and dare him to his face in his temple ; which, with the Gnostic, will give him the heart, but not vouchsafe the tongue ; which will leave the priest alone to make a noise (and sometimes, God knoweth, it is but a noise) in the pulpit. And this is but to run out of the smoke into the fire ; for fear of coming too near to superstition to shipwreck on profaneness ; for fear of will-worship, not to worship at all ; to imprison devotion in the soul, and lend her neither voice nor gesture ; though Christ be miraculous in all his ways, and doth wonders in the midst of us, to seal up our lips, and only commune with our own corrupt hearts, and be still. No lifting up of the voice or hands, no bowing of the knee in our coasts.

But I do but beat the air, and labour in vain. For now it is religion, not to express it ; and *he* is most devout *who* doth least show it. O when will this dumb devil be cast out ! A strange thing it is, that every thing else, even our vices, should be loud and vocal, and religion should be the only thing that should want a tongue ! that devotion should lie hid and lurk and withdraw itself into the inward man ! For this is not to honour God, ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ἰσχύος καὶ δυνάμεως, “with might and main,” with soul and body, with heart and knee and tongue ; this is not to “render to God that which is God’s :” which how to do without these outward expressions, is as hard for the eye of reason to see, as it is for the eye of sense to discern that devotion which is so abstract and spiritual. Certainly this poor woman in the text will rise up in judgment against this generation, who no sooner saw the excellency of Christ’s person, but “she lifted up her voice, and blessed the womb that bare him, and the paps which he had sucked.”

Last of all : This woman’s voice is yet lifted up, and calls upon us to lift up ours, even before the Pharisees. And such we shall find in every street and in every synagogue, who “devour” more than “widows’ houses with long prayers,” draw blood with the sword of the Spirit, and serve the prince of this world in the name of the Lord. If our fear were not greater than our love, amongst these we should “lift up our voice like a trumpet,” and put these monsters to shame, strike off their visor with noise ; and bring-in truth to tear off the veil of their hypocrisy. For, what ! shall we not lift up our voice for truth but when she hath most voices on her side ? Must truth be never published but in the times of peace ? Or must a song of praise be never chanted out but in a choir of angels ? Shall we only walk towards our Saviour, as Peter did, whilst the face of the sea is smooth, then be undaunted and

fear nothing; but when a wave comes towards us, presently sink? Whilst all things go with us smoothly, without any rub or wave of difficulty, how shall our faith and love be discovered? who shall distinguish between a true and superficial professor? For the love of man to Christ is no otherwise discovered than [is] the love of man to man. The love of a Christian cannot be known but by a great and strong temptation. A Pharisee before us is a temptation, difficulty and danger are nothing else but a temptation, which is therefore laid in our way, to try if any thing can sever us from the love of Christ and his truth. If we start back in silence, we have betrayed the truth to our fears, and left it to be trodden under foot by a Pharisee. We may call it "discretion and wisdom" to start aside at such a sight, and to lay our hands upon our mouths: but, *Discretio ista tollit omnem discretionem*, as Bernard speaketh: "This discretion takes away all discretion;" this wisdom is but folly: for from this cowardice in our profession we first fall into an indifferency, and at last into open hostility to the truth. We follow truth as Peter did Christ, "afar off," and then deny it, and at last forswear it, and join with the Pharisees, and help them to persecute those that profess it. So the *Libellatici* of old first bought a dispensation from the judge to profess the name of Christ, and at last gave it under their hands that they never were Christians. He that can dispense with a sin, will soon look friendly upon it, and at last count it a duty. He that will take an oath in his own sense, (which indeed is non-sense,) will easily be induced to take it in any sense you shall give it him. He that can trifle with his God, will at last blaspheme him to his face.

Beloved, you may judge of the heart by the voice, which falls and rises according to those heats and colds the heart receives. When this is coldly affected, we know not how to speak; we venture, but speak not out; we profess, and recant; we say, and unsay, and know not what to say: *quasi super aristas ambulamus*, "we tread as tenderly as if we were walking upon ears of corn," and as men that go upon the ice: *magis tremimus quàm imus*, "we rather tremble than go." But when our "heart is hot within us," the next occasion sets our tongue at liberty. We read in our poets, that Achilles for a time lurked in woman's apparel, but was discovered by Ulysses bringing him a sword, which he no sooner saw but he brandished it. So the soldier of Christ is not known till some difficulty, like the sword of Ulysses, be brought before him: then he will bestir and move himself to cope with it:



— Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐφέλκεται ἄνδρα σίδηρος.\*—HOMERI *Odyss.* xvi. 294.

If we be Christians, dangers and difficulties will sharpen and draw us on, and our voice will be loudest when a Pharisee is near.

To conclude : When we hear men speak between their teeth, or hoarsely, as if they had lost their voice, when they falter in their speech, and speak in points of divinity as Bassianus did when he had slain his brother Geta, *ut qui malint intelligi, quàm audiri*, “as willing to be understood indeed, but not to speak out,” and so cunningly disperse their doctrine that they may instruct their friends, yet give no advantage to their enemies, you may be sure the heart is not warm, nor really affected. But when we speak with boldness what we have heard and seen, when we cast down our gauntlet, and stand in defence of the truth against the world ; when neither Pharisee nor devil can silence us, but *in omni prætorio, in omni consistorio*, “in every judgment-seat, in every consistory,” when malice and power come towards us in a tempest, we lift up our voice, and dare speak for the truth when others dare persecute it ; it is an evident sign that a fire is kindled within us, and we are warmed with it ; that, with the woman here, we see some excellences in Christ, some beauty and majesty in the truth, which others do not, whose lips are sealed up. In a word : To speak of Christ before the Pharisees ; to lift up our voice, and speak of his name, when, for aught we know, it may be the last word we shall speak ; to be true prophets amongst four hundred false ones ; when the Pharisees call Christ Beelzebub, to cry “Hosanna to the Son of David ;” to bless the womb that bare him, and the paps that gave him suck, when others say, “He is a Samaritan, and hath a devil ;” is truly to make this devout woman a pattern, to make that use of her voice which she did of Christ’s voice and of his miracle, who could not contain herself, nor keep silence ; but, having received in her heart the lively character of Christ’s power and wisdom, in the midst of his enemies, in the midst of a multitude, when some reviled him, and others were silent, she lifted up her voice, and blessed the womb that bare him, and the paps which gave him suck ; which is her *dictum*, our next part, and should come now to be handled : but the time being past, we shall reserve it for part of our task in the afternoon.

\* “Oft ready swords in luckless hour incite

The hand of the wrath, and arm it for the fight.”—POPE’S Translation. ◊

## SERMON LXVII.

## A CERTAIN WOMAN'S COMMENDATION OF CHRIST.

*And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.—Luke xi. 27, 28.*

## PART II.

WE have already handled the circumstantial parts of the text: we are now to treat of the substantial,—the woman's speech, and our Saviour's.

4. We begin with the woman's: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," &c. And that the mother of Christ was blessed, we need not doubt. For we have not only the voice of this woman to prove it, but the voice of an angel: "Blessed art thou among women:" and, "Thou hast found favour with God, and shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, even the Son of the Highest." (Luke i. 28, 30—32.) And we have her cousin's testimony in the very words of the angel: "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." (Verse 42.) And we have the witness of a babe unborn, who leaped in the womb, *et prophetavit antequam natus est*, "and spake this truth when he could not speak." And indeed, though the womb be not capable of true blessedness, (which all the privileges and prerogatives in the world, of birth, or honour, or wisdom, or strength, cannot reach: for neither the earth nor Paradise itself can bring forth this fruit of blessedness, which is only at the right hand of God, who begins it here, and completes it in the highest heavens,) yet to be the mother of Christ carries with it a kind of resemblance and likeness with that which is truly blessedness.

For blessedness is a state and condition in which is treasured up all the perfection which created substances are capable of, all defects and imperfections (which mingle themselves with the best things here on earth, and taint and corrupt them) being quite removed and taken away. As, if we seek for pleasure, we shall find it in heaven, both pure and fine from those dregs which do here envenom and embitter it, and make even pleasure itself tedious and irksome. If you would have honour, here it is without burden. Here are riches, and no fear of losing them. Here

is life without vexation, here is life without end. This the womb is not capable of: yet we may see a representation of it in the womb of the virgin, in the birth of our Saviour; which was not ordinary, but miraculous; where she that brought the child had the joy of a mother, and the honour of a virgin; had all things but the imperfection of a mother.

I will not labour in this argument. Thus far we may safely go: "All generations shall call her blessed:" (Luke i. 48:) and while we speak of the mother in her own language and in the language of the Son, we have truth and religion on our side. But yet some there be who will not venture so far; and though they allow her blessed, yet boggle at the "saint," as a name of danger and scandal: and because others have dressed her up toyishly with borrowed titles, they do little less than rob her of her own, and take it to themselves; take it from the mother of Christ, and give it to a wicked and an adulterous generation. Others, on the contrary side, by making her more than a saint, have made her an idol. They have placed her in the house of God as mother of the family; put into her hands the keys of mercy, to let-in whom she [may] please; called her "the fountain of life, the mother of the living, and the raiser of the dead;" written books of her miraculous conception and assumption, and of the power and majesty she hath in heaven; of which we may say as Pliny doth of the writings of the magicians, that they have been published *non sine contemptu et irrisu generis humani*, "not without a kind of contempt and derision of men,"\* not without this insolent thought, that men would be so brutish as to approve, and such fools as to believe, whatsoever fell from the pen of such idle dreamers. For thus, without the least help of the breath of the Spirit, and without any countenance from any syllable in the word of God, they have lifted the holy virgin up, and seated her in God's throne, and every day plead her title in the very face of Christendom; and as Tully spake of some superstitious frantic philosophers, *quidvis malle videntur quàm se non ineptos*, "they seem to affect and hug this gross and ungrounded error, and had rather be any thing than not be ridiculous." But these extremes have men run upon whilst they neglect that rule by which they were to walk:—the one, upon the rock of superstition; the other, (as it oft falls out in disputes of this nature,) not only from the error they oppose, but from the truth itself which should be set up in its place. Between these two we may walk safely, and guide ourselves by the woman's voice and the angel's voice, and call her "blessed and saint,"

\* Lib. xxxvii. 40.

though not "God;" and we may place her in heaven, though we set her not in the throne.

(1.) *Blessed*, as the occasion of so much good. For when we see a clear and silver stream, we bless the fountain: and, for the glory and quickening power of the beams, some have made a god of the sun. Whatsoever presents itself unto us in beauty or excellency, doth not only take and delight us, but, in the midst of wonder, forceth our thoughts to look back to the coasts from whence it came. For virtue is not only glorious in itself, but casts a lustre back upon generations past, and makes them blessed: it blesseth the times wherein it acts, it blesseth the persons wherein it is, and it blesseth all relations to those persons, and the nearest most. We often find in scripture famous men and women mentioned with their relations. "Arise, Barak, thou son of Abinoam." "Blessed shall Jael be, the wife of Heber the Kenite." (Judges v. 12, 24.) "David the son of Jesse; Solomon the son of David." Blessed was Abraham, who begat Isaac; and blessed was Isaac, who begat Jacob; and then thrice blessed was she, who brought forth the Blessing of the world,—"Jesus Christ a Saviour." Therefore was barrenness accounted a curse in Israel, because they knew their Messias was to be born of a woman; but did not know what woman should bring him forth.

(2.) Again: if it be a kind of curse to beget a wicked son, or, as Solomon did, "the foolishness of the people." (Ecclus. xlvii. 23.) The historian observes, that many famous men amongst the Romans either died childless, or left such children behind them that it had been better their name had quite been blotted out, and they had left no posterity. And speaking of Tully, who had a drunken and a sottish son, he adds: *Huic soli melius fuerat liberos non habere*: "It had been better for him to have had no child at all, than such an one." Who would have his name live in a wanton, intemperate sot? Who would have his name live in a betrayer of his country, in a bloody tyrant? If this curse reflect upon those who have been dead long ago, and is doubled on the living; who look upon those whom they call *affectus*, "their affections," and *caritates*, "their love," as their greatest grief and torment; then certainly a great blessing and glory it is for a parent to have a virtuous child, in whom he every day may behold not only his own likeness, but the image of God, which shines in the face of every looker-on, and fills their hearts with delight and their mouths with blessings. If it be a tyrant, a Nero, we wish "the doors of his mother's womb had been shut up," and so "sorrow and trouble hid from our eyes." (Job iii. 10.) *Ventrem feri*, saith the mother herself to

the centurion who was sent to kill her: "Strike, strike this cursed 'belly that brought forth that monster.'" But if it be a father of his country; if it be a wise, just, and merciful prince; if he be a Titus; we bless the day wherein he was born, we celebrate his nativity, and make it a holy-day, and we bless the rock from whence he was hewn, the very loins from whence he came.

And therefore, (to conclude this,) we cannot but commend both the affection of this woman and her speech, the one great, and the other loud. For the greatness: The intension of the affection is not evil, so the cause be good; and it cannot move too fast, if it do not err. If the sight of virtue and wisdom strike this heat in us, it is as a fire from heaven in our bowels. And such was this woman's affection, begotten in her by Wisdom and Power, and both Divine. It rose not from any earthly respect, secular pomp, or outward glory; but she hearing Christ's gracious words, and seeing the wonders which he did, "the fire kindled, and she spake with her tongue." And she still speaketh, that we may behold the same finger of God as efficacious and powerful in Christ to cast out the devil out of us; the devil which is dumb, that we may speak his praises; and the devil that is deaf, that we may hearken to his words; the devil that is a serpent, that we may lay aside all deceit; the devil that is a lion, that we may lay aside all malice; the devil that wicked one, that we may be freed from sin; that so we may put on the affection of this woman, and with her "lift up our voice, and say, Blessed is the womb that bare Christ, and the paps which he sucked." And further we carry not this consideration.

II. We come, next, to our Saviour's gentle corrective, *Imò potius*, "Yea rather." And this "Yea rather" comes in seasonably. For the eye is ready to be dazzled with a lesser good, if it be not diverted to a greater; as *he* will wonder at a star *that* never saw the sun. We stay many times and dwell with delight upon those truths which are of lesser alloy, and make not any approach towards that which is saving and necessary. We look upon the excellences of Christ, and find no leisure to fall down and worship him; we become "almost Christians," and come not to the knowledge of that truth which must save us and make us perfect men in Christ Jesus.

1. The philosopher will tell us, that he that will compare two things together, must know them both. What glory hath riches to him who hath not seen virtue (as Plato would have her seen) naked, and not compassed about and disguised with difficulties, disgraces, and hardships! What a brightness hath honour to

blind him that hath not tasted of the favour of God! What a Paradise is carnal pleasure to him that a good conscience never feasted! What a substance is a ceremony to him that makes the precepts of the law but shadows! How doth *he* rely on a privilege *who* will not do his duty! How blessed a thing doth *she* think it to bring forth a son that can work miracles, *who* knows not what it is to conceive *him* in her heart *who* can save her! Therefore it is the method of wisdom itself, to present them both unto us in their just and proper weight; not to deny what is true, but to take-off our thoughts, and direct them to something better; that we may not dote so long on the one as to neglect and cast off the other. From wondering at his miracles, Christ calleth us to the contemplation of the greatest miracle that was ever wrought,—the redemption of a sinner; from his miracles to his word, for the keeping of which they were wrought.

For to this end Christ manifested himself by signs and wonders, that we might manifest ourselves to be his by our obedience, that “where he is, there we may be also;” (John xiv. 3;) which is blessedness indeed. When our Saviour told Nathanael “he saw him under the fig-tree,” Nathanael calls him “the Son of God and King of Israel.” (John i. 48, 49.) This was as it were the spring and beginning of his faith; and our Saviour makes much of it, and cherisheth it: “Dost thou believe because of this? thou shalt see greater things than these.” This is as the watering of it, the crowning of his first gift with a second. He shall see the heaven opening, and the angels ministering unto him at his passion, resurrection, and ascension. In my text the woman had discovered Christ’s excellency; and Christ discovers to her his will, his Father’s will, the doing of which will will unite her unto him whom she thus admired, and make her one with him, as He and his Father is one. “Blessed parents! yea, rather, Blessed thou, if thou hear my word, and keep it.” This is a timely grace, to lead her yet nearer to the kingdom of heaven: the lifting up of her voice was too weak to lift up those everlasting gates. This was a seasonable—“reprehension” shall I call it, or “direction?” It hath something of both, but so little of the rod that it is rather a staff to uphold the woman, and to guide her in the ways of blessedness. “Blessed is the womb that bare thee:” It is a truth, but a dangerous truth to dwell on. “Yea, rather,” points out to another truth upon which we may look with more profit and advantage: “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” *That* magnifieth my mother; but *this* will make him that observes it my

brother, and mother, and sister. *Et major fraternitas fidei quàm sanguinis* : " Faith and obedience keep us in a nearer relation to Christ than blood."

2. And now if we look into the church, we shall find that most men stand in need of a " Yea rather ;" who will magnify Christ and his mother too, but not do his will ; will do what they ought to do, but leave *that* undone for *which* that which they do was ordained. Lord ! how many beatitudes have we found out, and seldom touch upon the right !—*Felix sacramentum* ! " Blessed sacrament of baptism !" The father begins his book so *De Baptismo*. It is true ; but there is an *Imò potius*, " ' Yea rather, ' Blessed are they that have put on Christ."—" Blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper !" It is true ; but, " Yea rather, Blessed are they that dwell in Christ."—" Blessed profession of Christianity !" " Yea rather, Blessed are they that are Christ's."—" Blessed cross !" The fathers call it so. " Yea rather, Blessed are they that have ' crucified their flesh with the affections and lusts. ' "—" Blessed church !" " Yea rather, Blessed are they who are members of Christ."—" Blessed Reformation !" " Yea rather, Blessed are they that reform themselves."

The greatest debate is concerning these. What digladiations, what tragedies about these ! And if every fancy be not pleased, the cry is as if religion was breathing out its last, when religion consists not principally in these ; and these may seem to have been passed over as pledges of love as well as commands, and were passed over to this end. For we are baptized, that we might " put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.) We come to his table, that we may " feed on him by faith." The cross is magnified, that we may " take it up." (Matt. xvi. 24.) The church was reformed, that we should purge ourselves not only of superstition, but also of profaneness and sacrilege, and those sins for which " the name of Christ is blasphemed amongst the Heathen." (Rom. ii. 24.)

The philosopher indeed tells us, Ἔστι χαλεπὸν τὸ κρίνειν ποῖον ἀντὶ ποίου αἰρετέον, that " in respect of variety of circumstances it is a hard matter many times to make our choice, or in our judgment to prefer one thing before another." And in some cases this is true ; but, in this particular we speak of, all the difficulty rises, not from the object or from the understanding, but from the will. For we will choose that which is easy rather than that which is best ; that which will fit our humour, rather than that which will save our soul : and therefore we have need not of gentle but corroding physic ; of an *Imò potius* to be pressed

home upon us again and again in the sharpest accent. For when a man hath followed his thoughts to those pleasing objects which they so readily fly to, when he hath run his compass, and fastened on that which flatters his sense, and called it "blessedness," he runs further and further from blessedness, and holds nothing of it but the name. Thou mayest wash at the font, and yet pollute thyself; thou mayest eat at Christ's table, and not be fed; thou mayest be of the church, and yet be *anathema*; (1 Cor. xvi. 22;) of the Reformed church, and yet be "worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.) Blessed are all these, because they help to make us blessed, and are appointed as means for that end. But *Imò potius*, "Yea rather," must draw them home, and settle us in this fundamental truth: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Which is the resolve and "conclusion of the whole matter;" and with it we shall conclude.

3. This resolve of wisdom itself, as it doth cool and moderate our affections towards the outward and temporal favours and blessings of God, towards those of his right hand, and those of his left, so it doth intend\* and quicken them towards that which is blessedness indeed. It sets us up a glass, that "royal law," (James ii. 8,) "that perfect law of liberty," which if we "look into, and continue in it, being not forgetful hearers, but doers of the work, we shall be blessed in it." (James i. 25.) We may seek for blessedness in the field abroad, in outward favours and privileges, but, lo, here it is found. Blessedness, like Christ himself, is A (*Alpha*) and Ω (*Omega*), "the first and the last;" the end, and yet the first mover of us in these ways which lead unto it. *Christiano cælum antè patet quàm via*: "Heaven is first opened to a Christian, and then the way;" and he that walks in this shall enter into that. Now what is blessedness but a state of perfection, and "an aggregation of all that is truly good, without the least tincture and show of evil," as Boethius speaketh? This cannot be found but in the most perfect good, even God, who is Perfection itself; whose pleasure, whose delight, whose Paradise is in his own bosom. This he opens, and pours a part on his creature; of which we do in a manner take possession, and taste of its pleasant fruits, when we keep his word and law, which is nothing else but a beam of that law which was with and in God from all eternity; and by which, as we are made after the image, so are we transformed into the similitude, of God. Thus Plato himself calls it *ἐξομοίωσις*, our "assimilation" to, and *ἕνωσις*, our "union" with, God, in whom alone those two

\* See note, p. 161.—EDIT.



powers of the soul, those two horse-leeches, which ever cry, "Give, give," the understanding which is ever drawing new conclusions, and the will which is ever pursuing new objects, have their eternal sabbath and rest. *Hic Rhodus, hic saltus*: "This is the end, and this is the way." Our Saviour here seems to make two, "hearing," and "doing;" but indeed they are but one, and cannot be severed; for the one leads into the other, as the porch into the temple. It is the great error of the times, *conjuncta dividere*, "to divide those duties which God hath joined together:" to have quick ears and withered hands; to hear, and not to do; to let in, and let out; nay, to let in, and to loathe. And in this reciprocal intercourse of hearing and neglecting many spin out the thread of their lives, and, at the end thereof, look for blessedness. And, certainly, if blessedness would dwell in the ear, there would be more blessed on earth than in heaven. And if an open ear were the mark of a saint, what great multitudes, how many millions, are there sealed to be kept unto salvation! But, to hear is not enough; and yet it may be too much, and may set us at a sadder distance from blessedness than we had been at if we had been deaf. Our ear may turn into a tongue, and be a witness against us. For that plea which the hypocrites make, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets," (Luke xiii. 26,) is a libel and an accusation, and draws down a heavier sentence upon them. For he bids them "depart from him," who would "work iniquity" after they had "heard him in their streets." (Verse 27.) "Blessed are they that hear the word of God," reacheth not home; and therefore there is a conjunction copulative to draw it closer, and link it with obedience: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, AND keep it." So this conclusion will necessarily follow,—that evangelical obedience and the strict observation of the doctrine of faith and good works is the only and immediate way to blessedness. "For not the hearers of the word, but the doers, shall be justified," saith St. Paul. (Rom. ii. 13.) And indeed there is no way but this.

For, First, God hath fitted us hereunto. For, can we imagine that he should thus build us up, and stamp his own image upon us, that we should be an habitation for owls and satyrs, for wild and brutish imaginations? that he did give us understandings to find out an art of pleasure, a method and craft of enjoying that which is but for a season? Was the soul made immortal for that which passeth away as a shadow, and is no more? Or have we dominion over the beasts of the field, that we should fall and perish with them? No: we are *ad majora nati*, "born

to eternity ;” and in ourselves we carry an argument against ourselves if we keep not God’s word. Indeed, faith, in respect of the remoteness of the object, and its elevation above the ken of nature, may seem a hard lesson, yet in the soul there is a capacity to receive it: and if the other condition, of obedience and doing God’s will, did not lie heavy upon the flesh, the more brutish part, we should be readier scholars in our Creed than we are. If we could hate the world, we should be soon in heaven. If we would embrace that which we cannot but approve, our infidelity and doubtings would soon vanish as a mist before the sun. Augustine hath observed in his book *De Religione*, that multitudes of good moral men, especially the Platonites, came in readily, and gave up their names unto Christ. But the *agenda*, “the precepts of practice,” are as the seed; and the heart of man, as the earth, the matrix, the womb to receive it. They are so proportioned to our reason that they are no sooner seen but approved, being as it were of near alliance and consanguinity with those notions and principles which we brought with us into the world. Only, those are written in a book, these in the heart: at the most, the one is but a commentary on the other. What precept of Christ is there which is not agreeable and consonant to right reason?—Doth he prescribe purity? The heart applauds it.—Doth he bless meekness? The mind of man soon says, “Amen!”—Doth he command us to “do to others as we would others should do to us?” (Matt. vii. 12.) We entertain it as our familiar and contemporary.—Doth he prescribe sobriety? We soon subscribe to it: for what man would profess himself a beast? And hence it comes to pass that we see something that is good in the worst, that we hear a panegyric of virtue from a man of Belial, that when we do evil we are ready to maintain it as good, and when we do an injury we call it “a benefit.” For no man is so evil that he desires not to seem good. “There is,” saith Basil, ἀδίδακτος ἐκκλησις τοῦ κακοῦ, “in the soul of man, a natural distaste of that which is evil.” But virtue, though it have few followers, yet hath the votes of all. Temperance! the drunkard will sing her praises. Justice! every hand is ready to set a crown upon her head. Valour is admired of all, and wisdom is the desire of the whole earth. So you see God’s precepts are proportioned to the soul, and the soul to God’s precepts, which hath δύναμιν πλαστικὴν, “a formative quality, a power to shape and fashion” and to bring forth something of the same nature, a creature made up in obedience, in holiness, and righteousness. Christ’s exhortation to prayer begets that devotion which opens the gates of

heaven; his command "to take up the cross" begets an army of martyrs; his command "to deny ourselves" lifts us up above ourselves, to that blessedness which is everlasting.

Secondly. As the precepts of Christ are proportioned to the soul, so being embraced they fill it with light and joy, and give it a taste of the world to come. For as Christ's "yoke is easy," but not till it is put on; so his precepts are not delightful till they are kept. Aristotle's happiness in his books is but an idea, and heaven itself is no more to us till we enjoy it. The precepts of Christ in the letter may please the understanding part, which is always well-affected and inclinable to that which is apparently true; but till the will have set the feet and hands at liberty, even that which we approve we distaste, and that which we call "honey" is to us as bitter as gall. Contemplation may delight us for a time, and bring some content, but the perverseness of our will breeds that worm which will soon eat it up. It is but a poor happiness, to think and speak well of happiness, as from a mount to behold that Canaan which we cannot enjoy. A thought hath not strength and wing enough to carry us to bliss. But when the will is subdued and made obedient to the truth, then God's precepts, which are "from heaven, heavenly," fill the soul with a joy of the same nature, not gross and earthy, but refined and spiritual; a joy that is the pledge and the earnest, as the apostle calls it, of that which is to come. When the will is thus subject, and framed and fashioned according to the rule and pattern which God hath drawn, it clothes itself as it were with the light of heaven, which is the original of this chaste delight. Then what a pearl is wisdom! what glory is in poverty! what honour in persecution! what a heaven in obedience! Then, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth!" saith David. (Psalm cxix. 103.) *In quibus operamur, in illis et gaudemus*: "For such as the work is, such is the joy." A work that hath its rise and original from heaven, a work drawn out according to the law which is the will of God, begun in an immortal soul and wrought in the soul, promoted by the Spirit of God and the ministry of angels, and breathing itself forth as myrrh or frankincense amongst the children of men, will cause a joy like unto itself; a true and solid joy; having no deceit, no carnality, no inconstancy in it; a beam from heaven, kindled and cherished by the same Spirit; a joy which receives no taint nor diminution from those sensible evils which to those that keep not God's word are as hell itself, and the only hell they think of; but giving a relish and sweetness to that which were not evil if we did think it so; making poverty, disgrace, and death

itself as fuel to foment and increase it ; upholding us in misery, strengthening us in weakness, and at the hour of death and in the day of judgment streaming forth into the ocean of eternal happiness. Blessedness invites, attends, and waits upon obedience ; and yet obedience ushereth it in, being *illux misericordiae* ; “ it inviteth God’s mercy,” and draws it so near as to bless us ; and it makes the blessing ours, not *ex rigore justitiæ*, “ according to the rigour of justice,” as I call that mine which I buy with my money. For, no obedience can equal the reward. And what can the obedience of a guilty person merit, but *ex debito promissi*, “ according to God’s promise,” by which he hath as it were entailed blessedness on “ those who hear his word, and keep it ? ” And “ God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love.” (Heb. vi. 10.) O let neither our obedience swell and puff us up as if God were our debtor, nor let us be so afraid of merit as not to keep God’s word ! Let not our anger against Papists transform us into Libertines ; and let us not so far abominate an error in judgment as to fall into a worse in practice ; let us not cry down merit, and carry a Pope, nay, hell itself, along with us, whithersoever we go. Let us not be Papists : God forbid ! And God forbid, too, that we should not be Christians ! Let us rather move like the seraphims, which, “ having six wings, covered their face ” with the uppermost, as not daring to look on the majesty of God ; and “ covered their feet ” with the lowest, as acknowledging their imperfection in respect of him ; but “ flew ” with those in the midst, ready to do his will. (Isai. vi. 2.) Let our obedience be like unto theirs : Let us tremble before God, and abhor ourselves ; but between these two, let the middle wings move, which are next to the heart, and let our hearty obedience work out its way to the end.

## APPLICATION.

For conclusion : Let us not look for blessedness in the land of darkness, amongst shades and dreams and wandering unsettled phantasms. Fancy is but a poor petard to open the gates of heaven with : let us not deceive ourselves. To call ourselves “ saints ” will not make us saints ; to feign an assurance will not “ seal us up to the day of redemption.” (Eph. iv. 30.) Presumption doth but look towards blessedness, whilst disobedience works a curse, and carries us irrecoverably into the lowest pit. What talk we of the imputed righteousness of Christ, when we have none of our own ? What boast we of God’s grace, when we “ turn it into wantonness ? ” (Jude 4.) The imputed righteousness of Christ is that we stand to when we are full of all iniquity : and

this we call "appearing in our elder brother's robes and apparel," that, as Jacob did, we may steal away the blessing. Thus the adulterer may say, "I am chaste with Christ's chastity:" the drunkard, "I am sober with Christ's temperance:" the covetous, "I am poor with Christ's poverty:" the revenger, "I am quiet with Christ's meekness:" he that doth not keep his word, may keep his favour; and, if he please, every wicked person may say that with Christ he is crucified, dead, and buried. As Calvisius Sabinus in Seneca thought he did do himself what any of his servants did; if his servant were a good poet, he was so; if his servant were well-limbed, he could wrestle; if his servant were a good grammarian, he could play the critic.\* And so if Christ fasted forty days and forty nights, we fast as long, though we never abstain from a meal. If Christ conquered the devil when he tempted him, we also are victorious, though we never resist him. If Christ opened not his mouth when he was haled to the slaughter, we also are as sheep, though we open our mouth as a sepulchre. And therefore, as Seneca speaks of that rich man, *Nunquam vidi hominem beatum indecentius*, "I never saw a man whose happiness did less become him:" so most true it is, this obedience is but an unbeseeming garment, because it had no other artificer but the phantasy to spin and work and make it up. Beloved, if we keep God's word, he will keep his, and impute righteousness to us, though we "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.) What talk we of applying the promises, which *he* may do *who* is an enemy to the cross of Christ? If we keep his word, the promises will apply themselves. And, indeed, applying of the promises is not a speculative, but a practick thing, an act rather of the will than of the understanding. When the will of man is subject to the will of God, this dew from heaven will fall of itself. "Upon them that walk according to the rule shall be mercy and peace, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. vi. 16.)

To conclude: If we "put on the Lord Jesus," if we put him on, all,—his righteousness, his obedience, his love, his patience; that is, if we "keep his word;" he will find his seal upon us by which he will know us to be his; and in this his likeness he will look upon us with an eye of favour, bless us here with joy and content, and so fit and prepare us for everlasting blessedness at the end of the world, when he shall pronounce to all that have kept his word that blessed welcome, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom" and blessedness "which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34.)

\* See note in page 9 of this volume.—EDIT,

## SERMON LXVIII.

## THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*—Colossians iii. 1.

THE resurrection of the dead is the prop and stay, the very life and soul, of a Christian. *Illam credentes sumus*, saith Tertullian: "By believing this we have our being, and are that which we are;" and without this it were better for us not to be. "If there be no resurrection of the dead," saith the apostle, "then are we of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. xv. 19.) Now much better were it for us not to be at all, than to be miserable. For let us take a general survey, not, as Solomon doth in the book of the Preacher, of all the pleasures in the world, but of all the virtues of a Christian: only deny the resurrection of the dead, and what are they else but extreme "vanity and vexation of the spirit?" (Eccles. i. 14.) To cleanse our hearts and wash our hands in innocency, to hold a strict watch over all our ways, to deny unto ourselves the joys and pleasures of the world, to pine our bodies with fasting, to bestow our hours on devotion, our goods on the poor, and our bodies on the fire; this, and whatsoever else is so full of terror to the outward man, and so full of irksomeness to the flesh, what may it seem to be but a kind of madness, if, when this little span of our life be measured out, there remain no crown, no reward of it; if, after so many strivings with ourselves, so many agonies, so many crucifyings of ourselves, so many pantings for life, we must in the end breathe out our last?

But, beloved, Christ is risen, and our faith in his resurrection is an infallible demonstration and a most certain pledge to us that we shall rise as he hath done. Of which that we may the better assure ourselves, we must observe, [First,] That, as St. Paul tells us, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, so must we bear the image of the heavenly;" (1 Cor. xv. 49;) so, on the contrary, we must make an account that as we hope to bear the image of the heavenly, so must we first bear the image of the earthy; and if we will bear a part in the resurrection to glory, which is a heavenly resurrection, we must have our part in a resurrection to grace, which is a resurrection here on earth. St. John distinguishes for me in his Revelation: "Blessed is he that hath his part in the first resurrection:" and he that hath

none there, shall bear no part at all in the second resurrection. (Rev. xx. 5, 6.) As it is with us in nature,—at the end of our days there is a death, and after that a resurrection,—so is it with us in grace; yet the days of sin can have an end in us, there is a death; for the apostle tells us, “We are dead to sin,” and “we are buried with him in baptism.” (Rom. vi. 2, 4.) Then after this death to sin cometh the resurrection to newness of life. *Mors perire est, resurgere restingui, nisi mors mortem, resurrectio resurrectionem antecedit*: “To die is quite to perish, to rise again worse than to have lain for ever rotting in the grave, if this first death go not before a second death, and this first resurrection before the second.”

Secondly. As in our life-time we die and rise again with Christ, so do we likewise in a manner ascend with him into heaven. For to “seek those things which are above,” is a kind of flight and ascension of the soul into heavenly places. And as God commanded Moses, before he died, to ascend up into the mountain, to see afar off and discover that good land which he had promised to the Jews; (Deut. xxxii. 49;) so is it his pleasure that through holy conversation and newness of life we should raise ourselves far above the rest of the world, and in this life-time, ὡς περ ἀπὸ τῆς περιωπῆς ὑψηλοτάτης, as Nazianzen speaks, “as it were from an exceeding high mountain,” discover and have some sight of that good land and of those good things which God hath laid up for those which are his. So by the apostle our regeneration and amendment of life, that is, our first resurrection, is called a “taste of the good Spirit and word of God,” a relish and “taste of the powers of the world to come.” (Heb. vi. 4, 5.)

Now of this first resurrection doth our blessed apostle speak in these words which I have read unto you: “If you be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above:” which speech, though it go with an “if,” and therefore seems to be conditional, yet if we look nearer into it, we shall find that indeed it is a peremptory and absolute command, in effect as if he had said, “Rise with Christ, and seek the things which are above.” And as the angel said to Peter, being in prison, “Arise up quickly,” at which words “the chains fell off from Peter’s hands;” (Acts xii. 7;) so God by his blessed apostle comes to us, who are in a stricter prison, and commands us in the first words, “Arise quickly;” and in the next, “Seek the things which are above;” and so makes as it were the chains fall off our hands, and delivers us out of prison “into the glorious liberty of the saints of God.” (Rom. viii. 21.) For the things of this world and our love unto them are fetters to our feet and manacles to our hands, holding

us down grovelling on the earth. And except these chains fall off, we can never arise and follow the angel, as Peter did. When Elias in a whirlwind went up to heaven, the text tells us that his "mantle fell from him:" (2 Kings ii. 13:) and he that will go up into heaven with Elias, and "seek the things that are above," cannot go with his cloak thither; he must be content to leave his mantle below, forego all things that are beneath, and, as St. Jerome speaks, *nudam crucem nudus sequi*, "follow the naked cross, naked and stripped from all the glory and pomp of the world."

Now this part of scripture which I have read is a part of the practice of our spiritual logic: for it teacheth us to frame an argument or reason by which we may conclude unto ourselves that our first resurrection is past. For if we "seek the things which are above," then are we "risen with Christ;" if not, we are in our graves still, our souls are putrefied and corrupt. And again: If we "be risen with Christ," then, as Christ at his resurrection left in his grave the clothes wherein he was buried, so these things of the world, in which we lie as it were dead and buried, at our resurrection to newness of life we must leave unto the world, which was the grave in which we lay. As it is in arched buildings, all the stones do interchangeably and mutually rest upon and hold up one another; and if you remove and take one away, the rest will fall: so it is here; these two especial stones of our spiritual building, our first resurrection, and our seeking of things above, do mutually hold up and mutually prove one another. For take away but the stone of our first resurrection, and that of seeking the things above will immediately fall; and take away the seeking of the things above, and there is no first resurrection. Let us but grant that we are "risen with Christ," and certainly we shall "seek the things above:" and if we find our minds fixed on "the things above," we may infallibly conclude unto ourselves that we are "risen with Christ."

But I must come to my division. These words, as all other conditional speeches and propositions do, naturally divide themselves into these two parts: 1. The antecedent or foregoing part: "If thou be risen with Christ:" 2. The consequent or following part: "Then seek those things which are above."

We shall limit and bound our discourse within these three considerations:

I. That our conversion and newness of life is a rising; which we ground upon these words, "If you be risen."

II. That this our conversion and rising must be early, without delay; for which we have warrant in the word *συνηγέρθητε*. The



apostle speaks in the time past ; for he saith not, " If you do rise ;" or, " If you will rise ;" but, " If you are risen," as supposing it to be already done.

III. Lastly. That the manifestation of our conversion, of this our rising with Christ, consists in our " seeking of those things which are above," as Christ's was by appearing to his disciples, and showing to them his hands and his feet : " If you be then risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

Of these in their order.

I. Though there be many words in scripture by which our newness of life is expressed, yet our apostle in divers places of his writings makes especial choice of this of rising ; as, " You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins ;" (Eph. ii. 1 ; ) and, " Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together in Christ, and hath raised us up together with Christ." (Verses 5, 6.) And again, he maketh use of that of the prophet Isaiah : " Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.) *Omnis causa eousque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recensetur*, saith Tertullian : " Every soul is dead with the first Adam, till it be raised up to life with the Second." We may truly say of it that it is departed, because God, who is the life of the soul, is departed from it. And it being destitute of the favour of God, which should actuate and quicken it, the stench of sin seizeth upon it, the worm of conscience gnaws it, the horror of infidelity makes it like unto the fiends of hell, *et fit in sepulchro corporis vivo funus animæ jam sepultæ*, " and a living body is made the sepulchre to a dead soul ;" a soul that is dead, and yet dies every moment, multiplies as many deaths as sins, and, if that of the Schools be true, *Peccator peccat in suo infinito*,\* would be dead and dying to all eternity. " Son of man, can these bones live ?" as the Spirit of God says unto the prophet. (Ezek. xxxvii. 3.) Can these broken sinews of the soul come together and be one again ? Can such a disordered clock, where every wheel is broken, be set again ? Can this dead soul be made a saint, and " walk before God in the land of the living ?" (Psalm cxvi. 9.) We may answer with the prophet, " Lord God, thou knowest : " (Ezek. xxxvii. 3 :) Thou knowest that this dissolved, putrefied carcass may see the light again ; that Mary Magdalene may rise from sin, as well as her brother Lazarus from the grave ; that as we are fallen with Adam, so we may rise again with Christ ; that these " stones," being formed into the faith of Abraham, may be made " the children of Abraham," and

\* " The sinner commits sin in his infinity."—EDIT.

this "generation of vipers," having spit out their venom, may "bring forth fruits worthy amendment of life." (Matt. iii. 7—9.)

And this our conversion may well be styled a rising, for many reasons; for many ways it resembles it:

1. First. The world may well go not only for a prison, but a grave. All the pomp and glory of it are but as dust and ashes, wherein we are raked up and buried. All the desires, all the pleasures of it are but as the grave-clothes wherewith we are bound. And in the midst of these allurements, in the midst of these glories and sensual objects, the soul rots and corrupts, and even stinketh in the nostrils of God. In the midst of all the greatness the world can cast upon us, the soul becomes worse than nothing. The love of the world is as unsatiable as the grave, and devours souls as that doth bodies. But when through the operation of the Spirit we are taken out of the world, we have our resurrection. Then it may be said of us, as Christ said of his disciples, "'They are not of the world;' (John xvii. 14;) for 'I have chosen them out of the world.' (xv. 19.) I have set them apart, and made them my 'peculiar people,' (1 Peter ii. 9,) that they may escape the 'pollutions of the world.' (2 Peter ii. 20.) They are born in the world, and in the world they are born again unto me. In the world they are, but not of the world." In the world they are, and in the world they traffic for another world, passing by this as not worth the cheapening; looking upon beauty as upon a snare, loathing riches as dung, and afraid of pleasures as of hell itself. They have a being, but not living, in the world; for their "life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) But as Christ, when he was risen, stayed yet a while upon earth before he ascended; so do Christians make a short abode and sojourn for a time in it, "as in a strange country, looking for a city whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. xi. 9, 10.) In the world they have nothing: for they have forsaken all, surrendered all the things of the world to the world, "earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes." Ἀπαρνεῖσθαι, (Matt. xvi. 24,) ἀποτάσσεισθαι,\* (Luke xiv. 33,) they are our Saviour's own words, by which not only the act of "forsaking" is signified, but such an affection of the mind as placeth all things under Christ, is ready to fling them away if they cannot keep them with Christ; having as if they had not, possessing "as if they possessed not," (1 Cor. vii. 30,) having stepped into the world as mariners do sometimes out of their ship to the shore, there gathering these cockles, but ready upon the sign given to cast them away, and return with haste into the ship. So that in respect of the world

\* "To deny one's self," and "to forsake."—EDIT.

it may be said of them as the angel said of Christ, "Why seek you the living amongst the dead? They are risen, they are not here." (Luke xxiv. 5, 6.)

2. Secondly. At our resurrection there will be a great change. For though "we shall not all sleep, we shall all be changed. This corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 53.) There will be *caro reformata et angelificata*, as Tertullian speaks; our "flesh will be new-refined and angelified." So in our conversion and regeneration there is *μεταλλοίωσις*, or *μετασχηματισμὸς*, saith Basil, a kind of "transmutation or transfiguration." "We are transformed into the image of Christ." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) For God, who hath made us after his own image, will have us re-formed unto the likeness of his Son. As the flesh, then, so the soul, must be *reformata et angelificata*, "refined and angelified," or rather *Christificata*, "Christified," having the same "mind which was in Christ Jesus." (Phil. ii. 5.) For we are no further risen *nisi in quantum cœperimus esse angeli*, "but so far forth as we begin to be like unto the angels;" but so far forth as we have that "unction" St. John speaks of, (1 John ii. 20,) and are like unto Christ. Where there is no change there is no rising; whilst our "bed is in the darkness," whilst corruption is our father, and the worm our mother and sister, (Job xvii. 13, 14,) we cannot be said to be risen: and whilst all the alliance we have is with the world, whilst it is both father and mother and sister unto us, whilst we "mind earthly things," (Phil. iii. 19,) we are still in our grave, nay, in hell itself, and death devoureth us. For let us call the world what we please, "our kingdom, our place of habitation, our delight;" yet indeed it is but our grave.

Will you now see a Christian rising? He rises fairly; not with a tongue which is a sword, and a mouth which is a sepulchre; (Psalm lvii. 4; v. 9;) but with a tongue which is his glory, (Psalm xxx. 12,) and a mouth full of songs of thanksgiving; not with a gadding eye, but an eye shut up by covenant; (Job xxxi. 1;) not with an itching, but with an humble, ear; (2 Tim. iv. 3;) not with a heart of stone, but with a heart "after God's own heart." (1 Sam. xiii. 14.) And as in the resurrection of the body, *unde videtur perdidisse quod erat, inde incipit hoc apparere quod non erat*; "from whence he doth seem to have lost that which he was, from thence he begins to appear to be that which he was not:" so, no change, no resurrection. It is a gross error, and deceives many, and keeps their heart dead within them as a stone, to think they are risen, when they are bound hand and foot, both dead and buried; to think they are

up and walking, when, alas! they are in their grave. As the philosopher speaks of ignorant and self-conceited men, that they might have proved men of understanding, had they not thought that they had already attained unto knowledge; so, many who profess the name of Christ might have also risen with Christ, but for a groundless conceit that this is a business of quick dispatch, and that, as Hymeneus and Philetus said, their "resurrection is past already." (2 Tim. ii. 18.) The rising of the thought, the raising of the voice, the lifting up of the hand, the elevation of the eye, every inclination, every proffer,\* every weak resolution, is with them a resurrection. But this is, as we vulgarly speak, to rise on the wrong side: and therefore,

3. In the Third place. As our resurrection, so our regeneration, must be universal, of every part. *Quid est resurrectionem credere, nisi integram credere?* saith Tertullian: "We do not believe the resurrection, if we do not believe it to be entire and of every part; of that part which is bruised, and of that part which is cut off." *Detruncatio membri, mors membri*: "The maiming or detraction of any member is the death of the member; and the body must be restored and revived in those parts which are dead." So that to be raised from the dead, is to be made a whole man. Blind Bartimeus must have his eyes, Mephibosheth his legs, and John Baptist his head again, or else we cannot call it a resurrection. So it is in our rising with Christ: the whole man must be renewed. "The man of God must be made perfect to every good work," (2 Tim. iii. 17,) and be "presented unblameable and unreprouable in God's sight," (Col. i. 22,) with an understanding enlightened and a heart renewed, with holy desires, and clean hands, and sanctified lips, which make up as it were the integrity of his parts. In the common affairs of the world many times we do things by halves: we begin to build and cannot make an end; we send our hopes afar off, and fall short in the way that we follow them; we propose to ourselves a mountain, and, when we have done all, it is but a mole-hill; because many cross accidents, like so many Sanballats, come in between to hinder our work: (Neh. iv. 8:) and yet nevertheless, though we cannot finish it, we may be said to have begun it, and to have done something. But here in our regeneration, in our rising with Christ, there can no cross accident intervene. All the hinderance is from the perverseness of our own wills. And therefore in this work nothing is done if any thing be left undone. If we end not, we begin not: and if we rise not in every part, in every faculty of our souls, we are

\* See the note in vol. ii. p. 59.—EDIT.

not risen. *Non vult nisi totam qui totam fecit*, "He that made the whole soul will have it all." If it be not restored in every part, God hath no part in it.

There be, say the Schools, *particulares voluntates*, "particular habits, particular dispositions, and particular wills" to some kind of virtues. "Some are born eunuchs," saith our Saviour. (Matt. xix. 12.) Some are chaste, not merciful: some are liberal, not temperate: some have a quick ear, and but a heavy hand. Some can hear, and speak, and walk peradventure a sabbath-day's journey; and yet we cannot say they are "risen." For these particular operations are not natural, but artificial; not the actions of a living soul, but like unto the motions of that artificial body which Albertus made; not proceeding from any life within us, but formed as it were by certain wheels and engines, by love of a good name, by outward respects, by a desire to bring our purposes about, and the like. This is not *generalis*, but *portionalis, resurrectio*, "a portional, a particular, a half-resurrection;" indeed, as good none at all. This is not God's manner of raising us: *Deus, cum liberat, non partem aliquam liberat, sed totam liberat*, saith St. Augustine: "When God raiseth us, he raiseth not a part, but he raiseth all." His voice is, *Lazare, veni foras*, "Lazarus, come forth;" (John xi. 43;) not the body alone, but the soul also; and not one faculty of the soul, but every power of it; that is, the whole man, all Lazarus. For if any part of Lazarus yet savour of rottenness and corruption, we cannot say that Lazarus is risen.

Let us not deceive ourselves: he that is "risen with Christ," stands not, as Solomon was pictured by an archbishop, half in heaven and half in hell; but his "conversation is in heaven," (Phil. iii. 20,) and he is raised "far above all principalities and powers," (Eph. i. 21,) above "the power of darkness" and "the prince of this world," (Col. i. 13; John xii. 31;) above "every high thing that exalteth itself against" Christ and "the knowledge of God." (2 Cor. x. 5.) He is not *partiaris divinae sententiae*, "a divider with God and the world," in one part from the heaven, heavenly, and in the other part from the earth, earthy; but he is awake and alive, and active in the performance of every good duty. His obedience is universal and equal, like unto a circle; and consists in an equality of life, in every respect answering to the rule, the command of God, as a circle doth in every part equally look upon the point or centre. And being thus qualified, we may say of him as the disciples did of Christ, *Surrexit verè*, "He is risen indeed." (Luke xxiv. 34.)

Thus, then, you see, our regeneration is here expressed by

our "rising with Christ." We might afford you many other resemblances; but we must hasten. But here some man may say, "'How are the dead raised?' and by what power do their souls come to this state of life?" I will not say with the apostle, "Thou fool." (1 Cor. xv. 35, 36.) But certainly there is no man so weak in faith but must confess that he that raiseth our vile bodies, must also raise our vile and unclean souls; he that calleth us from the dust of the grave, must also call us from the death of sin; he that changes our bodies, must renew our minds. In our corporal resurrection and in our spiritual resurrection God is all in all. But yet the soul doth not rise again as the body, which is dust and near to nothing; but as a soul which hath an understanding, though darkened; and a will, though perverted; and affections, though disordered. And as we pray, "Turn us," so we promise that we will "turn unto the Lord." (Lam. v. 21; iii. 40.) He purgeth us, and we cleanse ourselves: (Psalm li. 7; Isai. i. 16:) he breaks our hearts, and we plough them up. (Hosea x. 11.) We are told that he createth a new heart in us, (Ezek. xxxvi. 26,) and we are exhorted to "be renewed in our minds." (Eph. iv. 23.) But *solus Deus*: For all this, "God doeth all." For this new creature springeth up indeed out of the earth, and groweth up and flourisheth, *illapsâ, maturantis gratiâ*, "by the influence of God's maturing and ripening grace," which drops upon our hearts "as the rain, and distils as the dew upon the tender herb." (Deut. xxxii. 2.) Take, if you please, St. Bernard's determination; and it is this: "This our rising," saith he, "is from God, and from man; from God's grace, and from man's will: but not so as if these two were co-ordinate, but subordinate. Grace and our will do not share the work between them," *sed totum singula peragunt*, "but each of them perform the whole work: grace doth it wholly, and our will wholly." God doth save us, and we work out our salvation; *sed ut totum in illo, sic totum ex ipso*, "but so that [as] it is wrought by the will of man, so is man's will wholly enabled thereunto by the grace of God, which determineth the will, if not physically, at least morally." And this may satisfy any but those *qui vinci possunt, persuaderi non possunt*, "who may be overcome with the force of truth, but not persuaded."

We may ask the question, how we are raised; divines may dispute and determine at pleasure: but it would be a more profitable question to ask ourselves, whether we are willing to be raised; whether, when God calls us, and the angel is ready to roll away the stone, when his countenance shines upon us, and when all lets and impediments are removed, we had not rather

still rot in our graves than be up and walking. We may ask, with the woman that went to the sepulchre, "Who shall roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre?" (Mark xvi. 3:) but we must ask and examine ourselves also, whether we are well content it should be removed; and not rather defer our rising, in hope that a time will come when we shall be plucked out of our graves whether we will or no; and vainly think that we had not lain so long in the dust, had God been willing to raise us. This is not to magnify the grace of God, but to "turn it," as St. Jude speaks, "into wantonness," (verse 4,) and in a manner to charge God with our death; as if he were well pleased to see us in the grave, who calleth on us and commands us to come out, and threatens a worse place if we make not haste to come out.

To attribute therefore our rising to God, is our duty; and we deserve not his grace, if we will not acknowledge it: but to attribute our not rising to him, is a sin; and a sin which we must rise from, or we shall never rise. Wherefore as he says, "I will ransom thee from the power of the grave; I will redeem thee from death;" (Hosea xiii. 14;) so he says also by the prophet Isaiah, (chap. lx. 1,) and the apostle repeats it, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.)

II. That this our conversion, or our rising with Christ, must be like Christ's resurrection, early and without delay. The apostle's word is, *Συνηγέρθητε*, "Ye are risen with Christ."

This manner of speech which the apostle uses is a most effectual persuasion. In civil business we have a rule, *Fides habita sæpe obligat fidem*: "It is a good means to make one an honest man, to pretend that we take him to be a very honest man, and deal with him as if indeed he were so." For shame to fail of that expectation which goes of a man, many times makes him do better than he would. With this art doth St. Paul deal with his Colossians; and by pretending that he supposeth them to be already "risen," he doth most effectually persuade them to rise. For they cannot rise too soon; they cannot rise soon enough. For it is not here as it is in other affairs.

[First.] It is a property of things belonging to the world not to be seasonable but at certain times; and there is nothing which doth so much commend our actions as the choice of fit times and seasons in which they are done. Therefore *ἀκαιρία*, "intempestiveness," and to be ignorant of times and occasions fitting every business, is counted amongst men a great vice and imperfection. For the world is like a theatre, in which all things

cannot come at once upon the stage; and every thing hath but its part, its proper scene and time of action. It is with the things of this world as with harps and other curious instruments of music, which are put out of order with every change of weather: so the alteration of every circumstance brings them out of tune. But the things of God are of another nature. As himself is, such are they, always the same. *Pietas omnium horarum res est, omnium ætatum*: "The practice of godliness is at all times seasonable." That precept of St. Paul, "Be instant in season, and out of season," (2 Tim. iv. 2,) concerns not only the preacher of the word, but also every person that hath ears to hear it. If we preach the word at midnight, as St. Paul did, (Acts xx. 7,) if with David we rise up early before the morning-watch, (Psalm lvii. 8; cxxx. 6,) if we pray seven times a day, if in our secret chamber, if in public before the congregation, if before princes, yet still is it seasonable. Now as all other parts of religious exercise, so our regeneration and first conversion unto God, which is here called "rising," whensoever it comes, can never be intempestive. Though it come in our old age, as it did to St. Peter, yet God is able to strengthen the weakness and imperfections of age. Though it come in our youth, as it did to St. John, yet God is able to rule and guide the most corrupt ways and passions of youth. Though it come in our childhood, as the word of God came unto Samuel, yet God is able to give understanding to childhood; yea, God is able to open "the mouths of babes and sucklings." (Psalm viii. 2.)

Yet may you not take this as spoken to patronize any man in deferring and putting off his conversion from day to day, or that we may presume to make choice of what time we list, as if God would attend our leisure; but rather, to commend to you quickness of dispatch, and to show that you can never choose a time too soon. St. Paul here speaks not in the *present*, "If you do arise;" for this would argue that there were some time when we were not risen: nor in the *future*, "If you would arise;" for this were to give us some respite; "Yet a little slumber, yet a little sleep;" (Prov. vi. 10;) I may stay yet a little while in the grave, and yet rise soon enough:" but he speaketh in the time *past*, "If you are already risen," thus to anticipate and forestall all times for God. Our Saviour, speaking in the gospel of some parts of religious exercise, saith, "These things ought you to do, and not to leave the other undone." (Matt. xxiii. 23.) Indeed those actions of religion the occasions of which come oft in our way, and which are often to be done, of these it is sufficient to say, "These we must do:" but this act of godliness of which



we now speak, our regeneration and new birth, is of another nature. It is done but once by us in all our lives; and we may not say of it, *Hæc oportet facere*, "This we must do:" *Fecisse oportet, non facere*, "This ought to have been done long since, it must not be now to do." Βουλεύεσθαι οὐκ ἔτι ὄρα, ἀλλὰ βουλευθῆναι, saith Plato on another occasion: "It is not now a time to take advice, but to use advice long since taken." Before our conversion to God whatsoever time was spent was lost; *siquidem hominis Dei facta non debent aliunde numerari nisi ex quo a Deo natus est*; "Christians must begin to account their lives not from their natural birth, but from the day of their return unto God." *Fui quidem annos sexaginta, vixi vero tantum septem*, was the speech of an ancient Roman gentleman. "I have been, indeed," saith he, "three-score years; but I have lived but seven." Even from this Heathen may we learn to distinguish betwixt "to be" and "to live." Be it that we have spent our lives in studies and deep speculations, or in honourable employments, or in some gainful trade and vocation; yet all this is nothing, *quia non ad utilitatem nisi seculi partim*, because before this first resurrection the profit of these redoundeth only to the world. All the time thus spent we may account ourselves to have been, but not to have lived.

Our Saviour, according to the prophecies which went before of him, was to lie three days and three nights in his grave. (Matt. xii. 40.) And most true it is that he did so; for the scripture is plain. Yet many divines have had much ado to show how it was so. Such haste made he out of his grave, that we can scarcely account his three days and three nights. He was buried on Friday about the ninth hour, and on the first day he rose about the dawning of the day; thus purposing as it were to give death no more time than needs he must for the fulfilling of the scriptures. And this is not done without a kind of mystery. For as Christ's resurrection is a type and figure of our rising from sin, so his lying in the grave resembles the state of our unregeneration, in which we are but as dead men. Betimes in the morning, whilst it is yet dark, in the first dawning of our reason, ought we to arise to newness of life. For as soon as there is any possibility of becoming a Christian, every moment after that is too late, and too much time is taken from God.

Secondly. Indeed, advice and consultation commend other actions, and out of good discretion and judgment many times it is that it is long before we set upon them, and our delay is accounted our wisdom: but in this action counsel is unseasonable, neither can there be any reason why we should delay it.

It is not in the "building up ourselves in our most holy faith," as it is in other buildings. (Jude 20.) The wise man in the Gospel, intending to build a tower, first sits down and considers his means, whether he be able to compass it. (Luke xiv. 28.) But in this we need not advise with our purse. Though it be a high tower, yea, higher than that of Babel, and reacheth up to heaven itself, yet none so poor but is of sufficient ability to finish it. When our Saviour Christ called his disciples, we read not of any that made scruple; but forthwith, as soon as they were called, without casting any doubt or scruple at all, they immediately arose and followed him. No need of deliberation in that action wherein all the danger is not to do it. When St. Cyprian was before the magistrate, and now ready to be condemned to the fire for Christ and his cause, the magistrate began to counsel him to advise better, and take time to deliberate; but the blessed martyr replies, *Fac quod tibi præceptum est: in re tam justâ nulla consultatio.* "Do you," saith he, "what you have commission to do: in so just an action as this there is no need of consultation."

Again: as it is with new vessels, they savour long of the liquor with which at the first they were seasoned, and the longer the liquor lies in them the stronger will they relish of it; even so it is with us. Whilst yet we are but new vessels, even as soon as we come from the wheel, from the hand of our Maker, by the envy of the devil we become vessels of dishonour, seasoned with sin, as it were with unsavoury liquor; and of this more or less we savour all the days of our life. The best way, then, if not quite to wash out, yet to abate, at least, this taint and evil savour, is betimes to change the liquor, and not to suffer the infection to grow stronger by longer standing.

Thirdly. When question was sometime made, at what time of age it was best for men to marry; it was answered, that for old men it was too late, and for young men too soon. This was but a merry reply. But the truth is, many of our civil businesses, whensoever they are done, are either done too soon or too late; for they are seldom done without some inconvenience: but this our rising may peradventure be too late for old men, but it can never be too timely for the young. It is a lesson in husbandry, *Serere ne metuas*, "Be not afraid to sow your seed; when the time comes, delay it not." And it is a good lesson in divinity, *Vivere ne metuas*, "Be not afraid to live; you cannot be alive too soon." *Vult, et non vult*, "He wills, and he wills not," is the character of a sluggard, who would rise, and yet loves his grave; would see the light, and yet loveth darkness better than

light; like the twin, (Gen. xxxviii. 28, 29,) puts forth his hand, and then draws it back again; doth make a show of lifting up himself, and sinks back again into his sepulchre. Awake, then, from this sleep early, and stand up from the dead, (Eph. v. 14,) at the first sound of the trump, at the first call of grace. But if any have let pass the first opportunity, let him bewail his great unhappiness, that he hath stayed longer in this place of horror, in these borders of hell, than he should, and, as travellers which set out late, *moram celeritate compensare*, "recompense and redeem his negligence by making greater speed." And now we should pass to our last consideration, That the manifestation of this our conversion and rising consists in the "seeking of those things which are above." But the time is well-near spent, and the present occasion calls upon me to shorten my discourse.

III. For conclusion: Let me but remember you, that this our rising must have its manifestation; and as St. James calls upon us to "show our faith by our works," (James ii. 18,) so must we show and manifest our resurrection by our "seeking those things which are above." It is not enough, with St. Paul, to rise into the third heaven; (2 Cor. xii. 2;) but we must rise and ascend with Christ "above all heavens." (Eph. iv. 10.) Nor can we conceal our resurrection, and steal out of our graves; but as Christ arose and "was seen," as St. Paul speaks, "of above five hundred brethren at once;" (1 Cor. xv. 6;) and as St. Luke, having told us of Christ, "The Lord is risen," presently adds, "and hath appeared unto Simon;" (Luke xxiv. 34;) so there must be, after our resurrection, an *Apparuit*. We must "appear" unto our brethren; appear in our charity, forgiving them; in our patience, forbearing; in our holiness of life, instructing them; in our hatred of the world, and our love of those things which are above.

Indeed some men's rising is but an apparition, a phantasm, a shadow, a visor, and no more: but this hinders not us, when we are risen, but we may make our appearance; nor must the Pharisee fright away the Christian. *Quædam videntur, et non sunt*: "Many things appear to be that which indeed they are not:" but this action cannot be, if it do not appear; if there be no apparition, there is no resurrection. It is natural to us, when we rise, to show ourselves. If we rise to honour, you may see us in the streets, like Agrippa and Bernice, *μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας*, "with great pomp." (Acts xxv. 23.) If we rise in our estates, (for that is the worldling's resurrection; and not to rise thus, with him, is indeed to be dead,) you may see it in the

next purchase. If we rise and increase in knowledge, (which is a rising from the grave of ignorance,) then *scire meum nihil est*, we are even sick till we vent; "knowledge is nothing, if the world cry us not up for men of knowledge." And shall we be so ready to publish that which the world looks upon with an evil eye, and conceal that from men's eyes which only is worth the sight, and by beholding of which even evil-doers "may glorify God in the day of visitation?" (1 Peter ii. 12.) Shall Dives appear in his purple, and Herod in his royal apparel, and every scribbler be in print? and do we think that rising from sin is an action so low that it may be done in a corner; that we may rise up, and never go abroad to be seen *in albis*, in our Easter-day apparel, "in the white garment" of innocency and newness of life; never make any show of the riches and glory of the gospel; have all our goodness locked up *in archivis*, "in secret," nothing set forth and published to the world? What is this but to conceal, nay, to bury, our resurrection itself?

Nay, rather, since we are "risen with Christ," let us be seen in our march, accoutred with "the whole armour of God." (Eph. vi. 11.) Let us be full of those "good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them;" (Eph. ii. 10;) for by these we appear to be risen, and they make us shine as stars in the firmament. We may pretend, perhaps, that God is the searcher and seer of the heart. Well, he is so: *Sed tamen luceat opera*, saith the father: "Yet let thy light shine forth;" make thy apparition. For as God looketh down into thy heart, so will thy good works ascend and come before him, and he hath pleasure in them. "Lift up your hearts:" they are the words we use before the Administration: and you answer, "We lift them up unto the Lord." Let it appear that you do. And therefore, as you lift up your hearts, so lift up your hands also. Lift up pure and clean hands, such hands as may be known for the hands of men risen from the dead. Let us now begin to be that which we hope to be,—spiritual bodies; that, the body being subdued to the spirit, we may "rise with Christ" here to newness of life, which is our first resurrection; and, when he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead, we may have our second resurrection, to glory, in that place of bliss where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. To which [may] he bring us who is our "resurrection and life," (John xi. 25,) even "Jesus Christ the righteous," (1 John ii. 1,) who died for our sins, and rose again "for our justification!" (Rom. iv. 25.) To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory for evermore.

## SERMON LXIX.

## ST. PAUL'S DOUBT AND DESIRE.

*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. (Or, For I am greatly in doubt on both sides, desiring to be loosed, and to be with Christ; which is best of all.)—Philippians i. 23.*

WE may here behold our blessed apostle St. Paul as it were between heaven and earth, doubtfully contemplating the happiness which his death, and the profit which his life, may bring; perplexed and labouring between both, and yet concluding for neither side. "To be with Christ" is best for him; to remain on earth is best for the Philippians. What can be better for him than heaven? and what can be better for his brethren than by his ministry to be fitted and prepared for heaven? "It is much better," saith he, "for me;" there he lays hold on Abraham's bosom: "But it is more needful for you; and I know I shall abide with you all;" (verses 24, 25;) there he doth as it were pull his hand back again, as willing to lose so much time out of Paradise to serve his brethren on earth, a valley of tears and misery. There be poor to be fed, poor souls to be delivered out of the snare of the devil, and snatched out of the fire, the church to be increased, God to be honoured in his saints: and now, though "pressing forward to the prize" and price "of his high calling," (Phil. iii. 14,) he stays and demurs, he checks his desires; he desires, and he desires not. He is in a great strait: he feels a double motion in himself, and in appearance a contrary motion; a desire to live, and a desire to be dissolved; a desire to be with Christ, and a desire to remain with his brethren: both springing from the same principle, the love of God. He would lay down his earthly tabernacle because he loves him, and he would "abide in the flesh" because he loves him. *Mortem habet in desiderio, vitam in patientiâ*, saith St. Jerome: "He desires to die, and yet is willing to live," and to both "the love of Christ constraineth" him. (2 Cor. v. 14.) "For," saith he, "I am in a great strait, desiring to depart," or, "to be loosed," "and to be with Christ; which is far better."

In this speech St. Paul presents unto us his doubt and his desire: his doubt, which to choose, life or death; and his desire, fixed on the last,—his departure and dissolution; a desire so reasonable that it leaves no room for doubt. For, 1. He doth not simply and absolutely desire it, but upon reason; and his reason

is most warrantable, most undeniable : he would “ depart, to be with Christ.” 2. That reason is backed with another, with a *Multò magis melius*, “ It is far better.” These carry strength enough, one would think, to deliver St. Paul out of his strait, to redeem him from all perplexed doubtings. For it is an easy matter to choose when we know what is best. When the object appears unto us with a *multò magis melius*, it is a foundation sure and firm enough, and we may soon build a resolution on it. What doubt, when the object appears in such beauty and excellency? When heaven-gates stand open, who can doubt to go in? When Christ is so near a man, as but to be dissolved and loosed is to meet him, shall he draw back and doubt? And yet St. Paul doubts and is in a great strait, and professeth he knows not what to choose. (Phil. i. 22.)

We will therefore,

I. In the First place, behold him in his strait, and consider his doubt; and then,

II. In the Second, commend to you his desire. And the topics or reasons to commend it by are wrapped up in the object, even in death itself: For, 1. It is but *ἀνάλυσις*, “ a dissolution, a resolving of the whole into its parts.” 2. It brings us to Christ; and then we cannot but conclude that that is “ much the best,” and the fittest object for our desire to fasten itself upon.

These are the particulars; and with these we shall exercise your devotion at this time.

I. First. Let us behold St. Paul in his strait, and there see him ignorant, and yet knowing, what to choose; doubting, and yet resolving what is best. “ What to choose I wot not;” (verse 22;) and, “ To be with Christ is best,” in the text; and in the next verse, “ To abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” And we may say with Bernard, *Affectus locutus est, non intellectus*, that “ it was the language of his love and affection, not of his understanding.” Yet he spake with the spirit, and he spake with his understanding also. His understanding did dictate what was best for himself, and he well understood what was best for them: but his love to Christ and them put upon him these golden fetters, bound him within this strait, and swallowed up his love to himself, nay, to his will and understanding, in victory. And now he will not have what he desires, he knows not what he knows, and cannot choose that which he cannot but choose. Such riddles doth love make, and yet unfolds them; such perplexities doth it bring us to, and yet resolves them; such seeming contradictions doth it put us upon, and yet makes them plain. The apostle would be with Christ, and yet remain with the Philip-

pians ; he would be dissolved, and yet live ; he would be in Paradise, and yet stay on earth ; he would have what is best for himself, and yet will have what is best for the Philippians' "furtherance and joy of faith ;" (verse 25 ; ) and his love of God's glory and the church's good reconciles all. This hath the pre-eminence in all ; this bows and sways his will from that which was best for himself to that which was best for others ; this answers all objections ; this is able to justify the greatest solecism ; this hath a privilege, that it cannot be defamed. "Ἔστι γὰρ νόμος, saith Plato, "By a kind of law" love hath the prerogative of honour ; makes slavery free, and disgrace honourable ; makes earth a fitter place for a saint than heaven ; makes service more necessary than reward ; and made this apostle willing to retire even when he was entering into his Master's joy. The glory of God and the good of his church, being put in the scales, outweigh our will and earnest desire, and make us willing prisoners for a while longer in these tabernacles of flesh. St. Paul here was willing to prolong his trouble, to defer his joy, and to stay some time from Christ, that he might carry more company along with him.

From this heroic spirit and height of love was that strange wish of his to be "accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake." (Rom. ix. 3.) *Pro amore Christi noluit habere Christum*, saith Jerome : "His love of Christ did seem so far to transport him, that, to honour him, he would even lose him." And so some of latter time have interpreted those words, that he was willing to purchase the salvation of his brethren with the loss of his own, and to redeem them from destruction to fall into it himself. But this had been such a love *cujus non audeo dicere nomen*, a love "which was never yet heard of in the world." This had been a wish inconsistent with love. For how can one man's soul be the price of another ? Nor can it be lawful for any Christian to wish the loss of that which he is bound to "work out with fear and trembling : " (Phil. ii. 12 :) or, if it were, it would far exceed the love of Jesus Christ himself, who was Love itself. The apostle's love was great unto his brethren, but not irregular : it laid aside all respect of himself, but not of the precepts of Christ : it trod down the man, but not the Christian, under its feet : it devoted the honour and repute and esteem which he had in Christ's church to his brethren, but not his soul. "I could wish to be accursed," "to be *anathema*," that is, to be in esteem as a sacrilegious person, who for devouring holy things is *anathema*, "cut off and separated from the society of men ;" to suffer for them the most ignominious death ; (for so the word doth often

signify;) to be separate from Christ, from the body and church of Christ, and, of his apostle and ambassador, to be "made the off-scouring of the world," the most contemptible person on earth, "a spectacle" to God and "to men and to angels." (1 Cor. iv. 13, 9.) And this could not but proceed from a high degree and excess of love. Love may break forth and pass over all privileges, honours, profits, yea, and life itself; but it never leaves the law of God behind it. For the breach of God's law is his dishonour; and love, if it be spiritual and heavenly, is a better methodist than to seek to gain glory to God by that which takes it away; at the same time to cry, "Hail!" to Christ, and crucify him. It was indeed a high degree of the love of God's glory and his brethren's salvation which expressed this wish here from the apostle, and which brought him into this strait: but his wish was not irregular, and his doubt was not of that nature but he could make himself a way to escape, and did resolve at last against himself for the glory of God and for the good of his brethren.

1. For the glory of God, first: that that must be the first, the first mover of our Christian obedience. For though there be other motives, and we do well to be moved by them,—the perfecting of our reason, the beautifying of the soul, and the reward itself; yet this is first to be looked upon with that eye of our faith wherewith we look upon God. Heaven is a great motive; but the glory of God is above the highest heavens, and for his glory's sake we have our conversation there. We do not exclude other motives as unfit to be looked upon. For it is lawful, saith Gregory, for a Christian *remuneracionis linteo sudores laboris sui tergere*, "to make the sight of the reward as a napkin to wipe off the sweat of his brows, and comfort the labour of his obedience with hope." But the chief and principal matter must be the glory of God. The other ends are involved in this, *sicut rota in rotâ*, "as a wheel within a wheel," a sphere within a sphere: but the glory of God is "the first compassing wheel, which must set all the rest a-working." We must neither live nor die but to God's glory. The glory of God and our happiness run round in the same cord or gyre; but the glory of God is *primum mobile*,\* still on the top. And then our love to God comes nearest and hath the fairest resemblance to the love God hath to us; whose actions are right in themselves, though they end in themselves; whose glory is the good of his creature.

In a word: he that loveth God perfectly, cannot but deny himself, neglect himself, perish and be lost to himself; but then he riseth again and is found in God, whilst he thinks nothing

\* "The first moving cause."—EDIT.



but of him, whilst he thinks he is loved of him ; and thus lives in him, whilst he is thus lost. *Amor testamentum amantis*, "Our love to God should be as our last will and testament," wherein we deliver up all to him, our whole life on earth, and some few years which we might have in heaven, "to him we thus love." To this high pitch and unusual degree of love our apostle had attained. What is his desire, but "to be with Christ?" O for the wings of a dove! (Psalm lv. 6:) for he cannot be with him soon enough. But then the desire of God's glory stays him in his flight, and detains him yet longer among the sons of men, to make them the sons of God, and so to glorify God on earth. And this inclination to glorify God is in a manner natural to those who are made "partakers of the divine nature;" (2 Peter i. 4;) and the nearer we come to the nature of God, the more do we devote and surrender ourselves for his glory. We will do any thing, suffer any thing, for the glory of God.

2. In the next place: This love of God's glory hath inseparably united to it the love of our brethren's good. For wherein is God's glory more manifested than in the renewing of his image in men, who are "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ," εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον Θεοῦ, "to the glory and praise of God." (Phil. i. 11.) It is true, "the heavens declare the glory of God:" (Psalm xix. 1:) but the glory of God is not so resplendent in the brightest star, in the sun when he runneth his race, as in the new creature, in man transformed by the renewing of his mind. There is God's image; "nay," saith Tertullian, "his similitude and likeness:" there he appears in glory. There his wisdom, his justice, his mercy are displayed and made manifest; there his glory appears as in his holy temple. For as "the woman is the glory of the man," (1 Cor. xi. 7,) in being subject to him; so are we the glory of God, when we are *Deiformes*, "when our will is subject and conformed to him, when our will is bound up in his will." For then it may be said, that "God is in us of a truth," (1 Cor. xiv. 25,) shining in the perfection of beauty, in those graces and perfections which are the beams of his, in our meekness, and liberality, and justice, and patience, and long-suffering, which are the Christian's tongue and glory, and do more fully set forth God's praise than the tongues of men and angels can do. Thus God's glory is carried along in the continued stream and course of all our actions: thus doth it break forth and is seen in every work of our hand, and is the echo and resultance of every word we speak: *the echo of every word!* nay, the spring of every thought, which beget that word and work.

Now to improve the glory of God in his brethren, to "build them up in their most holy faith," (Jude 20,) and upon that foundation to raise that holiness and righteousness which are the fairest representations of it, did St. Paul, after that contention and luctation in himself, after he had looked upon that place which was prepared for him in heaven, and that place of trouble and anxiety to which he was called on earth, determine for that which was not best for himself, but most fit and necessary to promote God's glory by the furtherance of the Philippians' faith. And thus as every creature doth by the sway of nature strive to get something of the like kind, something like unto itself, as fire by burning kindles and begets itself in every matter that is combustible, so doth every true disciple of Christ strive to make every man he sees a disciple. Abraham, as he was called "faithful Abraham," (Gal. iii. 9,) so made himself "the father of the faithful," (Rom. iv. 11,) and did "command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord;" (Gen. xviii. 19;) which was to beget them in the Lord. Joshua and his household "will serve the Lord." (Joshua xxiv. 15.) David, "having tasted how gracious the Lord was," calls others to make trial, and drink of the same cup. (Psalm xxxiv. 8.) This is the good man's, nay, the angel's, jubilee, to see others turn unto the Lord. The weeping prophet wished his "head a fountain of tears," when men dishonoured God by their rebellion. (Jer. ix. 1.) Moses's wish was that all the people could prophesy. (Num. xi. 29.) One prophet draws on "a goodly fellowship of prophets," one apostle "a glorious company," one saint "a noble army." For when the spirit of holiness, whose operation is like that of fire, is hot within men, it spreads itself violently like that element, which hath *voracitatem in toto mundo avidissimam*, as Pliny speaks, "is a restless element, and either spreads or dies."\* Grace, being kindled from the Father of lights, from him who is Light itself, takes in others, and licks up every thing about it, as the fire did which Elias called down from heaven. (1 Kings xviii. 38.) St. Paul being inflamed with this heat, what would not he do? what would not he suffer? He would "spend and be spent;" (2 Cor. xii. 15;) he would offer up himself a sacrifice for the Philippians; he would stay on earth when he desired to depart; he would abide in the flesh,—an irksome thing to one so spiritualized, and now ready to put on the crown which was "laid up for" him; (2 Tim. iv. 6, 8;) he would retire for a while even from joy itself, that the Philippians might become what he was truly styled, "the servants of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 1.)

\* *Historia Naturalis*, lib. ii. cap. 107.

We may think it perhaps a strange sight, to see so great an apostle, so filled with revelations, one that had been in the third heaven, to be now in such a strait; one that had received the truth, "neither by men, nor of men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," (Gal. i. 1, 12,) to doubt and to be ignorant what to do. But thus to be at a stand and in doubt, thus to consider both conditions, of this and the next life, and then to conclude against himself for the glory of God and the salvation of his brethren, could not but proceed from a most heroic and divine spirit, a spirit that had subdued the flesh, nay, conquered itself, and preferred the glory of God before his own will, though regular and warrantable; the same spirit which was in Christ, *qui, quod voluit effici, id ipsum concedi sibi non voluit*, as Hilary speaketh, "who would not have that granted which he would have done." I say, none but those who have such a spirit are subject to such a doubt; none but those who are thus free are brought to such a strait.

They who are fleshly and worldly-minded, "the children of this world, are so wise," indeed, "in their generation," (Luke xvi. 8,) that they are never thus perplexed, they never demur or doubt with St. Paul, they are never shut up in his strait. No; as they have not "tasted of the powers of the world to come," (Heb. vi. 5,) so it is not in all their thoughts. *Nusquam aqua hæret*, "They never stick or are in perplexity," but are sudden and positive, and soon conclude for themselves, "Here, here, let us build us a tabernacle; here, amidst the fading pleasures and flying vanities of this world; here, amongst shadows and apparitions, amongst those killing temptations which we love, amongst those occasions of evil which we will run and meet and embrace; in the midst of all the snares the enemy can lay, which we delight to be caught in, and look upon our fetters as ornaments. Here let us dwell for ever, for we have a delight therein." What is the glory of God unto us, who thus "glory in our own shame?" (Phil. iii. 19.) What will we do to save our brother's soul, who so prodigally prostitute our own? Not a spark of the fire in us which was in St. Paul; no trouble, no doubt in us, not the least consideration of God, ourselves, and our brethren. And thus we pass on securely, wantonly, delicately, not fearing the bitterness of death, never in any strait, till we are shut up in that prison out of which we shall never come out. And this is the most pleasing and the most sad condition we can fall into. This security is our danger. This lifting ourselves up is our ruin. A diligent, troubled, perplexed Christian shall find light in darkness, resolution in doubting, and a way to escape in the greatest strait.

To conclude this : If the same mind were in us which was in St. Paul, "if the same mind were in us which was in Christ Jesus," (Phil. ii. 5,) we should then look upon our calling to be Christians as the most delightful and the most troublesome calling. We should not hope to pass through it without rubs and difficulties, without doubts and disputings in ourselves. We should compare one thing with another, often put up questions, and have fightings and strugglings in ourselves. We should desire that which is best for ourselves, and conclude for that which is best in the sight of God. For this we must do,—even sometimes curb and restrain ourselves in our lawful desires, and, when we set forth for the glory of God, leave them behind us ; stay his leisure to do him service ; deny ourselves in our own desires ; desire to put off the flesh, and yet resolve to abide in the flesh ; lay down all our wills and desires, and bow to the will and glory of God. With St. Paul here, we may retain both,—a resolution to glorify God in our mortal bodies, and "a desire to be loosed and to be with Christ ;" cheerfully entertain the one, and yet earnestly desire the other. They were both here in the apostle, and the same love was mother and nurse to them both. "I am in a great strait ;" it was love perplexed him ; and the love of Christ raised up this "desire to be with" him : "For I am in a great strait, desiring to be loosed, and to be with Christ."

And so we pass from St. Paul's doubt to his desire.

II. And indeed, had he not been in this strait, he had not had this desire, which nothing can raise up but the love of God and his glory. This desire carries nothing in it that hath any opposition to the will of God. It is not wrought in us by impatience, or sense of injuries ; for the Christian hath learnt to forgive them : not by contumely and disgrace ; for the Christian can bear, *et contumeliam contumeliæ facere*, "and so fling disgrace upon contumely itself." It is not the effect of any evil ; for the Christian can "overcome evil with good." (Rom. xii. 21.) The Stoics indeed thought, *quærendam potiùs mortem quàm servitutem ferendam*, "that the best remedy for slavery, contumely, or a tedious sickness, was to force the soul from the body, which was now become a prison and place of torment to it." And in this *they* did contradict themselves, *who* brought in their wise man senseless of pain, even on the rack and wheel. When the body is an unprofitable burden, unserviceable to the soul, *oportet educere animam laborantem*, "we ought to drive the soul out of such an useless habitation." *Cùm non sis quod esse velis, non est quod ultrà sis* : "When thou art not what thou

wouldst be, there is no reason thou shouldst be any longer." *Quare mori voluerim, quæris? En, quia vivam:* "Would you know the reason why I would die? The only reason is, Because I do live." These were the speeches of men "strangers from the commonwealth of Israel," τῶν ἕξωθεν, "of those who were without," (1 Tim. iii. 7,) without Christ, and so "without God in this world." (Eph. ii. 12.) But the Christian keeps his station, and moves not from it *injussu Imperatoris*, "but when the Lord of all the world commands;" who hath given us a soul to beautify and perfect with his graces; but hath not given us that power over it, when it is disquieted and vexed, as he hath given to the magistrate over us if we offend and break the peace of the commonwealth. *Qui seipsum occidit, est homicida, si est homo:* "He that kills himself, is a murderer and homicide, if he be a man." And he that thus desires death, desires it not to that end for which it is desirable, "to be with Christ," but to be out of the world, which frowns upon him, and handles him too roughly, which he hath not learnt to withstand, nor hath will to conquer. This desire is like that of the damned, that hills might cover them, and mountains fall on them, that they might be no more. (Rev. vi. 16.)

No; this desire of St. Paul is from the heaven, heavenly, drawn from that place where his conversation was, wrought in him by the will of God, and bowing in submission to his will; a longing and panting after that rest and sabbath which remains, (Heb. iv. 9,) after that crown which was laid up for him. (2 Tim. iv. 8.) And this desire filled the hearts of all those who with St. Paul loved God in sincerity and truth; in whom the soul, being of a divine extraction, and like unto God, and cleaving and united to him, had a kind of striving and inclination to the things above, and was restless and unquiet till it came to rest in him who is the centre of all good. Here they acted their parts in the world as on a stage, contemned, hated, reviled it, trod it under foot, and longed for their *exit*, "to go out." *Væ mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est!* saith David: "Woe is me, that I sojourn in it any longer." (Psalm cxx. 5.) So Elias, who could call down fire from heaven, give laws to the clouds, and shut and open heaven when he would, cries out unto God, "It is enough; take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." (1 Kings xix. 4.) And this affection the gospel itself instils into us in that solemn prayer, "Thy kingdom come;" wherein we desire, saith Tertullian, *maturiùs regnare, et non diutiùs servire*, "to reign in heaven sooner, and not to stay longer and serve and drudge upon the earth." "Wretched man

that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death," (Rom. vii. 24,) this whole state and generality of sins, of calamities, and those evils which the world swarms with, life brings along with it? So Pharaoh, speaking of the locusts which were sent, "Intreat," saith he, "the Lord your God to take away this death from me." (Exod. x. 17.) This desire that was in St. Paul, in some degree possesseth the heart of every regenerate person, and is nourished and fomented in them by the operation of the blessed Spirit, as a right Spirit, a Spirit of love, working in us the love of God, and as a Spirit of peace, filling our hearts with peace, making our conscience a house of peace, as the ark of God, as the temple of Solomon, where no noise was heard. We love Christ, and would be there where his honour dwelleth; our conscience is at rest, and we have confidence in God.

1. Now, First, to love God is not a duty of so quick dispatch as some imagine. It is not enough to speak good of his name, to call upon him in the time of trouble, to make laws against those which take his name in vain, to give him thanks for that he never did and will certainly punish, to make our boast of him all the day long. For do not even hypocrites and Pharisees the same? But to love him is to do his will, and keep his commandments. By this we glorify him. "I have glorified thee on earth," saith Christ; and the interpretation follows, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do;" (John xvii. 4;) that is, I have preached thy law, declared thy will, published both thy promises and precepts, by the observation of which men may love thee, and long after thee, and be delivered from the fear of death. *Idem velle et idem nolle, ea demum est firma amicitia*: "Then are we truly servants and friends to God, when we have the same will, when we have no will of our own." "The sting of death is sin;" and there is no way to take it out, to spoil this king of terror of his power, but by subduing our affections to our reason, the flesh to the spirit, and surrendering up our wills unto God. Then we dare look death in the face, and ask him, "Where is thy terror? Where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. xv. 55, 56.) God loves them that love him; nay, he cannot but love them, bearing his image, and being his workmanship in Christ. And he that is thus loved and thus loves cannot but hasten and press forward, and "fly like the doves," as the prophet speaketh, "to the windows" of heaven. (Isai. lx. 8.) It is a famous speech of Martin Luther, *Homo perfectè credens se esse heredem Dei, non diu superstes maneret*: "A man that perfectly and upon sure grounds doth believe himself to be the child and heir of God, would not long survive that

assurance, but would be swallowed up and die of immoderate joy." This is that transformation and change by which our very nature is altered. Now heaven is all, and the world is nothing. All the rivers of pleasures which this world can yield, cannot quench this love. What is beauty to him that delights in the face of God? What is riches to him whose treasure is in heaven? What is honour to him who is *candidatus angelorum*, "whose ambition is to be like unto the angels?" This true, unfeigned love ravisheth the soul, and setteth it as it were in heavenly places. This makes us living-dying men, nay, dead before we depart; not sensible of pleasures which flatter us, of injuries which are thrown upon us, of miseries which pinch us; having no eye, no ear, no sense, no heart for the world; willing to lose that being which we have in this shop of vanities, and "to be loosed," that we may "be with Christ."

2. Secondly. This love of God, and this obedience to his will, not only placeth us upon, but, as Solomon speaks, makes us, "an everlasting foundation," (Prov. x. 25,) by raising up in us a good conscience. And this it doth as necessarily as fire sendeth forth heat, or the sun light. For it is impossible to love God sincerely, and not to know it; and it is as impossible to know it, and not to speak it to our own heart, and comfort ourselves in it. For conscience follows science. A light it is which directs us in the course of our obedience; and when we have finished our course, by the memory it is reflected back upon us: it tells us what we are to do, and what we have done. We have a kind of short but useful genealogy in St. Paul: "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned." (1 Tim. i. 5.) From faith unfeigned ariseth a good conscience; from that, the purity of the inward man; from that, that peace which maketh us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace:—a golden chain, where every link fits us in some degree for a dissolution; nay, where every link is unseparably annexed to each other; and with it we cannot but tend naturally and cheerfully, yea, and hasten, to our place of rest. For our conscience is our judge, our God upon earth: and if it be of this royal extraction, the product of our faith and obedience, it will judge aright. It will draw the *Euge* to us, and tell us what sentence the Judge will pass at the last day: and we even now hear in our ears, "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter into thy Master's joy." (Matt. xxv. 21.) And when our conscience hath passed this sentence upon us, we have *παρρησίαν*, "boldness and confidence" towards God. (Heb. x. 19.) This, this is an everlasting foundation; and upon it

we build as high as heaven. Our thoughts and desires, our longings and pantings, soar up even to that which is within the veil, which is yet hidden, and we are earnest to look into.

Let us, then, "exercise ourselves to have always a conscience void of offence," ἀπόσκοπον συνείδησιν. (Acts xxiv. 16.) The word intimates the clearness of a way, where no spy can discover any thing amiss. For ἀπόσκοπος in Suidas is *speculator*, *explorator*, "a scout, a spy:" so that ἀπόσκοπος συνείδησις is "a conscience clear and free from offence." The want of this makes death a king of terrors, and puts more horror in the grave than it hath. When death comes towards wicked men on his pale horse, it comes as a serjeant to arrest them, to put them out of possession of that which they had taken up as their habitation for ever; to banish them out of the world, which they made their Paradise, and to let them into eternity of torment. If we love the world, how can the love of God abide in us? (1 John ii. 15.) "We plead for titles," saith a learned gentleman of our own, who had large experience of the vanity and deceitfulness of the world, and was *exemplum utriusque fortunæ*, "an example of both fortunes, good and evil;" "We plead for titles till our breath fails us, we dig for riches whilst strength enables us, we exercise malice whilst we can revenge; and then when age hath beaten from us both youth and pleasure and health itself, and nature itself loatheth the house of old age, we then remember, when our memory begins to fail, that we must go the way from whence we must not return, and that our bed is made ready for us in the grave. At last, looking too late into the bottom of our conscience, (which the vanities of the world had locked up from us all our lives,) we behold the fearful image of our actions past, and withal this terrible inscription, that 'God shall bring every work into judgment.'" Thus he. And this our way uttereth our foolishness, (Psalm xlix. 13,) in increasing the fear of death and judgment by striving to chase it away; never thinking of death's sting till we feel it; putting by all sad and melancholy thoughts in our way, till they meet us again with more horror at our journey's end. This is it which makes death, which is but a messenger, a king, yea, a king of terrors. We can neither live, nor are willing to die, with such a conscience; whereas, had we "learnt," as Seneca speaks, "and studied death;" had we not fed and supplied this enemy with such weapons as make him terrible; had we cut from him now this, now that, desire, and anon another; (for death ἡμῖν καθ' ἡμῶν, "fights against us with ourselves," with our wantonness, and luxury, and pride, and covetousness;) had we spoiled him of those things which make



death terrible and the devil our accuser; we might have boldly met him, nay, desired to meet him. For why should *they* fear death *who* may present themselves with comfort before God, and shall meet Christ himself in all his glory coming in the clouds?

To conclude: Death shall be, to them who love God and keep a good conscience, a messenger of peace, a gentle dismissal into a better world, an ostiary to let us into the presence of God, where there “is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.” (Psalm xvi. 11.) Our apostle here calls it *ἀνάλυσιν*, but “a departing or dissolution.” To which we should lead you, but we cannot now so fully speak of it as we would, and as the matter requires: we will therefore reserve it for some other time.

---

## SERMON LXX.

IMITATE CHRIST AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.—*

I Corinthians xi. 1.

THAT which the philosopher telleth us in the First of his Ethics,—that we must not look for that certainty in moral philosophy which we do in the mathematics,—is most true. And the reason is as plain: For the mathematician separateth and abstracteth the forms and essences of things from all sensible matter. And these forms are of that nature for the most part that they admit not of the interposition of any thing. *Inter rectum et curvum nihil est medium*: “Between that which is straight and that which is crooked there is no medium at all:” for there is no line which is not either straight or crooked. But in morality and in the duties of our life, the least circumstance varieth and altereth the matter, and the forms there handled have something which cometh between; so that there is an inclination which draweth us near, sometimes to the right hand, sometimes to the left, sometimes to one extreme, sometimes to another. And in respect to this variety of circumstances it is that the philosopher telleth us, Ἔστι χαλεπὸν ἐνίοτε τὸ κρῖναι ποῖον ἀπὲν ποίου αἰρετέον. “It is a hard matter many times to make our choice, or in our judgment to prefer one thing before another.” Therefore they who have given us precepts of good life, have also delivered us rules to guide us in this variety of circumstances, that we swerve neither to the right hand nor to the left. For, as in artificial works the artificer’s hand is busy ἐν τῷ

γεννᾶν, “in the production of a new piece or work;” but his skill consisteth and is most seen ἐν τῷ θεωρεῖν, “in the contemplation of the rules of art:” so in the duties of Christianity *semper in manu regula*, as Seneca speaketh: Though the Christian be busy and intentive on his work to promote and finish it, yet “his eye is alway upon the rule.” Ὁ ἄνευ σκοποῦ βαδίζων οὐδαμοῦ προχωρεῖ, “He that walketh without a rule winneth no ground.”

Not to prolong the time in mentioning divers instances which offer themselves, we will lay hold of this here, of our apostle’s; who, walking as it were before the Corinthians in the ways of Christianity, calleth to them to follow after; but withal, for fear of danger, directeth their eyes to look upon the rule. St. Paul is a great ensample; but Christ is a greater, both an ensample and a rule. And if this great apostle of Christ follow not the rule, we must leave him in his way. “Be ye followers of me;” but then it followeth, “even as I also am of Christ.” Which words contain, 1. A duty: “Be ye followers of me:” 2. A direction: “Even as I also am of Christ.”

Give me leave to carry your meditations and devotion along with me, whilst I speak,

I. Of the use of example and imitation in general:

II. Of the object. St. Paul nameth himself: but we must not think that he appropriateth or taketh to himself the honour to be a pattern to others, but implieth all the saints of God; who are ἐνεργούμενα ὑποδείγματα, “lively and powerful ensamples.” As the logicians use the name of Socrates and Plato, and the lawyers of Sempronius and Seius, when they indifferently mean any man; so St. Paul, though he speak in his own person, yet excludeth no man who, like himself, is “a follower of Christ.”

Of these we shall speak in order.

I. What the orator said of his art of oratory, *Magna pars artis consistit imitatione*,\* that “a great part of that art did consist in imitation,” is true also in our Christian philosophy. *Longum iter per præcepta*: “At the hearing of the precepts of piety we are unwilling to set forth; when we are in our way, we pace it on but slowly; and if we make any commendable progress, we are ready upon the least rub and opposition to retire and turn.” How many are “so foolish” as to “begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh!” (Gal. iii. 3.) But when the ensamples of good men shine in our eyes, and revive the dull and slurred characters which are now fading and ready to slip out of our memory, there is some hope we will gather strength

\* QUINCTILIANI *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, lib. x. cap. 2.

and recover our spirits, that we will mend our pace, and walk on cheerfully in those ways of righteousness which the blessed saints of God have made smooth and even by their glorious and fruitful ensample. Chastity is not so hard a lesson after so many virgins; taking up the cross hath not that horror upon it, since so many thousands have made it amiable; nor is perseverance so tedious a virtue, when we look upon that "glorious army of martyrs" who have stood out the shock of all temptations, and suffered unto death. *Præceptis obtemperare nolentibus adjunguntur exempla*: "To rouse and actuate the will, which doth so slowly bow to the precept, God hath added ensamples of men of the same mould, to flatter and woo it to obedience."

Nor is the truth of this so plain as the reason is obvious. Man is a fanciful creature, led on by imagination, which conveyeth the *species* of things to the understanding; which, being a counsellor to the will, as one calleth it, presenteth them in that shape which maketh them lovely; presenteth virtue as possible, as easy, as delightful, having been the choice of so many that have gone before us; presenteth her with a crown in her hand, which she will set on the head of every one that will embrace her. For the understanding cannot perfect its act but by applying itself and having recourse to those phantasms which are nothing else but the likenesses and images and representations of things made up in the fancy and imagination. Hence St. Basil telleth us that our thoughts, which are *ἀσώματα χεῖρες*, "incorporeal hands," to lay hold on objects, are nothing else but as so many pictures drawn out by the soul in their true colours and proportion. And this experience itself doth teach us. When we would rightly apprehend a thing, we frame unto ourselves certain phantasms in the manner of ensamples, which, the more visible and sensible they are, the deeper impression do they make in the understanding. The philosopher, after he hath laid down his rules, giveth his proofs by letters and figures. And he giveth the reason in his Priors, *Μᾶλλον δ' ἴσως ὧδ' ἔσται τῶν λεγομένων ἕκαστον φανερόν*: that "so he might make things more plain, and lay them open to the eye." The orator, in his Institutions, thought it good counsel, *pueris eburneas literarum formas offerre*, "that parents, the better to teach their children, should cut them letters out in ivory, or in any other metal their tender years did take delight in; that so they might" *tractare et nominare*, "look upon them and handle and often name them, and so learn to read even in their very sport."\* And we read of a gentleman of Rome, who, finding his son slow to learn,

\* QUINCTILIANI *Instit. Orat.* lib. i. cap. 1.

provided him four and twenty playfellows like himself, and named them by the names of the letters of the alphabet, that so his son might the better remember them. The use of fables and apologues, we know, is very ancient. And one lesson we have in Plato's *Gorgias*, how to draw together fables and their application, which he calleth *κεφαλήν τοῦ μύθου*, "the head and principal part of the narration." For these representations do wonderfully please and flatter the imaginative part, which is most taken with the likenesses and images of things, more with the picture many times than with the essence of the thing itself. Achilles was a man of a goodly shape, and Thersites of a contemptible presence; yet *in picturâ æquè afficit Thersites, si sit similis, ac Achilles*: "We take as much delight to see the picture of deformity, if it be drawn to the life, as of comeliness and beauty. *In luctu et mœrore voluptas*, saith the philosopher: "There may be pleasure in grief and sorrow;" not that horror and grief are delightful in themselves, but in their representation.

To instance nearer home: We are not taken so much with the kingdom of heaven as when we behold it in the merchant's pearl. We understand Christ's office best when we are told he is a "Shepherd which layeth down his life for his sheep." (John x. 11.) To say the day of judgment cometh upon us on a sudden, striketh us not with that terror as when we hear it will steal upon us "as a thief." (1 Thess. v. 2.) The usurer may teach us Christian thrift, and how to increase and multiply our talent. We may read our folly in the foolish virgins, and our wisdom in the wise. And this is the very reason which the fathers give why our Saviour spake so often in parables. Because we stand in need of the help of ensamples, our Saviour himself, whose life was ensample enough to have instructed the whole world, proposeth others. The cruel miser may read his destiny in Dives's burning tongue. *Non guttam, qui non micam*: "He that would not give a crumb of bread, could not beg a drop of water." The Samaritan shall instruct the lawyer; and if the lawyer approve the mercy of the Samaritan, our Saviour is ready to drive the example home and apply it, "Go, and do thou likewise." (Luke x. 37.) If the disciples grow ambitious, and ask "who shall be greatest," he will bring a child in the midst. (Matt. xviii. 1.) If they be contentious, to wipe out that stain, he will wash their feet: "If I your Master have washed your feet, you," who are but fellow-servants, "ought to wash one another's feet;" (John xiii. 14;) in all humility descend to the lowest office which the necessity of your brethren may

require and call for. If the Master hath done it, it is no service, but an honour, to be like the Master.

The Schools will teach us, *Naturalia signa magis significant quàm positiva*: "Those signs which by their very nature and a kind of secret imitation signify things, are far more expressive than those which art and human invention have framed to this purpose;" and most times we are better taught by things than by words, as we know a man better by his picture than by his name. Therefore some have been of opinion that the best and surest way to knowledge is that which the Egyptians of old used, and the men of China use to this day,—to learn by hieroglyphics. Words may admit of glosses and interpretations, and therefore we are forced, as Tertullian speaketh, *vindicare proprietatem vocabuli sorti suæ*, "in our doctrines and disputes to vindicate and preserve the propriety of words entire:" otherwise, we teach not that which we intend to teach, and two may dispute to the world's end, and yet be two and at odds. *Fides nominum salus est proprietatum*: "Unless you retain their proper signification, there is no trust in words at all." "To be justified by faith," the word is plain enough; and yet after sixteen hundred years we are not agreed what it is to be justified. And the difference is but verbal: for some take the word in this sense, and some in that, and so dispute *andabatarum more*, "as blind men fight, blindfold and in the dark." The duties which concern our peace are written with the sunbeams; and yet we cannot well read and understand them, but, when we should be up and doing, doubt, and ask the question, what it is we are to do. *Nec vitæ discimus, sed scholæ*: "We mis-spent that time in fruitless questions, which was measured out unto us that in it we might be fruitful in good works." If I am to give, I stay my hand, because I will not know to whom I am to give, or how much. If I am to fast, I would first be resolved of the manner and the time, and at last conclude and rest in that which is least terrible to the flesh: to change my diet, or to miss a meal, is to fast. If I am to pray, I am troubled whether I may use a form, or do it "as the Spirit," that is, my own fancy, shall on the sudden "give me utterance." (Acts ii. 4.)

O what a strange darkness hath overspread the world, that men cannot yet see what it is to fast, to pray, to give an alms! What needless controversies and disputes hath it been filled with concerning the church, and heresy, and free-will, and the like! *Quot palæstræ opinionum! quot propagines quæstionum!* "What wrestling in opinions! what multiplying of questions!" which had all been stated, settled, and composed, had not each

party made advantage of the words which are capable of that sense and signification which either side will lay upon them. Therefore Martin Luther saith well, *Omnes abutuntur his vocabulis*, "These words have been foully abused:" *non enim fidei, sed suis studiis, ea aptant*; "for men have so handled the matter in their disputes, that they have shaped and formed them to their own purpose; not to the building up of each other's faith, but of that polity in the church which they affect." "The church" sometimes is a congregation of saints, and sometimes, like Noah's ark, it taketh-in both clean and unclean beasts: sometimes it is a body whose Head is in heaven, and sometimes it is a body whose head is also visible on earth. "Faith" sometimes is an assent and a full persuasion of the truth of what is delivered in the gospel, and sometimes it is an application of the promises: with some it is an instrument, and with some a condition. And "free-will" is confined to evil alone; which is not the freedom, but the slavery, of the will: for can there be a greater slavery than to be free, that is, to be bound with the chains of darkness?

Thus you see it is with words: but that representation which one thing giveth of another is more lively and constant; is not capable of so much ambiguity and dispute, but carrieth about with it the same face and countenance. It is true, the rule in all things must have the pre-eminence: but we are too ready to make the rule what we please; and many times it passeth-by unregarded. But being written out in the practice of the saints, it is of great force and efficacy. St. Paul in the flesh was the best commentary on his own epistles. Would you define humility to the life? behold Christ on the cross. What better character of zeal than Phinehas with his spear nailing the adulterous couple to the ground? What fairer picture of charity than the poor widow casting-in her two mites into the treasury? Would you know the true nature of contrition and repentance? you need not pass *per spineta Scholasticorum*, "through the briers and intricate disputes of the Schools," but may learn it more perfectly in the practice of the primitive saints. Behold them kissing the chains of imprisoned martyrs, washing the feet of lazars, wallowing at the temple doors, *adgeniculatos charis*, "on their knees begging the prayers of the saints," with their hair neglected, their eyes hollow, their bodies withered, their feet bare, and their knees of horn, as Nazianzen poureth it out to us in a flood of eloquence, and draweth the picture for us. These were *ἀγάλματα ἀπάσης φιλοσοφίας*, as Isidore speaketh, "the living statues of all Christian philosophy," for us to look

upon; more lively figures of true Christian piety than all the *dogmata*, all the “positions and definitions,” of the Schools.

And this I take to be the reason why God himself hath given us a fair catalogue of all the virtues of men and women “famous in their generations,” and hath been pleased to put it into the hearts of the living to preserve the memory of the dead. For this were the Diptychs read in the church; which were two leaves or tables, on the one whereof were written the names of those pious men and confessors who were yet alive; and on the other, of those who had died in the Lord, and were at rest. To this end churches were dedicate to God, but bore the names of saints, to preserve their memory. I might tell you, (and that truly, if there be any truth in story; but I am unwilling to bring the martyrs of Christ within the least suspicion of being superstitious: but history hath told us,) that they hung up their pictures in their private shops and houses; that they engraved the pictures of the apostles in their very drinking-cups, celebrated their feast-days, honoured their memories, framed panegyrics on them, wrote their lives. Basil wrote the Life of Barlaam, who was but a poor shepherd; Nazianzen, of Basil, and of others; which, he saith, he left to posterity *ὡς κοινὸν ἀρετῆς πίνακα*, “as a common table of virtue,” for all the world to behold. For since men are delighted in the imitation of others, and led more easily by examples than laws, what more profitable course could the church of Christ have found out than the preservation of the acts and memory of the saints, and transmitting them to posterity, *ὡς ἐφόδια*, as Gregory Nyssen speaketh, “as provision to help and uphold us in our way?” How are we affected with these narrations! What deep impressions do they make! How do our minds naturally cleave unto them, like stars fastened to their orbs, and so move together with them! We are on the dunghill, with Job; in a bed of tears, with David; on our knees, with Daniel; ready to be offered up, with St. Paul; at the stake, and on the rack, and at the block, with the martyrs. The very remembrance of good men, of the saints of God, is a degree and an approach unto holiness.

To drive this yet a little more home: The apostle’s counsel to the Hebrews is, to “consider,” *κατανοεῖν*, “narrowly to mark and observe, and to study, one another,” *εἰς παροξυσμὸν*, “to whet and sharpen each other’s affection,” now dulled perhaps with vain and impertinent speculations, “to provoke unto love and good works.” (Heb. x. 24.) To this end God hath placed us in the communion of saints, a benefit which we either understand not or undervalue; and he hath ordained it, that one

Christian should be as a lesson to another, which he should take out and learn, and teach again, and then strive to improve. For it is in this as it is in arts and sciences, *Qui agit ut prior sit, forsitan, si non transierit, æquabit*: “He who, stirred up with a holy ambition, maketh it his industry to exceed his pattern, may become as glorious a star as he; yea, by his holy emulation peradventure far outshine him.” *Qui sequitur, cupit et consequi*: “For he who followeth others maketh it his aim, we may be sure, if not to exceed, yet to overtake, them.”

And this use we have of examples: they are set before us to raise up in us a holy emulation. It is true, emulation hath this common with envy, that we sorrow and are angry: but the philosopher putteth the difference: Οὐχ ὅτι ἄλλω, ἀλλ’ ὅτιο ὕχι καὶ αὐτῷ ἐστὶ. We sorrow, “not that others are” beautified with graces, “but that we ourselves are not.” This sorrow and anger hath not the same rise and ground in the one as in the other. For this “godly sorrow” in holy emulation bringeth forth a “repentance not to be repented of;” (2 Cor. vii. 10;) and our indignation is not on the saint we look upon, but on ourselves; and it proceedeth from a love and admiration of those heroes whom virtue and piety have made glorious in our eyes. Love and hope are both antidotes against the venom and poison of envy, but are the ingredients which make up the wholesome composition of emulation. No such sorrow and anger in emulation as that which setteth the teeth of envy on edge: but there is love, which carrieth fire in it, and is full of activity and impatient of delay; and hope, *quæ expeditam reddit operationem*, “which setteth us forward in our way,” and “maketh our feet like hinds’ feet,” (2 Sam. xxii. 34,) not to follow, but to run after, those who are gone before, and are now *in termino*, “at their journey’s end.” *Divina dispensatio, quot justos exhibit, tot astra supra peccatorum tenebras misit*, saith Gregory: “As many just and holy men as the providence of God hath showed to the world, so many stars hath he fixed in the firmament of the church, ‘to lighten those who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.’” (Matt. iv. 16.) Πολλοὶ γὰρ ἀλλοτρίω θεοφοροῦνται πνεύματι, saith Dionysius Longinus: \* Such is the delight we take in example, that we see “many men are rapt and inspired with other men’s spirits.” And as the priests of Apollo at a chink or opening of the earth received a divine breath and inspiration, which so filled them that they could give answer to those who consulted the oracle; so from the virtues and holiness of good men, if we look steadfastly upon them,

\* *De Sublimitate*, sect. xiii.



and consider them aright, ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν στομίῳν ἰερῶν, "as by so many sacred doors and conveyances," are derived those defluxions of piety which do so fill us that we are able with alacrity and a kind of triumph to follow after. In a word: by the virtue of imitation it is that we become meek with Moses, patient with Job, chaste with Joseph, upright with David; that we "forget what is behind, and press toward the mark," (Phil. iii. 13, 14,) with St. Paul, who here calleth after us to "be followers of" him,—my next part.

II. And here we have a hard task; St. Paul an ensample, which all men magnify, but few follow. *Quotidie morior*, "I die daily," was his motto; (1 Cor. xv. 31;) and we had rather choose another, who tremble at the very thought that we must die once. St. Paul, a mark for all the miseries in the world to shoot at; "in afflictions, necessities, distresses, in stripes and imprisonment, in watchings and fastings:" (2 Cor. vi. 4, 5:) Who would be drawn out in these colours? Who would be such a Paul, though it were to be a saint? Follow him perhaps into the third heaven we would; but we have no mind to follow him through tumults on earth and tempests at sea, before tyrants, and to the block: here we turn countenance, and cannot stir a foot. But then, I told you, he taketh in all the saints, "the glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs."

*Menander fecit Andriam et Perinthiam.\*—TERENTII Prologus ad Andriam, 9.*

"He that made one, made both." He that was glorious in St. Paul, was glorious in all the rest. St. Paul I think the best servant that ever Christ had upon the earth, the map of all the saints. And he that followeth him, must follow all: an ensample, one would think, not to be reached by imitation. Difficulty is the great excuse of the world; and because things are hard to be done, we never set a finger to the work. But the emphasis is here in the object: "Be ye followers of me," and as many as with me follow Christ. All the saints of God are a copy for a Christian to take out: and he is scarce a good Christian who, though he attain not to it, striveth not to be as good as, nay, better than, the best. There are no bounds set to our "coveting the best gifts," (1 Cor. xii. 31,) none to this holy ambition. For can we be too like Christ? Can we come too near heaven? Who would not be the happiest in heaven? and therefore, who should not be the best on earth?

It is good to look over this Paradise, and pick the choicest

\* "Menander wrote the Andrian and Perinthian:

Know one, and you know both."—COLMAN'S Translation.

flowers. As the orator telleth us, that he that will attain to the sublimity and majesty of speech, must fancy to himself *ὡς ἂν Δημοσθένους*, “how Demosthenes, or Plato, or Thucydides would have spoken upon such a subject;” \* so should we in the ways of Christianity contemplate with ourselves what St. Paul, or St. Peter, or some other of the blessed martyrs, would have done in such a case. Would they have “turned the back in the day of battle,” (Psalm lxxviii. 9,) or have spoken or sworn against their conscience at the sight of a glittering sword? Would they have struck sail at every pirate’s threat? How did they pray, and fast, and endeavour towards the end! What resolution was there in one! what meekness in another! what patience in a third! what perseverance in all! *Quid ergo? non satis est sic omnia facere quemadmodum Paulus fecit?* Quintilian asketh the question of Tully; and I of St. Paul, more famous for piety than he for eloquence: “Is it not enough to do all things as St. Paul did, and make him our pattern?” Yes, certainly: and he maketh a glorious on-set that doth but seriously attempt. But, as he there goeth on, “It will be very advantageous in the ways of eloquence to imitate the force and vigour of Cæsar, the acuteness of Cœlius, the diligence of Pollio, and the judgment of Calvus;” † so must we look upon St. Paul, and withal take notice of the particular virtues of other holy men of God; and it will be our spiritual wisdom to make that our own which is best in every man. This is that commendable diligence which Nazianzen admired in great Athanasius, that he placed before his eyes Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, and Elias, and other men of God; and culled out the meekness of one, the zeal of another, the constancy of a third; *aliorum multa, aliorum omnia*, “many virtues from some, all from others;” and so made up *ἐν ἀρετῆς εἶδος*, “one specious and glorious image of goodness.” “This honour have all God’s saints.” (Psalm cxlix. 9.) Though we may not worship them, or pray unto them, (this were to dishonour not only that God who crowned them, but themselves also; for honour, where it is not due, is a kind of contumely,) yet this honour we must give them, to follow them on the same ladder by which they ascended up to heaven. By this we raise them as it were from the dead again, we revive their memories, we personate them in the world, and act their parts. Our actions are the resultances of theirs, our praises the echoes of their songs, and ourselves the living pictures of the saints. Nor can any scruple here arise to deter us. For though we are offended with their pictures, we need not startle at their piety:

\* LONGINUS *De Sublimitate*, sect. xiv.† *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, lib. x. cap. 2.

though we will not be idolaters, (God forbid we should!) yet we must be saints: though we fall not down and worship them, yet we must follow them: though there be no "profit in their dust," (Psalm xxx. 9,) yet there may be in their memory: though they hear us not, yet we may hear of them with delight and advantage, and hear them calling us out of the world to that bliss which they enjoy: though we may not worship their dead bones, yet we are bound to imitate their piety and goodness, which are *veræ sanctorum reliquie*, as Cassander speaketh, "the true relics of the saints." *Nec parva virtus, Dei amicos sic honorare*, saith the father: "And it is no small virtue thus to honour the saints and friends of God." For those that thus honour them, God will honour everlastingly.

And thus much be spoken concerning the use and benefit of example, and also of the object here, St. Paul, and, under his name, all the saints of God; in whom we must behold that which made them saints, and take it out and express it in ourselves, that we also may deserve that name. We should now descend to take notice of the abuse of examples; which we may avoid by having Christ in our eye as well as the saints: "Be ye followers of me;" but then it followeth, "even as I also am of Christ." But let us first make some use of that which hath already been spoken.

1. And, First, let us with thankful hearts lay hold on those helps and means which God hath fairly offered and setteth up in our way, to forward us in our passage unto bliss, to kindle and revive our hope, to "strengthen our weak hands and feeble knees," (Isai. xxxv. 3,) that we may "run the ways of God's commandments," (Psalm cxix. 32,) which to flesh and blood are rugged and unpleasant, full of rubs and difficulties. And why should we despair to trace those paths which so many have trod before us, or reach that glory which so many have already attained? Heaven was not made for St. Paul alone, but for as many as will be like him. It is true, "the grace of God is sufficient for us;" (2 Cor. xii. 9;) nor can we magnify it enough, if we understand what we say: but to talk of the grace of God, and not make use of it, is to be an enemy to it. This is to cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" and then to crucify him. We have the grace of God to stir and move us, but not to carry us by violence into heaven. We have his promises of peace and eternal life: and that is a grace. We have the ministry of the angels, who do many good offices for us to this end, though we perceive it not: and this is a grace, a favour; for "grace" and "favour" are all one. And we have the ministry of men, who

either went before us, or are our companions in our way : and this is a grace. Grace worketh in us by means,—by the word, by promises, by the ministry of angels, and by the ministry of men, by their doctrine, and by their ensample : and, having such “a wide, open, and effectual door,” (1 Cor. xvi. 9,) grace doth lead, but will not thrust, us in. And therefore let us glorify God for his grace by making use of it, by “hearkening what the Lord God will say,” (Psalm lxxxv. 8,) though he speak unto us by men like unto ourselves, subject to the same passions and infirmities. (Acts xiv. 15 ; James v. 17.) Let us not loathe the water of life, when it is conveyed to us in “earthen vessels ;” (2 Cor. iv. 7 ; ) but think that God speaketh to us by St. Paul, and by all the saints ; that he speaketh to us by their words, and by their works. Let us think we hear him say, “Go, and do likewise.”

Did I say, “God speaketh by St. Paul, and by all the saints ?” There be who will allow Paul *holy*, but not *saint* ; which is as if they should say he were a reasonable creature, but not a man. “But ‘saint’ is a name of danger, and hath brought men on their knees to commit idolatry.” By this argument the sun must also lose its name, and not be called “the sun,” because some have worshipped it. “But it hath been given to wicked men,—*saint* Ignatius, and *saint* Garnet.” And I fear it is given at this day to those who are as wicked as they. But God forbid that an honest man should lose his name because sometimes it is given to a knave, and because we call him “honest friend” who is our deadly enemy ! What, though the Pope have canonized them, and wrote them down in red letters in the calendar ? That, I am sure, cannot expunge their names out of the book of life, nor yet unsaint them ; unless you will say that a virgin is no more a virgin if once a strumpet call her so, or that Christ was not the Son of the living God because he was called by that name by a legion of devils. (Mark v. 7.) Such “gnats” as these do these men “strain at,” who every day before the sun and the people “swallow down camels.” (Matt. xxiii. 24.) They check at every feather, and pull mill-stones upon their heads. They will not call Paul and the apostles and the blessed martyrs “saints ;”—O, take heed of that !—but they take that title to themselves, and in that name work not wonders, but commit those abominations which the blessed saints of God abhorred. They scruple at the name of “saint,” and triumph in that of “a man of Belial.” They tremble at a shadow which themselves cast, and court a monster : they startle at a straw, and play with a thunderbolt. O beloved, let us not be afraid

of the name "saint;" not be afraid to give it to others, though our humility will not let us fix it on ourselves. There were saints at Corinth, and saints at Philippi, and saints at Colosse, and saints at Ephesus; *Saint Paul calleth them so*: and shall we be afraid to give him, and the rest of the apostles, and the martyrs of Christ, that name? Nay, rather,

2. In the Second place, let us bless God for his saints, and look upon them, and follow them in those ways which made them saints, "through honour and dishonour," through fire and water, through terrors and affrightments, through "the valley of death," into "the land of the living" and the Paradise of God. Let their glory work in us a holy emulation. Let us be sorry to see ourselves at such a distance; let us be angry at our own backwardness; let us love that virtue which hath crowned them; and let us labour in hope to overtake them, and live with them in the same region of happiness. Envy is a torment; but emulation filleth us with hope, which is a comforter. Indeed, when we speak of the glorious saints of God, we need make no mention of envy: we are free enough from that. If any man be rich, or mighty, or honourable, or learned, we are presently on the rack: but if any man be good, we are well content he should be so alone. Righteousness, and temperance, and martyrdom, which are bought at a dear rate, and cost us our very life and blood, are ἀνεπίφθονα, "without envy." We look back upon those worthies who were our forerunners in the way to heaven, as upon sad and uncouth spectacles. We are ready to fright ourselves with the conceit of impossibilities; we talk of nothing else. "The law," we say, "is impossible; and to follow the saints is impossible." And why is not to reign with them also impossible? And all this is for want of that hope, which we are as willing to stifle as the examples of good men are active to kindle it in our hearts.

Beloved, these great ensamples are strong arguments against us; *nec tam præcipiunt, quàm convitium faciunt*; "they do not only call after us, but upbraid us if we follow not." They have virtue and power in them to raise a hope within us which may stir us up to action, and pull our hands out of our bosom. *Quid deficimus? quid desperamus? Quicquid fieri potuit, potest.* "Why do we faint or despair? Whatsoever hath been done by any saint of God, may be taken up by us and done again." The very Heathen maketh it his argument: *Ignem Mutius, exilium Rutilius*: "Mutius overcame the fire; Socrates, poison; Rutilius, banishment; Cato, death." *Singula vicerunt jam multi; et nos vincamus aliquid*: "Many have overcome several evils; let

us overcome something.”\* Is obedience difficult? Abraham would have sacrificed his son, his only son, at the command of God. Is patience a burden? Job blessed God when he lay on the dunghill. Is humility distasteful? • You may behold the king of Israel in a dance. Is martyrdom terrible? We have a cloud of ensamples, *purpuratas nubes*, those “purple clouds” which have watered the field of Christ with showers of blood, that after them there may grow up martyrs through all generations. This power, this influence have the examples of the saints, if we will but receive it, that we may grow up thereby. “Brethren, I may boldly speak to you of the blessed patriarchs,” Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and of the blessed apostle St. Paul, “that they are both dead and buried;” (Acts ii. 29;) and though we have not their sepulchres with us, yet we have their inscriptions: “Perfect Noah; Faithful Abraham; Devout David; Paul the Servant of Jesus Christ;” which we should read and translate into ourselves, to drive us to perfection, to confirm our obedience, to nourish our faith, and to raise the heat of our devotion. Therefore,

3. In the last place: Let us emulate the best. *Par est optimum quemque ad imitandum proponere*, saith the philosopher: “It is fit we should propose the best patterns.” Nay, *Stultissimum est*, “It is folly not to do so,” saith the orator. *Elige Catonem*, saith Seneca: “Choose such a man as Cato for thy example.” † *Elige Paulum*: “Choose such an one as St. Paul, St. Peter, St. Stephen.” And when any difficulty or temptation assaulteth thee, as St. Cyprian would often call for Tertullian’s Works, *Da magistrum*, “Give me my master,” so do thou, *Da magistros*, “Give me the examples of those glorious saints of God, to settle and compose and establish me in all my ways.” A shame it is that after so long a time, after so many fair and bright examples, after so great a multitude of professors, when all arts and sciences are advanced every day, grace and holiness should suffer a kind of solstice, nay, go back more than ten degrees: that so many Peters and Pauls should pass by us, and not so much as their shadow reach us: that so many examples of perfection should shine in the church, and we grope as in darkness, and follow meteors and illusions and false lights: that we should read of Joseph’s chastity, and be caught with every smile; of Moses’s meekness, and storm at every breath that crosseth us; of Job’s patience, and, when calamity is but in the approach, roar as upon a rack; of Paul’s beating down his body, and pamper ours; of Paul’s keeping a good conscience, and lay

\* SENECÆ *Epist.* xcviij.

† Idem, *Epist.* xi.

down ours at every beck : that we should read of the acts of so many saints, and do contrary, and yet hope to be as good saints as they : that we should do the works of the father of lies, and yet call him "our Father" who is the God of truth. Beloved, if we look upon the command, we shall find that every man should be a Joseph, a Moses, a Job, a Paul : for it looketh alike upon all. The same law bindeth us, the same reward inviteth us, the same promises allure us, the same heaven openeth to receive us if we obey. Our God is the same, and we are the same, and heaven is the same. Our great mistake is, that we conceive that a *demensum*, a "certain measure," of saving and sanctifying grace is given to every man, and so no man can be better than he is ; that God hath set a bound to piety, as he hath done to the sea : "Hitherto it shall go, and no further." (Job xxxviii. 11.) Hereupon we lie down, and comfort ourselves, and "turn the grace of God into wantonness;" (Jude 4;) as if it were our duty not to be the best, and God would take it ill at our hands if we were as good as St. Paul.

Be not deceived : we are called here to follow St. Paul, not, as Peter did Christ, "afar off," (Luke xxii. 54,) but to come up close to him, as near as we can, in all holiness and righteousness ; to stretch our endeavours to the farthest, and with him to "press on towards the mark." (Phil. iii. 14.) We may come too short : it is impossible we should exceed. For though there be degrees of holiness, and the saints, as the stars, "differ from each other in glory," (1 Cor. xv. 41,) yet *his* light will soon be put out *that* maketh it not his ambition to be one of the greatest magnitude. If we come short, God will accept us ; but not if we fall short because we thought it as needless as troublesome to mend our pace, consulting with flesh and blood, which soon concludeth, "It is enough," and will teach us to ask ourselves that unprofitable question, "What should we be as good as St. Paul?" Fear not : it is no presumption to follow Paul in all the ways of holiness ; it is no presumption to exceed him. Not to follow him, and expect the same crown, is great presumption : but to strive to follow him to the highest pitch, is that holy ambition which will fit our heads for a diadem. And it was his wish, whilst he was on earth, that every man were as he was, except his bonds. (Acts xxvi. 29.)

To conclude, then : "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise" in any saint, let us "think on these things." (Phil. iv. 8.) Let us

chew, and digest, and turn them into good blood ; let us shape and fashion them in our hearts, till they break forth into the like actions ; that we, acting the saints and following them here on earth, may with them “ follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth ;” that our good works, by which we resemble them whilst we live, may follow us when we are dead, (Rev. xiv. 4, 13,) and make us like unto the angels of heaven, blessed as they are, and blessing God for evermore. But so it is : good examples glitter in our eyes, and we look up and gaze upon them as little children do upon a piece of gold, which they are ready to exchange for a counter. We are swift enough to follow the saints of God in their errors and deviations, but are *κακοὶ ζωγράφοι τῆς εὐσεβείας*, “ ill expressers of their piety and religion.” And there is a great danger in their examples where they betray themselves to be men, as there is profit where they are led by the Spirit of God.

III. Therefore St. Paul putteth in a caution ; commendeth imitation, but limiteth it ; exhorteth the Corinthians to follow him, but withal restraineth them with a *sicut* : “ Be ye followers of me ;” but, “ *even* as I also am of Christ :” — my last part ; of which briefly.

Those things which degenerate are so much the worse, by how much the more useful they had been if they had been levelled by the rule. Therefore in imitation, besides the persons, we must also consider what it is we must imitate in them. We must no farther follow them than they do the rule. *Ut in pessimis aliquid optimi, ita in optimis aliquid pessimi*, saith St. Jerome : “ The best men are not privileged from sin and error ; and as in the worst men there is some good thing, though clouded with much corruption, so in the best saints of God there may be something amiss, though scarcely seen, because of the splendour of those many virtues with which it is encompassed.” For as many vices do darken one single virtue, so many virtues may cast a colour upon some one sin and error, and make it in appearance fair and beautiful, even like unto them, and commend it to our imitation. Here then is need of a *sicut*, of a caution and limitation. For *proclivis malorum imitatio*, “ men are too prone to follow that which is evil,” especially where the person by his other better endowments not only palliateth, but addeth authority to, his fault or error.

Examples of famous men are like unto two-edged swords, which cut deep both ways, both for the good, and for the bad. Against good examples we too oft hold up some buckler of defence, that they may not reach us : but evil examples we receive



*toto corpore*, "with an open body," and with a willing mind; and are well pleased they should wound us unto death. The *πάρεργα* many times of good men, "those actions which fall from them by chance or inadvertency," we are more ready to take out than their *ἔργα*, "the works" which made them famous to all the world, and canonized them for saints. *Sæpe vitium pro exemplo est*: "If there be any thing irregular in them, that we set up for a pattern and example." Tully telleth us of Fusius, that he fell short of those sinews and strength of eloquence which were in Caius Fimbria, and attained nothing but a bad gesture and the distortion of his countenance.\* And Quintilian observeth that there were many in his times who thought they had gained a kingdom in eloquence, if they shut up every period and clause with *esse videatur*.† But that is most remarkable which Gregory Nazianzen relateth of divers who were admirers of Basil, that they did imitate in their behaviour *σωματικὰ ἐλαττώματα*, "his corporal defects and blemishes," his paleness, his gait, his tardity and slowness of speech: and when he was *σύννοους καὶ εἴσω συνηνηνοχῶς*, "a man collected in himself and much given to meditation," they, affecting the like deportment, fell into *σκυθρωπότητα*, "a sad kind of melancholy and stupidity." These defects many times overtake us, because we look upon the person, and never consider the rule. How many are Sarahs, but to tell a lie; Rebekahs, but to deceive; Davids, but to revenge, or worse! Therefore St. Augustine, speaking of the sin of David in the matter of Uriah, observeth that many upon the reading of that story did *ædificare in ruinam*, "build their fall upon David's fall," and framed unto themselves this reason, *Si David, cur non ego?* "If David did thus, then why not I?"

And as we err in taking the saints' vices to be virtues, so do we many times grossly mistake those graces which do most commend them. *Multos sæpe fallunt quæ similia sunt*, saith Hilary: "Those things which are like one another do oft deceive us." *Multa quæ tarditatis et ignaviæ sunt, gravitati et consilio tribuuntur*: "That which was gravity in the copy, is but sloth and dulness in the transcript." That which was zeal in Phinehas, is madness in another: that which would have been obedience in Abraham, would be cruel murder in any man else. That may be gravity in the saint which is stupidity and senselessness in me. Hope, when transcribed by imitation, may be presumption; bounty, prodigality; peaceableness, want of courage; devotion, superstition. The orator saith well, *Multa fiunt*

\* *De Oratore*, lib. ii. cap. 22.

† *Instit. Orat.* lib. x. cap. 2.

*eadem, sed aliter* : “Many do the same things, but not after the same manner.” A thief fighteth stoutly, but we call him not valiant : a bad servant complaineth not under the whip, but we commend not his patience : a traitorous Jesuit may smile perhaps at the very ridge of the gallows, but we do not call it martyrdom. How soon is the complexion of a good duty changed and altered ! How fair is it in one, and what deformity hath it in another ! It is gold here, and anon it is but a counter ; at one time sealed with an *Expediit*, approved as “very expedient ;” at another checked with a *Non licet*, forbid as “altogether unlawful.”

To draw towards a conclusion : There are some duties which are local : not the same ceremonies at Eugubium as at Rome. There are duties fitted to the times : not the same discipline in the church in the time of peace and in the time of persecution : not the same face of the church now that was in the apostles’ time ; nor were it fit that in all things it should be drawn like to that. Lastly, there be personal and occasional duties, which in some persons and upon some occasions are praiseworthy, but in others deserve no other reward but death. The command is, “Thou shalt not kill.” Samson killed himself ; but every man is not a Samson, hath not Samson’s spirit. Phinehas with his spear slayeth the adulterous couple ; but every man is not a Phinehas, nor hath Phinehas’s commission. St. Basil’s rule is most certain : “Where we find a contradiction between the work and the precept, when we read a fact commended which falleth cross with the command, we must leave the fact and adhere to the precept.” David was a good man, but no apology for adultery ; Solomon, a wise man, but no pretence for idolatry. St. Peter was a rock ; but we may dash upon this rock, and shipwreck ; and if we follow him in all his ways, we may chance to hear a serious check from Christ himself : “Get thee behind me, Satan.” (Matt. xvi. 23.) Be followers of Elijah ; but not to consume men with fire. Be followers of Peter ; but not into the high priest’s hall, to deny our Master. Be followers of St. Paul, and of all the blessed saints of God ; but with St. Paul’s correction, “As they were of Christ.”

Christ is the great exemplar, the supreme and infallible pattern, which all are to conform unto ; a perfect copy, for every one to imitate ; a principal standard rule, by which all other rules are to be examined, and according to which all our lives ought to be squared and fitted. “Put ye on,” saith the apostle, “the Lord Jesus Christ :” (Rom. xiii. 14.) which is, according to Chrysostom’s exposition, τὸ μηδέποτε αὐτοῦ ἀπολειφθῆναι, τὸ

παντοθεν αὐτὸν φαίνεσθαι ἐν ἡμῖν, "so to be clothed with him from top to toe, that nothing appear in us but that which is of Christ." All our affections must be suitable unto his: "Let the same mind be in you," saith St. Paul, "which was in Christ." (Phil. ii. 5.) In all our actions we must tread in his steps: "I have given you an example," saith he, "that ye should do as I have done unto you." (John xiii. 15.) In all our sufferings we must "take up our cross, and follow him;" (Matt. xvi. 24;) and (as it is, Heb. xii. 1, 2) we must "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." Yet we must not here conceive that we are bound to walk in an universal conformity unto Christ in all things. For,

1. There were many actions of his, which as they far exceed our natural abilities, so they require not our imitation. It is not safe for us to follow him on the sea, lest we sink with Peter; nor into the wilderness, to invite the tempter by a solitary retiredness. We are as unable to fast forty days and forty nights, as we are to feed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. We cannot command the winds to be still, nor devils to come out, nor drive away diseases with a word or with a touch. In brief, we cannot follow Christ in the way of his miracles; they afford us matter of wonder, not of imitation.

2. Neither, Secondly, must we think to imitate him in his works of merit. Do well we must, and suffer ill we may: but when we "have done all, we are still unprofitable servants;" (Luke xvii. 10;) and though we suffer never so much, yet "are the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.)

3. Therefore, in the Third place, we must follow Christ only in the works of his ordinary obedience. And thus he was unto us a living commentary on his own written law, or rather a living and breathing law for us to live by. He was subject to his parents, obedient to the magistrate, assiduous in his calling, painful in preaching, frequent in praying, zealous of God's glory, and ever obedient to his will. He was in his life an exact pattern of innocence: "He went about doing good," (Acts x. 38,) and "there was no guile found in his mouth;" at his death, of patience: "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not:" (1 Peter ii. 22, 23:) in both, and in all, of piety and humility. Beloved, we may assure ourselves that we do and walk aright, when we frame and fashion our lives according to this rule, when we express and represent the life of Christ in our conversation, when we "so walk, even as he

walked," (1 John ii. 6,) when in all our carriage and behaviour we can truly say,

*Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.*\*—VIRGILII *Aeneid.* lib. iii. 490.

"Thus did," or, "Thus said, my Saviour."

The lives and actions of men are subject to error; and the best of God's saints in all ages have had their falls. David is said to have been "a man after God's own heart;" yet if we should follow David in all his paths, he would lead us into those two fearful precipices, adultery and murder. Peter was a great apostle; but if we should imitate all Peter's actions, we should not follow Christ, but deny him. In our imitation therefore of men, we must observe the apostle's caution here in the text, and "be followers of" the saints, "even as they also are followers of Christ," and no further. When they go awry from Christ's example, we must leave them, be they what they will, and carefully follow the precedent that our Lord hath set us. "He is the way, and the truth, and the life." (John xiv. 6.) He never went astray himself, neither can he mislead us. He will be unto us as the pillar of the cloud and of fire was to the Israelites, a sure Guide to the land of promise, to the heavenly Canaan. If we keep our eye still fixed upon him, and heedfully and constantly follow his conduct, we shall walk in the ways of truth and peace, "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called," (Eph. iv. 1,) worthy of the name whereby we are called, "Christians;" we shall give testimony of the truth and sincerity of our faith, and perform the promise and profession made at our baptism, which is "to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and be made like unto him;" we shall adorn the gospel, honour our Master, and "glorify our Father which is in heaven:" (Matt. v. 16 :) in a word, we shall guide others in the way to happiness by our good example, "shining among them as lights in the world;" (Phil. ii. 15;) and we ourselves, "having served our own generation by the will of God," (Acts xiii. 36,) shall, "in the regeneration and the times of restitution of all things," (Matt. xix. 28; Acts iii. 21,) be received by him whom we have followed into those mansions of rest and glory which he is "gone to prepare for us; that where he is, there we may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.)

\* "Such were his motions: such a heavenly grace  
Charm'd from his eyes, and open'd in his face."—PITT'S Translation.

## SERMON LXXI.

## THE DANGER OF COVERING OUR SINS.

*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper : but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.—Proverbs xxviii. 13.*

“BE not wise in your own conceits.” (Rom. xii. 16.) It is St. Paul’s counsel : and it is the wise man’s counsel also. (Prov. iii. 7.) And he giveth the reason for it : “ Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit ? there is more hope of a fool than of him : ” (Prov. xxvi. 12 :) more hope of him that hath no use of reason, than of him that hath, and abuseth it ; that draweth it down to vile and base offices ; that maketh it ministerial and serviceable to his lusts ; that first employeth it as a midwife to bring forth that sin which his lust hath conceived, and then, when it hath brought it forth, maketh it as a nurse to cherish it ; first to find out ways to mature and perfect it, and then to cast a shadow to cover it. Certainly “ there is more hope of a fool than of him. ” For a fool setteth not up to himself any end, and so is not frustrate or defeated of it : but he that is wise in his own conceit is the more unhappy fool of the two ; for he proposeth to himself an end, and doth not only fail and come short of it, but falleth and is bruised on a contrary. He promiseth to himself glory, and meeteth with shame ; he looketh towards prosperity, and is made miserable ; he flattereth himself with hope of life, and is swallowed up by death ; he smileth, and pleaseth and applaudeth himself, and perisheth ; he lifteth up himself on high, and falleth and is buried in the mire and filth of his own conceits. That which he seeketh flieth from him, and that which he runneth from overtaketh him. The truth of which hath been visible in many particulars, and written as it were with the blood of those who have “ sought death in the error of their lives ; ” and here Solomon hath manifested it in this proverb or wise sentence which I have read unto you. For how happy do we think ourselves, if we can sin, and then hide and cover our sin from our own and others’ eyes ! and yet Wisdom itself hath said, “ He that doeth so shall not prosper. ” What a disgrace do we count it to confess and forsake sin ! and yet he that doeth so “ shall find mercy. ” Our ways are not as God’s ways. That which we gather for a flower, is a noisome and baneful weed ; that which we make our joy, is turned into sorrow ; that which we apply to heal, doth more wound ; our balm is poison, and our Paradise hell.

Ye have heard of the wisdom of Solomon; hearken to it in this particular, which crosseth the wisdom of this world: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Which words teach us these two things:

I. The danger of covering or excusing our sins: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper."

II. The remedy, or way to avoid this danger: "But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

I. The first we shall especially insist upon, and show it you in respect, 1. Of God, 2. Of ourselves.

1. First. The danger of covering our sins appeareth in this,—that sin cannot be covered, cannot admit of excuse. *Omnis excusatio sui æquitate nititur*, say the civilians: "All excuse is founded on equity, and none is good but so far as equity commendeth it." As far, then, as sin may be covered or excused, so far it is not sin, at least not liable to punishment. For our own experience will tell us, that where excuse with reason may run, there it exempteth the accused both from fault and punishment. We read, that when Aaron's sons had not eaten the goat of the sin-offering according to the law, and Aaron had made that reasonable excuse which we find, that his sorrow for his two sons Nadab and Abihu had made him unfit to eat of those holy things, which they were to do rejoicing, and when they brought their sanctified things, they were to say, "I have not eaten thereof in my mourning;" (Deut. xii. 7; xxvi. 14;)—when he had made this excuse, the text telleth us, "When Moses heard that, he was content." (Lev. x. 19, 20.) And this is the difference betwixt moral and ceremonial laws: *Aliud sunt imagines, aliud definitiones: Imagines prophetant, definitiones gubernant*: "We are governed, not by ceremonies, which pass away as a shadow; but by laws, which are immutable and indispensable." Ceremonies are arbitrary; and not only reason, but God himself, doth in this case frame excuses, and putteth them in our mouth, and covereth what deformity soever they may present to men, that cannot but misinterpret what they understand not. David in his hunger eateth of the shew-bread; the priest denieth him not; (1 Sam. xxi. 3—6;) and our Saviour in the gospel acquitteth him, out of the prophet: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." (Matt. xii. 7; Hosea vi. 6.) Better all ceremony should fall to the ground than any one hungry soul should starve for bread. But the laws given to the sons of men as a rule of life, are not ceremonial and temporary, but real and eternal; nor can those sins which break them receive any cover

or palliation : and to plead excuse or dispensation against these, is to turn mercy into sacrifice, to plead for Baal, to cover and bolster up and justify sin, which is the greatest sin of all.

When sacrifices were omitted, or the sabbath for some reasons not observed, we do not find that God doth complain ; and Christ maketh it lawful, nay, necessary, in some particulars ; a sin, not to do that which otherwise would be a sin ; not to neglect the sabbath to save the life of a man, nay, of an ass. What ceremony almost can we name which hath not at some time upon just occasion been omitted ? But when the moral law is broken, when God's people fall into idolatry, or follow lies, when they are murderers or oppressors, then he hath a controversy with them, and pleadeth against them. Here no cover will fit, no paint nor pargeting will serve ; all the excuses in the world will not keep off the sentence of death. To imagine that God will admit of excuse for the breach of such a law as is eternal, and bindeth all men and at all times, were, as the father saith, to make God *circumscriptorem suæ sententiæ*, "by a kind of fraud to avoid and defeat his own decree." This were to make his goodness imaginary, his severity a fancy, his commands nothing but security for offenders. This were to turn his justice into iniquity, and his wisdom into folly. So to cover our sin, is but to make it greater, and increase the punishments. "He that covereth it shall not prosper."

To urge this reason taken from God further yet : We find the two attributes of God, his wisdom and his power, the highest attributes which he hath. As his power is unlimited, so he hath *ὑπέροσον σοφίαν*, "wisdom above all wisdom whatsoever." In his actions *ad extra* these two always concur. As by his power the creatures were created, so "in wisdom hath he made them all," saith the Psalmist. (Psalm civ. 24.) Yet his power seemeth to be subordinate to, and receive direction from, his wisdom. And therefore, though all the attributes of God be infinite, and consequently equal, yet his wisdom seemeth to have the precedency, the first and highest place. It is so, we see, in his creature man : *Ingenii damna majora sunt quàm pecuniæ* : "He that disparageth our wisdom, hath laid upon us the bitterest imputation he can." We can hear with patience many times that others are richer or stronger than ourselves. No man is vexed within himself that he is not a Milo, or a Hercules, or a Cræsus. But he that detracteth from our wisdom is an enemy indeed. *Nulla contumeliosius fit injuria* : "He doeth us the greatest injury in the world that calleth us fools."

*Qui velit ingenio cedere, rarus erit.\**

We cannot wonder, then, if we observe the same in God, if we see and read him more jealous of his wisdom than of his power; that his indignation should wax hotter against the excuse than the sin. For he that committeth sin dallieth with his power: but he that covereth and pallieth sin playeth with his wisdom, trieth whether he can *per fraudem obrepere*, “fraudulently circumvent and abuse” God. He that sinneth would be stronger than God: but he that covereth his sin, striveth as it were to put out his all-seeing eye, and to be wiser than he, *potior Jupiter quàm ipse Jupiter*, as he in the comedy saith, “a wiser Jupiter than Jupiter himself;” which no impiety can equal. And therefore we may observe, that God forgiveth the greatest sins when they are laid open and confessed, but casteth an angry look and layeth a heavy hand upon those sins which would hide and cover themselves with excuses.

We have a notable instance of this in David and Saul: take but the pains to compare them both, and you will at the first view be soon persuaded that the heavy sentence which Samuel denounced against Saul, should have passed upon David; that of the two David more deserved to have had the kingdom rent from him, and the sceptre torn out of his hands. For, bring their sins to the balance, and compare them both. “Saul spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen:” (1 Sam. xv. 9:) and what error was here, but only that the commandment was broken? For when he spared the oxen and the sheep, who was the worse? *Quid meruistis, oves?* “What sin was it to be merciful to the dumb and innocent creature?” Besides, his end and pretence was good; he did it to sacrifice them to the Lord. (Verse 15.) But to the sin of David no oratory is equal. Who can express the heinousness of it? Saul offendeth against but one command, and that a positive one, and which was only for the present, and with which God did often dispense; but David, against an eternal law written in his heart, with which God never did, never will, dispense. Again: Saul’s sin was but one; but David’s was *peccatum complicatissimum*, “a sin carrying a train with it,” of which the least, in appearance, was greater than that of Saul’s: first, adultery; then an attempt to make Uriah drunk; then murder, not only of Uriah himself, whose bed he had defiled, but also of all those who fell with him. (2 Sam. xi.) And to this we may add his long continuance in sin, even a whole year, without any sense or feeling of it. It will not be easy to find out a parallel hereunto either in divine or human

\* “Few indeed will be willing to yield the precedence in point of genius.”—EDIT.



story ; either amongst the Israelites, or amongst "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." I would not rip up the bowels of this saint, or show you the full horror of his sin, but to this end,—to discover and show you withal this most necessary truth, the danger of covering a sin. We see David easily reconciled to God, but Saul cast off eternally without possibility of pardon. Yet Saul confesseth his sin, though it were late: "I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord:" (1 Sam. xv. 24 :) and Samuel prayeth for Saul, and yet nothing prevaieth. Now the reason of this may be plainly gathered out of the text. Nathan no sooner cometh to David, and showeth him his fault, but he presently, without any *ambages* or "circumstance," confesseth it, and upon confession receiveth pardon, which followed the confession as close as an echo doth the sound: "I have sinned," is answered with, "The Lord hath put away thy sin." (2 Sam. xii. 13.) But with Saul it was otherwise: for he denieth, and then wipeth his mouth, and receiveth the prophet with a compliment: "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." (1 Sam. xv. 13.) Being after taken and detected, he shifteth his sails, and turneth the point of his compass, and trieth by fair pretences and excuses whether he can catch God with guile. "The people," saith he, "spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." (Verse 15.) He breaketh the commandment of God upon pretence of sacrifice, and so, as much as in him lieth, abuseth the wisdom of God with a kind of mockery and deceit. And this is it which made that great difference between the action of David and the action of Saul, and that great breach between Saul and his God.

What a dangerous thing is it, then, to study to cover a sin ! How great is this sin, which not only trespasseth against the highest attribute of God, but also defeateth and cutteth off the usual ways of reconcilment ! After other sins committed, the means to make our way to God's favour are, confession, and the prayers of the saints, one for another. St. James telleth us so much. (Chap. v. 15, 16.) Now covering and excusing our sin evacuateth them both. Saul, you see, made liberal, though late, confession of his sin ; Samuel, faithful Samuel, one of the greatest of the Lord's prophets, earnestly prayeth for him : yet neither the delinquent's confession nor the prophet's prayer procure any thing at the hand of God. "The prayer of the righteous shall save the sick," saith St. James : then certainly covering and excusing a sin is a very desperate sickness, which the prayer of so righteous a person as Samuel was could not

recover. Nay, which is more, the prayer of the prophet is not only refused, but he is straitly charged to pray for him no more. "How long," saith God, "wilt thou mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him?" (1 Sam. xvi. 1.) This sin then of covering sin, is it not a sin unto death? Either it is so, or not far from it. There is but one sin for which in scripture we are forbidden to pray. "There is a sin unto death," saith St. John: "I do not say that thou shouldest pray for it." (1 John v. 16.) I conclude nothing, but wish them who delight to cover their sin,—who sin often, and yet never sin; who run away with the dart in their sides, and never feel it,—to lay this to heart. For see, Samuel here is forbidden to pray for Saul. To conclude this: What a strange sin is this sin of excuse; which, being liker to a circumstance of sin than a sin, yet maketh a lesser sin exceed the greatest, and the greatest to be greater than it is; which maketh a wanton look worse than adultery, anger than murder, the breach of a temporal law more dangerous than of an eternal! The Schools say well, *Maximum peccatum excusatio, quia quodlibet peccatum facit majus*: "That must needs be the greatest sin which maketh every sin greater."

Not to leave yet the consideration of the greatness of this sin in respect of God: When sin hath entered our heart, and shown itself in the active irregularity of our members, there are but these five ways observed in our deportment and behaviour against it: either, (1.) Concealing or denial; so Sarah denied that she laughed; (Gen. xviii. 15;) Gehazi, when he had run after Naaman for a reward, boldly told his master, "Thy servant went no whither:" (2 Kings v. 25;) or, (2.) *Ἀποχορισμὸς*, "Alleviation" and lessening the fault; when we excuse ourselves *a tanto*, though not *a toto*;\* let something of our fault appear, and cover the rest: or, (3.) Despair, as in Cain and Judas: or, (4.) Penitential confession, as in David and Job: or, (5.) Excuse, as in Saul. These five are like the prophet's baskets of figs: "the good, very good;" and that is but one; "and the evil, very evil and naughty:" (Jer. xxiv. 1—3:) but the worst of all is excuse. For in denial and concealment, though we deny the fact, yet we acknowledge it to be evil. *Nolumus nostrum, quia malum agnoscimus*: "We would never deny it, did we not confess it to be evil." In alleviation there is confession made, but tenderly: something we confess to be amiss, but not much. And in despair there is a large acknowledgment, but to no purpose. And the despairing sinner, though he destroyeth him-

\* "When we excuse ourselves 'from so great, though not from all, guilt.'"—  
EDIT.

self, yet deserveth our pity more than the former. To despair is not so much a sin as the committing those sins which plunged him in that gulf. Concealment, denial, and alleviation are wilful errors, to avoid the punishment which is due unto our sin : but despair is an argument against itself ; calleth the punishment on the offender further than God is willing ; executeth the delinquent, not for want of pardon, which is ready to be sealed, but of suing it out. But of all, the apologizer, who is ready with a veil to cover his sin, who can make a circumstance an anvil to forge an excuse on, is far the worst. In the rest there is some acknowledgment made, and so far they partake of the nature of penitential confession. Some confess too little, others too much : the two first come short of repentance, the third exceedeth : the two first confess tenderly, the other unprofitably. But in him that covereth his sin with excuse there breatheth no air of penitential confession ; but instead thereof he maintaineth that to be good which his conscience will tell him is evil. " I may deceive and cozen the wicked," saith the hypocrite, who is more wicked than they. " I may sin, because I am weak ; and break the command, because I cannot keep it ; and multiply actual sins, because of original." Simeon and Levi murder the Shechemites, and the excuse is ready, " Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot ?" (Gen. xxxiv. 31.) The sacrilegious person " taketh the houses of God into possession ;" (Psalm lxxxiii. 12 ;) for, " should they be abused to superstition ?" The foulest sin hath a mantle to cover it, and sometimes walketh under a canopy of state. We sin, and will not be said or thought to sin ; and this maketh sin more sinful. This doth *fores occludere misericordiae* ; not shut out the sin, but God himself ; " letteth fall a portcullis between God's mercy and our soul ;" emptieth God, as it were, who of himself is an inexhaust fountain of mercy, ever ready to flow ; and will not suffer him to be what he is, to be so good as he is. For by our impenitency he cannot do us what good he would : we will not suffer him to be merciful : we will not suffer him to wipe out our sins by forgiveness, but hide them as much as we can from his light and beams ; cover them, that he may not see them ; and, by our evasions and excuses, leave him no sin to wipe out.

To conclude this point : If we sport thus with God's wisdom ; if we strive to deceive him *cæcâ die*,\* in these dark shops and grotts of excuses ; if we think that any cover will keep us from his eye, who is greater than our conscience, and seeth more of us than we do when we are most impartial to ourselves and see

\* " By putting him off to an uncertain day."—EDIT.

most; if we thus dally and trifle with Wisdom itself, mercy, which triumpheth over justice, will yield to Wisdom: and if we cover our sins, and not lay them open by confession, we shall find God "just and faithful," but not "to forgive us our sins," not "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

2. We might here enlarge: but we pass from the danger in respect of God, to that in respect of ourselves. There is no one sin to which our nature more strongly inclineth us than this of covering and excusing our sin. So pleasing is excuse to our disposition, so inseparable from sin, that *cum ipso scelere nascitur, et soror et filia*, "it is both the daughter and sister of sin." We travail with sin and excuse, as Tamar did with twins. Excuse is not the first; for sin first maketh the breach, and then calleth for excuse: but though it be not the first, yet it followeth close at the heels. (Gen. xxxviii. 27—30.) Now, to give a reason for this:

(1.) First. It is the very nature of sin, not only to infect the soul, but to bewitch it, that it shall either not feel it, or not be willing to evaporate and expel it. It is compared to a serpent: and the poison thereof is much like unto that of the aspic which Cleopatra put to her arm: it casteth us into a kind of sweet and pleasant slumber, and killeth us without pain. We are smitten, and we feel it not; we are stricken, and are not sick; (Prov. xxiii. 35;) we are in the very mouth of hell, and yet secure. It is called "a burden," and yet we feel it not, nor doth it burden or lie heavy upon us. But as it is with those who lie under the water,—they feel no weight though whole seas run over them,—so is it with those who are overwhelmed and drowned in sin: they feel no weight; or if they do, they soon relieve and ease themselves. I say, A burden it is, and we are careful to cast it from us; but not that way which God prescribeth, but after a method forged and beaten out by our own irregular fancy. We do not cast it away by loathing it, and loathing ourselves for it, by resolving against it, by fearing the return of it, as we would the fall of a mountain upon our heads: but we cast it upon our own weakness and infirmity, which will not bear it; upon God's long-suffering and mercy, and presume to continue in it; upon Christ Jesus, and crucify him again; upon excuse, which is but sand, and cannot bear that which pressed the Son of God himself to death. *Soli filii iræ iram Dei non sentiunt*: "They only are insensible of the anger of God who are the children of wrath."

(2.) Secondly. Though God hath set up a tribunal in our hearts, and made every man a judge of his own actions, yet there is no tribunal on earth so much corrupted and swayed

from its power and jurisdiction as this. No man is so partial a judge in another man's cause as in his own: no man is so well pleased with any cheat as that which he putteth upon himself. Though God hath placed a conscience in us, as he "put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastplate of judgment," (Exod. xxviii. 30,) by which he might give answer unto us, what we are to do, and what not to do; what we have done well, and what amiss; as the high-priest by viewing his breastplate saw whether the people might go up to war, or not go up: yet when we have once defiled our conscience, we care not much for looking upon it; or, if we do, it giveth no certain answer; but we lose the use of it in our slavery under sin, as the Jews lost the use of their Urim and Thummim at the captivity of Babylon, as appeareth, Ezra ii. 63; Neh. vii. 65. The *use* of it, I say; which is, to accuse, (Rom. ii. 15,) to condemn, (1 John iii. 20,) to torment, (Wisdom xvii. 11, 13,) to make us have a trembling heart, (Deut. xxviii. 65,) and a faint heart. (Lev. xxvi. 36.) For it doeth none of these offices; neither accuse, nor convince, nor condemn, nor afflict, nor strike with fear. At best it doth but show the whip, and then put it up again. It changeth and altereth its complexion, as our sins; and hath as many names as there be evil dispositions in men. Our conscience checketh us, and we silence it; sin appeareth, and we cover it. Our conscience would speak more plainly, if we did not teach it that broken and imperfect language, to pronounce *Sibboleth* for *Shibboleth*, (Judges xii. 6,) to leave out some letter, some aspiration, some circumstance in sin.

Or rather, to speak truth, the conscience cannot but speak out to the offender, and tell him he hath broken the law; but as we will not hearken to reason when she would restrain us from sin, so we slight her when she checketh us for committing it. We will neither give ear to her counsel, and not sin, nor yet hearken to her reproof when we have sinned; neither observe her as a counsellor, nor as a judge; neither obey her as a friend, nor as an enemy. Hence it cometh to pass that at last in a manner it forgetteth its office, and is negligent in its very property; is a conscience, and yet knoweth nothing; a register, yet recordeth nothing, or, if it do, in so dark and obscure a character as is not legible; a glass, and reflecteth nothing, but a saint for a man of Belial; a book of remembrance, but containeth not our deceit and oppression and sacrilege, but the number of sermons we have heard, the fasts we have kept, though for blood, the many good words we have spoken, though from a hollow and unsanctified heart, our

indignation against the world, which hath nothing worse in it than ourselves. And this is the most miserable condition a sinner can fall into. This is, saith St. Paul, to "hold the truth in unrighteousness," (Rom. i. 18,) by an habitual course of sin to depress and keep under the very principles of goodness and honesty; κατέχευεν, "to hold and have full possession of" the truth, but make no use of it; to hide and bury it, as the bad servant did his pound in a napkin; (Luke xix. 20;) bury it in the loathsome sepulchre of a rotten and corrupt soul: as if, having a medicine about me, I should choose to take down poison; having plenty, starve myself to death; having honey and manna, lay it by till it stink, and feed on husks; having a conscience, not keep it; suborn my counsellor to be my parasite; be endued with reason, and use it only to make me more unreasonable; neglect and slight it, when it bids me not do this; and when I have done it, paint and disguise it, that I may not know the work of mine own hands, nor see that sin which was the mis-shapen and deformed issue of my lust.

(3.) Again: This sin of covering sin is more natural than any sin beside. We cannot name any that agreeth with all natures and complexions, as this doth. All are not apt to commit the same sin: anger draweth this man's sword; lust fasteneth a second to the harlot's lips; fear betrayeth a third to idleness and a spiritual lethargy; ambition and pride lift up another above himself; and covetousness burieth many in the earth. He that is wax to one sin, is marble to another. Envy slayeth one, lust is a deep ditch to another, wrath consumeth a third: but excuse is a cover that will fit all sins; which, though they have divers complexions, yet will all admit and receive this paint. Excuse, as a servant, waiteth upon all, and is officious to offer attendance on the foulest. It is a servant and slave to the murderer, to the wanton, to the oppressor, to the covetous. What is unwilling to stand to a trial, will run to excuse, as to a counsellor, for advice: *Quæ tum maximè gratiosa est, cum cædit*: "We embrace it when it stranglenth us; kiss and bid it most welcome when it woundeth us to death."

(4.) To make it yet plainer how incident it is to our nature to be covering that which hath an ill appearance, to be framing apologies; we may observe that there is something in man naturally which casteth him upon this vice, which is not in the devil himself. *Depuduit*, The devil "hath hardened his forehead, and cast off all shame of sin." It is his trade and profession to sin himself, and draw others to the like perdition: and they are his children who have cast off all shame. "Were

they ashamed? no, they were not at all ashamed," saith the prophet; (Jer. vi. 15;) not ashamed of that which was most ridiculous, most abominable. To sin, and not to blush; to discover our nakedness, and not be ashamed; is a sad declination to the condition of the damned spirits, the next step to hell. For God hath imprinted in man a natural shame of sin; which maketh him to fly from the eyes and ears of men, to make darkness his pavilion, to retire into grots and caves, to betake himself to corners and privacy, which are nothing else but the badges of sin. Sin hath a foul face, and her best friends are ashamed of her company. Sin is a favourite which we embrace; and sin is a monster we fly from. Sin is the greatest evil; it hath that name: and therefore when we commit it, it is not sin. They that make her familiar with them in the closet, will not go about with her in the streets; as ready to disgrace sin as to commit it: nor could she ever prevail with those who were most enamoured with her to acknowledge her without a blush.

*Nolim latere, siquid egero benè ;  
Nec opto testes, siquid egero malè,\**

saith Phædra, in the poet: "Our good deeds we bring forth at noonday, before the sun and the people; but no night is dark enough to cover our sin." Now God left this impression of shame upon us to keep us within compass, that we should not commit sin; to be μέγιστον πρὸς ἀρετὴν βοήθημα, as the father calleth it, to be "a great help and furtherance to us in the ways of virtue." For why should we bring forth such fruits, which, when we look upon them, will change our countenance, and dye it with a blush? And this effect shame should have: but, by the policy and envy of Satan, that which should naturally keep us from committing sin, doth as naturally draw us to conceal it; and what was made as a means to prevent it, is made a cloak to cover it.

That we may therefore "confess and forsake our sins," and so find mercy, we must strive to take this inconvenience away, and be careful how we use it. For it is of an ambiguous quality: it is what we will make it. Sometimes it is poison, and sometimes an antidote; sometimes it is "the savour of life unto life," and it may prove "the savour of death unto death." (2 Cor. ii. 16.) It is a bridle to our nature, to keep us in a regular and even motion: sometimes we must put it on, and sometimes we must take it off again. When we are solicited to

\* "I will not hide my head, if I've done well:  
If ill I've done, I want no witnesses."—EDIT.

sin, let us add it to our nature. The poet will tell us, *Pudere quàm pigere præstat totidem literis*. We cannot render the conceit, but the sense is good in all languages: "Shame is far better than repentance." And thus we see that good men are chary of their modesty, but the wicked harden their faces as steel. They use their shame as they do their garment, *quæ, quantò obsoletior est, tantò incuriosius habetur*, "which, the more it is worn, is the more slightly and carelessly laid up." Let us not sin for shame; for nothing can shame or disgrace us but sin: but, "when lust hath conceived, and brought forth sin," (James i. 15,) when it is committed, let us take off shame again, and be as bold to confess as we were to offend. *Ego rubori locum non facio, cùm plus de detrimento ejus acquiro*: "I give no room to shame when I am to repent; for I gain by her loss, and am most humble when I fling her away:" *et ipse hominem quodammodo exhortatur, Ne me respicias; pro te mihi melius est perire*: "when unseasonable modesty and shame itself seemeth to bespeak and exhort us not to regard her, becometh an orator against herself, and telleth us, that unless she perish we cannot be safe, nor build up our repentance but upon her ruins."

Shame is a good buckler to oppose against sin: but if sin hath once got the better of us, if we fly the sight of sin and are ashamed to confess, we fly, as Horace telleth us he once did, *relictâ non bene parmula*, and "leave our buckler behind us."\* Nay, "Shame," saith Parisiensis, "is as a prelate or bishop before sin, and doeth those several offices set down by St. Paul: *Ἐλεγερον, ἐπιτίμησον, παρακάλεσον* it 'instructeth, correcteth, and rebuketh' us." (2 Tim. iv. 2.) But after sin we must proceed to degradation, and put it from its chair: for if we suffer it to usurp and exercise jurisdiction over us, it will suspend and silence us, and make us an Anathema. Away then with that shame which will increase our shame! Away with that shame which is not yet, and yet sealet up our mouth that it may be! Is it a shame to confess? Confess, though it be a shame. For though there be shame, it shall be *debilis et inermis*, "weak and feeble and disarmed," not able to speak a word to accuse thee. *Præstat palam absolvi quàm damnatum latere*: "Open absolution is better than private and secret damnation." Better to be saved in thunder than lost in silence: better to be covered with shame, and live, than to cover our sins for shame, and perish: better to be a proverb of reproach on earth than a fire-brand in hell: better to blush now than burn for ever.

II. To draw towards a conclusion: Ye see in the text peni-

\* HORATII *Carm.* lib. ii. od. vii. 10.



tential confession reaching even to the mercy-seat. The sinner falleth down, breaketh his heart, openeth his mouth, breatheth his sins out, loatheth and forsaketh them; and mercy scattereth them, annihilateth them, looketh upon them as if they were not. Let us not, then, be more ashamed of confession than we are of mercy itself. Let us learn *exuere hominem*, "to put off man," to put off the old man, to unnaturalize ourselves, and forget this, though natural, yet unseasonable, modesty. *Est quædam prævaricatrix modestia; est quædam sancta impudentia*: "There is a modesty which betrayeth us; and there is a holy and sanctified shamelessness and impudence," when we lay our sins open and naked before God in their most deformed shape. Sin is never less deformed in the eye of God than when it is in its own shape. Masks and paintings and disguisings in other things, if they add no beauty, yet they conceal deformities; but in sin all this cost and labour is lost. Nothing more deformed in the eye of God than a periwigged and painted sinner, than a carnal man talking of the Spirit, than a wicked man "wiping his mouth, and saying, I have done no evil." (Prov. xxx. 20.) Behold, "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth:" (2 Chron. xvi. 9 :) from him no cloud can shadow us, no deep can cover us, no mountain can hide us. To him we are never more open than when we are most concealed. He looketh not at our sins when we read the roll and catalogue ourselves: but ἔκδικον ὄμμα, his "revengeful eye," is never off them when we seal the book, or fold it up in silence, when we study to disguise and conceal them.

Quintilian tells us, *Animalcula quædam, in foraminibus mobilia, in campo deprehenduntur*: "Some kind of small creatures there are, which whilst they be amongst their burrows and starting-holes are hardly taken; but bring them into the open field, and they are quickly seized on." We cannot but apply it to ourselves. Let us play least in sight with God as we please,—whilst our sins, like those little foxes which spoil the vineyard of God, do earth themselves or lurk in the holes and burrows of excuses, we shall never take them; but being brought forth εἰς τὴν ἐξομολόγησιν, "into confession before God," as into the open field, we shall quickly seize upon them, and destroy them. *Tegentis, non fatentis, crimen est*, saith St. Ambrose: "Sin is never more sin, hath never more upon it, than when it is covered." He that confesseth his sin, hath found a plaster for it; but he that covereth it, flingeth it away, and by too much tenderness suffereth his sore to fester. For sin is a disease and distemper of the soul: and as we observe of some diseases of the body, if it doth

*eructare se in superficiem*, as Tertullian speaketh, if it “breathe forth itself, and drive its poison outward,” by confession, it is like the physician’s *καθαρισμὰ*, and restoreth the soul to its healthful *κρᾶσις* and “constitution;” but if it strike inward, and hide itself in the heart, it is fatal and deleterial. Sin is as the leprosy; and every sinner in whom the plague of sin is, must be like the leper under the law: “His clothes must be rent, and his head bare, and he must put a covering upon his upper lip, and he must cry, Unclean, unclean.” (Lev. xiii. 45.)

And this we may observe, that the saints of God did so far abhor this sin of covering sin, and so jealous have they been of it, that they may seem to have bowed the stick too much the other way, and to have erred too far on the other hand, and studied expressions and forms of speech to that purpose. When David bewailed his sin before God, he thought it not enough to say he had not been free from sin since he was a child of a day old; he durst not entitle himself to so much as a day’s innocency: therefore he went up to the womb, and confessed himself to be born in sin. Nay, this he thought too much yet, and therefore went up to the instant of his conception: “In sin hath my mother conceived me.” (Psalm li. 5.) He left not himself any moment free from pollution. And so St. Paul, that worthy servant of Christ Jesus, shriving and confessing himself, useth few, but most quick and comprehending, words: “It is a faithful saying, and by all means to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” (1 Tim. i. 15.) Now what should that great sin be which should denominate him “the chiefest of sinners?” If any, then certainly it was this, that he persecuted the church; and yet even this himself professeth he “did ignorantly.” (Verse 13.) And as Origen, considering with himself the occasion which moved Lot’s daughters to incest, breaketh forth into this speech, *Vereor ne illarum incestus castior sit multarum pudicitia*, that he “feared much that this incest of theirs had more of chastity in it than the virginity of others;” so we may be easily persuaded that there was more of piety in St. Paul’s persecuting the church, than many others have who seem to maintain and cherish and defend it. For what moved him to it? Zeal for the law which God himself had made; a jealousy lest the glory should depart from Israel, and that service and religion be beat to the ground which God himself had established. And yet St. Paul himself hath recorded it, and all posterity must believe it, that for this action of his, whatsoever it was, he nameth himself “the chief of sinners.”

“This,” saith the father, “is the property of every child of

God, to accuse himself for little sins as for great, to hide his sins by revealing them, to diminish them by addition, to make them little, yea, nothing, by making them great." *Confessio, pœnarum compendium*: "Confession setteth a quick period to all sin and punishment:" *cùm accusat, excusat; cùm squalidum facit, magis mundatum reddit*: "even worketh a miracle; lifteth a man up, when it casteth him down; maketh him most glorious, when it most dishonoureth him; beautiful, when it defileth him: when it accuseth, it excuseth; and when it condemneth, it absolveth;" *ἐκδυσωπόῦσα τὸν Κριτὴν*, (it is the expression of the Greek father,) in a manner "making the Judge ashamed," holding his hand when he is ready to strike, striking the thunderbolt out of his hand, and changing the shadow of death into a glorious morning. Though we have run from him into a far country, yet if we return, and say, "We have sinned," he that was our Judge will be our Father, and will "run, and fall upon our neck, and kiss" us; and, for open confession, give us open absolution; and put upon us the best robe, (Luke xv. 11—32,) even clothe us with "the garment of righteousness," (Isai. lxi. 10,) behold us as his children, and by his blessed Spirit "seal us" up "to the day of our redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) In a word, we shall find mercy here to quicken and refresh our sick and weary souls, and the same mercy shall crown us for evermore.

---

## SERMON LXXII.

### PREDICTION OF CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT.

*Behold, I have told you before.*—Matthew xxiv. 25.

It is the observation of Chrysostom, that there was never any notable thing done in the world which was not foretold, and of which there was not some prediction to usher it in and make way for it. "These things have I told you," saith our Saviour to his disciples, "that when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you of them." (John xvi. 4.) And in my text, "Behold, I have told you before" of the fearful signs which shall be the forerunners of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the world; which two are so interwoven in the prediction that interpreters scarce know how to distinguish them. "Behold, I have told you before;" that you may be ready with "the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand

in the evil day;" (Eph. vi. 13;) that it "come not upon you unawares," (Luke xxi. 34,) but find you ready, as those who have overcome it when it was yet afar off, in its approach, and pulled out its sting and poison before it struck its terror into you. Our blessed Saviour here layeth open to his disciples, and in them to all succeeding generations, those evils which should be the forerunners of his second coming and of the end of the world, as famine, and pestilence, and earthquakes, and wars, and fearful sights, treacherous parents, false brethren, deceitful kinsfolk, and friends worse than enemies; that when these things come to pass, they might the less trouble us; as darts, which pierce not so deep when they are foreseen. Did I say, "that they might the less trouble us?" Nay, this prediction must have a stronger operation on us than so. These fearful apparitions must not trouble us; but that is not enough: we must make right use of them, and by them be admonished to prepare and fit ourselves for Christ's second coming. They must be received as messengers and servants to invite us to the great supper of the Lamb.

In the words may it please you to observe with me three things:

I. The persons to whom this prediction is made: "I have told you."

II. The things foretold, mentioned in this chapter.

III. The end of the prediction, or the reason why they are foretold: that we may "behold" and consider them. These three—the persons, the things, and the end—shall exercise your devotion at this time.

I. First, for the persons. Though these words were spoken to the apostles, yet, if we look nearer upon them, they will seem especially to concern us; and if we reflect upon ourselves, we shall find that we indeed are the men to whom they are spoken. The apostles, who received them from the mouth of our Saviour, were but as cisterns or water-pipes to convey them to us; but we are the earth which must drink them in. The apostles, who were the hearers of them, have many hundred years since resigned up their souls to their almighty Creator, and were never *earum affines rerum quas fert senecta mundi*, never "had the knowledge of those things which are to accompany the declining age of the world." Not they therefore, certainly, but we, "on whom the ends of the world are come," (1 Cor. x. 11,) are the natural hearers, if not of this whole sermon, yet of a great part of it, namely, of that which concerneth Christ's coming to judgment. Nor can we think of it as of some strange thing, that our Saviour should thus direct his speech unto us, who stand at so great a distance from him, even sixteen hundred years and more

removed from the time he spake. There is no reason we should : for our Saviour was God as well as man ; and it is not with God as it is with man. With man, who measureth his actions by time, or whose actions are the measure of time, (for time is nothing but duration,) something is past, something present, something to come : but with God, "who calleth the things that are not as if they were," as the apostle speaketh, (Rom. iv. 17,) there is no difference of times ; nothing past, nothing to come ; all is present ; no such thing with him as first and last, who is Alpha and Omega, both First and Last. (Rev. i. 11.) He that foretelleth things to come, it mattereth not whether they come to pass ten, or a hundred, or a thousand years after ; *quia una est scientia futurorum*, because "the knowledge of things to come is one and the same," saith St. Jerome. Adam, the first man who was created, and whosoever he shall be that shall stand last upon the earth, are to God both alike.

They that walk in valleys and low places, see no more ground than what is near them ; and they that are in deep wells, see only that part of the heaven which is over their heads : but he that is on the top of some exceeding high mountain, seeth the whole country which is about him. So it standeth between us mortals and our incomprehensible God. We that live in this world are confined as it were to a valley or to a pit ; we see no more than the bounds which are set us will give us leave ; and that which our wisdom or providence foreseeeth, when the eye thereof is clearest, is full of uncertainty, as depending many times upon causes which may not work, or, if they do, by the intervening of some cross accident may fail : but God, who by reason of his wonderful nature is very high exalted, ὡσπερ ἐξ ἀπόπτου τινὸς καὶ μεγάλης περιωπῆς, "as from some exceeding high mountain," as Nazianzen speaketh, seeth at once all men, all actions, all casualties, present and to come, and with one cast as it were of his eye measureth them all. Now, that we may draw this home : Our Saviour Christ, when he spake these words, did an act of his Godhead, and spake to the things that were not as if they were ; and to him, when he gave this warning, were we as present as his disciples were who then heard him speak, or as we ourselves now are : and therefore in good congruity he might speak unto us, how far soever removed we may think ourselves to be.

II. But that we may plainly see that we are the men whom these words most properly concern, let us, in the next place, consider the things foretold : and when we find out those things, we shall see that, *tanquam exserto digito*, every one of them, "as

it were with a finger," pointeth out unto us. And find them we shall, if we look upon passages precedent and subsequent to the text. For, take the predictions literally, or take them morally, with that interpretation which is put upon them by the learned, and we need not make any further inquiry after the persons, because they so nearly concern us. Look over this chapter, and you shall find mention of deceivers and false prophets, of nation rising against nation, of signs in the sun and in the moon, of wars and rumours of wars, of strange and unusual tumults, of the stars falling from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shaken: and which of all these signs are there which hath not at one time or other looked upon us, and told us to our faces that we, even we, are the men? Such a *συνδρομή* and "concourse" of causes hath scarcely been in any age as we ourselves have seen. Not to speak of every particular, if we consider "wars and rumours of wars," and "nation rising against nation," these certainly will tell us we are the men. *Si possemus in talem ascendere speculam*, as Jerome speaketh, "Might we go up into some exceeding high mountain," whence we might take a view of all the earth, we might show you all in commotion, "nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;" yea, even Christians, whose peculiar was peace, to whom it was bequeathed as a legacy by the Prince of peace, not turning swords into ploughshares, but ploughshares into swords: Christians, I say, divided; and *that* made a just cause, or rather a pretence, of war, *which* should be the bond of peace. Nor need we go up into any exceeding high mountain: our own plain hath been the stage of war and a field of blood; and we may find the hornet that stingeth us in our own hive. We may behold father against son, and son against father, and kinsman against kinsman, and brother against brother, breathing out indignation, pursuing with violence, and threatening *that* to their own house and to their own loins, to flesh of their flesh, *which* a Turk could not wish, nor a Pagan act. But did we, as we said, go up into some high mountain, and from thence see in one part of the earth the Turk and the Pagan, and in the other the Christians, all in battle-array, defying, spoiling, killing each other, with the same violence, with the same malice and fury, but loudest in the Christian, we might be at a stand and puzzled, as not able to determine which were the Turk or Pagan, and which the Christian.

But if we take these signs in that sense which they will bear, and which hath countenance both from the prophets and apostles, we cannot but apply them to ourselves, and lay our hands

upon our hearts, and undoubtedly conclude we are the men here spoken to.

For, First, for "the heaven:" the apostle telleth us it is the Christian church, "Jerusalem which is above," (Gal. iv. 26,) *ἐπουράνιος*, "the heavenly Jerusalem." (Heb. xii. 22.) And in many places of the Revelation "the stars" are the teachers. And, tell me, Is not our heaven clouded? Are not the stars fallen from their heaven? Are not the teachers, many of them, fallen from the profession of the truth, and become no better than, as St. Jude describeth them, "wandering stars," (Jude 13,) never keeping their course and station, nor constant to that "faith which was once delivered to the saints," (verse 3,) but at the beck of power, at the sound of the dulcimer, some hope of advantage, or at the heating of the furnace, the fear of punishment, (Dan. iii. 10, 11,) boldly anathematizing that to-day which they subscribed to yesterday, unsavoury salt, fit to be trodden under foot and flung to the dunghill? (Luke xiv. 34, 35.) Did I call them "stars?" They are rather meteors, not fixed in the heaven, but whiffed up and down the air; drawn up to some height by worldly respects and the breath of the multitude, and then hanging as comets or blazing stars, portending seditions, wars, famine, pestilence, and all those evils which shake the pillars of the world, and dig at the very foundation of church and commonwealth. And is not this prophecy fulfilled in our eyes? Is not our sun darkened, and our moon turned into blood? Are not our stars fallen, and the powers of heaven shaken? When we behold those things which are foretold, do we still look for prodigies? Or can there be greater prodigies than these? Talk what we please of Centaurs, Scyllas, and such kind of monsters; of an ox speaking, of a statue laughing, of a maid delivered of a serpent, of an ewe yeaving a lion, of a shower of flesh or stones, of tempests and whirlwinds: these, these are more ominous; these are all, these do all, and even point out to us the coming of the Lord; and when we see these, we may cry out with Moses, "Take a censer, and make an atonement: for the plague is begun;" (Num. xvi. 46;) or with David, "The waters have overwhelmed us, the waves are gone over our soul;" (Psalm cxxiv. 4;) or with the lepers, "The famine is in the city;" (2 Kings vii. 4;) a famine, if not of bread, yet of the word of God. For though we be fed every day, nay, almost every hour, yet a famine there will be, if the meat we feed on be but husks.

Last of all: if we look upon the state of Christendom, what is it but as a troubled sea? or what do we hear but the raging of the

sea, and the madness of the people? (Psalm lxxv. 7.) So that now, if ever, it will concern us to fear at least that these things which were foretold by Christ are come upon us, to watch over ourselves diligently, and to prepare for his second coming. Therefore we are called upon to behold and consider them: "Behold, I have told you before."

III. And there is good reason we should "behold." For these things fall not out by chance, (fate and chance in the things of God are but names, and have no power at all,) but by the providence of God they are sent upon us, that so Christians, to whom the promise of Christ's coming is made, and the signs thereof revealed, might the more apprehend it, and the better provide to entertain it; look, and observe any signs that are like them, and prepare themselves as if they were the very same. What shall we say then? "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness," who are spectators of these times, and stand by, for aught we know, to see the world breathe out its last? (2 Peter iii. 11.) Let us apply the words of Thræsea in Tacitus to ourselves: *Specta, juvenis; cæterum in illa tempora incidimus in quibus firmare animum oportet constantibus exemplis*:\* "Let us carefully observe such things as happen;—and God turn all to the best!—but certainly we are fallen into those times in which it will be most behoof-full for us to strengthen ourselves with all Christian constancy and resolution possible." For he that beholdeth this hath reason to look about him, and at least to conceive of these times (as the apostles did of theirs) as of the last days; by the noise of one trumpet to be put in mind of the last; and at the sight of these dreadful apparitions to behave himself as if the Son of man were even now coming in the clouds. "Behold," saith our Saviour, "I have told you before." When we see these signs, we must not pass them by perfunctorily, as if they were no signs at all, and as if they were not set up for us to look upon; nor think, when we are under the same calamities which are here foretold, they are not the same which are here meant. For suppose we should be in an error, and the world were yet to last many millions of years, and these wars and rumours of wars, these fearful sights and great signs, these persecutions, this falsehood of kindred and friends, and this distress of nations, are not sent to accompany the world to its grave or funeral pile; yet would it be as happy an error as we could fall into, if at the sight of them we did believe and tremble, and so turn to the Lord our God. Devotion is devotion, though an error occasion

\* *Annales*, lib. xvi. cap. 35.



it; and watchfulness is a Christian virtue, though raised and awaked by a false alarm. If I be cured, it is not much material whether Peter or his shadow do it. If they have this effect, to make us take ourselves from the world, and look up to heaven, "where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," (Col. iii. 1,) it matters not whether they be these very signs foretold, or only like them. And if they be like them, what sin can it be to take them for the same? Error could do no hurt at all, if we were never deceived but thus. If I did live every day as if the world were to end the next, my life would be a continual walk with God. That error is a happy error which freeth me from all those errors which lead unto death.

Let us then make this use of these signs, at least think they may be the same. And, for aught we know, they may be the same. The trump may sound, and the Son of man may come, whilst I am speaking of it. It may be now; it may be many years hence: but if I make it now to me, this *now* is not too soon, nor do I hasten his coming. "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," saith Christ: (Matt. xvi. 4:) and though they had many signs, and those signal, yet were they as wicked and adulterous as before. Though they had many signs, yet could they not judge of the first coming of Christ. They could foresee foul weather by the lowering and redness of the sky in the morning, (verse 3,) but could find no prognostic of their Messiah from his prophets before he came, nor from his miracles when he was come. So we, though we have seen many signs, many prodigies, though we have seen more than is foretold, even that which we cannot easily believe though we have seen it, yet all these wars and rumours of wars, all this noise and tumults, all these terrors, all these signs of a drooping and decaying world, have not power enough upon us to beget so much as a fear of the second coming of Christ, as those other signs could not work a belief of his first. We talk much of the mark of the beast in the Revelation: (Rev. xiii. 16, 17:) I am sure it is the mark of such another beast as he, the atheist, that God's "judgments are far above out of his sight," (Psalm x. 5,) a thing he looketh not after nor considereth; and though they be before his eyes, yet are they "far above out of his sight." Though the foundations of the earth be shaken, yet doth he ἐπιμένειν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, "continue immovable in sin." (Rom. vi. 1.) Though there be "wars and rumours of wars," war is his harvest, nor can his heart dance after any music but that of the trumpet. Though the world be on fire, he standeth and warmeth himself by it. What, though there should be plagues and pestilences? There cannot

be a greater plague than himself. A wicked atheist, a bloody hypocrite, is the worst evil of the place he liveth in. What, though there be persecution? With him it is sport; and always the whip is in his hand. What, though the sun be darkened? He hateth the light. What, though the moon be turned into blood? It is a colour he delighteth in. What, though the world be towards its end? It is but his ending with the world.

*Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil est :*

that is an article of the epicure's creed, and the atheist's too: "After death is nothing, and death itself is nothing." To him signs do not signify, terrors are not terrible, and miracles are nothing. All the ill-boding objects he beholdeth he interpreteth, as wise captains did use to do comets, or eclipses, or any unusual event, to his own advantage. Let the sea roar, and the waves make a noise; let the heavens be shaken, and the stars fall; he is as wicked as before, a stubborn atheist, still the same, till he fall into hell. So true is that of the Psalmist, "An unwise man doth not well consider this, and a fool doth not understand it." (Psalm xcii. 6.) But "whoso is wise will observe these things, and he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." (Psalm cvii. 43.)

Now this "Behold" should be unto us as the last trump, and awake us out of our sleep in sin, as that shall awake us from the grave. For it is not a bare cast of the eye, and no more; but an intentive, earnest look upon the object and the end; upon these signs, and what is meant by them. He that well considereth them, will have his mind, as the historian spake of Julius Cæsar, like a bow always bent.

1. And, First, the sound of this should awake us from that security in which our self-love hath lulled us asleep. The love of ourselves draweth on the love of the world: and when we love the world, our wish frameth our creed for us; and though we cannot think the world will endure always, yet we do think so; though we cannot believe it, yet we do believe it; at least, so live as if we did believe that it will never have an end. And these signs pass away from us as insensibly as the fashion of the world doth: or, if they make any impression in us, they are those of murmuring and despair. For self-love and love of the world have so fully taken possession of us, that the sight of these signs changeth our countenance, looseneth our loins, troubleth our thoughts, as the hand-writing on the wall did Belshazzar's; (Dan. v. 6;) but doth not work in us that repentance which might raise up in us that confidence that we should not fear at

all. He that loveth himself cannot love the coming of the Son of man, nor the signs of it. Now by "love of ourselves" I do not mean that love which nature itself hath imprinted in every man, and which Christ himself hath made the measure and rule of our love to others: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. xxii. 39.) For "self-love," as the word "tyrant," beareth a very good sense; but by our abuse it is made a sin and term of reproach. We cannot love ourselves too well; but may love ourselves so inordinately that all the venom and malice in the world cannot hurt us more. Hence it cometh to pass that, as St. Bernard saith, *Nihil ardet in inferno præter propriam voluntatem*, "Nothing suffereth in hell but our own will," because nothing but our own will can cast us into that place of torment; for our will alone it is that damneth us: so nothing more endangereth us than self-love, which either blindeth us, that we cannot see these signs, or causeth that, when we behold them, we tremble, and our hearts wither and fail for fear.

These two are of such consanguinity and nearness that we know not well how to distinguish them. For he that thus loveth himself is always *rigidus in suam perniciem*, "obstinate and wilful to his own destruction." *Sic se diligit homo ut sibi prosit*, saith Augustine: "Let a man so love himself that he may profit and advantage himself, his better self, his soul." *Nam animus cujusque est quisque*: "A man's mind is himself:" and if he adorn and beautify that, if he prepare that for happiness, then his love and all his actions rest upon a right and proper centre. But if he pollute his soul, if he fight against his soul, if he make his reason a servant to his lust, which should be a mistress to control and check it, if he thus transform himself into a beast, he will be a most unfit spectator of these signs: if he thus deform himself, he will undo himself. If this be love, it is such a love that bewitcheth me, that blindeth me, that deceiveth and cheateth me, that first putteth out my eyes, and then setteth me to grind at the mill, that depriveth me of my judgment, and maketh me worse than the beasts that perish. The covetous man loveth wealth; and that pierceth his soul: the ambitious loveth honour; and that is a snare: the wanton loveth beauty; and that biteth like a cockatrice: the angry man loveth revenge; and that keepeth his wound green, which otherwise patience would heal. Our first parents loved themselves, and tasted the pleasant fruit; and were thrust out of Paradise for it: Achan loved himself, and would finger the wedge of gold; and was stoned for it: Ahab loved himself, and would have Naboth's vineyard; and dogs licked his blood for

it: Judas loved himself, and received the thirty pieces; and he burst asunder for it. What could an enemy do more than self-love hath done to them in whose bosom she hath found a place? It stoneth, it hangeth, it killeth, it distracteth, it tormenteth and destroyeth: and what can an oppressor or a tyrant, what can the devil, do more? But this is not all: for, as the historian speaketh of covetousness, which is but a branch of it, *animum et corpus effeminat*: "it corrupteth both body and mind, and maketh them soft and tender and effeminate."\* First it corrupteth the mind, and then weakeneth and enervateth the body: it maketh us either insensible, as stocks and stones; or else too sensible of every blast, of every breath that cometh but towards us: it filleth our hearts with impatience, and our mouths with complaints. If it be a drop, it is a storm; if it be a breath, it is a tempest; if it be good counsel, it is a reproach; if it be an easy burden, we dare not touch it with one of our fingers; if it be an object of a terrible aspect, we study to forget it. We would not believe it when we do believe it; we would not see it when it is in our eye. In prosperity, self-love advanceth our plumes; but when the weather changeth, our spirits fail.

The philosopher telleth us, *Μικροψυχία τις φιλαυτία*, that "self-love is a pusillanimity or weakness of mind," afraid of every shadow, loathing every thing, flying every thing, groaning at the very sight of any thing that breatheth in opposition to us. And if self-love doth so shorten our strength, weaken our eyes, and dead our spirits, that we cannot look as we should upon those evils of common and quotidian incursion, and which we meet with every day, it is not probable we should behold these spectacles of terror, the forerunners of the last judgment, with that profit and advantage and comfort which we should: the sun darkened, and the moon turned into blood, and the world, for aught we know, falling about our ears, will be no signs to prevail with us to make ready and prepare for another world. If we cannot meet the Son of man at his first coming, how shall we meet him at his second? If we cannot meet him when he cometh and speaketh peace to us, peace in times of peace, and peace in times of tribulation, how shall we be able to meet him when he cometh in terror to judge both the quick and the dead? If we cannot behold the signs of his coming as we should, how shall we be able to stand up at his appearance? This is one reason why we do not behold what is here foretold with that profit we should, even our self-love, our inordinate and perverse love of ourselves.

\* SALLUSTII *Bell. Catilin.* cap. xi.

2. A second reason hereof is want of faith. And this "Behold" here is sounded forth to awake and quicken our faith. For if we "know whom we have believed," (2 Tim. i. 12,) and believe what we have read, then may we look upon these signs, even all the calamities of the world, with comfort. But if this be a reason, then reason may seem to be on our side, and to make us such eagles as to look upon these bright but fearful apparitions. For certainly there is no want of faith: there is nothing more talked of. *Ebrius ad phialam, mendicus ad januam*: "Every man filleth his mouth with it; the upright man for honesty, the perjured for deceit, the drunkard at his cup, and the beggar at the gate." Faith is become the language of good and bad, of the pure in spirit and the hypocrite, of the saint and that devil that taketh his name, of the whole world. Faith is to be found in every corner of Christendom; but such a faith as that peace was, the name of which only was written on the walls of a monastery when the whole convent were together by the ears in hot debate and contention. *Multi sibi potiùs fidem constituunt quàm accipiunt*, saith Hilary; and it is true in this sense also: "It is a general fault in the world, not to entertain that faith which should strengthen and establish us to behold these things, but to frame and fancy one of our own," to spin out one, as the spider doth his web; and such a thin web it is, that the blast of any temptation sweepeth it away. And on this we lay all our sins, even that weight which presseth down; (Heb. xii. 1;) as if we should set up a great Colossus on a reed which will not bear one finger of it. There is no want of this faith; *nec nobis opus est fide istá*, "nor is there any need or use of it."

But the faith which must make us fit spectators of these things which are here foretold, and which indeed we have seen, or something like unto them, nay, the very same; the faith that must qualify and prepare us for Christ's second coming; must be like his coming, full of glory and power; must shake the powers of the grave, must awake those that sleep, must demolish sin; must make us like unto Christ, not only in his passion, but also in his rising from the dead; must be to us as the trump of God, to call us out of our graves; not *fides inermis*, "a weak and unarmed faith," which hath neither buckler nor sword, which can neither defend nor strike a stroke, but is well content to stand by, and see our Saviour fight it out; but *fides pugnax*, "a faith armed against the day of trial, that can fight it out" against principalities and powers, and against all the fearful signs which shall be set up; and *fides vincens*, "a faith that overcometh the world and the love of the world;" and *fides triumphans*, "a

faith that every day triumpheth over sin and the devil," "maketh a show of them openly," (Col. ii. 15,) and manifesteth itself to God, to angels, to men.

This faith hath a clear and strong eye, and can look upon these terrible signs. By this "faith Christ doth dwell in our hearts;" (Eph. iii. 17;) and if Christ dwell there, he bringeth with him courage and resolution. How fit is he to behold the sun darkened, who hath this light in him! to see the falling of the stars, who hath this bright morning-star fixed in his heart! And what, if the world end, if he be with him who is the Beginning and the End? (Rev. i. 8.) This faith will make us fit to behold any object, will settle us in the knowledge of the providence of God, of which we had before but certain confused notions, little better than dreams. This faith is like the emperor's large emerald, in which he beheld wars and ruin, slaughter and desolation; whose colour tempered the object, and made it appear less terrible than it was. This faith heareth a voice from heaven speaking to the whole host and army of calamities, to all these fearful signs which shall usher-in the end of the world, as David did concerning Absalom, "Do the young man no harm;" (2 Sam. xviii. 5;) "Do my anointed, my peculiar people, no harm." (1 Chron. xvi. 22.)

In a word: this faith will stay with us, will wait and attend us, in the midst of all this tumult and confusion. And when "the powers of heaven are shaken," and "the elements melt with fire," (2 Peter iii. 12,) and the world is ready to be dissolved, it will bring us good news of help at hand: "Fear you not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." (Exod. xiv. 13.) For this faith always bringeth with it repentance; which is another end why we are called upon to behold these things. For that *μακροθυμία*, that "long-suffering" of God's, which calleth us to repentance, (Rom. ii. 4,) improveth and increaseth the means as we increase our hardness. The more heavy our sleep is in sin, the more noise and stir God maketh to awake us. After we have spent our estate amongst harlots, and fed with swine, yet, if we return, he will receive us. If we will not behold and consider him when he shineth upon our tabernacles, yet if we fall down before him when these signs appear, when he cometh with a tempest round about him, then he will receive us. When the world regardeth us not, when it frowneth upon us, when it is ready to be dissolved, yet, if we return, he will receive us. In "wars and rumours of wars," when "the sun is darkened, and the moon turned into blood," yet, if we return, he will receive us.

Never was the world so full of wickedness as in this last age of it; for as our forefathers went before us in time, so do we before them in iniquity: and therefore were there never greater means to reclaim it. So that this time of judgment is a time of mercy, wherein mercy, even whilst justice holdeth up the sword, whilst she is striking, spreadeth her wing, and waiteth till we come under the shadow of it. And these signs, if we will behold them as we should, and make them so, may be signs of the dissolution of the body of sin, as well as of the frame of the universe. For "the long-suffering of God is repentance," saith St. Peter; (2 Peter iii. 15;) and will bring forth the fruits of it, if it be not abused and hindered. And the destruction of a sinner is never so absolutely decreed by God, but that there is still hope of recovery, even then when his foot is upon the very brink of death and desolation. Let him then pull back, and return to his God, and he shall find that "with him there is mercy, and plentiful redemption." (Psalm cxxx. 7.)

"Behold, I have told you before:" and I have told you, that you may behold and consider it; that you may *excutere veterum*, "awake from that sleep in which security and self-love have lulled you;" that you may quicken your faith, and perfect and complete your repentance; and so be signed with these signs, that the Spirit may sign and "seal you to the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) And this is the compass of the *Ecce* ["Behold"]: and in this compass we may walk, and behold these signs; behold them with a watchful eye, with a believing eye, with a repentant eye, washing off all their malignity with tears.

These are the several rays of consideration. And if we thus behold these signs, we shall be also fitted and prepared to meet Christ at his second coming. Being thus qualified, we shall look upon all the ill-boding calamities in the world, which appear unto us in a shape of terror, as upon so many John Baptists, telling us that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" (Matt. iii. 2;) we shall look upon death, when he cometh towards us on his pale horse, (Rev. vi. 8,) and not fear him; we shall look upon the Son of man, when he cometh towards us "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," (1 Thess. iv. 16,) and it shall be as music to us. For he hath promised that where he is, we shall be also: (John xiv. 3:) and he hath made death, and these signs, and the dissolution of the world itself, a promise. For if we should not die, if the world should not be dissolved, we could not enjoy the promise. But when these signs shall usher him in, when he shall come again,

then shall he free us from the yoke and harrow, from oppression and tyranny. Then the meek shall be higher than the proud, and Lazarus richer than Dives. Then that bloody hypocrite who called himself a saint, shall have his portion with the devil and his angels; and the innocent, the despised, condemned innocent, shall "look up, and lift up his head." (Luke xxi. 28.) Then, though the heavens be shaken, he shall stand fast as Mount Sion; though the sea roar, he shall be at peace; though the stars fall, his heart shall be fixed:

*Si fractus illabatur orbis,*

*Impavidum ferient ruinæ.\*—HORATII Carm. lib. iii. od. iii. 7.*

And when "the Son of man shall come in the clouds," (Matt. xxiv. 30,) he shall be ready to meet him; and when the heavens shall be gathered together as a scroll, (Rev. vi. 14,) he shall be received into those "new heavens wherein dwelleth righteousness;" (2 Peter iii. 13;) and when all is dissolved, and the world is at an end, he shall live and reign with Him who made it, and who dissolved it, world without end. To which blessed estate [may] he bring us who hath foretold these things, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world!

---

## SERMON LXXIII.

### THE PHARISEE AND HIS PERFORMANCES.

*I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.—*  
 Luke xviii. 12.

A VAIN boast of a proud Pharisee, who cometh into the temple, not as a petitioner, but as a herald; and openeth not his defects, but proclaimeth his worth. If we view him well, we shall find him faulty in each part of his prayer.

He beginneth with thanks: "God, I thank thee;" (verse 11;) but it is thanks reflecting upon himself. The Pharisees, as Josephus observeth, did not deny the divine assistance, did not shut out God quite, but attributed the first and most to themselves: they acknowledged common blessings without relying on peculiar mercies, and did rather plead before God's throne than sue before his mercy-seat. So our Pharisee here prayeth not as if he desired to be heard, but as one that exacted what was due to his merit. *Quod justitia edificaverat, superbia de-*

\* "Beneath the crush of worlds undaunted he appears."—FRANCIS'S Translation.



*struebat*, saith Paulinus: "What his seeming righteousness had built up, his pride and vain-glory pulled down to the ground." In the progress of his prayer, he expresseth contempt of his brother: "I am not as this publican:" as if the defect of the one did enhance the worth of the other, and that publican the sinner did add to the merit of this Pharisee the boaster. In the conclusion, in the words of my text, like Solomon's fool, he commendeth himself, and that too but for the shell and outside of a religious act: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." We have here a catalogue of sins not committed, and of good duties performed: but if we cast it up, we shall find the sum to be nothing; a catalogue drawn out by pride and vain-glory, and coloured over and gilded by hypocrisy. You would think, indeed, you saw "a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile;" (John i. 47;) but pull off the visor, and you shall see a Pharisee; break open the painted sepulchre, and you shall behold nothing but dead men's bones and rottenness and corruption.

In the text we have two things to consider,—the person, and his performances; the person triumphing in his acts, and the acts reproaching the person. He did more than was required, "fasted twice in the week;" and gave more in tithes than the law exacted, even of mint and cummin, and of all that he possessed; and yet was a breaker of the law. He did more than he ought, yet came short of what he ought. *Jejunia, ut beneficia*: He urgeth his "fastings and tithings as benefits;" and, behold, they are turned into sins. "I fast, I pay tithes," is not a commendation, but a libel, in the mouth of a Pharisee. Or, if you please, we shall take the words,

I. In the form and manner in which they are proposed; and he speaketh them church-wise, in the form of a prayer:

II. In the substance and matter of them; and there we shall discover three notorious vices:—pride, drawing-on vain-glory, and both ushering-in hypocrisy: and out of them we shall draw some conclusions which may be useful for our observation.

I. First. "I fast twice in the week." Were we not told in the text that he "went up into the temple to pray," (Luke xviii. 10,) this language of his could not be thought a prayer. The style is too lofty, against the very nature of prayer. For whether we take prayer to be an ascent of the mind unto God, or a religious affection and breathing of the soul in all its defects and necessities, in all its returns and acknowledgments to God;—for prayer doth as it were divide us from ourselves, layeth us on the ground, in dust and ashes: so low fell Abraham; (Gen. xviii. 2;) and David, when he spake to God, could not but cry

out, "Who am I? or what is my father's house?" (2 Sam. vii. 18 :) when the soul looketh towards Majesty, the rays of it beat her back upon herself, there to behold her own emptiness and vileness ;—take prayer, I say, how we please, we cannot draw it to make it fit the Pharisee's speech here, "I fast twice in the week." *Hoc faciebat ut orans apud se esset*, saith the father: "He drew not nigh to God, but dwelt in the vain contemplation of himself, and looked upon his performances as it were through a multiplying glass, which made them seem more and greater than they were."

When Philip king of Macedonia laid siege to the fair city of Samos, he told the citizens that he came a-wooing to it; but the orator well replied, that it was not the fashion in their country to come a-wooing with a fife and a drum: so here we may behold this Pharisee in the posture of a beggar or petitioner, "going up to the temple to pray," and yet telling God he standeth in no need of him; as if, saith Chrysostom, a beggar, that were to crave an alms, should hide his ulcers, and load himself with chains and rings and bracelets, and clothe himself in rich and costly apparel; as if a beggar should ask an alms in the robes of a king. His "heart did flatter him in secret, and with his mouth he did kiss his hands," as Job speaketh. (Job xxxi. 27.) Coming before his Physician, he hideth his sores, and showeth his sound and healthful parts, in a dangerous case; like a man struck in a vein, that voideth his best blood, and retaineth his worst. And this is against the very nature of prayer; which should lay us at the feet of God, as nothing before him; which should raise itself and take its flight on the wings of humility and obedience; which should contract the mind in itself, and secure it from pride; which should depress the soul in itself, and defend it from vain-glory; which should so fill it that there may be no room for hypocrisy. Then our devotion will ascend as incense, "pure and holy," (Exod. xxx. 35,) seasoned with the admiration of God's majesty and the detestation of ourselves. But if it be not thus seasoned, but relish of the corruption of a hollow heart, it will be but as the smoke of the bottomless pit, or, which is as offensive to God, the breathings and evaporations of a Pharisee. And so far we find this Pharisee faulty, if we consider the form of his words as a prayer.

II. 1. In the next place: If we consider the matter and substance of the Pharisee's words, we shall find him a devil to himself, (so every proud man is, saith Climacus,) puffed up and swelled with the wind of his own conceit. *Grandis tumor est, sed contrarius sanitati*, saith Jerome: "His veins are full, but it

is with bad blood ;” and pride is as it were the spirits of it, which maketh it run disorderly, and break forth into biles and ulcers ; into that which we call “our glory,” but it is our shame. Pride maketh us to forget our dependence on God, and to hate an equality with our brethren. It turneth our loudest thanks into ingratitude. “I fast,” and “I am not an adulterer,” leaveth God in the rear, to help when all is done. “I am a great faster,” that engageth his God ; and, “I am not as this publican,” that excommunicateth his brother. Pride is a sin which indeed had its birth in heaven, in Lucifer ; but, as if it had forgot which way it fell, it never had the power to return thither again, but here on earth remaineth the devil’s emissary, to betray virtue itself, to spoil and rob us of our spiritual endowments, to poison each stream, to defile each action, to turn our prayers into sin, to make our good deeds stink in the nostrils of the Almighty, to corrupt a fast, to blow our alms before the wind with the breath of a trumpet, to make a sacrifice murder, and a gift an injury. Sin hath a foul face, and of itself is mis-shapen : therefore the devil’s art and labour is to make goodness so too, to set his inscription upon God’s coin, his devil’s face upon angelical perfections.

Ignorance begetteth pride, and pride increaseth ignorance. This maketh us leave God behind us, to whom we should cleave *tanquam principio*, “as the beginner” and donor of all good things ; and to think that the fountain and original of all good is in ourselves ; to think so when we do not think so. It maketh us, like Ananias, give God a part, but keep back the greatest part to ourselves. (Acts v. 2.) The proud is as he that “transgresseth by wine.” (Hab. ii. 5.) He doth not see what he seeth, not understand what he knoweth, but speaketh and judgeth of things most absurdly. Pride is the drunkenness of the soul. And it is the idolatry of the soul, making us bow to ourselves, and “burn incense to our own yarn,” as the prophet speaketh. (Hab. i. 16.) It is a kind of murder : it maketh us kill ourselves with smiling, and dote ourselves to death. It is the adultery of the soul : it divorceth us from God, and maketh us couple and engender with our own fancies. *Adulteri sumus : nos amari volumus, non Sponsum*, saith Augustine : “We are plain adulterers : we would have ourselves to be loved, and not the Bridegroom.”

It is a false witness and a lying glass, *οἶκοθεν ὁ μάρτυς*, “a witness drawn out of our own house,” our own corrupt hearts ; giving us for men, when we are but children in understanding ; witnessing either not the truth, or not the whole truth ; bring-

ing-in the flesh for the Spirit, a ceremony for the substance, a rite for religion, hearing for obedience, profession for practice, the lesser things of the law, mint and cummin, for "the weightier things of the law," (Matt. xxiii. 23,) and a part for the whole. And indeed these formalities oftener swell us up than sincere obedience. For obedience, if it be sincere, is humility, and keepeth us under God's hand; but pride commonly buildeth all its glorious superstructures upon defect, upon appearances and shows. He who is only a Jew outwardly boasteth more than he who is a Jew inwardly; and the formal Christian is more supercilious than he that mindeth the things of Christ, and is more taken with the hearing of a sermon than the other with doing of the word. If he can pray, and fast, and hear, he is more exalted in himself than he that "denieth himself, and taketh up Christ's cross, and followeth him." (Matt. xvi. 24.) "Knowledge falsely so called puffeth up, but charity edifieth." (1 Tim. vi. 20; 1 Cor. viii. 1.)

Lastly, I may say, pride is covetous and envious. *Amat avaritia unitatem*: "Covetousness would draw all, and make it one in itself." The Pharisee in the text had a deep dye and tincture of it. So blinded he was that he saw none but himself: "I am, and I alone; 'I fast twice in the week;' and what is this publican?" So he standeth as upon terms with God, and defiecth his brother. First he attributeth to himself, though not the total, yet the principal, cause of that good [which] was in him; and then looketh down and contemneth the low, dejected estate of the poor publican. Thus whilst other sins fly the presence of the Almighty, pride dareth oppose him to his face, and maketh even ruin itself the foundation of her tabernacle.

2. Next to the sin of pride followeth vain-glory, the daughter of pride; a hateful mother, and a hateful daughter. As choler is nothing else but *spuma sanguinis*, "the froth of blood," so is vain-glory nothing else but *spuma superbie*, "the froth of pride." Pride, like the foolish woman in the Proverbs, is loud and talkative. (Prov. vii. 11.) She speaketh in our garments, in our gestures, in every motion, in every look. When the heart is full of it, the tongue will be "as the pen of a ready writer." (Psalm xlv. 1.) Doth a Pharisee give alms? you shall hear a trumpet. Doth he pray? you shall see him "in the corners of the streets." Doth he fast? you shall see it in his countenance, (Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16,) or he will proclaim it in the temple, "I fast twice in the week." Let a monk but for some time cloister up himself and fast, and straight, saith St. Jerome, *putat se esse alicujus momenti*, "he beginneth to contemplate himself, and thinketh him

his enemy that doth not admire him." His one day's retirement must not lie hid: for he will speak it, by not vouchsafing a word to his equal. Let a blind votary devote himself to poverty, or go in pilgrimage to some saint; and his own opinion full soon will canonize him, and he will write it on the cloister-walls. Let the formal Christian keep the sabbath-day holy, though not more holy than the devotion, or rather itch, of his ear can make it; let him keep this one commandment, though he break all the rest; let him "keep the feast," though "with the leaven of malice and wickedness;" (1 Cor. v. 8;) and he will make this one day the boast and comfort of every day of the week, and vent himself in a censure, which is the voice and language of vain-glory, publishing his own praise in a sharp reprehension of others, and proclaiming his piety in the sentence of their condemnation. For vain-glory cannot speak more plainly than thus: "I am not as that publican."

Indeed, "a good name is as a precious ointment," (Eccles. vii. 1,) and every Christian is bound to preserve it. *Quisquis famam custodit, in alios misericors est*: "I am merciful to others, when I am careful of the preservation of my own good name:" for by this I let fall no spark to kindle a suspicion in him which may flame out at last into an uncharitable censure. "Ἡδίστον ἄκουσμα ἔπαινος, "Praise is a sweet and delightful note:" but if I sing it myself, or take delight in hearing it, I may take-in death at my ears. This siren's song may slumber me; but I may die in this slumber. For "as is the mother, such is the daughter:" (Ezek. xvi. 44:) as after pride cometh a fall, (Prov. xvi. 18,) so after this glorying cometh shame. And indeed they are both built up upon the same materials, upon thin and airy speculations; and they feed on shadows instead of meat, as the chameleons do on air. *Vilia popularis auræ mancipia*, They suck and draw-in "the breath of popular applause, which turneth oftener than the wind;" is now loud in a "Hosanna," and anon louder in a *Crucifige*;\* now maketh gods, and then stoneth them. And as they feed on air, so are they made out of air, the ebullitions and resultances of formalities, and shows, and outward performances. A truly pious mind keepeth at home in itself, is modest and silent, *Deo solo contentus iudice*, feasteth on a good conscience, "is ambitious of no eye but His that seeth all things, desireth no other *Euge*† but his." Of mortification, of fighting with ourselves, of denying ourselves, of bridling our anger, of quenching our lusts, of composing our affections, there is little noise in the world, unless it be in our pulpits; as little noise as

\* "Crucify him."—EDIT.

† "Well done."—EDIT.

practice: but fasting and prayer and alms busy not the mind so much as the tongue; and as we bring them forth with no great travail and pain, so we love to see them gracious in men's eyes, and to reflect back upon us with honour. "I fast twice in the week," must be written in the forehead of a Pharisee, that men may see it, and learn to call him, "Rabbi, Rabbi." (Matt. xxiii. 7.) He is his own chronicle, his own history; and the multitude must read and applaud it. Therefore our Saviour putteth-in a caution: "When ye fast, look not sour, as the hypocrites: for they disfigure their faces, that they may seem to men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." (Matt. vi. 16.)

3. Now, in the Third place, these two, pride and vain-glory, usher-in hypocrisy. They are *augmentum sterilitatis, et simulationis janua*: as they bring a leanness into the soul and "a barrenness of good works," (for what doth he bring forth that is delivered of a shadow?) so they make up that "gate which standeth wide open to let-in hypocrisy." For he that lifteth his head on high, he that would have his name carried about by the breath of the people, he that would be τῖς μέγας, "some great one," (Acts viii. 9,) will fill up that greatness, though it be but with shows; and, though he be not, yet will he seem to be, that for which he desireth to be pointed at, Οὗτός ἐστι, "This is the great faster, this is the devout man." This will make some sound and noise which may echo back upon him. Nay, hypocrisy is more curious and busy many times than the truth itself: it hath nothing, and yet seemeth to have more of religion than that which is truly so. So a parasite is wont to exceed a friend, a mountebank to promise more than a physician, a sophister to be more grave than a philosopher, a babbler more formal than a divine, and a Pharisee more strict and severe than a disciple of Christ. Hypocrisy and ostentation with the orator are all one. We read of Nero, who was a great actor on the stage, that, representing the madness and fury of Hercules, and being, as the argument of the fable required, bound with chains, a certain soldier, beholding him, thought he had been assaulted with violence, and ran to his rescue: so hath every age afforded us some skilful actors of their parts,—kings, that are but slaves; prophets, that are but impostors; and saints, that are but images, who can rage in their zeal, and pour forth bitter imprecations, when themselves are that execrable thing that should be put away; who censure all, condemn what is best, shake that which should stand, and set up a Babel on the ruins of Jerusalem. And all this is performed with that earnestness and life that standers-by, not so cunning, but even as wise, as themselves,

never once deliberate, or ask the question, "Are these things so?" but conclude that it is so in truth, and so run-in with as great fury to assist them; and never discover that it was fraud and cruelty and oppression that made the noise; that it was not Hercules, but the tyrant that acted his part. For the people, who are but shadows, are much taken with shows. *Ex veritate pauca, ex opinione multa æstimant*: "They are not led by the truth, but turned about upon opinion as on a wheel. For bring an actor from the school of Statilius," saith Tully,\* "and though he excel even Roscius himself, yet no man will take the pains to behold him: but let one come from Roscius's school, and spectators will flock to him, although he be far worse than Statilius." *Vulgus pessimus veritatis interpres*: "The common people are the most corrupt interpreters of truth;" for they look upon it, and call it error. They make saints and reprobates at pleasure, and will canonize a man of Belial if he be of their humour and faction, when they set the mark of the beast upon him who maketh conscience of his ways, and is so good that he cannot be like them. Therefore ambitious and vain-glorious men were always great flatterers of the people, and still gave them lettuce fit for their lips. The Pharisee is for the streets and the multitude; there you shall behold him spreading his phylacteries at large. "I fast twice in the week;" his doxology is fitted for himself. *Ego* ["I"] runneth through his whole litany. "Thine is the glory," is not in his *Pater-noster*. And if truth may expound it, "I fast" by interpretation is, "I am proud, I am vain-glorious, I am an hypocrite."

4. From the Pharisee's fast we may draw out this useful observation,—that an outward act, though enjoined by God, and though to the eye of man most exactly performed, if it proceed not from a pure and single heart, if it be not driven to that end for which it was commanded, is so far from finding acceptance with God, that it is odious and hateful in his sight.

(1.) Some duties there are which are *relativi juris*, and are "commanded for a further end;" as prayer, and hearing, and fasting, and the like: and there be others that have their *αὐτάρκειαν*, as Aristotle speaketh of sapience, "their end in themselves;" as denying ourselves, crucifying the old man, putting on the new, piety, and sincerity; all these are done for themselves, and have no other end, unless it be glory. The first always have reference to the last. We pray, and hear, and fast, that we may be fitter for the harder works. If we pray as we should, the power and efficacy of prayer followeth and assisteth

\* *Pro Roscio Comædo*, cap. x.

us in our daily conversation : if we hear as we should, we shall obey : if we fast as we should, we shall abstain from sin. What though we do *ὕπωπιάζειν τὸ σῶμα*, “ buffet and discipline our flesh ? ” (1 Cor. ix. 27 ; ) what, though we should—what Dominicus Loricatus is said to have done—give ourselves in one Lent five-and-forty thousand stripes ? what, though we should with the Euchite take St. Paul’s words literally, and “ pray continually ? ” (1 Thess. v. 17 ; ) what, though we hear the word every day, and that from morning to night ? yet, when all is done, nothing is done, unless all be drawn home to the end for which all were enjoined, which is, sincere and universal obedience ; without which we cannot think those services acceptable to God, but, as things which degenerate, so much the worse by how much the better they had been if they had been carried and brought home to a right end.

What a sin is it that prayer, which was made to open the gates of heaven, should devour widows’ houses ! that I should open my ears and greedily suck-in the doctrine of truth, and then as greedily confute the preacher by my practice ! And what is a fast, if it be for oppression and blood ? Fasting is no virtue, saith St. Jerome, who liked of fasting well enough : *Adjumentum est, non perfectio, sanctitatis* : “ It is a good help and way to virtue, but it is no part of the perfection and beauty of holiness.” And it will concern us to take heed how we flatter ourselves when we fast, as if we had performed some special part of God’s service, and so lose the benefit it might have brought with it. *Magis hoc providendum est,\* ne tibi hoc, quòd licita contemnas, securitatem quandam illicitorum faciat* ; “ lest by fasting, or the rest, we think we have highly merited at God’s hands ; and that our abstinence from what is lawful encourage us not and countenance us in something that is most unlawful,” and thus make fasting a stale and bawd for our sin. “ Behold,” say the people to God, “ we have fasted, and thou regardest it not.” (Isai. lviii. 3.) They thought that to hang down the head for a day was religion, when their lives were otherwise spotted with uncleanness. And it is the nature of ceremony to put a trick as it were upon devotion, and to assume that unto itself which is due to religion. And as it was sometimes said of churchmen’s wealth, *Religio peperit divitias ; sed filia devoravit matrem* ; so standeth the case between ceremony and religion : “ Religion was the first that brought it forth, and the daughter” with many men “ eateth up the mother.” Those duties which were ordained to promote holiness of life, undermine and supplant it, and then

\* “ This is more especially to be guarded against.”—EDIT.



stand in its place; obtain not the end, but are either taken for it, or drawn to worse. We fast, as Saul made the people, for a day; and then, as they did at night, we eat with the blood. (1 Sam. xiv. 24, 32.) Therefore what St. Paul spake of circumcision is true of fasting: they are in a manner both made of the same matter and upon the same mould: "Circumcision," and so fasting, "verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou break the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision," thy fasting is turned into sin. (Rom. ii. 25.)

(2.) Again: These duties which look further than themselves, and are instrumental to others, are of easier dispatch than those which they are ordained to advance. It is far easier to fast, to pray, to hear, to "tithe mint and rue and anise and cummin," than to do "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." (Matt. xxiii. 23.) These we must make our *παρασκευα*, or "preparations:" the greatest difficulty is *ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ*, "in the work itself." It is a harder matter to fight against lust than to fast for a day; to be in the body, and yet out of the body: it is harder to crucify the flesh than to punish it with the loss of a meal. It is harder for the wanton to make himself an eunuch than to forbear his bread; harder for the mammonist to be rich in good works than to pay his tithes. To sacrifice the calves of our lips, to open our ears, to afflict ourselves for a day, many slender motives, many by- and earthly respects, may persuade us. How soon will war or famine or a plague bring us into the house of mourning, and pull us on our knees! when not all these judgments, nor the terror of the wrath to come, can prevail with us to deny ourselves; can prevail with the covetous to scatter his bread, with the sacrilegious to hold off his hand from that which is holy, with the oppressor to beat out his teeth, with the wanton to keep his feet from the house of the foolish woman. Heaven itself hath not force enough to keep us out of hell, nor hell terror enough to drive us from it. Here, here is the agony and contention, here is the struggling, the labour, the warfare of a Christian, not in hearing, but in doing; not in abstaining from meat, but from sin. Here the mind is put to the utmost of its activity, here it is put upon the rack, here it is in labour and travail, not to bring forth a hollow eye or an open ear, a sigh or groan, or many prayers, but a new creature. *Hoc opus, hic labor est* :\* "This is a work indeed," the work of a Christian. Formalities and outward performances, hearing and fasting, and the like, are set forth, like those labourers in the parable, "early in the morning," and begin the work; but true piety, obedience

\* VIRGILII *Æneid.* lib. vi. 129.

and self-denial, these "bear the burden and heat of the day." (Matt. xx. 1, 12.) Those may change, nay, may be turned into sin; but these abide for ever, and are as lasting as the heavens.

(3.) Thirdly. The strict and severe observing of outward duties many times maketh us more slack and remiss in those which are more essential and necessary; as Euphranor the painter, having wearied his fancy and art in drawing the pictures of the petty gods, failed and came short in setting out the majesty of Jupiter. How often doth sacrifice swallow up obedience! May not a man be more deceitful for his prayers, more wicked for the many sermons he hath heard, and more bloody for a fast? May not a man cry out with Saul, "I have kept the commandment of God," (1 Sam. xv. 13,) when he hath broken it? sit down and rest in these types and shadows, and deal with the substance as the Jews did with Christ, revile and spit upon it, and put it to open shame? That of the father is true, *Ubi quod non oportet adhibetur, quod oportet negligitur*: "Where we place our diligence in that which is less, we withdraw and take it off from that which is more necessary;" are great fasters, and greater sinners. A Pharisee is never more a wolf or a viper than after a fast.

(4.) Last of all: (for I must hasten :) God is not so much glorified in a fast as in the renewing of his image, which is more visibly seen in a chaste, just, pious, merciful man than in all the anchorites or fasters in the world. For herein we are like him and resemble him. We cannot say we hear as God doth hear, or fast as God doth fast, or pray as God doth pray; but we are just as God is just, holy as God is holy, and merciful as God is merciful. Look not for the face of God in the hollow of the ear or the wrinkles of the face: look not for him in a forced sigh or groan: look not to see him always in thy outward mortification: for there thou seest at most but his hinder parts, what he commandeth last. The fullest view a mortal eye can have of him is in piety and innocency of life, which are the works of his hand, and weak and imperfect representations of him. And this is his glory, that we are like unto him; and in this he rejoiceth. As an artificer is delighted in his work, when he seeth it finished according to that idea which he had set up in his mind, and looketh upon it with the same favour and complacency as he doth upon his child which resembleth him; so looketh God upon his creature, when he seeth him built up according to that pattern which he hath made, and which was in himself; when he seeth him in that shape and form of obedience which he prescribed; when he is what God would have him be, a follower of

God. This is his glory, above all the Hallelujahs and Hosannas of men and angels.

In a word : this is the end for which he gave us those hard and unpleasant laws of fasting and abstinence, and that chargeable one (as we think) of hearing. For this we pray, for this we hear, for this we fast. And if these duties lift us up to this, they are accepted : if not, they but carry us the wrong way, from Beth-el to Beth-aven, from true godliness to lying and vanity ; and they are an abomination. And when God thundereth from heaven, and breatheth forth his menaces against the greatest sinners, the sentence is, "They shall have their portion with hypocrites." (Matt. xxiv. 51.) For,

(i.) Nothing is more opposite to God, who is truth, than a pharisaical hypocrite, whose whole life is a lie ; opposite to his justice ; which as it punisheth all and every part of wickedness, so it exacteth all and every part of sanctity ; which will not dispense with a moral, positive, and eternal precept upon the performance of a temporary and occasional one ; which exacteth his will to be performed not by halves, but commandeth us *implere legem*, "to fulfil his law," to fill it up with our obedience ; which will not take a day's fast for an age of intemperance, a bow of the head for a blow on the face, nor the hearing of an hour for the deceit and cozenage of a week ; which will not take the shadow for the substance, nor a picture for a Christian : in a word, which will not admit of our courage and resolution in sin for our active, yet unactive, endeavours in bodily exercise ; which will not take the helps, the abused helps, for the end, nor favour the devil for the saint he is like. The voice of justice is, "These things thou oughtest to have done, and not to have left the other undone." (Matt. xxiii. 23.)

(ii.) Hypocrisy is opposite to God's wisdom, and is a mockery of him, hiding us from his all-seeing eye ; as if he could not behold oppression and sacrilege through a fast ; as if he could not discover us fighting against heaven, because our march is grave and solemn, and we sin against him in his name ; as if he could not see Jeroboam's wife in her disguise, nor the devil in Samuel's mantle ; as if he that made the eye were blind, and he that made the conscience were not greater than it, and saw all things, even those we will not see, and those we cannot see ; for who ever yet forded his own heart ? Why should we then provoke the Lord to jealousy ? Are we wiser than he ? *Quid prodest inclusam habere conscientiam ? Patemur Deo* : "Why should we first beat and wound our conscience with sin, and then heal and skin it over with a ceremony ? for howsoever it be

shut to thee, thy heart is open to God," more open than Drusus's house in the story, that had neither windows nor doors. Though thy mask be on, and thou art acting thy part upon the stage of the world, yet thou art in the eye and presence of a just and wise God. To him thy compliment is a lie, thy dissimulation open, thy thoughts as vocal as thy words, thy darkness as clear as the light, and thy whisper as loud as thunder. He can sever thy dross from thy gold, thy oppression from thy fasting, thy sacrilege from thy zeal. And he who "telletth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names," (Psalm cxlvii. 4,) will tell the number of thy sins, as numberless as they, and call them all by their names,—thy oppression "oppression," thy fraud "fraud," thy profaneness "profaneness,"—though they lie hid and covered over in a fast, in thy ceremonious, specious, and hollow devotion.

And now where is thy hope? In a shadow, in a ceremony, in a "broken reed," which will pierce through thy hand, and aggravate thy sin. (Isai. xxxvi. 6.) "The hope of the hypocrite shall be cut off," saith Bildad. (Job viii. 14.) Nay, "His joy is but a moment," saith Zophar: (Job xx. 5:) and a moment, we know, is indivisible, of less continuance than a thought; philosophers will not allow it to be a part of time. How can that hope last which hath no better a pillar to lean on than a phantasm, which appeareth and is not? "I fast twice in the week, I pay tithes of all that I possess," is a fair *item* in a Pharisee's catalogue; but it is foisted in, and, when God looketh upon it, it is a bill of accusation.

#### APPLICATION.

And now you have seen the Pharisee's phylacteries pulled off, the hypocrite unmasked, let us take a short survey of ourselves by way of application, and so conclude.

And here, as St. Ambrose speaketh of the story of Naboth, *Vetus tempore, usu quotidiana*, "It is very ancient, but renewed every day in the practice of men;" so may we say of the Pharisees: The sect is vanished, but there is a generation of such vipers still, lifting up their heads and their voices as high as they, as very hypocrites as they; as holy as they, and as seditious as they; as holy as they, and as deceitful as they; as holy as they, and as covetous as they; as holy as they, and as imperious as they; as holy as they, and as bold dictators as they. *Mali thripes, mali ipes*: "Neither is better; for both are bad;" and it is not easy to determine which is worse, but when they show us their teeth and their horns. You may see them in the temple and in every street, hear them giving thanks, and blessing them-

selves; making that a law which is none, and slighting the rest; "straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel;" (Matt. xxiii. 24;) stumbling at a straw, and leaping over a mountain; start-ling at a child, at that which is harmless, and embracing a monster; silent and crafty when they are overpowered, and loud and cruel when they prevail; lambs when they list, and lions when they can.

I need not be large in their character; you may know them by their language, "I fast twice in the week." They fast, and they pray, and they hear, and they believe, and they are assured of heaven. They are, and they alone: the rest stand before them as publicans or excommunicate persons. "Can any good thing, can any prophet, come out of Nazareth?" (John i. 46.) Can any know any good, or do any good, that is not of that faction? Enlarge thy phylacteries, if thou caust, thou Pharisee, and paint that sepulchre of rotten bones, which thou art, with more art and curiosity than these; blow thy trumpet louder, or draw thy face to more figures than these. Lord, what is now become of religion? It was placed in judgment and mercy; it is now managed with cruelty and craft: it was committed to every nation and all people; it is now shut up in a party: it was seated in the will and understanding; it is now whirled about in the fancy: it was a wedding-garment; it is now made "a cloak of maliciousness:" (1 Peter ii. 16:) it was once true, he that loved Christ, and kept his commandments, was his disciple; (John xiv. 21;) but he is now no good Christian who is so, if he be not so after such a mode and such a fashion. We see it in the church of Rome; no salvation out of her territories: God grant we feel it not nearer home!

Beloved, he that shall look abroad, and well consider the conversation of many, may be tempted perhaps to an unworthy thought, that either there is no religion, or that religion is nothing. For wherein is it placed? In a fast, and that to our own wills; in hearing, and that but vain; in prayer, and that many times but babbling; in faith, and that but dead; in formalities and shows. Its "sound is gone through the earth," (Rom. x. 18,) and it is lost in the noise. Religion we fight for, and religion we fight against: religion we extol, and religion we shame: we cry it up, and tread it under foot; and are never less religious than when the Pharisee speaketh within us, and telleth the world, and maketh it known to all people, that we are so. *Non apparemus mali, ut plus malignemur*: "We will not appear evil, that we may do the more evil; seem very good, that we may be worse and worse."

Let us take an inventory of our jewels and our best things, let us set down our virtues. We fast with all our sins about us, full of iniquity, and many times feed it with a fast. We fast, and make it a prologue sometimes to a comedy, sometimes to a tragedy; and at once call down judgments, and deprecate them; humble ourselves before God, and provoke him. We hear, and that is all: and would to God that were all! But here that curse is upon it,—we “carry much seed out, but gather little in.” (Deut. xxviii. 38.) We hear much, and remember little, and practise less; nay, we practise the contrary to that which we heard with so much attention and delight. We pray for one thing, and desire another. We make it a trade, a craft and occupation, to take indeed a pearl, but not the kingdom of heaven. “Ay, but we believe.” I am unwilling to say, faith is a ceremony; but in many it is not so much, and signifieth nothing at all; a meteor hanging in the fancy which portendeth nothing but sterility and barrenness; rather a scutcheon for show than a buckler to quench a fiery dart. We call Christ a foundation, and we build upon him: we lay our cruelty upon him, who was a Lamb; our malice upon him, who prayed, who died, for his enemies; our pride upon him, who “made himself of no reputation;” (Phil. ii. 7;) our hypocrisy upon him, who was truth itself; and our rebellion upon him, who was a pattern of obedience. We believe in Christ, and crucify him again.

For this “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven,” because we “hold the truth of God in unrighteousness.” (Rom. i. 18.) “For this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still;” (Isai. v. 25;) not so much for the breach as for the contempt of his word and commandments, not so much for our offending him as for our dallying with him, not so much for our sin as for our hypocrisy; not only for our disobedience, but for our hearing; not only for our defects, but for our devotion; not only for our infidelity, but for our faith; not only for our intemperance, but for our fast. For what can provoke God more than to see such pearls trodden under foot by swine? (Matt. vii. 6.) I do not mention paying of tithes; for neither the law of God nor of man can defend them, nor any thing else that looketh like a prey.

And therefore, for conclusion, let me bespeak you as Christ did his disciples: “Take heed of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy;” (Luke xii. 1;) for it will leaven and sour the whole lump, the whole body of your religion, taint and poison your fast, frustrate your hearing, turn your prayer into sin, (Psalm cix. 7,) make your faith vain, and leave you in your sins.

## SERMON LXXIV.

## CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*—James i. 25.

## PART I.

THERE is nothing more talked of than the gospel, nothing more wilfully mistaken, nothing more frequently abused. “The sound of it is gone through the earth,” (Psalm xix. 4,) is heard from the east to the west; but men have set and tuned it to their own lusts and humours. No Psalm will please us but a Psalm of mercy: for judgment is a harsh note. Mercy and judgment, though David put them together in his song, with us are such discords that they yield no harmony. Mercy and judgment, law and liberty, though they may meet and delight us, though they must meet to save us, yet we set them at distance, “cleave to the one, and hate the other;” please and delight ourselves under the shadow of mercy, till judgment falleth upon us as a tempest to overwhelm us; lose our liberty in our embraces; forfeit mercy by laying hold of it; and the gospel of Christ is made the gospel of man, nay, saith St. Augustine, *evangelium diaboli*, “the gospel of the devil himself.” This our blessed apostle had discovered in “the dispersed tribes,” to whom he wrote,—that they were very ready to publish and magnify the gospel, that they loved to “speak” of it, that they loved to “hear” of it; that they were perfect in their Creed, that faith was set up aloft and crowned, even when it was “dead;” that they did believe, and “were partial;” that they did believe, and “despise the poor;” that they did believe, and “blaspheme that worthy name by which they were called:” (James ii. 4—7:) and therefore, to draw them back from this so dangerous a deviation, he exhorteth them, First, “To hear the word of truth;” (James i. 19;) (that he disliketh not;) but then, Secondly, “To receive it” into their hearts “purged from all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.” (Verse 21.) And, in the Third place, to drive it home, he urgeth them to the practice and full obedience of what they hear and believe. His First reason is: Because “to hear” and “not to do” is “to put a cheat upon ourselves,” (verse 22,) to defraud ourselves of the true end of hearing; which when we do, we must necessarily fall upon a

worse end. If we hear, and not do, we shall do that which will destroy us. His Second reason is taken *ab utili*, "from the huge advantage we shall reap by it." For blessedness is entailed not upon "the hearers," but "the doers, of the word;" as you find it in my text: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

In which words you have,

I. The character of a true gospeller, of a Christian indeed: He "looketh into the gospel, and he continueth in it" by frequent meditation and by constant obedience; by "not forgetting," and by "doing the work" which the gospel enjoineth. This is his character.

II. His crown: "He shall be blessed in his deed." So that here the apostle taketh the Christian by the hand, and pointeth out to him his end, namely, blessedness: and, that he may press forward to it, he chalketh out his way before him,—the gospel, or the doctrine of the gospel, of Christ. Here if he walk and make progress, here if he remain and persevere, the end is blessedness; and it is laid up for him, and even expecteth and waiteth to meet him. Thus we see it, and thus we set forward towards it. Doing is the duty, and blessedness is the reward. These are the parts.

I. In the first, the character of a true Christian, you have the character of the gospel itself, and that, one would think, a strange one. For who would look for law in the gospel? or who would look for liberty in a law? The gospel is good news, but a law is terrible: "We cannot endure to hear that which is commanded:" (Heb. xii. 20:) and one would think that the law were vanished with the smoke at Mount Sinai. And "liberty" is a jubilee, bringeth rest and intermission; but "a law" tieth and fettereth us, putteth us to hard tasks, to be up and doing, to labour and pain. And yet there is law in the gospel, and there is liberty in the gospel; and these two will friendly join and comply together; and the truest way to liberty is by this law. The gospel, then, or the doctrine of the gospel, is, (I.) A law, and so requireth our obedience: (II.) A perfect law, and exacteth a perfect and complete obedience: (III.) A law of liberty, that our obedience may be free and voluntary. And these, if we continue to the end, will draw-on the reward, which is the end of all, the end of this law, the end of our obedience: "We shall be blessed in our work."

We begin with the character of the gospel, or the doctrine of the gospel.



(I.) And, First, we see, the apostle calleth it a law. And though it may seem an improper speech to say, "The gospel is law," yet it will bear a good and profitable sense. For there is a new law as well as an old. *Et lex antiqua suppletur per novam*, saith Tertullian: "The old law receiveth addition and perfection by the new." Take it in what sense you please, in the best and most pleasing signification, it implieth a law.

If you take it for "a testament," as it is called, that is the will of the testator; (Heb. vii. 22;) and his will is a law. It is called so, *mandatum*, "a command," an injunction; *contestatio mentis*, saith Gellius, "a declaration of our mind." "I have given them thy word," saith Christ. (John xvii. 14.) "I have delivered all thy mind and will:" which we are bound to observe as a law.

Take it for a covenant: it is called so, "the new covenant." (Heb. xii. 24.) And what is a covenant but a law? It was a law upon Christ, to do what belonged to his office; and it is a law upon us, to do our duties; unless we can think that Christ only was under the law, that we might be *αυτόνομοι*, "lawless, and do what we please."

Take it, as the name importeth, for "good news;" even that pleasing sound, the angels' anthem, the music of heaven, may convey a law. For, what was "the good news?" "That we should be delivered from our enemies." (Luke i. 71.) That is but an imperfect narration, but a part of the news. The law is tied as fast to it as we are to the law: "That we should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life." (Verses 74, 75.)

Take it in the angels' words: "To you is born a Saviour." (Luke ii. 11.) And though "to you" may take all mankind within its compass, and be as large as the whole world, yet it is a law that appropriateth and applieth these words, and draweth them down to particulars. For though they take-in all, yet they do not take-in a libertine or lawless person. "To you a Saviour," is no good news to the impenitent sinner, to him that will not be obedient to this law, to the gospel of Christ. *Facit infidelitas multorum ut non omnibus nascatur qui omnibus natus est,\** saith Ambrose: "To you a Saviour is born, is universally true: but infidelity and disobedience interpret it against themselves." He is not your Saviour, unless you receive him with his own conditions: and his conditions make a law, and are obligatory.

For, in the last place, look upon his promises, of expiation

\* See the note in vol. i. p. 73.—EDIT.

and pardon and remission, of life and eternity, look upon them in all their brightness and radiancy ; and even from thence you may hear a law, as the Israelites did from the thick cloud and thunders. For love may have a law bound up in it as well as terror. Love hath its commands. Indeed it is itself a law ; especially the love of the God of love, who is equal to himself in all his ways ; whose promises are made (as all things else which are made by him) “ in order, number, and weight ; ” whose love and promises are guided and directed by his justice and wisdom. He doth not promise to purge those who will wallow in the mire, or to pardon those who will ever rebel, or to give them life who love death, or eternal, pure, spiritual joy to those who seek eternity only in their lusts. No : his promises are always attended with conditions fitted to that wisdom that made them, and to our condition that receive them. He doth not *ex conditionibus facere promissiones*, as some have been bold to say, “ condition with us to do his will, and then turn the condition into a promise : ” but rather *ex promissionibus facere conditiones*, “ make conditions out of promises.” For every promise in the gospel is loaded with its condition. “ Thou shalt be saved ; ” but it is, “ if thou believe : ” (Acts xvi. 31 :) there is *lex fidei*, “ the law of faith.” “ I will give thee a crown of life ; ” but it is, “ if thou be faithful unto death : ” (Rev. ii. 10 :) there is *lex factorum*, “ the law of works.” For they are not all *credenda* in the gospel, all “ articles of faith : ” there be *agenda*, “ some things to be done.”

Nor is the Decalogue shut out of the gospel. Nay, the very articles of our Creed include a law, and in a manner bind us to some duty : and though they run not in that imperial strain, “ Do this, and live,” yet they look towards it as towards their end. Otherwise to believe them in our own vain and carnal sense, were enough ; and the same faith would save us with which the devils are tormented. No : thy faith, to which thou art also bound as by a law, is dead, that is, is not faith, if it do not work by a law. Thou believest there is a God : thou art then bound to worship him. Thou believest that Christ is thy Lord : thou art then obliged to do what he commandeth : his word must be thy law, and thou must fulfil it. His death is a law, and bindeth thee to mortification. His cross should be thy obedience ; his resurrection, thy righteousness ; and his coming to judge the quick and the dead, thy care and solicitude. In a word : In a testament, in a covenant, in the angel’s message, in the promises of the gospel, in every article of thy Creed, thou mayest find a law. Christ’s legacy, his will, is a

law ; the covenant bindeth thee ; the good news obligeth thee ; the promises engage thee ; and every article of thy Creed hath a kind of commanding and legislative power over thee. Either they bind to some duty, or concern thee not at all. For they are not proposed for speculation, but for practice ; and that consequence which thou mayest easily draw from every one, must be to thee as a law. What, though "honey and milk be under his tongue," (Cant. iv. 11,) and he sendeth "ambassadors" to thee, and they "entreat and beseech thee in his stead and in his name?" (2 Cor. v. 20.) Yet is all this in reference to his command, and it proceedeth from the same love which made his law : and even these beseechings are binding, and aggravate our guilt, if we melt not, and bow to his law. *Principum preces mandata sunt* : "The very entreaties of kings and princes are as binding as laws ;" *preces armatae*, "entreaties that carry force and power with them," that are sent to us as it were in arms to invade and conquer us. And if we neither yield to the voice of Christ in his royal law, nor fall down and worship at his condescensions and loving parleys and earnest beseechings, we increase our guilt, and make sin sinful in the highest degree.

Nor need we thus boggle at the word, or be afraid to see a law in the gospel, if either we consider the gospel itself, or Christ our King and Lord, or ourselves, who are his redeemed captives, and owe him all service and allegiance.

1. For, First, the gospel is not a dispensation to sin ; nor was "a Saviour born to us," that he should do and suffer all, and we do what we list. No : the gospel is the greatest and sharpest curb that was ever yet put into the mouth of sin. "The grace of God," saith St. Paul, "hath appeared unto all men, teaching us," that is, commanding us, "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." (Titus ii. 11, 12.) *Libertas in Christo non fecit innocentiae injuriam*, saith the father : "Our liberty in Christ was not brought-in to beat down innocency before it," but to uphold it rather and defend it against all those assaults which flesh and blood, our lusts and concupiscence, are ready to make against it. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) He taketh away those sins that are past, by remission and pardon ; but he setteth up a law as a rampire and bulwark against sin, that it break not in and reign again in our mortal bodies. There Christ is said to "take away," not τὰς ἀμαρτίας, "the sins," but τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, "the sin, of the world," that is, the whole nature of sin, that it may have no subsistence or being in the world. If the gospel had nothing of law in it, there could be no sin under the gospel : "for sin is

a transgression of a law." (1 John iii. 4.) But, flatter ourselves as we please, those are the greatest sins which we commit against the gospel. And "it shall be easier in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah," (Matt. x. 15,) than for those Christians who "turn the grace of God into wantonness," (Jude 4,) who sport and revel it under the very wings of mercy, who think mercy cannot make a law, but is busy only to bestow donatives and indulgences, who are then most licentious when they are most restrained. For what greater curb can there be, than when justice, and wisdom, and love, and mercy, all concur and join together to make a law?

2. Secondly. Christ is not only our Redeemer, but our King and Lawgiver. As he is "the wonderful Counsellor," (Isai. ix. 6,) so he came out of the loins of Judah, and is a Lawgiver too. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." (Psalm ii. 6.) "The government shall be upon his shoulder." (Isai. ix. 6.) He crept not to this honour, but this honour returned to him as to the true and lawful Lord. "With glory and honour did God crown him, and set him over the works of his hands." (Heb. ii. 7.) As he crowned the first Adam with understanding and freedom of will; so he crowned the Second Adam with the full knowledge of all things, with a perfect will, and with a wonderful power. And as he gave to Adam dominion over the beasts of the field, so he gave to Christ "power over things in heaven and things on earth." And "he glorified not himself; but he who said, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," (Heb. v. 5,) he it was that laid "the government upon his shoulder," not, "upon his shoulders:" for he was well able to bear it on one of them. For "in him the Godhead dwelleth bodily." (Col. ii. 9.) And with this power he was able to "put down all other rule, authority, and power," (1 Cor. xv. 24,) to "spoil principalities and powers, and to show them openly in triumph;" (Col. ii. 15;) to spoil them by his death, and to spoil them by his laws, due obedience to which shaketh the power of hell itself. For this, as it pulleth out "the sting of death," (1 Cor. xv. 56,) so also "beateth Satan down under our feet." (Rom. xvi. 20.) This, if it were universal, would be the best exorcism that is, and even chase the devil out of the world, which he maketh his kingdom. For "to run the way of Christ's commandments," is to overthrow him and bind him in chains, is another hell in hell unto him.

3. Thirdly. If we look upon ourselves, we shall find there is a necessity of laws to guide and regulate us, and to bring us to the end. All other creatures are sent into the world with a

sense and understanding of the end for which they come, and so, without particular direction, and yet unerringly, proceed to the attaining of it. "The stork in the air knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming." (Jer. viii. 7.) Pliny, speaking of the bees, telleth us: *Quod maximè mirum est, mores habent*; "A wonderful thing it is to see that natural honesty and justice which is in them."\* Only man, the sovereign lord of all the creatures, whom it most principally concerned to be thus endowed, was sent into the world utterly devoid of any such knowledge, *et nisi aliendâ misericordiâ sustinere se nequit*, as Ambrose speaketh, "and without foreign and borrowed help never so much as getteth a sight of his own proper end." Amongst natural men, none there are in whom appetite is so extinct but that they see something which they propose unto themselves, as a scope of their hopes and reward of their labours, and in the obtaining of which they suppose all their happiness to reside. Yet even in this which men principally incline to, direction is so faulty, particulars so infinite, that most sit down in the midst of their way, and come far short of that mark which their hopes set up. And if our wisdom be so feeble and deficient in those things which are sensible and open to our view, what laws, what light, what direction have we need of, to carry us on in the way to that happiness which no mortal eye can approach!

Hannibal, in Livy, being to pass the Alps, a thing at that time held impossible, yet comforteth himself with this: *Nullas terras cælum contingere, nec inexsuperabiles humano generi esse*: † "That, how high soever they were, they were not so high as heaven, nor unpassable, if men were industrious." The pertinacy of man's industry may find ways through deserts, through rocks, through the roughest seas. But our attempt is far greater. The way we must make is from earth to heaven; a thing which no strength or wit of man could ever yet compass. Therefore Christ our King, who knoweth man to be a wandering and erring creature, would not leave it to *his* shallow discretion, *who* no sooner thinketh but erreth, nor setteth down his foot but treadeth amiss. But He cometh himself into the world, promulgeth his laws, which may be to him as Tiresias's staff in the poet, able to guide his feet were he never so blind: and in his gospel he giveth him sound directions no way subject unto error, guideth him as it were with a bridle, putteth his law into his heart, chalketh out his way before him, and, like a skilful pilot, showeth him what course to take, what *syrtes*, what

\* *Nat. Hist.* lib. xi. 5.† *Historia*, lib. xxi. 30.

“rocks” to avoid, lest he make an irrecoverable shipwreck of body and soul. His laws are the compass, by which if he steer his course he shall pass the gulf, and be brought to that haven where he would be.

Therefore “hath Christ called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter ii. 9.) And “we are the called of Jesus Christ,” (Rom. i. 6,) gathered together into a church, a house, a family, a city, a republic. Our “conversation,” *πολίτευμα*, *municipatus*, as Tertullian rendereth it, “our burghership,” “is in heaven.” (Phil. iii. 20.) And the philosopher will tell us, *Πρὸς τὰς πολιτείας τοὺς νόμους δεῖ τίθεσθαι*. “He that will erect a society, a commonwealth, must also frame laws, and fit and shape them to that form of commonwealth which he intendeth.” For laws are *numismata reipublicæ*, “the coins as it were by which we come to know the true face and representation of a commonwealth,” the different complexions of states and societies. And Christ our King hath drawn out laws like unto his kingdom, which are most fit and applicable to that end for which he hath gathered us into one body. “His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness;” (Heb. i. 8;) and his laws are just. He came down from heaven; and his laws carry us back thither. “He received them from his Father,” as himself speaketh; (John x. 18;) and these make us like unto his Father. These govern our understanding, *ne assentiat*, “that it yield not assent” to that error which our lusts have painted over in the shape of truth; and these regulate our will, *ne consentiat*, “that it do not bow and choose it;” and these order our affections, that they may be servants, and not commanders, of our reason. These make a heaven in our understanding; these place the image of God in our will, and make it like unto his; these settle peace and harmony in the affections, that they become weapons of righteousness, and fight the battles of our King and Law-giver. My anger may be a sword; my love, a banner; my hope, a staff; and my fear, a buckler. In a word, Christ’s laws will fit us for his kingdom here, and prepare us for his kingdom hereafter.

Therefore, in the next place, they are necessary for us, as the only means to draw us nigh unto himself, and to that end for which he came into the world. Every end hath its proper means, fitted and proportioned to it. Knowledge hath study; riches have labour and industry; honour hath policy. Even he that setteth up an end which he is ashamed of and hideth from the sun and the people, draweth a method and plot in himself to bring him to it. The thief hath his night and darkness; and the wanton, his twilight: and his hope entitleth and joineth him to the end, though he never reach it. In the kingdom of Satan

there are rules and laws observed. A thought ushereth-in a sin, and one sin draweth on another, and at last destruction. And this is the way of that wisdom which is but foolishness. And shall men "work iniquity as by a law," (Psalm xciv. 20,) and can we hope to be raised to an eternity of glory, and be left to ourselves? or to attain it by those means which hold no proportion at all with it? Will the gospel, the bare tidings of peace, do it? Will a fancy, a thought, a wish, an open profession, have strength enough to lift us up to it? Happiness in fancy is a picture, and no more: in a wish, it is less; for I wish that which I would not have: and barely to profess the means, and acknowledge the way unto it, is to give myself the lie, nay, to call myself "a fool:" for, what greater folly can there be than to say, "This is the way," and not to walk in it? If we were thus left unto ourselves, all our happiness were but a dream, and every thought a sin against the Holy Ghost. We should wish our King neither just, nor wise, nor holy: we should call him our King, and leave him no sceptre in his hand, no power to make a law; look forward toward the mark, and run backward from it; give Christ a "Hail," and crucify him; call an innocent Christ our King, and be men of Belial; a humble Christ, and swell above our measure; a merciful Christ, and be cruel; a just Christ, and be oppressors; hope to attain the end without the means, and against the means, and so go to heaven with hell about us.

And indeed wickedness could never so fill the hearts of men, if they did not entertain this conceit, that the gospel and the law are at as great a distance as liberty and captivity. And by this the gospel declineth, and groweth weak and unprofitable, not able to make "a new creature," (2 Cor. v. 17,) which is made up in "righteousness and holiness," (Eph. iv. 24,) and obedience to those laws which, had not the prince of this world blinded us, we might easily see and take notice of, even in the gospel itself. For Christ did neither dissolve the law of nature, nor abrogate the moral law of Moses, but improved and perfected them both. He left the moral law as a rule, but not as a covenant, pressed it further than formerly it had been understood, and "showed us yet a more excellent way." (1 Cor. xii. 31.) And as God gave to Adam a law *ἄλλην τῷ ἀντεξουσίῳ*, "as matter for the freedom of his will," to see which way it would bend, and to try his obedience: so did Christ in this new creation, even when he came "to heal the broken-hearted, and set at liberty those that were in prison," (Luke iv. 18,) publish his precepts, which are not counsels but laws, as matter of that obedience which will keep our heart from polluting again, and strengthen our feet

that we may “stand fast in that liberty wherewith he hath made us free.” (Gal. v. 1.) For without obedience to these laws the plague is still at our heart, and our fetters cleave close to us. He is come, and hath finished all; and, for all this, we are yet in our sins. I will not say with Tertullian, *Quisquis rationem jubet, legislator est*: “Whosoever commandeth that which reason suggesteth is a lawgiver:” for every man that can speak reason hath not authority to make laws. But Christ was not only the Wisdom of his Father, but had legislative power committed to him, being the supreme Head over all men, that by his laws, as well as his blood, he might bind them to that obedience which may make them fit citizens of his New Jerusalem. And as he is Christ, “anointed” by his Father, anointed to his office, to teach and command, so he distilleth his ointment on every member of his: “and the same anointing teacheth us of all things, and is truth, and is no lie;” (1 John ii. 27;) and maketh us Christians, that we may be obedient to the Christian law. Christ saith, “This new commandment I give you;” (John xiii. 34;) and his apostle calleth it “a law:” (James i. 25;) and we need not be afraid of the name.

## APPLICATION.

We will but draw it down to ourselves by way of use and application, and so conclude.

1. And, First, we should not be afraid of the word “law,” if we were not afraid of our duty; nor look up upon God’s decree, which is hidden from us, but “fulfil the royal law,” (James ii. 8,) which is “put into our mouth and into our hearts.” (Rom. x. 8.) For his decree and his command are not at such opposition but the command may be a decree also: and he decreed to save us by faith and obedience to his evangelical laws; and he decreed to crown us, but by those means which are fit to set the crown upon our heads. Therefore we cannot but condemn that conceit which hath stained the papers of many who call themselves “Gospellers,” and polluted the lives of more,—“that Christ came into the world to do his Father’s will, that is, to redeem us; but not to do his Father’s will, that is, to teach and command us:” which is in effect to redeem us, and yet leave us in chains: “that Christ is a Saviour, and not a Lawgiver: that the gospel consisteth rather in certain articles to be believed, than in certain precepts to be observed: that, to speak properly, there is no precept at all delivered in the gospel: that it belongeth to the law to command: that the breath of the gospel is mild and gentle, and smelleth of nothing but frankincense and myrrh,”—those



precious promises, which we gaze upon till our eyes dazzle, that we can see nothing we have to do, no thought to stifle, no word to silence, no lust to beat down, no temptation to struggle with; but we let loose our fancy, and our thoughts fly after and embrace every vanity; we set no watch to the door of our lips; we prove not our works; but do whatsoever the flesh suggesteth; because we have nothing to do, we tempt even temptation itself, and will be captives because we have a Saviour. For we are taught, and are willing to believe it,—“That the will of God is laid down in the form and manner of a law, but not so to be understood by the elect,” (which every man can make himself when he [may] please,) “but as a promise, which God will work in those his chosen ones, but will not work in others, who from all eternity are cast away: that faith itself, which is the chief and primary precept of the gospel, is rather promised than left as a command!” *Qui amant, sibi somnia fingunt*: \* With such ease do men swallow the most gross and dangerous falsehoods, and then sit down and delight themselves in those fancies, which could find no room but in the sick and distempered brain of a man sold under sin and bound up in carnality. For if we would but look upon Christ, or upon ourselves, and consider what is most proper to unite us to him; if we would but hear him when he speaketh, “You cannot love me, unless you keep my commandments;” (John xiv. 15;) we should not thus smooth and plain our way to run upon the pricks; we should easily, with one cast of our eye, see what distance there is between a promise and a law, and distinguish them by the very sound, which flesh and blood and our weariness in the paths of righteousness do so easily join together and make one. *Cælum mari unitur ubi visio absumitur, quæ quamdiu viget, tamdiu dividit*, saith Tertullian: “At some distance the heavens seem to close with the sea, not so much by reason of the beams which are cast upon it, but because the sight and visive power is weary and faint, which, whilst it remaineth quick and active, is able to divide objects one from the other.” In like manner we may conceive that a promise and a precept, which are in their own nature diverse and several things, (for a promise waiteth upon a precept, to urge and promote it; and obedience to the precept sealeth the promise, and maketh it good unto us,) yet may sometimes be taken for the very same. For the promises are glorious, and cast a lustre upon the precepts, that they are less observable; and so our duty is lost in the reward, that looketh towards us.

\* VIRGILII *Bucol.* Eclog. viii. 108. “Lovers what they wish believe.”—DRYDEN’S Translation.

Besides this, it could not be that men should so mistake, but that their eyes are dull and heavy by gazing too long upon the absolute decree of predestination, in which, though they be never so far asunder, the precept and the promise may well meet, they think, and be concentred. Certainly, a dangerous error! of which many a soul may be guilty, and know it not; call the doctrine of the gospel a law, and yet bury it in the decree, as in a land of oblivion! And what is this but to make Christ's Sermon on the Mount, not a catalogue of holy duties, but rather a collection of promises? They will say perhaps, that the gospel is εὐαγγέλιον, "good news." And so it is, the best that ever was brought from heaven to earth; and yet nothing the worse because it containeth both promises and laws. For they are as it were of the same blood and kindred, and in a manner con-natural one with the other. No promise without condition, no precept without a promise annexed. What need then these chymical, or rather fantastical, extractions to sever them one from the other? For is it "good news" that we shall be saved? and is it not "good news" that we must "work out our salvation?" (Phil. ii. 12.) Is the promise "good news?" and is not the law "good news?" Is heaven a fair sight? and is a law so terrible? Is it "good news" to the captive that his fetters shall be struck off? and is it not "good news," that he must shake them from him? Is he welcome that showeth us the way to happiness? and shall we turn away the face when he bid-deth us walk in it? Let us not deceive ourselves. He that truly desireth heaven, desireth holiness. He that looketh for the promise, loveth the law. He that will meet Christ at his second, must fall down before him at his first, coming. He that longeth for the *Euge*, the reward, will take delight also in his law. He that taketh Christ for a Saviour, will bow before him also as a Lord. We cannot possibly *dimidiare Christum*, "divide Christ, and take him by halves." Nor can we divide a Christian, to hang, as Solomon is painted, between heaven and hell; lifting himself up at the promises, and treading the precepts under foot; magnifying grace, and denying the power of it; trusting in God, and yet "sacrificing to his own nets;" (Hab. i. 16;) adoring his providence, yet consulting with the witch, the devil, at Endor; seeking his inventions, driving-on his purposes, and carrying-on his ends with those winds which can blow out of no treasury but that of hell! For if these might consist and stand together, the camel with his bunch, the miser with his load, the high-swollen politician, (that is, the gallant knave,) the deceitful with all his nets, the revenger with the sword in his hand,

—all these giant-like sinners might enter in at “the needle’s eye,” at “the narrow gate.” (Matt. xix. 24; vii. 13.) For “the grace of God hath appeared unto all men,” (Titus ii. 11,) and the promises are made unto all men: and if there be no condition, no law in the gospel, then *homini homo quid præstat?*\* then all are sheep, and there be no goats; then the disciples might have spared their question, “Are there few that shall be saved?” (Luke xiii. 23;) for Judas might have entered-in as well as John, and Simon Magus as Simon Peter. But, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate,” is indeed an exhortation; (Matt. vii. 13;) and Christ’s exhortations are laws: for he exhorteth us to nothing but that which we are bound to by covenant, and which the very nature and tenor of the gospel requireth. In a word: To “deny ourselves,” to “take up our cross,” to “love our enemies,” are precepts, and no where else to be found but in the gospel; (Matt. xvi. 24; v. 44;) and are all beams and emanations from God’s eternal law, by which his love, his wisdom, his justice are manifested to all the world. For none but these could so fitly draw us near unto him, or raise our nature to a capacity of eternal glory.

2. Therefore, to draw it yet homer,† whilst we thus gaze upon the mercy-seat, and never look upon the tables of the covenant; whilst we take the sceptre out of Christ’s hand, and leave him nothing but a reed, whilst we leave him to “tread the wine-press alone,” (Isai. lxiii. 3,) leave him to the pain and drudgery of his office, and take from him his legislative power; we take his place, and are a law unto ourselves: our thoughts are our own, “our tongues are our own,” our hands are our own: for “who is Lord over us?” (Psalm xii. 4.) We are *domini rerum temporumque*, “commanders of the times, and of our actions.” *Quæ sylva legum!* “What a wood of laws,” what a world of lawgivers have we! and Christ is left alone hanging on the cross! Every sect, every faction is straight a-framing of laws and making of articles and publishing of constitutions to uphold itself. And as they fall or rise, as the times favour or frown on them, so they either give or are subject unto laws, which are as the trophies and triumphs of a prevailing party. Now the Papist giveth laws to the Protestant, and draggeth him to the stake: anon the wheel is turned, and the face of the commonwealth changed, and the Protestant proscribeth him. The Papist hateth the Lutheran, and the Lutheran the Calvinist; and they of the Reformed party hate one another, as by a law: and no peace can be expected till they yield to one another’s laws, though the law of charity, which is Christ’s law, be lost and trodden under foot in the quarrel. Lord! how

\* TERENTIUS, *Eunuchus*, act. ii. scen. ii. 1. “In what respect is one man better than another?”—EDIT. † An old word for “nearer home.”—EDIT.

ready are we to make laws, who will acknowledge none but those we make; no, not His who was called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, of the increase of whose government there shall be no end!" (Isai. ix. 6, 7.) Which so amusethe many, who are but novices in the school of Christ, that they talk much of religion, and are ever to choose, because they have not yet learned to bow to Christ, and serve him, but in a faction. It was the reply of a prince in Germany to the Lutherans, when they would have persuaded and drawn him in to be one of their party: "If I join myself to you, I am condemned by others; and if I comply with others, I fall under your sentence.

*Quid fugiam, video; quid sequar, haud video:*

'What to shun, I see; but what to follow,' in this diversity of laws and shapes of religion, 'I cannot apprehend.' " From hence have been raised those many needless controversies and unprofitable questions which have not *taught* but *distracted* the world, and have made more noise than reformation. To make men good, they have made men worse; and to stretch the curtains of a church, or rather a faction, (for every faction is a church,) they have enlarged the kingdom of Satan. From hence are wars, from hence are tumults, from hence that fire in the world, which would soon be quite put out if the law of the gospel might take place: for, if we could once bow to that, there could be none at all. What speak we of the laws of men? There is "a law in the members;" (Rom. vii. 23;) and that swayeth and governeth the world, when the evangelical law is laid aside. It is a dream of mercy and liberty that giveth it strength and power, that giveth it a full swinge to tread down powers and principalities, laws and precepts, and all that is named of God. Ambition maketh laws: *Jura, perjura*: "Swear, and forswear:" "Arise, kill, and eat." Covetousness maketh laws; condemneth us to the mines, to dig and sweat. *Quocunque modo rem.*\* Gather, and lay up. Come not within the reach of Omri's statutes, of human laws, and you need not fear any law of Christ. Private interest maketh laws, and indeed is the emperor of the world, and maketh men slaves to crouch and bow under every burden, to submit to every law of man, though it enjoin to-day what it did forbid yesterday; to raise up our heads, and then duck at every shadow that cometh over us. But we can see no such formidable power in the royal law of Christ, because it breatheth not upon it to promote and uphold it, but looketh as an enemy that would cast it down; biddeth us deny ourselves; which we do every day for

\* HORATII *Epist.* lib. i. epist. i. 66.

———— "But if that honest plan

Should fail, get money as you can."—BOSCAWEN'S Translation.

our lusts, for our honour, for our profit; but cannot do it for Christ, or for that crown which is laid up for those that do it. Thus every thing hath power over us which may destroy us; but Christ is not hearkened to, nor those his laws which may make us "wise unto salvation." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) For we are too ready to believe, what some have been bold to teach, that there are no such laws at all in the gospel.

3. Therefore, in the Last place, let us cast this "root of bitterness" out of our hearts; (Heb. xii. 15;) let us look upon it as a most dangerous and baneful error, an error which hath brought that "abomination of desolation" into the world and into the lives and manners of Christians which have made them stink amongst the inhabitants of the earth, amongst Jews and Pagans and Infidels, who tremble to behold those "works of darkness" which they see every day not only done but defended by those who call themselves "the children of light." Because in that name "we bite and devour one another," (Gal. v. 15,) for this they despise the gospel of Christ, because we "boast of it all the day long," and make use of it as a licence or letters-patent to be worse than they, riot it in the light, beat our fellow-servants, defraud and oppress them, which they do not in darkness and in the shadow of death. The first Christians called the gospel *legem Christianam*, "the Christian law;" and so lived as under a law, so lived that nothing but the name was accused. But the latter times have brought forth subtile divines, that have disputed away the law; and now there is scarce any thing left commendable but the name. A gopeller, and worse than a Turk or Pagan; a gopeller, and a revenger; a gopeller, and a libertine; a gopeller, and a schismatic; a gopeller, and a deceiver; a gopeller, and a traitor; a gopeller that will be under no law; a gopeller that is all for love and mercy, and nothing for fear:—I may say, The devil is a better gopeller: for "he believeth and trembleth." (James ii. 19.) And indeed this is one of the devil's subtilest engines, *veritatem veritate concutere*, "to shake and beat down one truth with another;" to bury *our duty* in the *good news*, to hide *the Lord* in the *Saviour*, and *the law* in the covering of *mercy*; to make the gospel supplant itself, that it may be of no effect; to have no sound heard but that of imputative righteousness. From hence that irregularity and disobedience amongst Christians, that liberty and peace in sin. For when mercy waiteth so close upon us, and judgment is far out of our sight, we walk on pleasantly in forbidden paths, and sin with the less regret, sin and fear not, pardon lying so near at hand.

To conclude, then: Let us not deceive ourselves, and think

that there is nothing but mercy and pardon in the gospel, and so rely upon it till we commit those sins which shall be pardoned neither in this world nor in the world to come. *Nemo promittat sibi quod non promittit evangelium*, saith Augustine: "Let no man make the promise larger than the gospel hath made it, nor so presume on the grace of God as to turn it into wantonness," so extol it as to depress it, so trust to mercy as to forfeit it: but look into the gospel, and behold it in its own shape and face, as pardoning sin, and forbidding sin; as a royal release, and a royal law; and look upon Christ, "the author and finisher of our faith," (Heb. xii. 2,) as a Jesus to save us, and a Lord to command us; (Psalm ii. 6—12;) as "preaching peace," (Acts x. 36,) and preaching a law, "condemning sin in his flesh," (Rom. viii. 3,) dying that sin might die, and teaching us to destroy it in ourselves. In a word: let us so look into the gospel that it may be unto us "the savour of life unto life, and not the savour of death unto death;" (2 Cor. ii. 16;) so look upon Christ here that he may be our Lord to govern us, and our Jesus to save us; that we may be subject to his laws, and so be made capable of his mercy; that we may acknowledge him to be our Lord, and he acknowledge us before his Father; that death may lose its sting, and sin its strength, and we may be saved in the last day through Jesus Christ our Lord.

---

## SERMON LXXV.

### CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*—James i. 25.

#### PART II.

THAT the precepts of the gospel do bind us as laws, ye have heard already, and how the doctrine of the gospel is a law.

(II.) We must in the next place see how it is a "perfect law."

And, First, "That is perfect," saith the philosopher, *cui nihil adimi nec adjici potest*, "from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing can be added." Such is the gospel. You cannot add to it, you cannot take from it, one iota or tittle. "If any shall add unto these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any shall take away from them, God shall take away his part out of the book

of life." (Rev. xxii. 18.) There needeth no second hand to supply it : and that hand deserveth to be cut off that shall corrupt or alter it. For, look upon the end, which is blessedness ; there you have it drawn out in the fairest lines that flesh and blood can read, in as large a representation as our human nature is capable of. Then view the means to bring us to that end : they are plainly expressed and set out there in such a character that we may run and read them, open to our understanding, exciting our faith, raising our hope, and even provoking us to action. There is nothing which we ought to know, nothing which we must believe, nothing which we may hope for, nothing which concerneth us to do, nothing which may lift us up to happiness and carry us to the end, but it is written in the gospel as it were with the sunbeams. St. Paul giveth it this character, that it is "profitable," that is, sufficient, "for doctrine," which is either of things to be believed, or of things to be done ; "for reproof" of greater and more monstrous crimes ; "for correction" of those who fall by weakness or infirmity ; "for instruction in righteousness," that those who have begun well may grow up in grace and every virtuous work ; "that the man of God may be perfect and consummate," ἐξηρτισμένους, " 'thoroughly furnished' unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) Take him in what capacity you please, *there*, in the scripture, (in the New Testament especially,) yea, and in that alone, he may find what will fill and qualify him, and fit him in every state and condition. Take him in the worst condition, as an unbeliever ; *there* is that will beget faith, and form Christ in him :—as wavering in the faith ; *there* is that will confirm him :—as believing, and fallen into error or sin ; *there* is that will restore him :—as rooted and built up in Christ ; *there* is that will settle and establish him :—as under the cross ; *there* is that will strengthen him :—as crowned with peace ; *there* is that will crown that crown, and settle it on his head :—as in health ; *there* is that will make him "run the ways of God's commandments :"—as in sickness ; *there* is that will tune his groans, and quicken him even when he is giving up the ghost :—as a king ; *there* is that which will manage his sceptre :—as a subject ; *there* he may learn to bow. Take him as a master or a servant, as rich or poor, as in prison or at liberty, living or dying ; *there* he shall find what is necessary for him in that condition of life, even to the last moment and period of it ; and not only that which is necessary, but, under that formality, (as "necessary,") so fitted and proportioned to the end that without it we can never attain it. They that lay hold of it, shall have peace with God ; and they who despise it,

shall have a worm ever gnawing them. "These shall go away," saith our Saviour, "into everlasting punishment; but the righteous" (who look into this perfect law) "into life eternal." (Matt. xxv. 46.)

Will you behold the object of your faith? There you shall see not only a picture of Christ, but "Christ even crucified" (as St. Paul speaketh to the Galatians) "before your eyes." (Gal. iii. 1.) Will you behold that faith which shall save you? There you shall behold both what she is, and what wonders she can work. Have you so little charity as not to know what she is? There you may see her in every limb and lineament, in every act and operation which is proper to her,—her hand, her ear, her eye, her bowels. There you may see what is worth your sight. *Et quod a Deo discitur, totum est*: "We can learn no more than God will teach us." When we affect more, and pour forth all the lust of our curiosity to find it out, we at last shall be weary, and sit down, and complain that we have lost our labour. For thus curiosity, which is a busy idleness, punisheth itself; as a frantic person is punished with his madness. *Quicquid nos beatos facturum est, aut in aperto est, saith Seneca, aut in proximo*: "Whatsoever can make us happy, is either open to the eye or near at hand."

We will instance but in one, and that the main, point, justification; because the church of Rome hath set it in the front of those points of doctrine which are imperfectly or obscurely delivered in the gospel, and therefore require a visible and supreme judge of controversies to settle and determine them. It is true indeed, the gospel hath been preached these sixteen hundred years and above, and many questions have been started and many controversies raised about justification. For though men have been willing to go under the name of "justified persons," yet have they been busy to inquire how justification is wrought in them: they are justified they know not how. Many and divers opinions have been broached amongst the canonists and confessionists, and others. Osiander nameth twenty, and there are many more at this day: and yet all may consist well enough, for aught I see, and still that sense which is delivered in scripture as necessary remain entire. For, 1. It is necessary to believe that "no man can be justified by the works of the law" precisely taken. (Gal. ii. 16.) And in this all agree. 2. It is necessary to believe that "we are not justified by the law of Moses," either by itself, or joined with faith in Christ. (Acts xiii. 39.) And in this all agree. 3. It is necessary to believe that "justification is by faith in Christ." (Rom. v. 1; Gal. iii.



24—26.) And in this all agree. 4. That justification is not without remission of sins and imputation of righteousness. And in this all agree. 5. That “a dead faith doth not justify.” And here is no difference. 6. That that is “a dead faith” which is not accompanied with good works and a holy and serious purpose of good life. And in this all agree. 7. Lastly : That faith in Christ Jesus implieth an advised and deliberate assent that Christ is our Prophet and Priest and King :—*Our Prophet*, who hath fully delivered the will of his Father to us in his gospel, the knowledge of all his precepts and promises :—*Our Priest*, to free us from the guilt of sin and condemnation of death by his blood and intercession :—*Our King and Lawgiver*, governing us by his word and Spirit ; by the virtue and power of which we shall be redeemed from death, and translated into the kingdom of heaven. And in this all agree.

*Da si quid ultra est* : “And is there yet any more ?” All this, which is necessary, is plainly delivered in the gospel ; and what is more is but a vapour from curiosity ; which, when there is “a wide door and effectual,” is ever venturing at “the needle’s eye.” This is so plain that no man stumbleth at it. But those interpretations and comments and explications which have been made upon this, *nihil amplius quàm sonant*, “make a noise, but no music at all :” *nec animum faciunt, quia non habent* : “nor can they add spirit to us in the way to bliss, because they have none.” And as we find them not in the scripture, so have we no reason to list them amongst those doctrines which are necessary.

As to instance, for the act of justification : What mattereth it whether I believe or not believe, know or not know, that our justification doth consist in one or more acts, so that I certainly know and believe that it is the greatest blessing that God can let fall upon his creature, and believe that by it I am made acceptable in his sight, and, though I have broken the law, yet shall be dealt with as if I had been just and righteous indeed ? whether it be done by pardoning all my sins, or imputing universal obedience to me, or the active and passive obedience of Christ ? The act of justification is the act of a Judge ; and this cannot concern us so much as the benefit itself, which is the greatest that can be given ; not so much as our duty to fit us for the act. O that men would learn to speak of the acts of God in his own language, and not seek out divers inventions ! which do not edify, but many times rend the church in pieces, and expose the truth itself to reproach, which had triumphed gloriously over error, had men “contended only for that common faith which

was once delivered to the saints!" (Jude 3.) "My sheep hear my voice," saith Christ. (John x. 27.) 'Ακούει, εἰπεν' οὐ, Συζητεῖ, saith Basil: "They hear and obey, and do not dispute and ask questions." They taste, not trouble and mud, that clear fountain of the water of life.

And as in justification, so in the point of faith by which we are justified, what profit is there so busily to inquire whether the nature of faith consisteth in an obsequious assent, or in the appropriation of the grace and mercy of God, or in a mere fiducial apprehension and application of the merits of Christ? What will this add to me? what "cubit," what "hair, to my stature," if so be I settle and rest upon this,—that the faith by which I am justified must not be a dead faith, but "a faith working by charity?" (Gal. v. 6.) O let me try and examine my faith, let me "build myself up in it," (Jude 20,) and upon it those actions of obedience and holiness which are the language of faith, and speak her to be alive! and then I shall not trouble myself too much to determine *utrūm fides quæ viva, or quæ viva*, "whether a living faith justifieth, or whether it justifieth as a living faith;" whether good works are necessary to justification as efficient or concomitant: for it is enough to know that a dead faith is not sufficient for this work, and that "faith void of good works is dead;" (James ii. 17;) and therefore that must needs be a living faith which "worketh by charity:" whether charity concur with faith to the act of justification, as some would have it: whether it have an equal efficacy, or unequal, or none at all: whether the power of justifying be attributed to faith as the fountain and mother of all good works, or as it bringeth these good works into act; or it have this force by itself alone, as it apprehendeth the merits of Christ, although even in that act it is not alone.

In the midst of all this noise, in the midst of all these doubts and disputations, it is enough for me to be justified. And what is enough, if it be not enough to be saved? Which I may be by following in the way that is smooth and plain, and not running out into the mazes and labyrinths of disputes. It is the "voice" of the gospel "behind thee," *Hæc est via*, "This is the way;" "faith working by charity:" and thou mayest "walk in it," and never ask any more questions. (Isai. xxx. 21.) But "if men will inquire," let them "inquire:" (Isai. xxi. 12:) but let them take heed that they lose not themselves in their search, and dispute away their faith; talk of faith, and be "worse than infidels;" (1 Tim. v. 8;)—of justification, and please themselves in unrighteousness;—of Christ's active obedience, and be "to

every good work reprobate ;”—of his passive obedience, and deny him when they should suffer for him ;—of the inconsistency of faith and good works in our justification, and set them at as great a distance in their lives and conversation, and, because they do not help to justify us, think they have no concurrence at all in the work of our salvation. For we are well assured of the one, and fight for it, and most men are too bold and confident in the other. But the doctrine of the gospel is “a perfect law,” and bindeth us to both, both to believe and to do ; for it requireth a working and an active faith. “In the book of God all our members were written.” (Psalm cxxxix. 16.) *All our members?* Yea, and all the faculties of our soul. And in his gospel he hath framed laws and precepts to order and regulate them all in every act, in every motion and inclination ; which if the eye offend, pluck it out ; if the hand, cut it off ; limit the understanding to the knowledge of God ; bind the will to obedience ; moderate and confine those two turbulent tribunes of the soul,—the concupiscible and irascible appetites ; direct our fear, level our hope, fix our joy, restrain our sorrow ; condescend to order our speech, frame our gesture, fashion our apparel, set and compose our outward behaviour. Instances in scripture in every particular are many and obvious : and the time would fail me to mention them all.

In a word, then : This law is fitted to the whole man, to every faculty of the soul, to every member of the body ; fitted to us in every condition, in every relation, in every motion. It will reign with thee, it will serve with thee. It will manage thy riches, comfort thy poverty ; ascend the throne with thee, sit down with thee on the dunghill. It will pray with thee, fast with thee ; labour with thee, rest and keep a sabbath with thee. It will govern a church, it will order thy family. It will raise a kingdom within thee, not to be divided in itself, free from mutinies and seditions, and those tumults and disturbances which thy flesh with its lusts and affections may raise there. It will live with thee, stand by thee at thy death, and be that angel which shall carry thee into Abraham’s bosom. It will rise again with thee, and set the crown of glory upon thy head.

And is there yet any more ? Or what need there more than that which is necessary ? There can be but one God, one heaven, one religion, one way to blessedness ; and there is but one law : and this runneth the whole compass ; directeth us not only *ad ultimum, sed usque ad ultimum*, “not only to that which is the end, but to the means, to every passage and approach, to every help and advantage towards it,” leadeth us through “the mani-

fold changes and chances of this world," "through fire and water, through honour and dishonour," through peace and persecution, and uniteth us to that one God, giveth us right and title to that one heaven, and bringeth us home to that one end for which we were made.

And is there yet any more? "Yes: particular cases may be so many and various that they cannot all come within the compass of this law." It is true: but then they are cases of our own making, cases which we need not make, sometimes raised by weakness, sometimes by wilfulness, sometimes even by that sin itself which reigneth in our mortal bodies. And to such this law is as an axe to cut them off. But, be their original what it will, if this law reach them not, or if they bear no analogy or affinity with those cases which are contained in the gospel, nor depend upon them by any evident and necessary consequence, they are not to be reckoned in the number of those which are necessary, because we are assured from the Truth itself that all such are within the reach and verge of this law. Some things indeed there be which are indifferent in themselves, *quæ lex nec vetat, nec jubet*, "which the law neither commandeth nor forbiddeth," but become necessary by reason of some circumstance, of time, or place, or quality, or persons, &c. For *quod per se necessarium est, semper est necessarium*, "that which is necessary in itself is always necessary." But some things are made necessary for some place, some person, some times, and yet are in their own nature indifferent still. *Lex hæc ad omnia occurrit*: "This law reacheth even these;" and containeth rules certain and infallible to guide us even in these, if we become not laws unto ourselves, and fling them by; to wit, the rules of charity and prudence, to which if we give heed, it is not possible we should miscarry. It is love of ourselves and love of this world, not charity and spiritual wisdom, which make this noise abroad, this desolation on the earth.

The acts of charity are manifest. She "suffereth long," even errors and injuries, and doth not rise up against shadows and apparitions; "is not rash," to beat down every thing that our own hand hath not set up; "is not puffed up," swelleth not against a harmless and useful constitution, though it be of man; "doth not behave itself unseemly," layeth not a necessity upon us of not doing that which authority even then styleth "an indifferent thing" when it commandeth it to be done; "seeketh not her own," treadeth not the public peace under foot to procure our own, which is to satisfy an ill-raised humour; "is not easily provoked," checketh not at every feather, nor startleth at

that monster which is a creation of our own ; “thinketh no evil,” doth not see a serpent under every leaf, nor idolatry in every bow of devotion. (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.) If we were charitable, we should be peaceable. If charity did govern men’s actions, there would be “abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.” *Multa faciendæ sunt, non jubente lege, sed liberâ charitate*, saith Augustine : “Charity is free to suffer and do many things which the law doth not expressly command ;” and yet it doth command them in general, when it enjoineth obedience to authority. The acts, I say, of charity are manifest : but those of prudence are not particularly designed. *Prudentia respicit ad singularia* : “That eye is given us to view and consider particular occurrences ;” and it dependeth upon those things which are without us : whereas charity is an act of the will, and here we cannot be to seek. For how easy is it to a willing mind to apply a general precept to particular actions ! especially if charity fill our hearts, which is the “bond of perfection,” (Col. iii. 14,) and “the end and complement of the law,” (1 Tim. i. 5 ; Rom. xiii. 10,) which indeed is our spiritual wisdom. In a word : In these cases when we go to consult with reason, we cannot err, if we leave not charity behind us.

But the time will not permit to press this further. All that I intended was, to show the perfection of the gospel, how sufficient means it administereth to bring us to the end for which it was promulged. So then it is “perfect” in itself.

2. In the next place, it is “perfect” in respect of the law of Moses. That indeed was the law of God, and so made to be “a lantern to our feet, and a light to our paths.” (Psalm cxix. 105.) But the apostle telleth us, that this light is not sufficient for us, as being not bright enough to direct us to our end, *διὰ τὸ αὐτῆς ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀνωφελές*, “because it was a weak and unprofitable” light. (Heb. vii. 18.) Besides, as the law was altogether insufficient to justify a sinner, so was it defective in respect of light, which is more abundantly poured forth in the gospel. In the law it is written, “Thou shalt not commit adultery :” (Exod. xx. 14 :) under the gospel an eunuch may commit that sin, and do it with his eye : For “he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her,” is guilty of that pollution, saith our Lawgiver. (Matt. v. 28.) The law permitted many wives : the Christian is *soli uxori masculus*, “a man to his wife alone,” an eunuch to all the sex besides. The language of the law was, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth :” (Exod. xxi. 24 :) but now it is, “Good for evil, and a blessing for a curse.” (Matt. v. 39, 44.) *Et lex plus quàm amisit invenit*, saith Ambrose : “The law was no loser

by this precept, but a gainer." For the more perfect it is, the more it is a law. "You have heard it spoken to them of old, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy : but I say unto you, Love your enemies." (Matt. v. 44.) Here it is plain that Christ did advance and increase the strictness of the law by adding something to it. *In melius reformavit* : "He reformed it and made it better than it was." The gospel is called "the time of reformation." (Heb. ix. 10.) Christ did enlarge the law, he set his last hand to it, and did perfect it. "The gospel," saith Nazianzen, "is far easier than the law," διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἀντιδοσιν, "in respect of the hope that is set before us, and that great reward which is promised." Such a mark will draw us. The sight of heaven smootheth every path, maketh the weak strong, bringeth him in "as a giant to run his race." (Psalm xix. 5.) Otherwise it is ἐργωδέστερον καὶ μοχθηρότερον, "far more painful and laborious," hath "a straiter way and a narrower gate."

In a word : Whatsoever Moses required, that doth our Law-giver exact, and more ; a humility more bending, a patience more constant, a meekness more suffering, a chastity more pure, a flesh more subdued ; because the heavenly promises are more, and more clearly proposed, in the gospel than under the law. For is not eternity a stronger motive than the basket and temporary enjoyments ? Is not heaven more attractive than the earth ? Or when should we more love God than when he displayeth himself in all his beauty ? Hence it is that the old law, in comparison of the gospel, is said to be "imperfect." (Heb. vii. 19.) And Christ is called "the end of the law ;" (Rom. x. 4 ;) and the law, "a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ." (Gal. iii. 24.)

We know there is a righteousness most proper to the gospel, which the Jew saw through types and figures, "as through a glass, darkly ; but we see face to face," by open manifestation. (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) And this very righteousness of faith is so far from excluding the righteousness of works, that the gospel exacteth them more than the law, and justifieth none that are not full of them. And in this respect, as the Christian hath more helps and light than the Jew, so he must as far exceed the perfection of a Jew as the grace of the gospel doth the rigour of the law. *Crescit onus cum beneficio* : "The larger the privilege, the greater the burden." A greater tribute is due unto love than to fear. And our Saviour hath proposed it as an everlasting truth, that "to whom much is given, of him much shall be required." (Luke xii. 48.) And therefore he hath left these precepts more heavy on the back of Christians than formerly

upon the Jews. Not that the law of Moses was not perfect in its kind and in itself, but that it was less perfect than the gospel: so that what Christ brought in *non adversario sed adjutore præcepto*, “not by an opposite or contrary but a helping precept,” destroyed not what God esteemed as best then to be done, but took away that which he permitted to be done only for a time. It was no sin for a Jew to hate his enemy, or in some cases to take revenge; at least it was not imputed as a sin: not but that it was far better, and more acceptable to God, to have done otherwise, but because God was pleased so far to indulge to their present condition and the hardness of their hearts, as not to propose it under the commanding terms of a law. But Christ, as he is more indulgent to us in giving his graces, so he is less indulgent to us in exacting his laws. And that Christ doth not permit so much unto us, is plain by the *Ego vero*, “But I say unto you:” by which he did not only clear the law from those false glosses with which the scribes and Pharisees had corrupted it, but added something to it, not to contradict but perfect it. For had he meant to have expunged the false glosses of the scribes and Pharisees, no doubt he would have mentioned them, whom he so often taxed by name: and had it been their “leaven,” he would have done what he often did, enjoined his disciples “to beware of it.” Besides, the scribes and Pharisees were not of so long standing as Josephus thinketh. This sect had not its beginning long before Christ. And it is probable that when the gift of prophecy ceased, then men who were ambitious of a name and reputation did seek to gain it by severe discipline and austerity of life, which might lift them up as high in the opinion of the people as the foretelling of things to come did the prophets before them. “But I say unto you,” implieth, then, an addition to the law of Moses, or to that sense in which the Jews understood it, and to which they were bound. Let the apostle conclude for me: “The law made nothing perfect,” brought none to that true and inward sanctity; but if any attained to it, they owed it not to the law, but borrowed it, as it were, from the grace of the gospel: “but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto God.” (Heb. vii. 19.) The Jews were “under tutors and governors, in bondage under the elements of the world;” but “at the appointed time” our Lawgiver brought us laws from heaven, out of the bosom of his Father, (Gal. iv. 2—4,) and “showed us yet a more perfect and excellent way.” (1 Cor. xii. 31.)

## APPLICATION.

I might here enlarge myself; but we will only draw down all to ourselves by application, and so conclude.

And if the doctrine of the gospel be a perfect law, of abundant power and sufficiency to bring us to our end, then we may pass a censure upon those who argue it of great imperfection, and therefore are bold to add to it, or call it "a dead letter," and so receive it not as a law, but make one of their own; as those of the church of Rome, and the Libertines, or, as they call themselves, "spiritual men." And we may observe, that, though they look several ways, yet they both tread their measures alike; and, finding themselves at loss, finding no satisfaction in the gospel to their pride and ambition, to their malice and lust, and seeing they cannot draw it to their part, will put up and suborn something of their own to supply that defect. Both agree in this,—to make something besides and above the scripture the rule of their faith and actions. But some difference and dissimilitude there is between them. The Libertine layeth a foundation for a loose, inconstant, and uncertain religion; the church of Rome, for an engrossed, impropriated, and tyrannical religion. For what the inward word is to the Libertines, that to those of the Romish faction are traditions and the authority of the church. The inward word is common, or rather proper, to every particular man, hath no other word without itself to regulate it; and therefore is free for every man. And so we may have as many religions as there be several senses and inward words, as they call them, spoken or conceived: and so there may be as many religions as there be men. *Proveniunt oratores novi, stulti, adolescentuli.*\* Young men and maids, old men and children, I may say, fools and madmen, may hear this word, or rather speak this word to themselves, and so set up a religion. Again: the authority of the church, and traditions, being carried on by themselves, and looking on no outward word as a common rule to try them by, put out the eyes of every private man, divest him of his reason and judgment, and leave him in the dark, that he may be subject unto that church alone, and seek light from her as from the greatest luminary, *alienis oculis videre, alienis pedibus ambulare*, "see with her eyes, and observe her steps, and follow her precisely," though it be in those paths which lead to the pit of

\* CICERO *De Senectute*, cap. vi. "A swarm of rash, unpractised, young orators have unhappily broken forth, and taken the lead among us."—MELMOTH'S Translation.



destruction. The Libertine attributeth it sometimes to one man; the Papists, to the church; and, when the accounts are cast up, that is but one man. Both agree in this, that they challenge to themselves infallibility in judgment. "We have a revelation," saith the one: "We have traditions," saith the other, "and a church that cannot err." "The inward word," saith the Libertine: "The church, the church, the ecumenical, catholic church," saith the Papist. These are their spells and charms with which they take the simple and unwary people, who are "carried about with every puff of doctrine," (Eph. iv. 14,) and are always ripe and fitted for a cheat; *qui quod vident, non vident*, "who will not see what they cannot but see;" who receive every novelty as an oracle, every new fancy as the dictate of the Spirit, and never bless or applaud themselves more than when they are deceived.

In a word: The Libertine maketh as many Popes as there be men who pretend a skill in this Pythonic art and ventriloquy, who can hear their lusts and passions speak within them, and say it is the voice of the Spirit; who do not stay till the third call, but, at the very motion of the flesh, at every whirl of their fancy, are ready to answer, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. iii. 10.) And thus every man may be a Pope. But the Papists erect but one, and set him in his throne, to whom all other men must bow as to the head and monarch of the church, who hath full and absolute power to determine of those things which concern our peace, and to judge the law itself, to discover its defects, and to supply and perfect it. And here, upon this foundation, what a Babel of confusion may be built! Upon these grounds what error, what foul sin may not show its head and advance itself before the sun and the people, and outface the world?

With the one, scripture is no scripture, but "a dead letter:" and with the other, it hath no life but what they put into it. With the one, it is nothing; and with the other, it is imperfect, which in effect is nothing. For what difference in matters of this nature, and in respect of a law, between *being nothing* and *not being what it is*? For, to take away the force of a law is, in a manner, to annihilate it. "With them," as Calvin speaketh of those in his time, "St. Paul was but a broken vessel, John a foolish young man, Peter a denier of his Master, and Matthew a publican." And the language of ours at this day is little better. And with the other they are little less: for when they speak plainest, they teach them how to speak. And now that which was a sin yesterday, is a virtue to-day; virtue is vice, and

vice virtue, as the one is taught within, and the other is bold to interpret it. The text is, "Defraud not thy brother:" (Lev. xix. 13 :) the inward word biddeth thee spoil him. The text is, "Touch not mine anointed:" (Psalm cv. 15 :) by the authority of the church thou mayest touch and kill him. And let me tell you, the inward word will do as much. Deceit, injustice, sacrilege, rebellion, murder, all may ride-in, in triumph, at this gate: for it is wide enough to let them in, and the devil together, with all his wiles and enterprises, with all his most horrid machinations. He did but mangle and corrupt the scripture to make a breach into our Saviour: these take it away, or make it void and of no effect, to overthrow his church. Must the church of Rome be brought-in, like Agrippa and Bernice in the Acts, "with great pomp and state," (Acts xxv. 23,) with supremacy and infallibility? Then Peter is brought out, and his rock, nay, his shadow, to set out the mask; and the authority of the church leadeth him on: and they open their wardrobe, and show us their traditions, such deceitful ware that we no sooner look upon it but it vanisheth out of sight.

Again: must some new fancy be set up, which will not bear the light of scripture, but flieth and is scattered before it as the mist before the sun? Must some horrid fact be put in execution, which nature itself trembleth at and shrinketh from, and which this perfect law damneth to the lowest hell? Then an inward word is pretended, and God is brought in to witness against himself, to disannul his own law, and ratify the contrary, to speak from heaven against that which he declared by his Son on earth, to speak within, and make that a duty which he openly threatened to punish with everlasting fire! What is become now of our "perfect law?" It is no law at all: but as the Son came down to preach it, so there is a new Holy Ghost come into the world to destroy it: which is to do worse than the Jews did; for they only nailed Christ's body to the cross, these crucify his very mind and will: which yet will rise again and triumph over them, when "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to his gospel." (Rom. ii. 16.) For, what man of Belial may not take up this pretence, and leave nature and grace, reason and religion, behind him, and walk forward with it to the most unwarrantable and unchristian designs that a heart full of gall and bitterness can set up? Ahithophel might have taken it up, and Judas might have taken it up; even parricides have taken it up. And if every inward persuasion, the offspring of an idle fancy and a heart bespotted with the world, be the voice of God, then covetousness may be

a God, and ambition may be a God, and the devil himself may be a God. For these speak in them; these speak the word which they hear; which because they are ashamed to name, they make use of "that name which is above every name" to usher-in these evil spirits, in which name they should cast them out.

In the name of piety, what is this inward word, this new light? It may be the echo of my lust and concupiscence, the resultance of an irregular appetite, the reflexion of myself upon myself. It is the greatest parasite in the world: for it moveth as I move, and sayeth what I say, and denieth what I deny. As inward as it is, its original is from without. The object speaketh to the eye, and the eye to the heart, and the heart hot with desire speaketh to itself: "A rent and divided church will make up my breaches:" "A shaken commonwealth will build me up a fortune:" "A dissolved college will settle me in an estate." And I hear it, for I speak it myself: and "it is the voice of God, and not of man!" (Acts xii. 22.) Of this they have had sad experience in foreign parts, in both the Germanies, and in other places. And we have some reason to think that this monster hath made a large stride, and set his foot in our coasts. But if it be not this, it is madness. Nay, if this word within may not be made an outward word, it is nothing. For this "word within," as they call it, bringeth with it either an intelligible sense, or not intelligible. If it bring a sense unintelligible and which may not be uttered and expressed, then it is no word, or the word of a fool, that uttereth more than his mind, and speaketh of things which he knoweth not. For what word is that which can neither be understood nor uttered? But if it bear a sense intelligible, then it may be received of the understanding, and uttered with the tongue, and written in a book; and then the same imputation will lie upon it which they lay upon the outward word, that "it is but an ink-horn phrase." And written with ink it may be: for with amazed eyes we have seen it written with blood. I am even weary of this argument. But men have not been ashamed openly to profess what we blush within ourselves to confute. And this word within, this loathsome fancy, this nothing, hath had power to envenom the work of life itself, and make it "the savour of death unto death." (2 Cor. ii. 16.)

For conclusion then: Let us not say, "Lo, here is Christ; or, Lo, there is Christ." (Matt. xxiv. 23.) Let us not frame and fashion a Christ of our own. For if he be of our making, he is not the Son of God, but a phantasm. And such a Christ may speak what we will have him, speak to our hearts, our lusts, our

vices. Such a Christ will flatter us, deceive us, damn us. But let us behold him in his word, in his perfect law. There we shall see a true Christ, his full image, his will. There "we shall see him as he is;" (1 John iii. 2;) behold him in his nature, in his offices; behold him with all his graces, his precepts, his promises, with all the riches of his gospel. There we shall, "with open face," (not through the veil of types and ceremonies, not through our own carnal lusts and fancies,) "behold as in a glass," accurately and studiously observe, "the glory of our Lord" and Lawgiver, and "be changed into the same image," be like unto him, heavenly as he is heavenly, "be changed from glory to glory," from the glory to serve him to the glory to reign with him, "even as by the Spirit of the Lord," and the power of his word and perfect law. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) By the power of which law we "walk on from strength to strength;" (Psalm lxxxiv. 7;) from virtue to virtue, from one perfection to another, "till we be perfect men in Christ Jesus," and fitted for that "crown" which is "prepared and laid up for all those who love him in sincerity" and truth, (2 Tim. iv. 8; Eph. iv. 13; vi. 24,) and bow before him and keep his commandments, and are obedient to this perfect law.

---

## SERMON LXXVI.

### CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*—James i. 25.

#### PART III.

WE began the last day to speak of the perfection of the gospel, our second point in the character the apostle here giveth us of it: and, the time not then permitting us to handle it thoroughly, we shall make it the subject also of our present discourse. We told you, that God, who proposed eternity of happiness as the end of all man's actions, was never deficient or wanting in the administration of those means which might raise him to it. God, who built his church upon a rock, upon the confession of that faith which will lift it up to heaven, made it *militant*, and gave it rules and orders, laws and precepts, by the observation of which it might become *triumphant*. Take man in what capacity you please, in the gospel he may find that which will fill and fit him in every condition.

We showed this at large. Now we will add something, and then apply all more home to ourselves.

God, as he made man after his own image, so made him to be partaker of that happiness which He is. This he calleth him to, and pointeth out the way which leadeth to it: "This is the way; walk in it and be blessed." And first he set up a light within him, conveying it in those natural impressions which Tertullian calleth "a legal nature," or "a natural law." By that light which is impossible to be extinguished, every man that hath had some mediocrity of civil education is enabled to discern what is good and just, what evil and unjust. From this light breaketh forth one main beam, which shineth in all men's faces, even that known precept so much commended by Heathens themselves, "As ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them:" (Matt. vii. 12:) a command so equitable, that the most unjust dare not quarrel it; so evident, that, if it were possible to study ignorance, none could ever attain to that height as to lose the knowledge of it. *Non iniquitas delebit*, saith Augustine: "Sin itself, though it blur and deface, yet cannot utterly blot it out." And one would think those characters which God hath so firmly and deeply imprinted upon our souls were light enough to carry us on in our way. And we find that, by the help of this light alone, some Heathens, who never knew Christ, have raised themselves to that pitch and height of natural and moral goodness that most Christians seem to stand in the valley below, and look up and gaze upon them with admiration, to see them to have made a fairer progress, and steered a steadier course of virtue, by the leading of this star, than themselves have done by the lustre of the Sun of righteousness.

But yet this is not enough. *Sublimius quid sapit Christianus*: "The Christian, how faintly soever he goeth forward, yet looketh higher than the natural man could possibly soar up on the wings of natural endowments." He that draweth out his actions by the line and level of nature only, is not yet a Christian. *Natura est prima omnium disciplina*, saith Tertullian: "Nature is our first school-mistress." But God added to this his written law, and "in the last days spoke by his Son," and revealed his will perfectly and fully in the gospel. *Instrumentum literaturæ adjecit, si quis velit de eo inquirere*: "He hath drawn an instrument, and to nature and Moses added his gospel; in which whosoever will inquire may most fully learn his will." Here we are taught that fundamental lesson—to believe; which the father calleth *ἑθελούσιον τῆς ψυχῆς συγκατάθεσιν*, "a voluntary submission of the soul," the obedience of the will, and applying it to every precept.

Here we have those divine precepts of sanctity and holiness, the faithful commentaries of God's will; which, though they present nothing to our understanding to which the wisest philosophers would not have subscribed, yet forbade some things which were not absolutely unlawful by the law of nature; even those acts in which though to a natural eye there appeared no irregularity, yet reason itself would soon conclude it were better not to do than to do them. For many lessons there be which by the wit of man had never been collected, had not Christ, the true Lawgiver, gathered them to our hands. What is said fabulously of some grounds in Italy, that they bear an olive, and under that olive a vine, and under that vine corn, and under that corn *omne olerum genus*, "all kind of profitable herbs," and that without any hinderance of each other, is most true of the doctrine of the gospel. There is in it such a real and profitable fertility, that it beareth and yieldeth all, the fatness of the olive, the sweetness of the vine, the strength of corn, something for every temper, something that will prove food for every stomach. The will of God declared by Christ is all these, and more. And in the gospel it is proposed and laid open to the eye in its full proportion. That doctrine which leadeth to happiness is plain and obvious. Who knoweth not what it is to "believe in Christ," (Acts xvi. 31,) and to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts?" (Titus ii. 12.) Who understandeth not our Saviour's sermon on the mount? If there be any more doctrines than we find in the gospel, then certainly they are of the number of those *quæ salvâ fide ignorari possunt*, "which will not endanger us if we know them not." And did we practise what is easy to know, we should not thus be troubled to know what to practise. It is not any defect in the rule, any obscurity in the gospel, but the neglect of piety and religion, and that integrity of life which should distinguish Christians from all the world, that hath brought-in that deluge of controversies which hath well-near covered and overwhelmed the face of the church.

What hath the business of the world been, for these many hundred years, but to establish a supreme judge of the will of God in his chair of infallibility? And now having been driven upon so many apparent inconveniences and absurdities, they begin to demand at our hands a catalogue of fundamentals: which in effect is no more than to ask us what the will of Christ is; as if we were yet to learn. We might well reply to them as the Lacedæmonians once did to the Thebans calling upon them either to give them battle or to confess and yield themselves the weaker: "Whether are the better soldiers, let the world judge:

and our many victories speak : but they would be wiser than to fight at *their* summons, or come out into battle when *they* did think it fittest." Upon the same reason, we are not bound to answer every impertinent challenge which these Roman champions send, or go out in quest after our faith, which is manifested to all men. For this were indeed, with Saul, to seek asses, but not with the same event, in our way to find a kingdom. In the mean time, let them take the pains to seek them themselves ; unless they will rest contented with this resolution,—that whatsoever is fundamental and necessary is plain and evident in the scripture. He who commandeth us to do his will, did never mean to hide it from us, or show it us in the dark. *Nobis curiositate non est opus post Jesum Christum* : "Having this rule of Jesus Christ, we need not be further curious ;" nor make inquiry after his will, since we have the gospel, which is his will and testament, and his perfect law. To interline the scripture with glosses, to coin what traditions they please, and make them as current as that word which is purer than refined gold, is for those who cannot endure that glass which showeth them their deformity, or would have it like the magician's glass, to show them nothing but what they desire to see. These would deal with the scripture as Caligula boasted he would with the civil law of Rome, quite abolish it, *ne quid jurisperiti respondere possint præter eum*, "that no civil lawyer might be able to speak but what he would have him,"\* and so there might be no other law but his will.

But I must detain you no longer upon this. Traditions, we told you, such as the church of Rome pretendeth, are but deceitful ware, brought-in to put off worse, and make the grossest error fair and saleable. And the inward word of the Libertine is the echo of his own lust and concupiscence. Every man may hear it ; for every man may speak it to himself. This man may hear it, and another man may hear it. And I may admit of one as well as the other, since there is as good evidence for the one as for the other,—nothing but their bare word.

3. We must now draw a third inference : and it is this,—that if the doctrine of the gospel be a "perfect law," and so delivered to us, then are we bound to square our actions by it, and make them answerable to it in every part, *uti illa respicit, continuo respicere*, as he giveth charge in the comedy, "to look as that looketh," to move as that directeth, to make this law our compass to direct us in our way, to fit and proportion our obedience to it, that it may take-in the whole circle of all those virtues which speak us to be Christians, as St. Paul speaketh, "What-

\* Suetonius in *Vita Caligulae*, cap. xxxiv.

soever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, if there be any virtue, any praise," (Phil. iv. 8,) all these come within the compass of our obedience, which must be perfect as the law itself is perfect. Nor need we startle at the name of "perfection." For it is not such a perfection as is in God. Never could such a law be laid upon man, who is but dust and ashes, subject to many infirmities; as subject to err as to think, to tread awry as to move. Nor such a perfection as is in the angels, *quibus immortalitas sine ullo malorum periculo et metu constat*, "whose happiness is removed from all danger or fear of change," as Lactantius speaketh; for which though we have no plain evidence in scripture, yet even from thence we may gather reason enough to move us to believe it. But a perfection answerable to man's condition, a perfection which may consist both with sin and error; into which man may sometimes either through inadvertency or frailty fall, and yet be perfect. "Be perfect as God:" That is impossible. For *ille quod est, semper est; et sicut est, ita est*: "What he is, he always is; and as he is, so he is." His perfection is his essence, as incomprehensible as himself. "Be perfect as angels:" No: we are at best "a little lower than they;" (Psalm viii. 5;) and our perfection will have some savour of that flesh and blood which we carry about with us.

And here the law is given to men, and so requireth a perfection of which man is capable; not a legal, but an evangelical, perfection. For the legal perfection included all manner of impeccancy, and shut out all imperfection, all infirmity, all inadvertency. "Do this, and live. If thou do it not, thou shalt die." "Do exactly. Avoid precisely." This was the language of the law, and therefore it did not justify a sinner; for, even morally, it was impossible.

But the evangelical perfection is proportioned to every man's strength; and so, various and different, according to the several qualifications of men, who begin well, make good progress in the ways of piety, and at last are perfect. One man as yet laboureth and struggleth under a temptation; another man is scarce moved with it; and both may be perfect in their kind. And though perfection be not equal in all, yet that restless and sabbathless desire of proceeding further must be common to them and the same; a desire to gain more strength, to "stir up that grace of God which is in them," (2 Tim. i. 6,) to be nearer heaven and God every day; a desire to improve the approbation of that which is good into a love of it, the dislike of that which is evil into a hatred of it; a desire to tread that serpent under my foot



which I begin to be afraid of; every day to use a violence upon ourselves, by one text of scripture humbling our pride, by another cooling our lust, by a third controlling our wrath, and so by degrees mortifying our affections, spoiling ourselves of all our animosities, of all those grudgings and oppositions which may stand between us and that state of perfection which our mind is so wholly fixed upon. And even this desire of proficiency, if it be true and serious, and not faint and imaginary, may go under the name of "perfection," because it tendeth to it.

So there is the perfection of a beginner, for he is a perfect beginner; and the perfection of a proficient, for he is a perfect proficient: and there is a higher degree of perfection, of those who are so spiritualized, so familiar with the law of Christ, that they "run the ways of his commandments." (Psalm cxix. 32.) But there is none so perfect but he may be perfecter yet, none so high but he may exalt himself yet further in the grace and favour of God: and even the beginner who seemeth to follow Christ yet afar off, by that serious and earnest desire he hath to come nearer may be brought so near unto him as to be his member. For there be "babes in Christ," (1 Cor. iii. 1,) and there be "strong men;" (Rom. xv. 1;) and Christ looketh favourably even upon those babes, and will "take them into his arms, and embrace them." (Mark x. 16.) For his mercy is a garment large enough to cover all, to reach even from the top to the last round and step of that ladder which, being reared on earth, reacheth up to heaven, and to carry on those who first set foot in the ways of life, with a desire to ascend higher. For all these are "within," within the pale of his church. "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and they who love and make a lie," (Rev. xxii. 15,) who have no relish of heaven, no "savour of Christ's ointment," (Cant. i. 3,) no desire of "those things which are above," (Col. iii. 1, 2,) no "taste of the powers of the world to come." (Heb. vi. 5.) For where this desire is not, where it is not serious, Christ is quite departed out of those coasts. (Matt. viii. 34; ix. 1.) For Christ did not build his church as Plato formed his commonwealth, who made such laws as no man could keep; but he fitted his laws to every man, and requireth no more of any than what every one, by the strength which he will give, may exactly accomplish.

It is a precept of a high nature, and which flesh and blood may well shrink at, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.) This is a hard and iron speech, and he must have the stomach of an ostrich that can digest it. Therefore the church of Rome hath sauced

it, to make it easy of digestion ; and hath made it not a peremptory precept, but a counsel or advice, left it to our free choice whether we will keep it or no. To neglect and pass it by, will hazard *aureolam, non auream*, (it is their own distinction,) “not the crown of life, but some brooch or top,” some degree of happiness there. And this is a great error, either to add to or to take off from that burden which it hath pleased Christ our Lawgiver to lay upon us. Seem this precept never so harsh, this burden never so heavy, yet, if we consult with that patience and strength wherewith it hath pleased Christ to endue us by his blessed Spirit, we shall be able to bear it without any abatement or diminution. For we may deal with it as Protogoras did with his burden of sticks, dispose of it in so good order and method as to bear it with ease, and have no reason to complain of its weight. It is not so hard as we at first suppose : and that we may gather from the illative particle *therefore* ; which hath reference to the verses going before, and enjoineth a love above the love of publicans, whose love was *negotiatio*, “a bargaining, a trafficking love,” who paid love for love, “loved none but those who loved them ;” (Matt. v. 46, 47 ; ) and so raiseth our love to the love of “our heavenly Father” as to the most perfect rule, and then draweth it down to compass and bless even the worst enemies we have. And so this perfection here doth not signify an exact performance of all the commandments, but the observation of this one, the love of our neighbour ; and that not in respect of the manner of observing it, but the act itself, that we love not only our friends, but our enemies. (Verse 44.) And this indeed is a glorious act, worthy the gospel of Christ. For to “love them that love us” is but a kind of necessary and easy gratitude, the first beginnings and rudiments of piety, the dawning of charity. But when we have attained to this, “to love them that love us not, that hate us, that persecute us,” then our charity, kindled from the love of our Father, shineth forth in perfection of beauty. He that can do this hath “fulfilled the law.” (Rom. xiii. 10.) For he that can love him that hateth him, will love God that loveth him, will love him when he frowneth on him, when he afflicteth him, when, as Job speaketh, he killeth him. (Job xiii. 15.) For indeed he cannot do one but he must do both.

But then, for *the manner* of that love, there he must needs come short of the pattern. Dust and ashes cannot move with equal motion in this sphere of charity with the God of love. That we may love our enemies, is possible ; but that we love them with the same extension or intension of love as God loveth

them, is beyond our belief and conceit, and so, impossible to be reached by the best endeavours we have. God may give us strength, but he cannot give us his arm. He may make us wise and strong and good, but not as good and wise and strong as himself. What cruelty is our mercy to his! What weakness is our power to his almightiness! How ignorant is our knowledge to his light! If we speak of wisdom, he alone is wise; if of power, he only can "do what he will in heaven and in earth." (Dan. iv. 35.) If we speak of mercy, "his mercy reacheth over all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 9.) Man is a finite, mortal creature; and all his goodness and wisdom and mercy are as mortal and changeable as himself; and if it do measure out his span, and hold out to the end of it, yet it will retain a taste and relish of the cask and vessel, of flesh and mortality and corruption.

But yet the law is perfect, and requireth a perfect man, *et cum Dei adjutorio in nostrá potestate consistit*, saith Augustine often, "and it is in our power, with the help of God's grace, to be perfect." God doth *στυρίζειν*, "stablish us;" (Rom. xvi. 25;) he doth *βεβαιόω*, "confirm" us; (1 Cor. i. 8;) he doth "work in us to will and to do," (Phil. ii. 13,) by giving us the sight of his glory, and by his Spirit exciting and strengthening us. He doeth it that giveth sufficient helps and advantages to do it: the whole honour of every effect is due and returneth to the first cause. By this help we may be perfect, as perfect as the pre-script of the gospel and the new covenant of grace requireth. For, (1.) God requireth nothing that is above our strength: and certainly we can do what we can do; we can do what by him we are enabled to do. "I can do all things," saith St. Paul, "through Christ that strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.) We may "love him with all our mind, with all our heart, with all our strength." (Matt. xxii. 37.) And this is all. (2.) God hath promised to "circumcise the heart" of his people, that they should thus "love him." (Deut. xxx. 6.) And his "promises are Yea and Amen," even in temporal blessings, much more in spiritual. (2 Cor. i. 20.) And if we fail, yet his promise is true; and we have lied against our own souls. He gave us strength enough, and we have betrayed it to our lusts and the vanities of the world, have fallen with our staff in our hand, failed in the midst of all advantages, and suffered ourselves to be beaten down in our full strength, when there were more with us than against us. (Rom. viii. 31.) (3.) Last of all: He hath borne witness from heaven, and hath registered the names of those in his book who have "walked before him with a perfect

heart;" as Asa, (2 Chron. xv. 17; 1 Kings xv. 14,) David, (1 Kings iii. 6,) Josiah: (2 Kings xxiii. 25 :) and this under the old covenant. Much more then may we attain to it under the new, which was "brought in" to this end to "make every thing perfect." (Heb. vii. 19.) For there can be no reason given why Christ, who is the Son, should not make more perfect men than Moses, who was but a servant; (Heb. iii. 5, 6;) why the gospel should not make as good saints as the law.

Divines usually distinguish between *perfection of parts* and *perfection of degrees*. The First, they say, must be brought into act by cleaving not to one alone, but to every, commandment of God, and casting down every imagination, beating down every temptation, that may stand between them and it. The Second is but in wish. But in truth there is no reason why they should thus quite shut out that perfection of degrees. For though in the highest degree it cannot be; (it being the nature of love, not to consist within any terms; to have no *non ultra* in this world; to think not of what is done already, but what is further to be done, or, in the apostle's phrase, to "forget that which is behind, and to reach forth to those things which are before," Phil. iii. 13, 14, and never to be at rest but on the holy hill;) yet there is no reason why we may not admit of a perfection of degrees even in this life; that is, that perfection may be intended to as high a degree as the assistance of God's grace and the breath of the Spirit, if we hinder not, will raise it. For every stream will rise as high as its spring. And this is always joined with a firm purpose of pressing further, of proficiency, and being better every day, of "growing in grace," (2 Peter iii. 18,) of passing from virtue to virtue, from perfection to perfection, according as we have more grace, more strength, more light; which will increase with our work, and raise itself with our endeavours. For "to him that hath it shall be given;" (Matt. xiii. 12;) and "he that walketh in the light" shall have more irradiations and illuminations. (Luke xi. 36; 1 John i. 7.) To this perfection we may ascend higher and higher, add degree unto degree, be more and more perfect, more strong against temptations, more cheerful in our obedience, more "delighting ourselves in the law of the Lord." (Psalm i. 2.) But he that denieth this perfection to be possible even in this life, instead of easing his soul, endangereth it; instead of magnifying the gospel of Christ, denieth the power of it; and layeth a pillow of security for flesh and blood to rest on, to sleep out the time in the vineyard even to the last hour, and so to pass to torment in a dream.

Indeed perfection is so often mentioned in scripture that men are not unwilling to acknowledge there is such a thing. But then, consulting with flesh and blood, they have found out an art to make it what they please; as it is too common a thing, when we cannot raise our endeavours and fit and proportion them to the rule, to bend and draw down the law itself, and make it condescend and apply itself to our infirmities, and even flatter our most loathsome lusts and affections.

1. Thus we find perfection confined to orders and offices, to monks and votaries; nay, wrapped up in a monk's cowl: men have counted it a kind of perfection, to be sick, and die, and be buried in one. Some have placed perfection in a sequestered life: when, though they leave the world and the company of men, they may still carry themselves along with them, and in the greatest silence and retiredness have a tumult, a very market, in their souls. And he that converseth in public may "possess all things," and yet "use them as if he used them not;" (1 Cor. vii. 30, 31;) may have a companion, and be alone; may be a great commander, and yet more humble than his servant; may *secretum in plateis facere*, "make a cell in the streets," and be alone in the midst of an army. "Perfection" we may call it; but, as one saith, there is no greater argument of imperfection than this, *non posse pati solem et multitudinem*, "not to be able to walk without offence in the public ways, to entertain the common occasions, to meet our enemy and encounter him in all places, to act our parts in common life upon the common stage," and yet "hold fast our uprightness," (Job xxvii. 6,) "shine in the midst of a froward generation," (Phil. ii. 15,) and "keep ourselves unspotted of the world;" (James i. 27;) to be lambs with lions, and kids with leopards; to live in the coast where malice breatheth, and yet be meek; where rebellion is loud, and not forfeit our obedience; where profaneness vaunteth itself, and yet be religious; to be honest in the tents of Kedar, to be Lots in Sodom, and so to "save ourselves from a froward generation:" (Acts ii. 40:) Not to be able to do this, is a great imperfection. For, religion can show itself in any place, in any soil, in any air, in the closet and in the field, in the house and in the temple. This man may have a proud heart in a cottage; another, a low and humble soul in a palace. For, every man's thoughts are not as low-built as his house, nor do every great man's imaginations tower in the air. *In terrâ omni non generantur omnia*, saith the orator: "We cannot find all creatures in every soil." But a perfect man is a creature, a plant, which may grow up in any place. Carry a

pure heart with thee, and thou art safe in a throng. But if thy heart be polluted, thou art not safe; no, not in a grot or cave, or in the most retired solitariness.

2. Again: Some have placed perfection in poverty, and a voluntary abdication of the things of this world. And yet we see that as riches may be a snare, so poverty may be a gulf to swallow us up; and that riches may be an instrument to work out perfection, as well as want. And our skill, though it be as great in one as in the other, yet it is more glorious in the one than in the other; as we look more upon a diamond that is well cut, than upon a pebble-stone. He is the poorest man that is poor when he is rich. "It is said, 'Go sell all that thou hast: I may do this,' saith Gregory, "and keep it. That 'we must leave our lands and possessions, and father and mother: I may do this, and yet be lord of my land, and love my father and mother.'" We may use our wealth in this world *tanquam tabulá in fluctibus*, saith Augustine, "as a plank or board in a shipwreck," neither fling riches from us, nor draw them too near us; neither cast them away as burdensome, nor yet embrace them as firm and sure; *et benè utendo carere*, "want them by well using them." Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man in hell: (Luke xvi. 22, 23:) yet may a poor man follow the rich man into hell, and many a rich man have a room in the same bosom with Lazarus. *In nostro arbitrio est vel Lazarum sequi, vel Divitem*: "It is in our power, in what estate soever we are, to choose which we will follow, Lazarus or Dives." All that can be said is this, that they who are not able to manage their wealth, and so have reason to fear it, may do well to cast it away. But they who can be poor in wealth, are the strongest Christians. Both riches and poverty are equal in this,—that as they may be made occasions to sin, so they may be made also helps to perfection.

3. Thirdly. Some have placed perfection in virginity, which they call "making themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven;" (Matt. xix. 12;) and have laid an imputation upon the state of matrimony as most imperfect, as too much savouring of the world and carnality, and no better than what the Manichees called it, *honestam concubitús defensionem*, "a fair plea and an honest apology for lust." *Nusquam*, said Martin Luther, *Satanas per Papam sic insanit ut in castitate et libidine tractandá*: "The devil never seemed to rage more than in those discourses the Papists make of chastity and lust." That they may fright men from that which is lawful and honourable, to that which is foul and unwarrantable, thus they number up the

inconveniences of the married life: "the noise of the family, the deceitfulness of servants, the luxury of the wife, the forwardness of children;" as if these inconveniences were more dangerous than sin. "Virginity," they say, "is an angelical estate." And we are willing it should be so esteemed, but cannot see but perfection may find a place in matrimony as well as in single life, and that the one may people heaven as well as the other. And those inconveniences and troubles, as they may prove occasions of sin, so may be made *materia virtutis*, "matter out of which we may raise those virtues" which shall be pleasing in His eye who did first institute this state in Paradise. Nor do I conceive to what purpose it should be to bring matrimony and virginity into the scales to weigh them together. For what can accrue from hence but this, to defame the one because it may seem some grains lighter than the other? For when they have stretched their wits, and taken pains in comparing them, they must at last meet and agree in this, that perfection may fit them both, and bring as many husbands and wives into heaven as virgins. Virginity, they grant, is not *terminus*, *sed instrumentum perfectionis*, "not the end in which perfection is terminated, but the way to bring us to it, an instrument to work it out;" and, for aught can be said to the contrary, so may marriage also be. Bring both to the balance, if you please. By virginity and an unmarried life I avoid occasions, I hide myself from many dangers, which might otherwise come towards me; I withdraw myself from the many cares and troubles of this life. *Et virginitas nihil magis timet quàm seipsam*: "Virginity is afraid of nothing but itself;" and hath but this one trouble, to defend itself. *Operosius est matrimonium*: "But matrimony wrestleth with more difficulties;" and, having happily striven through them, and made way to the end, may seem to have made a greater and more glorious conquest. Certainly, to marry a wife, and by my good ensample to keep her an undefiled spouse of Christ; to have children, and by careful education to make them saints; to look upon Christ, and behave myself in my house as he doth in his church; to make his marriage of the church a pattern of mine, as mine is a sign and representation of his; will make my way as passable to perfection and eternal life, and set the gates of heaven as open to me, as an unmarried life shall to him who hath bound himself by vow to "keep his virgin." (1 Cor. vii. 37.) Perfection then is not tied and married to a single, but may join and go hand in hand with a married, life.

4. I may add to this, their vow of blind obedience, which

they call "the sepulchre in which their will is buried;" and that of mission, by which they bind themselves to go whithersoever their superior commandeth, to do whatsoever he enjoineeth, to run upon the point of the sword, to leap into the sea, to adventure on those actions which are most absurd, to teach a language which they do not know. All these appear as free-will offerings; but if we look nearer upon them, they are no better than "the sacrifice of fools." (Eccles. v. 1.) Of these indeed we find large elogiums in the writings of the ancients, which posterity hath much enlarged, making that a part of their policy which was their forefathers' devotion.

For we may imagine those high expressions of theirs were occasional, forced by the times, or rather manners of men, who were worldly and sensual, such as could endure no yoke. And from men of this temper, *iniquum petebant, ut æquum ferrent*, "they required more than was necessary to be done, that they might do something," that they might know some bounds, and not "run into all excess of riot," (1 Peter iv. 4.) and commit what disorder they pleased. They extolled virginity, that men might not wallow in lusts. They declaimed against riches, that men might not love the world. They commended solitariness, that men might be shy of the company of evil men; and pressed a ready obedience to men, that they might beget in them a greater reverence to the commandments of God. For if I must yield to the will of my brother, what then must I do to my Maker? This is the fairest plea [which] can be made for them. But to tie perfection to this or that state of life, which is enjoined to all, is to "call that common which God hath cleansed," (Acts x. 15,) and to appropriate holiness to that kind of life which is many times stained with uncleanness. Most certain it is, perfection is enjoined to every Christian: but every man attaineth not to it by the same means. As "there are divers mansions in God's house," (John xiv. 2,) so there are divers ways and courses of life by which we pass unto them. Indeed there is but one way to heaven, but one religion: *Μία γὰρ, καὶ εἰς πολλὰ σχίζεται*. "It is but one, but it divideth itself," to all estates and conditions of life, to all sexes, to all actions whatsoever. It may be fitted to riches as well as to poverty; it will live with married men as well as with votaries; it will abide in cities as well as in a cell or monastery. Why should I prescribe poverty? I may make riches my way. Why do I enjoin single life? I may make marriage my way. Why should I not think myself safe but when I am alone? I may be perfect amidst a multitude. Whether in riches or poverty, in



marriage or single life, in retiredness or in the city, religion is still one and the same. And in what estate soever I am, I must be perfect, as perfect as the evangelical law requireth. In every estate I must "deny myself, and take up the cross, and follow Christ." (Matt. xvi. 24.) I fear, this tying perfection to particular states and conditions of men hath made men less careful to press toward it, as a thing which concerneth them not. For why should a layman be so severe to himself as he that weareth a gown? Why should a knight be so reserved as a bishop? It is a language which we have heard. But I conclude this with that which the Wise Man spake on another occasion, "Say not thou, Why is this thing better than that? For every thing in its time is seasonable," (Eccles. vii. 10; iii. 1,) poverty or riches, marriage or single life, solitude or business. And in any of these we may "be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.)

## APPLICATION.

For conclusion then: Let this perfect law of Christ be always before our eyes, "till Christ be fully formed in us," (Gal. iv. 19,) till we be "the new creature, which is made up in holiness and righteousness." (Eph. iv. 24.) Let us press forward, in whatsoever state we are placed, with all our strength, to perfection, from degree to degree, from holiness to holiness, till we come *ad culmen Sionis*, "to the top of all." "Art thou called a servant? Be obedient to thy master, with fear and with singleness of heart, as unto Christ." Art thou called a master? "Know that thy Master also is in heaven. Let every man abide in that calling wherein he was called" to be a Christian, and in that calling work out perfection. (1 Cor. vii. 20, 21; Eph. vi. 5, 9.)

Place it not on the tongue, in an outward profession. For the perfect man is not made up of words and air and sounds. If he be raised up out of the dust, out of filth and corruption, it must be "in the name," that is, in the power, "of Christ." (Acts iii. 6.) "There be many good intentions," saith Bernard, (and it is as true, "There be many good professions,") "in hell."

Place it not in the ear. For we may read of "a perfect heart;" (Psalm ci. 2;) but we have not heard of a perfect ear. If there be such an attribute given to it, it is when it is in conjunction with the heart. "Faith cometh by hearing." (Rom. x. 17.) It is true, it cometh. The perfect man may pass by through this gate; but he doth not dwell there.

Neither place it in thy fancy. The perfection which is wrought there is but a thought, but the image of perfection, the picture

of a saint. And such images too oft are made and set up there ; and they that made them, fall down and worship them. Neither let us place it in a faint and feeble wish. For, if it were serious, it were a will ; but, being supine and negligent, it is but a declaration of our mind, a sentence against ourselves, that we approve that which is best, and choose the contrary ; turn the back to heaven, and wish we were there. It was Balaam's wish, but it was not his alone : " O let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." (Num. xxiii. 10.) And let us not interpret scripture for and against ourselves, and, when we read, " Be ye perfect," make it our marginal note, " Be ye perfect as far as you are able, as far as your lusts and desires and the business of this world will permit : " that is, " Be ye imperfect." I will not say, " If one of our angels," (and such angels there be amongst us,) but, " If an angel from heaven bring such a gloss, let him be anathema." (Gal. i. 8.)

Neither let us, because we are taught to say, " when we have done all that is commanded us, that we are unprofitable servants," (Luke xvii. 10,) resolve to be so, " unprofitable." For we are taught to say so, that we may be more and more profitable. For it is not the scope of that place to show us the unprofitableness of our obedience, but rather the contrary ; because when we " have made ready, and girded ourselves, and served," it shall be said to us also, that " we shall afterward eat and drink." (Verse 8.) Much less doth it discover our weakness and impotency to that which is good, and our propensity to evil. For the text is plain : we must say this, " when we have done all that is commanded us." And if we have done it, we can do more. Nor is it set up against vain-glory and boasting, but against idleness and careless neglect in performing that which remaineth of our duty. Because that which remaineth is of the same nature with that which is done already, as due to the Lord that commandeth it as our first obedience ; when you have gone thus far, you have done nothing unless you go further. When you have laboured in " the heat of the day," (Matt. xx. 12,) it is nothing unless you continue till " the evening." Something you have done which is commanded : behold, God commandeth more, and you must do it : continue to the end ; and then he will bid you " sit down and eat." (Luke xvii. 8.) He that beginneth, and leaveth off, and bringeth not his work to an end, he that doeth not all, hath done nothing.

Thus " let us make forward to perfection," (Phil. iii. 12—14,) and not " faint in the way." (Matt. xv. 32.) Let us " not be weary of well-doing," (Gal. vi. 9,) as if we were lame and imperfect ;

but let us press forward to the end, stand it out against temptations, fight against the principalities and powers of this world, and resist unto blood. Let us make up our breaches, and strengthen ourselves, every day take-in some strong-hold from the adversary, “beat down the flesh and keep it in subjection,” (1 Cor. ix. 27,) that it may be a ready servant to the spirit; weaken “the lust of the eyes,” humble our “pride of life,” and abate “the lust of the flesh;” (1 John ii. 16;) be more severe and rigid to our fleshly appetite, and never leave off whilst we carry this body of sin about us. And then, as St. Peter exhorteth, let us “give diligence to add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;” and let “these abound in us more and more, that we be not barren and unfruitful.” (2 Peter i. 5—8.) And when we have thus begun, and pressed forward, though with many slips and failings, (which yet do not cut us from the covenant of grace, nor interrupt our perseverance,) and at last “finished our course,” (2 Tim. iv. 7,) we shall “come unto Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect;” (Heb. xii. 22, 23;) where we and every thing shall be made perfect; where there is perfect love, perfect joy, perfect happiness for evermore.

---

## SERMON LXXVII.

### CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*—James i. 25.

#### PART IV.

THESE two days we have been treating of the perfection of the gospel, called by St. James a “perfect law:” and yet there remaineth something to be said. The rules and orders which Christ hath given us to observe are plain and easy and open to the understanding. *Adblandiuntur nostræ infirmitati:* “They friendly walk hand in hand with the weakest,” to lead him to his journey’s end. “How readest thou?” Canst thou “keep the commandments?” Or “hast thou kept them from thy youth? Wantest thou yet any thing?” (Luke x. 26; Matt.

xix. 20.) Then repair to some further rule. For us, we may well presume we have done enough, when we have done what our Lawgiver requireth.

For Christ did not make laws for his church as Phaleas, in Aristotle, did for his commonwealth, who took good order for preventing of smaller faults, but left way enough to greater crimes. No: he struck down all, digged up all by the roots, both the cedars and the shrubs, both the greatest and the smallest. He laid his axe to the very beginnings of them, and would not let them breathe in a thought, nor be seen in a look. Nor did he, like that famous Grecian painter, begin his work, but die before he could perfect it. It were the greatest opposing of his will to think so. He left nothing imperfect, but sealed up his evangelical law, as well as his obedience, with a *Consummatum est*.\* What he began he ever finished. In a word: His will is most fully and perspicuously expressed in his gospel. But yet, to urge this home, this giveth no encouragement to contemn those means which God hath reached forth to direct us in our search. For as we do not, with the church of Rome, pretend extreme difficulty of Christ's law, and upon this pretence strike the scripture quite out of the hands of the laity, and occupy their zeal with other matters, as Archytas did children with rattles, to keep them from handling things more precious; so do we require an exact diligence both in reading the scripture, and also in asking counsel of grey hairs, and multitude of years, of men of learning and understanding, whom God hath placed over them in his church. And if the great physician Hippocrates thought it necessary in his art, for those who had taken any cure in hand, *καὶ παρὰ ἰδιωτῶν ἱστορέειν*, "to ask advice even of idiots and unexpert men," much rather ought we *μετὰ Θεοῦ βουλευέειν*, "to ask counsel of God" by prayer and meditation, and of those whom God hath set up to teach us those things which concern our everlasting peace. The gospel, as it is said of the civil law, *vigilantibus scriptum est*, "is written to watchful and industrious men." Though the lessons be plain, yet we see many times negligence cannot pass a line, when industry hath run over the whole book. Nor can we think that *that* truth which will make us perfect, is of so easy purchase that it will be sown in any ground, and, like the devil's tares, "grow up whilst we sleep." (Matt. xiii. 25.)

St. Jerome speaketh of some in his time, *qui solam rusticitatem pro sanctitate habebant*, "who accounted rusticity and ignorance the only true holiness," and called themselves "the scholars of

\* "It is finished."—EDIT.

the disciples," who were simple and unlearned fishermen; *quasi idcirco sancti sint quod nihil scirent*, "as if their ignorance were a good argument of their piety, and they were therefore holy because they knew nothing." I cannot say that such we have in these our days. No: they are not such who profess ignorance, but are as ignorant as they could be, and profess it not: yea, they stretch beyond their line, and exalt themselves to teach even their teachers. Like "the lilies of the field, they labour not," they study not, and "Solomon," with all his wisdom, "was not so wise as one of these." (Matt. vi. 28, 29.) Some crumb falleth from their master's table; some empty and insignificant passage they catch at from some doctor and preacher that pleaseth them, and whom they call theirs; as well they may; for he bringeth them lettuce fit for their lips: and theirs let him be. And this filleth them so full, more than the whole loaf of another! and it runneth out at their mouth in some censure of those truths they neither do nor will understand. But bring them to the trial, and you shall find them as well skilled in the truth and gospel as poor Mycillus in Lucian was in coins, who knew not whether a penny were square or round.

But even these know more of the will of Christ than they put in practice. "Faith?" It is their common language. "Religion?" they talk of nothing more. "The truth of Christ?" they fight for it. "Piety?" it dwelleth with them. "Purity?" it is their proper passion, or essence rather. "Honesty of conversation, justice, and integrity?" The truth is, we have just cause to fear they do but talk of it. But I am willing to take my hand from this sore: and I did but add this to the rest as a necessary caution, that we might not neglect this light which shineth in our faces, and pointeth out to our journey's end, even to perfection.

Now if you ask, to how many degrees this perfection may be intended,\* the answer is easy: Our perfection hath no *Non ultra* in this world; nor is he a good Christian who striveth not to be best. *Nec est periculum ne sit nimium quod esse maximum debet*: "There is no danger of excess in that which can never be great enough." They who ask what degrees of perfection are sufficient, think they may sit down and rest in any, think any holiness sufficient to bring them to the sight of God. But a Christian's perfection must not be measured by the ordinary standard, by some scant and thrifty measure: it must be large and liberal, "heaped up and thrust down," (Luke vi. 38,) measured out not by the king's shekel, but by the shekel of the sanctuary, which

\* "Stretched out."—EDIT.

was double to the other. When our Saviour giveth a law unto our lust, he restraineth not only adultery and fornication and the rest of those grosser sins, but telleth us that the sanctity of a Christian suffereth not so much as a lascivious look in the eye, or a wanton thought in the heart. (Matt. v. 28.) When he rectifieth the vice of our speech, he forbiddeth not only profane oaths, impure language, and the like, but censureth "every idle word;" (Matt. xii. 36;) so that a Christian can scarce breathe without danger. Where he prescribeth unto us a measure of patience, he not only forbiddeth all revenge, but every contumelious word, every angry thought; and setteth us at such a distance from anger and revenge, as that he commandeth us to "pray for those that curse us;" (Matt. v. 44;) that so men might be sooner weary of their improbity than we of our goodness. As St. Jerome spake to his friend Paulinus, so doth Christ in his "perfect law" unto us who will be his disciples: *Nihil in te mediocre. Te contentus sum: totum summum, totum perfectum desidero*: "I cannot brook in you any mediocrity: I can hear of nothing but fulness, nothing but perfection, nothing but excess." *In donationibus factis ecclesie optima mensura est rerum donatarum immensitas*, saith a canonist: "Would you know in what measure you should give unto the church? There is no other measure," saith he, "of such gifts but greatness." Would you know in what measure you ought to be perfect? *Immensitas est mensura*: "The true measure of perfection is immensity and excess." For he that hath not yet attained to it, must yet look earnestly toward it, and make it his mark, "till he come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 13.) The "weak in faith" (Rom. xiv. 1) must be strong in faith, and they that begin well are bound to "press forward toward the end." (Phil. iii. 14.)

There is indeed in scripture mention made of a "measure of faith;" (Rom. xii. 3;) and men have applied it to signify a measure of holiness supposed to be wrought by God in the hearts of Christians; as if God did give the gifts of necessary righteousness and common honesty in some scant and defective measure, to some more, to others less; which is in effect to say, "Where we see but little honesty, there God hath given but little: and the reason why one man is not so honest as another is not from the man himself, but from God, who was more liberal to the one than to the other!" And here I confess my weakness, nor could I ever attain to discover the truth of this conceit; but I see it carried up and down as a passport or licence to be weak, an apology for our infant estate in Christ, for an old man and a

child in understanding, for weakness and infirmity. We are but such, we think, as God doth make us: and, if he had pleased, we might have been more perfect than we are. But tell me: Doth God give us that in measure which he requireth of us in excess? Doth he command us to "be men," (1 Cor. xvi. 13,) to "grow in grace," (2 Peter iii. 18,) and then withdraw himself, and leave us in an impossibility of getting out of our swaddling-bands? Must we ever "speak as a child, and do as a child?" and are we so shrunk up and be-dwarfed that we shall never become men, nor "put away childish things?" (1 Cor. xiii. 11.)

Let us take heed: it was "the evil servant" in the gospel that charged his master with hardness, that "he gathered where he scattered not," that "he reaped where he sowed not." (Matt. xxv. 24.) I know that the talents are distributed unequally, to some one, to some two, to some five: but then they are peculiar talents, and for honour, and not common and necessary. The first talent, the grace of necessary righteousness, as it cometh from God, so is not given "by measure." In this every man should be his own measure. Why one man is more or less honest than another, the reason is not in God, but in ourselves. For God's word to every one is, "Be ye perfect." (Matt. v. 48.) But the peculiar graces and talents of ornament, these God giveth only in part and in such measure as seemeth best to his wisdom. And so every man cannot be as strong as Samson, nor as learned as Solomon, nor prophesy as Jeremy, nor work miracles as St. Paul. All this is from God. But why we are not righteous as Noah, devout as David, zealous as Elias, we must find the cause in ourselves, and not lay the defect on God; who, in these graces of necessity, requireth perfection at our hands, and therefore the judgment is alike upon all. *Κρίσις ἔπεται χάριτι*, as Basil speaketh, "Judgment shall be proportionable to the gift." For God will require no more but the account and use of what he gave. And there can little reason be shown why we should fancy to ourselves such a thrift in God in the dispensation of those graces which are necessary, who commandeth us to be perfect, and delighteth himself and taketh pleasure in our obedience.

The scripture, it is true, speaketh to us sometimes of "babes in Christ," of "such as have need of milk, and not strong meat;" (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2;) of "lambs" as well as of "sheep." (John xxi. 15, 16.) It is plain, and I must acknowledge it: but yet I dare be bold to deny that this is any apology to continue in sin, or to excuse any man if he come short of that perfection which is required in the gospel. For the "babe in Christ" of

whom the scripture speaketh is not one defective in integrity of life, but unripe in knowledge, not deeply seen in the dark mysteries of scripture. And such an one St. Paul meant when he spake of "the weak in faith," whom he adviseth "not to bring to doubtful disputations." (Rom. xiv. 1.) Perfection in knowledge requireth time ; perfection in holiness, resolution.

To conclude this, on which I have insisted longer than I intended : The rule, the law is "perfect," and so requireth perfect obedience. For we must not paint and set out Christians,—as the church of Rome doth Christ, an infant in his mother's arms,—as "babes" still, rather than "perfect men." But we must apply ourselves and proportion our actions to this perfect rule, carry the image of it about us whithersoever we go, as our signet to engrave and shape and seal every thought and word and action, that so we may "grow up in grace," and "be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect." (2 Peter iii. 18 ; Matt. v. 48.) And further we press not the consideration of this second attribute of the gospel, perfection ; but bring you to,

(III.) The Third and last, that it is a "law of liberty." And certainly, before the gospel sounded, all was captivity. We were held "under the law," (Gal. iv. 5,) an inexorable law, under the power of sin and Satan, the hardest taskmasters that are. We were "captives," we were in a dungeon, imprisoned in thick and palpable darkness ; and not only so, but "blind ;" we wanted not only light, but eyes. We were in fetters and chains, and were "bruised" with them. (Luke iv. 18.) But the sound of the gospel was as the sound of the trumpet at the year of jubilee ; then we recovered our eyes, and "saw a great light ;" (Isai. ix. 2 ;) our "captivity was led captive," (Psalm lxxviii. 18 ; Eph. iv. 8,) our "chains fell off ;" (Acts xii. 7 ;) and we, who were "under sin," (Rom. vii. 14,) driven out from the face of God, under the power of that law which is "a killing letter," (2 Cor. iii. 6,) obnoxious to all the woes denounced against sinners, did recover and receive our liberty, were redeemed and brought back again, and, by free pardon, *quasi jure postliminii*, "as by a law of recovery," re-instated into that liberty which we lost, and so did *omnia nostra recipere*, "receive all that might be ours," our filiation, our adoption, our title to a kingdom ; *et putamur semper fuisse in civitate*, as the law speaketh ; "and we are graciously accepted as if we had never been lost ; as if we had always been free denizens of the city of God, and never wandered from thence ;" as if we had never forfeited our right. In a word : Our sins are wiped out, as if they had never been. And thus we were made free,



1. *A reatu peccati*, "From the guilt of sin;" which whosoever feelth hath his Tophet, his hell, here; and whosoever committeth it, doth at some time or other feel it. It made Hezekiah "chatter like a crane, and mourn like a dove." (Isai. xxxviii. 14.) It "withered David's heart like grass, and burned up his bones as an hearth." (Psalm cii. 3, 4.) It made Peter's tears flow in "bitterness." (Matt. xxvi. 75.) What should I say more? It made Judas hang himself. (Matt. xxvii. 5.) *Quis enim potest sub tali conscientia vivere?* For who can live under the guilt and conscience of sin? But there is balm in Gilcad for this.

2. We are made free *a dominio peccati*, "from the power and tyranny of sin:" which many times taketh the chair, and setteth us hard and heavy tasks; biddeth us make brick, but alloweth us no straw; biddeth us please and content ourselves, but affordeth us no means to work it out; condemneth one to the mines, to dig for that "money" which will "perish with him;" (Acts viii. 20;) fettereth another with a look, or with a kiss; driveth a third, as Balaam did his beast, on the point of the sword, through all the checks of conscience, the terrors of the law, every thing that standeth in its way, to the pit of destruction. This power sin may have, and too oft hath, in us. But the power of the gospel is greater than the power of sin, than the power of any act, and can abolish it; of any habit, and may weaken and scatter it; and is able to pull sin from its throne, and put down all its authority and power.

3. We are made free *a rigore legis*, "from the rigour," from the strict and exact observation, "of the moral law," which God at first required: from the law, I say, as it was "a killing letter." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) For, this yoke is cast away when we put on the yoke of Christ; who indeed requireth, as you have heard before, more holiness, more integrity, and greater perfection than the law did: but yet is not so "extreme to mark what is done amiss," (Psalm cxxx. 3,) nor doth he under this gracious dispensation punish every infirmity, inadvertency, and imperfection, which the law did. *Hoc fac, et vives*: "Do this, and thou shalt live." (Lev. xviii. 5.) And not to do it exactly, is to break it, and die.

4. We are made free *a servitute legis ceremonialis*, "from the servitude of the ceremonial law;" a busy and toilsome and expensive servitude; *in qua non vivebant, sed puniebantur*, saith St. Jerome: "in which they did not live, but were punished:" "a burden," saith the apostle, "which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." (Acts xv. 10.) This deliverance may seem more proper to the Jew: for how could the Gentiles be freed from that law of ceremonies to which they were never bound?

For where St. John telleth us that "if the Son make us free, we shall be free indeed," (John viii. 36,) he speaketh of the freedom from the guilt and condemnation of sin, which St. Paul in no place, that I remember, calleth our Christian liberty, although he speaketh of it in many places, but not under that name.

5. Last of all, this law of liberty passeth over to us, as by patent, the free use of the creature, that we are not bound by any religion to those or these meats, but may indifferently use or not use them. "The earth is the Lord's and all that therein is;" and "he hath given it to the children of men." (Psalm xxiv. 1; cxv. 16.) But yet he was pleased upon some reasons to grant some meats for use, and to forbid others as unclean: not that any were in their own nature unclean: (for whatsoever he made was good:) *sed, ut homines mundarentur, pecora culpata sunt*: "but to reform and purge the manners of men, he seemed to lay an imputation of uncleanness upon the creature;" which could not be unclean in itself, because it was the work of his hands. "In the camel," saith the father, "he condemneth a crooked and perverse life; in the sow, that walloweth in the mire, he forbiddeth all pollution of sin; in the lizard, our inconstancy and uncertain variety of life; in the hare, our lust; in the swan, our pride; in the bat, our delight in darkness and error." These and the like enormities the law did execrate in these creatures: and the Jews were "subject to these ordinances, Touch not, Taste not, Handle not:" (Col. ii. 21:) which indeed were not so much prohibitions as directions and remedies; that what was taken from their lusts might be added to their manners. And such a restraint was fit for them, who preferred the onions and garlic of Egypt before manna itself, and would not have liberty, that they might still stay by the flesh-pots of their enemies, who were lords over them. (Num. xi. 5; Exod. xvi. 3.) But now *claves macelli Christus nobis tradidit*, saith Tertullian: "Christ hath put the keys of the shambles or market into our hands." The "great sheet is let down from heaven, and we may rise, and kill, and eat." (Acts x. 11—13.) "Every creature of God is good, and none to be refused, but to be received with thanksgiving," and requireth no more sanctification, or cleansing, but "by the word of God and by prayer." (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.) And, "Whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake." (1 Cor. x. 25, 27.) And, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) And he that is scrupulous in this, and is fearful to touch or taste, hath "his face set as if he were returning to Jerusalem," (Luke ix. 51,) "calleth that com-

mon which God hath cleansed ;” (Acts x. 15, 28 ; ) as weak and vain as that philosopher who would not venture into a ship because he thought it a sin to spit into the sea.

These are the particulars of that liberty which this perfect law bringeth with it. All which I once intended severally and more fully to handle. But it would require more time than the present power that is over us hath been willing to allow us.

We will therefore more strictly keep ourselves to the words of the text, and see how we may reconcile these two things in appearance so contrary,—a “law,” which hath a severe and rigorous aspect, and “liberty,” which hath so pleasing and flattering a countenance ; the law which tieth us up, and liberty, which seemeth to let us loose to do what we please. For in this sense the world seemeth to take it, which is fuller of Libertines than of Christians ; who when they are under a law are in bonds, and never think themselves free but when they are a “law unto themselves ;” (Rom. ii. 14 ; ) that is, when they are the veriest slaves in the world. *Et libertas libertate perit* : “Liberty is made a gulf to swallow up itself.” It was a grave complaint of St. Jerome, *Non reddimus unicuique rei suum vocabulum* : “We are guilty of a strange misnomer, and do not give everything its due and proper name.” Some call disobedience “liberty,” and are not free, they think, but with their *Quod volumus sanctum est*,\* when they are let loose to do what they please. Every man desireth liberty, and forfeiteth it ; every man calleth for it, and chaseth it away ; every man would bring her in, and proscribe her. Nay, we may rise up and fight for her ; and, when the day is ours and the battle ended, find ourselves in chains. For when we cry so loud for it, we desire nothing but the name. That which our desires and hopes fly to, when we have overtaken and laid hold of it, changeth its countenance ; and we look upon it, and repent, and bemoan ourselves, and say, when it is too late, “This is not it which we meant.” And thus it falleth out not only in civil affairs, but in religious, in the work and business of our salvation. When we are rich, then are we poor ; when we are loose, then we are in fetters ; when we reign as kings, then are we slaves ; “being free from righteousness, we are the servants of sin,” saith St. Paul. (Rom. vi. 20.)

*Licet ut volo vivere* : “To live as I please,” is to lose my liberty. And therefore, to draw it home to our present purpose, a law is so far from being an abridgment to our liberty, that it is rather a pillar to uphold and sustain it, or rather it is the foundation upon which it is built, and on which it will stand fast for

\* “That which is our pleasure and command is holy.”—EDIT.

ever. Nor is there any liberty but under some law. For that is liberty which preserveth, not which destroyeth, a thing; by which it keepeth its own native qualities, or improveth them. The obedience of the creature to the law of his kind is his liberty. The angels have a law by which they work. And their law in respect of God is, "All ye his angels, praise him." (Psalm cxlviii. 2.) And their law in respect of men is, "Ye angels, that do his will," (Psalm ciii. 20, 21,) a law which bindeth them to works of ministerial employment. And their obedience to this law is their liberty. As the foundation of all evangelical glory and perfection is in obedience, so "the happiness of the intelligences," saith the philosopher, "consisteth in their subjection to the First" [Intelligence]. When the angels, reflecting on their own beauty and excellency, would be like unto God, "they fell," saith St. Jude, "from their first estate," from their liberty, and then would have no God at all; and so were driven "out of their habitation, and reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6.) Obedience confirmeth an angel; but desire to break his bounds and limits throweth him down from his heaven and liberty, and bindeth him in chains for evermore.

It is so in heaven: and it is so also below. God "made a law for the rain, and gave his decree unto the sea;" (Job xxviii. 26; Prov. viii. 29;) and so to every creature: and as they keep the law of their kind unwittingly, so their preservation is a kind of liberty. The sun hath then its liberty, when "as a giant it runneth its unwearied course," (Psalm xix. 4, 5,) not if it should stand still and rest itself; and "the moon, when it knoweth its seasons," (Psalm civ. 19,) not if it should wander from its beaten way. But this indeed is not properly liberty, because we speak of those creatures which can do no otherwise than they do: so that with them necessity is a kind of liberty; and to be drawn from their proper or natural course, servitude. And thus St. Paul telleth us of "the bondage of the creature," and of "its groaning to be delivered," being "made subject" by man "to vanity," dragged and forced to be instrumental and serviceable to his lusts. (Rom. viii. 19—23.)

But it is so really in civil affairs. Nothing more unlike liberty than that which men call unto them with that heat and violence, both by their words and works. Unless you call it a liberty, to be unjust; a liberty, to oppress; a liberty, to manifest our folly and our wickedness; a liberty, to go into hell. *O infelices, quibus licet peccare!* "O unhappy they who have such a liberty, to undo themselves!" What should they do with liberty, who are

ever the same, and never the same; who domineer to-day, and cringe to-morrow; who take up a resolution they know not how, and lay it down again they know not wherefore; prone to mercy in a fit, and in a fit as "swift to shed blood;" (Rom. iii. 15;) who are led by opinion, and not by truth; who consult and give sentence, and then repeal it, and after repeal the repeal itself; who call for light, and are soon angry with it; choose a religion, and abhor it; raise a faction, and anon persecute it; frame a government, and then demolish it? *His opus est lege*: "What should such a beast do without a curb?" What should these move but under a law, who must be made good to themselves and others against their will? Free them from a law, and they take liberty,—a liberty to undo themselves.

In a word: The obedience of the creature is his liberty; the obedience of the angels is their liberty; the obedience of man is his liberty. For, leave him to himself, to his wild lusts and affections, and there can be no greater enemy to destroy him than himself. So then a law and liberty may well consist and stand together. Nay, "God hath joined them together, and no man must put them asunder;" (Matt. xix. 6;) joined them together, even in this great jubilee, in this proclamation of remission and liberty. For every pardon is also an obligation; as it cancelleth one bill, so it leaveth no room for a future; as it pardoneth sins past, so it hath the force of a law, and forbiddeth us to sin again. "Sin no more," is a law written even upon the mercy-seat. (John viii. 11.) When we are pardoned, there is *mors criminum, et vita virtutum*, as Cyprian speaketh: "Sin must die, and we are bound as by a law to live to righteousness." When the understanding is a magazine of saving knowledge, and the will embraceth the truth of the gospel, and the affections are poised and carried on by the love of Christ exhibited in this law, and all the faculties of our souls and members of our bodies are subject to this perfect law, then are we like unto Christ, like unto God. We have *ισοθειον διαθεσιν*, "a divine constitution," or, according to Seneca's high expression, *imbecillitatem hominis, et securitatem Dei*, "with the frailty and imbecility of man we have the security and liberty of God," or, more truly, that which resembleth his: we are indeed the freest and noblest creatures in the world. On the contrary, an understanding that purveyeth for the world, a will that reacheth after it, an anger that is raised with every breath, a fear that ducketh at every frown, a hope that swelleth at every pleasing object, a joy that is loud at every folly, a love that kisseth every idol, an eye wandering after every vanity, an ear listening after lies, are the faculties and passions

and members, or rather the marks and reproaches, of a stigmatized slave. For can he be thought free, who employeth all the power he hath to make himself a prisoner?

No liberty, then, without subordination and subjection to this law. Behold, I show you a mystery, which you may think rather a paradox: A Christian, a gospeller, is the freest, and yet the most subject, creature in the world; the highest, and yet the lowest; delivered out of prison, and yet confined; set at liberty, and yet kept under a law! St. Paul saith to the Galatians, "Brethren, you have been called unto liberty." (Gal. v. 13.) He meaneth liberty in things indifferent, neither good nor evil in their own nature: there our fetters are broken off. "Only use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh:" there we are limited and confined.

So that Christian liberty itself is under a law, which bindeth us *ab illicitis semper, quandoque et a licitis*, "from unlawful things always, and sometimes from that which is lawful." Nay, it is under many laws:—

1. The law of sobriety and temperance, which must bound and limit the outward practice of it. "God hath given," as I told you before, "every moving thing that liveth, to be meat for us." (Gen. ix. 3.) All meats, under the gospel, all drinks, are lawful; fish and flesh, bread and herbs, and the rest. But there is a law yet to bound us. We are free, but not so free as to surfeit and be drunken, and to devour our souls with care for our bodies, to make an art of eating, and indulge so long to luxury till we can indulge no more. Wine is from the vine: "In which," saith St. Augustine, "God doth every year work a miracle, and turn water into wine." But if sobriety be not the cup-bearer, if we look not on temperance as a law, it may prove to us what the Manichees feigned it to be, *fel principis tenebrarum*, "the gall of the prince of darkness." Again: all apparel, all stuff, all cloth, all colours, are lawful. For he that "clotheth the grass of the field," will do "much more for us." (Matt. vi. 30.) But this liberty doth not straight write us "gallants," nor bolster out our excessive pride and vanity; this doth not give us power to put the poor's and Christ's patrimony on our backs. Modesty must be our tire-woman to put on our dress and our garments, and not fancy and pride. Tertullian thought it not fit to supplicate God in silk or purple. "*Cedò acum crinibus distinguendis*:" "Bring forth," saith he, "your crimping-pins and your pomanders, and wash yourselves in costly baths; and, if any ask you why you do so," *Deliqui, dicito, in Deum*; "say, 'I have offended against God:'" *itaque nunc maceror et crucior, ut*

*reconciliem me Deo*; “and therefore I thus macerate and afflict myself, and am come in this gay and costly outside, that I may reconcile myself to God.” Thus did he bitterly and sarcastically lash the luxury of his times. What, think you, would he say if he saw what we see every day, even when the days are gloomy and black, *et ecclesia in attonito*,\* when “men’s hearts even fail them for fear,” and vengeance hovereth over us, ready to fall upon our heads? But if he were too strait-laced, we ought to remember that apparel was for covert, and not for sight; to warm the body that weareth it, and not to take the eye of him that beholdeth it. We have freedom to use, but modesty and temperance must be as tribunes, and come-in with their *Veto*, and check and manage this liberty, that we abuse not the creature.

2. Our liberty is bounded with another law, even the law of charity; of charity, I say, both to myself, and to my brethren.

(1.) For ourselves; “a right hand is to be cut off, and a right eye plucked out, if they offend us.” (Matt. v. 29, 30.) We must remove every thing out of the way which may prove a stone to stumble at, though it be as useful as our hand, and as dear as our eye; at least “make a covenant with our eye” and with our hand, (Job xxxi. 1,) to forbear those lawful things which may either endanger the body or occasion the ruin of the soul. For, what is an eye, a hand, to the whole? And what a serpent is that occasion which, if I touch it, will sting me to death!

(2.) And, as for ourselves, so also for others, we must not use the creature with offence or scandal of our weaker brethren. *Licet*, “It is lawful,” is the voice of liberty; but the charity of the gospel, which is as a law to a Christian, bringeth in an *Expedit*, and maketh only that lawful in this case which is “expedient.” For as every thing which we please, as Bernard speaketh, is not lawful; so every thing that is lawful is not expedient. *Nihil charitate imperiosius*: “There is nothing more commanding than charity,” and no command fuller of delight and profit than hers. For how quickly doth she condescend to the weakness of others! How willing is she to abridge herself rather than they should fall! What delight doth she take to deny herself delight, that she may please them! She will not touch nor taste, that they may not be offended. And then, thus in matters of this nature to restrain liberty bringeth with it huge advantage. For how will *he* fly with ease from that which he may not do, *who* can for another’s sake abstain from that which he may! Liberty is a word of enlargement, and giveth us line, biddeth, “Rise, and eat:” but a *Non expedit*, “It is not expedient,” which

\* “The church is lost in astonishment.”—EDIT.

is the language of charity, "putteth the knife to our throat," (Prov. xxiii. 2,) cometh in case of scandal to pinion us, that we reach not our hand to things otherwise lawful. A *Non expedit* maketh a *Non licet*: "It is not expedient," in matters of this indifferency, is the same with "It is not lawful." The gospel, you see, then, is "a law of liberty," but it is also a law to moderate and restrain it.

3. Lastly. As it is a law of liberty, so it limiteth and boundeth it in respect of those relations which are between man and man, between father and son, master and servant, superior and inferior. For Christ came not to shake these relations, but to establish them. He left the servant, the son, the subject, as he found them; but taught them to bow yet a little lower before their master, their father, their lord, for the gospel's sake; to do it, *μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου*, "'with fear and reverence,' as to the Lord," *ἐν ἀπλότητι*, not as the Heathen slaves in chains, but, "in simplicity" and truth, "as unto Christ," *μετ' εὐνοίας*, "with good will," not driven on with the goad and whip, and *ὡς δοῦλοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, "as servants," not of men, but "of Christ." (Eph. vi. 5—7.) He giveth them liberty, yet tieth them up and confineth them, in the family, in the commonwealth, in the church. A Christian is the most free and the most subject creature in the world. And accordingly it was not heard that any Christian for some hundreds of years did break his bands, or rise up against authority. Not a more obedient son, not a more humble servant, not a more faithful subject, than a Christian. For when presumption on our Christian liberty, like a flood, is ready to cast down all before it, there is a law in the gospel which steppeth in, and speaketh in the voice of God himself, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." (Job xxxviii. 11.) We say, nay, Christ saith, that we are *ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι*, "truly free:" (John viii. 36 :) and he saith, and hath taught us both by his word and ensample, that we must be truly charitable, truly sober, truly obedient. The error in these later ages hath been, to remove this liberty, and take it from sin and conscience, and set it up against the face of the superior, and so to level and throw down all relations. We are now not free from the bondage and guilt and dominion of sin, not free from the clamours of conscience, wherein our Christian liberty principally consisteth; but free from dependence, free from all subjection: and thus we forfeit our freedom by defending it, fling off our obedience to those who are set over us, and so come under a worse yoke, even the yoke of the devil.



## APPLICATION.

For conclusion, then: Let us with joy and thankfulness remember that we are "called to liberty," but let us not forget that we are under a law to regulate and bound us; that this royal law is not nulled and made void by our liberty, nor our liberty lost in this law; that it speaketh nothing but peace and liberty, but withal exacteth obedience, which is the instrumental cause, the helper and promoter, of them both; that Christ hath taken from us one yoke, but put upon us another, and that an easy one; which if we fling from us or break asunder, our liberty will fly away, and leave us in bonds, enslaved to our own passions and lusts, bowing to every master but "our Master which is in heaven," (Eph. vi. 9,) who "bought us with a price," (1 Cor. vi. 20,) waiting on our ambition, lacqueying it after the world, sweating in a faction, busy and toiling in a sedition, and carried on with a swinge upon the weak and feeble wings of an opinion of liberty, and so making ourselves evil because we have learned that "the Son hath made us free." (John viii. 36.) And therefore let us "stand fast in our liberty." (Gal. v. 1.) And the only way to settle and fix us is this "royal law." To this if we take heed, carrying along with us that charity, sobriety, modesty, prudence, which it requireth, we shall stand, and not incline and sink either to the right hand or to the left; neither fall into such a superstitious tenderness as not to be able to take up a straw, nor yet run into that profaneness as to beat down all relations before us, to see neither father, nor master, nor magistrate, having our eyes dazzled with the beauty and glory of our Christian liberty.

To conclude: "Brethren, you have been called to liberty: only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh," (Gal. v. 13,) to promote that in its lusts and affections.

You are made free from *the guilt* of sin: add not guilt unto guilt, nor blood unto blood: be not worse than Jews and Turks, because you are Christians.

You are made free from *the dominion* of sin: make use of the power of the gospel to triumph over it. You are made free by this law of liberty, but you must "work out" this your freedom "with fear and trembling." (Phil. ii. 12.) The gospel is of power to break our bands asunder, but we must shake them off: for it doth not redeem those who love their captivity, and delight rather in their fetters than enlargement. If thou wilt, thou shalt be saved; and if thou wilt, thou art set at liberty.

Again: Ye are free from *the rigour* of the law, and walk now

rather as before a Father than before a Judge. But even a Father may be angry; and his anger may be heavier than that of a Judge, if we abuse his lenity, and "turn his grace into wantonness;" (Jude 4;) if we be too daring and bold under his indulgence and loving-kindness, and, as the flesh swayeth and leadeth us, venture now upon these acts of sin, now upon others, and be less careful what we do, because he will not "be extreme to mark what is done amiss;" (Psalm cxxx. 3;) and so at last make up those "cords of vanity," that "cart-ropes of iniquity," (Isai. v. 18,) with which we shall be dragged, not as sons, but as slaves and beasts to the slaughter.

Lastly: You are made free, and have liberty to use the creature: use it to his glory that gave it; that the bread that you eat, the garments you wear, the beam in the house, cry not out and witness against you.

And you are free from ceremonial precepts, but not from order and discipline; free in things indifferent, but not left in this indifferency to do what you please. In a word: free, but yet bound; bound to "serve one another in love," (Gal. v. 13,) and bound even by the law of nature (which this law of liberty doth not abrogate) "to do every thing decently and in order." (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) And thus if you walk, as free and yet serving, poisoning and moderating your liberty by a law, manifesting your freedom even in this service, and exalting this your service in your liberty, you shall be free indeed, free in whatsoever relation you stand, either in family, or city, or church, or commonwealth, and by it be made free denizens of the city of the Lord, who shall "deliver you from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of his sons," (Rom. viii. 21,) in the highest heavens, where you shall be free for evermore.

## SERMON LXXVIII.

## CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN INDEED.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*—James i. 25.

## PART V.

HAVING now finished our first part, the character of the gospel, we pass to our second, the character of the true gospeller.

II. And, (I.) First, we find that he doth *παρακύψαι*, “look into the perfect law of liberty.”

I. And one would think that were soon done. Who doth not look into the gospel? He that loveth it, looketh into it; and *he* looketh into it *who* is an enemy to it. But *παρακύπτω* is a word of a fuller signification, and implieth not a slight cast of the eye, a careless and perfunctory look, but “a look with the bend and incurvation of the body.” It is the word St. John useth: He telleth us that Peter, *παρακύψας*, “stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying:” (John xx. 5 :) and again, of Mary Magdalene, *Παρέκλυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον*, “She stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.” (Verse 11.) And of the gospel itself St. Peter saith, *Εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψαι*, that “the angels desire” (or “love”) “to look into it.” (1 Peter i. 12.) It is then a serious, fixed, earnest look, not a bare and inefficacious knowledge, that is here meant.

For who knoweth not the gospel? “To whom” hath not “this arm of the Lord been revealed?” (Isai. liii. 1.) They that blaspheme it, look upon it. They that deny the power of it, look upon it. *Παρακύπτειν* implieth more; not a naked knowledge, but a knowledge with the bending and incurvation of the will. If a man say he looketh into the gospel, and “knoweth Christ, and keepeth not his commandments, he is a liar.” (1 John ii. 4.) He that looketh but slightly, looketh not at all, or to as little purpose as if he had been blind. He that saith he knoweth the power of the gospel, and yet is obedient to the flesh and the lusts thereof, “is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1 John ii. 4.) For how can one at once look into the gospel, and see the glory of it, and despise it? What a solecism is the gospel in *his* mouth *who* is yet in his sins! It is not a looking but a looking *into*, not speculative but practick knowledge, that must

bring-on the end, and crown us with blessedness. It were better not to look on the gospel, than to look and not to like; better to be blind than so to see: for "if we were blind, we should have no sin;" that is, none so great; we should have some excuse for our sin. (John ix. 41.) Carelessly to look on "the law of liberty" is not a window to let-in religion, but a door and barricado to keep it out of the heart. For, what a poor habitation is a look for the gospel and grace to dwell in! The gospel is a "royal law," and a "law of liberty," liberty from the guilt and from the dominion of sin. We look *upon* it, and are content well it should be so. We know it, and subscribe to it. But if this would make us gospellers, what an assembly of Pharisees and hypocrites, what a congregation of men of Belial, might be the true disciples of Christ! I had almost said, What a legion of devils might go under that name! We look into the gospel, and talk of nothing more. In our misery and affliction, in anguish and distress of conscience, we confess the gospel must charm the storm, and "give medicine to heal our sickness." (Ezek. xlvii. 12.) "Thus we preach, and thus have you believed." (1 Cor. xv. 11.) But all this is nothing, if you do not *παρακύπτειν*, "bow and bend and apply yourselves to" the gospel. If you acknowledge its all-sufficiency, and trust in the arm of flesh; if when the tempest of affliction beateth upon you, you make a greater tempest in your souls; if ye "look, and go away and forget;" (James i. 24;) by such neglectful looking upon it, ye make the word of life a killing letter. For, what is it to see sin condemned in Christ's flesh, (Rom. viii. 3,) and to justify it in our own? to sing that *ἐπινίκιον*, that "triumphant song," over death, (1 Cor. xv. 55,) and wilfully to run upon that disobedience of which "death is the wages?" (Rom. vi. 23,) to see Satan trodden under our feet, (Rom. xvi. 20,) and yet to make ourselves his slaves? to look upon life, and yet to choose death? to look upon a law, and break it; upon a law of liberty, and be servants of sin, worse than bored slaves? (Exod. xxi. 6.)

2. To look, then, *into* the law of liberty is, so to weigh and consider it as to write it in our hearts, and make it a part of ourselves. For every look will not make a Christian. The Jews did look upon Christ; but they did not look upon him as "the Lamb of God:" (John i. 29:) for then they had not butchered him. We may "look upon the heavens, the work of God's fingers, upon the moon and the stars, which he hath ordained," (Psalm viii. 3,) upon this wonderful frame, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, "that which may be known of God;" (Rom. i. 19;)

but we do not always, as David speaketh, so look upon it as to consider it: and then it doth not raise us up to a due admiration of God's majesty, nor bring us down to a due acknowledgment of our subjection: we are no more affected with it than as if all were still "without form, and void," a lump or chaos. (Gen. i. 2.) At first it is a glorious sight, and no more; and at last, when we have familiarly looked upon it, it is nothing. We look *upon* ourselves mouldering and decaying; and yet we do not look *into* ourselves: for who considereth himself a mortal? Dives in purple never thought how he came into the world, nor how he should go out of it. We neither look backward, to what we were made; nor forward, to what we shall be. Can a rich man die? He will say he shall; but doth he believe himself? Can Herod, an angel, a God, be "struck with worms?" (Acts xii. 23.) We "die daily," (1 Cor. xv. 31,) and yet think we shall not die at all. In a word: We are any thing but what we are, because we do not look *into* nor consider ourselves. We look *upon* sin, and condemn it; and sin again: for we do not look *into* it, and consider it as the work of the devil, as the deformity of the soul, as a breach of that law of liberty which was made to free us, as that which hath no better wages than death and eternal separation from the God of life. (Rom. vi. 23.) If we did look *into* it, and consider it, we could not commit it. For no man ever yet did considerably destroy himself.

3. What, then, is it to look *into* the law of liberty, and in what is our consideration placed? "He that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them," saith our Saviour, (Matt. vii. 24,) is he that looketh into this law, and observeth it. He hath an evangelical eye; I may say, an angelical eye: for he boweth, and inclineth himself to see. And no man hath a clear eye but he that "doeth," ποιεῖ, saith our Saviour. Ποιεῖ signifieth a firm purpose of "doing," which is to look into. We must distinguish between an active and a contemplative look or assent. Then we look into this law, then we actively assent, when we have first considered what difficulties accompany this law, what "fightings within, and terrors without;" (2 Cor. vii. 5;) what a body of sin we carry about with us; what pleasing, what black temptations are ready to meet us at every turn; what enemies we have abroad, and what in our own bosom; how not only the way, but our feet also, are slippery. Then we must consider "that eternal weight of glory" which Christ hath promised to those who are obedient to this law; (2 Cor. iv. 17;) and then exactly observe that certain and inseparable connexion which is between this law and blessedness; that if the one be

observed, the other must naturally and necessarily follow ; that if we be true gospellers here, we shall be saints hereafter.

4. If this be looked into and rightly considered as it should, the will must needs bow and be obedient to this law ; which, as it is compassed with difficulty, so it leadeth to happiness ; which bringeth a span of trouble and an eternity of bliss. From hence ariseth that love of Christ and his law which is the root and foundation of all obedience, (Eph. iii. 17,) upon which we build up as high as heaven. For with such a look “ we see the heavens open, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ;” (Acts vii. 56 ;) nay, “ coming, and having his reward with him.” (Rev. xxii. 12.) It is the same method which our Saviour teacheth. For you must do in looking as you do in building. “ Which of you,” saith Christ, “ intending to build a house, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it ? ” (Luke xiv. 28.) If you will look into this law of liberty, you must count what it may cost you. It may cost you your goods. It may cost you your credit, even with those who profess the same thing with you, who are ready to forsake you. It may cost you your blood. But all these losses shall be made up and recompensed with eternity. Canst thou see that smiling beauty, and turn away thy eye ? Canst thou see that honour ready to crown thee, and defy it ? Canst thou behold riches, and esteem them as dung ? Canst thou meet the raging persecutor, and pity and pray for him ? Canst thou meet death itself with all its pomp and horror, and through all these undauntedly press forward towards heaven ? Then thou hast stooped down, inclined thyself, and looked into this law of liberty.

For if we have not this *πείθεισιν* and “ full persuasion,” if we have not laid this foundation, and approved this law of liberty, both in our understanding and practice, as the only way to happiness, we may look and look again upon it, and be stark blind, see nothing in it, nothing of that heaven and bliss which is promised. And then every breath is a storm, every temptation will be an overthrow ; then every light affliction, every evil that cometh towards us, will remove the eye from this law, and place it on itself, which we shall look on till we faint and fall down for fear, and forfeit our obedience, and even study how to make that false which is so contrary to our lusts and affections. “ Faith and a good conscience ” make it a just and full look : if we “ put that away,” presently “ concerning faith we make shipwreck.” (1 Tim. i. 19.) For as in scripture we are then said to know God when we love him ; so do we truly look into and consider this law, not when we make mention of it with our lips,

when we think of it, remember it, meditate of it, which is but the extension of our thoughts ; but when we draw it and fasten it to our soul, make it as our form and principle of motion, to promote those actions, that obedience in us, for which the law was made. This the fathers call "the circular motion of the mind," which first setteth upon the object, then is carried back into itself, and there boweth and swayeth the powers of the soul, and collecteth itself into itself from all foreign and impertinent occurrences, and then joineth all its forces and faculties, its will and affections, to the accomplishing of that good to which the law of liberty inviteth us.

## APPLICATION.

To look into the law, ye see, is of larger extent than the words do import at first sight ; and is of singular use. It poiseth and biasseth us in all our ways, that we may run evenly to that blessedness which is set before us. It is our compass, to steer our course amidst the waves, the ebbings and flowings, the changes and chances, of this world. It is our angel, "to keep us in all our ways." (Psalm xci. 11.) It is as the opening of a window into the closet of our souls, that that light may enter which may manifest every mote and atom, where there was nothing before but vacuity. It is our spy, to discover the forces of our enemy, and it is the best strength we have against him. It is as the balance of the sanctuary, to weigh every blessing in the gospel to a grain. It is the best divider, "giving to God those things that are God's, and to man those things which are man's." (Matt. xxii. 21.) It wipeth the paint off from sin, and discovereth its horror. It taketh temptation from beauty, and showeth us fading flesh, dust and ashes. It strippeth riches of their glory, and pointeth unto their wings. It seeth a deceiver in the devil ; in Christ, a Lord and Saviour ; and in his royal law it beholdeth heaven and eternity of bliss. All this virtue and power hath this *παράκλιψις*, this "looking into", the law, and due considering of it : which by being looked into becometh "the savour of life unto life ;" but, when we take off our eye, is made "the savour of death unto death." (2 Cor. ii. 16.) A steady and heedful look purchaseth, and a careless glance forfeiteth, our liberty. To look is to be free ; and not thus to look, is to have Canaan's curse upon us, to be servants of servants for ever. (Gen. ix. 25.)

And now, tell me, How many be there that thus look into the gospel? how many that thus weigh and consider it? "Many walk," saith St. Paul, ("Many look," we may say,) "of whom

we may speak weeping, that they are enemies" to the law of liberty. (Phil. iii. 18.) The Papist looketh into it, and there he findeth a triple crown. The schismatic looketh into it, and he findeth a sword to divide him from his brethren. The Anti-papist Jesuit looketh into it, and findeth the draught and model of a new discipline. The enthusiast and spiritual man looketh into it, and findeth nothing but ink and words. The Libertine looketh into it: for the law is in himself. *Querunt quod nusquam est, inveniunt tamen*: "They look and seek that which cannot be found, and yet they find it," every man his humour and the corruption of his own heart.

There is much in the eye. For the law of liberty is still the same; it moulteth not a feather, changeth not its shape and countenance: but it may appear in as many shapes as there be tempers and constitutions of the eyes that look into it. An evil eye seeth nothing but faction and debate. A lofty eye seeth nothing but priority and pre-eminence. A blood-shot eye seeth nothing but cruelty, which they call "justice." All the errors of our life, as the philosophers speak of the colours of the rainbow, are *oculi opus*, "the work of the eye." For the law itself can lend nothing towards them, but stareth them in the face, when the eye hath raised them, to shake and demolish them. It were good, then, to clear our eye before we look into the law, lest whilst we find what pleaseth us, we find what will ruin us. But O that we should have such eagles' eyes in the things of this world, and be such bats in the gospel of Christ! The covetous looketh into the world, and that hath power to transform his soul into earth. The wanton looketh upon beauty, and that turneth his into flesh. David beholdeth Bathsheba in her bath, and is on fire. Ahab looketh upon Naboth's vineyard, and is sick. The eye of flesh pierceth deep into the object, and the object pierceth as deep into the soul. But we look and look again into the law of liberty, but so faintly that we draw no power from it to "renew us in the inward man." (Eph. iii. 16.) It is a law of liberty, and we look upon it, and yet are slaves.

We speak much of faith, which is the eye of the soul, and what wonders it worketh: and indeed it would do so, if it were right and clear. It "is the substance of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) And if it draw heaven and glory so near us as to make them as certain to us as those things we see, it were impossible we should turn the back to eternity to follow a flying and transitory vanity, to pursue that which is as mortal as ourselves, and must perish with us, and doth most times perish before us. For faith, and a full persuasion of the means to the end which we



propose, is the hinge on which all the actions of men move and are turned. The worldling seeth this is the way to wealth, and he laboureth and sweateth in it. The ambitious looketh upon this as his way to the highest seat, and he treadeth it in pain, moveth forward in it, though he meet with many rubs and difficulties, many a disgrace, many a curse, as he moveth. If we believe and are fully persuaded that this will bring us to our end, we lay hold of it and follow its conduct, though it lead us against the pricks. Well said Tertullian, *Nemo non in causâ Dei facere potest, quod in suâ potest*: "Every man may do that for his soul which he doeth for his body; for his place in heaven, which he doeth for his estate on earth." And if our persuasion were as full for the one as for the other, if our eye of faith were as clear, and our intension as strong, we should see more glory in the gospel than in all that pomp which swayeth and boweth and inclineth us to it, and should fly from the one, and cleave to the other; see heaven in this law of liberty, and then take it by violence. For why should not our faith be as powerful in the things of God as our sense is in the things of this present life?

To conclude then: "The light of the body is the eye: if the eye be single, the whole body will be light." (Matt. vi. 22.) The judgment, the persuasion, is ὄμμα τῆς ψυχῆς, "the eye of the soul," saith Hierocles. And the body in this place is the mind. For what the sight is in the eye, that is the judgment in the mind: and if that be single and clear, it will look and look into an object, and fully consider it. It will see the gospel, and in it see wonders; see "lepers cleansed, blind men receiving their sight, and the dead raised to life again." (Matt. xi. 5.) It will see it as a law, and bow to it; as a perfect law, and make us "perfect to every good work;" (Heb. xiii. 21;) as a law of liberty, and "enlarge our feet, that we may run the way of God's commandments:" (Psalm cxix. 32:) it will see it, and in it that glory and riches which will ravish the eye; see it as "a ladder reaching up to heaven," and ascend up upon it; (Gen. xxviii. 12;) see it, and "with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord" and Lawgiver, "and be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," and the power of this law of liberty; (2 Cor. iii. 18;) see it, and so be brought at last to the beatifical vision, a nearer and clearer sight of God; which is the end of all, the blessedness here promised to them that do παρακύπτειν, thus "earnestly look into the perfect law of liberty."

## SERMON LXXIX.

## CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN INDEED.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*—James i. 25.

## PART VI.

WE have presented before your eyes the first part of the character and description of the true gopeller: Παρακύπτει, "He bendeth and inclineth and boweth all the faculties of his soul to look into" the perfect law of liberty, to weigh and consider it.

(II.) But this is not enough. It followeth therefore, καὶ παραμείνας, "and continueth therein." To look into it and not remain in it, is to fall away, to fall as a star, as "Lucifer, from heaven." (Isai. xiv. 12.) If we see the riches and glories of the gospel, and approve and delight therein, and then exchange them for that vanity which it teacheth us to tread under foot, give up all to our lusts and unruly affections, you know our doom: "Our last end is worse than our beginning." (2 Peter ii. 20.) Though we have known Christ, yet he will not know us; though we have embraced the gospel, yet it shall not save us; but we shall be judged according to that gospel which we have looked into and approved and then cast behind us, that we might follow our own inventions and the dictates of the flesh, which will lead us to destruction. This latter part doth establish the former, and maketh our look a fixed and steadfast look, a look which entereth in within the veil, (Heb. vi. 19,) even to the holy of holies, and endeth not but in the blessed vision of God himself. See, here they are linked and joined together, παρακύψας and παραμείνας, "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein," wreathed as it were one with the other. We cannot continue in it unless we look into it; and if we continue not, our look is nothing; nay, it is worse than nothing: for we look, and see that which might save, and will condemn, us.

Therefore to keep them thus united, the apostle draweth an exact method, and prescribeth the means: 1. He must not be ἀκροατῆς ἐπιλησμονῆς, "a forgetful hearer;" he must meditate in it: 2. He must be ποιητῆς ἔργου, "a doer of the work," the singular for the plural, a doer of those works which the evangelical law requireth. And these two, as "Aaron and Hur held up the

hands of Moses" when they "were heavy," will hold up ours, "on the one side, and on the other," that they may be steady unto our evening, "until the going down of our sun," (Exod. xvii. 12,) that we may "persevere to the end, and be saved." (Matt. x. 22.) And with these we shall exercise your devotion at this time.

1. The word is *παραμείνας*, like to that which our Saviour useth, 'Ο δὲ ὑπομείνας, "But he that shall endure to the end," the same shall be saved." (Matt. xxiv. 13; Mark xiii. 13.) From thence cometh ὑπομονή, that "patience" so much commended in the scripture. Ὑπομονῆς ἔχετε χρεῖαν, "Ye have need of patience," that, after ye have done the will of God," (that is, done it to the end,) "ye may receive the promise;" (Heb. x. 36;) a patience which standeth strong against all incursions, *belli molem quæ sustinet omnem*,\* "which undergoeth the shock of the whole war," observeth the enemy in all his stratagems, wiles, and enterprises, meeteth and encountereth him in all his assaults, meeteth him as a serpent and is not taken with his flattery, meeteth him as a lion and is not dismayed at his roaring, but keepeth and guideth us in an even and constant course in the midst of all his noise and allurements, and so bringeth us, though shaken and weather-beaten, unto our end, to the haven of rest, where we would be.

Ὑπομονῆς ἔχομεν χρεῖαν, "We have need of patience." *Quid enim malum, nisi impatientia boni?* saith Tertullian: "For, what is evil, but an impatience of that which is good?" What is vice, but an impatience of virtue? Pride will not suffer us to be brought low; covetousness will not suffer us to open our hand; intemperance will not suffer us to "put our knife to our throat." (Prov. xxiii. 2.) The love of the world is impatient of God himself. His word is a sword, and his commands thunderbolts: at the sound of them we are afraid, and go away sorrowful.

Ὑπομονῆς ἔχομεν χρεῖαν, "We have need of patience." For we must run our race in a constant and uninterrupted course, in an awful reverence to our Lawgiver, living and dying under the shadow of his wings, that "whether we live or die, we may be the Lord's." (Rom. xiv. 8.) *Non habitat nisi qui verè habitat*, say the civilians: "He is not said to dwell in a place who continueth not in it." And he doth not remain in the gospel who is ready, upon every change of weather, upon every blast and breathing of discontent, to change his seat. He doth not remain in it who, if "the rain descend and the

\* VIRGILII *Æneis*, lib. x. 810.

floods come and the winds blow," will leave and forsake it, though it be a "rock" which will easily defend him against all these. (Matt. vii. 25.) For what evil can there be against which it hath not provided an antidote? what tempest will it not shroud us against? Bring principalities and powers, the devil and all his artillery, *unus sufficit Christus*, "the gospel alone is sufficient for us."

And in this we see the difference between the world and the church. "The world passeth away," *Σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου*, "The fashion of the world," the scene is every day changed, and presenteth things in another shape. (1 Cor. vii. 31.) But "the church is built upon a rock," upon Christ; (Matt. xvi. 18;) that is, upon that "faith" in Christ "which worketh by charity." (Gal. v. 6.) And he who is built upon this rock, who is fully persuaded that Christ is the best Master, and that those duties which he teacheth are from heaven, heavenly, and will bring us thither, is sufficiently armed against the flattery of pleasure, the louring countenance of disgrace, the terrors of poverty and death itself, against all wind and weather whatsoever that might move him from his place. Look into the world: there all things are as mutable as itself. *Omnia in impio fluctuant*: "All things ebb and flow in wicked men," "fly as a shadow, and continue not." (Job xiv. 2.) Their righteousness is "like the morning dew," (Hosea xiii. 3,) dried up with the first sun; their charity, like a rock, which must be struck by some Moses, some prophet; and then, upon a fit or pang, no gushings forth, but some droppings peradventure, and then a dry rock again; their vows and promises, like their shadows at noon, behind them; their friendship, like Job's winter-brooks, overflowing with words, and then in summer, "when it is hottest," in time of need, quite dried up, "consumed out of its place;" (Job vi. 17;) their temperance scarce holding out to the next feast, nor their chastity to the next twilight. The world and "the fashion of it passeth away;" (1 Cor. vii. 31;) but on the contrary, the gospel is the eternal word of God. And as "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," (Rom. xi. 29,) so his graces are "durable riches;" (Prov. viii. 18;) *opes densæ*, "firm and well-compacted," such as may be held against all assaults; like Him from whom they descend, "yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever:" (Heb. xiii. 8;) faith *ἀνυπόκριτος*, "unfeigned;" (1 Tim. i. 5;) love abiding; (1 Cor. xiii. 13;) hope "an anchor." (Heb. vi. 19.) He that is a true gospeller doth remain and continue, and not wander from that which is good to that which is evil; is not this day a confessor, and to-morrow

an apostate ; doth not believe to-day, and to-morrow renounce his creed ; doth not love to-day, and loathe to-morrow ; doth not hope to-day, and droop to-morrow ; but *unum hominem agit*, "he is the same man, and doth the same things" *assiduè et æqualiter*, "constantly and equally." He remaineth not in the gospel in a calm only, and leaveth it when the winds rise : but here he will remain, fixed to those principles, and acting by them, when the sun shineth, and when the storm is loudest. By the gospel he fixeth and strengtheneth all his decrees and resolutions and determinations, that they are ever the same, and about the same ; now beating down one sin, anon another ; now raising and exalting this virtue, anon that. "If you ask him a question," saith Aristides the Sophister, "of numbers or measures, he will give you the same answer to-day which he will give you to-morrow and the next day, and at the last breath that he draweth."

2. In the next place, if we do not remain in the law of liberty, we do not obey it as we should. For "to remain in the gospel" and "to be in Christ," are words of stability and durance and perpetuity. For what being is that which anon is not? What stability hath that which changeth every moment? What durance and perpetuity hath that which is but a vapour or exhalation drawn up on high to fall and stink? "To remain in the gospel" and "to remain for ever" may seem two different things ; but, in respect of the race we are to run, in respect of our salvation, they are the very same.

We will not here dispute whether perseverance be a virtue distinct from other graces ; whether, as the angels, (according as some divines teach,) who stood after the fall of the rest, had a confirming grace given them from God, which now maketh them utterly incapable of any rebellious conceit, so also the saving graces of God's Spirit bring with them into the soul a necessary and certain preservation from final relapse. For there be who violently maintain it ; and there be who with as great zeal and more reason deny it. To ask, whether we may totally and finally fall from the grace and favour of God, is not so pertinent, as it is necessary to hearken to the counsel of the apostle, and to "take heed lest we fall," (1 Cor. x. 12,) to "take heed lest we be cut off," (Rom. xi. 21,) and to beware of those sins which if we commit we "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9.) For what will it avail, if we be "to every good work reprobate," (Titus i. 16,) to comfort ourselves that we are of the number of the elect? What will it help us, if, by adultery and murder and pride and malice, we make ourselves the children of death,

to lie down and dream that our names are written in the book of life? And what folly is it to fall and fall again, and think we cannot fall eternally! to be ashamed of the gospel, to do those things upon which the gospel itself hath fixed many woes, and yet to say we remain in it! Why should we ask, whether David fell away totally, when he fell so dangerously that, had he not repented, he had fallen into hell?

But I had rather commend perseverance unto you as “a condition annexed to every virtue;” so Bernard:—as “that which compasseth every good grace of God about as with a shield;” so Parisiensis:—as “that gift of God which preserveth and safeguardeth all other virtues;” so Augustine. For though “every good gift and every perfect gift be from above,” (James i. 17,) though those virtues which beautify a Christian soul descend from heaven, and are the proper issues and emanations as it were from God himself; yet perseverance is *unica filia*, saith Bernard, “his only daughter and heir,” and carrieth away the crown. She alone bringeth the disciple of Christ into the king’s bedchamber. For “he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matt. xxiv. 13.) He runneth in vain, who runneth not to the mark. He runneth in vain, that fainteth in the way, and obtaineth not. Whatsoever is before the end, is not the end, but a degree unto it. What is a seed, if it shoot forth and flourish, and then wither? What is a gourd, which groweth up in a night, and shadoweth us, and then is smitten the next morning with a worm and perisheth? What is a fair morning to a tempestuous day? What is a sabbath-day’s journey to him who must walk to the end of his hopes? What is an hour in Paradise? What is a look, an approach towards heaven, and then to fall back and be lost for ever?

Beloved, to begin well, and not to persevere; to give up our names to Christ, and not to dwell in him; to be “partakers of the Holy Ghost,” (Heb. vi. 4,) and then to chase him away; to be in the faith, and not stablished; to be in love, and not abide in it; to have hope, and cast it away; to have tasted of the powers of heaven, and be shut out; to look into the gospel, and not remain in it, is ἐλεεινότατον δέαμα, saith Chrysostom, “‘the most miserable spectacle’ in the world, more miserable than the murdering of a child in the womb, and depriving him of life before he see the sun!” And the reason is plain. For it doth not only make our beginnings nothing, and to be in vain; (that is not the worst; and yet the beginnings of life are so precious, as who would lose them? who would lose his title to a fair lordship? but then who would lose his title to eternity?) but now (which is a sad speculation) our beginnings are not only

lost, but cast an ill and malevolent look and aspect upon our progress and proceedings, which are so unlike them; and we are the worse because we were once good. If Lucifer fall from heaven, he is a devil; and he that remaineth not in the gospel, a revolted Christian, is the worst of men. "You did run well; who did hinder you?" And "are you so foolish, that, having begun in the Spirit, you will end in the flesh?" (Gal. v. 7; iii. 3.) To run well and then to faint, to embrace the truth and then to deny it, to be dispossessed of "an evil spirit" and then to "sweep and garnish the house" for him, is to receive him, and with him "seven other spirits more wicked than himself;" to become more foul, because once cleansed; more entangled, because once free; more blind, for the first light; more dangerously sick, because of a relapse; and "the last state is worse than the first;" (Matt. xii. 43—45;) nay, is worse for the first, and had not been so fatal if the first had not brought the beginnings of life. And therefore look into the gospel by all means; but then be sure to remain in it.

A good beginning must be had, but let the end be like unto the beginning. Let not Jupiter's head be set upon the body of a tyrant; as the proverb is, "A young saint, and an old devil:" but let holiness, like Joseph's coat of many colours, be made up of many virtues, but reaching down to the very feet, to our last days, our last hour, our last breath. For this is our eternity here on earth; *et propter hoc æternum consequimur æternum*: Our remaining in the gospel, our constant and never-ceasing obedience to it, is a Christian's eternity below; "and for this span of obedience, which is the mortal's eternity, we gain right and title to that real eternity of happiness in the highest heavens." To remain in the gospel and to be blessed for ever, are the two stages of a Christian; the one here on earth, the other in the kingdom of heaven: to "look into" the gospel, that is the first; and the second is like unto it, to "remain in it," to set a court of guard about us, that no deceitful temptation remove us out of our place. *Vera et tota et pura virginitas nihil magis timet quàm semetipsam*, saith Tertullian: "Virginity, if it be true and entire and pure, is afraid of nothing more than itself," it being then most in danger, most attemptable, as that which soon may be defiled by a touch or look. And when we have embraced the gospel, we are indeed out of all other danger but only the danger of losing our station or place. For our perseverance is a virtue which is never *in actu completo*, "never hath its complete act in this life." Whilst we live, we are men; and whilst we are men, we are mutable. Οὐχ ὅτι ζῶν

ἐλαθόν, saith St. Paul: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after," (Phil. iii. 12,) certain of the reward of perseverance, but not certain of perseverance. "For there is no certain victory," saith St. Jerome, "till the earthly house of this frail tabernacle be dissolved. Whilst we breathe, we are in danger; and therefore whilst we breathe, we must watch." And this was the doctrine of the ancient fathers, yea, of Augustine himself, and Prosper, that followed him.

Nor doth this doctrine draw dry the wells of salvation, nor stop the current of those comforts which flow from the inexhaust fountain of the goodness of God. No: They ever flow fresh and the same; but they do not water a dead, but a bleeding, heart. "The grace and favour of God" is then medicinal, and doth rouse and revive our drooping spirits, when we "receive it not in vain:" (2 Cor. vi. 1:) and we are certain of it, when we "stand fast," and "hold the profession of our faith without wavering," (Gal. v. 1; Heb. x. 23,) not when we fall into those sins which are enmity to God, and shut him out with all his comforts. We may be certainly persuaded that "his grace is sufficient for us," (2 Cor. xii. 9,) and will never forsake us, whilst we hold up our obedience, and carry it on in a continued course; that "he is with us, whilst we are with him." (2 Chron. xv. 2.) But we cannot be certain that we shall persevere, when we do not persevere; that God's grace and favour is the same when we kiss him, and when we oppose him; when we bow before him, and when we lift up ourselves against him. He doth indeed look upon us "in our blood," (Ezek. xvi. 6,) but we cannot be sure of his favour and lovingkindness till we be cleansed. The ground of all comfort is to "remain in this law of liberty." But what comfort is it to persuade myself I do remain in it even then when I am an enemy to the gospel of Christ?

I say, this taketh not one drop of comfort from those who love Christ and keep his commandments. For their comfort is, that they do persevere in the grace and favour of God; and that, as long as they are obedient, they are under his wing. "If our conscience condemn us not, then we have boldness and confidence with God." (1 John iii. 21.) And what greater consolation can there be than this, that whilst I remain in the law of liberty, I shall be blessed? whilst I abide in the vine, I cannot wither? whilst I am built upon the Rock, I cannot be shaken? And if I seek not my comfort here, where shall I find it? All the comfort which a Christian can have in this life is, that he "is in Christ Jesus," and by his power hath "crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 24.) And it will be in



vain to look back on eternity: for in the leaves of eternity it is written in a character indelible, that none but they that repent shall be saved. Thus the fountain of comfort lieth open to those who are obedient to the gospel, but is shut to those who stand out. No drop of comfort is due to them who are "free from righteousness and servants to sin." (Rom. vi. 20.) To these and whilst they are in this condition, to these and as they are such, belong reprehensions and comminations and woes; as the whip is most proper for the fool's back, and not a robe of honour; "tribulation and anguish upon every soul that sinneth," and repenteth not, that he may repent. (Rom. ii. 9.) When Nathan came to David after that complication of sins, he doth not smooth him up, and tell him, "Thou art a man after God's own heart. Thou art a child of God, an elect vessel. Be of good comfort; thou art fallen into this great sin, but not from the favour of God; thou art fallen, but if thou fall never so oft thou canst not fall for ever!" But when David himself had pronounced the sentence of death against the offender, he telleth him to his face, "Thou art the man that hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme;" (2 Sam. xii. 7, 14;) and with this rod he smote the rock, a heart insensible of sin, and the waters gushed forth, and watered his couch; and, being open to let out those waters of bitterness, it was open also to receive those of comfort, which stream from the rivers of the Lord, and make glad the heart.

Comfort is the inheritance of him that abideth in Christ, not of him that departeth from Him, and leaveth Him upon his cross, and crucifieth Him again. To say, "We are certain of perseverance in what condition soever," is to say, "We are certain to persevere when we do not persevere," and so maketh solicitude and watchfulness in the ways of Christianity unnecessary, divideth and separateth the *παραμείνας* from the *παρακύψας*, maketh a look enough, and leaveth remaining as a thing arbitrary; or at least maketh them both one, so that to "look into" the gospel will be to "remain" in it. For according to this new doctrine the same certainty of perseverance belongeth to them who fall and to them who stand, to them who are "weary" and to them who continue "in well-doing;" (Rom. ii. 7;) the same certainty may be had without, which is and must be acquired and maintained by, the exercise of piety alone. And this is to tread the air, or fluctuate upon the waters, when we shall find no rest for our foot but on the ark. This is to set up a heaven in our fancy, and gaze upon it, till we quite lose the sight of that which is the portion of the saints. This is to build without a foundation, or a foundation which is but air. But "no other

foundation can any man lay but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ ;” (1 Cor. iii. 11 ;) that is, the doctrine of the gospel of Christ. And upon due obedience to this we may raise our certainty as high as heaven. Here it will lie firm and sure : no wind shall scatter it, no tempest shake it ; but it will remain in us as long as we remain in our obedience to this law of liberty, the gospel of Christ. To remain in it, and to be certain of happiness, are joined together by God ; and no man, no devil, can put them asunder. In a word : To fall away, and to be certain, are incompatible ; but to remain, and to be certain, stand fast together for ever, and are unseparable.

I might here enlarge myself, and show you that this denial of the certainty of our perseverance, as it doth not any way deprive the true Christian of his spiritual comfort, but is rather an helper and promoter of it, so neither doth it derogate from God’s power. For, Οὐκ ἄκοντα σαώσῃ βίᾳ, saith Nazianzen : “ He doth not uphold us against our will.” And it is power he useth, and not violence ; a power which may beget, but not destroy, obedience ; which cannot consist with violence and necessity. *Nulla laus, non facere quod facere non potes* : “ It is no commendation not to do that which thou canst not do :” and what virtue, what obedience is it, to do that which thou canst not but do ? The precept or law supposeth a power left in him to whom it is made, either to obey or disobey. Nor doth it defeat God of his end and purpose. For his end was upon condition ; and his end was to punish him that remaineth not, and to crown him that persevereth. But I am unwilling to lead you into the briers. The truth is, the way is plain and easy ; but some men have made it rugged and uneven by walking in it, as *he* told the orator who complained he was fallen *in locum spinosum*, “ into a thorny and difficult place,” *Pedes hęc non spinas calcant, sed habent* : “ The thorns were on his feet, not in the way.” Men have raised that dust with which they were troubled ; and made that difficult which was easy, by groundless and unnecessary doubts. For what should we talk of *not-falling*, when we see a man lying in the pit ? of *certainty of standing*, when he is most certainly on the ground ? of *remaining*, when he is gone away ? of his *perseverance*, who hath committed those sins of which St. Paul saith, “ He that doeth them shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven ?” (Gal. v. 21.)

(III.) We will therefore proceed to the next point, the means we must use to remain in this law of liberty : and, 1. We must “ not forget what we hear :” 2. We must “ do the work.” We shall but lightly touch and paraphrase them, and so draw towards a conclusion.

1. That we may remain, we must “not be forgetful hearers.” For, as it is true, *Qui obscure loquitur, tacet*, “He that speaketh darkly,” or, as St. Paul speaketh, “in an unknown tongue,” (1 Cor. xiv. 2,) “is as if he were dumb and silent;” so he that heareth and forgetteth is as if he were deaf. Both fall short of that end for which speech and hearing were ordained. This is to take up water in a sieve, to let in and out, nay, to let in and loathe, and in this reciprocal intercourse of hearing and forgetting to spin out the thread of our life, and at the end thereof to look for blessedness, which is due only to “the doing of the work.” This is to give the law of liberty no more space to breathe in, than from the pulpit to our pew, from the preacher’s mouth to our ear. No: If we will remain in it, we must hear, and not forget; that is, we must remember it, “bind it as a sign upon our hand, and as frontlets between our eyes,” (which the Greeks call ἀσάλευτα, “unmovable,”) “write it on the posts of our doors;” (Deut. vi. 9;) nay, write it in our hearts, and by continual meditation make it more visible, more clear, more applicable than before; make that which *written* is but a dead letter, or *spoken* is but a sound, of power and energy to quicken and enliven us; make this law as powerful as the voice of God when he teareth the rocks and breaketh the cedars of Libanus, “mighty through God to cast down imaginations, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of itself.” (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) And this is to look upon it as the priest did upon his breastplate, upon the Urim and Thummim, to direct what to do, and what not to do; when to go out against the enemy, and when to shun him; when to encounter a temptation, when to fly from it. Thus we set it up in defence of itself, set it up against that alluring vanity which may steal away our love; against that doubt, that suggestion, which may enfeeble our hope; against that temptation which may shake our faith; and so keep us in it, keep us in all our ways, that we forsake not our station. This is to hear indeed. *Audire est edificare*, saith Augustine: “To hear is to build up” and settle ourselves in this law of liberty. *Mens videt, mens audit*, as Epicharmus said: “It is the mind that seeth, and the mind that heareth:” without it the eye itself is blind, and the ear deaf, of no use at all, when they end in themselves.

2. We must not only hear the word, and remember it, but “do the work,” by a religious alchymy *verba in opera vertere*, “turn words into works,” that they may be λόγοι ὑπὸ τῆς πράξεως ἐψυχωμένοι, “words quickened and enlivened with action.” And this will make our soul like unto the law, sign and characterize it with it; this will drive it home, “as a nail fastened by the masters of the assemblies,” (Eccles. xii. 11,) make it “enter the

soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow." (Heb. iv. 12.) This is, as the philosopher speaketh, *γυμνάζειν τὴν ψυχὴν*, "to try and exercise the mind" by frequent actions, or, as St. Paul, "to exercise ourselves unto all godliness." (1 Tim. iv. 7.) *Et quantum valet exercitatio!* as Æschylus cried out at a sword-fight: "O the force and power of practice and exercise! The people are troubled, and the wounded man is silent!" As experience is a multiplication of particular remembrances, so is a habit, which is a second nature, a body as it were made up of many actions. Piety and religion is increased and confirmed by use. And as the painful bee *in opere nascitur*, "is bred in the honey it maketh," so is goodness raised and exalted in the work that it doeth. Every good act is a degree to another. Every portion of grace is generative, nourisheth itself, and, if it be not hindered, begetteth a numerous issue. "Patience begetteth experience; experience, hope; hope, confidence." (Rom. v. 4.) As it was said of Alexander, *Unaquæque victoria instrumentum sequentis*, "Every conquest he gained made way to a new one;" so every step we make in the way to happiness bringeth us not only so far in our way, but enableth us with strength to go forward. The further we go, the more active we are. He that denieth his hunger, will not hearken to his lust. He that is harsh to his appetite in one request, will more easily put it off in a second. He that strugleth with a temptation now, will anon chase it away. He that is liberal to the poor, may in time sell all that he hath, and at last lay down his life for the gospel.

Some, we see, there be who, for want of this exercise and experience, are shaken with every wind, with every breath, with shows and apparitions, and are overthrown with a look either of allure-ment or terror; who know not what temptations mean, and so suffer them to work and steal nearer upon them, till they enter into their souls; nay, they are ready to tempt temptation itself, and greedily invite that to them which will destroy them. Others there are who, by frequent exercise and assiduous luctation and striving with themselves, have gained such a habit of piety, and so subdued the flesh to the spirit, that they find no such great difficulty in the combat, but "rejoice as mighty men to run their race." (Psalm xix. 5.) To them music is a sound, and no more; gold, but a clod of earth; beauty, but a vanishing colour. They look upon shining temptations, and are not taken; upon the blackest temptations, and are not dismayed; but stand and remain in that law of liberty to which they were called, free from the guilt of sin, and so free from the dominion of sin that they slight its terrors, and deny its flatteries, defy and keep it out not only when it threateneth, but when it fawneth and beggeth an

entrance. Such is the power of this spiritual exercise ; such advantage we have by our continued obedience and doing the work. The Hebrew doctors have found out a double crown, *auditionis*, and *operis*, one “ for hearing,” another “ for the work.” I would not the ear should lose its ornament ; yet, sure, obedience and the doing of the work have the especial promise of the crown. It is St. Paul’s doctrine : “ Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” (Rom. ii. 13.)

## APPLICATION.

For conclusion, then : Beloved, let us “ stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” (Gal. v. 1,) and let us *παραμένειν*, “ patiently remain in it.” Let us not give it a lodging in the hollow of the ear ; for so it will not long stay with us, but the next vanity or the next business will drive it away and take its place. Nor let us make a room for it in our fancy : for it is an easy matter to think we are free when we are in chains. Who is so wicked, that he is not ready to persuade himself he is just ? And that false persuasion too shall go for the dictate of the Holy Ghost. Paganism itself cannot show such monsters as many of them are who call themselves “ saints.” But let us gird up our loins, and be up, and doing the work, those works of piety which the gospel enjoineeth. It is obedience alone that tieth us to God, and maketh us free denizens of that “ Jerusalem which is above.” (Gal. iv. 26.) In it the beauty, the liberty, the royalty, the kingdom of a Christian is visible and manifest. For by it we sacrifice not our flesh but our will unto God, and so have one and the same will with him ; and if we have his will, we have his power also and his wisdom to accompany it, and to fulfil all that we can desire or expect. *Servire Deo, regnare est* : “ To serve God, is to reign as kings here, and will bring us to reign with him for evermore.” Let us then stand fast in our obedience, which is our liberty, against all the wiles and invasions of the enemy, all those temptations which will show themselves in power and craft to remove us from our station. In a calm to steer our course is not so difficult ; but when the tempest beateth hard upon us, not to dash against the rock, will commend our skill. Every man is ready to “ build a tabernacle for Christ” when he is in his glory ; (Matt. xvii. 4 ;) but not to leave Him at the cross, is the glory and crown of a Christian.

And, First, let us not dare a temptation, as Pliny dared the vapour at Mount Vesuvius, and died for it. Let us not offer and betray ourselves to the enemy. For he that affecteth and loveth danger is in the ready way to be swallowed up in that gulf. “ Valiant men,” saith the philosopher, are *ἡσυχιοί*, “ quiet

and silent,' before the combat ; but in the trial" ὄξεις, " 'ready and active.' But audacious, daring men are commonly loud and talkative before encounters, but" ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀφίστανται, "flag, and fail in them." The first weigh the danger, and resolve by degrees ; the other are peremptory, and resolve suddenly, and talk their resolution away. It is one thing to talk of a tempest at sea ; another, to discourse of it leaning against a wall. It is one thing to dispute of pain ; another, to feel it. Grief and anguish hath not such a sting in the Stoics' gallery as it hath on the rack : for there reason doth fight but with a shadow and a representation ; here, with the substance itself. And when things show themselves naked as they are, they stir up the affections. When the whip speaketh by its smart, not by my fancy ; when the fire is in my flesh, not in my understanding ; when temptations are visible and sensible, then they enter the soul and the spirit, then they easily shake that resolution which was so soon built, and soon beat down that which was made up in haste. Therefore let us not rashly thrust ourselves upon them :

But, in the Second place, let us arm and prepare ourselves against them. For, preparation is half the conquest. It looketh upon them, handleth and weigheth them beforehand, seeth where their great strength lieth, and goeth forth in the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ, and so maketh us "more than conquerors" before the fight. (Rom. viii. 37.) And this is our martyrdom in peace. For, the practice of a Christian in the calmest times must nothing differ in readiness and resolution from times of rage and fire. As Josephus speaketh of the military exercises practised amongst the Romans, that they differed from a true battle only in this, that "their battle was a bloody exercise, and their exercise a bloodless battle ;" so our preparation should make us martyrs before we come to resist *ad sanguinem*, "to shed a drop of blood."

To conclude : As the apostle exhorteth, "Let us take unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand ;" (Eph. vi. 13 ; ) to stand against the horror of a prison, against the glittering of the sword, against the terror of death ; to stand as expert soldiers of Christ, and not forsake our place ; to stand as "Mount Sion, which cannot be moved ;" (Psalm cxxv. 1 ; ) in a word, "to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.) For, "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James i. 25.)

## SERMON LXXX.

## CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN INDEED.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*—James i. 25.

## PART VII.

To persevere or continue in the gospel, and to be blessed for ever, are the two stages of a Christian, the one here on earth, the other in heaven: and there is scarce a moment, but a last breath, between them; nothing but a mouldering and decaying wall, this tabernacle of flesh, which falleth down suddenly, and then we pass and enter. And that we may persevere and continue, means are here prescribed: First: Assiduous meditation in this law; we must “not be forgetful hearers of it,” but “look into it” as into a glass; yet not “as a man that beholdeth his natural face in a glass, and then goeth away and forgetteth himself;” (verses 23, 24;) not as a man who looketh carelessly, casteth an eye, and thinketh no more of it; but rather as a woman, who looketh into her glass with intension of mind, with a kind of curiosity and care, stayeth and dwelleth upon it, fitteth her attire and ornaments to her by a kind of method, setteth every hair in its proper place, and accurately dresseth and adorneth herself by it. And, sure, there is more care and exactness due to the soul than to the body. Secondly: That we may continue and persevere, we must not only hear and remember, but “do the work:” for piety is confirmed by practice.

3. To these we may now add a Third, which hath so near a relation to practice, that it is even included in it and carried along with it: and it is to be such students in Christ’s school as St. Paul was: to study and “exercise ourselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.” (Acts xxiv. 16.) Not to trifle with our God, or play the wanton with our conscience; not to displease and wound her in one particular, with a resolution to follow her in the rest: not to let our love of the world or fear of danger make that a truth which we formerly looked upon as a foul and pernicious error; to be afraid of it in a calm, and ready to embrace it in a tempest: not to dispute and persuade ourselves to that which nothing but the honour and advantage which attendeth it could make lawful. Μηδὲν σοφίζῃ, μηδὲν τεχνάζῃ κατὰ τῆς σεαυτοῦ σωτηρίας, saith Nazianzen: “Do not play the sophister against thyself, nor invent an art and method to hasten thy ruin and destruction.”

These petty concessions, as we think, these easy but base condescensions, are ominous and prophetic, and presage and foretell a greater fall. They look towards the lowest pit, to the very abyss and depth of sin, and thither they tend. What may not he be induced in time to do, who, upon no better reason or motive than the love of himself and the suggestion of the flesh, is ready to put up the question to himself, "May I not do this?" a question which he never thought of before! How far may he run in the ways of error, when but to ask the question is to go too far! This is the first knock at the gates of death; and he that is so bold as to knock will venture further, even into her chambers. For when our fears or hopes either flatter or affright us to choose that which before we looked upon with some distaste, and had set up a resolution, though but a weak one, against it; we then begin to gild it over with some fair pretence, and would fain learn how to make it good, and so approve our choice, which appeared in another shape unto us before the course of the world and of things was altered. I would not engage myself now, and, within a while, I think I am bound to it! It is now perjury, anon a lawful and a necessary oath! Now I cannot look upon the idol; my present interest calleth upon me and cajolet me, I soon learn to look, and at last fall down and worship it!

Thus it falleth out when we are not strict observers of our conscience in the least commands: for then we soon put her off, and fling her by in her greatest, "and like fools," as the father speaketh, *ludimus adversus nos ipsos*, "we play and sport with ourselves and with danger, and are very witty and subtle to our own destruction." We do more than the Pope ever did, though he be liberal of his pardons: we grant our indulgences to ourselves. We graze, and play, and run at large; and, when the tempest approacheth, we run to the burrows of excuses, as those little beasts in the Proverbs do to the holes of the rocks. (Prov. xxx. 26.) We do that which we should not do, and which at first we would not do; and then say, "God be merciful to us in this!" We venture upon that which we once thought a sin; and though that thought will not quite leave us, yet we say of it as Lot did of Zoar, "Is it not a little one? and my soul shall live." (Gen. xix. 20.) "A little one" it may be, but as little as it is, the very condescension to it under that name may prepare the way and make the path smooth to let in the greatest. *O quam parvis veniunt summa mala principiis!* "How great a matter doth a little fire kindle!" (James iii. 5.) How doth he that is willing now to slip, at last fall and bruise himself to pieces! For the same motive which brought me thus far, may yet carry me



further out of my way. That which brought me to sleep on the bank, may at last tumble me into the stream and drown me ; especially if it arise out of worldly respects. That which maketh me slight my conscience in the least, may gain advantage and strength by that neglect, and have force to debauch and prostitute her in the greatest sin. That which maketh me lie, may make me steal. That which maketh my countenance fall, may make me a murderer. It is not the last cup that intoxicateth. It is not the last day that bringeth-on age. My age began in the womb. When I began to live, I began to die. It is not the last sin that hardeneth us : for induration came in and began with our first yielding and condescension.

It was a high strain of the orator accusing Popilius for Cicero's death, *Occisurus Ciceronem, incipere debuit a patre* : "He could not have killed Cicero, if he had not begun with his own father, and first murdered him." But a lesser sin than that might have led him to it. That boy that hath heart enough but to put out a quail's eyes, may at last take courage and embolden himself to imbrue his hands in the blood of his father. The *Thurificatores* amongst the ancients did not renounce their faith when they "offered up a little incense to Heathen gods ;" yet were they counted as idolaters, and cast out of the church. The names of the *Libellatici* and *Traditores* are infamous to this day, whereof the one "signed their apostasy with their own hand," and the other "with their own hands gave up God's word to be burnt in the fire." And some there were amongst them who bought it out with their money, and purchased a licence not to do it ; yet these were numbered amongst the *Lapsi*, "those that were fallen away," and passed with the heaviest censure of the church upon them. And what shifts, what evasions, what witty, witless devices have we heard of in these our days ! How have men studied perdition, and gloried in their shame ! What would they do ? What would they not do ? How have they "grown worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived ;" (2 Tim. iii. 13 ;) learning this cursed art of cheating themselves, and teaching it others ; and then applauding each other in this their discretion and wisdom, and laughing at and despising those simple and self-willed souls that had so much conscience, and so little wit, as not to save themselves ; that is, not to serve Christ and the world ! And these are Christians ! They profess Christ's name, they hear his word, and they never hear enough. They talk of heaven, but mean their purse ; and to safeguard this, will forfeit that ; to save a penny, will give up their reason ; and to satisfy their appetite, deny their conscience. Christians they are, but such Christians that, if they retire not

These petty concessions, as we think, these easy but base condescensions, are ominous and prophetic, and presage and foretell a greater fall. They look towards the lowest pit, to the very abyss and depth of sin, and thither they tend. What may not he be induced in time to do, who, upon no better reason or motive than the love of himself and the suggestion of the flesh, is ready to put up the question to himself, "May I not do this?" a question which he never thought of before! How far may he run in the ways of error, when but to ask the question is to go too far! This is the first knock at the gates of death; and he that is so bold as to knock will venture further, even into her chambers. For when our fears or hopes either flatter or affright us to choose that which before we looked upon with some distaste, and had set up a resolution, though but a weak one, against it; we then begin to gild it over with some fair pretence, and would fain learn how to make it good, and so approve our choice, which appeared in another shape unto us before the course of the world and of things was altered. I would not engage myself now, and, within a while, I think I am bound to it! It is now perjury, anon a lawful and a necessary oath! Now I cannot look upon the idol; my present interest calleth upon me and cajolet me, I soon learn to look, and at last fall down and worship it!

Thus it falleth out when we are not strict observers of our conscience in the least commands: for then we soon put her off, and fling her by in her greatest, "and like fools," as the father speaketh, *ludimus adversus nos ipsos*, "we play and sport with ourselves and with danger, and are very witty and subtle to our own destruction." We do more than the Pope ever did, though he be liberal of his pardons: we grant our indulgences to ourselves. We graze, and play, and run at large; and, when the tempest approacheth, we run to the burrows of excuses, as those little beasts in the Proverbs do to the holes of the rocks. (Prov. xxx. 26.) We do that which we should not do, and which at first we would not do; and then say, "God be merciful to us in this!" We venture upon that which we once thought a sin; and though that thought will not quite leave us, yet we say of it as Lot did of Zoar, "Is it not a little one? and my soul shall live." (Gen. xix. 20.) "A little one" it may be, but as little as it is, the very condescension to it under that name may prepare the way and make the path smooth to let in the greatest. *O quàm parvis veniunt summa mala principiis!* "How great a matter doth a little fire kindle!" (James iii. 5.) How doth he that is willing now to slip, at last fall and bruise himself to pieces! For the same motive which brought me thus far, may yet carry me

further out of my way. That which brought me to sleep on the bank, may at last tumble me into the stream and drown me ; especially if it arise out of worldly respects. That which maketh me slight my conscience in the least, may gain advantage and strength by that neglect, and have force to debauch and prostitute her in the greatest sin. That which maketh me lie, may make me steal. That which maketh my countenance fall, may make me a murderer. It is not the last cup that intoxicateth. It is not the last day that bringeth-on age. My age began in the womb. When I began to live, I began to die. It is not the last sin that hardeneth us : for induration came in and began with our first yielding and condescension.

It was a high strain of the orator accusing Popilius for Cicero's death, *Occisurus Ciceronem, incipere debuit a patre* : "He could not have killed Cicero, if he had not begun with his own father, and first murdered him." But a lesser sin than that might have led him to it. That boy that hath heart enough but to put out a quail's eyes, may at last take courage and embolden himself to imbrue his hands in the blood of his father. The *Thurificatores* amongst the ancients did not renounce their faith when they "offered up a little incense to Heathen gods ;" yet were they counted as idolaters, and cast out of the church. The names of the *Libellatici* and *Traditores* are infamous to this day, whereof the one "signed their apostasy with their own hand," and the other "with their own hands gave up God's word to be burnt in the fire." And some there were amongst them who bought it out with their money, and purchased a licence not to do it ; yet these were numbered amongst the *Lapsi*, "those that were fallen away," and passed with the heaviest censure of the church upon them. And what shifts, what evasions, what witty, witless devices have we heard of in these our days ! How have men studied perdition, and gloried in their shame ! What would they do ? What would they not do ? How have they "grown worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived ;" (2 Tim. iii. 13 ;) learning this cursed art of cheating themselves, and teaching it others ; and then applauding each other in this their discretion and wisdom, and laughing at and despising those simple and self-willed souls that had so much conscience, and so little wit, as not to save themselves ; that is, not to serve Christ and the world ! And these are Christians ! They profess Christ's name, they hear his word, and they never hear enough. They talk of heaven, but mean their purse ; and to safeguard this, will forfeit that ; to save a penny, will give up their reason ; and to satisfy their appetite, deny their conscience. Christians they are, but such Christians that, if they retire not

would fall to the ground. If heaven were not happiness, it were not worth a thought, much less our violence.

To enjoy something better than what we do, is the basis and foundation on which every action is raised. For, who doeth any thing only that he may do it? That action is vain that endeth in itself. Fruition is the *ultimus terminus*, "the last end," of all knowledge and volition. For to know only to know, is no better than ignorance. And in every act of the will it is manifest: for no man willeth only that he may will, no man loveth only that he may love, no man hateth only that he may hate, no man hopeth only that he may hope; but in every proffer,\* inclination, and determination of the will we look further than the act in which it endeth. When we desire any thing, we do it with an intent to be united to it, to meet and embrace it, and, from that union, something else in which the desire may rest and be fully satisfied. This made Moses meek, Abraham obedient, David devout, Job patient. This made apostles and martyrs; this led them "through honour and dishonour, through good report and evil report," (2 Cor. vi. 8,) and at last brought them to the cross and to the block, the next stage unto blessedness.

For that which moveth the will to obedience of the law is before the obedience itself, as that which exciteth and worketh it. If this be not set up, there is no such thing as conscience or obedience; at least, our conscience would lose its office, and neither accuse nor excuse us, neither be our comforter nor tormenter. If there were no hell, there were no worm: and if there were no heaven in the next, there were no joy in this, life. The apostle is plain: "Without faith," that is, without a full persuasion of a future estate, "it is impossible to please God. And he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. xi. 6.) And in this appeareth the glory and excellency of the gospel of Christ, of this law of liberty,—that it requireth no more at our hands for the obtaining of eternity of bliss but this faith, this persuasion: if so be we be holy and innocent, and remain in this law, and by this "faith overcome the world." (1 John v. 4.)

Blessedness then is as the sun, and looketh and shineth on all; putteth life in the law, raiseth our perfection, begetteth and upholdeth our liberty, maketh conscience quick and lively either to affright or joy us, either to scourge or feast us. "If in this life only we had hope, our faith were vain;" (1 Cor. xv. 17, 19;) nay, this law, the gospel, were vain. And therefore, in

\* See the note in vol. ii. p. 59.—EDIT.

every storm and tempest, under the shadow and wings of this hope we find shelter : “ We fly for refuge,” saith the apostle, “ to lay hold upon the hope which is set before us :” *Καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι* (Heb. vi. 18.) We fly out of the world, a shop of vanity and uncertainty, the region of changes and chances, “ to this hope, as to an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast ;” which cannot deceive us if we lay hold on it ; for it “ entereth into that within the veil,” (verse 19,) and so is firm and safe, fastened on this blessedness, as an anchor that reacheth to the bottom and sticketh fast in the ground. Blessedness upholdeth and settleth our hope ; and on our hope our obedience is raised to reach that blessedness on which our hope is settled. In a word : blessedness, like Christ himself, is *A (Alpha)* and *Ω (Omega)*, “ the first and the last ;” (Rev. i. 11 ;) the end, and yet the first mover of us in those ways which lead unto it. *Christiano cælum antè patuit quàm via* : “ Heaven is opened to a Christian, and then the way :” and he that walketh in it, shall enter in ; “ he that doeth the work shall be blessed in it.”

Now *Beatus erit*, “ He shall be blessed,” may either look upon this span, or upon that immeasurable space of eternity : and it is true in both ; both here, where we converse with men and misery ; and there, where we shall have the company of seraphim and cherubim, and “ follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” (Rev. xiv. 4.) Here we have something in hand, there the accomplishment ; some ears we have, we shall have the whole sheaf. Here we have one part of blessedness, peace of conscience : there remaineth the greater, the reversion in the highest heavens. As Christ said of the two commandments : “ This is the great blessedness ; and the other is like unto it,” (Matt. xxii. 38, 39,) that joy which is the resultance of every good work, which we call “ our heaven upon earth.” That which is to come is a state of perfection, “ an aggregation of all that is truly good, without the least tincture and show of evil,” as Boëthius speaketh. This cannot be found here on earth in the best saint, whose joy and peace is sometimes interrupted for a while by the gnawings of some sin or other which overtaketh him, or by the sight of imperfection which will not suffer his joy to be full. The best peace on earth may meet with disturbance. Therefore peace is found alone in the most perfect Good, even God himself, who is Perfection itself, whose delight and Paradise is in his own bosom ; which he openeth, and out of which he poureth a part of it on his creature ; and of which we do in a manner take possession when we “ look into and remain in the perfect law of liberty,” which is an emanation from him, a beam

of that law which was with God from all eternity, and by which as we are made after the image, so are we transformed after the similitude, of God; which Plato himself calleth ἐξομοίωσιν, "assimilation," and ἔνωσιν, "union" with God: in whom alone those two powers of the soul, those two "horseleeches," which ever cry, "Give, Give," (Prov. xxx. 15,) the understanding, which is ever drawing new conclusions, and the will, which is ever pursuing new objects, have their eternal sabbath and rest. "He that doeth the work shall be blessed in the work;" οὗτος, "this man," and none but this, "shall be blessed."

So then this is the conclusion,—that evangelical obedience, the constant observation of this law of liberty, of the doctrine of faith and good works, is the only and immediate way to blessedness. "For not the hearers of the word, but the doers shall be justified," saith St. Paul. (Rom. ii. 13.) And indeed there is no way but this. For,

First, God hath fitted us to this law, and this law to us. He hath fitted us for this heavenly treasure. For can we imagine that God did thus build us up, and stamp his own image upon us, that we should be an habitation for owls and satyrs, for wild and brutish imaginations? that he did give us understandings, to forge deceit, to contrive plots, to find out an art of pleasure, a method and craft of enjoying that "which is but for a season?" (2 Cor. iv. 17;) that he did give us wills to wait upon the flesh, "which fighteth against the spirit" and his image which is in us? (Gal. v. 17.) Was the soul made immortal for that which "passeth away as a shadow, and is no more?" (Job xiv. 2.) Or hath he given us "dominion over the beasts of the field," (Gen. i. 28,) that we should fall and perish with them? No: We are *ad majora nati*, "born mortal, but to eternity." And we carry an argument about us against ourselves, if we remain not in this law.

For, take it *in credendis*, "in those conclusions which it commendeth to our faith:" though faith indeed in respect of the remoteness of its object and its elevation be above nature, yet in the soul God hath left a capacity to receive it; and if the other condition, of persevering in it, did not lie heavy upon the flesh, the brutish part, we should be readier scholars in our Creed than we are. If we could hate the world, we should soon be in heaven. If we could embrace that which we cannot but approve, our infidelity and doubtings would soon vanish as the mist before the sun. St. Augustine hath observed it in his book *De Religione*, that multitudes of good moral men, especially the Platonics, came in readily and gave up their names unto Christ.

The moral man did then draw-on the Christian. But now, I know not how, the Christian is brought-in to countenance those who deserve another name.

But then for the *agenda* and "precepts of practice:" they are as the seed; and the heart of man, the earth, the matrix, the womb to receive them. And they are so proportioned to our reason that they are no sooner seen but approved, they being as it were of near alliance and consanguinity with those notions and principles which we brought with us into the world. Only those are written in a book, these in the heart: indeed the one are but a commentary on the other. What precept of Christ is there which is not agreeable and consonant to right reason? Doth he prescribe purity? The heart applaudeth it. Doth he bless meekness? The mind of man soon sayeth, "Amen." Doth he enjoin sobriety? We soon subscribe to it. For what man would profess himself a beast? And from hence it cometh to pass that we see *aliquid optimi in pessimis*, "something that is good in the worst;" that we hear a panegyric of virtue from a man of Belial; that truth is cried up by that mouth which is full of deceit; that when we do evil, we would not have it go under that name, but are ready to maintain it as good; that when we do an injury, we call it "a benefit." No man is so evil that he desireth not to enrol his name in the list of those who are good. *Temperance!* the drunkard singeth her praises. *Justice!* every hand is ready to set a crown upon her head. *Wisdom* is the desire of the whole earth. So, you see, these precepts are fitted to the soul, and the soul to these precepts.

But, Secondly, as this law of liberty is proportioned to the soul, so, being looked into and persevered in, it filleth it with light and joy, giveth it "a taste of the world to come." (Heb. vi. 5.) For as Christ's yoke is easy, but not till it is put on; (Matt. xi. 30;) so his precepts are not delightful till they are kept. Aristotle's happiness in his books is but an idea; and heaven itself is no more to us till we enjoy it. The law of liberty in the letter may please the understanding part, which is always well-affected and inclinable to that which is apparently true; but till the will, which is the commanding faculty, have set the feet and hands at liberty, even that which we approve we distaste, and that which we call "honey" is to us as bitter as gall. Contemplation may delight us for a time, and bring some content; but the perverseness of the will breedeth that worm which will soon eat it up. For it is a poor happiness, to speak and think well of happiness, to see it as in picture, *quæ non ampliùs quàm videtur delectat*, "which delighteth no longer than it is

seen ;” as from a mount to behold that Canaan which we cannot enjoy. A thought hath not wing and strength enough to carry us to blessedness.

But when the will is subdued and made obedient to this law, then this law of liberty, which is “from the heaven, heavenly,” (1 Cor. xv. 48,) filleth the soul with a joy of the same nature, with a spiritual joy, of which the joy in heaven is the complement and perfection, with a joy which is not only the pledge but the earnest of that which is to come. When the will is thus subact and framed and fashioned according to this law, according to this pattern which God hath drawn, then it clotheth itself as it were with the light of heaven, which is the original of this joy. Then what a pearl is wisdom ! What glory is in poverty ! What a triumph is it to deny ourselves ! What an ornament is the cross ! What brightness reflecteth from “a cup of cold water given to a prophet !” (Matt. x. 42.) What do you see and feel then when you intercede with your bounty, and withstand the evil days, and take from them some of their blackness and darkness ! when you sweeten the cup of bitterness, the only cup that is left to many of the prophets ! when you supply their wants, and stretch forth your hand to keep them from sinking to the dust ! when you do this to “the prophets in the name of the prophets !” (Verse 41.) Tell me : Doth it not return upon you again, and convey into your souls that which cannot be bought with money or money-worth ? Are you not “made fat and watered again” with the water you poured forth ? (Prov. xi. 25.) Are you not ravished in spirit, and lifted up in a manner into the third heaven ? I cannot see how it should be otherwise. For that God which put it into your hearts to do it, when your hearts have eased and emptied themselves by your hands, is with you still, and filleth them up with joy. Every act of charity payeth and crowneth itself, and this blessedness always followeth the giver.

But hath the receiver no joy but in that which he receiveth ? Yes : he may, and ought, or else he is not a worthy receiver. “It is” indeed “a more blessed thing to give than to receive,” (Acts xx. 35,) and therefore there is more joy. But the receiver hath his ; and his joy is set to his songs of praises to God, and acknowledgments to man. There is music in thanks ; and when I bless the hand that helped me, I feel it again : my praises, my prayers, my thanks are returned with advantage into my bosom. The giver hath his joy, and the receiver hath his. “It is a blessed thing to give ;” and “it is a most becoming and joyful thing to be thankful.” (Psalm xxxiii. 1 ; cxlvii. 1.) *In*



*quibus operamur, in illis gaudemus*, saith Tertullian: "As the work is, such is the joy:"—a work that hath its rise and original from heaven, drawn out according to the royal law, which is the will of God, begun and wrought in an immortal soul, and promoted by the Spirit of God and ministry of angels, and breathing itself forth as myrrh and frankincense amongst the children of men:—and a joy like unto it, a true and solid joy, having no carnality, no inconstancy in it, a beam from heaven, kindled and cherished by the same Spirit; a joy which receiveth no taint or diminution from sensible evils, (which to those who remain not in this law are as hell itself, and the only hell they think of,) but giving a relish and sweetness to that which were not evil if we did not think it so; making poverty, disgrace, and death itself as fuel to foment and increase it; upholding us in misery, strengthening us in weakness, and "in the hour of death and in the day of judgment" streaming forth into the ocean of eternal happiness.

*Beatus erit in opere*: "He that doeth the work shall be blessed here in this life, in his works;" and, when he is dead, "his works shall follow him," and compass him about as a triumphant robe. (Rev. xiv. 13.) Thus blessedness first inviteth, then attendeth and waiteth upon, perseverance in obedience; and yet obedience ushereth it in, *illex misericordiae*,\* first the work of God's grace and mercy, and then drawing it so near unto us as to bless us. And it maketh the blessing ours, not *ex rigore justitiæ*, "according to the rigour of justice," as I call that mine which I buy with my money: (for no obedience can equal the reward. And what can the obedience of a guilty person merit? All is "from grace," saith St. Paul. 1 Cor. xv. 10. And when the will of God is thus made manifest, *he* deserveth nothing but a rebuke *that* disputeth longer of merit. Nor can I see how a guilty and condemned person can so much as give it entrance into his thought. It did go once but for a work, good or evil, and no more: if it be more in its best sense, it is then more than it can be, and so is nothing:) but *ex debito promissi*, "according to God's promise," by which he hath as it were entailed blessedness on those who "look into the law of liberty, and remain in it." "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." (Heb. vi. 10.) O then neither let our obedience swell and puff us up, as if God were our debtor; nor let us be so afraid of merit as not to do the work. Let not our anger against Papists transform us into Libertines; and let us not so far abominate an error in judg-

\* "The inciter of mercy."—EDIT.

ment as to fall into a worse in practice; cry down merit, and carry a Pope, nay, hell itself, along with us, whithersoever we go. Let us not be Papists: God forbid! And God forbid too that we should not be Christians! Let us rather move like the seraphims, who, "having six wings, covered their face" with the uppermost, as not daring to look on the majesty of God; "and covered their feet" with the lowest, as acknowledging their imperfection in respect of him; but flew with those in the midst, ready to do his will. (Isai. vi. 2.) Let us "tremble before him," and "abhor ourselves;" (Dan. vi. 26; Job xlii. 6;) and between these two let the middle wings move, which are next to the heart, and let our constant obedience work out its way to the end, which is blessedness. For "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

And here I must set a period to my discourse, as the present power that is over us hath to the exercise of my ministerial function. And I could not better conclude than in blessedness. That is the end and conclusion of the whole matter; the end of this royal law, for thither it tendeth; the end of perfection, for to that it groweth up; and the end of our liberty, for thither it moveth. In blessedness they end; or rather they do not end, but are carried on with joy and triumph and exultation to all eternity. I might here wish you (and what good thing would I not wish you?) the blessings of the basket, the blessings of the right hand, and the blessings of the left, all the blessings promised in the law, and those blessings which are the glory of the gospel. I might here wish you those fourteen parts of blessedness reckoned up by the father; whatsoever is blessedness, or whatsoever tendeth to it. But here they all meet and are centred. This is your strength, your liberty, your security, your joy, your wisdom. Your wisdom is obedience to this law; and obedience striveth and hasteneth to overtake and join itself with this blessedness, which includeth all that we can desire, nay, more than we can conceive. *Quid a Deo præstari possit homini habenti felicitatem?* saith Augustine: "What can God do more for us than make us blessed?" And therefore when men say, "Lo, here is Christ," or, "There is Christ;" "Lo, here is blessedness," or, "There is blessedness," go not after them. (Matt. xxiv. 23.) For here, here alone, it is to be found.

Seek it not in your fancy, in a forced and false persuasion that you have attained it, when you run from it; that you are in a Paradise, when you are "seeking death in the error of your

life," (Wisdom i. 12,) and are even at the mouth of hell. For blessedness will not lie wrapped up in a thought: that hath made many thousands of saints who shall never see the face of God. What is an imaginary saint? What is a painted heaven? What is blessedness in conceit?

Next, seek it not in formalities, in the ceremonious diligence of hearing, and fasting, and loud profession. All the formalities and ceremonies in the world will not make a ladder to reach it; all this noise will not call it down.

But then seek it not in a faction, in a discipline, in this or that polity or government; for it will not be found in the rents and divisions which we make. It is tied to no place; it may be found in any. This "law of liberty" never made Papist, or Calvinist, or Lutheran, or Presbyterian. It is the Christian law, and maketh Christians; and maketh Christians, to make them blessed.

*Cùm omnes felicitatem expetant, vix centesimus quisque eam a Deo exspectat*: "All desire blessedness, and not one of a hundred will take it from God," or that which he offereth, but they make one of their own, such a blessedness as leaveth them miserable. They do that which is evil, and comfort themselves with a thought. They neglect the law, and bless themselves in formalities; in hearing, when they are deaf to every good work; in fasting, when they fast to blood and oppression; in praying, when they deny themselves what they pray for; in loud profession, which is as loud a lie. When they swim in their own gall, in "the gall of bitterness," they think themselves in the rivers of Canaan which "flow with milk and honey." (Acts viii. 23; Joshua v. 6.) They applaud themselves in their malice and deceit, in every evil work. They are what they should not be, and yet are blessed, because they are of such a faction, of this consistory, of this *classis*, of this conventicle; that is, they are blessed because they are not so! O that men were wise! O that they would be blessed! Then would they look for it where it is, in this law of liberty, and obedience to it; in this law, which doth purge the ear, and sanctify a fast, and give wings to our prayers; which plucketh the visor from the face of the hypocrite, and strippeth him of his formalities; which "scattereth the people that delight in war," (Psalm lxxviii. 30,) and is a killing letter to them that first displease God by their impiety, and then please and bless themselves in a faction; (2 Cor. iii. 6;) which is, *rem quietissimam in inquietudine quærere*, "to seek for a sad, serious, quiet thing in distraction," to seek for constancy in a whirlwind, reality in a shadow, life in a picture, peace in tumult, and joy and blessedness in hell itself.

For conclusion, then: That we may find blessedness, let us look into this royal law, that was made for blessedness, and blessedness for it. And we may look into this law in the blackest day, in the darkest times. When superstition flattereth, we may look into it; and when profaneness is bold, we may look into it. When we are poor, this will make us rich; when we are despised, this will honour us; when we are silenced, this will speak for us; when we are driven about the world, this will make it a journey to Paradise; and though we be imprisoned, this "cannot be bound;" (2 Tim. ii. 9;) and though we die, this is eternal, as eternal as that God whose law it is, his "everlasting gospel." (Rev. xiv. 6.) It will not leave us at our death, but lie down with us in our graves, and rise again with us to judgment, and set the crown of glory on our heads. And to the true love of this law, to this blessedness I commend you. It is my last gift, my last wish, that "the grace of God may dwell in you plenteously, and strengthen you to every good work." (Col. iii. 16; 2 Thess. ii. 17.) It is the blessing of him who is ready to die, and must speak no more in this place: and may it have the impression and force of the words of a dying man, and let it come up into the presence of that God who boweth the ear, and hearkeneth to the groans and sighs and prayers of them who cannot speak: that so this truth, this essential and necessary truth, may abide in you, and bow you to the obedience of that law which shall bring you to bliss! Then shall I magnify God in your behalf, and you shall bless God in mine. Then shall we meet and be present together when we are divided asunder; and, this truth remaining in you, and you in it, I shall speak when I am silent. Your prayers shall ascend for me, and mine for you, and they shall both meet before the throne of God; and God shall hear, and join us together in the blessing, who were so united in our devotion: and in this holy contention and blessed emulation of blessing one another, of praying for one another, we shall pass through this wilderness, where there be so many serpents to bite us, through this Aceldama, this "Field of Blood," through the manifold changes and chances of this world, and at the last day meet together again, and receive that blessing which the Judge shall then pronounce to all that love and fear him, to all that look into this perfect law of liberty and remain in it: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you," where there is joy, and peace, and fulness of all blessings for evermore. (Matt. xxv. 34.)

*Soli Deo Gloria.*

# FIFTY SERMONS

PREACHED AT

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE,

MILK-STREET, LONDON, AND ELSEWHERE.

WHEREOF TWENTY ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

BY THE LATE EMINENT AND LEARNED DIVINE,

ANTHONY FARINDON, B.D.,

DIVINITY-READER OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPEL-ROYAL OF WINDSOR.

THE THIRD AND LAST VOLUME,

NOT TILL NOW PRINTED.

TO WHICH ARE ADJOINED

TWO SERMONS

PREACHED BY A FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S,

UPON HIS BEING SILENCED.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY THOMAS ROYCROFT  
FOR RICHARD MARRIOTT.

---

MDCLXXIV.

IMPRIMATUR.

C. SMITH, R.P.D.

*Episcop. Londin. a Sacris Domesticis.*

*Ex Aedibus Londin., Jan. 29, 1673-4.*

---

TO THE READER.

---

THE good welcome and esteem the two former volumes of Mr. Farindon's Sermons have met with amongst learned and judicious persons, hath encouraged this also to venture abroad, hoping to speed as well as its fellows. They who have been conversant in the other, need not be told that these are the genuine works of the same author: for they will soon perceive that the very same spirit breatheth in all, and that they are all of one strain and style. The work is sufficient to commend itself: and truly both it and the author are well worthy of large encomiums: but the wine is so high and rich that it needeth not a bush.

The sermons on the Lord's Prayer our author did many years since finish; but had the great misfortune in the time of the late troubles to lose his notes, they being by a hand then in power forcibly taken from him. These thou now hast, as near as may be guessed, are more than two parts of three of what he did write and preach on that subject. However, finding upon each petition several sermons not inferior to any our author hath written, I could not think it reasonable, because I had not the entire sermons, to deprive thee of the better part of them: which I hope thou wilt accept, the rather for being in the affair freely dealt with. And so he biddeth thee heartily "Farewell," who is

Thine to serve thee,

R. M.

# TWO SERMONS

PREACHED AT

THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE,  
MILK-STREET, LONDON.

BY A FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S,

UPON HIS BEING IN THE LATE TROUBLES SILENCED.

---

## THE FIRST SERMON.

*Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee : yet let me talk (or reason the case) with thee of thy judgments : Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?—Jeremiah xii. 1.*

THE most general question which hath troubled the world, almost ever since it began, is that great dispute, concerning the just and equal distribution of temporal blessings ; how to reconcile the prosperity of the wicked, and the miseries of the righteous, with those common attributes which we assign unto God ; how it can consist with the Divine Wisdom and Justice to promote the designs of the ungodly, whom he abhors at the very soul ; and to crush and bear down those whom he calls by his own name, styles his “peculiar people,” and whom he esteems as the apple of his eye. For this objection hath gone through all degrees and qualities of men, high and low, rich and poor, miserable and happy, good and bad. The glorious, flourishing, and lofty sinner, whom “God smiles upon,” as Job speaks,—he proves there is no providence from his own success, because he goes smoothly on in his wickedness, without the least check or interruption : “Therefore pride compasses him ; therefore he sets his mouth against heaven, and his tongue walks through the earth,” scorning both God and man. (Psalm lxxiii. 6, 9.) And not only they, but the very people of God too, seeing this unequal dispensation, even they say, “How does God know ? and is there

knowledge in the Most High?" (Verse 11.) Nay, David himself professes, the thought of this came so cross him, as it had almost beat him down: "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped;" (verse 2 of the same Psalm;) and he very hardly recovered himself, but breaks out into this amazement, "Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper; they increase in riches!" (Verse 12.) As if he had said, "I looked to see the righteous upon thrones, and the virtuous gay and flourishing; but, contrary to all expectation, behold, these are the ungodly who prosper, they increase in riches:" which makes him cry out in the next verse, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain; in vain have I washed my hands in innocency;" a most desperate speech! and means thus: "Let who will stand upon forms and niceties hereafter; let who will betray his being and livelihood to a timorous conscience: I will be scrupulous no longer: no longer shall the formality of laws and religion tie me to be undone. If wickedness only thrives, I can be wicked too." Thus David, thus Habakkuk, and thus the prophet Jeremy in this chapter complains, who, seeing the falseness and treachery both of his friends and enemies still prevail against him; and seeing the conspiracies of those priests of Anathoth (where he was born too) never fail; though God had told him in the first chapter, he had made him a defenced city, an iron pillar, a brasen wall, and that he would enable him, by his divine assistance, to oppose the whole nation; whilst he, alas! found himself but a reed shaken with the wind, blown into a prison with every breath of a base informer:—seeing and considering this cross-dealing, and debating within himself what this should mean, falls out into this exclamation: "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee," &c.

Where you have a proposition or doctrine laid down, as certain; and then an objection raised against this doctrine.

I. The proposition: "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee."

II. The objection, which seems to oppose it, in these words: "Yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore does the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?"

I. I begin with the PROPOSITION itself: "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee."

Where you may observe the most singular piety and resolution of the prophet: though God's design looked never so strange unto him, and seemed, as it were, a mere contradiction, yet still he held fast to his principle, that God was just, whatsoever



became of him or his cause; that, whensoever he did plead and argue with God concerning his dispensations, he assured himself thus much beforehand, that God would overcome when he was judged; and that his righteousness, like a glorious sun, would break through all the clouds of opposition cast about it. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee."

The prophet did not preposterously conclude God just from the justice of his action; but, arguing backwards, inferred his proceeding to be just, because he himself is righteous. He does not first examine God's ways, and then pronounce him just because he finds him so, but first takes this as granted, that God is true, be the action what it will; and then afterwards inquires into the reason of it. And whosoever, in reasoning about God's actions, shall argue otherwise, or use any other method, will run himself upon many rocks and perplexities, and at last find blasphemy in the conclusion.

For we read of many actions commended in scripture, so horrid in themselves, as no orator can invent a colour to excuse them, but because God enjoined them.

Look upon Abraham's offering of his son Isaac simply by itself; and that will seem a sacrifice fitter for Moloch than a merciful God, who requireth not so much as a lamb from our fold. But the Lord commanded it, and then the patriarch's obedience stiled him, for ever after, "God's friend."

Consider the action alone, without other circumstances, and what a barbarous thing it was for the Israelites to dispossess the Canaanites of their lives and fortunes, who had done them no wrong; when the very Heathen called Alexander but "a more glorious thief," for doing less! But God, when their sins were full, had devoted them to slaughter, and then they were called "the Lord's battles."

David's most bitter curses and execrations would damn a Christian, if he should vomit them out of spleen; but when the Holy Ghost did dictate them, then they became the raptures of a zealous prophet.

Think of Rahab's preserving the spies by a downright lie; Samson's killing of himself; with divers actions of this nature; and then let me see him who can name any one thing which God cannot make lawful, either by doing it himself, or commanding it in others.

And yet it is a common saying amongst the Civilians and Schoolmen, that "some things are in themselves immutable, which God himself cannot alter; placed, as it were, out of God's reach: and that some things are not evil because God hath for-

bidden them, but are bad in their own nature before God hath laid any command concerning them at all;" robbing God, as it were, of part of his legislative power, which is to stamp every action good or bad, as it seems best to his divine will and pleasure; whereas, if you examine it rightly, what they say, "God by his almighty power cannot make such and such actions lawful," proceeds not from any natural obliquity in the actions themselves, but because we have wrapped them up in irreconcilable terms.

As for instance: God cannot make it lawful for me to commit murder: for it is a plain contradiction, that ever it should be lawful to kill a man unlawfully. But then God can make it lawful for me to kill any one living, though I have never so near a relation to him. So, again, God cannot make it lawful for me to steal, because to steal is to take away another man's right or property, whilst it is his right. But God can make it lawful for me to possess myself of any thing which another has, by changing the property, and by giving me a right unto it; so that we may as infallibly conclude the action just, whatsoever it be, as we can assure ourselves that God does it, or authorizes it to be done, though it seems to us never so irregular, and even to contradict the law of nature.

Well then does the prophet Jeremy here lay down this as a maxim, which he cannot deny, that God is just, though at first sight the prosperity of the wicked seems to overthrow it; being [seeing] if God does it, it must needs be just, because without any more ado God makes every action just by doing it, though we at present cannot find the reason of it.

Why, what would we have? Would we be gods ourselves, and call the Lord to give us an account of all his actions? Would we appoint him a day to bring-in all his reasons before us, why he deals thus, and thus, with us? Is this that we desire, with the prophet here, to dispute the question with the Almighty, to circumscribe and bound him in, within our limits, to make a circle round about him, which he should not pass, but upon such causes as our wisdoms shall think fit? But what a ridiculous thing is it in us, to cry up God's "counsels, as unsearchable," and fling him off because we cannot comprehend him! first, to confess "his paths past finding out," and then renounce God because we cannot track him! (Rom. xi. 33.) How childish does it show in us, to acknowledge a Lord God, "whose ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts;" (Isai. lv. 8;) and yet bring him to our bar; set him before our courts of justice; and measure his actions by our line and plummet! which are things of another kind, quite of another nature from

God's, which bear no proportion to them at all. For he who pronounces of God's actions according to those rules of justice we have, is guilty of the same vanity as if he should measure length by breadth, and judge of colours by sound, which are *toto genere diversa*,\* and carry not the least analogy to one another.

Seneca, in one of his heats, says, he would "rather believe drunkenness a virtue, than Cato vicious for being intemperate:" † a speech vain enough, in regard of him to whom he directed it; but most excellently true, if applied with reverence unto God. For we should rather believe injustice to be justice; that to kill, is to make alive; to fail our hopes, is to satisfy our longings; (as we think of physicians' medicines, that to poison is to restore;) rather than, by conceiving otherwise, lay the least imputation upon God's truth because we cannot reconcile his proceedings with our reason. We do indeed heap up all the glorious titles upon God imaginable, call him "the Almighty Wise God," "the Everlasting Counsellor." But in our dealings with him, we do, by retail, take them all back again to ourselves; and when he comes to exact any duty or obedience from us, which is troublesome, then we cavil and murmur, as if he had no power at all, but were indeed a mere idol. How could it happen else, that we, who will trust a lawyer with our whole estate, and without any scruple give him up all our deeds and writings, to manage as he thinks fit; yet will not trust our God one moment? but, as soon as ever we apprehend that things do cross our interests, presently we fall upon God, accuse his judgments for the miscarriage, and, as much as in us lies, would take the business quite out of his hand, in seeking, by unlawful means, to preserve ourselves? How, I say, can it be else, that we who dare commit our lives into a physician's hands, and never question his method,—though he put us to a new pain every hour, as if he studied only how to torment us most,—will yet leave nothing to the wisdom and disposing of God, without articles, conditions, at every turn exacting an account of his proceedings?

When the Jews admired how God could possibly lay aside his ancient people, and turn to the Gentiles, whom he never knew, St. Paul answers this question with another, saying, "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20.) As if he had said, "Suppose I could not assign any reason for this action of God's, would it therefore follow he were unjust? It is God whom thou repliest against; and thou, who dost reply, art but a man: 'God, whose way is in the whirlwind, and the clouds

\* "In their nature totally different."—EDIT.  
*Animi*, cap. xv.

† *De Tranquillitate*

are the dust of his feet : ' (Nahum i. 3 :) God unsearchable in his counsels, and man so ignorant, that he knows not whether the ground he treads upon stands still or moves : God, whose thoughts do as far exceed our thoughts, as the heavens do the earth ! nay, more, for the distance between us and the highest star is known and calculated, but the distance between us and God passes all arithmetic : it is infinite."

Why then should we saucily pry into the hidden counsels of God ? If he hath let down a veil before his holy of holies, how should we dare to tear it asunder, and profanely break into his mysteries ? What, must we know before we will believe ? have a demonstration for all God does, to give us satisfaction ? Why, perhaps we shall never answer Zeno's argument against motion : and shall we therefore sit still all the days of our life, and say we cannot stir ? Perhaps it is impossible to solve Pyrrho's objections against reality : shall we therefore fondly conceit, that every thing we see is but an appearance only ? that it is but your fancy that I seem now to speak, and nothing but your imagination that you think you hear me : as if our whole life were but one continued dream ? And is it not as much madness to mistrust the truth and faithfulness of God, confirmed by so many clouds of witnesses, evinced by so many ages of instances, because we cannot answer this one objection against it, because we cannot see through this one single particular of providence ?

Why then should we think it any indiscretion, with Abraham, "to believe against hope ?" (Rom. iv. 18 ;) or to be sure, (when we have least reason to expect it,) that the only way for a man to become a great nation, is to kill his only child ; and the means to overcome Canaan, was to go alone and a stranger into it ? Pray, why should we not believe our Saviour, that to save is to lose, and to preserve is to destroy ? Why should we imagine ourselves any wiser than St. Paul, who committed his body to God, until the last day, and persuaded himself that God was able to keep it until that day ? (2 Tim. i. 12 ;) though it passed through so many transmutations and changes, into beasts, fowl, and fish ; nay, though it became part of another man, which is to rise together with him in the same body ! Yet this seeming contradiction did not startle the apostle. He was sure of the thing, though he knew not how it could come to pass : "I know whom I have believed," says the apostle in the same place. Yet though Almighty God might challenge our obedience, without giving us account of his matters ; though we ought to conclude the Lord righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, when to our eye of flesh he appears neither holy nor righteous,

but rather the contrary; though our understandings be shallow, and God's judgments profound; though the well be deep, and we have nothing to draw; yet God, like a most gracious prince, when he might absolutely command, vouchsafes a reason why we should obey. Submitting himself to our slender capacities, he appears at our bars, and, to settle our wandering thoughts, to leave us quite without excuse, exposes himself to be impleaded by us, to be judged by us, to be examined by us. Which leads me to the OBJECTION, which seems to overthrow the righteousness of God: "Wherefore does the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?"

II. The occasion of this question, I told you, was, because the prophet's adversaries did continually prosper, and had power to do him hurt; not simply because the wicked prospered, but that, by this their prosperity, they had means and opportunity to mischief him; to smite him with their tongue, by secret whisperings; and smite him with their fists; to hurry him from one prison to another; and at last clap him up in the dungeon, sealing him up there unto inevitable destruction.

Now the prophet demands of God, in this question, why he did not disappoint the plots and contrivances of all those who had designed his ruin, being [seeing] God had sent him as an especial ambassador to his people. So as we may resolve the question into this: Why does God suffer the wicked to have any power to oppress the righteous?

A question, if we consider the time in which the prophet lived, not altogether idle or impertinent. For he lived under the law, a covenant of works; unto which God had annexed blessings and cursings, in outward appearance altogether temporal. (Deut. xxviii. 1—68.) But, on the contrary, this prophet found by sad experience, that he fled from his enemies, and not they from him; that not they, but he, groped at noon-days, being cast into a dungeon, which was only a larger sepulchre; and that the iron yoke was put upon his, not their necks: all which was contrary to the express words of the promise, as you may read at large in that chapter: which made him think God had forgotten to be gracious, and to ask, "Wherefore does the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?"

Nevertheless, had the prophet considered with himself rightly, he would not have thought this so strange a thing, even under the law, where God seems to set bounds and terms even to his almighty power, and to confine his absolute dominion and royalty over the creature, by making promises, oaths, and con-

tracts with his people. Yet he never passed away the land of Canaan, or any thing in it, so absolutely, but that still he reserved the title and propriety of it to himself. "All souls are mine," saith the Lord. (Ezek. xviii. 4.) "And the land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; and ye are sojourners and strangers with me." (Lev. xxv. 23.) God granted the use of it to them, yet kept still the right and full disposal of it to himself: for the Lord calls them (for all this grant) but "sojourners and strangers," who held what they possessed under God, and continued in it no longer than he gave them leave; from whom he might take it away, and bestow it on whom he pleased. And, truly, if we allow God the power but of a temporal prince, and grant him to be King of Israel only, we must allow him the liberty of changing, altering, and dispensing with his own laws. For we read how Nebuchadnezzar might "slay whom he would, and whom he would he might keep alive" within his own realms, "set up whom he would, and whom he would he might put down;" (Dan. v. 18, 19;) and lest you might imagine such an unlimited power over the subject unlawful, God is said to give him this power, in the same verse: and can we think, for all his promises, the Lord of the whole earth may not challenge as much sovereignty as a prince but of a single shire enjoys? As then he, in whom the supreme power of a state resides, when he grants out property of life, liberty, and estate to his subjects, does not by this charter debar himself the liberty of taking them away again, if the use of the public so require; in like manner God in that *θεοκρατία*, as Philo calls the commonwealth of the Jews, "God's own peculiar kingdom, where he reigned temporally," as the very civil magistrate of that nation, never tied himself up so strictly by his promises, as that he might not lawfully, for his own glory and the good of his people, upon some extraordinary cases, (as to purge, to correct, to punish, or for trial of them,) recall those good things he promised to the righteous, and confer them upon the wicked. A most clear instance of this absolute dominion in God, we see in that, under the law, he punishes frequently one man for another; nay, a whole commonwealth for the sin of one man; and, stranger yet, whole ages of posterity for the offence only of one single person: which proves most evidently, God might, even under the law, (where the Holy One seemed most to be limited,) afflict, without any consideration of guilt or demerit, or else the punishment could not have justly passed the offender's person. And this consideration, merely, might have stilled the prophet from asking this question.

But then that there should be some, (perhaps in this very congregation,) who, when they suffer (as they think) unworthily, —some who call themselves Christians,—who demand of God, why he gives them up into the hands of a tyrant, to suffer what they deserve not ; that such ask it, is a wonder to me far greater than the question itself. Have you so learned Christ? Plenty, peace, and victory over enemies,—these, indeed, were the blessings under the law. When God did not think fit (as yet) to discover fully the joys of a better life, he tempted Israel with the bliss of this ; and, instead of heaven, showed them Canaan. But when it pleased him, by Christ, to reveal unto us “ a new heaven and a new earth ;” a resurrection and “ an eternal weight of glory,” ready to crown all such as do believe and practise ; then he proposes loss of estate, and loss of friends, poverty, scorn, shame, nakedness, imprisonment, and death itself, to his disciples. For, these, ay, these, are the blessings of the gospel ; and by his example he proved them to be so. For, what crown had he, but of thorns? what sceptre, but of reeds? or where was he ever lifted up, but upon the cross? *Prosperity!* why, were I to study for an argument to render a church suspected for a false one, I would object the outward splendour of it: not that God does not bestow sometimes temporal blessings upon his chosen people, even under the gospel, to refresh and recover their wearied spirits after a difficult trial. But this, I say, is quite besides the promise of the gospel ; a thing extraordinary in respect of it. *Prosperity!* if this proves the goodness of a cause, how many arguments can the Turk allege to assert his Mahomet! Every battle he wins is a new objection against us, and every town he takes in Christendom, he gets ground of us in our religion also. What would become of the glorious martyrs, if it should be a blemish to suffer? Why did St. Paul call his scars “ the marks of the Lord Jesus?” (Gal. vi. 17 ;) which, were this true, they were the *stigmata*, and “ brands of guilt ;” and when the apostle gloried in his infirmities and troubles, then he did but cry up his own sins. Nay, upon this account, we cannot possibly quit [acquit] the eternal Son of God, whose whole life was but one continued passion. We, we Christians, should wonder that wicked men do not always prosper. We should admire how it comes to pass, that they do ever miss of their designs ; that a traitor does not ever escape justice, and the oppressor does not always hold his prey. Which made some pious Christians to reverence and esteem affliction so much, to think it so proper and peculiar to a Christian, as many times they have doubted of their calling and election, upon no

other ground but this,—because they did not find themselves miserable enough: therefore, for want of others to do it for them, they persecuted their own selves, and gave away their estates, when nobody else would take them from them. Like noble soldiers, they grew weary of peace and ease; and like the fencer in Rome, who was sick when he could venture his life but once a day.

And this is so certain and evident, that if you examine this question strictly, it will appear an objection raised, not out of any desire to clear God's justice, or that true holiness might be promoted upon the earth, or out of any consideration that concerns the glory of God, but merely out of self-love, and a by-respect of our own, which I shall show you plainly, and then the objection will fall to the ground of itself.

1. As, First, men ask this question, "Why do the wicked prosper?" because we do not see the usefulness of affliction, nor sufficiently apprehend what rare and admirable effects it doth produce: which, amongst the rest, is patience. It is something indeed, when a sinner suffers the punishment he hath deserved meekly and humbly; yet he that dares sin, durst likewise, if he could, resist the punishment due to that sin; and when he doth suffer, whom doth the sinner oblige in suffering? Not God; for it troubles him to punish. (Isai. xxviii. 21.) He swears, as he lives, he would not do it. (Ezek. xviii. 32.) "What praise is it, what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you endure it patiently?" says the apostle. (1 Peter ii. 20.) No: this only is true patience, patience indeed, when we suffer for doing well. And, pray tell me, How can men bear injuries, if there be no wicked men to do them? or how could a man lose his own, were there no violence to wrest it out of his hands? If you suppose a robbery, you must suppose a thief too; where there is a rebellion there must be a rebel, and a traitor where there is a treason; for "he that is born of God cannot sin." (1 John iii. 9.) He, such an one, cannot be the instrument of any wrong; for when he does unrighteously, he ceases to be righteous. Abel would never have killed Cain, nor would the Israelites have oppressed Pharaoh; Paul would never have imprisoned the Romans, nor the martyrs have killed their persecutors; and so we should have lost all these glorious examples of constancy and zeal, if God had not given leave to such wicked acts; lost the very privilege of a Christian, which he enjoys above the saints in heaven, which is to suffer. Nay, had there been no priests and elders to take away his life, Christ had not died; and then, as St. Paul argues, "you had been yet in your sins." (1 Cor. xv. 17.) When



we suffer for sin, we do, as the Latins (best of all tongues!) express it, *dare pœnas*, “give in exchange for some unlawful gain or pleasure, either our body to the executioner, or our estates to the exchequer:” this is a due debt, which we stand obliged to see satisfied. But when we suffer for doing well, and yet take it patiently, God will in a manner take this as a courtesy from us, as St. Peter implies. (1 Peter ii. 20.) You need not wonder, then, why our Saviour bids his disciples be exceeding glad at their afflictions; (Matt. v. 12;) why Peter and John went away rejoicing when they suffered for the name of Jesus; (Acts v. 41;) why St. Paul was so far from fearing it, that he longed for his dissolution; why the primitive Christians did so much court and admire danger, ruin, and destruction: for thus we glorify God; and thus he glorifies us again, in accounting us worthy, and admitting us, to suffer for his sake, that, as the apostle says, “at last we may receive the peaceable fruits of righteousness.” (Heb. xii. 11.)

Besides, if good men were not oppressed, we could not have so fair an opportunity to exercise our charity. I confess, we should pity those whom their own folly hath brought into calamity, whom lust and riot have cast upon the bed of sickness, or whom pride and vanity have impoverished and thrown into prison. But whom “the zeal of God’s house hath eaten up” and consumed, (Psalm lxi. 9,) whom strictness of conscience hath brought low and diminished, who is poor only because he durst not be rich for fear of doing ill,—this is such an object of charity as a man would travel the world to find out, were there not too many nearer home. Our formerly religious ancestors have run to Jerusalem to view the pretended relics of our Saviour, whether true or no; and thought it worth a pilgrimage to fetch a piece of the wood he suffered on, though perhaps it were a chip of the next block: whereas in sheltering the afflicted, we bring Christ himself into our houses; for he acknowledges, whatsoever is done to his poor suffering members, is done to himself. (Matt. xxv. 40.) It was one of the promises Christ made to his disciples, that they should always have the poor amongst them, (Matt. xxvi. 11,) to assure us, we should never want an opportunity to exercise that most powerful virtue of charity, which can lay so many obligations upon God to hear us, to pardon us, and to reward us both with the blessings of this and a better life. So that if you will but consider how much your own interest does engage you to help and assist the oppressed, you will scarce find in your hearts to call that “liberality,” which benefits the giver more than the receiver, but rather confess, by dispersing thus,

you show greater charity to yourselves than to others. For where can you place your money more securely, than when you make God your debtor? Or how can you lay out what you have to greater advantage, than by purchasing heaven with it? One would think, to build churches to the honour of God is a most high piece of devotion. *Melius est hoc facere*, says St. Jerome, *quàm repositis opibus incubare*: "It is better indeed to bestow our wealth thus, than keep it by, only to look upon." The holy father speaks slightly of this kind of charity, in respect of that which relieves the poor; and values one single alms, well-placed, as a greater munificence far than the erecting of the most stately cathedral. For, as St. Chrysostom argues upon the same subject, to build Christ a magnificent palace, and at the same time suffer him himself in his poor members to wander up and down for want of a lodging; to offer to his church a golden chalice, and deny him "a cup of cold water;" to cover his altars with the richest furniture, whilst he himself goes about naked; is just as if you should see a man almost starved with cold and hunger, and then, instead of feeding and clothing him, you should set up a golden statue to his honour, and let him pine with hunger. Though the other be commendable, yet certainly this expresses our piety most,—when we supply the wants of the necessitous, and give the poor and needy a good occasion to bless God, and trust to his providence hereafter; because thus we build up a living temple, which in the apostle's phrase is every true and sincere Christian. How much more then should you feed your minister, who so often has fed you! who, for your sakes, has, with St. Paul, died daily, by venturing himself every hour, and by standing continually with his breast quite open to receive every clap of thunder that came against him! So that though he be not a martyr, yet he is a confessor, (who is next to a martyr,) because he was ready to die in this good cause, though he be yet alive; and God preserve him so! Therefore in common gratitude you ought to assist him now in his distress, seeing his zeal to keep you steadfast in the true faith has brought him into it. Methinks, I say, you should a little consider him now at parting: for the question is not now, whether tithes be due *jure Divino*, or whether the law of the gospel, as well as the law of Moses, require you to give such a measure and proportion to your minister; but I ask you now whether you will give a man "a cup of cold water in the name of a prophet;" whether you think yourselves bound in conscience, not to let *him* starve at your doors as useless, *whom* you have praised and admired so much. This will be charity indeed: then you will *give*, whereas before you

did but *pay*. But, on the other side, to say, "There goes a good preacher! it is pity he hath nothing to live on!" to give him the wall or your hat in the street, and then be glad in your hearts you are passed by him, to drink his health at your full tables, whilst he is ready to perish for hunger, to bring him to your very door in a compliment, and then turn him out, is the same piece of charity as the apostle mentions, as if one should say to the hungry, "Get a good meal;" or to the naked, "Put on your clothes," when he hath none left to cover him. (James ii. 15, 16.) And be sure, what you give, give to God, rather than to the man: and be not like the ravens who fed Elijah, that knew not what glorious thing it was to feed a prophet.

2. Secondly. No man asks this question, "Why does the way of the wicked prosper?" but upon a false presumption of his own righteousness; because, as he conceives, he does not deserve what persecution is laid upon him: and whosoever he be [that] complains thus, if God should lay his sins in order before him, proceeding from his evil thoughts to his evil actions, from his sins of ignorance to his sins of malice and despite against God, would rather think it reasonable to charge God's mercy as too remiss, than his justice as too severe. "Why does God suffer the wicked to distress the righteous?" The supposition is notoriously false; there hath not happened such a case since the world began. If, for any ends of his own, God would afflict a righteous man, he could not possibly find one to exercise this power upon. Perhaps you did never commit adultery, but did you never cast a lascivious glance? Perhaps you did never stab a man with your dagger, but did you never run one through with your tongue? And though you did not kill your brother, yet have you not been so much as "angry with him without a cause?" (Matt. v. 22.) Now he that commits the least sin deserves the curse, as well as he that commits the greatest; for, as St. James excellently gives the reason, for the same God did forbid one as the other; (James ii. 10, 11;) and he who stands at the door here is as well out of the church, as he who is a thousand miles off, though not so far. "He that saith he hath no sin lies," saith the apostle: at the very heart he lies. (1 John i. 8.) St. Paul knew nothing by himself, yet for all that he would not quit himself, but refers that wholly to God: "He that judges me is the Lord;" (1 Cor. iv. 4;) who knew his heart better than he himself did. And David cries out, "Cleanse me from my secret sins, O Lord;" (Psalm xix. 12;) sins which fly our sight, that steal from us in crowds or borrowed shapes, so slyly as man (who is the most absurd flatterer of

himself) cannot discern them : as pride in decency, malice in zeal, hypocrisy in devotion, boasting in charity, covetousness and extortion under the name of "providing for our families." Wherefore when we meet with those terms of "holy," "just," and "righteous" given unto men in scripture, we must not conceive them so as if they were absolutely just, holy, and righteous, no more than we can say, "There is pure earth, or pure water, without the commixture of any other element." But when we are said to be innocent, it is either meant, *in foro humano*, "because the law of man can take no hold of us," though God, the Searcher of all hearts, may ; as St. Paul saith, he was "blameless," but not perfect : (Phil. iii. 6, 12 :) Or as righteous Lot in wicked Sodom was, because he loathed to do such horrid things as they did ; though he committed incest, so soon as ever he came forth : Or else, because God, seeing our hearts and intentions towards him, is pleased to cover our slips and failings with his mercy, as David is said to have done all things well, excepting the matter of Uriah ; (1 Kings xv. 5 ;) not that he could, indeed, clear himself from all guilt, (for, whosoever marks his story will find many foul actions besides this of Uriah,) but because he did not lie dead in any sin but this ; for he had a child before ever he thought he had committed adultery.

The prophet Habakkuk puts the question into more reasonable terms ; who inquires not why the wicked should devour the righteous, but why "the wicked should devour the man who is more righteous than he." (Hab. i. 13.) A man may be more righteous, yet not righteous neither. Perhaps he did not deserve it from this or that man, but from God he did : as David deserved not the disloyalty from Saul, Absalom, and his familiar friend, yet he deserved so much from God, as it was counted an escape when his child only lost his life. "The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die," saith Nathan to him. (2 Sam. xii. 13.)

But with what face can we complain against God ? we of this sottish and sinful nation, whose sins are risen so high, as we may very well conclude we were marked out to fulfil all the wickedness which is to forerun the day of judgment ! Do we murmur because our fears have compassed us, when our sins have beset us round about ? a nation wholly divided between debauchery and hypocrisy ; between open profaneness, the sin of Sodom, and lying unto God, the sin of those priests and elders which crucified our Saviour ! What, if our churches be thrown down, when we have profaned them by our empty formality, by bringing our bodies thither, but leaving our minds and hearts fast with some lust at home ? This, this was the idolatry they

so often twitted us withal ; these were the images and pictures we set up in churches,—our empty bodies that stood here without souls and hearts, to attend God's service. What ! would we call God to protect stones and mortar ? when nothing besides zeal, holiness, and fervency of devotion,—these are the *encenia*, which do sanctify, consecrate, and make a temple.

3. The last thing which moves us to ask this question, why the wicked prosper, is, because we think them in a better condition than they are. "Envy not the ungodly," says the Psalmist ; (Psalm xxxvii. 1 ;) as if the main ground of our impatience were our envy, because we so earnestly dote on these earthly vanities, as we grow mad with such as enjoy them from us, and charge the most righteous God for bestowing them on others, as this very prophet does in the seventh chapter ; whereas we quite mistake their condition. The objection supposes a false thing : for wicked men did never prosper in the world, unless you will call it "happiness" for a man to assure God's wrath upon himself, and to have a liberty to improve his sins, and increase his damnation : and this he does, if you will believe scripture to be the word of God ; for this, which you call "prosperity," engages us most certainly to punishment. The threats of Jonah saved Nineveh, though God had set down the very day in which he would destroy it. But when we go finely on in a wicked course of life, when we raise an estate by false-dealing, this flatters us to go still further, "to put off the evil day far from us, and cause the seat of violence to draw near us," (Amos vi. 3,) to pull our lusts still closer and closer to us, but remove the thought of God's judgments farther and farther off, till at last we will not believe that he does see, that he does understand, and, which is worse, till we imagine God approves and blesses our sins, because we thrive by it : like Ephraim, who concluded, God should find no iniquity in all his labours, because he was "rich ;" when, at that very time, he held "the balance of deceit in his hands." (Hosea xii. 7, 8.) It is the last of God's judgments when he throws away the rod, when he will smite us no more ; when he lays down his pruning-knife, and will dress his vineyard no more ; when he will not pour us out and rack us any longer, but lets us settle upon the lees, to putrefy and corrupt ; when God gives us over to our vile affections, and delivers us over to Satan already ; when he hath "bound up our sins" in a bundle, as the prophet saith, (Hosea xiii. 12,) and laid them by himself, till the day of his feast, his sacrifice, his banquet ; for these are the terms by the which the scripture expresses God's laughter, mirth, and jollity, when he means to glut himself with the blood of his adversaries.

Again : we do not only assure our damnation, but increase it, by our seeming prosperity, by having power to commit more and more sins, to treasure up wrath, to proceed from evil to evil, to add iniquity to iniquity, and so raise mischief to the height, till God cannot in honour and justice spare us, nor mercy itself save us. "How long, O Lord, O Lord holy and true, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood upon them that dwell on the earth!" It is the loud cry of the martyred saints; (Rev. vi. 10;) who receive this answer in the next verse: "That they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled:" as long as there remained one saint to destroy, they should live and govern; that (as our Saviour tells the Pharisees) "upon them might come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, even since the beginning of the world." (Matt. xxiii. 35.) Did men consider this, would they believe wicked men happy, because they laugh and sing? because they have as many clients pressing upon them here, as they shall have worms crowding to them in the grave? Alas! we should rather pity and pray for them, as much as if we saw them, like the lunatics in the gospel, cutting and tearing their own flesh. For the Lord is not slack: He is but fitting up and preparing all this while, whetting his sword, bending his bow, making ready his arrows, putting on his armour; and then "the Lord will go out with a shout," as the Psalmist says; (Psalm xlvii. 5;) and all the world shall say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judges the earth." (Psalm lviii. 11.)

"Why then art thou troubled, O my soul? or why art thou disquieted within me? trust in the Lord, who will yet deliver thee." (Psalm xlii. 5.) For the devil himself cannot so much as stir without God's leave, as appears by many examples in Job and the gospel too; and wicked men are but God's instruments, his hammer and his hatchet, as the prophet Isaiah calls them, with which he cuts, carves, polishes, and works our hearts; which otherwise would remain rude stone for ever.

Think of this, and it will still the murmuring spirit when it is within thee; and whenever this tempter doth assault thee to ask this question, "Wherefore does the way of the wicked prosper?" do as the prophet does in this text, "inquire of God, talk and discourse with God." For it is not the wit of Seneca, the gravity of Plutarch, nor the distinctions of Epictetus, which can solve this objection, but the gospel only; which tells us of a judgment to come, and a resurrection, without which we, of all men, would "be most miserable," as the apostle himself acknowledges;

(1 Cor. xv. 19;) to let others run away with the profit and pleasure of this world, whilst we brutishly look on and pine for hunger. Nor, which is worse, let us in our desperate humours go into the house of mirth, to drown the cry of our wants with the noise of a riotous jollity. What! would you forget your miseries? I thought you had, with St. Paul, "gloried in your tribulations," (Rom. v. 3,) if ye know ye are innocent. Then are you miserable indeed, when, by your murmuring and repining, you go from one hell to another; from poverty here, to eternal torments hereafter!

O, rather let me entreat you all to wait, wait, I say, upon God. Do not, through your impatience, lose your affliction, and the benefit of that hour wherein every one of you shall say, "It is good for me that I was afflicted." (Psalm cxix. 71.) Tarry the Lord's leisure; "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." (Exod. xiv. 13.) For all this will have a good issue, at least in the other world, if not in this: (Phil. i. 12, 13:) where God shall wipe every tear from our eyes, turn our howling into singing, when he shall bring forth the eternal weight of glory, which is laid up for all that shall endure unto the end: and so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

---

## THE SECOND SERMON.

*Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.*—Philippians iv. 17.

As that great philosopher wrote over his school-door, that none should presume to enter there, unless he had learned some mathematics: so our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, requires one principle of his disciples likewise, as a necessary qualification, before their admittance into his church; namely, to resolve beforehand thus much, never to regard any thing hereafter besides him, to strip ourselves of all earthly considerations whatsoever; to go continually with our lives and fortunes in our hands, ready in an instant to lay them down, as soon as ever the Lord hath need of them: so as none must dare to follow Christ, without his cross. Few amongst us but grant all this; we are ready enough to acknowledge all this, till God comes to prove us. For how pleasant does it seem to discourse of a storm at sea, under a warm roof? of banishment, at home in our own houses? of imprisonment, as we ride abroad? to magnify, extol, and, as it were, paint the cross of Christ, with our fine speeches, in our success? But when tribulation begins to appear, we withdraw

our shoulders quite from under it. Then we stand upon our guard with our poor, slender distinctions, putting-by danger, and most dishonourably shift ourselves out of the way, till, at last, we grow to the height of impudence, as to make it a case of conscience to renounce the command of God, that we may preserve ourselves, though it be by forswearing Christ: a piece of the same valour, as if a man should describe a battle well with his finger in wine upon a table, or read some valiant story with life and vigour, but in the field start at the report of a gun. Wherefore St. Paul in this epistle did very providentially, being now a prisoner of Jesus Christ in Rome, exposed to the fury of merciless Nero, who did riot it in nothing more than in the blood and ruin of innocent people:—I say, St. Paul did very wisely encourage the Philippians, here, to stand fast, to fear no opposition, but to go on boldly forwards in every work of a Christian, notwithstanding the terrible persecution was now begun. For do you not conceive this advice seasonable to his absent friends, when all his present acquaintance had forsaken him? as he complains to the Corinthians. For affliction did make the prophets themselves question providence, and almost turned them atheists. Affliction hath had power enough to remove rocks, as we find by St. Peter, and to stir that very foundation upon which Christ built his church. It is so great a temptation, as Almighty God tried Abraham with it ten times, before he would say he was faithful. Now, that his sufferings might not more prevail upon them, than they did upon himself, by putting them into a fright lest they might suffer the like, to fix their constancy he uses these arguments:—

First: As for himself, they should not bemoan him, because, though he was laid in irons, yet the word of God was not bound; the gospel, that had freer passage by this his confinement: for though his person could never have been admitted into Nero's palace, yet his afflictions had converted some, even of Cæsar's household, in the first and last chapters. (Phil. i. 12, 13; iv. 22.) So that considering the things which happened to him fell out thus to the furtherance of the gospel, they ought to joy with him, because he was in prison, it being only a more convenient place to preach in, where he might be heard the better; for the voice of his sufferings reached further than his tongue could possibly do.

Then again, in respect of themselves: Why should they complain, if Christ would vouchsafe them the honour to put his own crown of thorns upon their head? if he would please to exalt them, and lift them up to his own cross? They should rather boast and be exceeding glad; for thus they tread his steps whom



they profess to follow, in the other chapters: and afterwards concludes the whole epistle with a most pathetic acknowledgment of their great liberality in supplying his present wants.

So that, however Origen pleases to tax St. Paul's writings, as broken, rugged, and unequal, yet here both his matter and style glides so smooth and even, that we easily see to the very bottom of it. But lest these Philippians might mistake the joy he conceived at this their charitable expression towards him, either as proceeding from a covetous desire to fill his pockets, or out of too much carefulness to secure himself against want for the future, he tells them plainly, that indeed they solely had contributed to his necessities, of all the churches besides; that they had not relieved him once only, but "once and again," (verse 16,) that is, very often, according to the Greek phrase. And, in this, the apostle applauds them, "You have well done." (Verse 14 of this chapter.) But why? Wherein does the blessedness of this action consist? in relieving him? in feeding him? merely in feeding his belly? No: no such matter: but because in parting thus freely with their goods to supply him, they raised a bank in heaven for themselves; and in giving to him, became far more liberal to themselves, as it follows in my text: "Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound unto your account."

Where you see the Philippians' liberality, at the same instant, refused and accepted by St. Paul: *refused* under the notion of a gift, and as it merely served his turn: "Not because I desire a gift:" but most gratefully *accepted*, as it did respect and benefit those who did give, expressed in these words: "But I desire fruit, that may abound to your account."

I. I begin first to consider the Philippians' liberality towards the apostle, under the notion as he refuses it, namely, as a gift: "Not that I desire a gift."

1. *A gift!* "A gift" does he say? Why? Suppose he had indeed received their liberality, as a maintenance for himself to feed and clothe him only: suppose he had sent to them particularly for a subsistence from them, without any regard to the benefit which they should reap by giving: Imagine, I say, the apostle had expected a most speedy return from them, merely that he himself might live: yet could they look upon their bounty, as a mere gratuity, or a thing given away? Or, indeed, could they boast of any more done than they stood bound to do? Will you persuade me, St. Paul even in this had desired a gift? You acknowledge yourselves obliged to discharge the bills of fare, though they cost you as much again in physic to cure the

surfeits you got by them. It is a just and a due debt which your wantonness in apparel hath contracted ; and this you must quit, though you sell half your land for it. And you think you wrong and neglect yourselves extremely, if you do not prove your hearts with the madness of mirth, and the folly of pleasure, whatsoever it cost you : it is just and noble to pay to your lusts ; nothing but right to feed them ! But, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to house him who knows not where to lay his head, to perform all those acts of charity which style us Christians, more than faith itself, as St. Paul acknowledges : (1 Cor. xiii. 13 :) this, of all things, we esteem indifferent, accounting what we lay down here, as given, or, rather, thrown away. It is true, St. Paul could not have sued them, had they sent him nothing : for in those times of persecution, what court of justice stood open for poor Christians, but to condemn them ? Or how can you imagine this apostle should be suffered to accuse another, who was not permitted to defend himself ? especially recover maintenance by the judgment of those men who did not think him worthy to live ? Yet still, notwithstanding all this, in those very days, when it was death to relieve a Christian, when who-soever put forth his hand to succour them did in a manner stab himself ; yet then, in relieving, they did but pay St. Paul what they owed him ; nor so much gave an alms, as they struck out a debt, to which they stood engaged. For, take the apostle in his private capacity, only as a common Christian ; thus they were bound to relieve him, bound by the law of charity. Mark you, "the law of charity." They are lawyers and philosophers only who tell you, the acts of bounty and liberality fall not under the strict rules of debt and obligation : for, the scripture mentions a law of charity, and calls charity "the fulfilling of the law ;" as if, truly, there were no law but it. And as all laws have some punishment, either tacitly implied, or openly annexed, to make them obligatory and binding ; so hath also this law of charity. For if it be a punishment to be thrown into a lower hell than Gomorrah, and to suffer more than Sodom ; if it be a punishment, at the last day, to be cast by upon Christ's left hand ; to live eternally in utter darkness, without any light besides that of a sinful conscience ; if it be a punishment for Christ not to own us, when he comes to judge the world ; if any part of this singly, or all put together, deserve the name of "punishment ;" then, I am sure, who receives not a disciple, feeds not the hungry, clothes not the naked, will certainly be punished. If I should ask a lawyer, why I may not commit murder, or why I must needs satisfy my creditors ; he will presently answer, because I

should lose my life for one, and my liberty for my offending in the other. Yet I may possibly corrupt the witnesses, bribe the judge, or, by a quirk, fool and out-wit the statute; or, it is possible, by using violence successfully, turn the point of the sword upon him who should punish with it: and, pray, where will our lawyer then fix the obligation? If I am bound only because I shall receive a punishment here, when it is odds but, by my secrecy, art, or power, I may escape the penalty of human laws; why then do we put such stress upon these laws, which none of us would keep beyond his conveniency and interest, were there not a Power above them who commands our obedience? Or why should we say, an alms is not due to a poor man, because he cannot recover it in the court? and heedlessly pass-by one distressed, and drop no comfort, because he cannot take out a writ against us, or because the jury will not find it? when God will punish us for our hard-heartedness; God from whose power no wings can carry us; nor, as the prophet speaks, hell itself hide us! They then who admire the law of the land so much, and direct their actions merely according unto it, I think, had they lived in Rome, would have killed both father and mother before there was a law to punish parricide.

But may some object: "If I am bound to express my charity to him who needs it, why should a poor man thank me for my alms? For how do I show any extraordinary kindness unto him in doing my own duty, in bestowing that on him which I was obliged to give him? This seems quite to abolish two of the most noble virtues among men,—love and gratitude: love, in taking away the sweetness which alone gives it the relish, by making every charitable action involuntary, and not leaving it to our choice whether we will do good or no: and then it cuts off all civil acknowledgments between us whatsoever. If I am tied to feed the hungry, why may not they sit down at my table without invitation? And if I must clothe the naked, why may not he come and demand a garment of me? This appears to gain him a right: for, in all civil commerce between man and man, where one is bound to give, another may certainly challenge it as his own."

I answer: This doctrine does neither the one nor the other, neither destroys gratitude, nor takes away love, which must be free and unconstrained. For though God enjoins me to relieve the oppressed, yet he gives them no power to constrain me: so, as a beneficial act is an act of mere indulgence as to him who cannot enforce it from me, but a due debt as towards God, who gave me what I have for no other end than to deal it about as

he hath commanded ; it is an act of charity and choice, in regard of him whom we relieve ; an act of justice and necessity, in respect of God who hath enjoined it : and you may easily apprehend somewhat due to a man, when he himself can lay no claim to it. This is no paradox : I will give you an instance : Suppose you send a present by some messenger, (as here the Philippians did by Epaphroditus,) and he turns it to another use, and mispends it, so as the present never comes to him for whom you meant it : you see plainly, the money was due to him unto whom you sent it ; yet he shall never recover it by law, because he never possessed it : but the owner, he who sent it, shall have a good action against the messenger for breach of trust. In like manner, (for we all are but stewards to lay out what God gives us, as He shall dispose it,) if I take no notice of the cry of the poor, when God hath put money in my hand to give him ; though the beggar here can have no relief from any court of justice, yet God (whose talent I have either hid through covetousness, or consumed in prodigality) will, at the last, exact a most severe account of me. For I owe it to God, though I do not to the man ; and God challenges the acts of charity as such a peculiar debt to himself as he will not have man so much as know when we pay it, lest they may seem to share in it ; but commands us to bestow our benevolence in all secrecy imaginable. He will scarce allow us ourselves to be privy to our own gifts, nor our right hand know what our left hand gives away.

You see then, without taking-in the particular obligation of the Philippians to St. Paul, as their apostle, (which we shall consider by and by,) that, put the case, he had requested some benevolence from them, yet had he not then begged downright, or desired a bare gift : nor could they justly have imputed it to him as a gratuity only, because, in some sense, they were bound to do it as much as if he had had their bond for it. For, God commands us to be charitable ; who is said, many times, to leave heaven and come down from thence only to judge the poor and needy. No, my brethren : then you give when you grant out a revenue to one for his close drawing the curtain to an unclean bed ; then you give when you maintain your flatterer high and kicking ; then you give, when, like Judah, you come to pay for your unlawful lusts, which the pure God, who cannot behold iniquity, has forbidden you to contract for : this, this is to give ! But, for your minister, who leads you by the hand to the very gates of heaven ; who begets you again, not unto a life which beasts and trees enjoy as well as you, but to a spiritual and eternal being ; would you indeed lay down all that you have

at his feet, were you then out of his debt, to whom you owe even your own selves, as St. Paul tells Philemon? (Verse 19.)

2. But then, Secondly, St. Paul did not desire a gift, only to benefit himself, because he wanted nothing. They quite mistook his condition, if they looked upon him as a necessitous person. He might perchance seem dying, when, behold, he lived; appear outwardly sorrowful, yet rejoiced always; seem then poor himself, when he had made many rich; and look as if he had nothing, when he possessed all things. (2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) "Not that I want," saith the apostle, a little before my text; he would not have them think so meanly of him, as if he needed their benevolence, though he had nothing, not so much as a roof to shelter him from the weather, were it not for a prison. And he gives this reason in the same verse: For "I have learned," saith he, "in what state soever I am, therewith to be content." Ay, this is the knowledge which makes us wise, rich, free, happy, every thing, supplies all our wants, and sets us above danger; to have learnt quietly to submit ourselves to God, in all the variety of his dispensations, to be "content," *αὐτάρκης*. It is a word which our English will not well express, "to be self-sufficient," "to have provision within ourselves against all accidents;" when a Christian arrives to such a pass as, like God, he stands in need of nothing in this world. Though he can use it, if he hath it; yet doth he not want it, if he hath it not; neither meat in famine, nor clothes in his nakedness, nor liberty in prison; but is *αὐτάρκης*, wholly able to preserve himself without those outward helps. This is not "to live in the world," (Col. ii. 20,) to have our conversation in heaven already, and there discourse with none but God and angels. Thus we may shame a tyrant, and puff at his terrors. For, what, I beseech you, can the most subtle in curses invent against such, who call banishment "a going to travel," imprisonment "a getting out of a throng;" who say, to die is to lie down to sleep? It is as impossible to torment these as to confine a spirit, or to lay shackles upon that thing which has no body to bear them. For you must not esteem these kinds of expressions the heat only of a luxuriant wit, because whatever happens in this life is *τὸ πρὸς τὸ*, (as one most excellently calls it,) whose whole being consists "merely in relation," seems good to such as like it, and evil to such as think the contrary; just like meat, which, though it nourish one, may kill another. His brethren thought they had sold Joseph into a strange country to destroy him; but, he says, God sent him before to provide for their whole family. So this apostle collects with himself, that if he died, he should go to his Saviour; and

if he lived, he should serve his brethren. If he were at liberty, his tongue should preach; but, being in prison, his sufferings did further the gospel much more. If he met with all friends, they would receive the truth cheerfully; and if he found enemies, they would preach Christ for him, though out of strife and envy. With him, to die was gain, and to live was gain. He took every thing by the right ear, and found some benefit in every condition whatsoever: whether "by good report or by disgrace," (2 Cor. vi. 7, 8,) whether by the left hand or by the right, whether by hatred or out of good-will, whether by life or death, if Christ were preached, he looked no farther: he had his end, that *unum necessarium*, the advancement of the gospel; and whatsoever happened besides this, he esteemed as an additional complement which he might very well spare, and yet remain an apostle still. But now, on the other side, what a continued torment is a man's life without this spiritual carelessness, this holy neglect of our earthly being! Then are we born to misery indeed, if a moth, rust, or canker can make us wretched. If the trouble, which, as our Saviour says, belongs to every single day, can sully our mirth, and cast us down; if every wind and breath of an insulting tyrant can twirl us about to all points of the compass; if we make ourselves the shadow of the times, and take both form and figure only as men do rise and sit; like some flowers, if we shut and open just as they shine or not upon us; it were better a mill-stone were tied about our neck, and we were cast into the midst of the sea,—for that would keep us steady. Thus to halt, to be divided, as the word imports, between heaven and earth, light and darkness, God and Mammon;—it breeds the same deformity in the soul, as would appear in the body. If you fancied a man looked with one eye directly up to the sky, and at the same time pitched the other eye straight down upon the ground, how ugly would such a one seem unto you! This, this is the carefulness, or rather, this denying of God's providence, which makes so many desire a gift. *Desire it?* Nay, most impudently, make it their whole design, and business of their lives, to get it: mounting the pulpit as they would do a bank, and there sell off their drugs for medicines, when, in truth, they poison the very soul. Whence is it else, that they preach their dreams, calling that "the word of God" which hits in their heads, when they cannot sleep? "Who bite with their teeth," as Micah says, eat on, and talk as the company will have it; and, as it follows in the same verse, "who puts not into their mouths, and gives not what they expect, they even prepare a war against him;" (Micah iii. 5;) nay, blot him out of their

book of life : dogs, (it is St. Paul's word to them, Phil. iii. 2, or else I durst not use it,) that divine for money, who will be rich, whose greatest triumph is to lead "captive silly women : " men that will help up a sin into your bosom, which otherwise, perhaps, a tender conscience would keep down ; and set a whole city a-fire, and then, like Nero, stand by and play to it : men without whom no mischief ever had a beginning, nor by whom shall ever any have an end. Give me leave, I beseech you, to bend this crooked bough as much the other way, and call such to St. Paul's example, who, when he was to preach a new law, preached *ἀδάπανον εὐαγγέλιον*, "the gospel without charge ;" (1 Cor. ix. 18 ;) who put his hands to work night and day, that they might not receive any thing but from himself. And I heartily wish, what the apostle did here of choice, the civil magistrate would whip them to : for they are a scandal to their beautiful profession, to preach providence, and at the same time scrape together ; as if God, who provides for all things, would have more care of a crow, or the grass of the field, than of man whom he created after his own image ; as if He who sent forth his disciples without scrip or penny, did it only to destroy them. And how shall the people credit those who preach the contempt of the world to their congregations, when they see these foxes who would only have their auditors leave the world that they may enjoy it wholly to themselves ; calling that "the kingdom of Christ," when they themselves reign, or rather, when lust reigns in them : whereas St. Paul often urged this as an argument to confirm his doctrine, that he took nothing for it.

3. Thirdly. St. Paul did not desire a gift, because their benevolence kept him still alive, heartened his body up and prolonged his days : which, considering St. Paul's condition, was cruel mercy, the greatest injury they could possibly do him, to hold him thus from his Saviour, with whom he longed to be ! For the apostle had fully weighed the poises both of life and death ; and concluded, the most beneficial thing to him, if he looked only after his own advantage, was death ; "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ ; which is far better." (Phil. i. 23.) For, pray resolve me, What kindness is it to fetch a wretch devoted and given up to affliction, necessity, and distresses, to stripes, imprisonment, tumults, to fasting, watching, and all kind of labours, (2 Cor. vi. 4, 5,) to make much of a man, only that he may last out to torment ? to set his joints, that he may go on upon the rack again ? to strengthen and enable him, that he may suffer yet more ? to bind up his wounds, as they did the slaves in Rome, merely that he might fight with more beasts ?

This is the same pity, simply so considered, as if you should give strong cordials to one irrecoverably sick, to lengthen and draw out his pain, lest he should not feel what he endured; to wake a condemned man, and tell him he must die. *Evasit*, says the tyrant, of one who had prevented his fury by a timely death. *Evasit*, "In dying quickly he has made an escape, he got away, and has out-run me now."\* For there, in the grave, "the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest." (Job iii. 17.) "The prisoner and the oppressor there lie quiet both together," and there every one is free,—in the next verse. And therefore, if we consider death only as a rest from labour, the apostle had no reason to be solicitous with what to preserve his life any longer. For we mistake exceedingly if we think life, as life, is desirable; for there are some that "dig to find a grave, as much as they would do to discover a mine," as Job speaks. (Chap. iii. 21.) And God, when he would reward some memorable act of piety in a man, takes him out of the way before his judgments come; which made the prophet, when he could not turn away God's wrath utterly, pray the women might have "miscarrying wombs;" (Hosea ix. 14;) and the apostle, seeing the persecution begin to rage, advises the Christians not to marry, (1 Cor. vii. 1—40,) lest they should only bring forth to the sword and faggot: now, *not to be born* and *death* are, in effect, all one; they are both equally alike, not to be here.

4. Again: Imagine the world had treated and dealt kindly with the apostle, yet then he needed not much care for means to keep up his life any longer, for he calls himself now, "Paul the aged:" (Philemon 9:) a time when he might choose death merely out of satiety; because it is tedious to do the same things over and over again so often; to eat and be a-hungry, and then eat again, to sleep and then wake, and then sleep again, to see things still go about in the same circle; to behold peace breeding luxury, luxury war, and war smooth into peace again: for, "is there any thing whereof it might be said, This is new?" (Eccles. i. 10.) Solomon asks the question, who had proved all things, and at last concludes by a particular induction, (the surest demonstration of any whatsoever,) that as the sun goes round; as the rivers hasten to the sea from whence they came; as the wind goes round the points of heaven, and whirls about continually; so the actions of men have their circuits too: and whatever you wonder at in this or that age, you may find the same in another; for "there is no new thing under the sun." The apostle's years therefore, he being now grown

\* SUTTONIUS in *Vita Tiberii Neronis*.



old, might induce him, not to be much concerned how he should live, being "now full of days," as the scripture most elegantly expresses it; having taken a perfect view now of whatever this world can afford, (which requires no long time to look over, for Christ saw it all in a moment, Luke iv. 5—8,) and then I know not what a man has to do, but to despise it, and leave it with no more regret than he would walk out of a garden, where he found nothing that liked him. But there is a far higher contemplation, not only to render living inconsiderable to a Christian, but likewise to ravish our thoughts up from hence, and that is "the promises of the gospel," where we behold heaven open, and those eternal joys revealed there, which have lain hid ever since the foundations of the earth. If there were one that killed himself at reading Plato's "Immortality of the Soul;" if it be true that there are yet some Heathens who usually make away themselves upon no other account but because they would be in heaven; if natural reason can cast mere Gentiles into such admiration of that bliss; what will you say to St. Paul, who was rapt up alive into the third heavens, and saw what the saints enjoyed above, though he could not express it when he came back? With what scorn, do you think, he trod upon the ground afterwards, when the angel set him down again here! who was fain to have a thorn run into his flesh, before he could find himself to be a man: (2 Cor. xii. 7 :) can you imagine he would petition for liberty, whose very body seemed a prison to him till he returned to Christ again? Or would he sue for a supply, to detain him from that which became his wish,—his dissolution? How would you fret at him who should lengthen the race, when you had almost won it! or stake the prize yet farther off, when you had almost caught it! Just such a courtesy is it to relieve him who would die any way that he might quickly enjoy his Saviour. It is but deferring and putting off his happiness the longer, as if an unexpected supply should renew the fight then when we thought we had now gotten the day. "Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink," says Christ: (Matt. vi. 25 :) surely this precept is needless to the disciples of Christ. Methinks he should rather allay our desire, than fear, of death, who do expect such great things after it. Methinks he should rather advise us that we should not, out of hasty longing to be in heaven, neglect the means of continuing our being in this life. But, O you of little faith! to talk of the blessedness the saints of God enjoy above, and yet use the most base, abject, and sordid means to live here, and to keep yourselves from it!

If then we cannot apprehend the apostle here as a necessitous

person, nor any way concerned to prolong his days by shifting about for maintenance, but rather obliged to leave this world as soon as he could, that he might enjoy a better; we must think of some other reason why St. Paul entertained their benevolence with such joy: which leads me to the consideration under which he accepted their liberality; namely, for their sakes, not his own: "But I desire fruit that may abound to your account," &c.

II. "Fruit:"—as fruit of their *patience*, that they durst own one whom the world had not only laid by as useless, but tied up as dangerous;—and fruit of their *love*, that they would acknowledge him;—and fruit of their *constancy*, that they persevered still to admire the glory of the gospel, though clouded with so much opposition, as the whole world had now set it up as a mark to shoot at;—and as the fruit of their *zeal*; for, in sending part of their substance to supply him, they gave testimony that they would part with the whole, and lives, and all, to advance the kingdom of Christ;—and, lastly, as fruit of his *ministry*, wherein he saw he had not run in vain, suffered in vain, or scattered his seed among stones or thorns. For in this he perceived, that neither the fears nor love of the world had choked it; because, as he tells the Galatians, they "neither despised nor spued him up again," (as the word imports,) when he was in misery; (Gal. iv. 14;) but, in the midst of his distress, looked upon him "as an angel of God;" nay, "received him even as Jesus Christ," as it is in the same verse. At this he triumphs, at this he rejoices in the Lord exceedingly, in this chapter. (Phil. iv. 10.) This makes him cry out here, "I am full, I abound," not so much for his receiving, as for God's accepting; nor because what was sent came to him, but because it went up into heaven, like "a sweet smell," and of an alms became "a sacrifice," in the eighteenth verse. For, indeed, the intention only of the giver commends the gift; because a man may give his body to be burned, yet never be a martyr; distribute all whatsoever he hath to the poor, yet not be charitable: for he may send his presents upon a hook to catch some greater thing; like those in the gospel, who made *one* feast, that others might invite them to *many*, and therein he gives to his covetousness. Or he may give, as he in the gospel, only to rid himself of an importunate beggar, and then he gives to his ease and quiet. Or again, he may give, like the Pharisees, with trumpets, and then he gives to his ambition. Or, lastly, he may give, as some preached the gospel in St. Paul's time, out of strife and contention, not to keep up the man but the faction; (Phil. i. 16;) as kings send relief to those whom they hate, only to poise the scales, not that they may over-

come, but that they may be in a condition to fight on. But, as St. Peter says, "Their money perish with them," (Acts viii. 20,) who give to a disciple, and not "in the name of a disciple," and receive a prophet, yet not "in the name of a prophet!" Plato, being asked what God does in heaven, how he busies and employs himself there, how he passes away eternity, made this answer, Γεωμετρῆϊ, "He works geometrically;" and in judging of our works of charity, God most apparently does so. For, "the proportion of faith," as St. Paul calls it, (Rom. xii. 6,) in this particular is merely geometrical; where we must not compare sum with sum, as they do in a market, or value the gift more or less by telling it; but argue thus, "As what he bestows is in proportion to his estate, so is what I bestow unto mine." And in this sense, you know, the widow's two mites were recorded as a more bountiful and a larger present than if Solomon had thrown the wealth of his kingdoms into the treasury. It was the faith therefore from which their liberality proceeded, which cheered the apostle in all his distresses; not the gift itself. "Now," says he, "we live, if you stand fast in the Lord." (1 Thess. iii. 8.) This he called "a life," not to eat and drink; for what good would all their presents have done him, if they, for whose sake he professes he would fast all his life-time, should have fallen off from him? If it is not eating and drinking which feeds the minister; (1 Cor. ix. 1—18;) as our Saviour says, "he hath meat which the world knows not of;" (John iv. 32;) to hold fast those that stand, lest they fall down, to see the gospel spread wider and wider;—this is to enrich a true minister; to gain whole territories unto Christ, and to leave them the land; and to win whole kingdoms over, not unto himself, but God. Wherefore, in the fourth chapter, St. Paul calls these Philippians, whom he had instructed with such success, his "joy," and his "crown:" (verse 1:) for if there be degrees of bliss hereafter, as our Saviour, as well as the prophets, seem to imply; if there be certain lofts and stories in heaven, higher and higher mansions in that kingdom; we may not doubt but he who converts a soul to God, as he is said to increase the joys of heaven by doing it, so certainly he shall partake more of them, and "shine as a star for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.) But yet the apostle seems to decline even this consideration likewise of himself, to disclaim any interest of his own in promoting their good, nor to intend in it so much as his own salvation. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain salvation which is in Christ Jesus," saith the same apostle. (2 Tim. ii. 10.) Therefore it might reasonably be presumed, that he ran those

many hazards to avoid that terrible "woe" which he denounces against himself if he "preached not the gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 16.) But, behold here the last and utmost expression of integrity; he waves this, and, as if he could not enjoy that heaven without them, proposes this as the sole end and design of all his labours, not to save himself, but them,—“that they also may obtain the salvation of God:” as if he meant literally when he said, “for his brethren he could wish himself accursed even from Christ;” (Rom. ix. 3;) and, in the manner here in my text, he desires their bounty, not so much as a fruit of their affection towards him, or as an act of Christian charity any otherwise than as it did benefit them to give: “But I desire fruit which may abound to your account:” which their charity to St. Paul produced many ways:—

1. As, First, by striking off a debt from their account, to which they stood engaged. For, charity, as I have showed you, is a due debt, though we cannot sue for it in a court of justice; because God alone, not man, hath a right rigorously to force this duty from us. But if you look upon St. Paul as an apostle, and above an ordinary Christian, what did they owe him then? For, how did St. Paul grow into want? Was it not for their sakes? Did he not die, even every day, that they might live once for all? (1 Cor. xv. 31.) Had he kept his religion close to himself, and warily shifted faces with every company he met, as Peter does in the second of the Galatians; had he sat quietly at home, and not run from one country to another, from city to city, from town to town, from village to village, as if he had been to draw a map; or (which is the sly providence of this our age) had he in his preaching, not only let alone the sore, but smoothed it over; as praising thrift to a covetous man, and liberality to a prodigal, and commended courage and magnanimity before a stout and sturdy rebel; like a politic physician, applying a remedy to the leg, when the distemper lies in the head:—nay, had St. Paul but used himself that common circumspection and caution which he allows to others, perhaps he might have been able to relieve some of them. But when he was brought from judge to judge, from prison to prison, from court to court; suffering that long catalogue of torments which he gives us in the [second] epistle to the Corinthians, till he wearied his persecutors, and till they entreated him to go out of prison; (Acts xvi. 36—39;) and all because he taught them the truth sincerely;—if we could invent an obligation more binding than a debt, surely you would think *that* due from them to him, who had begotten them, nay, who was sacrificed for them, and

saved them ; (for these glorious terms the apostle gives himself ;) saved them, I say, not their bodies from the grave, but their souls from death. O my brethren, there was a time when men sold all they had, and laid it down at the apostles' feet. There was a time, even in our memory, when sacrilege was thought a sin, and men conceived the maintenance of a lawful clergy as sacred as their own revenues ; in the time when axes and hammers were lifted up to build, not to break down, the carved works of the sanctuary. Yet something is due still ; at least to give a cup of cold water in the name of a prophet, to hold up their weak hands, and to support their feeble knees with your staff of bread. For though St. Paul would have worked with his hands now, had they not been locked up with manacles, rather than prove burdensome to them ; (for then was not a time to receive gifts in the infancy of the church ;) yet he always says, he might claim it as a recompence, that he had power to challenge it ; and proves it by all kind of arguments ; from custom, reason, and scripture ; (1 Cor. ix. 1—19 ;) and lest you should pretend the abrogation of this law by Christ, the apostle adds, that "the Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel." (Verse 14.) He hath ordained it, enacted it, and made it a law for ever ; he hath tied and bound you up to it for ever ; it is not left to your choice and discretion. And our Saviour, when he sends out his apostles, calls their maintenance their hire ; (Matt. x. 10 ;) as if there did pass a tacit contract and bargain between the preacher and the audience, that if he feeds their souls, they should feed his body ; if he gives them the water of life, he may claim a draught from out of their well as due ; and that he who deals the bread of life about should have, in return, the bread that perishes ; a fair exchange, you will say, on your parts ; carnal for spiritual things, and a "birth-right," that gives you title to become the heirs of God, for a small "mess of porridge."

2. The Second advantage we have by charity, is the exercise of our patience before the day of trial come upon us. Who, pray, among you would leave, at this very instant, his whole estate to preserve his conscience, if violence should offer to take it from him ? Or who would go immediately from this very place to the stake, if God should call him thither ? But charity leads us to this perfection ; for, whosoever gives away of his own willingly, may come in time to endure quietly, if it be forced from him : and who can cheerfully part with some to relieve his brethren, will at last arrive so far as contentedly to lose all, so he may preserve his conscience. My brethren, it is all the busi-

ness of our time, diligence, and experience to be a Christian : for though God did sometimes extraordinarily pour forth as much of his Spirit into some vessels of mercy as enabled them at once to become Christians and martyrs both together, ready to lay down their lives for the faith as soon as ever they did believe ; yet it is said of Christ, that, notwithstanding he was a Son, yet “learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Heb. v. 8.) He learned it. Let others learn to measure the earth, do you learn to despise it : and let philosophers dispute the causes of lightnings, storms, and thunder, but do you Christians learn the way of Mount Sion, where you may stand above them all.

3. The Last and highest benefit we receive by our charity, is, that as God will most severely punish the neglect of this duty, so if we do perform it, he will account himself in debt to us. For, *τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ Θεῶν*, “God will thank you for this :” for this God will, in a manner, acknowledge himself beholden to you. (1 Peter ii. 20.) You lend to the Lord, lend to Him who possesses all already ; as if God would willingly part with his whole right and title to this world, so we, in compassion to our poor brethren, would give him the least return of it again : God owes you a blessing which you shall be sure to have, not only hereafter but here also, if we can believe God, for whom it is impossible to lie. For as God did certainly punish some with temporal punishments for offending against the gospel, as he did the Corinthians with diseases and sudden death for their profaning the Lord’s supper : (1 Cor. xi. 29, 30 :) so likewise may not we doubt but God, under the gospel also, rewards those who obey, even with temporal blessings ; and, if you observe it, nothing prospers here better than this virtue of charity. For the very politician himself advises us to help our very enemies, if we mistrust they can get out of themselves, because thus we shall make them our friends. Beasts have so much reason and civility to return a courtesy. Nature is still calling upon us for this duty so earnestly, as some have wished their very friends (to whom they stand most obliged) in misery, for no other reason but that they might relieve them, and be quit of this debt. On the contrary, it is remarkable what great advantages some have missed, merely because they knew not how to give in season. “For there is he,” saith Solomon, “that withholds what is meet, but it tends to poverty.” (Prov. xi. 24.) But suppose men do turn inhuman and ungrateful ; yet still “he that gives to the poor shall not lack.” (Prov. xxviii. 27.) For, God in your extremities will either afford you an *ἐκβάσις*, “a place to slip out

of," (1 Cor. x. 13,) or else give you strength to suffer; which, in effect, is all one. No great matter whether the three children be in the furnace or out of it, so the flame does not so much as singe them: (Dan. iii. 27 :) and then you will, without all question, receive an ample reward in the world to come. For if heaven do stand open to such as have their sins forgiven, then you, for your charity, shall be sure to enter in; for "charity shall cover the multitude of sins." (James v. 20.) If your luxury did make your Saviour fast, the feeding of his afflicted members,—that will feed him again: and if your wantonness in apparel stripped him, in covering their nakedness you shall clothe him again; in short, if your sins crucified him, in relieving them you revive him, and make him alive again upon the earth. This sacrifice will expiate all. "Give to the poor what thou hast, and all shall be clean unto you," says our Saviour. (Luke xi. 41.) Again: do you think such as do all the whole will of God shall inherit eternal life? Then your charity must of necessity let you in: for charity is the fulfilling both of the law and the prophets, and gospel too. What do you talk of sermons, and of hanging religion at the ear, when we are bound to break the sabbath to save but an ox or ass? What ordinance may not we then trample under foot to relieve a man? Or do you think lying down and believing will serve the turn, when the harlot Rahab, for her charity unto the spies, you find recorded, Hebrews xi. 31, among Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham the father of the faithful? when Cornelius's alms came up to heaven, and lay continually before God as a memorial, before ever he heard of a Saviour? (Acts x. 4.) No, my brethren: Christ will not ask you at the last day, whom you have followed, what church you frequented, but whom you have fed, whom you have clothed, whom you have relieved. This will be your question, upon which you will be examined at the last day of judgment, as you may read in St. Matthew: not how often you have heard your minister, but how often you have fed him. Do you think a prophet will go to heaven? Why, he that relieves a prophet, becomes thus a prophet himself, and "shall receive a prophet's reward." (Matt. x. 41.) Or an apostle? Why, St. Paul calls Epaphroditus here an apostle, because he had administered to his wants; nay, only because he did collect the contribution for the poor. (Phil. ii. 25.) Or do not you doubt but martyrs wear their crowns? Then be ye secure of yours. Charity cannot fail: for, by relieving the apostle, the Philippians became his fellow-sufferers, martyrs too, though at a cheaper rate. You do

but lay up, secure, and traffic with that you bestow on your brethren's wants. A thief may break into your house, or a robber spoil you of your money; but what you give away is safe, and your own for ever, as being locked up in the treasury of heaven, where no wicked person ever shall appear.

And now, having done with my text, sure, I need not make any application, or tell you how by St. Paul I meant your minister all this while, and you yourselves by these liberal Philippians. I know to whom I preach, and besides spoke it plainly, that so necessary a subject might sink into the meanest capacity. And because it hath pleased God to make me the happy instrument first to strike this rock at which your charity gusheth out in streams, I am obliged to tell you, what I have heard him say that is concerned in it:—

How that now he glories more than ever in his sufferings and afflictions, because they have yielded you so fair an opportunity to express your faith. How he rejoices not so much in your gift, as in your Christianity; and more in your love to God, than in your affection to himself. "For now," says he, "I see I have not spent myself in vain. I dare trust them now amidst a perverse and crooked generation: and if in this dispersion I shall hear they stand fast and steady in the doctrine of Christ, I shall live; for what else befalls me is impertinent, and drops quite besides me. But, for this," says he, "I will pray night and day, make supplications without ceasing to Him who is the Author and Finisher of every good work, that he will strengthen them against all temptations, that they may run on till they have won the prize, fight on till they have gotten the day, and then receive the reward of those who shall endure unto the end."

Thus much are his own words. But it is fit that I should conclude with something of mine own.

Seeing then this golden candlestick is to be removed from you; seeing that light which hath made such a blaze about this city, is now to return again into its corner; methinks I could acquaint you whom you lose, that you may be more satisfied, if possible, how well you have placed your charity. But I spare him: for I could ask, when he desired a gift, who received this not without some violence? I could ask you, Whose houses hath he crept into, like those that come with a tale coloured over with scripture misapplied, and grow, at last, to be masters of your family? I could say, that if I would have a school-



question unriddled, I would name him ; or a text soberly interpreted, I would choose him : and if I desired to see a sin rivetted, as it were with thunder, into hell, you yourselves would then direct me unto him. I could speak more, and thus, and thus, and thus, and so begin another sermon. And if St. Paul did boast himself, sure I might commend another. Or if he lay here before you in a coffin, then you would never think I had said enough.

At parting, give me leave to praise you at least ; to commend the congregation, if I may not the preacher. Then I tell you I have seen such persons, when they were in town, frequent this place, as were able to create a temple wheresoever they went ; men,\* each of whom, single and alone, made up a full congregation, nay, a synod : so as some have not unfitly named this church "the scholar's church."

But I shall wave this, and pass to what shall more profit you : which is, to desire you, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, to consider and lay it to heart, that the last judgment which God spent on the obstinate Jews was the destruction of the temple, and the turning out of his priests. I say, bethink yourselves what it should be which makes God's vengeance so implacable against you, that he threatens you not with cleanness of teeth, but the famine of the word. Examine your consciences, and if you find your crying sins have put these ministers to silence, you ought in conscience to maintain them ; to give them, as the Philippians here did, once and again ; to seek them out, and relieve them, as Onesimus did St. Paul. "Owe no man any thing," says the apostle, "but to love one another : " (Rom. xiii. 8 :) a most excellent speech, and means thus ; as if he said, "You may pay your bills at a shop, and be out of the tradesman's debt ; you may lay down your money, and take up your bonds ; you may really satisfy all other engagements, but this debt of charity never. This you must always be paying, yet never think it satisfied." Break then off your sins by prayer and alms-deeds ; for who knows whether God will yet have mercy upon you, and set these candlesticks in their right places again. But you especially are bound to do thus, who resolve to partake of this blessed communion. For here we celebrate the death of Christ, who left heaven to suffer for us ; and shall not we part with one crumb of earth to enjoy him ? For, in feeding the poor we feed him ; in receiving a disciple, we take Christ home to our houses, set Christ down at our tables, and make

\* Dr. H[enry] H[ammond], Dr. R[obert] S[anderson].

him incarnate again, make every day a Christmas-day, and every meal a sacrament : and at last he will receive us into his eternal mansions, where we shall never want more, where we shall spend all our charity no longer in relieving one another, but in enjoying one another's bliss and happiness, always singing praises unto the Lamb that sits upon the throne.

---

READER,—These two sermons, especially the latter, if I could have obtained them when the author's second volume was printing, should have been placed immediately before the last sermon of that volume : now thou art desired to let thy fancy place them there, and it is as well as if they really were so.—Thine, R. M.

## SERMONS.

---

### SERMON LXXXI.

PREACHED BY THE AUTHOR UPON HIS BEING RESTORED TO  
THE EXERCISE OF HIS MINISTRY.

*Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am ; for I am as ye are : ye  
have not injured me at all.—Galatians iv. 12.*

AFTER so long a pause, after such an interruption as the unhappiness of the times has made, (for I will not put it upon any other score,) I am returned to the execution of my ministerial function, by the providence of God, by the favour of some of the highest, and, as I hope, beloved brethren, by your loving consent, and (for I will presume it so, because I wish it so) your unanimous approbation. Otherwise (give me leave, I beseech you, to enlarge myself and open my heart to you) far better were it for me to return to my dust and to my former condition, there to sit down and pray for my enemies, to possess my soul in patience and silence, to struggle with all those temptations which poverty, scorn, and contempt commonly bring along with them, than to embroil myself in an odious and loathsome contention with those whom I am bound to count my brethren, though they think themselves bound to be my enemies ; whom if I do not love, I shall hate my own soul ; and whose salvation if I do not seriously tender, I shall forfeit my own. “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God is,” that all misconception, prejudice, jealousy, suspicion, which are the winds that blow the coals of contention, may be bound up for ever ; that they may be buried in the sea, and in everlasting oblivion ; that they may be drowned in the ocean of God’s mercies, never to rise up again in any breast, there to create and set up that “world of iniquity,” that bitterness, that debate and hatred, which, as St. James speaketh, “defile the whole man, and set on fire the whole course of our nature,” our youth, our age, and are themselves kindled at no other fire than that of hell. (James iii. 6.) And therefore that I may walk circumspectly, and not cast the least shadow of offence in the course I am to

run, I so far drive it out of my thoughts to accuse any, that I would not give them leave to frame any apology or defence for myself; which peradventure may be thought expedient, and some may expect. But in this I must take leave to deceive their expectation, and to follow the rules of discretion and spiritual prudence, which will teach us that thriving lesson,—to lose something, that we may gain the more; to yield, that we may overcome; not to be over-just to ourselves, that others may be won at last to do us the more right; not to stand upon credit and reputation when we plead for peace. And of this most Christian art I may say what Gorgias once spake of a tragedy,—“that it was a kind of fraud by which he that did deceive was juster than he that did not deceive, and he that was beguiled was much wiser than he that was not.” O that by this art, by this, by any continuance, by all the endeavours of my whole life, I might thus deceive you into such charitable conceits as might make you “of the same mind one towards another,” as St. Paul exhorts, (Rom. xii. 16,) and “not to have,” as St. James interprets St. Paul, “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons;” (James ii. 1;) τὴν πίστιν, “the faith,” for τοὺς πιστοὺς, “the believers,” as appears by verse 2; not to look upon or consider one another as rich or poor, as learned or ignorant, as honourable or dishonourable, as pleasing or displeasing; but as Christians, as members of the same body, as called to the same hope of an everlasting inheritance! And to this end I have culled out these words of the blessed apostle St. Paul: “Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.”

Which words are as “the droppings of the honeycomb;” (Cant. iv. 11;) as that “new wine and milk” which were to “drop and flow from the hills and mountains.” (Joel iii. 18.) And so many of the fathers interpret that place of the apostles, who, as hills, were eminent for love and piety. These words are the very breathings of love, as those “sweet spices” of which the apostle maketh “a perfume” and increase of love, “a composition artificially tempered together, pure and holy.” (Exod. xxx. 34, 35.) What doth he not do, what doth he not say, to recover the Galatians from their dangerous deviations? What doth not this master-builder attempt to perfect his work? How sincere is his heart! He is still the same man, and yet how various are his expressions! Sometimes he is in a maze, and wondereth, as in chapter i. 6: “I marvel that you are so soon removed from me unto another gospel.” Sometimes he is in trouble, and chides, as in chapter iii. 1, 3: “Are you so fool-

ish? Have you begun in the Spirit, and are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Will you fall back from the Spirit, which teacheth true and solid piety, to a carnal and outward worship of God, to the ceremonies of the law? Throughout the whole epistle he disputes, and convinceth them, that Christ and Moses, the gospel and the law, could not consist together; that to seek for justification by the law was quite to shut out Christ, whose peculiar office it was to justify and save them. At last, after wondering, chiding, and disputing, he turns his vehemency another way, and is as earnest and zealous in entreating; like a good captain, who will attempt that fort by treaty which he cannot win by siege; or like a wise physician, who will condescend to flatter a froward patient into health. From the height of amazement, from rebukes, which carry with them a mark of superiority, from arguing and disputing, from fighting, and levelling all opposition in his way, he sinks by degrees, and falls low, even to beseeching: which whosoever doeth, by the very doing of it he maketh himself an inferior. See how his "doctrine drops as the rain, and his speech distils as the dew!" (Deut. xxxii. 2.) The Spirit of love blows upon him; see how the spices flow abroad! (Cant. iv. 16.) "Brethren, I beseech you," &c.

You have the occasion of these words. Will you have these sweet spices beaten yet smaller? Then conceive our blessed apostle speaking thus: "'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you,' (Gal. iv. 19,) till the true figure and image of Christ be stamped on you, which is now much defaced and almost wasted out by the artifice and deceitfulness of false apostles; if you felt my pain and sorrows, you would not thus look upon me as an enemy, but lend as open an ear to the truth as now you do unto fables; you would recollect yourselves at my wondering, and think sure there was something of moment that amazed me; you would kiss my lips for my rebukes; you would weigh the force of my reasons, and submit. 'You are not straitened in me, but you are straitened in your own bowels.' (2 Cor. vi. 12.) For if I wondered, it was to make you consider: if I imputed folly to you, it was to make you wise: if I pressed you with reason, it was to make way for the truth: if I said you were 'bewitched,' (Gal. iii. 1,) it was to uncharm and disdeceive you. *Habet et virga charitatem*: 'Even my rod was shook over you by a loving hand;' and the roughest wind, the harshest expression, came from the same treasury of a well-affected heart, out of which the gentlest gale of persuasion useth to be breathed forth; and that love which

was as loud as thunder, can speak yet in a lower voice. For though you are in a dangerous error, which undermines the very foundation of the gospel, yet I can call and do count you 'brethren;' a name able to slumber any storm, to becalm any tempests, to make the roughest Esau as smooth as Jacob. And if there be not rhetoric enough in that name of 'brother' to move you, then see, I bow lower yet, and 'beseech you.' And though a request may be of that nature that no humility, no submission, no oratory can commend and prefer it, yet mine is not so: my request is most equitable, grounded upon a principle of nature. I request but love for love. 'Be ye as I am; for I am as ye are:' which in all equity you are bound to believe as true, till some act of enmity prove it to be false. Lastly, do not make your displeasure an argument of mine, and, finding nothing in me, lay hold on something in yourselves, to prove me an enemy. Do not shape me out in your thoughts what no injury can make me. Do not draw a lion when the copy is a lamb. Why should you be conscious of doing that wrong which I never suffered? If you struck me, I felt it not: if you wronged me, I was not moved, because I was not sensible. Whatsoever you have done, or whatsoever you can do, I can shadow it with love: and be the character never so visible, the impression never so deep, I can blot it out by forgiveness. Why should you fear? why should you suspect? Behold, 'you have not injured me at all.'"

What motives, what insinuations, what reasons, what wise pre-occupations and preventions, what art, what humility, what love is here! I may be bold to say, the tongue of men and angels cannot be more expressive, more pathetical: no eloquence can outspcak this love: "Brethren, I beseech you," &c.

This I conceive to be the sum of these words. Now they consist of these four parts: here is, 1. A loving compellation: "Brethren;" 2. A submissive address by way of comprecation: "I beseech you;" 3. A request most reasonable: "Be you as I am; for I am as ye are;" 4. A wise and prudent pre-occupation or prevention, which removes all obstructions, and forestalls those jealousies, those surmises and groundless suspicions, which are the bane of charity, and the greatest enemies to peace: "Ye have not injured me at all." Of these the request is the main. We shall at this time speak only of the first part, that adducing, persuading, powerful name of "brethren."

This word in scripture is of a large and capacious signification and extent. Sometimes it is confined to a blood, to those who come from the same loins: "We be twelve brethren, sons of

our father." (Gen. xlii. 32.) Sometimes it taketh-in a whole kindred. So Abram, who was Lot's uncle, calleth him "brother:" (Gen. xiii. 8:) and Christ is said to have "brethren," though Mary had no other son. (1 Cor. ix. 5.) Sometimes it is enlarged to comprehend a whole nation. Thus Paul calleth the Jews his "brethren according to the flesh:" (Rom. ix. 3:) and Moses thus bespeaks the two Hebrews that were at strife: "Sirs, you are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?" (Acts vii. 26.) Sometimes it is of as large a compass as the whole world; and he that is a man, by right of his humanity, is brother to all the men that are. So Lot lovingly entreateth those wicked Sodomites, "I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly," (Gen. xix. 7,) respecting only the common brotherhood of nature. And again it is contracted into that narrow circuit of a little flock, the church, those who are "gathered together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad." (John xi. 52.) We will not look upon the word "brethren" in all these representations, but confine ourselves to the two last, which are most apposite to our present purpose, and in all probability most suitable to the mind and meaning of our apostle. And we will consider the Galatians and all Christians, I. As brethren by nature, and, II. As brethren by grace; as partakers of the same flesh and blood, and as partakers of the same heavenly calling; brethren as men, and brethren as Christians, professing the same faith.

I. In the First place: Nature herself hath made all men brethren. "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" (Mal. ii. 10.) There is great difference indeed in other respects. Some are high, others low; some fair, others foul; some learned, others unlearned; some rich, others poor. But in respect of original and extraction there is no difference at all: we are all branches of the same root, all hewn out of one rock, all digged out of one pit. We are all *homines ab humo*. And as we all "have our rise from the ground," so to the ground again we must all fall: out of it we were all taken, and unto it we must all return. (Gen. iii. 19.) The highest as well as the meanest may claim kindred with the worm and corruption. (Job xvii. 14.) This point I have often touched: this doctrine is most evident both by scripture and experience,—that "all nations of men are made of one blood;" (Acts xvii. 26;) and that by nature we are all brethren. We need rather to have it pressed than proved, and to be taught to practise what we cannot but know.

1. And therefore, to make some use of that which we have

learnt concerning our brotherhood by nature, this may serve, in the First place, to condemn all those who look upon men under other consideration than as men, or view them in any other shape than that of brethren. And the very name of "man" and of "brother" should be an amulet for all mankind against the venom of iniquity and injustice. For all the title any one hath to these sublunary things, he hath it not *jure adoptionis*, "by any right of adoption or filiation:" riches and the things of this world are not to be found in that charter, but an incorruptible crown and eternal life. These latter indeed are demised unto us by our new birth: but the things of this world we hold by another tenure, *jure creationis*, "by the right of creation," as we are men, from Him who hath made the earth, and "given" it in possession "to the children of men." (Psalm cxv. 16.)

2. Therefore, in the Second place, by this light of nature we may condemn ourselves when any bitterness towards our brother riseth in our hearts, and allay or rather root it out with this consideration, that it is inhuman and most unnatural; that we cannot nourish it in our breasts, and not fall from our creation, and leave off to be men. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer," saith the prophet, "and cut down to the ground!" (Isai. xiv. 12.) How art thou fallen from being a minister of light, to be a prince of darkness! from being so filled with the grace of the Divinity, to be a foul receptacle of malice! from waiting on God in all his majesty, to be thrust down into the foulest pit, there to be his executioner! And how art thou fallen, O man, whosoever thou be that hatest thy brother, from heaven (for in earth there is no other heaven than what love makes) to hell itself, to be a place for those foul spirits, malice and envy, to reign and riot in! How art thou fallen from thy conversing with angels, to wallow in blood! from the glory of thy creation, to "burning fire, and to blackness, and darkness, and tempest!" (Heb. xii. 18;) from being a man to be worse than "the beasts that perish!" (Psalm xlix. 20.) O what a shame is it to our royal and high descent! O what a shame is it that man, who was formed and fashioned by the hand of Love, by the God of Love, by Love itself, (for it is Divine Love that laid the foundation of the world, that breathed a soul into man, and stamped that image of God upon him,) that man, I say, so elemented, so composed, so compassed about with love, should delight in war, in variance, and contentions! that this creature of love should be as a hot fiery furnace sending forth nothing but sulphur and stench, but malice and the gall of bitterness! that he who is *candidatus angelorum*, made to be "a competitor with



the angels," and in time to be equal to them, made to be conformed with Christ, and to be "transformed into his image," as the apostle speaks, (Rom. xii. 2,) should make himself a companion with devils! and (for a malicious man, though he be not possessed, yet may be sure he carries a devil about with him whithersoever he goes) that this *τίμιον ζῶον*, this "honourable creature," as Synesius calls man, should turn savage, should be a beast, nay, a devil, to accuse, deceive, and destroy! We use indeed to stand much upon our honour and repute: but none can dishonour us more than ourselves do, even then when we are in our altitudes; when we glory in our shame; when one man hath trodden down another as the clay in the streets; when we think ourselves great men by making our brethren little; when we contemn and despise, hate and persecute, them: then, in this height, in this glory, in this triumph, we are the most despicable creatures on the earth in his sight who, being the God of love, and having made us men, and linked us together as brethren, cannot but look upon us as the basest and vilest creatures in the world, when, being grown savage, we hate one another.

II. And further we carry not this consideration, but pass now to view the Galatians as brethren in that other capacity, as they were Christians, professing the same faith: which our apostle in this place might more particularly and especially mean.

For as they were brethren by nature, so were they also by grace and their celestial calling, having "one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one baptism, one calling;" (Eph. iv. 4, 5;) being all brought out of the same womb of common ignorance, heirs of the same common salvation, partakers of a like precious faith, sealed with the same sacraments, fed with the same manna, ransomed with the same price, comforted with the same glorious promises. *Et major fraternitas Christi quàm sanguinis*, saith the father: "The brotherhood we have by Christ is a greater and nearer tie than that we have by blood or nature." Hereupon Justin Martyr and Optatus have been so far charitable as to call Judaizing Christians and Donatists by the name of "brethren." And we may observe that our apostle, who in all other his epistles calleth them [whom] he writes to "saints,"—"To the saints at Corinth;" "To the saints at Ephesus;" "To the saints at Colosse;" "To the saints at Philippi: grace be with you," &c.,—yet in this whole epistle he never calls the Galatians "saints;" because, from being Christ's disciples, they had well-near degenerated to be Moses's scholars, and had joined the law with the gospel. Yet nevertheless, though he will not honour them with the name of "saints," yet he is very willing to call them "brethren," as pro-

fessing the same Christ, though with an unsavoury mixture and dangerous addition. This may soon be gathered by any who will but take so much pains as to read this short epistle. And upon so plain an observation, as upon a foundation, we shall build this doctrine,—that there is such a relation, such a brotherhood, betwixt all those who profess the same faith, that neither error, nor sin, nor injury can break and dissolve it. For if any or all of these had been of force enough to do it, then certainly our apostle would never have been so free as to have called the Galatians “brethren.”

1. And, First, to error: Though it have a foul aspect, and bear a distasteful and loathed name, yet it carrieth no such monstrosity, no such terror with it, as to fright brethren so far asunder as not to behold one another in that relation, not “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph. iv. 3.) For if there were any such power about it, the name of “brethren” must needs be quite wiped out from amongst the children of men; there being almost as many several opinions in the world as men, and most of them erroneous. For man, being subject to passion, cannot improve his wisdom so far as to preserve it safe and untouched of all error. So that no reason can be given,—but such as uncharitableness, or ambition, or pride, or self-conceit use to frame, and throw as fire-balls about the world, to consume and devour all brotherhood, (and these are no reasons, but carnal pretences,)—why men may not be divided in opinion, and yet united in charity; why they may not draw opposite conclusions, and yet conclude in peace; why they may not have different conceptions, and yet be of the same mind one towards another; why they may not err, and yet be brethren.

(1.) For, First, error may be the object of my dislike, but not of my anger. For as it is error, and no more, it hath no moral, culpable deformity in it, as being no way free nor voluntary. And the civil law hath laid it down as a rule, *Voluntas errantis nulla est*, “He that errs hath no will at all.” For he doth not err who knows he is ignorant, but he who thinks he knows what indeed he doth not know. And error is no sooner discovered but by its very being discovered is avoided. Therefore the greatest punishment an erring person can receive is, as Plato speaks, to be brought to school and be taught. Now, to keep our charity alive even toward erring persons,

First. We must consider the great difficulty of finding out truth in all things, and of avoiding error. This consideration made St. Augustine so compassionate and mild even towards the worst of heretics, the Manichees; and to think that none could be en-

raged against them but those who thought it an easy matter to serene the mind against carnal pleasures, and who knew not how hard a thing it is for the eye of the inward man through so many mists of objections to look upon the sun. He who considereth that himself also may be tempted, will use "the spirit of meekness" towards an erring brother. (Gal. vi. 1.)

Secondly. We should conceive it more probable that our brother doth err rather for want of light than out of malice and wilfully, to his own damnation and others'.

Thirdly. We ought to look upon the erring person as one who may possibly be of the number of the elect, whom God in his wisdom may permit to err and fall, that he may raise him up again to the knowledge and profession of the truth with greater glory to himself. And against those who are destined to a crown of glory, against our brethren and the members of Christ, how dare we pass a severe sentence?

[Fourthly and] lastly. Let us but a while put upon ourselves the persons of our adversaries, and put ours upon them; and let us conceive it possible that ourselves may err as foully as they. And then let us think within ourselves that this deceived brother, whose error we count so pernicious, may be sent to us from God to be an occasion of finding out some truth the face whereof we have never yet seen, as having been never represented to us. And then to these charitable thoughts let us join also a prudent consideration of those truths wherein we both agree, which peradventure may be more and more weighty than those in which we vary; that so, by the lustre and brightness of these, the offence taken by the other may vanish as the mist before the sun. In all our disputes and debates with our brethren whom we suppose to err, let us walk by that rule which the learned have drawn out before us for our direction,—that no text of scripture in its exposition can retain the sense and meaning of the blessed Spirit which doth not edify in charity. For that doctrine cannot be of any use in the church, saith Bernard, which exasperates one man against another. And this moderation, this discretion, is that salt which Christ requires to be in us, that wise seasoning of our words, that purging of our affections, amongst which ambition and envy are the most violent: "Have" this "salt in yourselves; and" then, as it follows, you shall "have peace one with another." (Mark ix. 50.)

(2.) Now for application of this: I might here strike through the loins of those who are enemies to peace, and are so intent against them who are not of the same opinion, that in the prosecution they forget they are brethren; who, like Hannibal,

cannot live without an enemy; or like those ancient Spaniards in Trogus, are so out of love with concord that they dispute and quarrel upon no other reason than this, because they hate it; who call every opinion that is not theirs "heresy," and heresy a crime, accounting nothing sin but heresy; not so hot against a foul pollution in the heart as against an error in the understanding; not so angry with a crying sin as with a petty mistake. But I had rather exhort you to "bear the burdens" of these contentious men, as St. Paul exhorts in this epistle; (Gal. vi. 2;) not to assault one another with lies in defence of the truth; not to nourish hatred in honour to charity; not to fly asunder in defence of the corner-stone; not to be shaken a-pieces to secure the rock. If others separate themselves, do not you withdraw your affection from them. *Si velint, fratres; et si nolint, fratres*: "If they will, let them be your brethren; and if they will not, yet let them be your brethren." And in these times of hurry and noise, in these so many divisions and sects, look upon every sect with an eye of charity, or, as Erasmus calleth it, with "an evangelical eye:" and, leaving all bitterness and rancour behind you, walk on in a constant course of piety, and a holy contention with yourselves; not answering reviling with reviling, but beating down every imagination which is contrary to love; doing that upon sin in yourselves which you cannot do upon error in your brethren; not shaking off brotherhood, though the error be as great as this of the Galatians, than which there scarce could be a greater: that so you may be like the people of Nazianzum, who by their peaceable behaviour in times of great dissension gained a name and title, and were called "the ark of Noah," because by this part of spiritual wisdom they escaped that inundation, that deluge, which had well-near overflowed and swallowed up all the Christian world.

2. But, in the next place, if error cannot break and dissolve this relation of brotherhood which is amongst Christians, being of itself venial and easy to be pardoned, especially of those who are subject to error themselves; yet sin hath a foul aspect, and is of the most ugly and deformed appearance of any thing in the world; being compared by one to dung, by another to that which I will not now name; being a monstrous deviation from that infinite justice and purity, that eternal law of God: so that if we could watch one eye with another, our carnal eye with our spiritual; if we could see sin in its impure and horrid shape; if God would present it to us now in that likeness in which it shall appear in the day of judgment; we should straight be shaken in our minds our joints, would be loosed, and "our very soul,"

saith St. Chrysostom, "would fly out of our bodies." And do we not well, then, to be angry with this monster, though we meet it in a brother, or in the person perhaps of our dearest friend? Should we not hate the garment, much more the person, of him who is bespotted with sins? (Jude 23.) This question may be asked: and yet we should never ask this question, if we would distinguish (which is easy to be done) between the nature of our brother and his fault; between that which he received from God, and that evil affection [which] he hath from himself; between that which is from heaven, heavenly, and that which is from the earth, nay, from the lowest pit of hell; if we would consider him in his rational nature, the image of God; and in that other capacity, as he is one for whom Christ died, and so capable of eternal life; and that though he seemed dead, yet his life may nevertheless be "hidden with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) For why judgest thou thy brother? (Matt. vii. 1—3.) "Judgment is the Lord's," (Deut. i. 17,) who seeth "things that are not as if they were." (Rom. iv. 17.) What, though he be fallen upon the stone, and be bruised? yet he may be built upon that foundation which is "sure, and which hath this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) This open profaner may become a true professor, this false witness may be a true martyr, this persecutor of the church may at length prove the most glorious member and bold defender of it, and he that led the saints bound to Jerusalem may himself afterwards rejoice in his bonds for the same cause. Paul of the tribe of Benjamin may, as it is said of Benjamin, "in the morning ravin as a wolf, and at night divide the spoil," (Gen. xlix. 27,) and after bow his head to such a sheep as Ananias. And therefore the apostle, where he erects a kind of discipline amongst the Thessalonians, thus draws it forth: "If any man obey not our word," that is, be refractory to the gospel of Christ, "have no company with that man, that he may be ashamed;" (2 Thess. iii. 14;) that, seeing others avoid him, he may be forced to have recourse unto himself, to hold colloquy with his own soul, to find out that plague of his heart which makes him thus "like a pelican in the wilderness, or an owl in the desert;" (Psalm cii. 6;) like the leper under the law, which no man must come near. "Have no company with him," that is, "By thy company give him no encouragement in his sin:" and yet, for all this, have company with him; for, "Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother;" (2 Thess. iii. 15;) which we cannot do if we avoid his company. And in this sense also we must take that of the apostle, where he forbids us to cat

with public and notorious offenders: (1 Cor. v. 10:) for the apostle's mind was not that such men were to be given over for gone; or that we should acquaint ourselves only with the good, and not with the bad; as physicians do in time of pestilence,—look only to the sound, and shun the diseased. For our Saviour Christ familiarly conversed, ate and drank, with publicans and sinners, and gives the reason of it,—Because he “came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Matt. ix. 13.) And we cannot think that St. Paul is contrary to Christ.

Beloved, the rule of charity commands us to think every man an heir with Christ; or, at least, if he be not, that he may be so. What, though believers be very few, and there be many so like them that we cannot distinguish them? This is, I confess, an error of our charity, but it is a very necessary error. And he that errs not thus, he that thinks not and hopes not the best he can of all he sees, wants something of being a good Christian. And this error of our charity is not without reason. For we see not where, nor how, the grace of God may work. How sinful soever a man be, yet if he be baptized, if he make profession of the name of Christ, if he do but come behind and touch the hem of Christ's garment, the grace of God may cure him. Nay, were he dead in sin, who knows what the grace of God may do? Peradventure God may call unto him lying and stinking in his sins as in a grave, “Lazarus, come forth.” (John xi. 43.) Charity therefore, because she may err, nay, because she must err, looks upon every Christian as a brother. If he err, she is a guide to him; if he sin, she is a physician; if he wander, she recalls him; if he fall, she strives to lift him up, being a light to the blind, and a staff to the weak; if he fall into sin, she is ready to “restore him in the spirit of meekness;” (Gal. vi. 1;) *καταπραΐζειν*, that is the phrase, “to be his surgeon, to handle him with a gentle,” or, as we use to say, “with a lady's hand;” not roughly, but with all tenderness and compassion; to set every broken joint, but so as if she touched it not; to settle all that is dislocated, that all his parts and joints may be entire, and aptly knit together, that nothing may be wanting to him of those things which are required to the completing and constituting of a brother and a Christian. Look upon these Galatians unto whom Paul writes, and then cast your eye upon chapter v. 19—21, where he draweth out that black catalogue of “the works of the flesh, adultery, fornication, uncleanness,” and the like; and you will think it more than probable that these sins even reigned amongst them; that they had “abused their” Christian “liberty as an occasion to the flesh;” (verse 13;) that besides the con-

tagion of a foul error, they were also polluted with sins : yet St. Paul doth rather intimate than impute them. He shows them in their full horror and deformity, that the Galatians may run from them ; and leaves them to accuse and condemn themselves : and though he strike at their error and sin both, yet he makes a fair close with themselves, and calls them " brethren."

And now briefly to make some use of this, it may seem to correct an angry and malignant humour which lurks in the hearts of many men undiscerned, undiscovered, and often breatheth and exhalet itself forth, not to the saving of the souls, but to the blasting of the good name, of their brethren ; not as physic, but as poison, fatal and deleterial. It is one mark of antichrist, that " he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God ; " (2 Thess. ii. 4;) thundering out his excommunications, canonizing, damning, absolving, condemning whom he pleaseth. Beloved, thus ὑπερείδειν, " to overlook," our brother, thus to look down upon our brethren, and dart a heavy censure on them for that for which we should shed a tear, is so far to follow antichrist, as to take the seat and place of God ; nay, to put him out of his seat, and do his office ; nay, to do that which he will not do, to sentence him to death whom he, for aught we know, hath chosen unto life. Nay, though it doth not make any man antichrist, yet it makes him so much antichrist as to place him in a flat opposition to Christ himself : " For we have not such a high priest as cannot be touched with the feeling of our " sins ; " but being tempted himself, is able " and willing " to compassionate those who are tempted." (Heb. iv. 15 ; ii. 18.) Did we feel the burden of our brother's sins, as he did ; did we apprehend the wrath of God, as he did ; we should rather, as he did, " offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him " for our brethren, (Heb. v. 7,) than smite them with our tongues, than " tell of the misery of these wounded ones," (Psalm lxix. 26,)—that is, " speak vauntingly and preach thereof," as the word signifies,—than thus rain down upon them their own snares, " hailstones and coals of fire." (Psalm xviii. 12.)

I confess, prudent and discreet reprehension is as a gracious and seasonable rain, as precious balm ; but rash and inconsiderate censure is as a tempest or hurricane, to waste a soul, to carry all before it, and to dig up a good name by the roots. And as it is truly said that most men speak against riches not out of hatred but love unto them, so do many declaim against sin, not out of hatred to sin, but out of love to themselves ; which may be as great a crime as that they speak against. *Signum putant bonæ conscientiæ aliis malè dicere* : " They think it a sign of a good

conscience in themselves to speak evil of others, and conceit themselves good if they can say others are evil." Whereas true righteousness speaks always in compassion, but that which is false and counterfeit breathes forth nothing but wrath and reviling and indignation. "Remember those that are in bonds, as if you were bound with them, and as being yourselves in the body;" (Heb. xiii. 3;) "as being in the body," obnoxious to the same evils, in a "mortal body," (Rom. viii. 11,) an "earthly" body, and a "corruptible" body. (1 Cor. xv. 40, 53.) And remember those who are in their sins, which are the bonds, I am sure, and fetters of the soul, as being also in that "body of death;" (Rom. vii. 24;) as being under that burden that presseth down, and under "sin, that hangeth so fast on" that we shall never fling it off till we cast off our bodies; (Heb. xii. 1;) being in the same polluted garments which will stick close to us till we be "unclothed, and clothed upon, and mortality be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 4.)

Look not upon thy brethren as grasshoppers, and upon thyself as a strong and perfect man in Christ; as if thou wert spiritual, heavenly, impeccable, and as far removed from sin as God himself. But rather, as St. Paul was made a Jew to the Jew, (1 Cor. ix. 20,) so be thou as a sick man ministering to the sick, handling another with the same compassion thou wouldst have extended to thyself, if thou thyself shouldst be in his case. If thou despise and reproach him, I am sure thou art in a far worse. For be he what the frailty of the flesh, the subtilty of Satan, and the flattery of a vain world can make him, yet he is thy brother: be he sick well-near unto death, yet he is thy brother: be he the lost sheep, yet he is thy brother; and Christ may fetch him back again, even upon thy shoulders, that is, by thy compassion and thy care: be he amongst the swine with the Prodigal, yet he is thy brother; for within a while he may come back again to his Father and thy Father's house: if he be to thee as an Heathen or publican, (Matt. xviii. 17,) yet he must also be a brother. And further we press not this use.

3. So, then, neither error nor sin can untie this knot, can dissolve and break this relation of brethren. I named a third, but I am well-near ashamed to name it again, or bring it in competition with error or sin; because an offence against God should more provoke us than any injury done to ourselves: which our apostle here sets so light by, that although the Galatians had even questioned his apostleship, and preferred Peter and James and John before him, yet he passeth it by as not worth the taking notice of; like Socrates, who, being overcome in judg-



ment, professed he had no reason to be angry with his enemies, unless it were for this, that they conceived and believed they had hurt him. And here St. Paul saith, "Ye have not hurt me at all." And indeed no injury can be done by a brother to a brother. For the injury is properly done to God, who made them brethren and fellow-servants, and who reserves all power of revenge unto himself, who is their common Master and the God of revenge. If a brother strike us, we should, saith Chrysostom, kiss his hand; if he would destroy us, our revenge should be to save him. *Ignoscat tibi Christus*, saith Nazianzen to a young man that was suborned to kill him: "Christ forgive thee, who hath also forgiven me, and died to save me." *Ille idoneus patientiæ Sequester*: "He is the best Advocate for our patience," the best Decider of all our controversies and debates. If you gage and lay down your injury with him, he is the Revenger; if your loss, he is the Restorer; if your grief, he is the Physician; if your death, he will raise you up again. But we shall no further prosecute this, because it will fall in with our last part.

We will rather, having, as ye have read, secured and fortified the brethren, walk about yet a while longer, and tell the towers and bulwarks which the God of love hath raised and set up to uphold them. And they are, 1. Pleasure, excessive pleasure; 2. Profit, great profit; 3. Necessity, extreme necessity. All these serve to maintain and uphold this brotherhood. For brotherly love is, 1. Pleasant and delightful; 2. Profitable and advantageous; 3. So necessary that it had been better for us never to have been than not to love the brethren.

1. For the First, hear what the Psalmist saith: "Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm cxxxiii. 1.) Not only it is so, but it is worth our observing, and we are called to "behold" and consider it; which if we did with a serious eye, we should not so slight and undervalue it as we do. For pleasure is winning and attractive: it is a motive above all eloquence, more persuasive than the words of the wise. O that we could be once brought to be well-persuaded of this pleasure, and did not so dote on that which hath no true pleasure at all in it! "The hills," saith the prophet David, "are girded with gladness." (Psalm lxv. 12.) Things are figuratively said to be glad when they attain unto and abide in their natural perfection. So the light is said to rejoice when it shineth clear and continually, because then it is in its highest and fullest splendour. Now there can be no higher perfection for a Christian than to love the brethren: "He that dwelleth in

love dwelleth in God, and God in him :” (1 John iv. 16 :) and, “By this men shall know you are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,” (John xiii. 35,) saith Christ by the same John in his Gospel. What perfection greater than for a man to dwell in God, and to have God dwell in him? This is to be like unto God, and to be partaker of his spirit. And to be Christ’s disciple is to be one with him, and to be engrafted into him. Here is the Christian’s highest pitch, his ascension, his zenith, his third heaven. And therefore it is said to be a speech of Christ which the Nazarene Gospel hath recorded, though our Bibles have not, *Nunquam læti sitis nisi cùm fratres in charitate videritis* : “No spectacle of delight, nothing that a Christian can take pleasure in, nothing of virtue and power enough to raise a disciple’s joy, but to see his fellow-disciples, his brethren, embracing one another in love.” For if the ground of all pleasure be agreement and proportionableness to the temper and constitution of any thing, then certainly nothing so agreeing, so harmonical, so consonant to our reasonable nature and to the ingenuity of our kind, and consequently so universally delightful to all who have not put off the bowels and the nature of man, and are by the love of the world swayed and bended to a brutish condition, as that which may as well go for a reward as for a duty,—the loving of the brethren; that language of love, which we must practise here, that we may chant it in heaven with “the congregation of the first-born, and the spirits of men made perfect” by love, eternally. (Heb. xii. 23.)

And indeed charity is the prime ingredient of the glorified saints : of whose state we understand no more but that they are in bliss, and love one another; and that they are for ever blessed because they for ever love one another. Their “charity never faileth,” saith St. Paul; (1 Cor. xiii. 8;) and then their bliss is everlasting. “What is Paradise,” saith the father, “but to love God, and serve him?” And the best love we can show him, the best service we can do him, is to love and serve the brethren. “The end of the gospel is love :” (1 Tim. i. 5 :) that is, other doctrine tendeth to strife and contention; but the whole doctrine of the gospel tendeth to love and unity: so that no doctrine that naturally and of itself worketh wrath and uncharitableness can be evangelical. For “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, and without hypocrisy.” (James iii. 17.)

Beloved, envy, malice, debate, contention, strife, are the delight and joy of them who have tasted of the powers of no other world than of this which shall be consumed; or rather, they are the

delight of the infernal spirits, as it is a torment to them to be restrained from doing mischief. "Art thou come to destroy us, to torment us before our time?" saith the unclean spirit. (Matt. viii. 29.) "Art thou come to curb and hinder us from vexing and destroying those we hate?" For this is torturing, this is sending them again "into the deep," confining them to their hell. (Luke viii. 31.) As the lower pit is said to be opened in the Revelation, when they have liberty to vex and torment mankind; (Rev. ix. 2;) so it is as much hell to them not to punish others, as it is to be punished. And none but evil spirits, and men of their constitution and temper, can make a heaven in hell itself, by doing mischief. And indeed delight it is not properly; but it is called so because it is proportionable and satisfactory to their malice and pernicious nature and disposition. No; if we hear, *Lætentur cæli*, "Let the heavens rejoice," it is because peace is here on earth. (Luke ii. 14.) If we hear, *Lætentur angeli*, "Let the angels rejoice," it is for the tears and repentance of some sinner here below. If we hear, *Lætentur sancti*, "Let the saints rejoice," it is in their union and communion, in those mutual offices of bearing and supporting one another, and, as so many angels, by prayers and exhortations, and by the reciprocal activity of their love, lifting and conveying one another into Abraham's bosom.

Thus we see that that love which makes and keeps us brethren is the pleasantest thing in the world, and that all other joy is no better joy than the damned have in hell. "A joy" I must not call it: "a complacency" we may call it; but that is too good a name. It is the feeding, the filling, the satisfying the malice of an ugly and malicious fiend.

2. But, in the next place, we shall the sooner fall in love with this love, if profit also be brought-in to commend and enhance the price and value of this pleasure. And here if we ask with the apostle, *Τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια*; "What profit is there?" we may answer, "Much every manner of way." (Rom. iii. 1, 2.) For from this we have all those helps, those huge advantages, which are as so many heavens and promotions and thrustings forward into happiness. By my brother I may see that which before I could not discover. He may clear up my affections from storm and tempest, and my understanding from darkness and confusion of thoughts. He may cast out *infinitatem rei*, as the civilians speak, "that variety, that kind of infinity of appearances in which every thing useth to show and present itself." He "may be," as Moses said to Hobab, "to me instead of eyes," to guide and direct me by his counsel and providence. (Num. x. 31.) By him I may hear,

as Samuel did for Eli, what the Lord God will say. (1 Sam. iii.) By him I may feel and "taste how gracious the Lord God is." (1 Peter ii. 3.) He may do those offices for me which the angels of God, those "ministering spirits," cannot do, because they have no body. He may be my servant, and I may wait upon him: he may be my supporter, and I may uphold him: he may be my priest, and I may teach him: he may be my guard, and I may protect him: he may be my angel, and I may go with him and be his conduct: he may be made all things to me, and I may be made all things to him. Thus we may grow up together in grace, (for in this nursery, in this Eden, in this fraternity, the nearer and closer we grow together, the more we spread and flourish,) *complantati*, "grafted together in the similitude of Christ's death;" (Rom. vi. 5;) and *consepulti*, "buried together with him in baptism;" (verse 4;) and *conresuscitati*, "risen together with Christ." (Col. iii. 1.) No grafting, no burying, no rising, but together; no profit, no advantage, no increase, but in love: "Speaking the truth in love, we grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: by which the whole body fitly joined together and compacted," as a house, "by that which every joint supplies," by that spirit and juice which every part conveys, "according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," according as it wants sustentation and increase, *εἰς οἰκοδομήν*, "that the body," which is the brotherhood, "may be edified," that is, more and more instructed and improved by mutual love and the duty and offices of charity, which is that "increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. iv. 15, 16.)

O, what a shoal of Christians did this love send forth, when the Heathen could make the observation, and proclaim it, "See how these Christians love one another!" Then did they fill their villages, their temples, their armies: and, if we look upon their number, they might, as Tertullian observes, have easily swallowed up their enemies in victory. When St. Peter, that fisher of men, caught so many together, even "three thousand souls," it was love that gathered them in, and it was love that kept them in. For *ἁμοθυμαδὸν*, "they continued daily with one accord in the temple:" (Acts ii. 41, 46:) they "were of one heart and of one soul." (Acts iv. 32.) And what is it that hath made such a dearth and scarcity of sincere and truly pious Christians, but our debate and bitter malice, the greatest enemy Christianity hath? For by "biting and devouring one another" we have well-near "consumed one another," (Gal. v. 15,) nay, well-near consumed religion itself.

And if a Heathen should stand by, he could not but wonder, and make no other observation than this, "See how the Christians hate one another!" The Heathen of old could find out nothing in the Christians but their name to accuse them; but we of this aged and corrupted world have scarce any thing but the name of Christians to commend us.

*Hoc Ithacus velit,\** This is that which our enemies have long expected, and to effect which they have spent their nights, their days; have laid out their leisure, their business, their watchings, their very sleep; and now have seen that fire which they did help to kindle, by the light of which they may stretch forth their curtains, and enlarge their territories and dominions every day in Christendom. For as the devil is tormented, as Optatus speaks, with the peace of the brethren, when they are joined together *vinculo fidei et glutine charitatis*, "by the bond and cement of faith and love;" so is he enlivened, and put into hopes of success in his attempts, by the mutual ruptures and jealousies which the brethren, the members of the church, foment and cherish amongst themselves. When, by the defection of Jero-boam, Judah and Israel were rent asunder, then came Shishak, and troubled Jerusalem. (2 Chron. xii. 2.) And therefore let us "love the brotherhood," as the apostle exhorts. (1 Peter ii. 17.) For an enemy is never more dangerous to an army than when it is disordered by mutiny and division. If it be at peace with itself, it hath half conquered the enemy. When the church begins to be torn by schisms and contentions, then every blast is ready to shake and shatter it; but when it is in unity within itself, then it is built up strong and fair, as the tower of David. No heresy, no enemy, no Jesuit, no devil, no, not the gates of hell, can prevail against us, whilst we are fast joined together, rooted and built up and established in love. (Eph. iii. 17.) No principalities nor powers, no height nor depth, no creature, can come near to touch us, whilst we keep within the circle and compass which love maketh, whilst we continue brethren.

3. Thus then we find both pleasure and profit in being brethren. But now, in the Third and last place, there is a kind of necessity to force us: and the love that keeps us so, is necessary not only as a virtue or quality without which we ought not to be, but as a virtue without which we cannot be what we profess. For, loose but this bond once, unjoint this goodly frame, shake but the brotherhood, and we are fallen from heaven, spoiled of all the riches of the gospel, deprived of all the privileges and prerogatives of Christians, defeated of all those glorious pro-

\* VIRGILII *Æneid.* ii. 104. "This would Ulysses like."—EDIT.

mises, shaken from the hope of immortality and eternal life, without love, and then without God in this world; left naked and destitute, stripped of our inheritance, having title to no place but that where the revolting angels and malicious spirits are shut up. For as that is true which we find in the gloss on the canon-law, *Habe charitatem, et fac quod vis*; "Do it in love, and do what thou wilt;" thy zeal shall be as the fire in the bush, burning, but not consuming; thy reproofs shall be balm; thy justice, physic; thy wounds, kisses; thy tears, as the dew of heaven; thy joy, the joy of angels; all thy works, fit to be put in the register of God. But if once thou forsake the brotherhood, if once thou shake hands with love, then whatsoever thou doest must needs be ill done because thou doest it. If thou "speak with the tongue of men and angels," it is but noise; if thou "give all thy goods to the poor," it is but loss; and that which with love is martyrdom, without it may be murder. (1 Cor. xiii. 1, 3.) Thy zeal will be rage; thy reproofs, swords; thy justice, gall and wormwood; thy wounds, fatal; thy tears, the dropping of a crocodile; thy joy, madness; and thy works, fit for nothing but the fire. The gospel to thee will be as killing as the law, and the blood of Christ cry as loud for vengeance as that of Abel, or of any brother whom thou hast persecuted and wounded with injuries and reproach.

Let us not deceive ourselves with vain pretences and ridiculous excuses, with empty and airy fancies, which can conceive and shape out love, when it is dead in the heart; which can revile, and love; strike, and love; kill, and love. For a truth it is, and a sad truth; a truth which may bore the ears of many of us Christians, and strike us to the ground, as Peter's voice did Ananias; and St. John hath set his seal to it: "He that loveth not his brother" (and not to love him, with St. John, is to hate him) "abideth in death:" (1 John iii. 14:) and again: "He that hateth his brother is a murderer;" (verse 15;) alluding to our Saviour's reformation of the law, which even made anger murder. What degree of murder soever he means, such a murderer he is that "hath not eternal life abiding in him;" the want of this love being a sure mark of a child of wrath, and of one carrying his hell about with him whithersoever he goes; being himself a Tophet, burning with fire and brimstone, with hatred and malice and fury; having nothing between him and that everlasting hell but a ruinous wall, his body of flesh, which will moulder away and fall down within a span of time.

O, how should this still sound in our ears, as that, "Rise, and come unto judgment," did in St. Jerome's, who could not sleep

for it! O that the sound of this would make us, not to leave our sleep, but to leave our gall, our venom, our malice, which may peradventure bite our brother's heel, wound him in his person, in his estate, or good name, but will most certainly sting us unto death! Let then this sad, nay, this behoof-full, this glorious, this [extreme] necessity prevail with us: and let us not so trifle with God and our own souls, so flatter and smile ourselves to death, as to think there is no such necessity at all, but that we may love God, and yet hate and persecute our brother; nay, love God the more, the more we hate our brother. For I ask, Is it necessary to love God? Is it necessary to love ourselves? Is it necessary to be the children of God? Is it necessary to love God's image in others, and to repair it in ourselves? Is it necessary to be engrafted into Christ? Is it necessary to believe? In a word, is it necessary to be saved? Then is it also necessary to love the brethren sincerely, cordially, with a single heart. To love ourselves, or, as we are commanded, to love our common Father which is in heaven, and who is the God of love, profit and pleasure may draw and allure us; but necessity forces, and chains, and links us to the brethren. Now the God of love work true brotherly love in us all!

---

## SERMON LXXXII.

### ON THE NATIVITY.

PREACHED ON CHRISTMAS-DAY.

*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: (or, into a fleece of wool:) as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.—Psalm lxxii. 6, 7.*

THIS Psalm contains a prayer and a prophecy: a *prayer* for king Solomon, who laid down his sceptre with his life, and “slept with his fathers;” (1 Kings xi. 43;) and a *prophecy* of Christ, whose “throne is for ever and ever,” (Psalm xlv. 6,) and of whose kingdom there is no end. Take it as a prayer, and it was heard: for “God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, and largeness of heart,” (1 Kings iv. 29,) to “judge his people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment.” (Psalm lxxii. 2.) Take it as a prophecy, and it was fulfilled: for God sent his Son, who is Wisdom itself, to be “the

Shepherd and great Bishop of our souls," (1 Peter ii. 25,) and to be our King to lead us in the ways of righteousness.

Apply it to the type, and the expressions are hyperbolic. "Righteousness" in the text is not complete, nor "abundance" full; "peace" not as lasting as the moon, but as the moon waxing and waning, and at last eclipsed and turned into blood. That "dominion from the river unto the ends of the earth" takes in no larger compass than Judea, or at most "the region from Tiphseh unto Azzah;" (1 Kings iv. 24;) so narrow a compass of ground that St. Jerome was ashamed to bewray its dimensions. In a word, interpret it by the inscription, as "a Psalm for king Solomon," and "all generations" make but forty years; "all kings" are but Pharaoh and Hiram, and some few other that were on this side the river Euphrates; "all nations" are not many nations; and Solomon's "for ever," we know well, had an end. And as we find it in hyperbolic speeches, *ad verum mendacio pervenitur*, "that we come not too short of the truth, the phrase is made to look beyond it." That we may conceive aright of the glory of Solomon's kingdom, David extends it "from the river unto the ends of the earth:" that we may conceive some "peace," he tells us of "abundance." He multiplies and dilates the bounds of his empire; makes Judea as large as the whole world; an age, eternity; and that sceptre which did "depart," (Gen. xlix. 10,) everlasting. Literally this cannot be true of king Solomon.

*Hic Psalmus Solomoni canere dicitur quæ tamen soli competant Christo*, saith Cyril: "This Psalm is sung to king Solomon, but the ditty is of Christ, and of him alone." "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Luke xi. 31.) "He shall have dominion from sea to sea:" (Psalm lxxii. 8:) this belongs to Christ alone. "All kings shall worship him:" before whom do all kings fall down, but Christ? "And all nations shall serve him:" (verse 11:) whom shall all nations serve, but Christ? "His name shall endure for ever:" whose name but Christ's? "All nations shall be blessed in" Christ; (verse 17;) in Solomon, none at all. And here in my text, "He shall descend like the rain," cannot be true of Solomon: for he descended indeed, but not like rain, because he came not down from heaven. Many things are spoken of the type which more properly belong to the antitype. Many things in this Psalm are spoken of Solomon which stretch beyond the line of truth; and for no other reason but this, because they belong to Christ, whose type he bore, and in whom they were truly to be made good, and without any hyperbole at all. Solomon did "judge the people



with righteousness ;” (verse 2 ;) but Christ shall judge the whole world, and Solomon himself. Solomon was a king ; but Christ is the King of kings. Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in wisdom ; but Christ is Wisdom itself. Solomon did “break in pieces the oppressor ;” (verse 4 ;) but Christ broke the jaws of the destroyer of mankind, and took the prey out of his mouth. “To him give all the prophets witness :” (Acts x. 43 :) to him do all the fathers apply the words of my text. “The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge him” in her hymns and service for this great Feast of Christ’s Nativity, singing praises to the Lord our Strength, who “came down like the rain into a fleece of wool,” or, “the mown grass :” “as showers that water the earth.” And we have seen it with our eyes, and feel it in our hearts, and it is the joy and glory of this high Feast, that “in his days the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.”

And now I may say of this prophecy as our Saviour himself did of another : “This day was this scripture fulfilled in” Christ, (Luke iv. 21,) who is *signaculum omnium prophetarum*, who was the great Prophet who was to come, (John vi. 14,) and “the seal of all the rest ;” in whom all prophecies were at an end. And therefore we will but change the tense, and not read it *Descendet*, “He shall come down,” (for the Jew himself will yield us thus much,) but *Descendit* : “The fulness of time is come,” (Gal. iv. 4,) and “he is come down” already. *In quo quicquid retrò fuit, demutatam est*, saith Tertullian : “In whom whatsoever was in times past is either changed, as circumcision ; or supplied, as the law ; or fulfilled, as the prophecies ; or made perfect, as faith itself.” The subject of the song is the same : *Eaedem voces sonant, eadem literæ notant, idem Spiritus pulsat* : “The words that sound, the same ; the letters that character him out, the same ; the same Spirit, who inspires the prophets, and now speaks to us.” Only for the feast’s sake we will but change the time, the future for the present, and so express our thanks and joy ; which should as far exceed the joy of the prophets, as fruition doth hope, and the present enjoying of the benefit a sad and earnest expectation of it. And then there will naturally arise the handling of these points :

I. We shall consider the incarnation of the Son of God as a descent or coming down.

II. The manner of this descent. It was *placidus et insensibilis*, saith the father, “sweet and peaceable, without trouble, without noise, scarcely to be perceived :” not in the strong wind, to rend us to pieces ; not in the earthquake, to shake us ;

not in the fire, to consume us; but in "a still and small voice:" (1 Kings xix. 11, 12:) not as thunder, to make a noise; not as hail, to rattle on the house-tops; not as the blast and mildew, to wither us; but as the "rain" falling "sweetly on the grass," or "on a fleece of wool," and "as the showers which water the earth," and make it fruitful.

III. We shall observe the effect which this descent produceth, or the fruit which springs up upon the fall of this gracious rain. First. Righteousness springs up, and spreads herself: *Justus florebit*; so some render it: "The righteous shall flourish." Secondly. After righteousness peace shows itself, even "abundance of peace." And, Thirdly, both these are not *herbæ solstitiales*, "herbs which spring up and wither in one day," but which will be green and flourish "so long as the moon endureth," which is everlastingly. And therefore we must,

IV. In the last place observe, 1. The relation which is between these two, righteousness and peace: they are ἀντιστροφα.\* Where there is righteousness, there is peace; and where there is peace, there is righteousness. 2. The order: righteousness first, and then "abundance of peace." Take them all three, and you shall find a kind of subordination betwixt them; for no peace without righteousness, no righteousness without this rain: but if the Son of God "come down like rain," straight righteousness appears on the earth; and upon the same watering, and from the same root, shoots forth "abundance of peace," and both "so long as the moon endureth." Of these, then, in their order, briefly and plainly; and,

I. First, of the descent. "He that ascended is he also that descended first," saith the apostle. (Eph. iv. 9.) And he "came down" very low: he brought himself *sub lege*, "under the law;" *sub cultro*, "under the knife," at his circumcision; *sub maledicto*, "under the curse;" *sub potestate tenebrarum*, "under the power of darkness;" down into the cratch, down into the world, and down when he was lifted up upon the cross, (for that ascension was a great descent,) and from thence down into the grave, and lower yet, εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς, "into the lowermost parts of the earth." Thus low did he "come down." But if we terminate his descension in his incarnation, if we interpret his descent by *Natus est*, that "he was born," and say no more, we have brought him very low, even so low that the angels themselves must παρακύψαι, "stoop to look after him;" (John xx. 5;) that not the clearest understanding, not the quickest apprehension, nothing but faith, can follow after to

\* "Reciprocal terms."—EDIT.

behold him ; which yet must stand aloof off, and tremble, and wonder at this great sight. *Hic me solus complectitur stupor*, saith the father : “ In other things my reason may guide me, meditation and study may help me ; and if not give me full resolution, yet some satisfaction at least. But here,” *O prodigia ! O miracula !* “ O prodigy, O miracle of mercy !” Ὁ παραδόξου τῆς οἰκονομίας, “ O the paradox of this strange descent !” “ This is a depth which I cannot ford, a gulf wherein I am swallowed up, and have no light left me but my faith and admiration.” *Certè mirabilis descensus*, saith Leo, “ a wonderful descent ;” *a cælo ad uterum*, “ from his throne to the womb ;” from his palace to a dungeon ; from his dwelling-place on high, to dwell in our flesh ; from riding on the cherubin, to hanging on the teat. A wonderful descent ! “ Where is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ?” (1 Cor. i. 20.) That God should thus come down ; that he that containeth all things should be compassed by a woman ; that he should cry as a child, at whose voice the angels and archangels tremble ; that he whose hands meted out the heavens, and measured the waters, should lie in the cratch ; *Deus visibilis, et Deus contrectabilis*, as Hilary speaks, that “ God should be seen and touched and handled ;” no orator, no eloquence, the tongues of men and angels, cannot reach it. *O anima, opus est tibi imperitiâ meâ* : “ O my soul, learn to be ignorant, and not to know what is unsearchable.” *Abundat sibi locuples fides* : \* It is enough for me to believe that the Son of God came down.

And this coming down we may call his humiliation, his exinanition, his low estate. Not that his Divine Nature could descend καθ' ἑαυτὴν, “ considered in itself ;” but God came down κατ' οἰκονομίαν, “ in respect of that gracious dispensation ” by which he vouchsafed to dwell amongst us. For he assumed into the unity of his person that which before he was not, and yet remained that which he was. *Ille, quod est, semper est ; et sicut est, ita est* : For “ what he is, he always is ; and as he is, so he is,” without any show or shadow of change. But yet in the great work of our redemption he may seem to have laid his majesty aside, and not to have exercised that power which was co-eternal with him, as infinite as himself. And now it is no blasphemy, but salvation, to say, that he who created man was made a man ; that he who was the God of Mary, was the Son of Mary ; that he that made the world, had not a hole to hide his head ; that he who was the Lawgiver, was made under the

\* “ A rich faith yields abundant satisfaction to the mind.”—EDIT.

law. And therefore, in every action almost, as he did manifest his power, so he expressed his humility. A star stands over him, when he lay in the manger: he rebukes the winds, who was asleep in the ship: he commands the sea, and fishes bring tribute in their mouths; but at Cæsar's commands he submits, and pays it: he strikes a band of men backward to the ground, but yields as a man, and is bound, and led away as a sheep to the slaughter. And thus that love which reconciled the world unto God, reconcileth these strange contradictions,—a God, and a man; a God that sleeps, that thirsts; *vectigalis Deus*, “a tributary God;” *Deus in vinculis*, “a God in bonds;” a God “crucified, dead, and buried.” All which descents he had not *in naturâ*, not “in his Divine Nature.” *Neque enim defecit in sese, qui se evacuavit in sese*, saith Hilary: “For he who emptied himself in himself did not so descend as to leave or lose himself.” But the descent was *in personâ*, “in his person,” in respect of his voluntary dispensation, by which he willingly yielded to assume and unite the human nature to himself. And thus *he* was “made of” that “woman” who was made by himself, (Gal. iv. 4,) and was contained in her womb, *whom* the heavens cannot contain; and “was cut out of the land of the living,” (Isai. liii. 8,) *who* was in truth, what Melchisedec was only in the conceit of men in his time, “without father, and without mother, having no beginning of days, nor end of life.” (Heb. vii. 3.) He was less than his Father, and yet his Father's equal; the Son of David, and yet David's Lord: a case which plunged the great rabbies among the Pharisees, (Matt. xxii. 46,) who had not yet “learned this wisdom, nor known this knowledge of the holy.” (Prov. xxx. 3.) But most true it is, *Non fallit in vocabulis Deus*, “God speaks of things as they are, nor is there any ambiguity in his words.” He tells us he is God, and he tells us he is man: he tells us that his dwelling-place is in heaven, (Isai. lvii. 15,) and he tells us that he came down into the world: (John i. 10, 11 :) he tells us he is “from everlasting,” (Psalm xc. 2,) and he tells us he was born “in the fulness of time.” (Gal. iv. 4.) *Et quod a Deo discitur, totum est*: “And what he tells us, is all that can be said.” Nor must our curiosity strive to enter in at the needle's eye, where he hath opened an effectual door.

Indeed, it was the devil's policy, when his altars were overthrown, when his oracles were silenced, when he was driven from his temples, when his Godhead was laid in the dust, and when Pagans and idolaters, his subjects and slaves, came-in willingly in the days of Christ's power, to strive *dimidiare*

*Christum*, “to divide Christ into halves;” and, when Christ became the language of the whole world, to confound their language, that men might not understand one another’s speech. And like a subtle enemy, when he was beaten out of the field, he made it his master-piece to raise a civil dissension in the city of God. *Proh! quanta etiamnum patitur Verbum!* saith the father: “Good God! how much doth Christ yet suffer in his church!” “He came into the world, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” (John i. 10, 11.) He comes down, but as a phantasm, as a mere creature; so Arius: as an adopted son; so Photius: which is in effect to say, he came not down at all. For if he be a mere creature, the descent is not so low: and if he be adopted to this work, it is rather a rise than a descension. And if he be but the son of Mary made the Son of God, and not the Son of God made the Son of Mary, it is no descent at all. I do not love to rake these mis-shapen monsters out of their dust, but that I see at this day they walk too boldly upon the face of the earth, and knock, and that with some violence, to have admittance into the church. And therefore it will behove us to take the whole armour of faith, and to stand upon our defence; *conservare vocabula in luce proprietatum*, “to preserve the propriety of words entire, to walk by that light which they cast;” and not, with those heretics, τὰ ἐλαττοῦντα λέγειν, “to make use of those phrases which speak Christ man,” and τὰ ὑψοῦντα παρατρέχειν, “to pass by those which magnify him as God;” but to join together εὐδοκίαν and ἐξουσίαν, his “good pleasure” and his “power;” to say that he came into the world, and to say that he created the world; to say he was the scorn of men, and to say he was the image of his Father; in a word, *ipsi Deo de se credere*, “to believe God in that he speaks of himself.” And then we may turn aside, and behold this great sight, and make it our glory and crown to say, *Descendit Rex*, not Solomon, but, “The King of kings, the King of glory, is come down.” And so I pass from the descent, or coming down, to the manner of it: *Descendit sicut pluvia*, &c.\*

II. The manner of his descent is as wonderful as the descent itself. It is as full of wonder that he thus came down, as that he would come down; especially if we consider the place to which he came,—the world; a Babylon of confusion, a Sodom, a land of Philistines, of giants, who made it as a law to fight against the God of heaven. We might have expected rather that he should have come down as a fire, to consume us; as a

\* “He hath come down like rain,” &c.—EDIT.

tempest to devour us; as thunder, to amaze us; than as rain, to fall softly upon us, or as a shower, to water and refresh us: that he should have come down to blast and dig us up by the roots, rather than to yield us juice and life to grow green and flourish. Indeed we could expect no less: but his mercy is above all his works, and then far above our expectation, far above all that we could conceive, far above our sins, which were gone over our heads, and hung there ready to fall in vengeance upon us. And rather than they should fall as "hailstones and coals of fire," he himself "comes down like rain, and as showers that water the earth." Justice would have stayed him, and for him sent down a thunderbolt; but Mercy prevailed, and had the better of justice, and in this manner brings him down himself.

And here to show you the manner of his coming down, we shall observe a threefold descent: 1. *In uterum matris*, "into the Virgin's womb;" 2. *In mundum*, "into the world;" and, 3. *In homines*, "into the souls of men." For as the Virgin's womb was *thalamus Christi*, "the bride-chamber of Christ," wherein the Holy Ghost did knit the indissoluble knot between his human nature and his Deity; so the world was the place where he pitched his tent; (John i. 14;) and the soul of man is the temple of the Lord, where the same quickening Spirit by the operation of faith makes up that eternal union and conjunction between the members and the head. And into all these he came down *ἀψοφητὶ καὶ ἀταράχως*, saith St. Chrysostom, (and we find the very same words in the sixth council of Constantinople,) "quietly and without any noise at all;" like rain, which we may know is fallen by the moistures of the fleece or grass, but not hear when it falls.

1. And, First, thus he came down into the Virgin's womb "as upon the grass," and made her fruitful to bring forth the Son of God; and as "into a fleece of wool," out of which he made up *tegmen carnis*, "the veil and garment of his flesh;" and so without noise, so unconceivably, that as it is an article of our faith, and the very language of a Christian, to say, "He is come down," so it is a question which poseth the whole world, and none but himself can resolve the *quomodo*, "how" he came down. For as he came down, and was made man, not *μεταπτώσει* or *ἀλλοιώσει*, not by any "alteration" or "mutation" of his divine essence; *sine periculo statús sui*, saith Tertullian, "without any danger of the least change of his state;" not by converting the Godhead into flesh, as Cerinthus; nor the flesh into the Godhead, as Valentinus; no, nor by compounding and mingling the natures, so that after the union there should remain one entire

nature of them both ; but by an invisible, inconceivable, ineffable union : so also did the blessed Virgin conceive and bring him forth without any pain of travail, without any breach of nature, without any alteration ; and retained *gaudium matris cum honore virginitatis*, “the joy of a mother, and yet the integrity and honour of a virgin.” We may say, *Peperit, non parturivit* : “She brought Christ forth, but did not travail.” And Tertulian, where he conjures down that *spectrum* and “phantasm” of Marcion, borrows his very words, and urgeth this for a truth, *Peperit, et non peperit ; virgo, et non virgo* : “She brought forth, and did not bring forth ; a virgin, and not a virgin.” She brought forth, saith he, because Christ did take of her flesh ; and she did not bring forth, because she took nothing from man : a virgin in respect of her husband ; and not a virgin, in respect of her child. And so, being busy in the confutation of one error, he seems to run unadvisedly upon another. But his meaning is [no] more than this,—that she was both a mother, and yet a virgin ; and that Christ was born *communi lege*, “as other men are,” and not *utero clauso*, “the womb being shut :” which, whether it be true or false, I leave to those learned surgeons, and masculine midwives, the Schoolmen, to determine. I will say no more, but with the father, *Enormi et otiosæ curiositati tantum deerit discere quantum libuerit inquirere* : “Vain and irregular curiosity gains no ground in the search of those things which are too hard for it, and of which we have no evidence of scripture : and all the profit she reaps is but this,—to run forward apace, and to be struck blind in the way ; to make great speed, and be further off.” It is enough for us to believe and acknowledge that she was a pure and immaculate virgin ; that the Holy Ghost overshadowed her ; that she was that fleece into which this gracious rain fell *sine soni verberere*, “without any noise or sound :” that, as a fleece, she was made both solid and soft ; softened and made fine by the power of the Most High, to receive this heavenly shower, to conceive that ; and solid, to conceive him without the division of parts, to receive him into her womb as sheep do the rain into their fleece, *sine inquietudine*, saith Ambrose, “without any motion or stirring ;” *parere, nec compunè*, “to bring him forth without any compunction or conquassation of parts :” to be soft, and prepared, and become a mother ; and yet solid and entire still, and remain a virgin. And further we need not carry the resemblance. And therefore, in the next place, we will bring Christ from the womb into the world.

2. And here, though I cannot say the world was all “mown grass,” or “as a fleece,” or “as earth,” but rather as brass, or

as the barren rocks; yet Christ came down into the world. And he came, not *jaciens fulmina*, saith Chrysostom, "in thunder and lightning," with "a fire to devour before him, or a tempest round about him;" (Psalm l. 3;) but in great humility, in silence: and, as his kingdom, so his coming, was "not with observation." (Luke xvii. 20.) In a word: though he were "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," yet he enters the world as a lamb. For, first, *nasci se patitur*, "he condescends and suffers himself to be born," and is content to lie hid in the womb nine months, who might have taken the shape of a man in a moment. He grows up by degrees; and being grown up, he is not ambitious to be known. He is baptized by his servant; and being tempted by the devil, *nihil ultra verba conatur*, "he useth no other weapon than his words." Was the reed bruised? he broke it not. Did the flax smoke? he quenched it not. (Matt. xii. 20.) Were men ungrateful? he cured them. His hand that betrayed him was in the dish with him. (Matt. xxvi. 23.) So that, as his flesh was *παραπετασμα τῆς Θεότητος*, "the veil of his Divinity," so what he did and what he suffered were as so many curtains, or rather as a thick cloud, to obscure and darken his majesty. You will tell me of the new star: but whither did it lead the wise men? To see a poor infant in a manger: and though the sign of the star were glorious, yet the sign of the cratch did obscure it. Of the angels' anthem: but they were but a few shepherds that heard it. Of the men of the East who came to worship him: but at the same time Herod the king did "seek the child to destroy him." (Matt. ii. 13.) Of his retinue: but they were fishermen. Of the angel that comforted him: but it was in his agony. Of the earth shaking, and the veil of the temple rent: but it was at his death. *Certò latuit in infirmitate majestas*: "His majesty lay hid and was obscured in his infirmity." And thus he tempered and qualified his economy amongst us; cast forth these radiations of majesty, and yet appeared as but under a cloud; had these tinctures and rays of greatness, and yet dulled and almost lost in poverty and ignominy and scorn, and, in respect of the many, quenched in the blood which he shed.

But now we need not wonder that he thus came in silence and great humility. For the whole world was an hospital of diseased men, or rather a prison of slaves and captives, fettered in the chains and bonds of iniquity: and should Christ have bowed the heavens, and come down in glory, should he have shone in his majesty, should he have come in thunder and blackness of darkness, certainly the sight would have been so terri-



ble that Moses himself, even the best men living, would have trembled and shaken. Had all been glory, all with us had been misery. Had Christ come as God alone, we had been worse than the beasts that perish, even companions of devils. *Nisi iram misericordia finivisset*, saith the father, "If his mercy had not stepped in between his majesty and us, and quenched that fire which was ready to burn," the prisoners, nay, the prison itself, had long since been consumed and brought to nothing. Therefore Christ came not as a Judge, but as a Physician. For sick men are not cured with noise and ostentation. The fleece was dry; and the gentle drops of rain will wash and cleanse it: but a cataract, a deluge, will drown the sheep itself. The earth was dry, and the grass mown, *desecta et detonsa*, "cut down;" nay, *curiosa a locustis*, so the Chaldee, "bitten and gnawn of locusts." And no locusts comparable to sins, which devour not leaves only, but the very root. Now, when locusts swarm, commonly it is a drought: therefore rain and showers are most seasonable, to make the grass grow afresh; but fire would consume all. It is impossible, saith the father, that our shackles should be knocked off, and we set at liberty, *nisi in nostris fieret humilis qui omnipotens permanebat in suis*, "unless he were made humble in our nature who was omnipotent in his own;" impossible, that the mown grass should grow up without rain, or those who are dead in sins be revived with a consuming fire.

I may add one reason more, and that taken from the nature of faith; which, if the object be plain and manifest and open to the sight, is no more faith: and therefore that which she looks upon, is seen, but hidden; hath light, but clouded; is most probably, but not demonstratively, true. For I do not believe that a man is a living creature, or that the sun shines; because the one is evident to my understanding, the other open to my sense. *Fides non nisi difficultate constat*: "Faith cannot subsist unless it finds some difficulty to struggle with." And this is the merit, the dignity of our faith,—though a cloud come between it and the object, to look through it; as Abraham, though the body be dead, and the womb dead, yet "against hope to believe in hope, that he shall become the father of many nations;" (Rom. iv. 18;) to believe the promise of God, when he useth those means for the trial of our faith which are most like to extinguish it; to behold a Saviour through the thick cloud of ignominy and scorn; to see a God in a cratch, on the cross, and in the grave; to be persuaded that he may be the Son of the Most High, though he "come down as dew," and not as a cataract, and "descend like rain," and not in thunder.

It was the unhappiness of the Jew to expect ἔνδοξον Χριστὸν, “a most glorious Messiah,” and to think he should come into the world as Agrippa and Bernice his wife, μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, “with great pomp;” (Acts xxv. 23;) that he should be a great captain and warrior, and should “take the power of Damascus, and carry away the spoils of Samaria.” (Isai. viii. 4.) And this anticipated conceit is that which hath made them *siccatum vellus*, as Jerome speaks, like Gideon’s “fleece, dry,” when there is dew in all the ground about them. (Judges vi. 40.) “It is true,” saith Tertullian, “he shall take the spoils of Samaria;” but it is then, saith the text, when he is a “child, before he know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.” (Isai. vii. 16.) And if the Jew would have considered his age, he might soon have discerned of what nature the war was he was to wage, and what spoils they were he should bear away. For if he must take them by violence and dint of sword, how should he bid defiance? Should he do it with the cry and tears of an infant? *Signum belli non tubá sed crepitacillo dabit?* “Shall he give signal to battle, not with a trumpet, but with a rattle?” Shall he leap from the teat to his horse, and point out his enemy, not from the wall, but from his mother’s breasts? *Observate modum ætatis, et quærite sensum prædictionis*, saith the father: “Let the Jew remember his age, and then he will not be to seek what manner of war it was.” We confess the child Christ was and is Ἀρχιστράτηγος, “a great Captain,” and hath a trumpet, and a sword, and arrows; and he soundeth his trumpet, and “girds his sword upon his thigh,” and makes his arrows sharp; and he strikes with his sword, and sends forth his arrows: but yet he never sheddeth blood. He “rides in majesty;” but it is “because of his meekness and gentleness;” (Psalm xlv. 3—5;) which are no virtues, I think, at the camp. His trumpet is the gospel; his sword, the word, which “divideth asunder the soul and the spirit, and the joints and the marrow;” (Heb. iv. 12;) his arrows, his precepts, which fly very swiftly, piercing every heart, and wounding every conscience. With these he “pulleth down strong-holds, casteth down imaginations,” (2 Cor. x. 4, 5,) and fights “against principalities and powers.” (Eph. vi. 12.) And “the people fall under” him. (Psalm xlv. 5.) What! to be trodden under feet? No; but to worship him. He “carries away the spoils of Samaria;” and not only of Samaria, but of all the nations of the earth. *Certè alius est ensis, cujus alius est actus*: “Certainly this is another manner of sword” than that which Joshua and David fought with: this is “the sword of the Lord,” not “of Gideon,” (Judges vii. 18, 20,) and

“drawn to another end.” For our Captain draws his sword to make his enemies kings; woundeth, that he may heal; beats us to dust, that we may be exalted for ever; fights with us, that we may prevail; and then rides in triumph, when we overcome and are crowned.

And to this end he came down, not in majesty, but weakness; not in thunder, but in rain. He did in a manner divest himself of his honour which he had everlastingly with God; and he who was a King before all time, became a Preacher, an Instructor, a Schoolmaster, to lead us to himself, and vouchsafed to interpret his own imperial command. No servant so careful to execute the will of his master as he was to perform the will of his Father. *Hoc habet sollicitudo, ut omnia putet necessaria*: “His care thought nothing too much:” and therefore, though for so great a Prince it had been a sufficient discharge to direct or command, yet he will super-erogate, and go many degrees above sufficiency. For what he commands us, he himself is the first man that doth execute it. And though it be *ad sanguinem*, to suffer “unto blood,” *primus in agmine Cæsar*,\* still he is “first.” He is not only our Pilot to direct the stern, but also he doth manage the sail, and set his hand to the oar: yea, he himself is unto us both sea, and sun, and pole, and wind, and all; and he wins us more by his example than by his precept.

Thus Christ came: and thus to come down is certainly to “come down like rain upon mown grass.” *Exasperat homines imperata correctio: blandissimè jubetur exemplis*: † There is something of thunder and hail in a command; and it may make some noise, because it falls not “upon a fleece of wool,” but on a stone; upon man, who by nature is a stubborn creature: but we may be bold to say, examples are showers, *guttæ stillantes, stillicidia cælestia*, “drops and dew;” and they fall gently and sweetly and effectually. And in this manner Christ came down into the world “like rain upon the mown grass,” or, “on a fleece of wool:” “as showers that water the earth.”

3. And now we come to the third degree of Christ’s descent or coming down: he cometh into the souls of the sons of men, to “be shaped and formed in us,” (Gal. iv. 19,) that we may be *Christiformes*, “made like unto Christ, and bear an uniformity and conformity unto him.” And he observes the same *sicut* still, and comes down *in animam sicut in uterum*, “into our hearts as he did into the Virgin’s womb,” gently and insensibly, “as the rain doth into a fleece of wool;” using, indeed, his

\* “Cæsar still marches first.”—EDIT. † “To command amendment serves but to exasperate men: example is the most winning form of precept.”—EDIT.

power, but not violence ; working effectually upon our souls *per suaviductionem*, say the Schools, “leading us powerfully, but sweetly,” to that end [which] his predeterminate will hath set down. St. Cyprian well calls it *illapsium gratiæ maturantis*, “the fall of God’s ripening grace,” which falls like dew or rain upon the grass. *Nescio quomodo tangimur, et tangi nos sentimus* : “We are watered with this rain, and we know not how ; we feel the drops are fallen, but how they fell we could not discern.” And we are too ready to ask with the Virgin Mary, “How cometh this to pass ?” But the angel, nay, God himself, telleth us, “The Holy Ghost doth come upon us, and the power of the Most High overshadows us : and that holy thing which is born in us shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke i. 34, 35.) *Non deprehendes quemadmodum aut quando tibi prosit ; profuisse deprehendes* : “That the power of God’s grace hath wrought, we shall find ; but the retired passages by which it hath wrought are impossible to be reduced to demonstration.” *Res illic geritur, nec videtur* : “The rain is fallen, and we know not how.” We saw not Christ when he came down ; but it is plain that he is come down. And he comes down not into the fancy alone : that commonly is too washy and fluid of itself, and brings forth no better a Christ than Marcion’s, a shadow or phantasm. Nor into the understanding alone : for thither he descends rather like light than water ; and he may be there, and the grass not grow. He may be there only as an absent friend, in his picture. But he cometh down *in totum vellus*, “into the whole fleece,” into the heart of man, into the whole man, that so he may at once conceive Christ, and yet be presented a pure and undefiled virgin unto Christ, and be the purer by this new conception. And he cometh down *in totam terram*, “upon all the ground, upon the whole little world” of man, that so he may be “like a well-watered garden,” even a paradise of God. (Jer. xxxi. 12.)

A strange complaint the world hath taken up ; yea, rather, not a complaint, but a pretence, a very “cloke of maliciousness” to hide our sins from our eyes : (1 Peter ii. 16 :) That Christ doth thus come down but at pleasure, only sometimes, and but upon some men ; some who, like Mary, are “highly favoured” by God, (Luke i. 28,) and called out of all the world, nay, chosen before the world was made : and if the earth be barren, it is because this rain doth not fall. As if the grace of God were not like rain, but very rain indeed, and came down by seasons and fits : and as if the souls of men were not like the grass, but were grass indeed ; not voluntary, but natural and necessary, agents. Thus we deceive ourselves, but we cannot

mock God. His grace comes not down as a tempest of hail, or as a destroying storm, or as a flood of many waters overflowing, but as rain or drops. He poureth it forth every day, and renews it every morning. And he would never question our barrenness and sterility, if he did not come down; nor punish our unfruitfulness, if he did not send rains. If, before he came into the world, this rain might fall as it were by coasts, in Judea alone; yet now, by the virtue of his coming down, it drops in all places of his dominion. *Omnibus æqualis, omnibus Rex, omnibus Judex, omnibus Deus et Dominus*: "As he came to all, so he is equal and indifferent to all, a King to all, a Judge to all, and a God and a Lord to all." And his grace *manat jugiter, exuberat affluenter*, "flows continually, and falls down abundantly." *Nostrum tantùm sicut pectus et pateat*, "Let our hearts lie always open," and the windows of heaven are always open: let us continually thirst after righteousness, and this dew will fall continually. Let us prepare our hearts, let us make them soft as the fleece; let us be as grass, not stubble; as earth, not brass; and the Son of God will come down into our hearts "like rain into the fleece of wool," or, "mown grass," and "like showers that water the earth."

III. And, now we have showed you this threefold descent, we should, in the next place, contemplate the effect which this great humility wrought, the fruit which sprung up on the fall of this glorious rain upon God's inheritance; the spring of righteousness, and the plenty of peace, and the eternity of them both. But I see the time will not permit.

## APPLICATION.

For conclusion, therefore, and as the present occasion bespeaks me, I will acquaint you with another descent of Christ,—into the blessed sacrament; I mean, into the outward elements of bread and wine. Into these also he "comes down," insensibly, spiritually, ineffably, yet really, "like rain into a fleece of wool." Ask me not how he is there; but there he is. *Eja, fratres, ubi voluit Dominus agnoscì? In fractione panis*, saith St. Augustine: "O my brethren, where would our Saviour discover himself, but in the breaking of bread?" In his word he seems to keep a distance, and "to speak to us," saith the father, "by way of letter or epistle;" but in the sacrament of his body and blood he communicates himself, that we, who could not see him in his flesh, may yet eat that flesh we cannot see, and be in some kind familiar with him. I need not busy myself in making the resemblance. Theodoret in one of his Dialogues hath made up

the parallel between the incarnation of Christ and the holy sacrament. 1. In Christ there are two natures, the divine and the human; and in the sacrament there are two substances, the heavenly and the earthly. 2. After the union the two natures are but one person; and after the consecration the two substances make but one sacrament. 3. Lastly: As the two natures are united without confusion or coalition of either in Christ, so in the sacrament are the substances, heavenly and earthly, knit so together that each continueth what it was. The bread is bread still, and the body of Christ is the body of Christ; and yet Christ is the Bread of life, and the bread is the body, and the wine the blood, of Christ. It is *panis Domini*, "the bread of the Lord," and *panis Dominus*, "the Lord himself," who is "that living bread which came down from heaven." (John vi. 51.) And to a believing virgin soul Christ comes nearer in these outward elements than superstition can bring him, beyond the fiction of transubstantiation: for as he by assuming our nature was made one with us, made "flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones;" (Gen. ii. 23;) so we by worthily receiving his flesh and his blood in the sacrament are made one with him, even "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter i. 4.) *Per hunc panem ad Dei consortium præparamur*, saith Hilary: "By this bread we are united to him here, and made fit to be with him for ever." And to drink this cup, the blood of Christ, is *κυριακῆς μεταλαβεῖν ἀφθαρσίας*, saith Clemens, "to be made partakers of the incorruptibility of God."

And now to conclude: This quiet and peaceable committing of Christ to us should teach us the like behaviour one to another. For "shall he come down like rain," and shall we fall like thunder upon our brethren? Shall he consider us as a fleece of wool or as grass, and shall we make one another a mark and an anvil for injuries to beat on? Shall butter and honey be his meat, and shall we feed on gall and wormwood? Shall he "not break a bruised reed," and shall we make it our glory to break in pieces the cedars of Libanus? Shall he come to save, and shall we destroy one another? Shall he come without noise, and shall we make it our study to fill the world with tumult and confusion? Shall he give eyes to the blind, and we put them out? clothes to the naked, and we strip them? legs to the lame, and we cripple them? Shall he raise men from the dead, and we kill them? And if we do it, can we be so bold as to say we are Christians, or that Christ dwelleth in us of a truth? Will he abide in this region of blackness and darkness, in this place of noise and thunder and distraction? No; the humble and

contrite, the meek and merciful, is the place of his rest. He that came down in humility will not stay with the proud heart; he that came down in silence will not dwell in a chaos, in confusion. Therefore “put you on the Lord Jesus Christ;” (Rom. xiii. 14;) put on his meekness, his humility. As children of Christ, put on tender bowels and compassion: (Col. iii. 12:) and let your bowels yearn over the poor, to relieve him; over the weak, to strengthen him; over the injurious, to forgive him. And let us be as rain, to soften and quicken,—not as fire, to consume,—one another. And then he who thus came down into the womb, thus into the world, thus into our souls, thus into the sacrament, in silence, without noise or tumult, like rain or dew; having thus watered us, and distilled his graces upon us, by virtue of this his first advent; at his second advent, when he “shall descend with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel,” (1 Thess. iv. 16,) though he come with more terror, yet shall he let fall his “dew as the dew of herbs,” and drop upon our rottenness and corruption: and they “that dwell in the dust shall awake and sing.” (Isai. xxvi. 19.) And in those “his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace,” not only “so long as the moon endureth;” but in “new heavens and new earth shall dwell righteousness” and peace for evermore. (2 Peter iii. 13.)

---

## SERMON LXXXIII.

### THE NATURE AND SUBJECT OF MEEKNESS.

*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—*  
Matthew v. 5.

#### PART I.

BLESSEDNESS is that which all men desire, the sun which every eye looks upon. And in this Sermon of our Saviour it streams down upon us in several beams and strictures,—in poverty of spirit, in mourning, in meekness; which seem to us as dark and thick clouds, but are beams by which we have light to see the way to the kingdom of heaven, to comfort, and the inheritance of the earth. (Verses 3—5.) Now the two first virtues, or beatitudes, (call them what you please: and if they be virtues, they are beatitudes, though not formally, yet by communication; and if blessedness be the garland to crown them,

they must be virtues. The two first, I say,) poverty of spirit, and mourning, are set in opposition to our concupiscible appetite; which, if not checked and held back by these, stoops at every prey, is ensnared with wealth, and crowned in pleasure, and, like those *ἀντόματα*, those “artificial engines or clocks” the philosopher speaketh of, are turned about disorderly, *parvā motione factā*, “at the least touch and representation of unlawful and forbidden objects,” whether it be a wedge of gold, or the lips of the harlot, whether wealth or pleasure. And therefore our best Master hath placed these two, as assistant angels, to order the motion of that power in the desire of earthly blessings, and continue her motion in the search of those things which are above, even poverty of spirit, and a voluntary abdication of those pleasures, which smile upon us as friends at their entrance, but at their exit, when they turn their backs upon us, are as terrible as hell itself. He that hath his mind so spiritually steered, that it declines not to the wealth and pomp of the world, nor to the delights which it affords, howsoever his way be rugged and uneven, and his passage cloudy and tempestuous, shall notwithstanding at the end thereof find a kingdom and consolation.

And now to these two, in its due place, (and by a kind of nearer method,) is added *πραότης*, “meekness and sweetness of disposition,” to restrain the irascible faculty or appetite, as those did the concupiscible. Thus they stand in the original and Greek copy, and the Latin fathers read them so. Nor could the Jesuit find any reason why they should not be so placed in the Vulgar Translation, and he thinks they were misplaced by the error of the scribe, and put between poverty and mourning. Sure I am, there is good reason why meekness should stand in the place it doth. For “from whence come wars and fightings amongst us?” saith St. James: “Come they not from hence, even from our lusts that war in our members?” (James iv. 1.) And the Schools teach us that anger proceeds from the concurrence of many passions. “We lust, and have not:” (verse 2 :) we hope for wealth, and are poor and destitute; we would sport away our time in pleasure, but some intervening cross accident casts us down: and for this we are angry. Jacob hath Esau’s birth-right; and Esau will kill him: Naboth denies his vineyard; and Ahab is on his bed: Jonathan loves David; and Saul is ready to nail him to the wall with his javelin: the Samaritans deny entertainment; the disciples would presently call down fire from heaven to consume them. *Irascibilis propugnatrix concupiscibilis*, saith Gerson: “These two seditious tribunes of



the soul, the irascible and the concupiscible faculty, mutually uphold each other." My desire, my hope, my grief are the fuel of my anger. He that stands in my way to wealth or pleasure is my enemy, and setteth me on fire, which nothing can quench but poverty of spirit and contempt of pleasure. When we are weaned from the world and the vanities thereof; when we are "crucified to the world, and the world unto" us; (Gal. vi. 14;) we are then *apti nati*, "fitted" for this third beatitude, and gain strength against anger, and against all thirst and desire of revenge. If "I know how to abound, and how to want;" (Phil. iv. 12;) if I can sit down in the house of mourning, and judge those miserable whom the world calls happy, and pity them whom most men bow to; I am then *idoneus aulitor*, "a fit man to hear" our Saviour preaching from the Mount, and proclaiming to all the world, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." And thus much of the dependence this third beatitude hath on the former two.

Meekness, then, you see, stands in its right place, after poverty of spirit and mourning, which make its way plain, and usher it in. I will not here compare them: for they are all three beatitudes; *circumincidunt mutuò*, "they are involved one within another;" and such a connexion and kind of consanguinity there is betwixt them, that one partakes of the denomination of the other. Poverty is meek, and meekness is poor: he that mourns is meek, and he that is meek is ready to mourn: as the philosopher said of the will, that it was either *appetitus intellectivus*, or *intellectus appetitivus*, "either appetite with understanding, or understanding with appetite." But yet, without the least detraction from the former, we may commend meekness as the virtue which when our Saviour teacheth, he maketh himself the example. He indeed is *Schola virtutum*, "a School and Academy of virtue;" and every action of his was a sermon. That he was poor, it is plain: for he had not so much as the foxes had, a hole to hide his head. His grief we may see run down his cheeks, when he weepeth over Jerusalem. But when he commends meekness, he doth it by the best example,—himself. He stands up, and placeth himself before our eyes, and bids us look on him. All the virtues which make a Christian we must learn from Christ: but there is never an express *Discite a me* set upon any virtue, except meekness; and upon meekness it is, "Learn of me; for I am meek: and you shall find rest to your souls." (Matt. xi. 29.)

And indeed meekness, as it is a most necessary virtue for a Christian, so is most hard to learn. It is a hard matter to

quench anger, and to restrain all desire of revenge. Plato tells us that anger is *ἄμαχόν τι καὶ ἀνίκητον*, “not easily subdued, almost invincible;” and Aristotle, that it is *ὀρμητικώτατον τι*, “a vehement and violent passion;” and that it is a far easier thing to be strong against the allurements of pleasure than to prevail against the heat and force of wrath. I may “make a covenant with my eyes,” and shut out lust; (Job xxxi. 1;) I may “put a knife to my throat,” and so keep off intemperance; (Prov. xxiii. 2;) I may “sell all that I have, and give to the poor;” (Matt. xix. 21;) I may “mourn like a dove, and chatter like a crane:” (Isai. xxxviii. 14:) but to repress anger, to take off all desire of revenge, not to hurt an enemy, to love an enemy, to do good to an enemy, is that which our Saviour here commends, and the hardest task of a Christian. Therefore St. Chrysostom is plain, that God doth not look so graciously upon fasting and mourning, no, not upon virginity and contempt of the world, as upon this virtue of meekness, which so sweetly composeth the mind, and makes one man a god unto another, by covering his sins, bearing his burden, and condemning and burying his malice in patience and forgiveness. We see here in my text it stands in near conjunction with blessedness, and “hath the promise both of this life, and also of that which is to come.” (1 Tim. iv. 8.) “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”

Our method now shall be,

I. First. To show you *ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ*, “very briefly,” what this virtue is which bears so goodly an inscription; and that in respect, 1. Of the nature of it; 2. Of the subject of it, in whom it is, and of whom it is required; 3. Of the object, on whom it is to be showed and exercised. And when we have briefly laid before you this virtue, in its full extent, we shall,

II. In the next place, more easily persuade you, that it is a virtue most proper, most necessary for a Christian, without which he cannot live, nor move, nor have a being. And this will make way for that which sweeteneth and gives a relish to all these:

III. The reason which our Saviour here gives why the meek are blessed: “For they shall inherit the earth.”

I. 1. To show you what meekness is, we must distinguish it from that behaviour which hath nothing of it but a bare and naked representation, and doth then most deceive us when it is most like it. The father will tell us that virtues and vices are *ἀγχίθυροι*, “near borderers one upon another;” and the Stoic, that philosophy is so sacred and venerable a thing, *ut siquid illi simile est, ipso mendacio placeat*, “that its very counterfeit doth

please us." He that retireth from the world, and betaketh himself to vacancy and idleness, is soon taken for a great philosopher. Craft goes for wisdom, silence and reservedness for policy: and, as St. Bernard tells us, *Diabolus suos habet martyres*, that "the devil hath his martyrs;" so saith St. Augustine, *Diabolus habet suos mansuetos*, "The devil also hath his meek ones," as well as Christ. Look upon the common deportment of men, and you would think that meekness were no stranger upon earth, but a virtue common to the children of men. You may see it floating on the tongue, bowing the body, dressing the countenance with a smile, falling down at your very feet, excusing faults, undervaluing injuries, making crimes errors, and errors virtues, by interpretation. Every man almost is *mansuetus, quasi ad manum suetus*, as Festus gives the etymon, "as mild and gentle as if he were brought up to hand." Nothing more common in the world; nothing more deceives us. Experience hath taught us that anger, when it is loud and sudden, breathes itself out like the wind, whilst it strives to overthrow: and therefore we have learnt, with the tyrant in Tacitus, *velare odium fallacibus blanditiis*, "to hide our anger in a compliment;"\* to speak quietly to our enemy, that we may smite him to the heart; to kiss him, that we may betray him. We rake up our revengeful thoughts, as we do fire under the ashes, *ut non compareat nisi cum adurat*, "that it may be felt sooner than seen, and burn and consume our enemy on the sudden." The greatest mischief we do is *cum præfatione clementiæ*, "with a preface of mildness, and with a friendly address."† "I love you," is the word, which being interpreted is, "I will destroy you."

*Meekness* shall we call this? We may as well call the devil meek, *qui arridet ut sæviat, blanditur ut fallat*, "who smiles that he may rage, and flatters that he may deceive," and never biteth more deadly than when he fawns. But yet this is meekness in the world's account, which goes for no more with us than "a fair-spoken man;" meek Joab, and meek Absalom, and meek Judas; courteous devils, who gain the applause of men, even then when they deceive them: nor doth meekness show itself in the full perfection of beauty otherwise than in a smile, a cringe, a kiss, a compliment; when that smile may be a snare, that cringe a stab, that compliment a lie, and that kiss treason. For experience hath proved that to be true which St. Augustine hath taught us: *Potest odium blandiri, charitas sævire*: "Charity may come with a rod, and malice turn parasite;" the one to better us, the other to deceive us. There is oil in the reproof of a friend; but there is

\* *Annales*, lib. xiv. cap. 56.

† Suetonius in *Vitâ Domitiani*, cap. xi.

wormwood and bitterness and poison in the oil of an enemy. Now we cannot deny but these may be the outward expressions of Christian meekness, which is not locked up and imprisoned in the heart, but manifests itself in the outward gesture; (for certainly he is no meek man whose tongue is either a razor or a sword;) but yet revenge and rancour of heart may borrow these expressions, may make its approaches in a pleasing posture, and may break an enemy's head with oil. And indeed revenge is never more bloody than when it speaks in a still voice and the dialect of love. *Nemo hostilius vulnerat quam qui amabili manu*: "No wound more deadly than that which is given with a friendly hand." For he strikes home and without fear, who is not feared when he strikes.

That we may therefore take this old devil off the stage, which makes such desolation in the shape of an angel of light, we will set before you the common provocations of anger, in repressing of which our meekness especially consists. The philosopher, in his "Rhetorics," (lib. ii. cap. 2,) hath furnished us with three. The first is *καταφρόνησις*, "contempt" of our persons; which is a sharp provocation. And he is undoubtedly a great proficient in the school of meekness who hath learnt to be contemned. Therefore David makes it his prayer, "Remove from me reproach and contempt." (Psalm cxix. 22.) Such a temptation he looked upon with fear and trembling. The second is *ἐπηρειασμός*, "an incommodation, or spiteful usage." Which frequently affronts us; men being many times of that vile disposition as to delight in mischief, and to look upon it as a purchase, though they reap no other fruit than the bare doing of it. The last is *ἔξρις*, which is "injury with grief and loss and disgrace." Our Saviour here points out to it in this chapter, when he tells us of a blow on the cheek, of taking our coat, of violence. (Matt. v. 39—41.) And the second he mentions in express terms: *Προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπηρειαζόντων ὑμᾶς*, "Pray for them who spitefully use you." (Verse 44.) Now he that hath learnt to be contemned; he that can drink down injuries, and digest them; he that is so spiritually poised and ballasted, that no tempest, no wind of the unrighteous, can shake him; he that is as ready to forgive as wicked persons are to wrong him; he that so abstains from offence as if he pardoned no man, and yet so pardons others as if himself were an offender; may challenge a title to this beatitude, and to the inheritance of the earth.

And now, further to display the beauty of this virtue, we will proceed to show you the extent of it. The philosophers may seem to have too narrowly confined it: if therefore we will

behold meekness in its full proportion, we must look for it not at Athens, but Jerusalem; not in the philosophers' Schools, but in *Porticu Solomonis*,\* in the house of Wisdom, in the gospel of Christ. Reckon up all the precepts which philosophy hath given us, all the examples which have been shown; and though we shall find enough to shame us Christians, yet we shall not find that degree of meekness which is required of Christians. We read in Tully, that "justice requires that we endamage none," *nisi lacessiti injuriâ*, "till we are provoked by some injury." † And Lactantius well censureth it: *Simplicem veramque sententiam duorum verborum adjectione corripit*: "He spoiled a good sentence by the addition of two words," *lacessiti injuriâ*, "provoked by injury." For a Christian hurts no man, though he be provoked. Seneca speaks more like a Christian: *Magni animi est, omnium veniam dare, nullius petere*: "It proceeds from a great and well-subacted mind, to pardon all injuries, but to walk in that simplicity that it needs ask pardon of none." But yet this doth not fully express a Christian; who doth not only pardon injuries, but in a manner reward them. It is a great commendation which Tully gives Cæsar, that he forgot nothing but injuries, nor ever hurt an enemy, *nisi in agris stantem*, "but fighting in the field." He was one of the stoutest and greatest champions of the world. He stood the shock of fifty set battles, besides all sieges and outroads: he took a thousand cities and walled towns: he over-ran three hundred several countries: and in his wars were slain well-near twelve hundred thousand men, besides all those who died in the civil wars. And yet he protested of himself, and that most truly, that he never drew blood but in the field. Here is indeed a pattern of meekness; and such a pattern that most Christians are unwilling to take out: yet this doth not reach home.

*Novam certè mansuetudinem docet Christus*: "Certainly Christ hath drawn out meekness in other colours;" and except our meekness exceed the Heathens', we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Will you see the full extent of meekness? It is hard to show it: for, as I find it in the fathers, who walked by the light of scripture, it is made almost boundless. Not to be angry, to forgive, not to revenge; these yet do not reach it. To suffer with patience and a quiet mind the greatest injuries; this is not home. To forgive seventy times seven times; (Matt. xviii. 22;) this number is yet short to teach our meekness to keep time with the malice and injustice of men. It must yet press further, and manifest itself, not only in suffering, but in

\* "In Solomon's Porch."—EDIT.

† *De Officiis*, lib. i. cap. 7.

doing. "Dost thou know," saith St. Chrysostom, "that thy brother intends particular mischief against thee, that he would imbrue his hand in thy blood?" *Αὐτοῦ φίλησον τὴν δεξιάν,* "'Yet kiss that hand:' for the Lord did not refuse to kiss that mouth which made the bargain for his blood." Hath he robbed thee of all thy goods? Be not angry; but if by chance any thing be left, give it willingly to him who hath taken away all. Nay, saith Basil, "if thine enemy hunger, though thou hast but one loaf to sustain thyself, yet give it him, and rely upon God's providence to feed thee."

You will say now perhaps that I have stretched it too far, even beyond its line and compass; and, as Pythagoras instructed his scholars to do, where there was burden enough already, laid on more. If I have, yet I have done it *magnis autoribus*,\* and have no less than St. Chrysostom and St. Basil for my defence. Indeed meekness cannot be too far extended, where with evil handling it hath been shrunk up almost to nothing. "What! kiss his hand? nay, off with his head. Feed our enemy with bread? nay, strike a dagger into his throat." This goes for current doctrine; not in the camp alone, amongst barbarous soldiers, but in the habitations of peace, amongst Christians. As for true meekness, we find it *in paginis, non in operibus*; † in our books perhaps, but not the least syllable or character of it in our manners and deportment. I have often wondered that Christians should make so little esteem of this virtue, which is theirs alone, and especially directed unto them. The very Pagans by the light of nature saw the horror of revenge, and abhorred it.

*Ferus est, legumque videtur  
Vindictam præstare sibi,*

could Claudian say. ‡ And the Jew, though many things were by way of indulgence permitted him for the hardness of his heart, yet renounced it utterly. You may hear the Jews of Alexandria speak it plainly in Philo, *Οὐκ ἐφηδόμεθα, Δέσποτα, τιμωρίας ἐχθροῦ.* "Lord, we delight not to take revenge upon an enemy." Only the Christian, who hath received this precept in that latitude in which neither nature nor the law did ever tender it, hath more estranged himself from it than either Jew or Pagan; no Heathen story ever finding out a parallel to the malice of a Christian. I speak this to our shame: but the philosopher will tell us, *Corruptio optimi est pessima*, "The most

\* "Countenanced by high authority."—EDIT. † "In our pages, not in our works."—EDIT.

‡ *Panegyris De Consulato Fl. M. Theodori*, 225.

"Fierce is he; and he seems himself to seize

Vengeance, the dread prerogative of law."—EDIT.

pure complexions are most noisome when they putrefy;" and of all men a wicked Christian is the worst.

And indeed something there is in our very religion which the devil makes use of to deceive us. The gospel is news of peace, and speaks nothing but forgiveness and salvation: our Saviour is a meek Saviour, we are sure; and because he is willing to pardon us when we fall down before him, we nourish a false hope that he will pardon us our malice also, and forgive us our debts, though we take our brother by the throat. Besides, revenge may be numbered amongst those sins which go down glibly and with delight, because no human law doth punish it; nay, in some case [law] doth seem to countenance it. Adultery, and drunkenness, and such-like sins, carry shame in their very foreheads, and, when they are committed, strike the soul with some regret and sorrow, which many times begets a repentance not to be repented of: but ambition, and revenge, which is commonly a handmaid to ambition, these lurk secretly in our heart, and are commonly in men of great wisdom and spirit, who will not have their credit poured out upon the ground as water, but preserve it choicely as a precious ointment. They carry commonly content and honours and riches with them for their reward. And therefore we conceive that these precepts of meekness and forgiveness are spoken rather *cohortatoriè quàm verè*, "rather by way of exhortation than strictly exacting that we should perform them." And now though the meek be "blessed," yet we count it a kind of happiness that we are not meek; and for "the inheritance of the earth," we can never purchase it, we think, with so sheepish a disposition. And therefore what morosity do we put on! How punctual are we in our behaviour, that we be not wanting to ourselves where the law can help us! We love the proverb well that tells us, that "he that makes himself a sheep, the wolf will eat him." For meekness and forgiveness, you shall hear of it perhaps in our last Will and Testament. We refer that to our death-bed, when indeed we should have nothing else to do but to die. And if we give up our last gasp meekly, we are meek enough.

And now tell me, beloved, when meekness is thus contracted, nay, lost, in our manners, can we blame these holy men who have enlarged the curtains of her habitation, and required more at the hands of a Christian than perhaps ever any Christian attained to? There is no danger here of excess; no, there is no fear but that in this we will come short. *Meliùs ultra quàm citra stant mores*: "I cannot do too much, I may too little." And, as Quintilian speaks, where he gives the rules of a perfect orator,

*Omnia sunt præcipienda ut plura fiant* : “ We command all to be done, that we may do the most.” For suppose we observed our Saviour’s precepts literally ; suppose I gave him my cloke that took away my coat, and went two miles with him that compelled me to go one ; suppose I kissed the hand that struck me, and made my enemy the sole inheritor of all my estate ; what inconvenience would follow hence ? or what danger could it bring unto my soul ? Nay, how like would this make me to the proto-martyr, St. Stephen, who prayed for his enemies ; and to the great Martyr, (as the fathers call him,) Christ himself, who died for his enemies ! The world perhaps might put upon me a fool’s coat : but what need I fear this imputation, when angels clap their hands, and applaud my meekness, and God himself hath promised a robe of glory ? *That folly is my glory which makes me wise unto salvation.*

Beloved, the doctrines which teach perfection are not dangerous ; nor can they be too often urged in this dull and heavy age, which hath so long talked of imperfection, that imperfection is almost become a duty. “ We must be no better than we are ; we are Pelagians and proud if we conceive any hope of it.” As if our Saviour, when he commands us to be perfect, did speak more than he meant ; intending only this, that we should be imperfect. Be not deceived : God requires at our hands perfection, and the fulfilling of his law. But indeed it is one thing what God requires, and another what he will accept. He will accept of our endeavours if they be serious, and if we strive forward to perfection : but if our endeavours grow feeble and faint, and fail, upon conceit of I-know-not-what weakness, he will not accept them. If we think that any degree of meekness is enough, we have forfeited our blessedness, and the promise is made of none effect. The orator in his Institutions—speaking of men that were famous for their strength of memory ; of Themistocles, who learnt the Persian tongue in one year ; of Mithridates, who spake as many several languages as he governed nations, which were no fewer than two-and-twenty ; of Cyrus, who could call his soldiers by name—tells us, the truth of this was uncertain : *Habenda tamen fides est vel in hoc, ut qui crediderit et speret* : “ Yet,” saith he, “ every man that desires to improve his memory by industry, ought to believe it, that, believing it to be so, he may hope also by practice to gain as good a memory as they.”\* *Quicquid enim fieri potuit, potest* : “ For whatsoever hath been once done by any man, may be done again by every man.” The same may we apply to our present purpose. Do we read of any that kissed

\* *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, lib. xi. cap. 2.



that hand that struck them? that gave their enemies bread when themselves were like to starve for hunger? that gave him a talent who had robbed them of a mite? Let us not entertain these stories as fabulous, but believe that it was and should be so, *ut qui crediderit et speret*; that belief may raise our hope; and the hope that so much may be done, may make it easier for us to do the most; to cool our anger, to curb our desire of revenge, to empty our hearts of all gall and bitterness, to be like unto Moses, who under the law was the meekest man upon the earth, and to Christ himself, who was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth." (Isai. liii. 7.)

2. And now having showed you the nature of meekness, in the next place we will seat her in her proper subject: and that is every man, as he is a private man, not as he bears the sword of justice. For our Saviour, when he commends meekness, doth not strike the sword out of the hand of the magistrate. *Nullum verbum hinc de magistratu et ejus officio*, saith Luther: "Here is no mention made of the magistrate and his office." It is far better that I lose my coat than revenge myself; for by the law of equity no man can be judge in his own cause: but let the magistrate strike, and the blow is not of revenge, but justice. "Justice," saith Plutarch, "accompanies God himself, and breathes revenge against those who break his law; which men also by the very light of nature use against all men" *ὡσπερ πολίτας*, "as they are citizens and members of a body politic." Meekness is that virtue which sweetly ordereth and composes our mind in pardoning those injuries which are done to our private persons; but it hath no room in the breast of a judge, who looks upon the offender *vultu legis*, "with no other countenance than that of the law." In my own case *licet mihi facere quod volo de meo*, "it is lawful for me to do what I will with my own." (Matt. xx. 15.) I may give it, or I may suffer it to be torn from me: and by this loss I may purchase the inheritance of the earth. But when I sit on the tribunal as a judge, the case is not my own. It is meekness to pardon wrongs done unto ourselves; but to deny the course of justice to him that calls for it, to sheath the sword when it should cut off the wicked from the earth, may peradventure commend itself by the name of "inconsiderate pity," but meekness it cannot be. For the magistrate, as he is the keeper of the law, so in his proceeding he must be like it. Now the law is *surda res*, as the young men in Livy complained, "deaf and inexorable."\* Though thou speak it fair, it hears

\* *Historia*, lib. ii. cap. 3.

thee not; and though thou speak in tears, it regards thee not. It is immovable as a rock, and it stares the offender in the face. No compliment can shake it, no bribe move it, no riches batter it. If it seem to change countenance and turn face, it is not its own face, but the paint and visor of the magistrate. When the magistrate is grown meek on the sudden by the operation of a bribe, when injustice beats upon this rock of the law to mollify and allay its rigour, that falls out which Tertullian observes of infidelity meeting with a convincing argument; injustice prevails, and the law is vanquished; and, what is monstrous, the ship is safe, and the rock shipwrecked. Therefore the magistrate, when he is to condemn an offender, may put on the passion of anger, and raise it up against his compassion; and then strike him, saith Seneca, with the same countenance he would strike a serpent.\* *Histrionibus, etsi non iratis, tamen iram simulantibus, conducit*: "The very counterfeiting of this passion helpeth the tragedian in his action." And the judge may set it against those assaults which may move him to unnecessary compassion, and which may turn him to the right hand or the left.

We need not here enlarge ourselves in a case so plain. That which the private man may demand may be now more useful,—Whether it be lawful to implead our brother in any court of justice. Questionless it is. For to deny it were not only to pluck the magistrate from the bench, but to cancel and disannul all the laws of Christian commonwealths. Morality teacheth us to do no wrong: that which religion adds is no more but this,—to keep our mind in an habitual preparation of suffering. And so the casuists and St. Augustine interpret these precepts of our Saviour, that we must then retain the heart of a friend when we have taken upon us the name of an adversary, and so compose ourselves that we should choose rather to lose our right than our charity. But "charity seeketh not her own:" (1 Cor. xiii. 5:) a good argument, not only to keep me from the tribunal, but to drive me also from the church. For he that bids me "cast my bread upon the waters," (Eccles. xi. 1,) hath also prescribed that form of prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matt. vi. 11.) It is true, *Regulæ charitatis latius patent quàm juris*, "The rules of charity are of a larger extent than those of the law." If thou owe a hundred measures of oil, charity takes the bill, and sits down quickly, and writeth fifty; and if thy vessels be empty, she cancels the bill, and teareth the indenture. But it is as true, too, that "charity begins at home," and that "he that provides not for his family is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.)

\* *De Irâ*, lib. i. cap. 16.

To conclude this point: It will concern every man to take heed *quo animo, quibus consiliis*, "with what mind and upon what advice" he brings his brother to the bar. *Necessitas humanæ fragilitatis patrocinium*: "Necessity is a good plea;" but where necessity enforceth not, I may say of it, as St. Paul doth of marriage, "He that impleadeth his brother, may do well; but he that impleadeth him not, doeth better." (1 Cor. vii. 38.) And I cannot but commend that resolution of St. Jerome, *Mihi etiam vera accusatio adversus fratrem displicet: nec reprehendo alios, sed dico quid ipse non facerem*. And happy is he who can take up this holy father's language: "It is troublesome to me to bring an accusation, though never so true, against a brother: I censure not those who do it, but only declare what I would not do myself." Indeed our Saviour bids us "agree with our adversary," (Matt. v. 25,) and forgive him; but we do not read that any where he hath commanded us to implead him. And this should make us suspect ourselves in such a case: for here are two parts,—not to implead him, and to implead him. The one is most evidently lawful; it is in our power: the other, doubtful. When our judgment, then, is at a loss, and cannot resolve on the one side, the best wisdom it will be to cleave unto the side which is evident and plain; unless we please to put it to the venture, and harass our souls, and try conclusions with God. But most commonly so it is, *Prevalent dubia*, "Things doubtful in themselves have more power over us than those things which are plain and certain;" and men are easy of belief in those things which they would have done. What is wanting in the evidence, we supply in our will: and although our opinion point to the plainest side as safest, yet we secretly wish that the more doubtful part were true; and at last, though we have small evidence, yet we adhere and stick close unto it. From hence those stabbings and digladiations amongst Christians. From hence it is that because we may lawfully implead our brother, we think we may as lawfully undo him; and because I may redeem my cloke by law, by law I may purchase my brother's cloke also. I conclude this point with that of the apostle, "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thess. v. 21, 22.)

I should now proceed to lay open the object of our meekness; but I see the time hath prevented me. Only give me leave to tell you, it is not enough to lay down our malice for a day, and then to raise it up, and breathe it out against our brother, upon the next occasion: for this is a strong evidence that our malice was never laid down. For though it must set before the sun, yet it must not set as the sun, to appear again and show itself in

our hemisphere the next morning. The civilians will tell us, *Qui comitali morbo laborant, ne iis quidem diebus quibus morbo carent sanos rectè dici*: "They that are troubled with the falling-sickness are not to be reckoned as free from it when the fit is off." If the disease return again, be the term and date of time what it will, it is but the intermitting of the fit, no freedom from the disease. And so malice and anger, which is a kind of falling-sickness, though for some time we are rid of it, yet if it return again, we are still guilty of the sin, though we made some pause, and suffered it not for a while to break out. Will you know where you may make use of your anger? Make use of it upon yourselves. *In propriis erratis securissimus hic affectus*, "This affection doth never good but when it looks inward, and frowns upon our own misdeeds." For by this turning our anger upon ourselves and our sins, *femininum iræ, masculinum facimus*, "that which is womanish in anger is made masculine and heroic; nay," *ferinum iræ, divinum facimus*, "that which is brutish in anger is made divine," and fights the Lord's battles, beats down imaginations, destroys principalities and powers, treads down strength, all our pride and animosity, and works a conquest on our sins, the greatest enemies to God and ourselves. And thus, if we invert the operation of anger, and turn its edge upon ourselves, if our meekness and "moderation be shown unto all men," (Phil. iv. 5,) and our indignation rest upon our sins, it shall prevent that anger which is as just as terrible, and shall entitle us to this blessedness here, even all those blessings which are the purchase of the Prince of Peace; and the blood of that meek Lamb shall cleanse us from all our sins.

---

## SERMON LXXXIV.

### THE OBJECTS OF MEEKNESS.

*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—*  
Matthew v. 5.

#### PART II.

IN the morning we laid before your eyes the virtue of meekness; a virtue by which, as St. Chrysostom saith, a man may know a Christian better than by his name. Tertullian telleth us that anciently, among the Heathen, professors of Christianity were called, not *Christiani*, but *Chrestiani*, from  $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ , a word

signifying “sweetness and benignity of disposition.” I know not how you were taken with the beauty of this divine and useful virtue, and with what affections you beheld her in those colours in which the gospel hath showed her. Some, perhaps, heard the report of her as they do news from a far country; not able to contradict, nor yet willing to believe, it. To others her description was but *picta nebula, quæ non longiùs delectat quàm videtur*, “as a painted cloud, which is forgot with the removing of our eye, and delights no longer than it is seen.” But yet as the queen of Sheba spake of the wisdom of Solomon, so will I of this excellent virtue: “The one half is not yet told you.” (1 Kings x. 7.) We will therefore proceed on, and pass by those lines which we first drew; and, having showed her in her general description, and confined her to her proper subject, we will, according to our method proposed,

3. In the next place present you with the object of meekness; by which I mean those persons in respect of whom this virtue is to be exercised.

We have not so confined meekness and shut her up in the breasts of private men, but we shall as far enlarge her in respect of her object; which is in compass as large as all the world. Τὸ ἐπεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, saith the apostle, “Let your softness” (“your moderation, your meekness, your equity”) “be known unto all men.” (Phil. iv. 5.) For though meekness and equity be not one and the same virtue, yet every meek man so far participates of equity that he is not ἀκριβοῦς δίκαιος, ἀλλ’ ἐλαττωτικὸς, “too exactly just, but makes himself less than he is;” that he is willing to depart from his own right, and will not do all that strict and rigid justice warrants as lawful. Nor is this virtue cloistered up to shine in a corner; but, like the sun itself, *non uni aut alteri, sed statim omnibus in commune profertur*, “she displays her beams, not in good men alone, or Christians alone, but to wicked men, to erring men, to all men, even to the whole world.” For this end God doth permit some evil persons in the world. *Omnis malus aut ideò vivit ut corrigatur, aut ideò vivit ut per illum bonus exerceatur*: “Every wicked person doth either prolong his life for his own good and amendment of himself, or for the good of others, to their trial.” If there were none to injure us, meekness were but a fancy, or, like a rose in winter, would have a being, an essence, perhaps, but no existence. If there were no evil men, there would not be any good; at least, not known to be so. *Utrâque turbâ*, saith Seneca, *opus est, ut Cato possit intelligi*: “There must be both good and evil men, to make Cato’s virtues

known.\* And Nazianzen, in his Epistles, speaking of the factious behaviour of men, and the troubles of the times, saith, that all those things were to come to pass *ut Basilus cognoscetur*, “that Basil might be known;” that he might manifest that wisdom which long experience had taught him, and so “shine forth as a light in the midst of a froward generation.” (Phil. ii. 15.) Whilst the heavens are clear and the weather fair, and no wind nor tempest stirs, *inglorius subit portum*, “the pilot arriveth indeed at the wished-for haven, but without praise or glory.” And were our life becalmed, and if no tempests of injuries beat upon us, what room then had meekness to show herself? *Sed cum stridunt funes, et gemunt gubernacula*; † when malice rageth, when wicked men provoke us; when there are Ishmaels to scoff at us, Shimeis to revile us, Zedekiahs to smite us on the cheek; when injuries, like the billows of the sea, follow close one on the neck of another; then is the world a stage for meekness to act her part on.

An easy thing it is to be meek where there is nothing to raise our anger; and revenge hath no place where there is no provocation. The philosopher, in his Rhetorics, giving us the character of meekness, tells us that most men are gentle and meek to those who never wronged them, ἢ ἀκουσίως ποιοῦσιν, “or who did it unwillingly;” to men who confess an injury, and repent of it; ταπεινουμένοις πρὸς αὐτοὺς, “to those who humble themselves at their feet,” and beseech them, and who do not contradict them; to those whom they reverence and fear: for fear and anger seldom lodge in the same breast. But Christianity raiseth meekness to a higher pitch, where no injury can reach it. A studied and plotted injury, an injury made greater by defence, an injury from the meanest, from him that sits with the dogs of our flocks, any injury at any time, from any man, maketh a fit object for Christian meekness, which, in the midst of all contumelies and reproaches, in the midst of all contradictions, is still the same.

Should we insist upon every particular, our discourse would be too large. We will therefore fasten our meditations upon those which may seem most pertinent, and so take off all those pretences which we Christians commonly bring-in as advocates to plead for us when we forget that we are Christians. There be two errors in our life; the one, of opinion; the other, in manners and behaviour, which is far the worse: and though these of themselves carry no fire with them, yet by our weakness

\* *De Tranquillitate Animi*, cap. vii.

† *PLINII Epist. lib. ix. ep. 26.*

“When the distended rigging rattles, and the labouring rudder creaks.”—EDIT.

commonly it comes to pass that they are made the only incendiaries of the world, and set both church and commonwealth in combustion. If our brother's opinion stand in opposition to ours, if his life and conversation be not drawn out by the same rule, we presently are on fire; and we number it amongst our virtues, to be angry with those who in their doctrine are erroneous, or in their lives irregular. Now in this I know not how "blessed" we think ourselves, but I am sure we are not "meek." For if we were truly possessed of that meekness which Christ commends, as we should receive the weak in faith with all tenderness, so should we be compassionate to the wicked also, and learn that Christian art which would enable us to make good use both of sin and error.

(1.) And, First, for error: Though many times it be of a monstrous aspect, yet I see nothing in it which of itself hath force to fright a Christian from that temper which should so compose him that he may rather lend a hand to direct him that errs, than cry him down with noise and violence; seeing it is a thing so general to be deceived, so easy to err, and so hard to be reduced from our error; seeing with more facility many times we change an evil custom than a false opinion. For sin carries with it an argument against itself. *Hoc habet quod sibi displicet*, saith Seneca: "As it fills the heart with delight, so it doth with terror." Like the viper, *mater est funeris sui*, "it works its own destruction," and helps to dispossess itself. But error pleaseth us with the shape of truth; nor can any man be deceived in opinion, but as Ixion was, by embracing a cloud for Juno, and falsehood for the truth. He that errs, if he were persuaded he did so, could err no longer. And what guilt he incurs by his error, the most exact and severe inquisition cannot find out; because this depends on that measure of light which is afforded, and the inward disposition and temper of his soul; which are as hard for a stander-by to dive into as to be the searcher of his heart.

The heresy of the Arians was as dangerous as any that ever did molest the peace of the church, as being that which struck at the very foundation, and denied the Divinity of the Son: yet Salvian passeth this gentle censure on them: *Errant, sed bono animo errant; non odio, sed affectu, Dei*: "They erred, but out of a good mind; not out of hatred, but affection, to God." And though they were injurious to Christ's divine generation, yet they loved him as a Saviour, and honoured him as a Lord. The Manichees fell upon those gross absurdities that reason, when her eye is weakest, may easily see through: yet St.

Augustine, who had been one himself, bespeaks them in this courteous language: *Illi sæviant in vos qui nesciunt quocum labore verum inveniatur*: "Let *them* be angry with you *who* know not with what difficulty the truth is found, and how hard a matter it is to gain that serenity of mind which may dispel the mists of carnal phantasms. Let *them* be angry with you *who* were never deceived, and who do not know with what sighs and groans we purchase the smallest measure of knowledge in divine mysteries. I cannot be angry; but will so bear with your error now as I did with my own when I was a Manichee." A good pattern to take out, and learn how to demean ourselves towards the mistakes of our brethren, and to "bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" with the pretence of zeal and religion, (Rom. xv. 1, 2,) which lose their name and nature, and bring-in a world of iniquity, when we use them to fan the fire of contention.

I do not see that relation or likeness between difference of opinion and contrariety in affections, that one would beget the other, or that it should be impossible or unlawful to be united unto him in love who is divided from me in opinion. No; charity is from heaven, heavenly, and may have its influence on minds of diverse dispositions, as the sun hath on bodies of a different temper; and it may knit the hearts of those together in the bond of love whose opinions may be as various as their complexions. But faction and schism and dissension are from the earth, earthly; and have their beginnings and continuance, not *ab extra*, from the things themselves which are in controversy, but from within us, from our self-love and pride of mind, which condemn the errors of our brethren as heresies, and obtrude our own errors for oracles. I confess, to contend for the truth is a most Christian resolution, and in Tertullian's esteem a kind of martyrdom. It is the duty of the meekest man to take courage against error; and, as Nazianzen speaketh, in a cause that so nearly concerns us as the truth of Christ a lamb should become a lion. I cannot but commend that of Calvin, *Maledicta pax cujus pignus desertio Dei*, "That peace deserves a curse which lays down the truth and God himself for a gage and pawn;" and *benedicta prœlia quibus regnum Christi necessitate defenditur*, "those battles are blessed which we are forced to wage in the name of the Lord of hosts." And thrice happy he who lays down his life a sacrifice for the truth! But religion and reason will teach us, that all this may be done without malice or rancour to their persons whose error we strive against, and that the Lord's battles may be fought without



shedding of blood. Surely meekness is the best director in these wars, where he gains the greatest conquest who is overcome. The physician is not angry with him whom he intends to cure; but he searcheth his books, and useth his art and all diligence, *morbum tollere, non hominem*, "to remove the disease, and not to kill the man:" how much more should we be careful how we handle our weak and erring brother, lest we make him weaker by our rough and unskilful usage, and cure him indeed, but in the tyrant's sense in Suetonius, who boasted he had done a cure, when he cut off a man's head, or otherwise put him to death, who had offended him! We read that Paul and Barnabas were at some difference about the choice of their companion; the one "determined to take Mark with them," the other "thought it not good:" from whence sprung that "paroxysm," as the evangelist terms it, which divided them the one from the other. (Acts xv. 37—39.) Yet St. Jerome will tell us, *Quos navigatio separavit, hoc Christi evangelium copulavit*: "Though they sailed to several coasts, yet they were both bound for the same negotiation, even the preaching of the gospel." Paul "withstood Peter to his face;" (Gal. ii. 11;) yet in the same chapter he calls him a pillar of the truth. (Verse 9.) A father may differ from his son, and the wife from the husband, in opinion: yet this difference breaks not the bond of that relation which is betwixt them; but the father may, nay, must perform the office of love, and the son of duty. And why may not Christians be diversely persuaded in some points of religion in earth, and yet the same heaven hold them both?

That which deceives us are those glorious things which are spoken of zeal. We read of Phinehas, who was blessed for thrusting his javelin through the adulterous couple; of the austerity of Elijah, the zeal of Simon the Canaanite, the severity of Peter, which struck Ananias and Sapphira dead; the constancy of Paul, who struck Elymas the sorcerer blind. And we are told, *Non est crudelitas pro Deo pietas*, that "in God's cause the greatest piety is to be cruel." But we willingly mistake ourselves: for neither here is the cause alike, nor the person the same. We know not of what spirit we are. (Luke ix. 55.) Every man is not a Phinehas, an Elijah, a Paul, a Peter. Nor did Elymas lose his sight, and Ananias his life, for their errors, but for their witchcraft and grand hypocrisy. Nor are times the same. We cannot but commend zeal as an excellent quality in man: but as agaric or *stibium*, being prepared and castigated, are sovereign physic, but, crude and unprepared, are dangerous; so zeal, which so many boast of, seasoned with discretion, is of

singular use and profit; but, taken crude and in the mineral, it oft-times proves deleterial and unfortunate. Zeal is a light, but by occasion it troubles the eye of the understanding; and being by degrees enraged by our private ends and fancies, at last it puts it quite out, and leaves us fighting in the dark. *Θερμότης ἀπαίδευτος*, and *νωθρότης ἀπρακτος*, “an unlearned zeal,” and “supine negligence,” are both so bad that it is not easy to determine which is worst: only negligence lets inconveniences slyly steal into the church, but unguided zeal much plies those errors which negligence letteth in; and, as if error were indeed a hydra, it never strikes off the head of one error, but two arise in the place. And therefore St. Bernard, in his Forty-ninth Sermon on the Canticles, will tell us, *Semper zelus absque scientiâ minùs utilis invenitur, plerùmque etiam perniciosus sentitur*: “Zeal without knowledge is always unprofitable, many times most dangerous.” And therefore, the more hot and fervent it is, and the more profuse our charity, with the more care and diligence should we set our knowledge and reason as a sentinel, *quæ zelum supprimat, spiritum temperet, ordinet charitatem*, “which may abate and cool our zeal, temper our spirit, and compose and order our charity.” For if we do not keep our souls with diligence, and carry a strict and observant eye upon our zeal, our meekness will be consumed in this fire, and with it the whole crop and harvest of spiritual wisdom lost. We shall be “heady and high-minded, lovers of ourselves;” (2 Tim. iii. 2, 4;) unwilling to pardon one error to our brethren, and to acknowledge any of our own.

This is it which hath been the mother and nurse too of all those outrages in the church of Christ that story hath transmitted to posterity, and those too which later and our present times have been too guilty of; that men will neither subscribe to the opinion of others, lest they may be thought not to have found the truth, but have borrowed it; nor will yet retain so much meekness as to give their brother leave to err; but, when they cannot convince him by argument, fall heavy upon him with reproach: a fault sometimes in him that errs, and sometimes in him who holds the truth; the one obstinate, the other indiscreet; both ready to maintain with violence what they cannot persuade by reason.

The Arians betook themselves to this guard, and called in the temporal sword to defend their cause against the orthodox; and when they could not prevail by argument, they made use of outward force: and so this faction, saith the father, plainly showed *quàm non sit pia, nec Dei cultrix*, “how destitute it was of piety

and the fear of God." The Donatists styled themselves *filios martyrum*, "the offspring of martyrs;" and all other Christians, *progeniem traditorum*, "the progeny of those who basely delivered up the sacred things." They broke the chalices, demolished the altars, ravished virgins and matrons, flung the holy eucharist to the dogs, slew those who were not of their faction, beat down the bishop Maximinian with bats and clubs even as he stood at the altar, and did those outrages on Christians which Christian meekness would have forbidden them to commit on a Jew or infidel. The monks of Egypt were indeed devout and religious men, but for the most part Anthropomorphites, "holding that God had hands and feet and all the parts that a man hath," and was in outward shape and proportion like unto one of us; that, having got Theophilus, a learned bishop of Alexandria, into their hands, so roughly used him that he could not get out of their fingers till he made use of his wits and sophistry, and told them in a kind of compliment that he had seen their face as the face of God.

Nor did this evil rest here, amongst the vulgar and discontented persons, *quibus opus erat bello civili*, as Cæsar spake, "who could not subsist but in times of noise and hurry;" but it blasted the fairest plants in all the church. Chrysostom would not consent to give his suffrage for the condemnation of Origen's works: Epiphanius subscribes to it, and makes St. Chrysostom a patron of those errors which did no doubt deserve a censure. Both forgot that meekness which they both commended in their writings. Epiphanius curseth Chrysostom, and Chrysostom Epiphanius; and both took effect: for the one lost his bishopric, and the other his country, to which he never after returned. An infirmity this is which we cannot be too wary of, since we see the strongest pillars of the church thus shaken with it: an evil which hath always been forbidden and retained in all ages of the church; zeal being made an apology for fury, and the love of truth a pretence to colour over that behaviour which hath nothing in it to show of truth or Christianity. And therefore the church of Christ, which felt the smart of it, hath always condemned it. When Eulalia the martyr spit in the face of the tyrant, and broke and scattered the idols before [him], Prudentius and others were fain to excuse it, that she did it *impulsu Divini Spiritûs*, "by special revelation from the Spirit." Which was indeed but an excuse, and a weak one too: for that Spirit which once descended in the shape of a dove, and is indeed the Spirit of meekness, cannot be thought to be the teacher of such a lesson. But when other Christians

in the time of Diocletian attempted the like, and were slain in the very enterprise; to deter others from such an inconsiderate zeal, it was decreed in the council of Eliberis, (canon lx.) *Siquis idola fregerit*, "If any hereafter break down the Heathen idols, he shall have no room in the Diptychs, nor be registered with the number of the martyrs, although he be slain in the very fact;" *quatenus in evangelio non est scriptum*, "because we find nothing in the gospel that casts a favourable countenance upon such a fact."

I have brought this instance the rather, to curb those forward spirits now-a-days who, did not fear more restrain them than discretion, would be as good martyrs as these, and, with the same engine with which they heave at the outwork, in time would blow up church, religion, and all; who are straight angry with any thing that doth but thwart their private humour, or with any man that by long study and experience and evidence of reason hath gained so much knowledge as not to be of their opinion. What mean else the unchristian nicknames of "Arminians," and "Pelagians," and "Socinians," and "Puritans," which are the glorious scutcheons the meekness of these times doth fix in every place, and the very pomp and glory of their triumph, when factious men cry down that truth which they are not willing to understand? Doth this rancour, think you, proceed from the Spirit of meekness? or rather from the foul spirit of distraction? Little do these men think that the truth itself suffers by such a defence; that rash zeal cannot be excused with intentions, and the goodness of the end which is proposed; that the crown of martyrdom will sit more gloriously on his head who rather suffers that the church may have her peace, than on his who dies that he may not offer sacrifice to idols. For in this every man hath been merciful and good to himself; but in the former he merits for the whole, and is a sacrifice for the public peace of the church whereof he is a part. Talk of martyrdom what we please, never was there any martyr, never can there be any martyr, made without meekness. "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, though I give my body to be burned" in the justest cause, for the truth of the gospel, "and have not" meekness, which is a branch of Christian "charity, it profiteth me nothing:" (1 Cor. xiii. 3:) for my impatience will rob me of that crown to which my sufferings might otherwise have entitled me. The canonists speak truly: *Non presumitur bono exitu perfici quæ malo sunt inchoata principio*: "The event of that action can never be good whose very beginning was unwarrantable."

Philosophers have told us that when the sea rageth, if you throw-in oil upon it, you shall presently calm it. The truth of this I will not now discuss : but give me leave to commend this precious oil of meekness to pour upon your souls, when zeal or ignorance shall raise a tempest in your thoughts. Have men of wisdom tendered to you something which falls cross with your opinion? If you obey not, yet be not angry. If your obedience appear not in your practice, yet let it be most visible in your meekness. Remember that private men, who converse in a narrow sphere, must needs be ignorant of many things which fall not within their horizon and the compass of their experience; that they may have knowledge enough, perhaps, to do their own duty, which will come short in the performance of another's, especially of a superior's. If an erroneous conscience bind thee from the outward performance of what is enjoined, yet let truth and scripture and meekness seal up thy lips from reviling those *qui in hoc somnum, in hoc vigiliis reponunt*, "who do watch for thy good, and spend their days, and nights too," that thou mayest live in all good conscience before God all the days of thy life.

To conclude this point: Dost thou know or suppose thy brother to be in an error? Take not mine, but St. Paul's, counsel, and "restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering that thou also mayest be deceived." (Gal. vi. 1.) And peradventure this may be one error,—that thou art persuaded that thy brother errs, when truth and reason both speak for him. Pride and self-conceit are of a poisonous quality, and, if not purged out, *exhalat opaca mephitim*,\* "it sends forth pestiferous vapours," which will choke and stifle all goodness in us. But meekness qualifies and prepares the mind, and makes it wax for all impressions of spiritual graces: it doeth no evil, it "thinketh no evil:" it cannot be "provoked" with errors in opinion, nor with those grosser mistakes and deviations in men's lives and conversation. (1 Cor. xiii. 5.)

(2.) We have brought meekness to its trial indeed. For, sure, where sin once shows its deformity, all meekness in a Christian, whose religion bindeth him to hate sin, must needs be lost. It is true, all created natures we must love, because they have their first foundation in the love and goodness of God; and he that made them "saw that they were good." (Gen. i. 31.) But sin is no created entity, but without the compass of nature, and against her, against that order and harmony which reason dispenseth. This only hurts us: this is that

\* VIRGILII *Aeneis*, vii. 84.

smoke which comes from the very pit of hell, and blasts the soul, even then when the body is untouched: this is the furnace in which men are transformed into devils. We cannot, then, hate sin enough. Yet here our Christian skill must show itself; and we must be careful that our anger, which frowns upon sin, do not rage against the sinner; and that whilst we strike at one we do not wound both. Our anger must be, not *νέμεσις*, but *ἀγανάκτησις*, not “a hatred of the person,” but “a detestation of the sin.” A hard subtlety indeed it is, to distinguish things thus confounded and blended together! *Facile est atque proclive*, saith St. Augustine, *malos odisse, quia mali sunt: rarum autem et pium, eosdem ipsos diligere, quia homines sunt*: “It is an easy thing to hate evil men because they are evil: but to love them as they are men, this is a rare and pious thing.” And therefore we must be wary that our anger be not too hot and extreme against the actions of others, for fear lest at last we transpose it upon the men themselves. Timon, that great hater of mankind, made this his apology,—“that he hated evil men, because they were evil; and all others, because they did not hate them.” He thought it a sin not to be angry with those who did commit sin. But Christianity begets no Timons, but children like unto the Son of God, who, though he “knew no sin,” yet was content to lay down his life for sinners.

There is no man so evil but hath some good thing to commend him, though it break not out, as being clouded and darkened with much corruption. Therefore Christian meekness is very wary, and doth not think there is nothing else but evil where she often sees it: and though she cannot nourish a good opinion of the man, to think him good; yet she will a charitable hope, that he may be so. And as those who seek for treasure give not over by reason of clay and mire, so long as there is any hope to speed; so doth not meekness slack her hand and cast off her industry, though it be spent on the most polluted soul, *ut ad quædam sana, in quorum delectatione acquiescat, per tolerantiam perducatur*.\* Many for want of this meekness destroy the work of God, *dum ita objurgant quasi oderint*, “whilst they reprove their brother as if they hated him, and upbraid rather than reprehend him.” They make it their virtue *rixari cum seculo*, “to chide the times and manners.” They suppose they are bound to hate sinners; and will be just rather in showing mercy to their beast than to their brother. “Away with him, away with him from the earth!” is quickly said; but

\* “That it may be led, by forbearance, to certain sound principles, in the contemplation of which it may long take delight.”—EDIT.

is commonly breathed from a soul as much stained and polluted as his is whom we suppose to be sick to death. What Tertulian spake is most true: *In majestatis reos et publicos hostes omnis homo miles est*: "Against traitors and public enemies every man is a soldier." And it is as true, that every one that is of strength to pull a soul out of the fire, is, when his brother sins, a priest also, and may, nay, is bound to, rebuke him: but he must be careful that his counsel and advice be the dictates of his love, not of his gall and bitterness; that he take God himself for a pattern, *qui non homines odit, sed vitia*; "who never hated men," whom he made, "but sin," which, being God, he could not make.

The prophet David puts it up in the manner of a question unto God himself, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those which rise up against thee?" and presently gives himself the answer: "I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." (Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22.) *Quid est illud, PERFECTO ODIO?* saith St. Augustine: "What is that the prophet means by 'perfect hatred?' No more than this: He hated the vices in them, not the men." How, then, will this perfect hatred and the love of our enemies subsist together? To wit, by this: That we hate this in them,—that they are wicked; and love this in them,—that they are men. Psalm cix. is a Psalm of cursing. There we find such fearful imprecations that a true Christian must needs tremble but to hear them read. St. Chrysostom, in his very first words upon that Psalm, saith, Πολλῆς ἐνταῦθα συνέσεως ἡμῖν χρεῖα, "He that will take this Psalm into his hands had need be discreet." Whether it be a prophecy or a collection of bitter imprecations, is not much material: in the gospel there is no such gift of prophecy, nor liberty of cursing, granted. He that foretells his brother's ruin, is a prophet also of his own: and he that curseth his brother secretly in his heart, though it be for sin, hath committed that sin which will bring a heavy curse upon himself. I know it hath been used in the church; and it hath been thought a heavy curse to say, *Deus laudum*,\* upon any man, which is the very first words and title of that psalm. A common thing it was in France, saith Calvin, if any man had an enemy that molested him, to hire with a sum of money a monk or a Franciscan every day to repeat this Psalm. A gentlewoman of great note procured one of that fraternity to use that very form of imprecation against her only son. So

\* "O God of praises:" In the English authorized version, "O God of my praise!"  
—EDIT.

dangerous are the examples even of the saints of God; which we are too ready to follow, when they are ill; and when they are good and warrantable, as ready to mistake them. *Si David, cur non ego?* “If David, that saint of God, that man after God’s own heart, did fill his Psalm with imprecations, why may not we also set our prayers to the same tune, and curse our enemies with a *Deus laudum?*” I will grant we may when, as we find such a roll of curses under the law, we find also such another under the gospel. If the proverb will suffer the Jew but to creep into Mount Ebal, sure Christianity should be a fence to keep a Christian from coming near it. I cannot conceive but that God doth exact this duty in far greater measure from a Christian than from a Jew. For though this precept in equity bound the Jews as well as us, yet God, who dispensed with them, hath not done that favour unto us, who have received far greater from him, but requires this duty of meekness from us in the highest degree. If he demanded of the Jew an homer, he will exact from us Christians an ephah.

#### APPLICATION.

For conclusion, then, and to make some use of that which hath been spoken: Let us not go in the ways of the Gentiles; nor in theirs who are so fully bent against those who are not of the same opinion, that in the prosecution they forget they are men, and that there is any such virtue as meekness; that, like Hannibal, cannot live without an enemy; or, like those ancient Spaniards in Justin, are so out of love with concord that they swell at the very name; that have no other reason or inducement to quarrel but to quarrel, and think religion consists in words of gall and acts of vengeance, that clamour is zeal, and fury piety, and that then they reign as saints when they wash their feet in the blood of their brethren; that call every opinion that is not theirs “blasphemy;” and that are not so hot against a foul pollution in the heart as against an error in the understanding, nor so angry with a crying sin as with a supposed mistake. If these be saints, then certainly our Saviour is not so meek as he hath told us; or we must believe, what is past understanding, that our meek Saviour, as he once had Judas, so may now have these men of Belial for his disciples. If these men be saints, why may not Lucifer recover his place? What! a saint with fire and sword, with axes and hammers, with “fire devouring before him, and a tempest round about him?” (Psalm l. 3;) like the bottomless pit, sending forth smoke as out of a furnace, smoke out of which come locusts to devour the earth? a covet-



ous, malicious, deceitful, treacherous, adulterous, murderous saint? Such saints peradventure may walk on earth, or [go] under that name; but sure they will never follow the Lamb, nor appear in those "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter iii. 13.)

Let us, I say, not be like these: "for they say, and do not;" (Matt. xxiii. 3;) they say, and do the contrary. What profit, what honour will it be to be such an angel as appears here in light, and is reserved to be kept in chains of darkness for ever? such a saint as shall be turned into a fiend? Let us rather "take upon us the yoke" of Christ, who was "meek;" (Matt. xi. 29, 30;) and "bear the burdens" of these contentious men, as St. Paul exhorts. (Gal. vi. 2.) Let us not assault one another with lies in the defence of truth, nor break the bonds of charity in the behalf of faith, nor fly asunder in defence of the corner-stone, nor be shaken in pieces to secure the rock. If they separate themselves, let us not withdraw our affection from them. *Si velint, fratres; et si nolint, fratres*: "If they will, let them be our brethren; and if they will not, yet let them be our brethren." And in these times of hurry and noise, in the midst of so many divisions and sects, let us look upon every man with an eye of charity and meekness, or, as Erasmus speaks, "with an evangelical eye:" and, leaving all bitterness and rancour behind us, let us walk on in a constant course of piety and holy contention with ourselves; not answering reviling with reviling, but beating down every imagination which is contrary to meekness; doing that upon sin in ourselves which we cannot do upon error in others. When they spurn at our meekness, and defy our silence, and rebuke our innocence, let us be meek and silent and innocent still; when they will kill us, be as silent as they who have been dead long ago: that so we may possess our souls, when they are ready to take them from us; and be like the people of Nazianzum, who by their peaceable behaviour in times of great dissension gained a name and title, and were called "the ark of Noah," because by this part of spiritual wisdom they escaped that deluge and inundation of fury which had well-near overflowed and swallowed up all the Christian world.

In the last place: Let us level our wrath and indignation against sin, but spare the sinner, since ourselves so often do call upon God to spare us: and if he did not spare us, where should the righteous, where should the best saints, appear? It is one mark of antichrist, that "he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," (2 Thess. ii. 4,) thundering out his excommunications, canonizing, damning, absolving, con-

demning whom he [may] please. Thus ὑπερορᾶν, “to overlook” our brother, thus to look down upon our brethren, and dart a heavy censure at them for that [for] which we should shed a tear, is so far to follow antichrist as to take the seat and place of God; nay, to put him out of his seat, and to do his office; nay, to do that which he will not do; to sentence him to death whom God, for aught we know, hath chosen to eternal life. Nay, though it doth not make a man *the* antichrist, yet it makes him so much antichrist as to place him in a flat opposition to Christ himself. For he is not such an angry Bishop, such a proud “High Priest, as cannot be touched with the feeling of our sins;” (Heb. iv. 15;) but one who, being meek and tempted himself, is “able” and willing “to compassionate those that are tempted.” (Heb. ii. 18; v. 2.) Did we feel the burden of our brethren’s sins, as he did; did we apprehend the wrath of God, as he did; we should rather “offer up prayers and supplications with strong cryings and tears” for them, (Heb. v. 7,) than “tell of the misery of these wounded ones,” (Psalm lxix. 26,) (that is, “speak vauntingly and preach” thereof, as the word signifieth,) than let our anger loose against them, and beat upon them with all our storms.

I confess, prudent and discreet reprehension is as a gracious and seasonable rain, but rash and inconsiderate anger as a tempest, a hurricane, to waste a soul, and carry all before it, and dig up piety by the root. As it is truly said that most men speak against riches, not out of hatred, but love, unto them; so do many against sin, not out of hatred to sin, but love of themselves, which may be as great a sin as that which they are so loud against. *Signum putant bonæ conscientiæ, aliis maledicere:* “They count it a sign of a good conscience in themselves, to be angry with and speak evil of others;” they think themselves good if they can say others are evil: whereas true righteousness speaks always in meekness and compassion; but that which is false and counterfeit breathes forth nothing but wrath, reviling, and indignation.

O beloved, what solecisms, what contradictions may we observe in the school and church of Christ! men raging against sin, and yet raising a kingdom from it in themselves; loathing it as poison, and yet drinking it down as water; angry with it, and loving it; whipping it with scorpions, and yet binding it about them as a garment! Jacob’s sons declaiming against uncleanness, with the instruments of cruelty in their hands! Absalom bewailing the injustice of the times, when himself was a traitor! Judas angry with Mary’s ointment, when he would have it sold,

and put it into his bag! What a pageant is it, to see sacrilege beating down idolatry, covetousness whipping of idleness, profaneness pleading for the sabbath, gluttony belching out its fumes against drunkenness, perjury loud against swearing, and hypocrisy riding in triumph, and casting out its fire and brimstone on all! And what is a groan or a sigh from a murderer? What is a satire from a Sodomite, or a libel from a man of Belial? If hell hath any music, this is it; and the devil danceth after it, after the groans and sighs and prayers and zeal of a Pharisee. And “do they then well to be angry?” Yes, they say, they “do well to be angry, even to death;” (Jonah iv. 9;) but not at their sin, of themselves, but their brethren. For meekness and cruelty cannot harbour in the same breast. Nor will it come near the habitations of covetousness, ambition, and hypocrisy: for where these make their entrance, meekness takes the wing, and flies away.

Therefore, to conclude, let us “mark” these men, “and avoid them,” as the apostle counsels. (Rom. xvi. 17.) And though they “bring us into bondage,” though they “smite us on the face,” (2 Cor. xi. 20,) though they take from us all that we have, let us pity them, and send after them more than they desire,—our prayers, that God will open their eyes, that they may see the snare of the devil, which holds them fast while they defy him and all his works; and what a poor and narrow space there is betwixt them and hell, while they think they are in the presence and favour of God. In a word: though they curse, let us bless; though they rage, let us pray: and, as the apostle counsels, “let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from us, with all malice: and let us be kind and meek one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us.” (Eph. iv. 31, 32.)

---

## SERMON LXXXV.

### THE NECESSITY OF MEEKNESS.

*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—*  
Matthew v. 5.

#### PART III.

WE cannot insist too long upon this subject; yet we must insist longer than at first we did intend. For this holy oil, like that of the widows,\* increaseth under our hands, and flows more

\* 1 Kings xvii. 9—16; 2 Kings iv. 1—7.

plentifully by being poured out. That which our last reached unto you was the object of meekness, which we found to be as large as the whole world. Τὸ ἐπιεικὲς, saith St. Paul, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." (Phil. iv. 5.) For meekness is not cloistered up within the walls of one society, nor doth it hide itself behind the curtains of Solomon; but looks further, upon the tents of Kedar, upon Beth-el and Beth-aven. We could not, nor was it necessary to, gather and fetch-in all particulars: but we then confined our meditations to those which we thought most pertinent, and within their compass took-in the rest; which were error in opinion, and (which is the greater error, nay, "the greater heresy," saith Erasmus) error in life and conversation; where we took off those common pretences and excuses which Christians usually bring-in as advocates to plead for them, when they forget that meekness without which they cannot be Christians. For what is in error or in sin which may raise my anger against my brother? *Errantis pœna est doceri*, saith Plato: "If he err, his punishment is to be taught:" and if he sin, we must molest and pursue him, and beat upon him with line upon line, with reprehension upon reprehension, till we convert him. If he err, why should I be angry? and if he sin, why should I hate him? The way to uphold a falling house is not to demolish it; nor is it the way to remove sacrilege to beat the temple down. When we fight against sin and error, we must make Christ our pattern, *qui vulnus, non hominem, secat; qui secat ut sanet*; "who levels his hand and knife against the disease, not against the man; and never strikes but where he means to heal."

1. And now to add something which the time would not before permit: let us but a while put upon ourselves the person of our adversaries, and ours upon them; and conceive it as possible for ourselves to err as for them. And if we do not thus think, we fall upon an error which will soon multiply, and draw with it many more: for we cannot err more dangerously than by thinking we cannot err. And then to this let us join a prudent consideration of those truths wherein we both agree, which peradventure may be more, and more weighty, than those in which we differ; that so by the lustre and brightness of these the offence taken by the other may vanish, as the mist before the sun. For why should they who agree in those truths that may lift them both up together to heaven, fall asunder and stand at distance as enemies for those which have no such force and activity? This is to hazard the benefit of the one for the defence of the other; and, for the love of a truth not necessary,

to abate our love of that which should save us; to forfeit our charity in a violent contention for faith; and so be shut out of heaven for our wild and impertinent knocking at the gates. Therefore in all our disputes and debates with those whom we are so ready to condemn of error, let us walk by this rule, which reason and revelation have drawn out to be our guide and direction,—that no text in scripture can retain the sense and meaning of the blessed Spirit, which doth not edify in charity. “Knowledge puffeth up,” swelleth us beyond our sphere and compass; but it is “charity” alone that “doth edify,” (1 Cor. viii. 1,) which in all things dictates what is expedient for all, and so “builds” us up together “in a holy faith.” (Jude 20.) We cannot think *that* doctrine can be of any use in the church *which* exasperates and envenoms one man against another. It is St. Bernard’s observation. And therefore moderation and meekness is that salt which Christ requires to be in us; that wise and prudent seasoning of our words, that purging of our affections, amongst which ambitions and envyings are the most violent. “Have this salt in yourselves, and” then, as it follows, you shall “have peace one with another;” (Mark ix. 50;) and this peace will beget in you a holy emulation to work out your eternal peace together with fear and trembling.

2. Secondly. For sin “why judgest thou thy brother?” (Rom. xiv. 10;) or so much forgettest that name as to be enraged against him? The judgment is the Lord’s, who “seeth things that are not as if they were.” (Rom. iv. 17.) What, though he be fallen upon a stone, and sore bruised? he may be raised again, and be built upon that “foundation which is sure, and hath this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his.” (2 Tim. ii. 19.) This open profaner may become a zealous professor; this false witness may be a true martyr; this persecutor of the church may at last be a glorious member of it, and a stout champion for the truth. He that led the saints bound to Jerusalem, (Acts ix. 2,) did himself afterwards rejoice in his bonds, and suffer and die for that truth which he persecuted. The apostle, where he erects a kind of discipline amongst the Thesalonians, thus draws it forth: “If any man obey not our word,” that is, be refractory to the gospel of Christ, “have no company with that man, that he may be ashamed;” (2 Thess. iii. 14;) that, seeing others avoid him, he may be forced to dwell at home, to have recourse unto himself, to hold colloquy with his own soul, and to find out the plague in his heart which makes him thus “like a pelican in the wilderness, or an owl in the

desert ;” (Psalm cii. 6 ;) like the leper under the law, whom no man must come near. “ Have no company with him ;” that is, by thy company and familiarity give him no encouragement in his sin. For good words and courteous behaviour may be taken for applause : a smile is a hug, and too much friendship is a kind of absolution. And yet, for all this, have company with him : for it tells us, “ Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother :” (2 Thess. iii. 15 :) deal gently and meekly with him. But this we cannot do if we wholly separate ourselves from him, and avoid his company.

The rule of charity directs us to think every man an heir with Christ ; or, if he be not, at least that he may be so. And this is a kind of privilege that charity hath in respect of faith. Faith sees but a little flock, but few that shall be saved ; makes up a church as Gideon did his army, who took not all that were pressed out for the war, but out of many thousands selected a band of three hundred, and no more : but charity taketh-in all, and sees not any of that company whom she will dismiss ; but thinks all, though now their hands be weak and their hearts faint, in time may be sweetly encouraged to fight and conquer. You will say, this is an error of our charity. But it is a very necessary error : for it is my charity thus to err ; and it is not a lie but virtue in me, in my weak brother’s case to nourish a hope of that strength which peradventure he shall never recover. The holy mistakes of charity shall never be imputed as sins ; no, nor be numbered amongst those of ignorance. For he that errs not thus, he that hopes not the best of all he sees, though weltering in their blood, wants something to complete and perfect him, and make him truly worthy of the name of a good Christian. And this error in charity is not without good reason. For we see not how nor when the grace of God may work, how sinful soever a man be. Peradventure, saith St. Jerome, God may call unto him lying and stinking in his sins as in a grave, “ Lazarus, come forth.” (John xi. 43.) Charity therefore, because she may err, nay, because she must err, looks upon every man with an eye of meekness. If he err, she is light ; if he sin, she is a physician, and is ready to “ restore him with the spirit of meekness.” (Gal. vi. 1.)

II. And thus much for the object of meekness : we proceed now to that which was in order next ; and as we have drawn forth meekness in a complete piece, in her full extent and latitude, so will we now in the last place propose her to you as a virtue, 1. Most proper, 2. Most necessary, to a Christian : by

which degrees and approaches we shall press forward towards the mark, even the reward of meekness, the inheritance of the earth. Of these in their order.

1. Meekness, we told you, is that virtue by which we may better know a Christian than by his name. And this the very enemies of Christianity have acknowledged. *Vide ut se invicem diligunt Christiani!* was a common speech among the Heathens: "See how the Christians love one another!" when they broke the laws of meekness, and did persecute them. *Malè velle, malè facere, malè dicere, malè cogitare de quoque ex æquo vetamur:* "To wish evil, to do evil, to speak evil, to think evil, are alike forbidden to a Christian;" whose profession restraineth his will, bindeth his hand, tacketh up his tongue to the roof of his mouth, and curbeth and fettereth his very thoughts. For as we are not ἀκέφαλοι, "without a head," so, if we will be members, we must be supplied with that oil of meekness which distilleth down from our Head, Christ Jesus. He came not, saith Tertullian, into the world with drum and colours, but with a rattle rather; not with a noise, but "like the rain into a fleece of wool;" (Psalm lxxii. 6;) not destroying his enemies, but making them his friends; not as a captain, but as an angel and ambassador of peace; not denouncing war, but proclaiming a jubilee; and with no sword but that of the Spirit.

Look upon all the acts of our Saviour, whilst he conversed on earth amongst men; and we shall find they were purely the issues of tenderness and meekness. He "went about doing good:" (Acts x. 38:) as he cured men's bodies of diseases, so he purged their souls of sin. When he met with men possessed, though with a legion of devils, he did not revile, but dispossess, them: he rebuked the devil, but not the man. His mouth was so filled with the words of meekness, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," that he seldom spake but the issue was comfort. He pronounced indeed a "woe" to the Pharisees; (and so he doth to all sinners: for woe will follow the hypocrite whithersoever he goeth, though it be not denounced;) a woe to drive them from sin to repentance; not a curse, but a precept, to fright them from that woe which he denounced. It is but pulling off the visor, casting away their hypocrisy, and the woe will vanish and end in a blessing. He called Herod a "fox:" (Luke xiii. 32:) for, as God, he knew what was in him; and to him every wicked person is worse than a beast. No fox to Herod, no goat to the wanton, no tiger to the murderer, no wolf to the oppressor. Obstinate sinners carry their woe and curse along with them, nor can they fling it off but with their sin. And Christ's pro-

fession was "to call sinners to repentance." (Matt. ix. 13.) When the reed was bruised, he broke it not; and when the flax did smoke, he quenched it not. (Matt. xii. 20.) As he hath a rod for the impenitent, (and it is the last thing he useth,) so he cometh in the spirit of meekness, and openeth his arms to receive and embrace them that will meekly yield and bow before him, and repent, and be meek as he is meek. Now our Saviour is *disciplina morum*,\* "the way and the truth." (John xiv. 6.) And that gracious way which it hath pleased him to tread himself before us, the very same he hath left behind to be gone by us; and hath ordered a course of religious and Christian worship, which consisteth in meekness and sweetness of disposition. An incongruous thing therefore it is that, he having presented to us the meekness of a lamb, we should return the rage of a lion; that he should speak in a still voice, and we should thunder.

And this is most proper to Christianity and the church. For, (1.) First. What is the church of Christ but a congregation of meek ones? We cannot bring bears and lions and tigers within that pale. *Quomodo colligemus?* as Tertullian speaketh: "How shall we gather them together?" *Jungantur tigribus ursi.*† We cannot bring them together into one body and collection; or, if we do, but as Samson did his foxes, to look several ways. (Judges xv. 4.) We are told indeed that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf with the young lion:" but it is when they are so cicurated and tame that "a little child shall lead them." (Isai. xi. 6.) It is true, the visible church is made up of both. For not only "without," as St. John speaketh, but within, "are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters;" (Rev. xxii. 15;) as there were in the ark of Noah both clean and unclean beasts. In this church is Cain as well as Abel, Esau as well as Jacob, Judas as well as Peter; but they are no parts of that "general assembly," no parts of the "church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," nor to be numbered amongst "the spirits of just men made perfect." (Heb. xii. 23.) That part of the church which is thus militant in earth, shall never be triumphant in heaven. Cruel Dives shall never be seen in Abraham's bosom, nor the bloodthirsty man in *his arms who shed no blood but his own*, and that for the sins of the world. The church which shall be saved was not planted in blood: or, if it were, it was in the blood of a Lamb. It was built upon

\* "A school of morality."—EDIT.  
(See HORACE, *De Arte Poeticâ*, 13.)—EDIT.

† "Let bears be joined to tigers."



the faith of Peter, not upon his sword. When he used his sword, he was commanded to put it up; but his faith was to be published to the whole world: and if he had any grant or title to be the head of the church, it was not for cutting off Malchus's ear, but for laying down his own life for the faith.

Many notes have been given of the true church by those who acknowledge none but their own, notes which show her not. "Multitude of true believers:" Why? the number is but small. "Infallibility:" It is an error to think so. "Antiquity:" The church, that is now ancient, was once new; and by this note, when it was so, it was no church. "Continuance to the end of the world:" We believe it: but it is no note; for we cannot see it. "Temporal felicity:" This is oftener seen in the tents of Kedar than at Jerusalem, in a band of soldiers than in the church, which winneth more conquests in adversity than in prosperity, and worketh out her way to glory in her own blood. These are notes *quæ nihil indicant*, "which show nothing;" trumpets that "give an uncertain sound." But if I should name meekness as a note of the true church, I should have a fairer probability to speak for me than they. For meek men, if they be not of the church, yet are "not far from the kingdom of heaven." But a meek Christian is entitled not only to the earth, but to heaven also. The church is a church, though her professors be "but of yesterday," (Job viii. 9,) and though they fall into error. And though it be in tribulation, yet still it is a church; yea, it is never more glorious than in persecution. But without meekness it cannot be a Christian church, no more than a man can be a man without a soul. For meekness, if it be not the essence of the church, yet is a property which floweth from its very essence. For that faith is vain which leaveth malice or rancour in the heart. A Christian and a revenger, if they meet together in the same person, the one is a box of poison, the other but a title.

(2.) Again, in the Second place: Our reason will tell us that meekness is most proper to Christianity and the church, because human reason was too weak to discover the benefit, the pleasure, the glory of it: nor was it seen in its full beauty, till that Light came into the world which did improve and sublime and perfect our reason. To human reason nothing can seem more unreasonable, more unjust, than to love an enemy, to surrender our coat to him that hath stripped us of our cloak, to return a blessing for a reproach, and anoint *his* head with oil *who* hath stricken us to the ground. This is a new philosophy, not heard of on earth, till she was sent down from heaven. On earth it was, "A blow for a blow, and a curse for a curse." *Dixerit*

*insanum qui me, totidem audiet.\** If injuries be meted out unto us, we mete them back again in “full measure, pressed down, and running over.” (Luke vi. 38.) Revenge is counted an act of justice; the Pythagoreans’ τὸ ἀντιπεπονθός, “a reciprocation of injuries.” And what need [of] any other law than our grief or our anger? or where should justice dwell but on the point of our sword?

Εἰ κε πάθοι τὰ κ' ἔρεξε, δίκη θεῶα γένοιτο

It was the law of Rhadamanthus, “It is equity that he that doeth, should suffer what he doeth; and he that suffereth, should return it in the same kind.” When those “brethren” in evil, (Gen. xlix. 5,) having slain Hamor and Shechem, and spoiled their city, were rebuked by their father Jacob, they were ready with this plea, “Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?” (Gen. xxxiv. 31.) No sooner is the blow given, but the first thought is to second and return it; and nature looks upon it as upon an act of justice.

In the world it goeth thus: all power and dominion and justice is tied to the hilts of our sword; which if we can wield and manage dexterously, with skill and success, that which otherwise had been an injury is made a law. The Turk, to settle and establish his religion, as he first built it in blood, so giveth way to every thing that best sorteth with human corruption, to make it easy, that men may not start back for fear of difficulties: and as he wrought it out with his sword, so his best argument for it (as it is most times in a bad cause) is his sword. The philosophers cried down revenge, yet gave way to it; chid their anger, yet gave it line thus far: and both Tully and Aristotle approve it. But, *Munit nos Christus adversus diaboli latitudines*, saith Tertullian: “Christian discipline is a fence to keep us from these latitudes and expatiations,” and pointeth out to the danger of those sins which the Heathen commended for virtues.

Many, indeed, have dealt with these precepts of our Saviour as skilful cooks do by some kind of meats which of themselves are but harsh and unpleasant,—cooked and sauced them, to make them savoury dishes. For when we see our journey long and full of rubs and difficulties, we fancy something that may both shorten and level it, and make it more plain and easy than indeed it is. Christ our Master is so great an enemy to murder, and would have us so far detest it, that he hath not suffered us to be angry. Now the interpretation is, We must not “be angry” εἰκῆ, “without a cause.” (Matt. v. 22.) And this em-

\* HORATIUS *Serm.* lib. ii. sat. iii. 298. “Who calls me mad, shall hear himself a fool.”—DR. FRANCIS'S Translation.

boldeneth us to plead for our wrath, as Jacob's sons did, when it is "cruel," (Gen. xlix. 7,) and upon this very colour, that there is good reason we should be angry. For, be the storm never so high, be our anger never so raging, yet we can pretend a cause, and that cause we pretend as just; otherwise we would not pretend it: for who would pretend that for a cause which is unjust? To "love our enemies," (Matt. v. 44,) this is a harsh and an iron speech; and he must have the stomach of an ostrich who can digest it. Therefore we have dressed and sauced it, to make it palatable and of easy digestion: and some have thought, and been bold to say it, that this is no peremptory precept, but only a counsel and advice, and left to our choice whether we will keep it or no. If we neglect and pass it by, we hazard only *aureolam*, not *auream*; we hold fast eternal life, but lose some "little coronet" and addition which the full performance would have purchased. When Julian the Apostate urged the Christians, and laid it to their charge, that their religion was destructive of all rule and government, because the precepts which Christ gave forbade them to resist evil, or go to law with their brother; Nazianzen confesseth that our Saviour did indeed leave behind him these injunctions, but that he added withal, *μη τῶν πάντων εἶναι*, "that they did not belong to every man," but to those only who could *τοῦ ἀκροῦ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐπιθάλειν*, "by their holy endeavours lift themselves up to the highest pitch of virtue:" for those that keep them there was a reward laid up, but no fear of punishment to those whose endeavours fell short. Which answer of his doth not satisfy: for if it be better not to implead my brother than to implead him, the apostate's argument is still of force, because Christianity commendeth that as best. From this source and fountain sprang that river of evangelical counsels that overfloweth in works of super-erogation, which are drawn up by the power of the keys into the treasury of the church, and then showered down in pardons and indulgences, to water the dry places of the earth, to quench the insatiable thirst of the court of Rome. Had the father but distinguished betwixt public and private revenge, he had peradventure stopped the mouth of the adversary, and not unhappily occasioned others to open theirs against the truth. Whatsoever his mistake was, it is not so dangerous as theirs who think these precepts concern Christians not at all; and who conceive that our Saviour was so far from adding any thing unto the law, that he brought in his hand a dispensation from it; that for us so strictly to observe the moral law is not so necessary; that this ease and benefit accrues to Christians by the coming of Christ,—that they may

be more indulgent to themselves, since they have Him for their Advocate who is their Lawgiver, and hath proclaimed a jubilee rather in sin, than from it. We will not deal with these men as those hard task-masters did with the Israelites,—because they rest from their burden, withdraw their straw, and yet require the whole tale of bricks: but we may make their burden greater because they have more straw.

I might here enlarge myself. All that I intend is only this,—to show you how proper this virtue of meekness is to a Christian; that God requireth a higher degree of it in Christians than he did formerly in the Jews; that our Saviour doth now bind our hands and tongues and thoughts in those cases where the law of Moses did give more line and liberty; that the name of “brother,” which was heard of only in Jewry, is not now shut up in the narrow confines of a house or family, but must be the language of the whole world. He that is within the pale of the church, and he that is not of the church; he that is a Christian, and he that never heard of Christ; he that is so near me as to be my friend, and he that standeth at the distance of an enemy; a Christian, a Turk, a Jew, a friend, a foe, every man, now is my “neighbour.” We who are disciples of a better Testament, *sanctiores incolæ*, “inhabitants of that ‘Jerusalem which is from above,’” must look up upon that light which our great Master hath held out to us in his gospel, and not content ourselves and sit down as if we were at our journey’s end, when we have only walked on along with the Jew a sabbath-day’s journey, and made no further progress in meekness than the *dictum ab antiquis*,\* the law of Moses, pointeth to. For how little of a Christian hath he who dareth foment so much anger as might glow in the heart of a Jew and not consume him! I love not to rake in the ashes of the blessed saints of God, whose “memory is as sweet as honey in every man’s mouth, and as music at a banquet of wine.” (Ecclus. xlix. 1.) But an evil custom men have got, to make good men’s errors more authentic than their virtues, and for sins against the gospel suborn apologies out of the law, and not strive to pass the narrow gate because the Jew had the favour to find admittance at a wider. David had the “praise of ten thousands;” God honoured him among his saints, and “gave him a crown of glory:” (Ecclus. xlvii. 6:) yet every action of David is not a rule for a Christian, though never laid to his charge: and David by especial dispensation might do *that*, and yet not forfeit his soul, *which* would now sink a Christian’s

\* The Vulgate translation of the phrase, thus given in the English version: “It hath been said by them of old time.” (Matt. v. 21, 27, 33.)—EDIT.

to the lowest pit. In 2 Sam. xix. 23, he forgiveth Shimei, who had cursed him, and telleth him he shall not die, and sweareth unto him; and yet, even with his last breath, he leaveth it in charge with his son Solomon to "bring his hoary head down to the grave with blood." (1 Kings ii. 8, 9.) David no doubt is a glorious saint in heaven: but should any Christian follow his example, and make revenge a part of his last Will and Testament; if our Saviour's rule be true, which is most plain, that if we forgive not our enemies, God will not forgive us; (Matt. vi. 15;) that gate of mercy which was open to David, will certainly be shut to him.

Yet how have men beat their brains to make good this fact of David's, which can find no excuse, for aught we know, but from the times and particular indulgence and dispensation! Some say, he pardoned him only for the time, and retained a power of revenge to be put in execution when he pleased, or when convenience should favour him. But what is this but to make David guilty of a lie and Jesuitical equivocation? Some say, he sinned not, because he did it not himself, but left it to his son. And what difference is there whether I kill a man myself, or cause him to be put to death? Some, that the oath was to be taken, not as Shimei, but as David himself, understood it; because, when all is in the power of him that sweareth, the meaning of the words is in his power also. This hath been the absurd impiety of these days, and makes an oath, which is the strongest confirmation, of no use, but as a thread of tow, which every man may break asunder at his pleasure. Others, that it was an oath, not upon compact, but liberality. As if an oath which is freely made bindeth not as much as that doth which is upon agreement. Lastly, some, that he forgave him, as he was David, but not as he was king of Israel: which is in effect, As a private man, he swore that he should not die; but as a public person, he commanded his son to cut off his head. Ταῦτα μὲν σκῆψεις καὶ προφάσεις. "These excuses and apologies" do not acquit, but condemn, this blessed saint of God; and with the least breath, you see, they are scattered as leaves before the wind. It is not our intent to aggravate that fact as a sin in David, which yet in a Christian would be *crimen devoratorium salutis*, "a sin that standeth in adverse aspect to the spirit of the gospel, and would deprive of all right to that promise which is here made to the meek, and leave no hope of salvation." For after our Saviour had given that precept of loving our enemies, he presently backeth it with the strongest reason that can be brought: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; who

maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. v. 45.)

We conclude this point with that of Tertullian: *Novam certè mansuetudinem docet Christus, etiam vicem injuriæ prohibens permissam a Creatore*: "Christ hath brought-in a new kind of meekness into the world, forbidding that liberty of revenge which the Maker of all things had for some reason permitted for a time." But this may seem to be *durus sermo*, "a hard saying;" and the world is not very fruitful of such men as are able to bear it. For if this be true, the language of the gospel is more harsh than that of the law, and speaketh in more terror than the thunder from Mount Sinai: we are come again "to blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and to the voice of words, which we entreat may be spoken to us no more." (Heb. xii. 18, 19.) Not to hate an enemy; to love an enemy; to do good to an enemy; not to be angry; if this be gospel, our case is far worse than that of the Jew. Indeed, saith St. Basil, this was the very reason why the Jews would not receive Christ and his gospel: they said, *Σκληρός ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος*, that "it was a hard saying." (John vi. 60.) *Laboriosa omnia ignavis*: "All things are toilsome to the sluggard." A pain it is to him to pull his hand out of his bosom. (Prov. xxvi. 15.) Contenance is a hard lesson to the wanton, temperance to the glutton, and meekness to a Nabal, to a son of Belial, who will swell and quarrel at a very look, and, though the winds be still about him, and not the least injury so much as breathe on him, yet hath wind enough shut up in his heart to raise a tempest. *Semper offendunt bona malos, pia impios, sancta profanos*: "Good things are always scandalous and offensive to evil men." If you enjoin meekness, you put a thorn in their sides to prick and trouble them: and you may to as much purpose bid a dead man rise and walk, as win him that loveth his passion to lay it down.

But yet, how hard soever our talk is, we find that the Jews had an expensive and laborious religion; that they were *sub elementis mundi*, as children, or rather as slaves, "under the elements of the world;" that they had many ceremonies, many statutes and laws, *in quibus non vivebant, sed puniebantur*, "in which they did not so much live as were punished." And now "what doth God require of thee," O Christian? Not to circumcise thy foreskin, but thy heart; not "thousands of rams," but to forgive seventy times seven times; not "ten thousands of rivers of oil," but only this "precious ointment," which may fall upon the head of thy brethren, and "run down to the skirts of their garments," (Psalm cxxxiii. 2,) to their lowest infirmities;

not "the fruit of thy body for the sin of thy soul," but to forgive, that thou mayest be forgiven. (Micah vi. 7, 8.) And what is easier than this? saith Chrysostom. *Non opus est peregrinationibus*: "Thou needest not go on pilgrimage, or take any long journey, to achieve it:" it is but going out of thyself, and leaving thy pride and animosities behind thee. Thou needest not sail for it, thou needest not plough for it: it is but ploughing up the fallow ground of thy heart, (Hosea x. 12,) and then sowing the seed of meekness. *Sufficit ut velis tantum, et jam virtus illa suum opus implevit*: "If thou canst fight against thy flesh, degrade thy ambition, and shut out the world, if thou canst work in thyself a willingness to forgive, this virtue hath its work and consummation." *Habe charitatem, et fac quod vis*, as it is in the gloss of the canon law: "Have charity," put on the bowels of compassion and meekness, "and do what thou wilt." For if thou canst but once love its countenance, thou wilt soon embrace it. *Amor magus*, "Love is a kind of magician," and hath spells and enchantments to charm our passions, and conjure down this devil.

You may now think yourselves in a very slippery place, when, not a violent tempest, but a gust, a puff of wind, will overthrow you; when, not murder, but anger; not a word, but a thought; not revenge, but not doing good; not rage, but impatience; not noise, but a whisper, may endanger your title to this crown of blessedness. "Fear not:" only "be strong and of good courage." (Deut. xxxi. 6.) The Stoic looked pale in a tempest; but he imputed it *subitis motibus officium rationis prævertentibus*, "to those phantasies and sudden motions which do unawares suppress the reason, and give her no time to deliberate:" so a Christian may be shaken with those assaults which by subreption may steal upon him; he may speak what afterwards he will revile more than his enemy, and do what he will detest more than an injury; cast a look of dislike, and soon distaste that look; cloud his countenance, and chase it away with a prayer; be moved, and within a while be more moved for being so; and so remain the same meek man and a Christian still. For God forbid that an injected thought, a sudden motion, a forced frown, a word struck out by some outward and unexpected violence, should shut any man out of the covenant of grace, and hope of happiness! If God should thus mark extremely what is done amiss, no flesh would be saved, but the whole world would be as Sodom and Gomorrah. That which the gospel requireth at our hands is, that every man should severely watch over himself, watch and deprehend himself, and then double his watch, suspect a tempta-

tion, and fight against it before it come, fight against it though it never come, and not easily entertain any act which standeth in opposition to this virtue, nor any occasion which may draw-on that act. For, to be bold to think evil, so I vent it not in language; to imagine I may vent, so I do not strike; and, when I strike, to comfort myself because another's little finger is greater than my loins; to commend the rod because it is not a scorpion; to say of those sins which surprise me because I do not fear them, as Lot did of Zoar, "'Are they not little ones?' may I not commit them, and yet 'my soul live?'" (Gen. xix. 20;) to make my not doing of evil an apology for my not doing of good, my not thrusting my neighbour out of his own doors a sufficient warrant for my not receiving him into mine; to think that any degree of meekness is enough,—is to forfeit all, and lose my title to the inheritance of the earth.

It is, I confess, a sad observation, but too manifestly true, that if meekness be a virtue so proper, so essential to the church, then the church is not so visible as we pretend, but we must seek for the church in the church itself. For if meekness have yet a place, it must be (which is very strange) in the hearts of men, in the inward man. For, to the eye, every hand is lifted up, every mouth open; and they who call themselves the members of the church, are very active "to bite and devour one another:" and it is not probable that their hearts should melt within them, and their bowels yearn, whose mouths are as open sepulchres, and whose feet are swift to shed blood. (Rom. iii. 13, 15.) Is meekness a note of the church? Certainly we may distinguish Christians from the world by nothing surer than by malice, in which they surpass both the Turk and the Jew: and where most is required, least is found. *Odium theologorum*, "The malice of divines," was in Luther's time a proverb: but now the proverb is enlarged, and will take-in the greatest part of Christendom. The Papist breatheth nothing but curses and anathemas, and maketh his way with fire and sword where reason and religion shut him out. Others, who are no Papists, yet are as malicious and bloody as they, and persecute their brethren under that name, call them Papists, and spoil them as the Heathen did of old, who put Christians into the skins of beasts, and with dogs baited them to death. If you think not, if you act not, if you look not, if you move not as they do, you are a child of perdition, devoted to ruin and death. If you preach any other doctrine than that which they receive, then you are accursed, though you were an angel from heaven. (Gal. i. 8.) *Forgive you?* that were a sin not to be forgiven. Heaven and earth shall pass away,



rather than one tittle and jot of what they have set up shall fail.

I have much wondered with myself how men could so assure themselves of heaven, and yet kindle such a hell in their breasts; how they could appropriate a meek Saviour to themselves, and even claim him as their peculiar, as the Heathen did their deities, and yet breathe nothing but hailstones and coals of fire; how they should call themselves *evangelicos*, "the only gospellers," and yet be such strangers, such enemies, to that virtue which is most commended in the gospel; how they should forgive none on earth, and yet so boldly conclude that their pardon is sealed in heaven; that they should expect so much mercy from that God whom they proclaim so cruel as to damn men, as they destroy their brethren, for no other reason but because he will. I cannot here but wonder and lament, and pray that this malice of their heart may be forgiven them: for we cannot but "perceive that they are in the very gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity." (Acts viii. 22, 23.) And I bespeak you, as our Saviour did his disciples, to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." (Matt. xvi. 6.) For if "a little leaven will leaven the whole lump," (1 Cor. v. 6,) what will such a lump of malice do? Even infect the whole body of your religion. Your hearing, your prayers, your fasts will taste of blood. Let us then "mark and avoid them." Let us divest ourselves, not of all power, but of all will, to hurt. Let that alway sound in our ear,—which is as good gospel as that Christ died for the world,—that, if we forgive not, we are in the number of unbelievers, and are condemned already. Let us reserve nothing to ourselves but that which is ours, meekness and patience; and leave to God that which is his, judgment and retribution. Commit all *Jovi Vindici*, "to the God of revenge." For he is the best umpire for our patience. If we put our injury into his hands, he is our Revenger; if our loss, he can restore it; if our grief, he is our Physician; if our death, he can raise us up again. *Quantum mansuetudini licet, ut Deum habeat debitorem!* "Lord! what a power hath meekness, which maketh God our debtor" for our losses, for our contumelies, for our reproaches, for our death, for all! who hath bound himself to repay us with honour; with riches, with advantage, with usury, with the inheritance of the earth, and with everlasting life.

## SERMON LXXXVI.

## NECESSITY AND REWARD OF MEEKNESS.

*Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.—*  
Matthew v. 5.

## PART IV.

I HAVE bestowed many words upon this virtue of meekness : but I have not yet said enough ; neither indeed can I, *licet toto modio dimensum darem*, as he speaketh, “though I should give it you out by the bushel,” full measure, pressed down, and running over. *Nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam satis dicitur* : “We cannot repeat that lesson too often which we can never be so perfect in as we should.” And *he* certainly is no friend to meekness *who* is impatient at her name, though it sound never so often in his ear. For can he love meekness that is afraid of her picture and description ? or can he stand out the shock of those evils which wait upon and follow every motion of his life, who cannot bring a few hours’ patience to hear of that virtue which is the only buckler to quench those darts ? I would I could give you her in a full and complete piece, the whole signature, every line, all her dimensions. I would I could present her naked before your eyes, in all her rays, with all her beauty and glory ; her power in conquering, her wisdom in defeating, those injuries which press hard upon, yea, overthrow and triumph over, all the power and policy of the world ; that so you might fall in love with her, and fasten her to your souls, and make her a part of them. For then indeed we should see *concurrere bellum atque virum*,\* every man strong against a battalion, every man chasing his ten thousand : we should see a meek soul in contention with the world, and by doing nothing treading it under foot. And this we have attempted formerly to do, but we have not done it in so full and fair a draught as we desired. Yet though you have not had the one half told you, you have heard enough to move you, with the queen of Sheba, to draw near unto it, and prove it in yourselves. (1 Kings x. 7.) And when you shall have practised it in yourselves, you will say it was true indeed that you heard, but you will feel more than you have heard or could hear by report. We will therefore yet awhile longer detain you.

You have beheld the face of meekness in her proper subject,

\* LUCANI *Phars.* vi. 189. “The hero engaged in warlike conflict.”—EDIT.

which is every private man; and in her proper object, which is as large as the whole world, and takes-in not only the Israel of God, but the Amorite, the Hittite, the Amalekite; not only the Christian, but the Turk, the Jew, and the Pagan; any man that is subject to the same passions, any man that can suffer, any man that can do an injury. For meekness runs round the whole circle and compass of mankind, and binds every evil spirit, conjures down every devil she meets with. Lastly, we presented unto your view the fitness and the applicableness of this virtue to the gospel and church of Christ, and told you that it is as it were the very breath of the gospel, the echo of that good news, the best gloss and comment on a silent, weeping, crucified Saviour, the best explanation of his last prayer, "Father, forgive them." (Luke xxiii. 34.) For the notes and characters of a Christian, as they are described in the gospel, are patience, an easy putting up and digesting of injuries, humility, a preferring of all before ourselves. And St. James tells us, that "the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated;" (James iii. 17;) where he giveth the first place unto purity. It would be a sin almost to compare Christian virtues together, and make them strive for precedency and place: yet he that shall mark how everywhere the scripture strives to commend unto us gentleness and meekness, and that peace is it *quam nobis apostoli totis viribus Spiritus Sancti commendant*, as Tertullian speaks, "which the apostles endeavour with all the strength and force of the Holy Ghost to plant amongst us," might be bold a little to invert the words of St. James, and read them thus, "The wisdom which is from above is first peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, then pure." For the Son of God, who is the Wisdom of the Father, and who for us men came down from above, first and above all other virtues commended this unto the world. At his birth the song of the angels was, "Peace on earth, and good will towards men." (Luke ii. 14.) All his doctrine was peace; his whole life was peace, and "no man heard his voice in the streets." (Matt. xii. 19.) And as Christ, so Christians. For as in the building of Solomon's temple there was no noise of any hammer, or other instrument of iron, so in the spiritual building and frame of a Christian there is no sound of any iron, no noise of weapons, nothing but peace and gentleness and meekness. *Ex præcepto fidei non minus rea est ira sine ratione suscepta, quàm in operibus legis homicidium*, saith Augustine: "Unadvised anger by the law of faith and the gospel is as great a sin as murder was in the law of Moses."

2. Thus you have seen how proper meekness is to the gospel and church of Christ. Now in the last place we shall draw this virtue forth to you as most necessary to the well-being, not only of a church, but of every particular member of it; necessary to lift us up to the reward, the inheritance of "the earth;" which whether you take for that earth which is but earth, or that earth which by interpretation is heaven, *ad omnia occurrit mansuetudo*, "meekness reacheth both," both the footstool and the throne of God; it gives us title to the things below, and it makes us heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Without this we can have no mansion in heaven, nor any quiet and peaceable possession of the earth. And thus with our last hand we shall set you up that copy which you may draw out in yourselves. For meekness in character, in leaves of paper, in our books, is rather a shadow than a picture, and soon vanisheth away; but being drawn out in the soul and practice of a Christian, it is a fair and lasting piece, even the image of Christ himself, which the angels and God himself desire to look upon. And with these we shall exercise your Christian devotion at this time.

(1.) And, First, meekness may seem most necessary to Christians, if we consider the nature of Christianity itself, which stands in opposition to all other professions in the world; confutes the philosopher, silenceth the scribe, strikes oracles dumb, cries to every man in the world to go out of it. "Behold," saith our Saviour to his disciples, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," (Matt. x. 16,) which will tear you to pieces for no other reason but because you are sheep. It is a disease very incident to men, to be jealous of every breath which blows in opposition to that which they have already received; to swell against that which is contrary to them; and, though it be true, to suspect it; to wonder what it should mean; to be troubled, and afraid of it, as Herod and all Jerusalem were when the new star appeared; (Matt. ii. 3;) and, though it be as visible to any wise man as the star was in the east, yet to seek to put it out, or, if they cannot, to destroy those over whom it stands. And therefore Tertullian tells us, *Cum odio sui cœpit*, that "Christianity was hated as soon as known," and did no sooner show itself in the world, but it found enemies who were ready to suppress and cast it out; men that could hate it for no other reason but because it taught to love; that could be angry with the Christian because he was meek, and destroy him because he made it his profession to forgive; men who counted revenge no sin, as the ancient Grecians did sometimes thievery, because it was so commonly practised amongst them.

Again : as it was planted *in rerum colluvie*, “in the corruption of men and manners,” so it doth in a manner bid defiance to the whole world. It tells the Jew, his ceremonies are beggarly ; the wise man of this world, that his philosophy is but deceit, and his wisdom madness. It plucks the wanton from the harlot’s lips, tumbles down the ambitious from his pinnacle, disarms the revenger, strips the rich. It writes over the rich man’s gates, “Blessed are the poor ;” (Luke vi. 20 ;) over the doctor’s chair, “Where is the disputer of this world ?” (1 Cor. i. 20 ;) over the temple, *Non lapis super lapidem*, that “not a stone shall be left upon a stone which shall not be thrown down.” (Matt. xxiv. 2.) For a *Non occides* it brought down a *Ne irascaris*, and made anger murder ; for a *Non mæchaberis* a *Non concupisces*,\* and made desire adultery. It brought down sin to a look, to a thought : and therefore no marvel if there arose against Christians *tot hostes, quot extranei*, “as many enemies as there were Heathen or Jews.”

But besides their open and professed adversaries, they found enemies amongst those who were of their own household. What was there which could make men miserable, or move their impatience, which did not break in upon them every day ? Could contempt ? They were “counted the offscouring of the world.” (1 Cor. iv. 13.) Could violence ? It was counted religion to kill them. Could hatred ? *Accusabantur vocabula*, “The very name of Christian was an accusation.” If there were any seeds of evil in them, so much fire as is in the flint, there was outward violence enough to strike it out. So that a Christian may seem to be, as he spake of Palladius, *coagulum omnium ærumnarum*, “the very compound of all calamities, and the centre wherein all miseries meet.”

Now it is almost natural to misery to breathe itself out in complaints, as lovers use to do, to complain to the day and the night, to the sun and the moon. Flesh and blood draws itself in at the very sight and approach of any thing that distastes it ; and when it is touched, it swells and evaporateth. A hard thing it is for men in disgrace not to be impatient, and a common thing τῶν ἀτυχοῦντων ἐξαγριῶσθαι,† “for men who have struggled long with afflictions, with injustice and injuries, to grow fierce and revengeful ;” and, because they are contemned of all, to hate all ; and to treasure up that wrath which, if ever opportunity breathe upon it, will break forth and burn like fire.

\* For, “Thou shalt not kill,” it brought down, “Be not angry ;” and for, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” “Thou shalt not lust.”—EDIT. † *Vide* EURIPIDIS *Phæn.* 389.—EDIT.

Whence the historian observes of Otho, that he was *longo exilio efferatus*, "grown fierce and cruel upon long exile;"\* *Agrippam ignominid accensum*, "that the disgrace which Agrippa received had much altered his disposition."† Therefore our Saviour here, to prevent the like in his disciples, who but for the hope of that which is to come were "of all men most miserable," (1 Cor. xv. 19,) teacheth them a new method of revenging injuries, by forgiving them; of subduing misery, by enduring it; of conquering an enemy, by falling down at his feet; to take up no other buckler than meekness against the worst of those evils which he saw would befall them. And thus he provided that, though the religion which he did set up might displease, yet those whom he sent forth to publish it should offend no man, and save themselves as it were by the fire of persecution.

This is the policy which Christ hath established in his church, and by which he establisheth the pillars of it. For meekness is the sepulchre, the land of oblivion, in which all injuries are buried, never to rise again, nor see the light. When I forgive, I do by injuries as God doth by my sins,—forget them, cast them behind my back, and blot them out, that no tittle of them appear, to raise an angry thought. But anger and revenge are an irrational and treacherous remedy. They take not away the evil, but double it, envenom and enrage it; make that a scorpion which was but a whip, and that a monster which to meekness is nothing: they perpetuate and transmit it from youth to age, from age to the very hour of death, nay, from one generation to another. The sting of an injury is impatience, and the strength of impatience is revenge; but to forgive an injury is to swallow it up in victory. I call it therefore "the wisdom and policy of Christ," though the world call it by another name, and count them but fools that practise it. For, lay open all the books in the world which have been written of republics and government, yet we find not any directions which can propagate a government, and make it everlasting: but now perhaps we see a state flourish; but anon it will decline, and at last have its fatal period, and fall to pieces. But this Christian wisdom makes the church and every member of it as immovable as a rock, more glorious in adversity than in peace, more happy in a tempest than in a calm, victorious when ready to fall, and most safe when forsaken.

Besides, the wisdom of this world, how oft doth it meet with a check! How often is it defeated, and in a while changeth its name, and is turned into folly! How many dig a pit, and fall

\* TACITI *Historiæ*, lib. i. cap. 21.

† Ejusdem *Annales*, lib. i. cap. 4.

into it! How many hath their wit brought almost home to their intendments, and then left them looking after them with anger and grief! How many hath it brought to the end of their desires, and ruined them there! How many have built up their hopes with one hand, and demolished them with the other! "The devil," saith Basil, "is the great politician of the world:" but yet he is deceived with his own sophistry, and taken in his own craft; and, in setting hard at the church, he falls himself to the ground; or, if he destroy a soul, he doth but add torment to himself, and with his own malice enrage the fire of hell. The Jews, to keep out the Romans, did banish themselves; and taking counsel together against Christ, they put him to death, at whose death the veil of the temple rent in twain. All the imaginations of men have been either faint and feeble at first; or else, making haste to that which they proposed, they have lost that which they so eagerly pursued, and overtook nothing but what they looked upon with horror. All the wisdom in the world, if you put it into the balance, will be found but light: but this necessary wisdom, this "wisdom which is from above," never fails; but though it be sown in dishonour, it riseth again in honour; and through scorn and contempt, through poverty and death itself, it makes its way to that effect which it is as powerful to produce as it is weak in show.

O that we were wise! so wise as to rely on the wisdom of God, which, through uncouth and desolate paths, through the wilderness, through a sea of blood, will safely waft us over to the heaven where we would be; and not trust to our own sensual, vain, and uncertain providence, which, though the way be smooth and pleasant, yet reaps nothing but bitterness in the end; which carries us on in a giddy, staggering, pleasing, displeasing course, but evermore into the pit; which makes our feet like hinds' feet, lifts us up on the wings of hope, and at last knocks out our brains against the mark we aimed at; which brings us to the honey we long for, and smothers us in the hive! Number up all the fatal miscarriages of the sons of men, and you shall find they were all from this, and this alone,—that they took upon them to be wiser than God. If we were content our ways should be as God's ways, and would walk in those ways which he hath appointed, and steer our course by his compass, we should then look upon revenge as a fury, and cleave to meekness as our angel-keeper; we should soon see the weakness and folly of the one, and the victories and trophies of the other; we should find the one the most noxious thing in the world, and the other most necessary.

(2.) For, in the next place, as the observance of this duty hath promoted the gospel, so the neglect of it hath hindered the growth of Christianity, and made those rents and schisms in the church which good men may lament with tears of blood, but the wisest cannot make up again with all their care and endeavour, which, most times we see, instead of closing and healing such wounds, do make them wider than before. We see, the indiscreet and unseasonable defence of the truth doth but call in more company to side with the opposer, draws down even zealots themselves to an indifferency, in which they do not long stand wavering, but soon fall into error. It is not noise, but silence, that prevaleth. It is not the rough, but tender, hand that binds up these wounds. It is not power nor subtilty of wit, not disputation nor consultation, not the tongue of the eloquent nor the pen of the ready writer, which can compose these differences in the church. We cannot but observe that after all the labour and travail of the learned, there is yet altar against altar, religion against religion, and Christ against Christ: and the wounds the church hath received, bleed still afresh, and are every day more inflamed, more incurable. What have all our prisons and whips and fire and sword done? What one hair have they added to the stature of Christianity? Is she not rather contracted and shrunk? Is she now of so large a size and proportion as she was in her infancy and cradle? Is she as powerful in her catholic extent and universality as she was in a few fishermen? Certainly the best balm is this wisdom of our Saviour, by which we are directed to forgive injuries and errors, to yield so far to our brethren as not to hate them, not to be angry with them, because they are not of our opinion. The want of this temper, of this softness and sweetness of disposition, was the true mother of schism, which meekness hath not edge enough to make. It is but taking it up again, and all this business will be at an end, and conclude in peace.

Yet do I not here derogate from councils or disputations. These are the means appointed by God himself to settle men who doubt. We must consult before we give sentence; and he that instructs disputes. No; these are *στηλογράφιαι κατὰ πάσης αίρέσεως*, "the pillars and trophies where all heresies are hung up," engraven and shown openly to the sun and the people. I know they may be antidotes against the poison of the serpent, who is as ready to cast his mist about the understanding part as to infect the will: and I may subscribe to that of Isidore, *Ideo Christi veritas in diversas hæreses est scissa, &c.*, that "Christianity had formerly been divided into so many sects, because,



before the times of Constantine, and those halcyon-days, the bishops durst not meet together to consult.\* This indeed may be a reason, but not all the reason which may be given. For even in Constantine's time did the Arian heresy show and vaunt itself, and after the council of Nice, so famous over the world, did so prevail that it was a doubt which way the church did look and incline, whether to the Arian tenets or the determination of that council; because the Arians did almost equal the orthodox in number, and in eloquence and learning far exceed them. Afterwards this heresy was revived, though with another name, in the Origenists: and not long after *tot erant Symbola, quot professores*, "there were almost as many Creeds as professors." And one main reason thereof, I suppose, was the want of meekness and moderation; when the noise and violence of the one party would not give the other so much leisure as to bethink themselves; when men would raise tempests only for a thought which did not please them, and most men were like Scaurus in the orator, *qui nullius unquam impunitam stultitiam transire passus est*, "who would not suffer a solecism or any error to pass without a heavy censure;" when, as Luther speaks, for the omission of a syllable or of a letter, they would *novos infernos cudere*, "make another hell," and devote their brethren to the devil, thundering out anathemas one against the other, which many times both deserved rather for their heat and bitterness than for their errors. For the church may err: but if she drive charity and meekness out of her quarters, she is no longer a church. Ambition and covetousness,—these break down her hedges; and malice is the wild boar which destroyeth and eats up her grapes. When this fire is once kindled in her bowels, then *ruit Ilium*,† then her pillars shake, and she is ready to fall. But, as I remember, I have spoken at large of this heretofore.

(3.) You see, beloved, then, that meekness is necessary to the church *ad bene esse*, to keep its parts together from flying asunder; and so to every Christian, to keep him compact and at unity with himself and others. But now, in the next place, I may say it is necessary to the very being of the church, as without which no man can be admitted into "the congregation of the first-born which are written in heaven." (Heb. xii. 23.) With wanton Christians, that trifle away their souls, and would walk to heaven with earthly members and unwashed feet, there is but *unum necessarium*, "one thing necessary;" and that is faith; which, because it doth alone justify, we leave it alone,

\* ISIDORI HISPALENSIS *Origines*, lib. vi.  
325. "Troy falls."—EDIT.

† VIRGILII *Æneid.* ii. 290,

naked and destitute; or take it along with us as a comfort to us, whilst we labour and sweat in a world of wickedness. For what title to heaven can the most Christians show but this *Credo*, "I believe?" The rest of the copy is malice and envy and covetousness, the black lines of reprobation: poverty and mourning and meekness are no part of their claim. But let us look upon our charter again, and we shall find meekness to be one of those *paucissima necessaria*, of "those few things necessary" to give us right to our inheritance; and that faith is nothing, is dead, and so cannot give life, if it do not work by love, even work out all our venom and malice, and so leave us liable and open to receive reproaches and blows, but without tongues or hands to return them, as so many dead marks for every dart to stick in, till by the power of meekness they drop from us, or by the hand of the Highest are plucked out, and shot back upon our enemies. A truth so plain that I dare boldly say there is not a plainer in the whole scripture. For what can a guilty, condemned person plead for himself that he should enter into this inheritance, but forgiveness? For this is the object of our faith,—that God will be reconciled to us in his Son. And then this is plain English, I am sure,—that "if we forgive, God will also forgive us: but if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us ours." (Matt. vi. 14, 15.) *Et qui ad tam magnum tonitruum non expergiscitur, non dormit, sed mortuus est*, saith St. Augustine: "He that awakes not out of his pleasant dream of revenge at this thunder, is not asleep, but dead." For, "He will not forgive you," is the same with this, "He will damn you with those malicious spirits, the devil and his angels;" and, "He will forgive you," is equivalent to this, "He will receive you into his kingdom, to his seat of mercy and glory." We may say, then, that meekness is necessary, as a cause to this effect, as a virtue destined to this end; at least, *causa sine quâ non*, "a cause so far as that without it there is no" remission of sins. For "though I have faith to remove mountains, and have all knowledge," yet if I have not meekness, there is no hope of heaven. (1 Cor. xiii. 2.) Or it is *causa removens prohibens*, "a cause inasmuch as it removes those hinderances" which stand between us and the mercy of God: for how can I appear before the Father of compassion with a heart spotted and stained with the gall of bitterness? How can I stand before the mercy-seat with my hands full of blood? And thus meekness is a cause of forgiveness, and may be said to produce this effect, because, though it have no positive causality, yet without it mercy will

not be obtained. Blessedness is joined to meekness as in a chain which hath more links : and, "If you shall forgive your enemies, my Father will forgive you," doth not show what is sufficient, but what is necessarily required, to the expiation of sin, and the inheritance of heaven.

Again : by meekness we resemble him who is a God "that blotteth out transgressions." (Isai. xliii. 25.) When we are angry, we are "like unto the beasts that perish ;" yea, we are as "the raging waves of the sea, foaming out our own shame :'' (Jude 13 :) but when we yield to our brother's infirmity, and forgive him, we are as gods.

3. Thirdly. This virtue is seldom—I may say, never—alone ; but it supposeth faith, which is *sigillum bonorum operum*, "the seal to every good work," to make it current and authentic, yea, and all that fair retinue of virtues which as handmaids wait upon faith, and make her known to the world. For he whose mind is so subact as to bear another man's burden, and to lift himself up upon the ruins of himself, and create virtue out of injury and contempt, cannot be "far from the kingdom of heaven," nor destitute of those "sacrifices wherewith God is well pleased." And this, I say, though it be not necessary, yet is very probable. For these—to be covetous, to be luxurious, to be wanton, and to be meek—cannot lodge in the same breast. For we see, prodigality as well as covetousness is a whetstone to our anger, and makes it keen and sharp : and the wanton will as soon quarrel for his whore as the miser for his purse. But meekness "believeth all things, hopeth all things, beareth all things, and doeth nothing unseemly." (1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7.) For the mind of the meek is like the heavens above : *Semper illic serenum est*, "There is continual serenity and a perpetual day there." It is as wax fit to receive any impression or character of goodness, and retain it ; a fit object for God's benefits to work upon ; ready to melt at the light of his countenance, and to yield at the lifting up of his hammer. And therefore,

4. In the last place, this meekness and readiness to forgive maketh us more capable of the gospel of Christ and those other precepts which it doth contain, and so fits and prepareth and qualifieth us for this blessedness, for this great benefit of remission of sins. For he that is ready to forgive all injuries, will be as ready to be poor, very forward to go to the house of mourning, merciful, a peace-maker, one that may be reviled and persecuted, and so rightly qualified for those beatitudes. And he who can suffer an injury will hardly do one : whereas they commonly are most impatient of wrongs who make least cou-

science of offering them ; *qui irascuntur quia irascuntur*, “ who play the wantons, and are angry with their brother for no other reason but because they are pleased to be angry.” Now the orator will tell us that *nullus rationi magis obstat affectus*, “ there is no affection which is so great an enemy to reason as anger.” For sorrow, and fear, and hope, and the rest, make an assault and lay hard at us ; but anger, as a whirlwind, overwhelms us at once. I may be stricken with fear, and yet hearken to that counsel which will dispel it ; I may hang down my head with sorrow, and yet be capable of those comforts which may lift it up again ; for every one is not as Rahel, that would not be comforted : (Jer. xxxi. 15 :) but we deal with angry men as we do with men overcome with drink, never give them counsel till the fit be over. For, fairly to bespeak a man thus transported, is to as much purpose as to bid the sea go back, or to chide the winds. And as the reason and judgment are dimmed and obscured with that mist which sudden anger casts, so are they also by that which they call *χόλον επίμονον*, “ a lasting or abiding anger,” which is the forge or alembic of revenge, and works it by degrees. And till this be dispelled and scattered, there is no room for the doctrine of the gospel, which breathes nothing but meekness and forgiveness. *Disce ; sed ira cadat naso* : \* to be angry and to learn are at as great a distance as to be in motion and to stand still. He that fills his thoughts with revenge, can leave no room for the precepts of that Master who was led to the slaughter as a sheep : (Isai. liii. 7 :) but the meek man is like him, is a sheep, his sheep, and will soon hear his voice, draw nearer and nearer unto him, and by meekness learn purity and those other virtues which will bring him into the arms of his Saviour and the kingdom of heaven.

And thus you see how necessary a virtue meekness is for the church, and for every part of it ; for every Christian, to entitle him to the inheritance of the earth ; as “ the earth ” is taken for that “ new earth ; ” (Rev. xxi. 1 :) the earth not of living, dying men, but that earth where we shall live for ever ; that state of happiness which, like the earth, shall stand fast for ever. For, what is meekness but a pregustration and foretaste of that quiet and peaceable estate which is nowhere to be found but at the right hand and in the presence of God ? that as God, who is slow to anger and full of goodness and mercy, is properly and naturally in a constant and immovable state of bliss,

\* *PERSII Sat. v. 91.*

“ Listen,—but first your brows from anger clear,

And bid your nose dismiss that rising sneer.”—GIFFORD’S Translation.

so Christians, who by divine grace and assistance raise themselves up to this height and pitch as to look down from a quiet mind, as from heaven, upon all the injuries and reproaches which shall be thrown against them, so communicate as it were with God, and are assimilated to him, may also by the grace and favour of God participate with him of the same lasting and unchangeable glory.

## APPLICATION.

III. And now we should descend to show the title the meek have to the earth, as it is in the letter, and signifies temporal happiness, and the quiet possession of the things of this world: but the time is well-near spent. Now therefore we will add but a word or two by way of application of what hath been already spoken, and so conclude.

And did I say that meekness was a necessary virtue to the church of Christ, and that without it we cannot receive the gospel, nor be ourselves received into the kingdom of heaven? Certainly I mistook: at least the greatest part of Christendom will rise up against me, and arraign me as guilty of a dangerous heresy. For in their practice they confute it every day. It was indeed a necessary virtue for the infant, baby church, when she could not move her arms, nor her tongue, but in prayers and blessings; when Christians were ready to suffer, but knew not what it was to strike; when they were *expeditum morti genus*,\* readier to breathe forth their souls in the fire than to kindle one, readier to receive the sword into their bowels than to draw it. But now the church is aged and forgetful, and men have learned to dispute and distinguish themselves out of their duty; have found out a new light, by the guidance of which they may walk on securely, and follow their brutish passions and covetous desires to the mark they have set up, and by this light wade on and wash their feet in the blood of their brethren. It was a virtue; it is now the mark of a lukewarm reprobate: it was the beauty and glory of the church; but later times have looked upon it as a foul dishonour: it was the only buckler the former Christian had; but those of after-times have thrown it away, and for it took up the sword, which they brandish with terror, as that weapon which Christ himself hath put into their hands: it was the proper virtue of Christians, and most necessary for them; it is now an anathema; now not to curse, deserves a curse. The church was a flock, a "little flock" of sheep; (Luke xii. 32;) it is now become as "terrible as an army with

\* "A people ever ready for death."—EDIT.

banners ;” (Cant. vi. 4;) and Christ is already brought into the world in that posture in which the Jews expect their Messias, with drum and colours. Shall I tell you what is counted necessary now? It is necessary to contend for the faith, to stand up against error, to be zealous for the glory of God. “And what man of Belial dare be so bold as to stand up and say this is not necessary? God forbid that faith should fail, that error should take the chair, that the glory of God should be trodden under foot!” It is true: but then, though this be necessary, it is necessary to do it in that way and order which Christ himself hath prescribed, and not in that which our malice and covetousness and ambition draws out in blood. And the sword of the Lord, the word of God, managed with the spirit of meekness, is more apt and fit to enter the soul and the spirit than the sword of Gideon. *Religionis non est cogere religionem*, saith Tertulian: “Religion cannot be forced, which, if it be not voluntary, is not at all.” For there cannot be a grosser solecism in divinity than to say a man is good against his will. And sad experience hath taught us, that they who thus contend for the faith with noise and fury do name Christ indeed, but mean themselves.

We may instance in the church of Rome. They who defend the truth, *non syllogismis, sed fustibus*, as St. Jerome speaks, “not with reason and scripture, but with clubs and swords,” do but glance upon the truth, but press forward to some other mark. And “The Glory of God” is but written in their foreheads, that whilst men look steadfastly upon that, they may with more ease and less discerned lay hold on the prey, and so be villains with applause. “Ye suffer fools gladly,” saith St. Paul, such as boast, and count themselves the sages of the age, “because you yourselves are wise” in your own conceit, though as very fools as they. “Ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage,” (what do not the Romish proselytes endure?) “if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.” (2 Cor. xi. 19, 20.) For how willing have men been to be deceived, and to canonize them for saints who wrought the cheat, to think them the best pastors who devour them, and them the humblest men who exalt themselves, and them the most gentle friends who smite them on the face! Such a deity, such an idol, such a nothing is religion and Christianity made in this world; cried up with noise, and beat down with violence; pretended in every thing, and denied in every thing; magnified in those actions which destroy her; forced to draw that sword which she commanded her disciples to put up; made a sanguinary and shedder of blood, of which

(could she prevail, and have that power which God hath given her) there would not one drop fall to the ground. But the world is the world still, and would make the church like unto it: and though it be ambition, or covetousness, or malice, yet we call it "religion;" and when that word is once spoken, then down goes all morality, all humanity, all meekness, and religion itself. Is it not for her cruelty that we make the church of Rome the seat of antichrist, and call her "the beast?" And let it be the mark and character of the beast still. Let not that which a Turk or Jew would run from with disdain, be fastened as an ornament of glory on the Christian, who is better drawn and expressed in chains and fetters than with his feet on the neck of his enemies. For where should a Christian be seen but under the cross? When he flings it upon others, he may call himself by what name he [may] please, but he is not a Christian. Do we not make this our plea against the church of Rome,—that sentence of death was never passed upon any of them for religion? And therefore let not our words anathematize, and our actions justify them. Let us not do that which in a Papist we call an abomination. Let us not name the Lord Jesus, and then fall down and worship the prince of this world, when he lures us to him with the glory of it, and those things which he will give us. A strumpet is not a whit the less a strumpet because she calls her neighbour so; and the name of antichrist will belong to us as well as to that church, if we partake with her in those sins for which we call her so. And it will little avail us to call her antichrist, whilst ourselves are drunk with the blood of our brethren.

But *Dii, talem terris avertite pestem* :\* "God banish from the earth this kind of" Popery! And let us be able to make that glorious profession which the Christians did to the Heathens in the times of Nazianzen: *Quam libertatem vobis eripuimus?* "When our emperor was a Christian, and the church had peace and flourished, what one part of your liberty did we deprive you of? Did we spoil you of your wealth, or cast you into prison? Did we raise up the people to rage against you? Did we call for the sword of the magistrate, and invite the secular power to destroy you? Did we degrade you from your honours, or remove you from your offices? Did we displace your prætors?" They are the father's own words. "What did you hear from us but hearty wishes, earnest exhortations, and vehement prayers for your salvation? So far were we from shedding your blood, that we were ready to pour out our own for your souls." This

\* VIRGILII *Æneid.* iii. 620.

was all our violence; and indeed you esteemed it so. You imputed to us even our very meekness as a crime, and counted our patience to be violence. This we can, but this you cannot say for yourselves. You by most exquisite torments would force us to a false religion, who by our very religion are forbid to use any violence to draw you to a true one. It is true, the kingdom of heaven cannot be taken but by violence: (Matt. xi. 12:) but it is by violence upon ourselves; upon our anger, to bridle it; upon our fleshly lusts, to control them; upon our unruly affections, to moderate them; upon the old man, to crucify him. We make our addresses unto you "in the spirit of meekness;" (Gal. vi. 1;) we "beseech you to be reconciled unto Christ;" (2 Cor. v. 20;) but we were never taught to present our religion to you on the point of the sword.

O that we could make this glorious profession! This is the gospel-way, the only way to open the gates of heaven to ourselves and others. "For we wrestle not," saith St. Paul, "against flesh and blood," against the Neros and Nabals of the earth; against the Jews, who solemnly curse us three times a day, saith St. Jerome; against the Turk, who delights in our blood; against the Papists, who make it a sport to anathematize us; nor against those who hate them with a perfect hatred, and are worse than they; not against the slanderer, whose tongue is a razor; nor against the oppressor, who hath the teeth of a lion; nor against the detractor, whose whisper is as the sting of a scorpion, and hurts unseen: "but we fight against principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world." (Eph. vi. 12.) These are a Christian man's enemies, and with these he solemnly wagemeth war. And his weapons are answerable: "the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit;" (verses 13—17;) which though they are "mighty to pull down strongholds," (2 Cor. x. 4,) yet will they not touch an enemy that appears in the shape of a man. "The breastplate of righteousness" will not defend me from them that shoot their arrows in private: "the shield of faith," though it "quench the fiery darts of Satan," yet will not quench that "fire," destroy that tongue, which is "a world of iniquities:" (James iii. 6:) and "the sword of the Spirit" cannot beat back the malice of an enraged enemy, or smite down those that hate us. But if we believe, and trust to this part of providence which the Wisdom of the Father hath taught us, we shall see greater things than these. (John i. 50.) We shall find ourselves disarmed, with never a hand to strike, with a tongue that cannot curse, with weapons which may resist a devil,



but cannot hurt a man ; which will cast down a sin, but not an enemy ; not able to move when the Heathen rage, and when the enemy drives towards us, like Jehu, furiously ; making the greatest preparation against our own impatience ; fighting against our anger, when we will not hold up a hand against those that hate us ; for the truth's "sake killed all the day long, and appointed as sheep for the slaughter ; yet in all these things more than conquerors." (Rom. viii. 36, 37.)

These are "the riches of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria." (Isai. viii. 4.) These are the victories and trophies of a Christian,—a ploughed back, a face spit upon, hands bound, and feet in fetters, and a heart melting and bleeding for them that do it, and pouring forth supplications and prayers for them, the only "coals he heapeth upon their heads." (Prov. xxv. 22.) And thus the Christian doth *seculi fluctus calcare, præeunte Christo* ; he "treads upon the proud waves of this world, Christ going before him ;" he walks in Christ's steps ; he wadeth, not in the blood of his enemies, but in his own, to that inheritance which is laid up for him. He learneth of Christ, who is "meek and lowly ;" and so heals every malady, binds up every wound ; wipeth off all disgrace, triumphs over all the evil in the world, and so "finds that rest unto his soul" which our pride, our animosities, our rage can never purchase us. (Matt. xi. 29, 30.)

To conclude : Though meekness do not open the gates of heaven, yet it makes our admittance more easy : though it be not sufficient to save us, yet it is a fair means to make us wise unto salvation : though it do not merit remission of sins, yet it makes us like to our Father which is in heaven. (Matt. v. 45.) And at the great day of retribution this also which we have done shall be mentioned, and our Father shall say unto us, "'Well done, true and faithful servants : ' you have bowed down your backs to the smiter, you have loved your enemies, and prayed for your persecutors : behold, I have loosed you and forgiven you all your debt : 'enter into your Master's joy.'" (Matt. xxv. 21.) To which [may] he bring us who hath dearly bought us with his blood, Jesus Christ the Righteous !

## SERMON LXXXVII.

THE DUTY AND OBJECT OF A CHRISTIAN'S IMITATION.

*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.—*  
Ephesians v. 1.

## PART I.

THE words are plain, and need not the gloss of any learned interpreter,—that God is our Father, and we his children; that, as children, we must be followers of him in those ways which lead us to him. There is no man so much a child in understanding but will understand this without a Philip, without any man to help or guide him. (Acts viii. 35.) But yet, beloved, many times the plainest places of scripture require our pains and labour as much as the obscurest, and are far more useful and necessary than high and deep speculations; as we find a stone out of the quarry more fit to build a house with than a diamond. These words which I have read, as plain as they are, are as a rich mine, which, being well searched into, will yield abundance of ore, even the rich treasury of that wisdom which will make us wise unto salvation. If we desire wealth, “the earth is the Lord’s, and all that therein is;” (Deut. x. 14;) if strength, he is “the Lord of hosts;” if wisdom, “he created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his works;” (Ecclus. i. 9;) if life, he is “the living God;” if immortality, he “only is immortal.” (1 Tim. vi. 16, 17.) There is none like unto the Lord our God; and if we follow him, we shall be rich, and wise, and strong; we shall live, and live for ever. Let us, then, look steadfastly upon these plain words: and upon the opening of them we shall behold the heavens open, and God himself looking down upon the children of men, upon his children, displaying his rays, and manifesting his beauty, to draw them near unto himself, to allure and provoke them to follow after him; teaching dust and ashes to raise itself to the region of happiness, mortality to put on immortality, death to put on life, and our sinful nature to make its approaches nearer and nearer to purity itself, that where He is, there we may be also. (John xiv. 3.)

My text is a general proposition, depending upon that which our apostle had told the Ephesians in the former chapter. And it is an exhortation to a duty of a high nature, even reaching to heaven itself; a persuasion to look upon God as an ensample: “Be ye followers of God.” But what? must the Ephesians be

enjoined a duty where impossibility stands in the way between them and performance? Not so. They are God's "children," and they are his "dear children;" and as he is their Father, so he will be their Pattern too. He will draw with his finger as it were the lines by which they must walk: nay, he will go before them in the way, and they shall hear a voice saying, "'This is the way; walk in it:' (Isai. xxx. 21 :) I am merciful; be ye merciful: I am long-suffering; be ye patient: I forget your transgressions; do ye forgive your enemies: 'Be ye followers of me.'" This is as if the apostle had thus bespoken the Ephesians: "My task is to persuade you to forgive one another: what better argument, what stronger motive can I use, than to tell you that you are God's 'dear children?' If you be children, it is the glory of a child to resemble his father: But you are children; and not that only, but τέκνα ἀγαπητὰ, 'dear children; and children strive to imitate their parents, to whom they are dear. Nay, farther yet, you are not only ἀγαπητὰ, *dilecti*, but ἀγαπητὰ, *diligibiles*,\* through Christ, who hath made you worthy to be beloved: and the more you imitate your Father, the more 'lovely' still you appear. 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.'"

So now you may see here a medicinal water; and not an angel, as in the pool of Bethesda, but God himself, moving of it, and calling us to enter, that we may be healed. Or you may behold that great penman of the Holy Ghost drawing out, as it were, and setting the Ephesians a copy, so legible that one may run and read it. Briefly, you have a pattern proposed: "Be ye followers of God;" and the persons whose duty it was to be imitators,—the Ephesians, who were "dear children." Or thus:

I. Here is a duty enjoined: "Be ye followers;"

II. The object of imitation: "God;"

III. The motive: "as you are dear children," or, "because you are dear children:" 1. Because you are "children;" 2. Because you are "dear children." Of these in order.

I. What the orator spake of his art is most true of ours: *Magna pars artis continetur imitatione*: † "The greatest part of rhetoric consists in imitation." So, too, doth our Christian profession. God hath not only fixed the two tables for us to look upon, or his command to be our direction: that indeed is *via veritatis*, ‡ "the way" by which we are to walk. But there is, too, *lumen vitæ*: § he hath also placed many lights in the way:

\* "Not only beloved, but lovely."—EDIT.

† QUINTILIANI *Instit.*

*Orat. lib. x. cap. 2.*

‡ "The way of truth."—EDIT.

§ "The light

of life."—EDIT.

the light of spiritual understanding, that we may see the way; and the light of imitation, that, seeing others walk in the way, we may tread in their steps. So Abraham shall teach his family: so Solomon shall look upon king David; and, "My son, hear my voice," saith Solomon: (Prov. i. 8:) so the weak Christian, and he that eateth milk, shall walk as it were upon the strength of him that eateth stronger meat. And lest these helps should not be strong enough to uphold our weakness, lest these lesser lights should be too dim to lead us, God himself hath cast his rays upon us, and hath made even those virtues which he is exemplary. And indeed how much we stand in need of this help of example, in respect of our frailty, our Saviour laid open when he took our nature. He was *disciplina morum*;\* his whole life was so as if he had descended only to be an ensample. Yea, although he himself were ensample enough to have instructed the whole world, yet he proposeth others. The Samaritan shall instruct the lawyer: and if the lawyer approve the mercy of the Samaritan to the man wounded on the way, our Saviour is ready with his, "Do you likewise." (Luke x. 37.) If the apostles grow proud, he will bring a child in the midst of them; and if contentious, to wipe out that stain, he will wash their feet.

We are not only deprived of our former health in Paradise, as the Papists would have it; but we are also wounded and maimed, and stand in need of these crutches, as it were, of precepts and ensamples. We are still going on in the paths of death; and thither we would hasten with hinds' feet, did not God pull us back again, and sometimes lead us "with the cords of men, with the bands of love," (Hosea xi. 4,) and sometimes drive us by his threatenings, and sometimes hearten us with the sight of others labouring on the way. And if the opinion of some were true, that original sin consisteth most in imitation, here were ample and sufficient remedy, in that God leads us by ensample. To this end he hath placed us in the communion of saints; a gift which we either understand not, or undervalue: and he hath wisely ordained that one Christian should be a lesson to another, which he should take out and learn, and teach again, and then strive to improve. For it is here as in arts and sciences: *Qui agit ut prior sit, forsitan, si non transierit, æquabit*: "He who, spurred on with a holy ambition, makes it his industry to exceed his pattern, shall no doubt become as glorious a star as he, and by his holy emulation far outshine him." Only endeavour we must, and not shut our eyes when God hath set his lights in his

\* "A school of morality."—EDIT.

candlesticks. A shame it is that Lot should be in Sodom, and his devotion be imprisoned at home with him; that David's soul should be where there are haters of peace; that Peter should pass by, and not so much as his shadow reach us; that the lesser stars, nay, the sun itself, should shine, and we be in darkness; that it should be noon-day with us, and we grope as if it were midnight. The philosopher would not speak it without a *Pudet dicere*, without a preface of "shame," *Nunquam apertius quàm coram Catone peccatum*, "that for all so great an ensample of severity as Cato was, yet vice was still impudent." And Pliny speaks it as a commendation of Trajan, that he was good among the worst: "For," saith he, "when Camillus and Scipio lived," when virtue had, as it were, made herself visible in those worthies, "it was a matter of no difficulty to be good:" *tunc enim imitationis ardor, et semper melior aliquis, accenderet*: "for then the heat of imitation inflamed men, and still the life of some better man was a silent call to the weaker to follow after."\*

Beloved in our Lord and Saviour, the time was when this our land was overcast with as thick a darkness as that of Egypt, and there was no Goshen for a true Israelite, no light but that of the faggot, no place to profess safely in: yet they then were followers of Christ, and in the scriptures diligently searched out the steps of the apostles, and in spite of fire and persecution walked in them. And although the gospel was unto them but as a light in a dark cloud, yet by this light they traced the paths of the primitive fathers, *sub principe durâ, temporibusque malis*; † and in bad times they durst be good, when the queen was even as a lioness amongst the lions, and cruelty lurked no where more than under a mitre and rochet. The case, God be thanked, is otherwise with us now: the bands of our captivity are snapped asunder; the cup of God's wrath is taken out of our hands; and God hath made us as it were a strong brasen wall, and his enemies and ours have fought against us, and have not prevailed. Antichrist is revealed, the mystery of iniquity laid open, errors of all kind detected, the Bible unclasped, teachers of truth, like stars in the firmament, eminent; wisdom crieth out in the streets, and religion hath as it were placed her tabernacle in the sun; and shall we still have a frost at our heart? shall we have withered hands? shall we be cold and benumbed, and not able to set one foot forward in the steps of our forefathers?

Beloved, let us look over into the tents of our enemies, into the tabernacles of wickedness. What doth that church of Rome

\* *PLINII Panegyricus*, cap. xiii. *etines.*—EDIT.

† "Under a cruel princess, and in evil

more crack of than of antiquity,—how like she is to the church in former times, how she hath still the same gate, and traceth the same paths; and that we are but of yesterday, that Luther breathed into us our first breath; that it troubleth us much, saith Gregory of Valence, that we are not able to show any company of people in times past known to the world, whom we follow in our doctrine and religion? If we would pull down the images out of their church, they cry us down with a *Populus eruditur*, “They are the books of laymen, by which they are instructed in the articles of faith, and have as it were before their eyes laid open the wholesome examples of the faithful, which may move them to compose their lives to the imitation of them.” If we would pull off those wings which they have given to nature to soar up above her power, if we deny their free-will, if we pull down their Babel of merits, they then tell us of the ancient worthies of their church, and add some saints that were wicked men; yea, some that never were men. They will show you what they have laid up for others in the treasury of the church, to discharge their debts, before they owed them. They say that we walk blindfold in our own ways, and will not open our eyes to see the times of old; that we have run away from the bosom of our mother, and now suck strange breasts. It is true, indeed, that we can both silence them in their boast, and wipe out their accusation. We can tell them that “Rome is unlike herself:” *Non Roma præstat Romam*, as Scaliger speaketh: that the church began not with Luther, but began then to be less corrupt: that we left not her, but her superstition: that we walk in the old way, and are followers of the professors of the primitive truth which was then embraced when the Pope’s kitchen was not yet heated by the fire of purgatory, when his exchequer was not filled by indulgences, when there was no corner-mass, when transubstantiation was yet unbaked, when all sins were accounted mortal, when pardons were sold only for prayers and repentance, when there were no merits heard of but our Saviour’s, when the people were not cozened of the cup, when the Pope was not *Jupiter fulminans*, when he had no thunderbolt, no power of deposing kings and emperors. But, beloved, our Christian care and industry should be, that we rank not ourselves amongst those of whom St. Paul affirms that they “held the truth of God in unrighteousness;” (Rom. i. 18;) that we walk as children of the truth; *ne dicta factis deficientibus erubescant*, as Tertullian speaketh; “that our life give not our profession the lie;” that we “may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,” as St. Peter saith; (1 Peter ii. 15;) that when “they

speak evil of us, they may be ashamed who blame our good conversation in Christ." (Chap. iii. 16.) For if we follow Christ and his apostles only in word and show; if we wear Christ's colours, and fight under the devil's banner; the title of Christian will no more befit us than that of Boniface a hard visage, or that of Urbanus a cruel Pope. Therefore a Christian is well defined by an ancient father to be *qui Christum verbis et operibus, quantum homini possibile est, imitari nititur*, "that striveth, as much as lies in the power of man, to imitate Christ, by making his hand as active as his tongue; to imitate him both in his deeds and in his words."

You see, beloved, that our weakness stands in need of that which God hath graciously reached out unto us,—this help of example. As he hath made the ear, so the eye also, to obtain learning. And lest we should complain of impossibility to perform what he commands, he hath proposed unto us men of the same mould we are of. This doctrine, then, concerns us two ways: (I.) In respect of ourselves: (II.) In respect of others.

(I.) In respect of ourselves, 1. To remove the lets and hinderances of imitation; 2. To observe the rules of imitation.

1. Now there are divers hinderances: I will mention but three.

(1.) The first is spiritual pride and self-conceit. We willingly persuade ourselves that we are out of danger, and that we can go upon our own strength; that we may rather be examples to others than follow them. At a sight only of our Saviour, at the least feeling of the operation of the Spirit, with Peter, we cast ourselves into the sea, we venture upon any temptation, and think we can walk in the most dangerous places without a leader. And this self-conceit proceedeth from want of grace. Grace teacheth us to remove this hinderance. *Non extollit, sed humiliat*, saith one: "Grace doth not puff up, but humble, a man:" it shows him unto himself. The more a man tastes of these spiritual vanities, the greater is his hunger, and he will leap for joy to eat them at any table. Therefore it was a good rule of St. Jerome, *Omnium simus minimi, ut omnium fiamus maximi*: "Let us in our own opinion be the least of all; and then we shall strive forward and forward, and by a willingness to follow others' example grow up to be the greatest of all."

(2.) This self-conceit works in us a prejudicate opinion, and makes us undervalue and detract from the worth of our brother: which is the second hinderance. We may see it in the scribes and Pharisees. They were forsooth Moses's disciples, and were swelled up with the thought of that chair: as for Jesus, he was not known unto them from whence he was. And how crafty were they, being cheated themselves, to deceive others! They

buzz into the people's ears that he was but "the carpenter's son," (Matt. xiii. 55,) that none of the rulers believed on him. (John vii. 48.) And so daily in themselves they increased a willing and obstinate ignorance; and at last, not knowing him, they crucified the Lord of life. (Acts iii. 15.) Therefore the apostle, speaking of the diversity of gifts and offices of the members of Christ, gives this counsel: "In giving honour, go one before another." (Rom. xii. 10.) Our honour, our preferment, our precedency is, to honour our brother. If we honour him for those good gifts which God hath bestowed upon him, we shall strive to benefit ourselves by them, *lumen de lumine accendere*, "to light our candle at his," to borrow of his lustre, to sit at that heavenly fire which warms his breast. When Naaman was to be healed of his leprosy, Elisha bade him wash himself seven times in the river Jordan: but at this the Syrian was wroth, and his thoughts were at home. "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus," were "better" with him "than all the waters of Israel:" (2 Kings v. 12 :) and if he after had not been better advised, he had still remained and died a leper. Beloved, if thy brother hath tasted of God's graces, if the river of God hath made his heart glad, and God hath appointed that thou shouldst wash at this river, that thou shouldst amend by his fruitful example; and thou then, esteeming him to be dry and barren, thinkest of a fountain at home, of thine own ability; take heed that thou still retain not thy leprosy of sin; take heed thou perish not in thy sin, and that it may not truly be said of thee, "He that is a scholar to himself hath a fool to his master." To this end let charity possess thy heart, that excellent gift of charity, *quæ se consiliis suis non credit*, "which trusts not herself to her own counsels," as Ambrose speaks; which "envieth not," which "thinketh not evil;" (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5;) whose contemplation blesseth itself with the patience of Job, the sincerity of David, the courage of Nehemiah, the industry of Paul; which writes in our memories these good examples, and teacheth us to turn them over every day; which will not suffer us to undervalue our brother, but makes us nourish the least spark of goodness in him, and, if we can, blow it and enliven it into a flame both in his breast and ours.

(3.) The third and last hinderance of Christian imitation is spiritual drowsiness. The Schoolmen call it *ἀκηδία*, *acedia*, the devil's dormitory and sleepy potion, by which each faculty of the soul is laid in a deep sleep; so that though God call never so loud by his criers, the preachers of his word, by the open and visible examples of good men, yet we hear not, we stir not,



we walk not, or, if we do, it is but like those that walk in their sleep; our fancy is troubled, and we know not whether we do or no. If we stir and move, it is but, like the sluggard in the Proverbs, to fold the hands, to lie down, and sleep again in sin: (Prov. vi. 10:) like Eutychus in the Acts, whilst Paul is a-preaching, whilst the example of good men is vocal, we are fast asleep, in danger to fall down and break our necks. (Acts xx. 9.) By this we suffer our souls to gather rust, which should shine and glister with the continual exercise of good works, which should be rubbed and furbished as it were with the frequent meditation of the good life of others. By this we are utterly deprived of that great help in our warfare, the imitation of others. Rouse then up yourselves, beloved, and remove this hinderance: awake from this sleep, and stand up. Let the choir of angels and the joys of heaven wake you. Let the howling and gnashing of teeth, the noise of the damned, stir you. As ye have heretofore drunk nothing but the top of the cup, the sweet of sin, so now take and drink the dregs of it, that it may be bitter to your soul, and that your spirit may be wounded: and then ye will not be able to bear it; then ye will stir and move and be active; then ye will make use of the examples of good men, and do any thing to be rid of this cup.

2. Thus we have opened the door, and removed the bar, and are now as it were in the plain field, in our walk. In the Second place, we must take heed how we walk, and observe the rules of imitation.

(1.) And, First, we must not take our pattern upon trust; no, not St. Paul himself. He brings it in indeed as a duty, "Be ye followers of me;" but he adds this direction, "as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. xi. 1.) For in imitation, besides the persons, there is also to be considered, saith Quintilian, *quid sit ad quod efficiendum nos comparemus*, "what it is we must imitate in the persons. We must no further follow them than they follow the rules of art." And he tells us of many in his age who thought themselves perfect Ciceronians if they could shut up a period with *esse videatur*.\* Some there were *quibus vitium pro exemplo erat*, saith Seneca, "who imitated nothing but that which was bad in the best." It is so in our Christian profession: we must view, and try, and understand what we are to imitate. We must not make use of all eyes, but of those only which look upon the Lord. We must not walk as it were upon other men's feet, unless we know what paths they tread. We must not follow all guides: for some may be blind, and lead us into the ditch. To this end God hath bounded and

\* *Institutiones Oratoricæ*, lib. x. cap. 2.

limited us in our walks, and drawn out as it were certain lines. In the scripture he tells thee, "Thus far shalt thou go, thus far shalt thou follow, and no further." (Job xxxviii. 11.) If any do *transilire lineas*, as Tertullian speaks, "leap over the lines, pass the limits," thou must leave him there, and keep within thy bounds. All other ways are dangerous, all other paths slippery, all other imitation damnable.

This the church of Rome is well acquainted with; and therefore she breaks down the bounds, pulls down the limits, hides the lines, dammeth up the king's highway. She pulls out thy eyes, and then she leads thee in a way indeed, but not of truth, in a by-path, in a way leading out of the way. The way of truth it cannot be: for *veritas nihil erubescit, nisi solummodò abscondi*; "truth blusheth at nothing, but to be hid:" but I must walk their way, and not know whether it be a way or no. Though I doubt, yet I must not dare to question it, but must still walk on, and put it to the adventure. If idolatry and superstition and blind obedience will saint a man, then I am sure to be a saint in heaven. That church reacheth forth unto thee a cup, and says it is of the water of life, when indeed it is but poison. She hath an open breast, and a motherly affection: she shows thee a milky way, but which neither Christ nor his apostles ever trod in: no tracking of them but by blood. She shows thee an easy way, a sensual way, made passable by indulgences, and pardons, and private masses, and super-erogation: only thou must walk in it without offence to the church of Rome. Thus, like those physicians Sidonius speaks of, *officiosè occidit*, "she will kill thee with good words:" like some kind of serpents, she will sting thee, and thou shalt dance when thou art stung: she will flatter thee to thy destruction, and thou shalt perish as it were in a dream. Beloved, what shall we do then? We will pray to God with Paul, to "guide our journey;" (1 Thess. iii. 11;) with David, to make our way upright. We will say as Israel said to Sihon king of the Amorites: "We will neither turn aside into the fields, nor into the vineyards; neither drink of the waters of the wells." We will neither walk in those specious, pleasing ways, nor taste of the wine which that harlot hath mingled, nor draw water out of those wells which they have digged unto themselves: "but we will go in the king's highway," (Num. xxi. 22,) even in that way wherein the apostles, the prophets, the blessed martyrs, the holy saints, all our forefathers, by the light of scripture have gone before us.

(2.) The Second rule of our Christian imitation is, that we strive to imitate the best. *Stultissimum est, non optimum quemque*

*proponere*, saith Pliny: "It is great folly not to propose always the best pattern.\* And, *Elige Catonem*, saith Seneca: † "Choose a Cato," a prime, eminent man, by whose authority thy secret thoughts may be more holy, the very memory of whom may compose thy manners; whom not only to see, but to think of, will be a help to the reformation of thy life. Dost thou live with any in whom the good gifts and graces of God are shining and resplendent, who are strict and exact, and so retain the precepts of God in memory that they forget them not in their works? Then, as St. James saith, "Take the prophets for example," (James v. 10,) so I say, Take these for an ensample; lodge them in the closet of thy heart; confer with their virtuous actions, and study them: and if at any time the devil and the world put thee upon those actions which might make thee to forget thy copy, then take it into thy hands, and look it over again; and as St. Cyprian would often call for Tertullian's works, with a *Da magistrum*, "Give me my master;" so do thou, *Da præceptores*, "Give me the instructing examples of these good men; let them always be before my eyes; let them be a second rule by which I may correct my life and manners: let me not lose this help, which God hath granted me, of imitation."

But, beloved, here beware we must, that we mistake not the goats for the sheep, the left hand for the right; that we weigh not goodness by the number of professors. For it is the devil's policy to make us think that the most are the best; and so he shuts us out of the "little flock," and thrusts us into the folds of goats: and thus we deceive ourselves. *Plerique ducimur non ad rationem, sed ad similitudinem*: "We are not guided by reason, but let her slip," and so are carried away as it were in a throng, *non quâ eundum, sed quâ itur*, "not indeed whither we should go, but whither the many-headed multitude lead us." Therefore thou must take this as a rule, *Multitudo, argumentum mali*: "No surer argument that men are evil, than that they are many." The city of the Lord is not so peopled as the city of the world, which the devil hath erected; neither is heaven so full as hell; nor are there so many saints as there are devils, not so many chosen as there are passed-by, not so many good examples as there be bad ones. We undervalue true professors, we make their paucity a blemish, whereas our Saviour tells us his flock is "little," (Luke xii. 32,) "a lily amongst the thorns;" (Cant. ii. 2;) and when God commands us, as in this, so in all actions, "not to follow a multitude in evil." (Exod. xxiii. 2.)

(II.) And this in our Christian imitation we must observe in

\* *Epist. lib. i. ep. 5.*

† *Epist. xi.*

respect of ourselves. We must be careful, too, in respect of others. And since God hath made imitation such a help to our salvation, we must strive to be guides and lights unto our weaker brethren; not an *ignis fatuus*, or *lambens*, “a fat and foggy meteor,” to lead them out of the way; but *stellæ micantes*, “bright and glistering stars,” to lead them to Christ.

1. And this, in the First place, concerneth the ministers and messengers of God. It is St. Paul’s charge to Timothy, even before the holy angels, that he should “keep himself unblameable before all men:” (1 Tim. vi. 14:) Valentinian’s to his bishops, that they should *vitâ et verbo gubernare*, “govern the church both with their life and with their doctrine;” and, as Nazianzen spake of Basil, they should have “thunder in their words, and lightning in their deeds,” *λέγοντες καὶ πράττοντες*, “speaking and doing:” not like Lucian’s apothecary, who sold medicines for the cough, when he and all his household were infected with it; nor like those physicians [whom] Nazianzen speaketh of, *ἄλλους ἰατρῦειν ἐπιχειροῦντες, αὐτοὶ βρῦντες ἔλκεσι*, “laying [on] their hands to cure the wounds of others, whilst themselves were full of sores:” but striving to come forth glorious and wholesome examples, that they humble not those with their life whom they have raised up with their doctrine; considering that sin doth not only show but teach itself, and what a heavy doom will reach them, if they beat down those with a bad, whom they should raise up and set a-walking with a good, example.

But, beloved, I here mistake my auditory, and speak to this congregation as if I were amongst an assembly of Levites. And yet I know, too, and I need not fear to speak it, that it is an argument of a wicked and profane heart, of a sensual love of the world, that no doctrine now-a-days is more acceptable than that by which a minister may be arraigned; no sermons more applauded than those that strike at the ephod; nothing that the people’s ears do more itch after, or more greedily suck-in, than the disgrace or weakness of their leaders. I will speak it, (and, as Salvian spake in another case, *utinam mentirer*, “I would to God in this I were a liar;” I would you might accuse, I would you might justly reprove, me,) No news more welcome, especially to the wicked, than that which carrieth with it the sin of a teacher. No calling more spurned (I mean, by the wisest) than that of priesthood. As Job speaketh, They whose fathers he refused “to set with the dogs of his flock” mocked him; (Job xxx. 1;) so the “children of fools, more vile than the earth,” make their pastors their song; (verses 8, 9;) and the greatest sinners, the

most debauched sinners, when they have outcries within them, when they have a tempest within them, when their conscience affrights them with doleful alarms, [alarms,] will still the noise, will becalm the tempest, will drown the cries with this breath, with this poisonous blast, with a defamation of the messengers and ministers of the Lord. But let these men know that a day will come, when no excuse shall lull them asleep, when their conscience shall awake them, when the billows shall rise higher, when the tempest shall be louder, when the cry shall be more hideous, when they shall know that though God will require their blood at their pastor's hand, yet it is a poor comfort to them to die in their sin; whenas he shall be punished for giving, and they for following, a bad example.

2. But as this concerns most especially the ministers of the Lord, and those that serve at the altar, so, in the next place, it concerneth the people too; and that nearly, as nearly as the safety of their souls concerns them. For, beloved, the womb of sin is not barren, but she is very fruitful, and brings forth, too, without sorrow or travail. The devil hath his *Crescite et multiplicare*, "Increase and multiply." It is enough for sin to show herself, and be delivered. And therefore most true it is, *Plus exemplo peccatur quàm scelere*, "We sin more against God by example than by the sin itself." Adultery, whilst it lies close in the thought, is only hurtful at home; but if it break forth into act, it spreads its contagion, and it seizeth upon this Christian and that Christian, and in them it multiplies, and, like the pestilence, goeth on insensible, invisible, unavoidable. If the father be given to that great sin of taking God's name in vain, it will soon be upon the tongue of the little infant, and he will speak it as his own language; nay, he will speak it before he can speak his own language, before he knows whether it be a sin or no: he will be, as by birth, so by sin, a child. It was held a miracle that Nicippus's sheep did yean a lion: and almost impossible it is that he should swear that never heard an oath before; that the child should be like a lion, greedy of the prey, and the father as innocent as a lamb; that so many should trace the paths of death, the broad way to destruction, without a leader. Hence it is that in punishing of sin God looks not only with the eye of justice upon it, as it is *ἀνομία*, "a transgression of the law," but as it is exemplary, as it hinders the edification of the body of Christ, and the gathering together of the saints; and is the millstone that hangs upon the neck of the sinner, and sinketh him, not only for the particular sin itself, but because he hath been an occasion of his brother's fall.

Thus, then, you see we must be careful in the performance of this duty in respect both of ourselves and of others also : of ourselves, in removing the lets and observing the rules of imitation ; of others, in so going before them that we lay not a stumbling-block for them in the way. And thus much the general doctrine of imitation implied here hath afforded us. Behold now the love of a good Father, the tender care of our best Master. He will not only set his best scholars over us, and teach us by others, but he will read the lecture himself, and be a pattern for our imitation. And so I come to the more especial object of imitation here proposed ; and that is God : “ Be ye followers of God.”

II. The soul of man, as it takes not the infection of original sin before its union with the body, so makes the body her minister as it were and helper, to abate corruption, to keep down concupiscence, to make the shafts of the devil less mortal. She sees with the eyes, and hears with the ears, and reacheth forth the hands, and walks with the feet. But yet all this is an argument of weakness and imperfection, that we stand in need of these helps ; that I must learn of him whose pedigree is the same with mine, who is an Adamite as well as I, who was conceived in sin as I was ; nay, more, that a rational and immortal creature must be sent to school to an ox and an ass, (Isai. i. 3,) nay, to the pismire. (Prov. vi. 6.) Therefore the soul is then most herself, and comes nighest to her former estate, when, forgetting the weight and hinderance of the body, she enjoys herself, and takes wings as it were, and soars up in the contemplation of God and his goodness ; *cùm id esse incipit quod se esse credit*, as Cyprian speaks, “ when she begins to be that which she must needs believe herself to be,” of a celestial and heavenly beginning. When the inward man lifts itself up with the contempt of the outward, then we are illuminated with blindness, we are clothed with nakedness, we see without eyes, we walk without feet, we hear without ears, and we increase our spiritual wealth by not making use of those outward gifts which seem to enrich us.

Hence it is that God so often calls upon us to take up our thoughts from the earth, and employ them above, and to have our conversation in heaven. And to this end he speaks to us in scripture after the manner of men, and tells us that he is gracious, and merciful, and long-suffering. And when he calls that cruel servant to account for pulling his fellow by the throat, he condemns him by example : “ O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because *thou desiredst me* : oughtest not thou also to have had pity on thy fellow-servant, even as I had of thee ?” (Matt. xviii. 32, 33.) Not that these virtues are in God as acci-

dents: to say this, were to be blasphemous, and to deny him to be God. They are so indeed in man, and admit degrees of perfection and imperfection: but in God they are essential. He is Justice, he is Mercy, he is Truth, he is Wisdom itself. And therefore the Schoolmen call them, as they are in God, *exemplares virtutes*, "no otherwise virtues than as they are exemplary;" because these divine virtues, which are essential to him, must be exemplary to us. We must make him the rule of goodness in all our actions: we must be just, to observe the law; valiant, to keep down our passions; temperate, to conform our wills to the rule of reason; and wise, to our salvation. But there is no virtue that makes us more resemble God than this [which] the apostle here exhorts the Ephesians to; and that is mercy. For although all virtues are in the highest degree, nay, above all degrees, most perfect, in him; yet, in respect of his creatures, none is so resplendent as mercy. If thou callest him Health, I understand thee, saith St. Augustine, because he gives it thee. If thou callest him thy Refuge, it is true, because thou fliest unto him. If thou sayest he is thy Strength, it is because he makes thee strong. But if thou namest his Mercy, thou hast named all: for whatsoever thou art, thou art by his mercy. His goodness is infinite, and looks over all; even his justice hath a relish of it. It is extended unto the very damned: for their torments are not so great as God could inflict, or as they deserve. And in respect of us it exceeds his justice: For his justice hath a proportional object to work upon; we being children of wrath, and worthy of punishment: but his mercy hath none at all; we deserve not to fly to its sanctuary, to be covered under its wings. When we lay weltering in our blood, there could no reason be given why God should take any of us out: he did it *βουληθεις*, saith St. James, "because he would." (James i. 18.) There were none then that could have interceded and pleaded for us, as the elders did for the centurion: "They are worthy that thou shouldst do this for them." (Luke vii. 4.) Mercy is the queen and empress of God's virtues: it is the bond and knot which unites heaven and earth, that by which we hold all our titles,—our title to be men, our title to the name of Christian, our title to the profession of Christianity, our title to earth, our title to heaven.

I could lose myself in this Paradise; I could build a tabernacle upon this Mount Tabor; I could still look upon this mercy-seat: even to speak of it is great delight. But from the contemplation of God's mercy I must descend lower, and lead you to the imitation of it, and with the apostle here exhort you to "be followers of God," to "forgive one another," (Eph. iv.

32,) "to walk in love, even as Christ loved us;" (Eph. v. 2;) and when God reacheth out his hand of mercy to you, not to draw-in yours to your brother. And here I see three paths, as it were, to follow God in; three things required to this imitation: 1. The act of imitation itself; 2. That this act be performed *ex studio imitandi*, "out of" a love of God's mercy, and "a desire to imitate him;" 3. A conformity of the act of imitation to the pattern followed.

1. In the First place, then: As God forgiveth us, so we must forgive our enemies. It will not be enough to have God's mercies on our tongues, or to speak of them with admiration; with joy to go over the bridge, and then pull it up to our brother. We account him not a good painter who can only commend a picture, and not use the pencil himself to draw a line: neither is *he* fit to be governor of a ship *that*, having passed a tempest, doth only praise the pilot, but scarce knows the rudder himself. Good God! what a solecism in Christianity is it to have a cruel heart, and a tongue speaking nothing but mercies! to be in the gall of bitterness and most devilishly malicious, and yet to cry out, "Taste and see how gracious the Lord is!" (Psalm xxxiv. 8; 1 Peter ii. 3.) Jerome censureth Virgil for his

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.—Georgic. ii. 490;*

for calling him "happy that knew the cause of things." *Apparet ipsum ignorasse quod laudat*: "He was ignorant, and knew not that happiness which he commended." So these merciless patrons of mercy *ignorant quod laudant*, "they praise they know not what." They talk of forgiveness, and clothe themselves with malice. Their tongue is smooth, and their heart is rugged. They speak in a still voice, but in their breast is thunder. Their words are more soft than butter; but they think of swords.

2. In the Second place: As we must forgive, so God's mercy must be the motive: we must do it *ex studio imitandi*, "out of a desire to imitate God:" Not out of propension of nature, out of meekness of disposition; for we cannot say the child doth imitate his father in eating, because eating is natural: Not out of a stoical affectation, *contumeliam contumeliæ facere*, "to think it revenge enough to beat off an injury with a witty jest:" Not out of love of peace, and fear of trouble: Nor, lastly, out of necessity; therefore to forgive, because thou canst not revenge. *Quod necessitas facit, depretiat ipsa.\** For, as he told the emperor that "wearied cruelty is not clemency," so an inability

\* "Those actions which necessity prompts are thereby lowered in value."—  
EDIT.



or an impossibility of revenge is not mercy. A lion, though within the grates, is a lion still, as fierce, as wild, as ravenous as before; and a bear is a bear still, still greedy of blood, though without a tooth, without a paw. Thou sayest thou dost forgive thy enemy with all thy heart? But *O quàm cuperes tibi unguis esse!* "thou wantest but fangs," thou wantest but ability to revenge! If the lines were loosed, and thy teeth sharp, thou wouldst grind thine enemy to powder, thou wouldst triumph in thy revenge, thou wouldst show what thy forgiveness was. Though a wall be placed between thee and thy enemy, that thy artillery cannot reach him, and thou canst not be revenged, yet *voto jugulásti*, as St. Jerome speaketh, "thou hast performed it in thy wish." And *thus* to forgive, beloved, is so far from following God, that we run away from him. God forgives not because he is not able to destroy thee. No; as Cæsar once spake, and nobly too, *Facilius est facere quàm dicere*, "It was easier for him to be revenged than to talk of it:" so, did not God's mercy restrain him, he could with a word destroy the whole world. He hath a sword, and fire, and a quiver; a "glittering sword," a sword that "shall eat flesh;" and "a fire kindled in his wrath, that shall burn unto the bottom of hell;" and a quiver full of arrows, of arrows that shall drink blood: (Deut. xxxii. 22, 41, 42:) yet he will in mercy sheath his sword, he will quench his fire, he will hide his arrows in his quiver, that when we feel the operation of the sweet influence of his mercy within ourselves, we may also with an upright and sincere heart derive it to our brother.

3. Lastly: We must conform our imitation to the Pattern. He with one act of mercy wipes out all scores: so must we. When he forgives our sins, he is said to cast them behind him, never to think of them, so to forget them as if they never had been: so must we. He doth it too without respect of persons: and so we ought to do. We must forgive all, for ever; and so far must we be from respect of persons that we must acknowledge no title but that of Christian.

To conclude this point: How slight soever we make of it, there is no surer mark that we are not in the true faith, than hatred of our brethren; no stronger argument that we are not members of that body whereof Christ is the Head, than the (I will not say hatred, but) not-loving of the weakest member of it. For "he that loveth not his brother," the love of God cannot dwell in him. (1 John iii. 10, 17.) He may flatter himself with a vain opinion that he loveth God, but the love of God is not really in him; it abides not, it dwells not, it hath not

residence in him. And "he that hateth his brother is in darkness." He may think he enjoys the light of the gospel, and that he is under the covenant of grace; but there is no such matter. He is *diaboli ludibrium*, "the devil's laughing-stock;" nay, the very forge of Satan, wherein he hammereth and worketh all iniquity. "And he walketh in darkness," saith St. John. His hatred "hath blinded his eyes," so that he walks on, and thinks he is in the right way. He labours in his vocation, he goes to church, he receives the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, he can do any Christian office; and so he thinks he is sound and healthful, even when the poison is at his very heart. And therefore St. John addeth, "He knoweth not whither he goeth:" he falls into many sins, whilst he thinks he doeth well. An opinion he hath [that] he is in the right way to heaven, but no Christian knowledge thereof, "because that darkness hath blinded his eyes," (1 John ii. 9—11,) so blinded his eyes that he discerneth not any as he should. If he be a prophet, he obeys him not; if a just man, he respects him not; if otherwise a friend, he knows him not. For malice hath as it were informed his soul; and as she makes the body her instrument, so the soul the place of her dominion; and she reigns there as the devil's tributary, *custos peccatorum*, "the keeper of the door of the soul, that sin fly not out." And watchful she is too: for she never sleeps. If but a thought of repentance arise, she will chain it up. So that whilst hatred possesseth thy heart, thy heart is a stone: broken it may be; but softened it cannot be. And though thou flatterest thyself that thou hast repented of thy sins, yet it hath no more reality than thy eating or running in a dream. O, then, beloved, let us put-on brotherly love, the certain sign and note that God in Christ hath begotten us his children. Let us forgive our enemies, that so we may resemble our Father. Let us root out the bitter weed of malice,—the strongest argument of a true and serious repentance. Let us clothe ourselves with charity, which will make our ways, otherwise rugged and uneven, to be smooth and passable, being the very bar and petard to break up each door and hinderance in our way. Lastly, in our apostle's words, Let us "be followers of God, as dear children."

## SERMON LXXXVIII.

## MOTIVES FOR A CHRISTIAN TO IMITATE GOD.

*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.—*  
Ephesians v. 1.

## PART II.

WHEN my meditations first fastened themselves upon this parcel of scripture, I then thought that the space of an hour would have both quitted them and me. But this holy oil, like that of the widows in the Book of Kings, increased under my hands, and I could not then pour it out all unto you. (1 Kings xvii. 9—16; 2 Kings iv. 1—7.) I therefore then became your debtor. And it is *ισπὸν χρέος*, “a holy and sacred debt:” and I am come now to quit my promise, to pour out the remainder of the oil, and to pay my debt, even there where I obliged myself, in the holy sanctuary.

III. I then observed that these words contained in them a duty, “Be ye followers of God;” and the persons enjoined this duty, the Ephesians, who are styled “dear children.” Which title includes motives to win and enforce them to the duty: 1. Because they were “children,” a great prerogative; 2. Because “dear children,” a gracious adjunct. The duty hath been handled: the motives remain; which, I say, include a high privilege or prerogative. For if, as we are men, we esteem it honourable to be of such a race and stock, to be descended from this potentate or that prince; surely, then, as we are Christians, when we have put-on our better and more heavenly thoughts, we shall account it the greatest honour to derive our pedigree from heaven, “to be called the sons of God,” as St. John speaketh; (1 John iii. 1;) to be *filii divini beneficii*, as St. Augustine, “children of the divine kindness;” to be children of God, and heirs of a kingdom, and that a heavenly kingdom; to have title to a crown, and that a crown of life. But so it is, beloved, that when we hear of charters and grants, of privileges and prerogatives, our thoughts go no farther, but stay themselves in the mere grant and privilege. The gospel is indeed *εὐαγγέλιον*, “good news;” and we delight to hear of a Saviour, of a Prince of peace, of one that shall make our peace, and take away the sins of the world: but we think not of any allegiance or duty which we owe to this Prince. Glad we are he is victorious, and that he hath the keys of hell and of death. And

wear his colours too we would ; but we would not come under his banner, we would not fight his battles. "Children" we all would be ; but where is our duty ? We desire to be "endeared ;" but where is our gratitude ? Nay, further yet, we would be accounted "lovely," and yet remain enemies to the grace of God. Our sins we would have covered, but not blotted out : we would have God forget them, and yet still walk in them.

And here we mistake the nature of a privilege. For the tie thereof is as strong as that of the law ; and the greatest sins are those against the gospel. Our own chronicles will tell us that riots and disorders in cities in one king's reign have weakened and disannulled charters and privileges granted by a former king. Beloved, God is the King of kings, "the same to-day, and yesterday, and for ever : " and he grants not his privileges or charters that we should let loose the reins to impiety, and make our strength the law of unrighteousness. (1 Cor. xv. 56.) The trumpet of the gospel sounds not that we should take up the weapons of sin to prepare ourselves to the devil's battle : neither did that tree of life grow up that we should sin securely under the bough and shadow of it. And therefore the apostle here, exhorting the Ephesians to imitation of God, uses this method. He taketh not his argument *ab inutili* : \* he shows them not God's quiver, nor points to the arrow which is now set to the very breast of them if they obey not. He tells them not it will be "disadvantageous" unto them if they follow not God. But he draws his argument *a congruo* : † he lays open and unfolds before them the riches of God's mercy. He proposeth God in his full beauty ; "his head as the most fine gold, his locks curled ; his cheeks as a bed of spices, and as sweet flowers ; and his lips like lilies, dropping down pure myrrh." (Cant. v. 11, 13.) He brings him in as a Father, not dropping only, but ready to pour out, his choicest blessings on his children. Or rather he draws his argument *a necessario* : they "must needs" be obedient, and imitate their Father, or else they cannot be children. And he rises as it were by a gradation : 1. They are "children ;" and children ought to learn of their parents. 2. They are "dear children ;" and here the tie is made stronger. 3. They are τέκνα ἀγαπητὰ, *diligibiles filii*. Their sins are wiped out, and they appear "lovely" through Christ. And here is the fulness of God's grace, and it will bring us with David to a nonplus, to a *Quid retribuam* ? "What shall I return to the Lord for this his kindness ? " (Psalm cxvi. 12.)

\* "From the consideration of the uselessness of resistance."—EDIT.  
 † "From fitness and propriety."—EDIT.

Thus these waters of comfort issue forth like those in the vision, Ezek. xlvii. ; and God leads all his through them. 1. They are “children:” and here the waters are as it were to the ancles. (Verse 3.) 2. They are “dear children:” and here they reach up to the loins. (Verse 4.) 3. In Christ they are “worthy to be beloved:” and here the waters are risen, they flow, and cannot be passed over: (verse 5:) no line can measure them, no cogitation fathom them, no gratitude reach them; our thoughts, our words, our actions, all are too weak to express the depth of them. Now each Christian must be as a fruitful “tree planted by this river of waters, whose leaf fades not,” and whose fruit fails not. (Psalm i. 3.) If he be a child, he must be obedient; if he be dear, he must be the more grateful; if he be made worthy of love, his “conversation” must “be as becometh the gospel of Christ.” (Phil. i. 27.) So we have here *beneficium* and *officium*, “a benefit” and “a tie;” the benefit, telling us whose children we are; the tie, pointing out to our obedience. We will plainly and briefly view them both.

(I.) 1. In the First place, the Ephesians are “children:” A great prerogative, if we consider their former estate, what they were before. They were *Satanæ mancipia*; no otherwise: servants, and that “servants and slaves to Satan;” under the law, and that a killing law: but now redeemed, that they may “receive the adoption of sons;” (Gal. iv. 5;) and having this adoption sealed too, and that by the Spirit of God; and their names written in a book, and that not only *in libro vocationis*, “amongst those who are outwardly called,” but in the book of life, which admits no blot, no blur, no defacing; in which whosoever is written, is one of God’s children, and is accounted so, and shall be so to all eternity. Now the civilians define adoption to be the receiving of a stranger *in alienam familiam, inque jus familie*, “into another family, and to have title and right to be of that family.” And strangers the Ephesians were, even “aliens from the covenant” of grace, (Eph. ii. 12,) *sine spe, sine opibus*, as he told his adopted Jugurtha;\* “without the least hope, without any spiritual wealth or endowments;” naked and languishing, and even panting under the terrors of the law, and (which was the complement of their misery, and an addition to their contumelious condition) not deserving a better estate.

And this, beloved, raiseth the worth and dignity of the benefit, and begets in us at once both comfort and wonder,—that children we are, and yet deserve not this adoption, this filiation. Amongst men it is otherwise: desert always was the ground of

\* SALLUSTII *Jugurtha*, cap. x.

adoption. The emperor Nerva adopts Trajan, and takes him to be his son, *hoc est, unicum auxilium fessis rebus*, saith the orator, "as a stay and prop to his declining estate." *Temerè fecerat, si non adoptasset* : "He had done very unadvisedly if he had not done it."\* And Galba adopts Piso, *quia eò necessitatis ventum erat*, "because he was driven unto it by necessity:" he had a brother elder than he worthy of that fortune, but *that* he was more worthy.† And Micipsa, after divers attempts to take away Jugurtha's life, at last adopts him, *quia glorià invidiam vicit*, "because his virtue now in its full splendour shone so bright that envy could not dim it."‡ But what worth was there in us below? what spark, what appearance, what show of desert in us? All in us, not extinct or in the embers, but naturally darkness: a night on our understanding, stone at our hearts, rebellion in our affections; and we dead; and that not in a dream, (as the Anabaptists foolishly conceive, calling original sin "the dream of Augustine,") but truly and really. All in the loins of that one Adam, when that one Adam by his rebellion slew us all, and made us all slaves, not worthy to be God's hired servants.

But see here a *συνίστησι*, "God hath set forth his love," (Rom. v. 8,) nay, "the exceeding riches of his grace." (Eph. ii. 7.) And it is worth our observing, that God is not rich as man is, to his own good and profit. His riches serve not himself, but us. And whereas man gathers not wealth by giving, God calls himself "rich" by making us so. Man adopts because he is rich; but God then terms himself "rich" when he doth adopt. Thus with the eye of favour he looked upon us when we were deeply plunged in our deserved misery. And by this favour *navigamus spei velo*: In this deluge of sin "we hoist up the sails of hope," and make forward for the high prize and price of our calling. In this great tempest he became our Pilot; *majorque, dum exacerbatur, erupit*; "and even in his anger forgot his anger, slumbered in the tempest, becalmed the storm;" and, when we were in the mouth of danger, even almost on the rocks of despair, the light of his countenance shone round about us, and by that light we saw the haven where we would be: so that now our weakness became a strong argument of God's power; and the seed of corruption in us brought forth in him the sweet fruit of forgiveness. None thunder-struck or killed with a curse but the serpent, the devil, who was the procurer of it. Though we were "enemies," (Rom. v. 10,) though we were "darkness,"

\* PLINII *Panegyricus*, cap. viii.

† TACITI *Hist.* lib. i. cap. 15, 16.

‡ SALLUSTII *Jugurtha*, cap. x.

(Eph. v. 8,) though we were "disobedient" and rebellious in our affections, (Titus iii. 3,) yet even in this hostility God became our friend; in this darkness he was our light; in this rebellion he sealed our pardon; in this poverty he was our true wealth; and of slaves he made us his children, and brought us "into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 21.) And sons only we are not, but "heirs; heirs of God, and co-heirs, joint-heirs, with Christ." (Verses 16, 17.) As he is Son, so we by his right are sons too. "All is ours;" Paul is ours, and Cephas is ours; because we "are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. iii. 21—23.) So that St. John might well usher-in this great advancement with an *Ecce*, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John iii. 1.)

2. But, in the Second place, besides this grace of adoption, we are children too in a manner by generation. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth:" (James i. 18 :) but not so as he begat his only-begotten Son, "by an eternal generation," as Fulgentius speaks, but "by a voluntary regeneration." In him without any natural beginning there remained an eternal nativity: but God's will preceded and went before our new birth. And to this end he placed us *in gremio matris ecclesiae*, "even in the bosom of the church our mother," who conceived us of "the incorruptible seed of God's word," as St. Peter speaketh, (1 Peter i. 23,) the blessed Spirit quickening this seed, till a new creature be brought forth, not into this temporary, but into the eternal, light; which she feeds with the bread of life, the word of truth; which she nourisheth with the milk of faith; which she strengtheneth with the bread of affliction, with the blood of martyrs, till, growing up "from strength to strength," from virtue to virtue, it became at last "a perfect man in Christ Jesus." And this may well be called "a birth:" for indeed it much resembles our natural birth, but especially in two respects:

(1.) First. Here are the two terms of generation, *non-ens tale*, and *ens tale*; "the matter out of which it was produced," and "the substance or entity which it is now;" terms truly contradictory, as different as heaven and hell, as light and darkness: so that here is *mira mutatio*, "the change is wonderful." View man in his naturals, as not yet regenerate, and he is, as the apostle saith, "the child of wrath:" (Eph. ii. 3:) *candidatus diaboli*, saith Tertullian, one that hath abjured heaven, and is as it were "a competitor and one that stands for hell," nay, one that may be employed as the devil's instrument to bring others thither. As Pliny said of Regulus, *Quicquid a Regulo fit necesse*

*est fieri sicut non oportet* ; so of him, "Whatsoever he doeth must needs be done amiss, because he doeth it." Who would ever look that a sweet stream should flow from this corrupt fountain? Who would expect that this *Nehushtan*, "this rude piece of brass," should ever be polished? (2 Kings xviii. 4.) Or is it possible, so far as in our conceit, that out of this cockatrice-egg there should be hatched a dove? Hence then increase thy gratitude and obedience, and admire God's power. With mere man this is impossible ; but "with God all things are possible." (Matt. xix. 26.)

And this change, too, as the introduction of a human soul, is instantaneous and in a moment, though the growth be by degrees. *Non opus est morá Spiritui Sancto* : "The Holy Ghost needs not the help of delays." But if even into this dead and corrupt matter he breathe the breath of spiritual life, it shall stand up from the dead, and live, and be a new creature : which is the *terminus ad quem*,\* the second term of this spiritual birth. And here view him, and he is ἕτερος ἐξ ἑτέρου, he is changed, "another out of another ;" a child of light, *candidatus eternitatis*, "one that thinks of nothing but eternity." Certainly a blessed birth and happy change. A happy day it was when it might be said that such a child was conceived, a child of peace, a child of blessings, a child of God. That day was a day of brightness, a day of rejoicing, a typical day of that eternal day when time shall be no more.

(2.) The second resemblance of our spiritual birth to our natural is in respect of the difficulty and pains in bringing forth this child. And here it is but a resemblance : it will not admit a comparison. For though the pains of a woman in travail are great, so that almost they are become proverbial, yet they are but light afflictions, scarce worth note or naming, in respect of the sorrow and pain endured in this delivery, but rods to these scorpions, but as a cramp or convulsion to this rack, as scratches to these wounds ; scarce breaking the upper skin, as Seneca speaks, whilst these "divide asunder the soul and the spirit," (Heb. iv. 12,) whilst they enter the bowels and the heart ; scarce worth the speaking of in respect of these sighs and groanings, which, the apostle saith, are unspeakable. (Rom. viii. 26.) For indeed the grief of the body is but the body of grief ; but the pain of the soul is the very soul of pain : and the soul it is that is afflicted in this birth. The sighs are hers, and the groans are hers : and all is to dead in herself the root of sin ; *non exercere quod nata est*, as St. Jerome, "not to be what she is ;" to be in

\* "The point to which it leads."—EDIT.



the body, and yet out of the body; to tame the wantonness of the flesh; to empty the whole man of luxury; to prune the overspreading passions;—all, to be delivered, and to bring forth this new creature. *Quantæ sollicitudines! quantæ contritiones!* saith St. Ambrose: “What solicitude! what anxiety! what contrition! what tie of continence! what lashes of conscience! what bitterness of soul!” *Qualis adversarius!* “What an adversary” to cope withal and to remove, that would strangle this infant in the womb, in the conception; nay, that would destroy it *in semine, in principiis*, before it were an embryo; that would not suffer it to have power to become a child of God! But yet, though there be pain and grief in the travail, there is joy and comfort after the delivery. *Quæ parturit, quatitur et compungitur:* “In the travail there is a conquassation and compunction as it were:” but *quæ peperit, exultat;* “when the woman is delivered, when the little infant hangs on the teat, there is joy and exultation;” and the mother “forgets the pain, because a child is born into the world.” (John xvi. 21.) So Christ, [who] is our joy, the child to be formed in us, as the apostle speaketh, (Gal. iv. 19,) at the first is bitter and distasteful to us, and we are not willing to conceive him in the womb of our soul, because this new birth cannot be without a funeral. For to be thus born we must die; we must die to ourselves, to the world, to the flesh: we must hate that which we most love; we must renounce all that may hinder this birth. But when Christ is fully formed in us, the cloud of sorrow is removed, all is serene and bright, and we forget the pangs and grief and sorrow which before we endured: for “the Holy Ghost hath come upon” the soul, “and the Most High hath over-shadowed” it; and now “that holy thing which is born shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke i. 35.)

And this, beloved, is the benefit or privilege I told you of. A great privilege: for, *Remittuntur ei peccata cui filii nomen ascribitur:* “His pardon is sealed who hath this title and name given him, to be ‘the child of God.’” But as it is *beneficium*, so it is *officium*; it is obligatory, and hath “a duty” annexed unto it. If we be children, we must be obedient. We have now altered our language. Our dialect was a strange dialect; we spake words clothed with death: but now our language and voice is, “Abba, Father.” And this first cry, these first words of our nativity, as Cyprian speaks, “Our Father, which art in heaven,” are as witnesses to remember us that we have renounced all carnality, and, as children in Christ, know only “our

Father which is in heaven." "Be ye therefore followers of God, as children," or "because ye are children." For this very appellation is an admonition; this title is a remembrancer; this honour and dignity must either instruct us, or it will condemn us. It was a speech worthy the mouth of an emperor which Alexander Severus used, *Conabor me dignum præstare nomine Alexandri*, "I will endeavour to be worthy the name of Alexander." And it was a speech worthy the mouth of a Christian which Basilides, a converted executioner, used to return upon his companions who persuaded him to swear by the name of Cæsar, *Non licet jurare, quia sum Christianus*: "It is not lawful for me to swear by him, because I am a Christian." Great honours are contumelies, and upbraid us, if our comportment and behaviour be not answerable. What a ridiculous thing was it to see Nero, an emperor, with his harp or fiddle, or in his buskins acting on a stage; to see Domitian catching of flies, or Hercules at his distaff! So, what an incongruous thing is a Christian and a blasphemer, a disciple and a traitor; to be *in arê ecclesiæ*, "in the court or floor of the church," and yet chaff; to be within the pale, and yet a devil; to be a child of God with the teeth of a lion, ravening for the prey, and ready to devour his brother! "If I am a father, where is my honour?" saith God. (Mal. i. 6.) Where is your understanding captivated, your stubborn wills conquered, your passions subdued? And, "If you were Abraham's seed, you would do Abraham's works, and not the devil's," saith our Saviour to the Jews. (John viii. 39, 44.) Good God! a wonder it is to see a world of sins, a world of sinners; and yet all Christians; a deluge of iniquity, and yet none drowned, all within the ark; so many fighting against God, and yet all his soldiers; so many abusing his name for trifles, for nothing, indeed, out of mere custom, and yet this with a child's mouth; so many rebels and traitors, and yet all children! But, beloved, let us not deceive ourselves and our own souls. It is not the name of "children" that will entitle us to the kingdom of heaven, but the reality, the being so. Without this our religion which we profess will accuse, and the relation which we boast we have to God will condemn, us. For, *Reatus impii, pium nomen*, saith Salvian: "A glorious title doth but more lay open our errors;" and it adds to the guilt of a wicked man, that he hath his Christendom, and that his name is amongst the children of God. But let us walk worthy of the gospel of Christ, and, as "partakers of the heavenly vocation, consider the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb.

iii. 1.) "Let every one that names Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) Let us "walk as children of the light:" (Eph. v. 8:) and "be followers of God, as his children."

But here the weak Christian will reply, like the sluggard in the Proverbs, that "there is a lion in the way," (Prov. xxvi. 13,) an impossibility of following God; that the dignity of the gospel is so great that neither man nor angel are equal to it, or able to do any thing worthy of it. Indeed a weak Christian, and one that would be a child still, but, as the apostle speaks, "in understanding!" (1 Cor. xiv. 20.) For see: God desires but a competency. He likes thee when thou followest him, though it be with a child's pace, with an infant's strength. So that thou follow him, he interprets thy endeavours performance. And though like a giant thou rouse not thyself up to run the race, yet if with all thy courage thou follow, he calls thee strong that made thee so, though thou hast but the strength of an infant. But thou sayest, "It is impossible." Why, but that which is impossible may be necessary. For thou thyself hast made it so: the time was in Paradise when it was not impossible. The best use thou canst make of it is to do what thou canst, saith St. Augustine, and then *petere a Deo quod non possis*, "to entreat God's help in that thou canst not perform." And thou needest not fear a denial: for, behold, he is thy Father, and thou art his child, nay, τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν, his "dear child:" which is the gracious adjunct, and comes next to be handled.

(II.) Incongruous it is, you see, that a child, so freely adopted from so base an estate, should prove refractory and disobedient. And pity it were, nay, impossible, *filium tot lacrymarum*, as Augustine's mother spake of him, that "a child bought and begot with so much grief, with so many tears," should perish at the last in rebellion. This prerogative was not granted in vain. But see here, the waters of comfort rise higher, and the privilege is enlarged, and the tie made stronger. This child of God, which was Benoni, "a son of sorrow," is now become Benjamin, "a son of" God's "right hand," (Gen. xxxv. 18,) beloved and dear in his sight. And he will make him even as Joseph, a son of "increasing," "a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by the well-side." (Gen. xxx. 24; xlix. 22.) And here, beloved, what wings might I wish for to fly a pitch proportionable to the height of God's love? or what line might I use to sound the depth of God's mercy? or with what words shall I express how he endears himself to his children? Shall I mention the love of women? The love of Jonathan to David was greater. (2 Sam. i. 26.) Shall I speak of Jonathan's love

to David? It was great indeed, but to a friend: but God embraces first, and loveth first. "We love him, because he loved us first." (1 John iv. 19.) He is ὁ τῆς ἀγάπης Πατήρ, "the Father of love;" and he is ἡ Ἀγάπη, "Love itself." And he delights in these titles and attributes, saith Nazianzen, ἵνα νομοθετήσῃ, "that he may as it were by proclamation promulge and publish his love." And no carnal friend, though, as Chrysostom saith, he be mad in love, can so burn in affection to his friend, as God doth in love to our souls. Now this love of God is,

1. First, A preventing love. It prevents our slowness and backwardness to entertain it. We sacrificed to the queen of earth, to fortune, that she would love us; to the world, that it would favour us; and never thought of God's love.

2. It is a purging love. It washes away our corruption and filth, and sets us upon our legs, that we may "walk in love."

3. It is an overflowing love; *nimia charitas*, as the apostle speaks, "exceeding great, too much love;" larger than our thoughts, or our desires, passing our understanding. (Eph. ii. 4; iii. 19.) *Sermo non valet exprimere: experimento opus est*: "Speech cannot reach it: experience must express it." Feel it we may: discourse of it we cannot.

4. Lastly. It is a bountiful love; and it is perpetual. "With an everlasting love have I loved thee," saith God: (Jer. xxxi. 3:) and, he "hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation:" (2 Thess. ii. 16:) and, "He hath prepared for his children a crown; and they are heads destined to a diadem," saith Tertulian. His common gifts, his earthly goods, *quæ nec sola sunt, nec summa sunt*, "which are neither the greatest goods, nor yet alone," but have always a mixture and taste of evil, he gives unto his bastard children, as Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines, but the heritage to Isaac, (Gen. xxv. 5, 6,) the kingdom and the crown to the children of promise. Nay, further yet: his love is there greatest, where it appears least. In our misery and affliction, in the anguish of our soul, when we think he frowns upon us and is angry, his love attends and waits upon us, his wings are over us, we always carry his protection about us. Suppose it be an asp or a basilisk, we shall walk upon it; a lion or a dragon, we shall tread it under foot; a Red Sea, it shall divide itself; a hot, fiery furnace, we shall be bathed in it; a lion's den, thou shalt be as safe in it as in thy private chamber. Suppose it poison, it shall not hurt thee; a viper, thou shalt fling it off; the wittiest and most exquisite torment, thou shalt not feel it. For, *Martyres non eripuit, sed nunquam deseruit*: "He took not the martyrs from the stake;

but did he forsake them? No;" his love was with them at the stake, and in the fire. And this heat of love did so inflame them, that the fire burnt not, the rack tormented not, because the pain was swallowed up in love.

Nay, all shall work for the best to the children of God. Be they afflictions? we miscall them; they are but trials, but lessons and sermons. Be they tears? he puts them in his bottle. Be they enemies, and that a mighty host? behold, "they that be with us are more than they that be with them. The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (2 Kings vi. 16, 17.) Or, if not, our patience is revenge; and our sufferance heaps coals of fire upon the head of our adversaries. Be it the world? "We so use it, that we may enjoy God," saith St. Augustine. Be it the flesh? by God's power we beat it down. Be it the devil himself? in striving to take away, he increases, our glory. Be it death? it is but a passage. What, though we be here in disgrace, the very off-scouring of the world, the by-word and song of the people, accounted the cause of all evils, as the Christians were in the primitive times? (no hail, no great thunder, no inundation, but the Christians were accused for it;) what, though we be never so vile, never so contemptible in this world? We are here strangers: "The world knows us not, because" it knows not God. (1 John iii. 1.) No marvel if a king unknown in another country be coarsely or injuriously used, because he is unknown and in another country. Let then the world esteem of God's children as it [may] please: they are here in an unknown place, *peregrini deorsum, cives sursum*; \* like mountains or high hills, as Seneca speaks of his philosopher, their growth and tallness appears not to men afar off, but to those who come nigh. At the day of judgment there will another account be made. When God appears, "we shall be like unto him." (1 John iii. 2.) Then the note will be changed, and the cry altered: "We fools thought their life madness, and their end without honour: but now they are counted amongst the children of God, and their portion amongst his dear saints." (Wisdom v. 4, 5.)

And are God's children dear unto him? Sure this benefit hath a tie, and this increase of God's love calls for an increase of gratitude. He expects that he should be dear to us. For though God's love be not as man's love, *negotatio*, as Seneca speaketh, "a kind of a market-love, with which we traffic, and from it expect gain;" yet he expects that we should love him again: not that our love can profit him, but for our own sakes.

\* "Strangers and pilgrims below, citizens above."—EDIT.

He will not love at random ; he will not cast away his love, nor his mite, but he will have it repaid. But if his ten talents be laid up in a napkin, laid aside as not worth the using, then his anger riseth, and his indignation is high ; and he will not only take away his talents, but will bind thee hand and foot, and cast thee into prison, and punish thee as an unprofitable servant. It is so even with us men. No wound greater to us than that which ingratitude giveth. “If it had been my enemy, I could have borne it,” saith David : “but it was my familiar friend, with whom I took sweet counsel,” that did me this wrong. (Psalm lv. 12, 13.) When Cassius and the rest set upon Cæsar with their poniards in the senate-house, he defended himself with silence : but when Brutus struck, he covered his face with his robe, with his *Καὶ σὺ, τέκνον* ; “What ! thou, my son Brutus ?” That Brutus stabbed him, this was the stiletto at his heart. It is so with God. We cannot offend him more than by unthankfulness. *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris* ;\* for “in it are all sins.” Infidelity begets it : and we cannot name a greater sinner than an infidel. A sin this is so hateful and detestable to God that we find him complaining to the heavens and to the earth of the Jews’ ingratitude : “Hear, O heavens, and hearken, O earth : for I have nourished rebellious children.” (Isai. i. 2.) And he might well complain. The Jews were his peculiar people, culled out of the whole world, graced with the title of *populus meus* : they were “his people,” his dear people ; like Gideon’s fleece, full of the dew of heavenly benediction, when all the earth was dry besides ; a signet on God’s right hand, a seal on his heart, and as the apple of his eye ; his vineyard, which he hedged about, planted with the best plants, built a tower in the midst of it, and spared no diligence to better it ; a nation which he raised and increased and defended with wonders. How can he, then, now bear with their ingratitude ? How can he be pleased with these wild grapes of disobedience, and stubbornness, and rebellion ? Surely, as he hath threatened, he will pluck off this signet, he will take away this hedge, he will dry this fleece, he will pull this eagle out of her nest. Though she “make her nest high, he will pluck her down from thence : she shall be small among the Heathen.” (Jer. xlix. 15, 16.) And this *populus meus* shall be *populus nullus*, this “his people” shall be “no people,” but a scattered nation, the scorn of the world, *in quos omnium Cæsarum ira detumuit*, “who have smarted as slaves under each emperor ;” whose very name shall be odious as it is at this day.

\* “When you call a man *ungrateful*, you attribute to him the worst vices.”—  
EDIT.

Beloved, to come home to ourselves, and to change Jewry into England: If they then, surely we now are *populus Dei*, "God's people;" as much endeared, as much obliged, as ever the Jews were. When the cloud of superstition darkened England, God dispersed that cloud, and placed the candle in the candlestick, the gospel in the church: and this taper hath burnt bright these many years,—we may say, by miracle; for our enemies' whole industry hath been to extinguish it. We have also seen God's wonders on the deep: for when we saw no "door of hope" to pass through, as the prophet speaks, (Hosea ii. 15,) when our enemies were ready to devour us, as with an east wind God scattered them: and that navy which His Holiness had christened and called "Invincible," in a moment was overcome; and a coin was stamped with a fitter name, a new inscription: *Venit, ivit, fuit*, "It came, it went away, it came just to nothing." Nay, when hell itself fought against us, and there lacked nothing but the touch of a match to our destruction, God in an instant blasted and nullified the design of bloody men. They were in travail with mischief, and were delivered too; but they brought forth a lie. These loving-kindnesses, I know you all will say, deserve to be written in a pillar of marble, with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, and to be shown to all posterity. But, beloved, it is not verbal thanks alone that God requires: but we must write these favours in our hearts, and the remembrance of them must drive us to repentance for that great sin of ingratitude; it must win us to obedience, and enforce us to a more Christian conversation; and that *citò, hodiè*, "without delay, this day;" lest God remove his providence from our tabernacle; lest he blow out our taper, and remove our candlestick; lest he darken our sun, and turn our moon into blood; lest he furbish that sword which is already drawn against us, to cut us off and destroy us. The Jews were his children, as dear to him as we are; and now they are cast away, cut off, small and despised amongst men!

Besides this larger volume of God's blessing, each Christian hath at least a pocket-manual, in which he may read God's love unto himself, and tell what he hath done for his soul. If thou be rich, it was God's love that made thee so; and he looks for some restitution by the hands of the poor. If thou be full of days, thou hadst them from God's right hand; and he gave them not that thou shouldst still be a child in understanding. If thou be an Absalom for beauty, God made not so fair a soul [body] for a bad guest, a foul soul. If thou hast a good thought, it was God's love that wrought it, and thou must not

be so unkind as to stifle it. If thou hast a holy intendment, it was God that raised it, and it is sacrilege to pull it down. If thou hast perseverance in goodness, it was God that continued it; and thy prayer must be that he will not depart from thee. And then, if out of all these thou findest a full persuasion that thy sins are forgiven, and that thou art lovely in God's sight, thou must also increase thy obedience; and as thou tastest of God's love in the highest degree, so thou must wind up this obedience to the highest pin; thou must be a "follower of God, as a child worthy to be beloved, worthy to be dear:" which is the last step of this gradation, and comes now to be handled.

(III.) A child of God, and a dear child:—a great privilege, a great tie. But now not only to be so, but to be made worthy to be so, not only to be "endeared," but to be *filius diligibilis*, "a child worthy of love," and of a deformed and defaced person to be made amiable, this is that "cord of man, that band of love," that draws us; (Hosea xi. 4;) this is the covering of that black which the sun had looked upon; (Cant. i. 6;) this is the work of our well-beloved Christ Jesus. And now he calleth, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." (Cant. ii. 13.) As when St. Chrysostom makes it an argument of the dignity of the soul, that whereas a body naturally deformed cannot by the most skilful artist be brought to an apt and seemly proportion, yet the soul polluted, crooked, and maimed may be cleansed, and set, as it were, and made straight again: so must we here, with the apostle, make it not only an argument of God's love, but a great motive to our obedience, that our sins are forgiven us, that they shall not be imputed unto us; that we shall appear before our Judge, not in our own likeness, but in the likeness of our elder Brother, Christ Jesus, who is truly *Τέκνον ἀγαπητόν*, God's "well-beloved Son, in whom he is well-pleased." (Matt. iii. 17.) When Joseph, "a fair person and well-favoured," was enticed by Potiphar's wife to lie with her, his answer was, "My master hath made me ruler over his house, and hath committed all into my hand; he hath kept nothing from me, but thee: how then shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. xxxix. 6—9.) Beloved, each Christian should thus dispute with himself: "I was sore wounded, and God hath procured a salve for my sore: and shall I therefore lie still, and bleed myself to death? He hath for my sake humbled his Son, he hath multiplied his mercies upon me: and shall I make his mercy a cause of my obstinacy in sin? He hath kept nothing from me but his honour: and shall I



strive to diminish that? He hath freely forgiven me my sin : and shall sin therefore ‘abound? God forbid.’” (Rom. vi. 1.)

God forbid that our practice should not as well give Rome the lie as our doctrine! She imputes it unto us, that we lull men asleep on the pillow of security; that we sing a requiem to their souls, when the conscience is most clamorous; that we are mere solifidians, leaning upon a reed, relying only upon an empty and hollow faith; that we do *per contemplationem volare*, saith Bellarmine, “hover as it were on the wings of contemplation;” that we hope to go to heaven with only thinking of it, and never strive for inherent rightcousness; and that our assurance that our sins are forgiven us is *præsidium peccati*, “the devil’s fence,” and a strong bulwark, that the kingdom of sin cannot be demolished in us. So charitable is their opinion of us. And although God’s messengers do lift up their voice like a trumpet against sin, and whip the vice of security out of the temple; although our pulpits ring and sound again with the doctrine of good works, and not one of our writers, that ever I could see, (except some few hare-brained Lutherans,) did ever let fall from their quills one word that might prejudice the necessity thereof; yet they cry out as men at great fires, as [if we] yet were the only incendiaries, and religion were now a-lying on the pile, and the whole Christian world by us to be set on combustion. It is true, beloved, we could pay them with their own coin: we could cast before their eyes their hay and their stubble, stuff fit for the fire; their indulgences and private masses, their pardons for sins not yet committed; pillows indeed and true dormitories to lay men asleep on. But recrimination is no remedy; and silence is the best answer to impudence. Our best way to confute them is by our practice; as Diogenes confuted Zeno, that believed there was no such thing as motion, by walking over the room. So if Christ say unto us, “Your sins are forgiven you,” let us then “take up our beds, and walk.” (Mark ii. 5, 9.) Let him that lies on the bed of security, arise from that bed; on the bed of idleness, awake from that sleep, from that slumber, and unfold his hands, and stand up, and “walk before God in the land of the living.”

For, beloved, what! are we believers? are we faithful? Why, then we must, nay, we cannot choose but, be obedient. For faith and assurance of forgiveness is the ground and foundation, not only of Christian charity, but also of all other virtues, of all true obedience; having its residence, not only in the understanding, but also in the will; not floating in the brain, but inflaming the heart, and thereby gaining dominion and a kingdom over the affections. Hence faith is called “obedience;” (2 Thess. i. 8.)

where Paul saith that there is a "flaming fire" provided for "those who obey not the gospel of Christ." For as *he* obeys his physician, not who believes he is skilful, but *who* observes his prescripts, who takes the recipe, and is careful of his own health and his physician's honour; so he is truly faithful that obeys the gospel of Christ; who doth not only believe that Christ is a most able Physician of his soul, and that the gospel is the best physic, the best purgation; but he who takes this physic, although there be wormwood or gall or aloes in it; who embraceth and receiveth Christ being offered unto him, although he bring grief and afflictions along with him; who observes his rules, although he prescribes diligence and industry and carefulness; who doth therefore the more hate sin because it is forgiven him; lastly, who doth the more love God, because through Christ he is made a son "worthy to be beloved." For, as Seneca saith well, *Non est res delicata vivere*, "It is nothing of delicacy and delight to live, but even in this [life] afflictions and sorrow will make us wish for death;" so it is not all pleasure, all content, to be a Christian. There are thorns as well as roses; there are the waters of Marah as well as those flowing with milk and honey; there are sorrows within, and fightings without; there are "the marks of Christ Jesus" to be borne; (Gal. vi. 17;) there is a book of lamentations, like that of Ezekiel's, to be devoured and digested too. (Ezek. ii. 10; iii. 2, 3.) "In thy way to heaven there lies a sword," saith Chrysostom, "and fire, and contumelies, and disgrace: and thou canst not go about, but this sword must prick thee, this fire scorch thee, these disgraces light on thee." And before thou go thy journey, thy very bosom friends, thy old acquaintance, thy sins, are to be renounced. "I have cast away all worldly desire," saith Nazianzen, ἀφ' οὗ Χριστῶ συνταξάμην, "since I came to be of the order of Christ, and to rank myself amongst Christians." And, "Pity it is," saith Cyprian, "that" *frons cum Dei signo pura*, "that forehead which was signed with the sign of the cross, should ever be compassed about with the devil's garland." And, "The apostles of Christ," saith he, "were tried by afflictions and torments and the cross itself," *ne de Christo esset delicata confessio*, "that the trial might be solid, and the confession then made, not when there was a calm," when the brim of the water was smooth and even, not in the sunshine; but in the storm and tempest, when persecution raged, and the sword glittered, and the enemy was terrible.

This was the true trial of a Christian: and indeed, beloved, the gospel (of which when we hear, we think of mercy, not of grace) is γλυκύπικρον, "a bitter-sweet;" a potion indeed, and

more cordial than we can imagine, but not without its bitterness. Nay, further yet, the gospel holdeth us with a stronger bond than the law. For although it add nothing to the law in respect of innovation, as if that were defective, yet it doth in respect of illustration and interpretation. Our Saviour proposed *non nova, sed novè*, “not new commands, but after a new manner.” It was said of old, “Thou shalt not steal;” but thou mayest do this by denying an alms: for that is *furtum interpretativum*, “theft by way of interpretation,” because thou keepest that from the poor man which is due unto him. In the law it is written, “Thou shalt not commit adultery:” under the gospel an eunuch may commit it: for he may *fabulari cum oculis*,\* as St. Augustine speaks: and he who hath “looked upon a woman to lust after her” is guilty of this sin, saith our Saviour. (Matt. v. 28.) The language of the law was, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:” but now it is, “Good for evil; bless for a curse.” And *plus lex quàm amisit invenit*, “the law was a gainer, not a loser, by this precept of Christ,” “I say unto you, Love your enemies.” (Verse 44.) Therefore the Schoolmen well call the gospel *onus allevians*, “a lightening burden,” much like the wing of a bird, which maketh the bird heavier, but yet it is that [which] it flies with.

Beloved, to shut up all in a word: as he spake of victory, “It is not gotten” *sedendo et votis*, “by sitting still, and wishing for it;” so our spiritual conquest flies not down into our bosom whilst we sit folding of our arms. Nor will Balaam’s wish be the chariot to carry us to heaven: “Let me die the death of the righteous.” (Num. xxiii. 10.) Neither will the walls of sin fall down with good desires, with religious wishes, as the walls of Jericho did with rams’ horns. No; the world is deceitful still, and the devil is a devil still, and we are yet in the flesh; and a wonder it were that we alone amongst other Christians should tread the paths of life, and never sweat in them; that this way should be a way of blood when the apostles walked in it, and strowed with roses now for us. Or can we expect that we should be carried up to heaven in a dream, or that God should draw us thither whether we will or no? as if he could not reign without us, nor the blessed angels be happy but in our company. Good God! what a presumption is it to think that the name of “child,” the mere opinion of God’s love, and to talk of forgiveness of sins, should help us; that good wishes will promote us; that when we have cast ourselves headlong into a sea of misery, into a deluge of sin, it will be enough to say, “Master, save us; we perish!”

\* “Talk loosely with his eyes.”—EDIT.

Beloved, "be not deceived; God is not mocked." (Gal. vi. 7.) If we will have Christ to be our Priest, to satisfy for our sins, and to intercede for us, he must be our Prophet too, to teach us; and our King, to govern and rule us. If we will have the meat that perisheth not, we must labour for it; if eternal life, we must lay hold on it; if the garland, we must run for it. If we will enjoy the benefit, we must perform the office; if we will be children of God, we must be followers of God; if we would be endeared to him, he must be dear to us; if we would be lovely, we must be loving: and if God forgive our sins, we must forsake them; if we will have the crown of life, we must be faithful unto death; if we will have the victory, we must fight for it. *Vincenti dabitur*, "To him that overcometh will Christ grant to sit upon his throne." (Rev. iii. 21.) He hath a crown laid up for his children; and his children shall have their blessing, and shall know that they were dear unto him: they shall enter into their inheritance, the kingdom prepared for them. (Matt. xxv. 34.) And now not only Paul is theirs, and Cephas is theirs, but Christ is theirs, and God is theirs, (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23,) and the crown is theirs, and heaven is theirs; not in hope only, but in reality; not in apprehension only, but in fruition also; not in right and title only, but also in possession. Thither the Lord bring us, who purchased it for us with his precious blood!

---

## SERMON LXXXIX.

### THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

*At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?—Matthew xviii. 1.*

HERE is a strange question put up, and that by disciples; and as strange an answer given, and that by Christ himself. The question is, who should be "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The answer is, that in that kingdom a child is the greatest. A question put up by men prepossessed with hopes of greatness, ignorant what this kingdom, and what greatness, was; and an answer excellently fitted to that question, checking at once their ignorance and removing it. So that here, you see, ambition and ignorance put up the question; and Wisdom itself makes the answer. Ambition and ignorance swell our thoughts into a huge bulk, and make us giants; but Wisdom abates that

tumour, contracts and shrinks us up into the stature of a child. "Who is the greatest?" say the disciples: that is the question. "A child is the greatest," saith our Saviour, who was the Wisdom of the Father: that is the answer.

Indeed, a man is known by his speech, and our words commonly are the evaporations of our hearts. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," saith Christ, (Matt. xv. 19,) and evil questions too. Such as the heart is, which is the fountain of life, such are the motions of the parts. Such as the will is, which is the beginning of action, such are the motions and operations of the soul, which flow from the will, and are commanded by it. Our words are the commentaries on our will: for when we speak, we make as it were a dissection of our own hearts, and read an anatomy-lecture upon ourselves. Our wanton talk discovers a stew in the heart: when our words are swords, the heart is a slaughter-house: when we bear false witness, that is the mint: when we worship Mammon, that is his temple. The heart is ἐργαστήριον τῆς κακίας, "the shop and work-house of all evil." In this we set up idols; in this we work mischief; in this we heap up riches, build up thrones, raise up kingdoms. "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" is the very dialect of ambition, and shows that the disciples' hearts were so set on honour that they could not ask a question right.

We read that "they had disputed" of this before "amongst themselves by the way:" (Mark ix. 34:) and then they put up this question to Christ, here in this chapter. And again, Matt. xx.; and again, Luke xxii., when he had eaten the passover with them, when he had foretold his passion, and preached unto them the doctrine of the cross, when his passion was nigh at hand, even then did these disciples dream of honours and greatness and a temporal kingdom, and are not ashamed to tell it to Christ himself. (Verse 24.) "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" First they dispute it among themselves in the way, and then they ask Christ the question. This is the method of the world at this day: First, to dispute every man in the way, *in viâ suâ*, "in his own way;" the covetous in the way that leads to wealth, the ambitious in the way that leads to honour, the sacrilegious person in the way that leads to atheism and profaneness: and then to ask Christ himself a question, and hope to strengthen their vain imaginations by scripture, and to have an answer which shall fit their humour, and flatter their ungrounded resolutions, even from the mouth of Christ himself. From him they hear that they must "work with their own hands:" (1 Thess. iv. 11:) he then speaks of riches and honour.

From him they hear that "Bel boweth down:" (Isai. xlvi. 1 :) Dagon must fall, and all superstition must be rooted out. *Nullum sine auctoramento malum est.\** We can now be covetous, be ambitious, be sacrilegious, be what the flesh and our lusts will have us, be any thing, by scripture. "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The disciples would never have asked the question, had not their thoughts run on greatness; had they not thought that Christ had come to this end,—to set up a throne of state for one of them.

I will not make this error of the disciples greater than it is: and yet I cannot make it less because disciples fell into it, and, with the Jesuits, for St. Peter's sake pronounce it but a small and venial one. St. Chrysostom calls it ἔγκλημα, "a fault." And it concerns us not so much to aggravate as to avoid it. It is sufficient for us that Christ hath resolved this question, and brought a little child upon the stage to teach disciples, and to teach us to avoid that rock which the disciples themselves had dashed upon.

In the words then we will observe,

I. The occasion of the question, pointed out unto us in the first words: "At the same time."

II. The persons that moved the question; who are plainly named: "The disciples came unto Jesus, saying."

III. The question itself: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Where we shall take some pains to discover the true nature of this kingdom, that so we may plainly see the disciples' error and mistake, and carefully avoid it.

These are the parts we shall speak of, and out of these draw such inferences as may be useful for our instruction; that as by the disciples' doctrine, when they were inspired by the Holy Ghost, so by their error, when they were yet novices in the school of Christ, we may learn to guide our steps, and walk more circumspectly in the ways of truth; that by their ill putting up the question, we may learn to state it right. Of these in their order.

I. We are first to speak of the occasion of this question. And to discover this, we must look back upon the passage immediately going before, and as it were ushering-in, my text. (Matt. xvii.) There the occasion privily lurks, as the devil did in the occasion. And there we find how our Saviour in a wonderful manner both paid and received tribute; received it of the sea, and paid it unto Cæsar; in the one professing himself to be Cæsar's subject, in the other proving himself to be Cæsar's Lord. You see, Cæsar commands him to pay tribute, and Christ readily obeys:

\* "There is no wickedness for which an authority is not cited."—EDIT.

but withal he commands the sea, and, behold, the fishes hasten to him with tribute in their mouths. (Verse 27.) Now why our Saviour did so strangely mix together his humility and his power, in part the reason is given by himself: "Lest we should offend them." For having proved himself free, and therefore not subject to tribute, (for if the sons of kings be free, then the Son of the King of heaven must needs be so,) yet saith he unto Peter, "That we give no offence, cast thy angle into the sea." He is content to do himself wrong, and to lose his profit, to gain his peace. And as he did express his humility that he might not offend Cæsar, so we may be easily persuaded that he did manifest his glory that he might not offend his disciples. For lest his disciples peradventure should begin to doubt whether he was, as he pretended, Lord of heaven and earth, who did so willingly acknowledge a superior: look how much he seemed to impair his credit by so humbly paying of tribute,—so much and more he repaired it by so gloriously receiving it. Now, saith the text, "At the same time," when this wonderful thing was acting, then was this question proposed. But now in all this action let us see what occasion was here given to this question, what spark to kindle such a thought in the disciples' hearts, what one circumstance which might raise such an ambitious conceit. They might indeed have learnt from hence humility and obedience to princes, though tyrants, and as tyrants exacting that which is not due; and a willingness to part with their right rather than to offend; that Christ is not offended when, thus parting with our goods, we offend ourselves, to please our superiors. But a corrupt heart poisons the most wholesome, the most didactical, the most exemplary actions, and then sucks from them that venom which itself first cast. A sick, ill-affected stomach makes food itself the cause of a disease, and makes an antidote poison. Prejudice and a prepossessed mind, by a strong kind of alchymy, turns every thing into itself; makes Christ's humility an occasion of pride, his submission a footstool to rise up upon, and upon subjection itself lays the foundation of a kingdom.

Some of the fathers, as Chrysostom, and Jerome, and others, were of opinion that the disciples, when they saw Peter joined with Christ in this action, and from those words of our Saviour's, "Take, and give them for me and thee," did nourish a conceit that Peter in this was preferred before the rest, and that there was some peculiar honour done to him above his fellows; and that this raised in them a disdain against Peter; and that their disdain moved them to propose this question, not particularly, whether Peter should be—but *ἀδιορίστως*, "in general terms," who

should be—the greatest. And this the church of Rome lays hold on; and founding her pretended supremacy on Peter, where-soever she finds but the name of Peter, nay, but the shadow of Peter, she seeks a mystery; and, if she cannot find one, she will make one. The cardinal is fond of this interpretation, and brings it in as a strong proof of that claim [which] the bishop of Rome makes of being prince of all the world. But what is this but *interpretationibus ludere de scripturis*? “when the text turns countenance, to put a face and a fair gloss upon it,” and make it smile upon that monstrous error which nothing but their ambition could give birth and life unto? For, to speak truth, what honour could this be to Peter? To pay tribute is a sign of subjection, not of honour. And, if we will judge righteous judgment, nay, if we will judge but according to the appearance, the greatest honour which could here have accrued to Peter, had been to have been exempted when all the rest had paid.

To speak truth, then, or at least that which is most probably true, not any honour done to Peter, but the dishonour which was done to Christ himself, may seem to be the true occasion of this question. I shall give you my reason for it. We see it a common thing in the world that men who dream of honours, as the disciples here did, grow more ambitious by the sense of some disgrace; as in winter we see the fountains and hollow caverns of the earth are hottest; and as the philosophers will tell us that a quality grows stronger and more intense by reason of its contrary. Humility may sometimes blow the bladder of pride; disgrace may be as a wind to whet up our ambitious thoughts to a higher pitch. Or it may be as water; some drops of it by a kind of moral *anti-peristasis* may kindle this fire within us, and enrage it; and that which was applied as a remedy to allay the tumour, may by our indisposition and infirmity be made an occasion to increase it. “We trusted that this had been he who should have redeemed Israel,” say they. (Luke xxiv. 21.) Is this he who should come with the sword and with power and with abundance unto them; that should root up the nations before them, and re-instate them in the land of Canaan? Is this that Messiah who, after many years victoriously passed on earth, should at last resign up his life, and establish his kingdom upon his successors for ever? A conceit not newly crept in, but which they may seem to have had by a kind of tradition; as appeareth by that of our Saviour: “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God:” (Luke xiv. 15:) and by “the mother of Zebedee’s children,” who requested that her “two sons might sit, one at Christ’s right hand, the other at his left,



in his kingdom." (Matt. xx. 21.) And can Christ do this, and thus submit himself? Can he be a King that thus pays tribute? Some fit and pang of this distemper did no doubt trouble the disciples' minds at this time. They had been often troubled with it, and had sundry times discussed amongst themselves, as we have observed, who should be the greatest. And now upon this occasion, seeing Christ bowing to authority, and submitting to them whom they thought he came to destroy; "the fire burned, and they spake with their tongue." (Psalm xxxix. 3.) Seeing the Lord of heaven and earth thus challenged for tribute, and thus gently yielding to pay it, they lost the sight of his power in his humility; they forgot the miracle of the money in the fish's mouth, because it was tribute: and, being struck with admiration, they began to inquire what honours and what degrees of greatness were in his kingdom, which is his church; and observing the King of heaven himself thus subject to command, instead of learning humility, they foment their pride, they awake their ambition, and rouse it up to seek the glory of this world; they are bold to ask him who was the Master and pattern of humility, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

This I take to be the occasion of this question. And so I pass from it to the persons who moved it: "The disciples came unto Jesus."

II. And the disciples, we doubt not, had been well and often instructed that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, but spiritual; yet the prejudicate conceit they had of the Messias did shut up their understanding against this truth; the shape they had drawn in their minds of Christ made Christ less visible in his own shape. So hard it is *homini hominem exuere*, "for a man to put off himself;" for a man that looks for a pearl, to interpret it grace; for a man that is ambitious of honour on earth, to look for it in heaven. Such a damp and darkness doth prejudice cast upon the minds and understandings even of the best men, even of disciples of Christ. For the devil fits himself to the nature and disposition of every man. What he said of the Jesuit, *Jesuita est omnis homo*, "A Jesuit is every man to every man, can apply himself to all humours, all dispositions," is most true of our common enemy, Satan. He is in a manner "made all things to all men." If he cannot cast us down into the mire of carnal and brutish sin, he is very active and cunning to lift us up on the wings of the wind, and to whiff us about with the desire of honour and priority. *Etiam in sinu discipulorum ambitio dormit*, saith Cyprian: "Ambition finds a pillow to sleep on even in the bosom of disciples themselves." There she lies

as in a shade, lurks as in a bedchamber ; and at last she comes forth, and you may behold her raising of palaces, and measuring out kingdoms ; and you may hear her asking of questions, “ Who shall be the greatest ? ” *Multimoda Satanae ingenia*, saith Jerome : “ The craft of Satan is various, and his wiles and devices manifold. He knows in what breast to kindle lust, into which to breathe ambition. He knows whom to cast down with sorrow, whom to deceive with joy, whom to shake with fear, and whom to mislead with admiration. He searcheth our affections, he fans and winnows our hearts, and make that a bait to catch us withal which we most love and most look upon. “ He fights,” as the father speaks, “ with ourselves against ourselves ; ” he makes snares of our own desires, and binds and fetters us up with our own love. If he overcome us with his more gross temptations, he insults : but if he fail there, he then comes towards us with those temptations which are better clothed and better spoken. He maketh curious nets, entangles our fancy, and we straight dream of kingdoms. If our weakness overthrow us not, *trophæis triumphisque succumbemus*, saith the father, “ our own trophies and triumphs shall destroy us.” Like a wise captain, he plants all his force and artillery at that place which is weakest and most attemptable. We see the disciples’ hearts were here weakest, and here lay most open : hither therefore the devil directs his darts, here he placeth his engines, to make a breach. So dangerous a vice is ambition ; and so hard a thing it is even for good men, for mortified persons, for the disciples of Christ, to avoid it ! “ Who shall be the greatest ? ” they are not always the worst men that put up that question.

Tully observes of the philosophers, that though they wrote books of the contempt of glory, yet they would set their names to those books, and so seek for glory by oppugning it, and even woo it in the way of a bold defiance.\* And Plutarch, speaking of the philosopher whose *dictor* † it was, *Latenter vivendum*, “ that a concealed life was best,” yet adds withal, Ἄλλ’ οὐδὲ ὁ τοῦτο εἰπὼν λαθεῖν ἐθέλησε, “ that he would not have it concealed that this *dictor*, or ‘ speech,’ was his.” ‡ What speak we of the Heathen philosophers ? The philosophers of God, the prophets of God, have been much infested herewith. Look upon Baruch : When he thrived not in the king of Judah’s court, he fell into discontent and repining ; so that the prophet Jeremy is sent unto him with express message : “ Seekest thou great things for thyself ? seek them not : for I will bring evil upon the whole earth, saith

\* *Oratio pro Archiâ*, cap. xi.

† See note, p. 142.—EDIT.

‡ PLU-

† ARCHI *Libellus, An rectè dictum sit, Latenter esse vivendum.*

the Lord." (Jer. xlv. 5.) Behold Jonah under his gourd : what a pet and chafe is he in ! how irreverent to his God ! How doth he tell God even to his face that he " did well to be angry, even unto death !" (Jonah iv. 9.) And all this anger, from what fire was it kindled ? Certainly from no other than an overweening conceit of his own reputation ; lest the sparing of Nineveh, against which he had denounced ruin and destruction, should disparage him with the people, and lose him the name of a true prophet.

1. And this we need not much marvel at, if we consider the nature of this vice. For, First of all, it is a choice vice, preserved on purpose by the devil to abuse the best : nor will it grow in every soil. Μεγάλαι φύσεις και θερμαί, " great and noble natures," the best capacities, the most able wits,—these are the fat soil in which this weed grows. Base and sordid natures seldom bear it. What cares the covetous person for honour, who will bow to dirt ? What cares he for rising in repute, who hath buried himself alive in the earth ? What cares he for a name, that had rather see other men's names in his parchments than his own in the book of life ? What cares the wanton for renown, who had rather be crowned with roses than with a diadem ? or will he desire to rise higher, whose highest step is up to the bed of lust and the embraces of a strumpet ? These swine love not such water as this, nor such an ointment as a good name ; but will wallow still in their own mire. And therefore you may observe it, Matt. iv., that the devil sets not upon our Saviour with lust, or luxury, or covetousness, or any such vulgar and inferior vice ; but carries him to " an exceeding high mountain, and from thence shows him the kingdom of the world," (verse 8,) to see whether he will stoop at the prey.

2. Secondly. It is a vice to which the world is much beholden, and therefore finds more countenance than any. Look upon the works of men's wits, their books and writings ; look upon the works of men's hands, their charity and alms-deeds and hospitality ; and we shall quickly discover that honour and desire to transmit their names to posterity have been in many (for to say, " in all," were the greatest uncharitableness in the world ; but in many they have been) the chiefest fires to set these alembics a-work. We will not now dispute the truth of that which the Schools teach,—that evil could not subsist if it were not founded in good ; but we may be bold to say that this evil of ambition could hardly subsist if it were not maintained and rooted in virtue. Other weeds will grow of themselves, finding matter within us to feed and nourish them. Murder is but the ebulli-

tion of our choler; luxury, a very exhalation of our flesh; lust boils in our very blood: but this vice, like unto ivy or woodbine, will hardly grow unless it fix itself upon the oak, upon some strong and profitable matter. If you see Absalom in Hebron paying his vow, it is to gain a kingdom. (2 Sam. xv. 7.) If the Pharisee fast and pray, it is to be called "Rabbi;" if he gives alms, it is with a trumpet. If Simon Magus desire to turn apostle, it is to be "some great one." (Acts viii. 9.) If Diotrophes be of the church, it is "to have the pre-eminence." (3 John 9.)

3. Last of all: It is a vice which amongst many men hath gained the reputation of virtue. And, "If it be not a virtue," saith the orator, "yet it is many times the cause of it." Ambition and emulation have ever been accounted the nurses of wit, the kindlers of industry, the life of studies, and the mothers of all famous actions. And this is it which hath raised their price and estimation. But it here falls out as it doth with bodies which are nourished with unwholesome meats; they are in a short time corrupted with diseases, and die by those meats they lived on. Wit and industry, which are maintained by these vices, do at last run to ruin by those vices which maintain them. How many an alms is blown away with the breath of the trumpet! How many a prayer is the shorter for its length, is not heard for its noise, and is lost in the open streets! How many a fast is buried in a disfigured face! How many a good deed had been registered in heaven, if it had not been first written on the walls! But, as we read in the historian, that thievery and piracy were so commonly practised amongst the Grecians that men made public profession of them, neither were they taken to be vices; so we find it by daily experience, that ambition is so like to virtue that the world hath even taken her to be one, and made much of her, and extolled her, because she is so common. Disciples themselves will be talking of kingdoms and greatness; will be asking the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And yet it is as impertinent a question as could have been put to Christ. And of this we are to speak in the next place: but first we will draw such inferences out of that which hath been spoken as may be useful for our instruction.

1. And, First, if we look back upon the disciples, we cannot but look into ourselves; and seeing what it was that kept them so long from the true knowledge of the Messiah, who had been so long with them, with whom they ate and drank and conversed, and whose miracles they were eye-witnesses of, we

cannot but search and ransack our inward man, empty it of all extravagant and heterogeneous matter, dispossess it of every evil spirit, of every carnal conceit, which may shut out Christ, sweep and garnish it, that the truth may enter and dwell there. Prejudice puts out the eye of our judgment. Οἴσις προκοπῆς ἐγκοπῆ, "Opinion is a great retarder of proficiency;" it being common to men to be jealous of every word that breathes in opposition to what they have already received, as of an enemy; and, though it be truth, to suspect it, because it breathes from a contrary coast. "Moab is settled on his lees, hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." (Jer. xviii. 11.) He hath ever the same taste and the same scent: and this makes every thing, promises and threatenings, judgments and blessings, doctrines and miracles, relish and taste and scent as he doth. He is the same under the rod and the same under blessings, the same in a calm and the same when it thunders. He "is settled on his lees," and no change can change him. It is a world [?] to see what power prejudice hath to change the face and countenance of objects, and shape them like unto itself. It makes a shadow a man, and a man a hobgoblin; it mistakes a friend for an enemy. It puts horror upon virtue, and makes vice itself of a ruddy countenance. It makes God the author of sin, and the devil a worker of miracles. It makes the Prince of peace a man of war; beholds a poor Christ, and makes him a king; receives him in the form of a servant, and builds him a throne; dreams of kingdoms in the house of mourning, and of triumph in persecution; makes Christ's humility an occasion of pride; makes a new religion, a new Christ, a new gospel; and thus gropes at noon-day; is deaf to thunder, is surly against good counsel, and thrusts him away that gives it; is an enemy to a friend; is a fiery furnace to devour those that minister unto it. When God opens the gates of heaven, this shuts them; when he displays his rays of mercy, this puts them by; when he would enter, this shuts the door; when he is ready to let fall his dew, this will not suffer him to be good unto us, will not suffer him to bless, will not suffer him to teach, will not suffer him to save, us. This "killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent;" (Matt. xxiii. 37;) this whipped, and spat upon, and crucified the Lord of life himself. For all mistake is from the eye, all error from the mind, not from the object. If the eye be goggle or mis-set, if the mind be dimmed with malice or ambition and prejudice, it puts upon things what shape it pleaseth, receiveth not the true and natural *species* they present, but views them at

home in itself, as in a false glass, (which renders them back again as it were by reflexion,) which is most deceitful. This makes gods and sets up idols in itself, and then worships them. And this is the reason why Christ is so much mistaken, why the gospel of Christ receives such different entertainment. Every man lays hold on it, wrests it to his own purpose, works it on his own anvil, and shapes it to his own fancy and affections; as out of the same mass Phidias made a goddess, and Lysippus a satyr.

O beloved! how many lie buried under prejudice, corrupt and putrefied and even stinking in the nostrils of God and man, not to be awaked till the last trump! All exhortations, all reproofs, all admonitions, all reason, all truth is to them but as a mess of pottage set upon a dead man's grave; the tongue of men and angels, but as sounding brass. How do they rejoice in iniquity, triumph in evil, confirm themselves in wicked practices! What a Paradise do they plant in Tophet! what a heaven do they make in hell itself! How busy are they to sanctify and glorify their error! What shift do they make to make themselves the devil's children seven times more than they are! How do they argue and dispute themselves into hell! That which is a reason against them is made a reason for them; that which strikes at their error is made to uphold it; that which checketh them spurs them; that which binds them sets them loose; that which bids them, "Touch not, taste not," is to them as the voice to Peter, "Rise; kill, and eat." (Acts x. 13.) Where prejudice bears rule, every thing must bow; every sheaf, every occasion, every occurrence must fall down before it. If it be adversity, it is an argument; if good success, it is an argument. What shall I say? In the next world it is holiness—but in this it is prejudice, it is covetousness, it is ambition—that makes saints. So dangerous was prejudice and pre-conceit to the disciples, that no words, no miracles of Christ could root it out; but it grew up in them, and spread itself into thoughts and questions, which are as the boughs of it; till "a sound from heaven," till "a mighty rushing wind," till fiery tongues beat it down and consumed it. (Acts ii. 2, 3.) So dangerous was it to the Jews, that it had been better for them to have been utterly ignorant of their Messias. For this gross pre-conceit of their Messias was yet the main reason that they entertained him not when he came, because he came in a posture so contrary to their expectation, so unlike that Christ which they had set up already in their minds. So dangerous a thing is a prepossessed mind to itself.

And therefore it well concerns us, as Chrysostom speaks, *κοιμίζειν τῶν ἀτόπων λογισμῶν τὰ πάθη*, "to quiet and slumber

these imaginations, these absurd reasonings and dialogues" which we make within ourselves. For why should such "thoughts arise in our hearts?" such thoughts as will shut out better; such thoughts of a temporal, as will deprive us of an eternal, kingdom; such thoughts of goodness as will make us worse than the beasts that perish! And it well concerns us to be jealous and suspicious of ourselves. For jealousy and suspicion, though in other matters it be a disease that no physician can cure, yet in respect of our souls is a seasonable medicine, full of efficacy and virtue. We cannot be too jealous of our own salvation. My jealousy of my honour may draw-on destruction, my jealousy of my money may invite a thief, my jealousy of my wife may provoke her to folly; but my jealousy of my soul doth ennoble and enrich it, and "present it a pure virgin unto Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) Let us then be afraid of our own thoughts, and take heed of all prejudicate conceits.

2. In the Second place: Since the devil made use of this error of the disciples, and attempted them there where they were most open to him, let us, as wise captains use to do, double our watch, and be careful to strengthen that part which is weakest and most assailable; as Galen counsels, where the affections are contrary, first wrestle with that which is most prevalent, and overcome it, that we may find our work the casier and less trouble to bring the rest in subjection. For, beloved, as temptations work by the sensitive part upon the rational, so they have a diverse operation according to men's several constitutions and complexions. Every man is not equally prone to every sin. This ravisheth the eye of one which another will not look on: this man liketh that which another abhorreth. He that made the devil fly at the first encounter, may embrace him at the next. He that stood out with him in lust, may yield to him in anger: he that defied his mammon, may stoop at his kingdoms: he that would none of his bread, may feed himself with his air: he that feared not the roaring of the lion, may be overcome with the subtilty of the serpent. A man of a heavy and sluggish disposition is seldom ambitious; a man of lively and nimble spirits is seldom idle. As hard a matter it is for some men to commit some sin as it is for others to avoid it; as hard for the fool in the gospel to have spent his estate as for the prodigal to have kept it. We see this man wondering at his brother that he should fall into such or such a sin, and the other wondering as much at him how he should fall into the contrary. Therefore the devil, who observes how we are elemented and composed, hath his *τρίθυρα*, saith Macarius, "his divers back-

doors," out of which he may slip and return at pleasure, and, if his first bait be distasteful, come again and present another which will fit our taste and palate. If the disciples leave all, and follow Christ, he will try them with honour, and teach them to dream of a kingdom even in the school of their Master.

It will concern us, then, to take pains, and go down and meet him at this door, at that door, which he is most likely to enter : if it be the eye, shut it up by covenant ; if it be the ear, stop it, and be those adders which will not hear his charms ; if it be our taste, deny it ; if it be our appetite, be harsh to it ; if it be our fancy, watch it, and bind it up. For if this was " done to the green tree," the disciples of Christ ; if they were endangered where they were weakest ; what may not " be done to the dry," (Luke xxiii. 31,) which is ready to catch and take fire at every spark of a temptation ? Let us then be ready and prepared, and stand in our complete armour at that door which the enemy is most likely to attempt. Let us " put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against every wile of the devil," (Eph. vi. 11,) especially against that wile which may soonest ensnare us.

3. Let me give you one use more, and so conclude this point. Let us not seek the world in the church, nor honours and preferments in the kingdom of Christ. Let us not fit religion to our carnal desires, but lay them down at the foot of religion ; make not Christianity to lacquey it after the world, but let Christianity swallow up the world in victory. Let us clip the wing of our ambition, and the more beware of it because it carries with it the shape and show of virtue. For, as we are told in philosophy, *In habentibus symbolum facilius transmutatio*, " Amongst the elements those two which have a quality common to both are easiest changed one into the other ;" so above all vices we are most apt to fall into those which have some symbolizing quality, some face and countenance of goodness ; which are better dressed and better clothed, and bespeak us in the name of virtue itself, like a strumpet in a matron's stole. Let us shun this as a most dangerous rock, against which many a vessel of burden after a prosperous voyage hath dashed and sunk. By desire of honour and vain-glory it comes to pass that many goodly and specious monuments, which were dedicated rather to honour than to God, have destroyed and ruined their founders, who, like unfortunate mothers, have brought forth beautiful issues, but themselves have died in the birth of them. They have proved but like the ropes of silk and daggers of gold which Heliogabalus prepared to stab and strangle himself withal, adding, *pretiosiore[m] mortem suam esse debere*, " that his death



ought to be more costly than other men's ;"\* and they have served to no other end but this, *ut carius pereant*, "that the workers of them might die with greater state than other men," and might fall to the lowest pit, as the sword-players did in the theatre, with noise and applause.

I have spoken of the occasion of the question, and of the persons who put it. Come we now, in the last place, to the question itself: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

III. The disciples here were mistaken *in terminis*, "in the very terms" of their question. For neither is greatness that which they supposed, nor the kingdom of heaven of that nature as to admit of that greatness which their fancy had set up. For by "the kingdom of heaven" is meant in scripture, not the kingdom of glory, but the kingdom of grace, by which Christ sits and rules in the hearts of his saints. When John the Baptist preached repentance, he told the Jews that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iii. 2.) When our Saviour tells us that it is like seed sown in good ground, like a net cast into the sea, like a pearl, like a treasure hid in the field, what else can he mean but his kingdom of grace on earth? not his kingdom of glory in heaven. So that for the disciples to ask, "Who is greatest in this kingdom?" was to shape out the church of God by the world; much like to that which we read in Lucian of Priam's young son, who, being taken up into heaven, is brought-in calling for milk and cheese, and such country cates as were his wonted food on earth. For in the kingdom of grace, that is, in the congregation of God's saints and the elect members of Christ, there is no such difference of degrees as ambition taught the disciples to imagine. Not that we deny order and government in the church of God. No; without these his church could not subsist, but would be like Aristotle's army without discipline, *ἄχρηστον τὸ ὀπλιτικόν*, "an unprofitable rout." To this end Christ "gave apostles, and teachers and pastors; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. iv. 11, 12.) His teachers call us, his governors direct us, to this kingdom. But the disciples, being brought up in the world, thought of that greatness which they saw did bear the sway amongst men: much like the *Ἀνθρωπομορφῖται*, ["Anthropomorphites,"] who thought that God bare the shape of a man, because they read in scripture of his feet, and hands, and eyes, and the like.

But that it was not so in Christ's kingdom, may appear by

\* LAMPRIIDIUS in *Vitâ Heliogabali*, cap. xxxiii.

our Saviour's answer to the question. For he takes a child, and tells them that if they will be of his kingdom, they must be like unto it. By which he chokes and kills in them all conceit of ambition and greatness. For, as Plato most truly said, that "those that die do find a state of things beyond all expectation diverse from that which they left behind;" so, when we are dead to the world, and true citizens of the kingdom of Christ, we shall find "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female; but all are one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 28.) God looks not what blood runs in thy veins, he observes not thy heraldry. If greatness could have purchased heaven, Lazarus had been in hell, and Dives in Abraham's bosom. "Earl," and "knight," and "peasant" are terms of distinction on earth: in the kingdom of heaven there is no such distinction. Faith makes us all one in Christ; and the crown of glory shall be set upon the head of him that grindeth at the mill as well as upon his that sitteth on the throne. Christ requires τὸ ψυχῆς εὐγενέτης, "the nobility of the soul:" and *he* is the greatest in his kingdom *who* hath the true and inward worth of honesty and sanctity of life, though in this world he lie buried in obscurity and silence. Here Lazarus may be richer than Dives, the beggar higher than the king; and a child, the least, is greatest in this kingdom.

A main difference we may see between this kingdom and the kingdoms of the world, if we compare them.

First. The subjects of this kingdom are unknown to any but to God himself. "The foundation of the Lord standeth sure," saith the apostle, "having this seal, The Lord knows who are his." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) And if they be unknown, who then can range them into orders and degrees?

Secondly. Of this kingdom there is no end.

Thirdly. The seat of this kingdom is the hearts of the faithful. *Cathedram habet in cælo qui domat corda*: "His chair is in heaven that rules the hearts of the sons of men here on earth." This "earth," that is, this body of clay, "hath God given to the sons of men," (Psalm cxv. 16,) to the princes of the earth, under whose government we live: but our heaven, our better part, our inward and spiritual man, he reserves to himself. Kings and princes can restrain the outward man, and moderate our outward actions by their laws and edicts. *Illâ se jactat in aula Æolus*:\* Thus far can they go; they can tie our hands and tongues; and they can go no further. For, to set up an impe-

\* VIRGILII *Æneid.* i. 140.

"He boasts and blusters in his empty hall,"—DRYDEN'S Translation.

rial throne in our understandings and our wills, belongs to Christ alone. He teacheth the lame to go, and the blind to see, and recovers the dry hand : he makes us active in this kingdom of grace.

[Fourthly and] lastly. As their subjects and seat are different, so are their laws. In the commonwealth of Rome the laws were the works of many hands. Some of them were *plebiscita*, "the acts of the people;" others, *senatús-consulta*, "the decrees of the senate;" others, *edicta prætorum*, "the verdicts of their judges;" others, *responsa prudentum*, "the opinions of wise men in cases of doubt;" others, *rescripta imperatorum*, "the rescripts and answers of their emperors when they were consulted with." *Christiani habent regulam*, saith Tertullian : "Christians have one certain immovable rule," the word of God, to guide and rule them in their life and actions. Besides, the laws of the kingdom of Christ are eternal, substantial, indispensable : but the laws made by human authority are many of them light and superficial, all of them temporary and mutable ; for all the human authority in the world can never enact one eternal or fundamental law. Read the laws that men have made, and lay them together, and we shall observe that they were made upon occasion and circumstance either of time, or place, or persons ; and therefore either by discontinuance have fallen of themselves, or by reason of some urgent occasion have been necessarily revoked : but the laws of our great King are like himself, everlasting, never to be revoked or cancelled, but every *ἰῶτα* and "tittle" of them to stand fast, though heaven and earth pass away.

Thus you see, the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world have not the same face and countenance ; the subjects of the one being discernible, of the other unknown ; their seat and place and laws are different. So that our Saviour, as he answered the sons of Zebedee, "Ye know not what ye ask," (Matt. xx. 22,) so he might have replied to his disciples here, "Ye know not what ye speak. 'My kingdom is not of this world.' (John xviii. 36.) The kingdom of heaven is within you. Why ask you then, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' That you commit no more such solecisms, behold here a little child ; let him teach you how to speak ; and become like him, and you shall be great in the kingdom of heaven."

We see, then, that the disciples of Christ were much mistaken in this question of greatness. And a common error it is amongst men to judge of spiritual things by carnal, of eternal

by temporary. When our Saviour preached to Nicodemus the doctrine of regeneration and new life, what a gross conceit did he harp upon, of a re-entry to be made into his mother's womb! When he told the Samaritan of "the water of life," her thoughts ran on her pitcher and on Jacob's well. When Simon Magus saw that by laying on of hands the apostles gave the Holy Ghost, he hopes by money to purchase the like power; for, seeing what a kingdom money had amongst men, he straight conceived *cælum venale, Deumque*, "that God and heaven might be bought with a price." Thus, wheresoever we walk, our own shadow goes before us, and we use the language and dialect of the world in the school of Christ: we talk of superiority and power and dominion in that kingdom wherein we must be priests and kings too, but by being good, not great.

The sense which the disciples through error meant was this,—who should be "greatest," who should have most outward pomp and glory, who should have precedency above others: but the sense which, as appears by our Saviour's answer, they should have meant was, "Who is the greatest," that is, "Who is of the truest and realest worth," "in the kingdom of heaven?" This had showed them disciples indeed, whose eyes should be the rather on the duty than on the reward, and who can have no greater honour than this,—that they deserve it. Though there be places of outward government, of pre-eminence and dignity, in the church, yet it ill becomes the mouth of a disciple to ask such a question. For though they all jointly ask, "Who is the greatest?" yet it appears by the very question that every one of them did wish himself the man: An evil of old very dangerous in the church of Christ, but not purged out in after-ages. *Per quot pericula*, saith St. Augustine, *pervenitur ad grandius periculum!* "Through how many dangers and difficulties do we strive forward to honour, which is the greatest danger of all!" *Ut dominemur aliis, priùs servimus*, saith St. Ambrose: "To gain dominion over others, we become the greatest slaves in the world." What an inundation had this desire of greatness made in the church! how was it ready to overwhelm all religion and piety, had there not been banks set up against it to confute it, and decrees made to restrain it! The deacon would have the honour of the priest; the priest, the consistory, of the bishop. The bishop's seat was not high enough, but he would be a metropolitan, and to that end procured letters from the emperors, which the Greeks called τὰ πραγματικά, by which they obtained, that where there was formerly but one, there might now be two metropolitans. And all these, no doubt, were disciples of

Christ, if for no other reason, yet for this, *Quis est maximus?*\* for their affectation of greatness. And now what followed? As one well observes, *Ex religione ars facta*, "Religion was made a trade and an art to live by." Till at last it was cried down in divers councils, at Chalcedon, at Trullum in Constantinople, and others: and in the council of Sardis a bishop is forbidden to leave the government of a small city for a greater. Of all men ambition least becomes a disciple of Christ: and therefore Christian emperors did after count him unworthy of any great place in the church who did affect it. *Queratur cogendus, rogatus recedat, invitatus effugiat*: "Being sought for, let him be compelled; being asked, let him withdraw himself; being invited, let him refuse." *Sola illi suffragetur necessitas recusandi*: "Let this be the only suffrage to enthrone him, that he refused it." *Maximè ambiendus, qui non est ambitiosus*: "For it is fit that he that doth not seek for, should be sought for by, preferment." And to this purpose it was that our Saviour answers the disciples, not to what they meant, but to what they should have meant, to divert them from all thought of dominion. And withal he implies that that is not greatness which they imagined, but that humility and integrity of life was the truest greatness and greatest honour in his kingdom.

And, to speak the truth, this only deserves the name of greatness. *Οὐκ ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ τὸ εὖ κεῖται, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ εὖ τὸ μέγα*. For "goodness is not placed in greatness, but greatness in goodness." To go in costly apparel, to fare deliciously, to have a troop to follow us, perhaps wiser than ourselves, this we may call what we please, but greatness it cannot be. We read in Seneca the orator of one Senecio an orator, who affected much *grandia dicere*, "to speak in a lofty style and great words:" which affectation in his art after turned to a disease, so that he would have nothing in his house but what was great,—great servants, and great vessels of silver, *calceos etiam majores*, "shoes also too great for him." And from this fantastic humour he took his name, and was called *Senecio Grandio*, "Senecio the Great."† Yet for all this he added not one hair's-breadth unto his stature. Beloved, if we would measure ourselves aright, we should find that that is not greatness which the world calls by that name,—outward state and pomp and stateliness, to cast men on their knees with a frown, or to raise an army with a stamp of the foot. We are the less for these: and to think ourselves greater for these, is to run upon the same error which Senecio Grandio did.

\* "Who is the greatest?"—EDIT.

† *SENECÆ Suasor. ii.*

Again: it is but a fancy, and a vain one, to think there is most ease and most content in worldly greatness, or that we sleep best when our pillow is highest. Alas! when our affrighted thoughts shall awake each other, and our conscience put forth her sting; when those sins shall rise up against us, by which we have climbed to this pitch; all the honour of the world will not give us ease. Will a leg or a cap, think you, still this noise? Will the obsequious cringe and loud applause of the multitude drown the clamour of our conscience, which, like an awaked lion, will roar loud against us? No, beloved; not all the pomp, not all the pleasure of the world, not the merry harp and the lute and the timbrel, no, not a triumph, will be able to slumber the tempest within us, no more than the distressed weather-beaten mariner can becalm a boisterous sea with his whistle or a wish. We read of a soldier who, being to sleep upon a hollow piece of steel, complained his pillow was hard; but stuffing it with chaff, he thought it much the lighter. Just so it fares with ambitious men: when they have run on in the ways of honour, when they have attained their ends, they shall find that their pillow is steel still; only they filled it with more chaff than other men. Besides, honour doth not make him greater that hath it, but him that gives it. For if it proceed from virtue, *bonum nostrum non est, sed alienum*, "it is not our virtue, but his that honours us;" σημεῖον εὐεργετικῆς δόξης, "a sign," saith the philosopher, "of another man's good esteem and opinion;" which opinion is raised, not from the person, but his virtue. And therefore the apostle's counsel is, "In giving honour go one before another;" (Rom. xii. 10;) as if he were truly honourable, not who receives honour, but who gives it, and all precedency were in this. And indeed honour is, if not a virtue, yet a strong argument of it, in him who bows himself in a just veneration of goodness. *Scias ipsum abundare virtutibus, qui alienas sic amat*, saith Pliny: "You may be sure he is full of virtue himself, who loves to see the splendour of it in other men."

Lastly: Greatness and honour add nothing to virtue. Nothing accrues to a good man when he rises and comes on in the world; nothing is defalked from him when he falls and decays. The steed is not the better for his trappings; nor doth the instrument yield sweeter music for its carved head, or for the ribbon which is tied unto it. Ὑπαίθρος ἀρετῆ, "Virtue in the open air," naked, destitute, and afflicted, is of as fair a presence as when she sits under a canopy of state; David in the wilderness as honourable as on his throne, Job on the dunghill as in all

his wealth, and Joseph in the stocks as when he was “a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house.” (Gen. xlv. 8.) When God speaks by his prophet, he tells us that his ways are not our ways, nor our ways his: (Isai. lv. 8:) and here, where Christ speaketh to his disciples, by his answer it appears that his judgment and theirs were not the same. When God sent Samuel to anoint David, Jesse brought forth Elias, and Samuel said, “Surely this is the Lord’s anointed:” but God corrected his error, and bade him “not look upon his countenance, nor the height of his stature: for God seeth not as man seeth.” (1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7.) Beloved, if with the disciples here we have a thought that Christ’s kingdom is a temporal kingdom, God hath not chosen that thought. If we look upon the countenance of men, and think them the greatest who are of highest stature, and in honour and dignities are taller than their fellows by the head and shoulders, we are deceived, and the god of this world hath blinded our eyes, that this pigmy in Christ’s kingdom appears to us as big as a Colossus. But there is a little one, a child, behind, an humble and low convert: and “whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 4.)

To conclude all: Let us seek for honour; but seek for it in its own coasts. On earth it is nothing, or it signifieth nothing; and most commonly it is given to them who signify as little. Therefore let us look up to the highest heavens, where the seat of honour is. Let him who put us into the vineyard give us our wages; and let the King of glory bestow honour upon us. Let us make him alone our Spectator, him alone our Judge; and he “will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.” (Rom. ii. 6, 7.) Which God grant us all, through Christ our Saviour!

---

## SERMON XC.

### HOPE AND CHARITY.

*Hopeth all things.*—1 Corinthians xiii. 7.

At the very reading of this chapter the true Christian cannot but think himself in a kind of Paradise, and conceive he sees charity growing up like a tree of life, spreading its branches, full and hanging down the head, inviting him to gather such fruit from

every one of them as may be pleasant to his taste, and abound to his account. At this time I have laid hold but on one of them, but such an one as will give you a taste of all the rest. For in true hope there is long-suffering and kindness, there is patience and meekness; there is no envy, no malice, no pride, no suspicion. And if we take down this, and digest it, the rest will be sweet unto our taste, and pleasant as honey to our mouth. The tree is a tree of life, and every branch of it is "beautiful and glorious, and the fruit thereof excellent and comely to them that are escaped of Israel." (Isai. iv. 2.) It is truly said that charity doth virtually contain within herself all other graces. St. Paul calls it "the greatest" virtue, (1 Cor. xiii. 13,) and "the complement and fulfilling of the law." (Rom. xiii. 10.) If there be liberality, charity enlargeth the heart; if temperance, she binds the appetite; if chastity, she makes the eunuch for the kingdom of heaven; if patience, she works it; if resolution, she makes us valiant. "Charity," saith one, "is as the philosopher's stone, that turns all into gold." It makes suffering patience, it makes giving liberality; it puts value upon a mite, or a cup of cold water. Charity baptizeth all the other virtues, and makes them Christian. She stands as a queen among the virtues, encircled and compassed about as with a crown. Patience waits on her; bounty is as the breath of her nostrils; long-suffering is her very spirit. In a word: faith is the foundation; charity, the building, which reacheth as high as heaven; and hope, the pillar or buttress to uphold it.

I. We shall now find our way easier, and the task not hard, to bring charity and hope together. For if charity comprehend all virtues, I am sure hope is one. I know that the essences of these virtues are distinct, and their offices divers. Distinct habits have their distinct acts. The act of faith is to believe; of charity, to love and embrace; of hope, to expect. But yet though their acts and offices be divers and distinct, they may all meet in the same subject. They are distinct, but not separate. Nay, to speak truth, they are inseparable. Faith may be said to love, and hope to believe, and charity to hope. For he that doth truly believe, doth love; and he that doth truly hope, doth believe; and he that loveth, doth hope. And yet neither is faith hope, nor hope charity. The abstract doth here stand for the concrete; "charity," for the Christian man endued with charity. And the sense is,—Charity is the source, the original, the immediate cause of hope, that which alone produceth it. *In subjecto, in supposito*, "in the same subject, in the same person," two virtues may meet which notwithstanding in themselves are most distinct.



Besides, in this union of virtues there is observable *κοινωνία ἰδιωμάτων*, "a kind of communication of idioms." As it is true to say of Christ, that he who is God is man, and he who is man is God; but blasphemy to say, that his Deity is humanity, or his humanity Deity: so he errs not who affirms, *aut sperantem credere, aut amantem sperare*, "that he who hopes believes, or that he who loves hopes;" but he were strangely deceived who should say, that either hope is faith, or faith is charity.

Certainly, when our apostle says that "charity hopeth," *ὁ σολοικίζει*, "he commits no solecism," he speaks no absurdity, nothing which becomes not an apostle. The most fearful and horrid solecism is in our life and conversation, when we hope in God whom we do not love, and when *we* expect a reward from Him *who* deserve a stripe. *Sperare in Deum propter meipsum, et non amare Deum propter seipsum*, "To hope in God for my own good and for myself, and not to love him for himself," is a dangerous mistake. To divide and separate hope from love, is as bad as to separate love from faith. The apostle in the next verse tells us that charity *οὐδέποτε ἐκπίπτει*, "never falleth away." He implies a falling away of faith and hope in the last verse of the former chapter. *Νυνὶ δὲ μένει*, "Now," saith he, here in this world, "abide faith, hope, and charity," so knit and united and coupled that no divorce shall make a separation. If the hand of charity wither, my hope is dead. If I reach not forth drink to the thirsty, and meat to the hungry, and garments to the naked; if I be so palsy-stricken that I cannot give a cup of cold water; my hope is sick and feeble and languishing, *spes informis*, "a hope without shape or form," as withered and hanging down as my charity, as palsy-stricken as she, not able to reach to a reward, or lay hold on a blessing.

Now we cannot in strictness attribute hope to the saints departed; whose charity, notwithstanding, is now perfected. For, what should they hope for? *Heaven*? They already reign there. *The robe of glory*? They have put it on. *The penny*? They have received it. He who was their hope, is now their joy and crown. They are *extra statum merendi aut demerendi*: They "can neither merit nor offend." They are *in termino quiescentiæ*, "in that rest which remains to the saints of God." "That which is perfect is come, and that which was in part is taken away." (1 Cor. xiii. 10.) Those *εὐχαριστικά* and *ἔγκωμιστικά* of the ancient church, their "prayers and panegyrics and oblations" for the dead, did rather testify their own hope than persuade theirs. Expect they did the full complement of

their bliss and beatitude, *περὶ τὸν πάντων Βασιλέα χορεύοντες*, "dancing and triumphing before" him who taught them to conquer. And being crowned with victory, what should they hope for? *Spes, quasi pes animæ*, saith Isidore: "Hope is the foot of the soul." And to move the foot, this progressive motion, this striving forward, belongs to him who is going on his way. *Spes absentis est*: "We hope for that we see not:" the saints rest in God. *Spes itinerantis est*: "Hope is my companion in my journey:" at my journey's end hope leaves me. Where there is hope, there is motion; and with that motion she ends. In the saints departed there is charity, but hope there is not. And indeed the charity the apostle here speaks of is not *charitas patriæ*, but *viæ*.\* This charity that hath hope to wait on her, this expecting charity, is charity that hath a hand to give, and a body to suffer, and a tongue to speak; is the charity of him who can "bestow his goods on the poor, and give his body to be burned;" (1 Cor. xiii. 3;) is proper to him who walks and rejoiceth and labours in hope, as the apostle speaketh.

Well, then, we may settle it as an undeniable conclusion, that charity may be without hope; but, in the next place, it is as true, that hope cannot be without charity. In heaven there is no room for hope, where notwithstanding charity is; nor shall there be in hell, where charity is not: infinite joy there, infinite horror here. No addition to that which is infinite, no succession to eternity. Here our arithmetic faileth us: we cannot add one cubit or inch to infinitude; we cannot multiply eternity, nor add one day to immortality: and can we hope? The blessed saints departed rest in God, who is the end of their hope, do not hope: the devils and damned reprobates hate God, and cannot hope; *non ostiolum spei*, "not the least wicket, not a cranny of hope" is left to them. Behold, the Bridegroom is come, and is entered, and the door is shut. (Matt. xxv. 10.) Origen, whom some have placed with a picklock in his hand to open these everlasting doors, and after the revolution of some thousands of years to empty hell, and break the chains of everlasting darkness, hath this censure in Photius, "to have delivered" *παραλογώτατα καὶ δυσσεβείας πλήρη*, "many absurd positions and full of impiety." If charity could be found in hell, I would perhaps look for hope there. But to place hope there without charity, is to turn darkness into light, Judas into Peter, Satan into an angel of light, and hell itself into Paradise. But I mistake the father: for the cardinal will tell us, he meant not

\* Not "the charity of the country" to which we are going, but that "of the road" thither.—EDIT.

hell, but purgatory, where there is perfect charity, as intensively hot as the fire there. What! charity there, and perfect? We infer, then, No hope there. For "perfect love," as it "casteth out fear," (1 John iv. 18,) so it casteth out hope too; which ebbs and flows, increaseth and decreaseth, waxeth and waneth with charity; and when it either fails, or hath its perfection, it endeth. We sow in hope: but when the harvest, the time of gathering and separation, comes, hope vanisheth. For my charity raises my hope by the same degrees she receives: but *in culmine virtutis*\* she swalloweth it up in victory. On the hills there is salvation, but in the bottom, in the valley of death, there is *omnimoda desolatio*, "a strange kind of desolation," not only of the soul, but "of all" her comforts, even that last comfort, hope. "She is dead," say they in the Gospel: *τί ἔτι σκύλλεις τὸν Διδάσκαλον*; "why troublest thou the Master any further?" (Mark v. 35.)

We find, you see, this hope neither in heaven, nor in hell: Neither in Abraham's bosom; there Lazarus is so sure that he may not carry a drop of water to cool a flaming tongue: nor in the place of torments; Dives's care, we read, is not for himself, but his brethren. In hell there is no fire but that sulphureous tormenting fire; and in heaven the fire of charity is *in intensis gradibus*,† clear, and bright, and refined, like the elementary fire, pure and invisible, wheeling and rolling about in an eternal gyre and circle. We must then descend unto earth; where charity is visible; where this fire, like to the fire there, is of a grosser and more sensible temper; and, with that, too, flameth upward, till it be refined and exalted to a celestial heat, till its motion be heightened into perfection, and with it our hope turned into possession.

By this fire we must sit down; nay, we must carry these coals in our bosom, if we will *spem accendere*, "kindle hope." If this fire be extinguished, if this heat perish, my hope will either freeze and congeal and petrify into a stubborn despair; or else, by a kind of *anti-peristasis*, being encompassed by excess of cold, beaten upon by the violence of a contrary quality, it will break forth into an unruly flame, and raise itself to a saucy presumption. But here it is, and here we find it, even *spem in charitate*, "hope in charity." For *in amore hæc insunt omnia*, "in love are all these things" which with the eye of hope we look upon, or with the hand of hope we lay hold on.

First. The object is the same. For love is an affection join-

\* "When at her height of power."—EDIT.

† "In its most intense degree."—EDIT.

ing and uniting us to God. Love could not walk in that circle of blessings, both spiritual and temporal, if God were not in the midst. Draw what lines you please; propose either competency of means, or quiet of conscience, or the joys of heaven; hope will faint and languish, if God be not the centre wherein these lines meet.

Secondly. The character and mark whereby we may know them both is the same.

1. Love is bold. We commonly say, "We will build upon a friend." Put what objections and what scruples you please, of inopportunity, inconveniency, improbability, that he cannot now, that he wants leisure and a convenient time to do me good; love answers all. And so doth hope: place tribulation, persecution, death itself in the way, yet she presseth forward. "Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him," saith Job. (Job xiii. 15.)

2. Love is jealous; it carrieth and conveyeth the soul to the object not enjoyed. *Ubi amor, ibi animus*: "Where my love is, there is my mind;" where my treasure is, there is my soul. *Ubi sum, ibi non sum*, saith the old lover in Plautus: "Where I am not, there I am; and where I am, there I am not." I am sure, *ubi spes, ibi est animus*, "where my hope is, there my soul is;" my understanding, to apprehend it; my care, to procure it. *Spe jam sumus in cælo*. "We aim at heaven; and hope puts us there already." And this earnest inclination to the object begets a jealousy. To Love, a glance is a frown, and a frown anger, and anger death; and yet it is Love still: and Hope hath these abatements, and fits, and shiverings; and yet it is Hope still.

3. Love is querulous and full of complaints. "Why doth he pursue me?" saith Job: "Why dost thou set me as a mark?" (Job vii. 20.) And, "Why art thou angry with thine inheritance?" saith David. "How long, Lord? how long?" (Psalm lxxiii. 62; lxxix. 5.) Hope's own dialect. For there is a kind of thirst in hope, more than that of a chased hart. *Festina charitas*, and *festina spes*: "Love is on the wing and in haste; and so is hope." *Spes quæ differtur affigit*: "Hope knows no affliction but delay." While she is, she is in trouble, in pangs, like a man fastened to a cross, who desires nothing more than to expire. The life of hope is expectation: answer that, and hope is not.

And in this relation stand hope and charity: like Hippocrates's twins, they are born and grow up together. Their operations, their postures, their gestures, are not unlike. *Sic oculos*,

*sic ille manus.\** As a well-made and well-placed picture looks upon him that looks upon it, so doth my charity eye my hope, and my hope looks back upon my charity. Nay, my hope is the picture of my charity, and my charity is the lively representation of my hope. Would you see the portraiture and lively view of my hope? then behold my charity. Would you take the lineaments and proportion of my charity? look upon my hope. Charity is a commentary upon my hope; and my hope is an interpretation of my charity. To love God, and to hope in God, are terms reciprocal: he that loves him hopes in him, and he that hopes in him loves him. So that, take *charitatem in viâ*, “charity upon earth,” and *charitas sperat* is not only *κατὰ πάντα*,† but *καθόλου*, “a universal proposition,” and the terms are *æqualis ambitus*, “of equal latitude.” Where hope is, there is charity; and where charity is, there is hope.

Thus the terms naturally stand; and yet a strange paradox is maintained in the world,—that hope may thrive well enough without the warmth and fomentation of charity. We deny hope to men already damned in hell: but *candidatis diaboli*, “to men who are confederate with hell,” who “call it unto them both with works and words;” (Wisdom i. 16;) to men who are judged already, and “whose damnation sleepeth not,” but is awake and in agitation; we deny it not. They who “treasure up wrath against the day of wrath,” who know nothing of faith, hope, and charity, but their naked names, a faithless generation, without love in this world, and quite destitute of hope, desperate sinners, yet notwithstanding hope. After their rebellion for a reward, after their treason for a crown, after all the injuries and slights and denials and repulses given to the Holy Ghost for his loving and familiar parleys, for his kisses and embraces, *post læsum Patrem*, after they have renounced their Father which is in heaven, and sold their birthright, they howl after the blessing, and cry out with Esau, “Bless me, even me also, my Father.” (Gen. xxviii. 34.)

But this is not *ὁδῶν βαδίζειν*, “to walk in the right way.” This is a most methodical impiety. *Insanit spes nostra*, “Our hope is mad and distracted.” Nay, it is *ἐλπὶς ἀνελπὶς*, “an expectation without a hope,” a maimed, bruised, lame hope, *spes exspes*, “a hopeless hope,” a hope without a foot. Good God! should a traitor on the gibbet, now ready to be thrown down and quar-

\* VIRGILII *Æneid.* iii. 490. For a translation, see p. 224 of this volume.

—EDIT. † “ ‘Charity hopeth’ is not only ‘with regard to all things.’ ”—

EDIT.

tered, expect to be honoured with rewards? Should a Ravailac look to be made one of the privy council? Should Catiline demand a civil garland? or Cethegus, now to be strangled, ask what triumphant arches and statues are set up to honour him? Thou son of perdition, dost thou expect salvation? Thou son of Belial, dost thou hope for a crown? Thou hast flung a stone at Christ; and dost thou ask him bread? Thou hast given him a serpent, thy fraud and deceit, thy hypocrisy, thy windings and turnings in the religion thou professest; and dost thou crave a fish? Canst thou hope to be saved by that gospel thou despisest, and to be washed with that blood thou tramplest under thy feet? *Filius non es; et ibis ad Patrem?* "Thou art no son; and dost thou go to the Father?" Thou hast no charity; and dost thou nourish hope?

Indeed some comfort it is to a condemned person, when the sentence is passed, to hope for a reprieve. *Errare aliquando in viâ profuit*: "We wander sometimes with delight;" and our error pleases us well, because we hope it is not an error. But when that day of revelation and manifestation, ἡμέρα ἐπισκοπῆς, that general "day of visitation," (1 Peter ii. 12,) shall come, when all things shall be γυμνὰ καὶ τετραχλησμένα, "anatomized and naked," (Heb. iv. 13,) like a beast for sacrifice, "cut down the back," whose very entrails are seen; when both shall meet, —on the offender's part, desperation; and on the Judge's, desertion; *cum Judex ostendet suam sententiam, et reus suam conscientiam*; "when the Judge shall read his sentence, and the offender open the book of his conscience;" then shall he who welcomed and entertained hope, and yet shut charity out of doors, confess not only ἀμεθοδίαν, his "want of method," but also ἀναισθησίαν, his "dulness and stupidity." He shall then be too sensible what an absurdity and solecism it was, to make his hope his familiar and his domestic, and yet turn the key against charity. *Tuas tibi res habe*,\* from hope to charity, is a dangerous form, a bill of divorce and separation of the soul from God. There is no way, then, but to unite and join them together. Let charity and hope meet, and then that will follow,—"righteousness and peace," and a myriad of blessings, "will kiss each other." (Psalm lxxxv. 10.)

II. We have now made good this proposition, and showed in what relation the terms stand. *Quòd speret*, "that charity hopeth," we have already proved. Our next task will be to give

\* The form of words used by the Romans in matter of divorce; the husband saying to the wife whom he sent away, "Take your things along with you."—EDIT.

an answer to the *quid sperat*, and point out to "the object of this hope." And here we find it to be of very large compass, even τὰ πάντα, "all things." And if I may "hope all things," then is there nothing excepted, a *Non licet*\* nowhere engraven to fright away my hope. I may yield up my hope to my ambition, I may prostitute her to pleasure, I may sell her to Mammon, I may betray her to revenge, and lend her to my malice. *Quid non speremus?* What is there that comes not within the compass of this *omnia*? "What is there we may not hope for?"

But we must here take-in that rule in divinity, *Verba non sono sapiunt, sed sensu; nec auribus audienda, sed mentibus*: "We must not take the sound of the words, but the sense; and they are presented rather to our understanding than our ears." St. Paul's *Expedi* and *Licet* must come in; "all things which are lawful, all things which are expedient." (1 Cor. vi. 12.) We must tie our hope to God's promise, and limit one duty by another, our hope by our prayers. What God commands me to pray for, what he hath promised to give, may raise my hope. Some things there are which are not *inter omnia*, not to be numbered "amongst this all." Some things are *nullius numeri*, "as good as nothing;" and my estate may be bettered in being without them. Some things are worse than nothing; and my estate will be far worse if I have them. Some things are ἀδιάφορα, "indifferent," in their own nature neither good nor evil; and a naked circumstance, a condition, a bare "if," may make it either good or evil to hope for them. Some things there be which are evil πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτῶν φύσιν, saith Basil, simply and "in their own nature" evil; as sin, and the occasions of sin, and the impunity of sin: and a great sin it is to hope for these. Some things are evil πρὸς ἡμετέραν αἴσθησιν, "which appear so to us, sensible" evils, such indeed as we are most sensible of; affliction, and poverty, and sorrow, and disgrace: and these I am so far from hoping for, as that I may pray against them. A *Libera nos, Domine*, is set upon them: at the very naming of them we all cry out, "Good Lord, deliver us." I fear, I avoid, I run away from these. *Spero meliora*, "I hope for better things."

We will then bound and limit this our hope, and draw those lines which must fill up the circumference. And thus they lie: "Charity hopeth all things."

1. First. *Omnia bona*, "all good things." For, to wait for the twilight with the adulterer; to catch at all opportunities which may be as steps to bring to the pinnacle of honour; to have

\* "It is not lawful."—EDIT.

*pervigiles oculos*, "our eyes still watching upon the prey;" is not hope, but lust, or ambition, or covetousness. *Etiã speravit*, you know was spoken of Felix: "He hoped also that money should be given him of Paul;" (Acts xxiv. 26;) and what was this hope but covetousness?

2. *Bona absentia*, "future, absent goods;" goods at a distance. For when the object is present, hope is no more. The apostle before said that charity "is patient," *μακροθυμῆι*, *elongat animum*, (1 Cor. xiii. 4,) draws-in its breath as it were, and stayeth, and defers, and prolongs itself. "If we hope, we expect in patience," saith the apostle. (Rom. viii. 25.) *Spes omnes res spissas habet*, saith he in the comedy: "All things to hope are hard and massive," and must be beaten out with the hammer.

3. *Ardua*, "matters of difficulty." For hope loves to struggle with its object, and sometimes is increased by opposition, and made bolder by being frightened. But if the object be *ad manum et parabile*, "at hand and cheap," my hope is lazy and asleep; it moves not, it stirs not. *Ἐλπίς παρ' ἐλπίδα*, "hope above hope, hope against hope," (Rom. iv. 18,) that is hope indeed. For, as Tertullian—asking the question, why Christ after his resurrection did not manifest and publish himself to the whole world, and so put it out of all question that he was risen indeed—answers well, that this he did not, *ut fides, cui magna merces debetur, non nisi difficultate constaret*, "that our faith, which hath the promise of a great reward, might be commended by that difficulty which stood in its way;" so may we say of hope, *Χαλκῶδες ἡ τῆς ἐλπίδος ὁδός*, "The way of hope is hard and rugged." She passeth-by the pomp of the world, and she treadeth dangerous paths. If a serpent be in the way, she feareth not; if a flower, some pleasing object, she gazeth not; but presseth on forward, over riches and poverty, over honour and disgrace, *super calcatum patrem*, "over all relations and dependencies;" and in this habit and attire, *ruspata sanguine*, as Tertullian speaks, torn, and weather-beaten, and "in her own gore," she striveth forward to her object. Though I see it not, yet I hope: though it be in heaven, yet I hope: though I am in chains, even fettered *retinaculis spei*, "with those stays and hinderances of hope" which the world or the devil cast about me, yet I hope still.

4. Lastly: *Possibilia*, good things, though hard to obtain, yet "possible." For charity *nihil perperam agit*, "is not foolish and indiscreet:" it ploughs not the air, nor sows upon the rocks. What is easy and at hand cannot raise a hope; and what is im-



possible overwhelms and swallows it. What is ready to fall into my bosom, I need not hope for : and what I cannot have, *nec spes, nec votum est*, “doth scarce produce a wish, much less beget a hope.”

These are the bounds, and these make up the object, of my hope, and, as lines drawn to the circumference, fill up this *omnia*, this “all-things,” in the text. Now, St. Basil’s rule is most safe, *Μὴ μεταίρειν τὰ ὅρια τὰ αἰώνια*, “Not to remove these bounds, nor alter these everlasting limits.” We must not take the compass, and draw new lines, and put out God, and place ourselves *in centro*, “in the midst.” We must not build our hope upon dust and rubbish, upon our own weak and rotten foundation. But we must keep our hope close to charity, which looks upon the right object. For hope, as fear, is measured by its object. Fear is a base and grovelling, a cowardly passion, if either an enemy or disgrace or danger beget it : but *pone Deum*, “place God there,” make him the object of thy fear, and then that of Synesius is most true, *Ἀφοβία μεγίστη τὸ φοβεῖσθαι*, “To faint and be daunted here doth strengthen us, and our greatest security is to fear.” And my hope is as its object is : if it be placed on princes or in any son of man, it is as frail and mortal as they are, and departs with their breath ; it is chased away with a frown ; it is blown out of their nostrils, and perisheth as soon as a thought. If I lay it on my own strength or wit or policy, alas ! I have set up a paper wall ; nay, I have built my fort in the air : and you need not plant a cannon against it, to make a battery ; it will down of itself, and overthrow and ruin the builder, and leave a mark, an *Ecce*, upon him : “Behold the man that made the arm of flesh his strength, and put his confidence in himself !” (Jer. xvii. 5.) But make God its object, and hope is a rock, a castle, an impregnable citadel, “cannon-proof,” as we say ; no assault, no battery shall force it. “For the Lord,” saith the prophet Nahum, “is good, a strong-hold in the day of trouble ; and he knoweth them that trust in him.” (Nahum i. 7.)

And indeed charity keeps hope where God would have it placed, at its right object. She is a perfect methodist. She guides hope, and leads her on orderly, draws every line to its true proper centre ; she turns it from the creature, and levels it on God. The order of charity is the order of unity. The devil is a great disturber, the author of confusion. Whereas God hath placed contempt upon the world, love upon goodness, and shame upon sin, *ὁ Σατανᾶς ἀντιστρέφει τὴν τάξιν τῶν πραγμάτων*, “the devil hath inverted this order,” saith Chrysostom, and hath placed shame upon repentance, and security upon sin ;

distrust upon God's providence, and hope upon the world: he hath placed hope upon fear, and fear upon hope. Τὰ φοβερώτατα, "The most fearful and terrible things" in the world, if we rightly understood them,—those we hope for; and τὰ ἐπιθυμητὰ, "the most desirable," the most conducive to our eternal happiness,—those we fear. Now the office and work of charity is ἐκατέρα πράξει τὸ οἰκτιῖον ἀπονέμεσθαι, even an act of justice, to make every wheel move in its own place, "to give every action," every affection, "its proper end and work;" to place my hatred on the world, my love on God; my anger on sin, my delight on goodness; my fear on God, and my hope on God. Put *charitas* to *sperat*, join "charity" and "hope," and *omnia*, "all things," will follow: we cannot hope amiss. Thus doth charity edify, (1 Cor. viii. 1,) even build us up as high as heaven; and hope, being the supporter, and bringing in with it τὰ πάντα, "all things," doth establish and strengthen the building.

But, in the last place, as we build up ourselves, so must we edify others also, "in our most holy faith:" and as we hope for all things for ourselves, so must we reserve a hope for those also who are tied in the same link and bond of love. When we see a house tottering, we must not make our censure a wind to blow it down; but hope that even a broken beam, a loose rafter, nay, the very rubbish itself, may in time be made a sound part of the building. When I see my brother fall, I must lend him my hand to help him up. If my hand will not help him, I must lend him my pity and compassion and prayer. And when all the rest fail, I must give him my hope. Charity hath an eye abroad as well as at home; nor doth she nurse up hope for herself alone, but makes it as catholic as the church, nay, as the world. *Ægrotis dum anima est, spes esse dicitur*, saith Tully: \* "Hope lasteth as long as life lasteth, nor can it expire but with the soul." And how desperately soever we see our brother plunged in sin, yet we must hope well that his sickness is not unto death.

How did the church of Christ frown upon the Novatians, who denied hope of pardon to those who fell away in time of persecution! St. Cyprian calls them *pietatis paternæ adversarios*, "enemies to the grace of God." Isidore tells them, they were "proud and foolish boasters;" and Nazianzen, that their religion was θρασύτης καὶ ἀκάθαρτος καθαρότης,† more in their tongue than in their heart. They would be stiled καθαροί, "the purest" Christians, craftily making, as he after observes, the elegancy

\* *Epist. ad Atticum*, lib. ix. ep. 10.

† "Audacity and impure purity."

and beauty of that name a bait to catch the ignorant and unwary multitude. This spiritual pride, say the Schools, and contempt of our brother springeth from that conceit, that self-flattery we nourish in our breasts, that we have stood strong against the violence of temptations. And then with us he is scarce a Christian who is tempted. And so having no leisure to bring our own hypocrisy to the balance, we begin to look big and call it zeal that swells us. We walk upon the pavement of heaven, and from thence behold our poor brother on the ground: and then how vile doth he seem in our eyes, a woman, a wretch, a son of perdition! Then we can thunder, when God is silent; we snatch the sword out of his hand, and latch it in his side who doth but shrink at an invasion. Whereas those Christians whom a frequent visitation of their own hearts hath taught to make a virtuous use of their brother's sin, would—not only after a fainting, but after a fall; not only after a fall, but after a bruise; not only after seven falls, but after seventy times seven falls—at least hope well, reach out the hand of mercy to him, and rather show him comfort in the Creed, than denounce judgment against him out of the Decalogue. This is truly to be followers of Him who “will not break a bruised reed.” Greatness of authority may make us to be feared, and depth of learning to be admired; abundance of wealth or honour may gain us a knee or a hat: but that which makes one man a god unto another is charity; which, when she hath spent the whole box, doth yet anoint her brother with her hope, and, where she cannot help, yet will hope the best. Therefore Tertullian tells us that anciently among the Heathen the professors of Christianity were called not *Christiani*, but *Chrestiani*, from [χρηστὸς] a word signifying “sweetness and meekness and benignity of disposition.” I cannot but conceive that this was the reason why the ancients, many of them, conversed even with the Heathen themselves. No doubt they did it out of hope of their recovery. We find in our books that they held a friendly intercourse of epistles; St. Basil with Libanius the sophister, Nazianzen and Augustine with others. And antiquity hath either left us true, or forged us false, epistles between St. Paul himself and Seneca the philosopher, as we find them copied out by Sixtus Senensis.

And indeed why should we not hope well of every man, suppose he were a Judas; and by our Christian industry strive to recover his drooping soul, and to revive the flame of charity in his breast, which may warm him into a temperate hope? How know we but that the word of God through our ministry may of this stone raise up a child unto Abraham?

*Debilem facito manu,*

*Debilem pede :—*

*Vita dum superest, bene est.*—SENECÆ *Epist.* ci. ;

as Mæcenas sometimes basely spake in another case : \* But let our weak brother be “lame hand and foot,” sick in head and heart ; yet as long as there is life in him, our charity must visit him, and our hope make us active to his recovery : otherwise, like unskilful physicians, we shall suffer him to die under our hands, and then pretend his disease was incurable. The priest and the Levite, who saw the man wounded on the way, and passed by on the other side, are not proposed as patterns of our imitation ; but the Samaritan, who came near to the place, and “came and looked on him,” and no doubt hoped well : for he “bound up his wounds, and poured in wine and oil, and brought him to an inn, and made provision for him.” (Luke x. 30—35.)

The reason why we reach not out the hand of help unto others is, because we hope well of none but ourselves. Nay, we make it a great part of our Christian zeal, to challenge an assurance to ourselves, and to entitle our brother to despair ; and so we forfeit our hope for want of charity. But our apostle here brings-in charity in another dress, “hoping all things” of all men. And indeed this is a kind of privilege that charity hath in respect of faith. To faith the number of the elect appears but small ; but to charity the church is large and copious. Faith makes up a church as Gideon did his army, who took not up all he met, but out of a many thousands elected a band of three hundred and no more : but charity sees not any of that great company whom she will dismiss, but thinks that all may fight and conquer. You will say, perhaps, that this is an error of my charity. I confess it is ; but it is a very necessary error. For it is my charity thus to err ; and it is not a lie, but a virtue in me, in my brother’s case to hope for that good which he shall never enjoy. The holy mistakes of charity shall never be imputed, nor be numbered amongst my sins of ignorance. Nay, he that errs not thus, he that hopes not the best he can of all he sees, wanteth something, and comes yet short of a good Christian. *Christianum est errare*, “It is the part of every Christian thus to err.” And there is good reason for it : for we see not where nor how the grace of God may work. How sinful soever a man be, yet if he come behind, and but touch the hem of Christ’s garment, the grace

\* “Did nature me unkindly treat ;

Distorted both my hands and feet ;—

All this, and more, I would endure,

Of life’s enjoyment still secure.”—MORELL’S Translation.

of God may cure him. Nay, were he dead in sin, who knows what God may do? *Forsitan et mihi in sepulcro scelerum jacenti dicat, "Hieronymus, veni foras,"* saith St. Jerome: "Peradventure God may call unto him lying yet stinking in his sin, as in a grave, 'Lazarus, come forth.'" The proverb in nature is, *Ex quolibet ligno non fit Mercurius*, "Every crooked piece of timber is not fit to make a god of."\* For nature cannot make what she pleaseth of what she [may] list. But God finds no subject unfit for his skill; but out of the most rotten and crooked piece can make an image and erect a statue of himself. And therefore charity, because she may, nay, because she must, be deceived, is at *sperat* in the thickest cloud, and "hopes" for day-break in the darkest and longest night. Our apostle tells us, *sperat omnia*, she "hopeth all things;" she friendly extends and communicates her hope to every man.

## APPLICATION.

For conclusion, and to apply all: Let us lay hold on charity, and then hope will follow; for they are linked together. But if we let charity loose, hope will take wing, and leave us nothing but a false persuasion, which hypocrites call by that name, when it is nothing like it, nothing but a mere thought. And a thought will not give legs to the lame, nor crown a beggar, nor write *his* name in the book of life *who* hath made himself "to every good work reprobate." It is not a feeble thought, it is an active charity, that is the foundation of hope. "Run to and fro through Jerusalem, go about the streets thereof," (Jer. v. 1,) muster up together all that name the Lord Jesus, and you shall find every man is full of hope; and then you may conclude that every man is charitable. Whatsoever the premisses be, whatsoever the actions of our life be, most men make this the conclusion, and die in hope; assure themselves of happiness, by no better experience than that which flesh and blood and the love of ourselves are ready to bring in. They fill themselves with hope, when they are full of nothing but malice and envy and uncleanness; of which we are told, that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." (Gal. v. 21.) And what hope, what assurance is this? An assurance without a warrant; a hope which only we ourselves have subscribed to with hands full of blood; a hope which is no hope, but a cheat, a delusion, presenting us nothing but heaven, when we are condemned already. It is true that hope is a fair tie and pledge of what we shall enjoy hereafter; but it is not then

\* ERASMI *Adagia*, sub tit. *Munus aptum*.

the work of the fancy, but of the heart; to be wrought out with fear and trembling, and not to be taken up as "a thing granted," as the τὸ διδόμενον. We cannot set up a pillar of hope where there is no basis, no foundation for it, but a weak and feeble thought.

I know it is put up by some as a question, whether we ought to be assured of our salvation: but it is but an impertinent question, and not well put up. For will any man ask whether we ought to be in health? and not rather, whether we ought to feed on wholesome meats, and keep a temperate diet? Beloved, let us have charity, and hope will as certainly follow and as naturally as growth and health do a moderate diet. Otherwise to hope is a sin; it is not hope, but presumption. For what hope is that which looks towards liberty, and leaves us in chains? that which promiseth life, when we are children appointed to die?

Let us, then, possess our hearts with charity, and hope will soon enter in; for they love to dwell and breathe together. But it will not enter a froward and perverse heart; for that will not receive it: nor the heart of a Nabal; for that is stone, and will beat it back: nor a heart that is fat as grease; for it slips through it: nor a Pharisee's heart; for that is hollow, and doth nothing but sound; every thought is a knell, and proclaimeth the fall of some in Israel. None have less hope of others than they who presume for themselves. None condemn more to hell than they whose "feet are swift to shed blood," and who delight in those ways which lead unto death. Their very mercies are cruelty. To put on the new man, with them, is to put off all bowels. Every word they speak is clothed with death. And if malice and deceit and uncharitableness lead not thither, I may be bold to say, there is no hell at all. They who make God as cruel as themselves, to destiny men to destruction only because he will, and to build up men on purpose to ruin them for ever; that make the wickedness of men depend on the antecedent will of God "absolutely and irresistibly efficacious;" (they are their own words;) that say that God doth work all things in all men, even in the reprobate; that the induration and incredulity of men is from the predestination of God, as the effect from the cause; that God calls men to salvation who are condemned already; that though the elect (which are themselves) fall into adultery, murder, treason, and other crying sins, yet they fall not from grace, but still remain men after God's own heart, when they do the works of their father the devil:—these are they whose words are as sharp swords to cut off their brethren

from the land of the living. These men breathe forth nothing but hailstones and coals of fire, but death and destruction. These make a bridge for themselves to happiness, but pluck it up to their brethren. These are in heaven already, and shut it up, that none else may enter. Certainly a new way to heaven, never yet discovered by the King of heaven ! who hath put the keys into the hand of charity, who may boldly enter herself, and who also is very willing to let-in others ; who brings forth a hope,—a hope for ourselves, and a hope for others.

Whoso makes haste to perfection, is very willing to forward others in the way : he calls upon them, he waits on them, he expects when they will move forwards ; and though they move not, yet he hopes still. Charity, which brought down Christ from heaven, lifts us up unto that holy place ; and we are never carried with more delight, than when we go with most company, there to join with the choir of angels, and to sing praises to the God of love for evermore. "We love God, because he loved us first ;" (1 John iv. 19 ;) and for his love's sake we love every man. And now what is our hope, but that together with others we may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory ?

---

## SERMON XCI.\*

### DAVID'S REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION.

*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.*—Psalm li. 12.

IN these words we have,

I. An act : "Restore ;"

II. An agent,—God : "Restore thou ;"

III. The person suing,—David : "unto me ;"

IV. The blessing sued for,—the joy of God's salvation : "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."

David, (as the title showeth us,) being awakened by Nathan out of the slumber wherein he had long lain after his foul fact with Bathsheba, penned this psalm, and published it ; a truly penitential psalm, full of humble and hearty acknowledgments of sin, and of earnest petitions for mercy and for assurance of God's favour. His great fall had so bruised him that he felt no ease or comfort : all was discomposed and out of tune, his "soul

\* This is believed to have been the composition of some other person. See the Life of the author, prefixed to vol. i. p. lxiii.—EDIT.

cast down and disquieted within him," his heart broken, his spirit wounded. And "a wounded spirit who can bear?" (Prov. xviii. 14.) Hence it is that he prayeth with such vehemence and fervency that God would be pleased in great mercy to "blot out all his transgressions," and to "wash and cleanse him from his sins and iniquities;" (Psalm li. 1, 2;) that he would "not cast him away from his presence, nor take his holy Spirit from him;" (verse 11;) and, here in my text, that he would "restore unto him the joy of his salvation." But however these last expressions may seem to be the breathings of a disconsolate spirit, and of one even out of hope, yet we must not think that this man after God's own heart, this great saint, though grievously fallen, was quite fallen from grace, and that his faith had now utterly failed and was extinguished. No; faith can never be lost: or rather, if it be lost, it never was true faith; as St. Jerome speaketh of charity.

Tell me not of Saul's anointing, of Judas's apostleship, of Balaam's prophetic spirit: tell me not of those who are in the church, but not of the church; who, like the Pharisees, have the law written on their fringes, religion on the outside, when the devil is in their heart. For Judas was but a traitor lurking under the title of a disciple. *Sub alterius habitu alteri militavit* :\* He wore Christ's livery, but was the devil's servant. Saul was amongst the prophets, but never received a prophet's reward: and Balaam blessed the people from God, but he died not the death of the righteous. There may be some gifts of the Spirit, where the Spirit never truly was: there may be a beam of grace, a show of godliness, where the power thereof is denied: and faith in him may seem to be dead, where it never had true life or being. So Nazianzen, speaking of those who forsook the colours under which they had formerly fought, says, "They were" οἱ προσωελθόντες ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον ἐπιπολαίως, "men who negligently and for fashion's sake handled matters of religion;" having a Hosanna in their mouth when a *Crucifige* † was in their heart; like meteors, which either being drawn up by the heat of the sun, or lifted up by some puff of wind into the air, there for a while they remain, and draw men's eyes to behold them, till at last they go out, and infect it. But true faith is like the sun, which is not therefore not at all because a cloud hath overcast it: or, like the moon, it waxeth and waneth, but still receives some light from the sun.

The Papists and Arminians in this point, as Augustine spake

\* "Habited in the regimentals of one captain, he fought for another."—EDIT.

† "Crucify him."—EDIT.



of heretics of the same stamp, should have rather our prayers than our dispute, and will sooner be recalled by our devotion than yield to the strength of our reason. But if there be any infant in religion, who is not yet grown up to this truth, whose earthly thoughts cannot reach to the height of this heavenly mystery; if he will not believe God in the book of his words, he may see and read a resemblance of it in the book of his works. Come, Christian; look upon the tree. In the winter it is stripped of its fruit and leaves, nipped by the frost, covered with snow, so that it seems to be withered and dead, and fit only to be cast into the fire. Say, then; may not faith be where sin and the filth of the flesh hath oppressed it? Can a winter of affliction dead it? Or shall we think that man whose works always speak not his faith, whose light sometimes shines dimly before men, to be in the shadow of death, and only fit fuel for hell-fire? No; this were to wrong our charity as well as our faith, to make the way to hell broader than it is, to enlarge the kingdom of Satan, to undervalue the gift of grace, to mistrust the promise of God, and to make him a liar like unto ourselves. What, if we be weak and feeble? What, if the arm of flesh cannot uphold us? Yet God directeth us in our paths; and is as tender-hearted to us as a nurse to her child when she teacheth it to go, sometimes leading and guiding us by his mercy, sometimes catching if we slip, and, if we fall, hastily pulling us up again, and snatching us to his embraces.

Hear this, and leap for joy, you who are members of Christ's mystical body. You may fall, but you shall rise again. Your names are written in the book of life; and neither the malice nor the policy of Satan can blot them out. God hath made a league with you; and you may be sure he will be as good as his word. He hath married himself to you for ever; and then you need not fear a divorce. He hath written his law in the midst of your heart; and the devil shall never rase it out. He hath put his fear into you; and such and so great a fear, as St. Augustine speaks, that you shall always adhere unto him; that shall make you fly sin as a serpent; and, if it chance to bite and sting you, shall make you look up to that brasen Serpent lifted up, and you shall be healed. If you be tempted, he will give the issue. (1 Cor. x. 13.) Only thou must so be confident, that you presume not; so fear, that you despair not. Faith and fear together make a blessed mixture; fear being as the lungs, and faith as the heart, which will get a heat and over-heat, as one speaketh, if by fear, as by cool air, it be not tempered. If then faith uphold thy fear, and fear temper thy faith, though thou

take many a fall by the way, yet at last thou shalt come to thy journey's end. Though the devil shake thy faith, yet God will protect it: though he for a while steal away this precious jewel, "the joy of thy salvation," yet God will restore it. Which is my Second part,—the person whose act it is: "Restore thou."

II. It is not the tongue of an angel can comfort David. The prophet might awake him, but raise him up he could not. Nathan's parable had been but as a proverb of the dust, and his "Thou art the man" had sooner forced a frown than a tear from a king, had not God's Spirit fitted his heart, had not the Holy Ghost been the interpreter. For it is not so with the heart as it is with the eye. The eye indeed cannot make light nor colours, yet it can open itself, and receive them: but the heart neither can produce this joy, neither can it open itself to receive it; but God must *pulsare et aperire*, "knock and open," take away the bars and open the doors of it, and purge and cleanse it. He must write in it the forgiveness of sins, and shine upon it with the light of his countenance; or else the weight of sin will still oppress it. This joy ariseth out of the forgiveness of our sins. Now such is the nature of sin, that though *actus transit, yet reatus manet*, as Lombard speaks: "Sin no longer is than it is a-committing; but the guilt of sin still remains;" like a blazing star, which, though itself be extinct, yet leave its infection behind it. For to rise from sin is not only to cease from the act of sinning, but to repair our former estate; not only to be rid of the disease, but to enjoy our former health.

Now in sin, as Aquinas saith, there are two things; *peccati macula*, and *pœnæ reatus*; "the blot and stain of sin," which doth darken the lustre of grace. And we, who made this stain, can[not] blot it out again. It is lost labour to wash ourselves. Can we leopards lick out our own spots? Can we purge ourselves "with hyssop, and be clean?" Can we wash our black and polluted souls, and make them "whiter than snow?" And for "the guilt and punishment due to sin," we all stand quaking at God's tribunal; we look towards the mercy-seat: and if God extremely mark what is done amiss, whose joints of his loins are not loosed? whose knees smite not one against another? who is there able to abide it? God is our Judge, and he alone must quit us. He is offended, and he must forgive us. "Come, and let us return unto him: for he hath" suffered us to be spoiled, "and he will heal us; to be wounded, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: and the third he will raise us up." (Hosea vi. 1, 2.) He is our Creditor, and hath taught us to pray unto him to "forgive us our debts." Every

sin properly is against him ; either immediately, when we sin against the first table ; or mediately, when we sin against the second, when we strike God through our neighbour's side, and so by breaking the law wrong the Lawgiver. And therefore he only can forgive our sins, against whom our sins are most properly committed. Nathan indeed pronounced David's pardon, *Deus transtulit peccatum*,\* and so may be said to remit his sin *ministerialiter*, "by way of office and ministry ;" but God did it *autoritativè*, "by way of power, right, and authority." Nathan had his commission from God : and if comfort had not shined from thence, David had still lain in sorrow, and as yet remained in the dust of death. Ten months were now passed since his sin was committed, and yet we read of no compunction. He lay stupified in sin, and was like a man sleeping in the midst of his enemies. O, then, whose heart can conceive those thoughts which possessed him when he awaked ? His river of tears could not now express his grief. He saw God, who was wont to guide him in his paths and direct him in his ways, now withdrawing himself, hiding his face from him, and leaving him under the burden of his sin. And high time it was to call him back again ; to seek him by importunity of prayer ; to send after him sighs and groans ; to "sow in tears," that he might "reap in joy."

Look now upon David, whosoever thou art that carriest man and frailty about thee. Behold him lying on the ground, see him pressed down with the burden of his sin ; and then think his case thine. Think the time may come when thou mayest have no feeling of Christ at all, and thy poor soul may be as a man desolate in the night, without comfort ; that it may be beaten down to the dust, and thy belly cleave unto the earth. Tell me, whom then wilt thou fly unto for succour ? what balm with thou search out to refresh thee ? The Pope may be liberal, and open his treasuries, and let fly an indulgence : but it is not a pardon from him [that] can help thee. Alas ! miserable comfort is this : a merry tale well told is far better. Yet, it may be, thou hopest to make the law of unrighteousness thy strength, (1 Cor. xv. 56,) to drown thy sorrows in a cup of wine ; to leave them behind thee, and lose them amongst merry company. In this thou dost but like the dog,—break the chain, and draw a great part of it after thee. O, then, if thou fall with David, with David trust in the Lord. What, if his "jealousy burn like fire ?" (Psalm lxxix. 5 ; ) let thy tears quench it. Let thy prayers like pillars of smoke mount upwards, and pierce the clouds, and offer a holy violence to God.

\* "The Lord hath put away thy sin." (2 Sam. xii. 13.)—EDIT.

Then, when hope is almost changed into despair, thou shalt find Christ, and feel him coming again; then faith shall revive, and lay faster hold on him; then shall "the joy of thy salvation" be restored. And when thy soul is heavy, and thy heart is disquieted, and thy bowels vexed within thee, then will he look upon thy misery, and cause his face to shine; and the peace of conscience, like a sweet sleep, shall fall upon thee.

III. I now come, in the Third place, to speak of the person,—king David: "Restore to me." And who can look upon him but through tears? Who can behold him, and not look down unto his own steps? Whose pride can lift him up so high as to make him think the devil cannot reach him, and pull him down? Or is not David sent to us, as Nathan was to him, to tell us by his example that, unless God put-under his hand, he that stands surest may take a fall, and that he who thinks himself like Mount Sion may be moved? Surely if there be such perfectionists, such proud Pharisees, that dare fling a stone at an adulteress, and proclaim themselves without sin; if there be any whose purity dare stand out with God, and "answer him" more than for "one of a thousand;" (Job ix. 3;) they might well take leave to demand that privilege which that cursed sect in Saxony bragged of, of whom Sleidan reporteth; who boasted that they had private conference with God, and a command from him to kill all the wicked of the earth, and so to make a new world, whose purity should plead for itself, and not need the help of a Mediator. But these men were possessed with more than a Novatian spirit, and in their adventure to hell outbid the *Καθαροί*,\* which the manners of many turbulent spirits in our church have long since Englished: whose religion, as Nazianzen speaketh, was *θρασύτης, καὶ ἀκάθαρτος καθαρότης*, "whose piety was boasting, whose purity was impure;" who craftily "made," as he after observes, "the elegance of the name a bait to catch the ignorant and unwary multitude." Cursed and cruel men, who have not so much pity in them as the Levite in the Gospel! He saw the man wounded, vouchsafed him a look, and then passed by: these, by a witty and new kind of cruelty, as Cyprian calls it, kill him that is already wounded, take away even the hope of recovery, and oppose the thunder of an excommunication even to the least noise of sin, refusing the penitency and contrition of their brother, and denying the mercy of their Father which is in heaven; justly deserving a hell, because they threaten it; and the surest heirs of damnation, because they make all others so.

\* The *Cathari*, or ancient "Puritans."—EDIT.

But what? is this the state of mankind, that we must either be viler than the worms of the earth, only fuel for hell-fire; or else stand out with God, and contend for purity with the Most High? No, foolish sectary! we have better learned Christ. Each Christian, if he look upon David, will quickly see upon what ground he stands; and that if every fall after baptism were as far as hell, God's promise would be suspected, and repentance, which is offered to the greatest sinner, would be proposed to mock, not to comfort, us; like a staff held out to look on, not to help us; or like a mess of meat upon a dead man's grave, for which we should be never a whit the better. We behold the saints throwing down their crowns before the throne; (Rev. iv. 10;) and can we either, with the Anabaptist, think we can attain to a perfect degree of regeneration, or, with the supererogating Papist, rob God of his honour, pull heaven unto us, and make it, not God's gift, but our own conquest? What suckling in religion knows not to distinguish between perfection of parts and perfection of degrees? We know our sanctification is universal, not total; in every part, but in part. Our understanding is enlightened, yet there remains some darkness; our will rectified, yet some perverseness; our affections ordered and subdued, yet prone to disobedience; our whole man sanctified, but not wholly. We propose to ourselves not this or that, but every commandment to observe. We compose and order our life to the rule, and shun whatsoever is repugnant to it. But we do but begin, not finish. We make perfection our prayer, not our boast; and expect it not here, but in heaven. One while, we have need of the cords of love to lead us; another while, of the thunderbolts of God's judgments to terrify us: one while, the thought of hell must beat us from sin; another while, the love of heaven must lead us in the paths of righteousness: now his promises, now his threatenings, must excite us.

Let Fulgentius conclude this point: *Perfecti sumus spe futuræ glorificationis, imperfecti onere corruptionis*: it is in his book *Ad Monimum*: "We are perfect in respect of the hope of future glory; imperfect, if we consider this body of death, this burden of corruption:" perfect in expectation of the reward, the crown of glory; imperfect as we are in the battle, in the race, fighting and running to obtain this crown. And this was St. Paul's perfection: "Let as many as be perfect," (Phil. iii. 15,) that is, in some degree, and in respect of others. For he accounts not himself to have obtained, or to be already perfect; (verse 12;) and he professeth: "Brethren, I account not myself that I have attained: one thing I do, I forget that which is behind,

and endeavour myself to that which is before." (Verse 13.) Now then let not frailty and infirmity dispute with its Creator. He that once was taken up into the third heaven, had so much earth about him as to feel the combat between the flesh and the Spirit. He that was a chosen vessel had some cracks in him, and had fallen to pieces, and lost that heavenly treasure, had not God preserved it. Job's answer best fits a Christian's mouth: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." (Job xl. 4.) Yet look up too. Let not desperation keep thee down; but let the power of godly sorrow lift thee up again. Know that to confess thy sin and to repent, is as it were to make the angels a banquet, and to send more joy to heaven. Let repentance reconcile thee with God: then, though the devil strive to cover thee over in the grave of sin, yet thou shalt come forth; though thy bones be broken, yet they shall rejoice; and to thee now, as to David then, "the joy of thy salvation" shall be restored: the last part,—the object: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."

IV. David's request is for peace of conscience, "the joy of God's salvation;" that which St. Paul calls "joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) The Septuagint render it by the Greek word *ἀγαλλίασις*, which signifies more than joy, even "exultation, and rejoicing, and triumphing for joy;" like that of the church: "When the Lord brought again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with joy." (Psalm cxxvi. 1, 2.) It is the highest degree, almost excess and surfeit, of joy. God may let me feel it, but express it I never can. Tell me, Christian, (or, indeed, canst thou tell me?) what joy thou conceivest at this spiritual banquet. Doth doubt arise within thee because Christ is not present? See, here he hath left a pledge and pawn behind him, his blessed sacrament: "Take, eat; this is his body: thou shalt never hunger. Take, drink; this is his blood: thou shalt never thirst." Dost thou believe? Believe, then, he is nearer to thee in these outward elements than the Papists would make him; beyond the fiction of transubstantiation. When the priest delivers to thee the sanctified bread, let thy meditation lead thy Saviour from his cradle to his cross. His whole life was to lead thy captivity captive. And now with the eyes of faith behold him stretched out upon the cross, and think thyself unburdened, and that heavy weight laid upon thy Saviour's shoulders: and then thou canst not choose but suppose thou heardst him groan. It was a heavy burden that fetched that groan from him. A strange thing! thy sins, which

were not yet committed, pierced him. Yet let not despair take thee. Anon thou shalt hear that triumphant and victorious voice, "It is finished;" (John xix. 30;) a voice which rent the vail of the temple in twain, clove the stones, made the earth to quake, and was able to have changed not that place alone to what once it was, (if we may believe some geographers,) but the whole world into a Paradise. When the priest offers thee the cup, think then thou seest Christ bleeding, and pouring out *non guttam, sed undam, sanguinis*, "not drops, but streams, of blood." Think thou seest *per vulnera viscera*, "through his wounded side the bowels of compassion." And then think thou art partaker of his promise already, and that now thou drinkest with him in his Father's kingdom.

Tell me now; where art thou? Is not this to be rapt into the third heaven? Now thou canst call God Father; now thou art sure of thy perseverance; now thou canst think of hell without fear and horror. Thou canst make thy bed of sickness look sorrowful only to thy friends: and, whilst they stand weeping and howling by thy bed-side, thou shalt have no other cause of lamentation but that they lament thee. And then, in the midst of shrieks and outcries, when with trembling hands they close up thy eyes as if they close up their hopes, thy soul shall pass away, and settle itself in Abraham's bosom. If this be not joy indeed, and exultation and triumphing for joy, if this be not above an *ἀγαλλίασις*, tell me, what Paradise shall we search for it? where shall we find it? When my cogitations settle upon this blessed object, methinks I see a Christian in his white and triumphant robes, walking upon the pavement of heaven, laughing at and scorning the vanities of the world, looking upon them as an aged man would on children's toys, beginning, with Nazianzen, *συμπολιτεύειν τοῖς ἀγγέλοις*, "to be a fellow-citizen with the angels," and, with Cyprian, *miserere seculi*, "to look down upon the world with pity and compassion;" being even now a type of a glorified saint, and the resemblance of an angel. I could lose myself in this Paradise; I could build a tabernacle upon this Mount Tabor: for even but to speak of it is delight. My conclusion shall be in prayer:

"O thou who art the Father of this joy, and God of all consolation; whose kingdom consists not in meats and drinks, but in joy unspeakable, even the joy of the Holy Ghost; prevent us with thy mercy, that we fall not. But if, with David, we fall, in mercy restore us. Seal unto us the forgiveness of our sins, and fill our hearts with this joy!"

## SERMON XCII.

RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.

*We then, as workers together with him, (or, as helpers,) beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.—*  
2 Corinthians vi. 1.

WE begin as the church beginneth. And we cannot begin better, nor choose a more exact method than that we find in *domo doctrinæ*, (as the Chaldee Paraphrase calls the church, upon the first of the Canticles,) “in the house of wisdom and learning.” No method to the method of the church, nor any language so delightful to the child as the language of the mother. We need say no more. The authority of the church makes good the choice of my text. But yet we cannot but observe the wisdom of the church in fitting the text to the time. For as it is one commendation of an orator *apta dicere*, “to fit his speech to the matter he speaks of,” so is it also *opportuna dicere*, “to level and apply it to the time.” The orator will tell us, *Non idem signorum concentus procedente ad prælium exercitu, idem receptui carmen*: “An alarm and a retreat have different notes; nor is the sound of the trumpet the same when we bid battle as when we leave it.” This time of Lent, these thirty-six days, which is *Quadragesima propriè dicta*, as Bellarmine speaks, “the whole time of our clean Lent,” the church of Christ hath culled out and set apart “as the tithe of our days,” saith St. Bernard; “as the tithe of the year,” saith Aquinas; “as the tithe of our life,” saith Gerson; wherein she calls upon her children in a more especial manner, not only *πολεμεῖν τῇ γαστρὶ*, as Julian speaks, “to wage war with their belly and appetite” by fasting and abstinence, but to fight against themselves, their irregular desires and inordinate lusts, to make a retreat from sin, and to fight the battles of the Lord of hosts.

I confess, as Clemens speaketh of a Christian man’s life, *Ἀπας ὁ βίος πανήγυρις ἁγία*, “The whole term of it should be a feast, a holy day” unto the Lord, wherein he should continually offer up the sweet-smelling sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; so the Lent of a Christian man should take up not forty days only, but all the days and hours of a Christian man. But since we are so willing to forget ourselves, and suffer our souls to gather rust; since few men would fast at any time, if there were not *statum jejunium*, “an allotted time of fasting;” the church calls upon us, in the words of the apostle, *Ἰδοὺ, νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος*, “Be-



hold, now is the accepted time," now an occasion worth the laying hold of; *νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας*, "now is the day of salvation," (2 Cor. vi. 2,) a time of fasting, to prepare ourselves for the great feast; a time of Lent, to prepare us for Easter. And as it is prescribed the Jews, that when they were come near unto the battle, the priest should come forth to encourage the people; (Deut. xx. 2;) and in all ages captains have had their orations to their soldiers, *quibus animos addant*, "to make them bold and stout in the battle:" so doth the church bring-in St. Paul, *ἔξαρχον καὶ στρατηγὸν τῶν διὰ πίστεως σωζομένων*, as Nazianzen speaks, "the captain and champion of all the faithful soldiers of Christ Jesus," bespeaking the Corinthians, and in them the whole Christian world throughout all generations, now at this time to "put on the armour of light;" (Rom. xiii. 12;) and, as they have given up their names unto Christ, so to receive *regium characterem*, "the imperial mark and character of Christ;" to engrave it not on their arm, but on their heart; *non desinere esse quod esse dicuntur*, as the imperial laws require of governors and guardians of cities, "not to leave off to be what they are said to be;" to "please him who hath chosen them to be soldiers;" to labour, but "as good soldiers;" (2 Tim. ii. 3, 4;) and, in the words of my text, "to receive the grace of God;" but that is not all; so to receive it, that they receive it "not in vain."

I know this text by Bellarmine and others is applied to this time of Lent: and so it may very well. For by this we are taught the right use of fasting, and how to improve this time, this short time, this fleeting time, these forty days, to eternity itself. But being unwilling to draw the words from their native and primitive sense, and intending to make that the subject and work of the next day, and now only to glance at it by the way; I will take the words *κατὰ πρῶτον σκοπόν*, as they lie in St. Paul, and "in that sense which he first intended." And then I may call my text St. Paul's *fidei-commissum*, his legacy, which he leaves as a "feoffment in trust" to all posterity; *breviarium totius evangelii*, "a breviary of the whole gospel;" a short catechism for Christians, which whoso learns by heart is a true gospeller indeed. "Not to receive the grace of God in vain," is *signaculum super brachium*, "a signet upon the arm," and *signaculum super cor*, "a seal upon the heart," the true seal and character of a Christian. *Ecce panem; parate fauces*,\* as St. Bernard saith, "Behold, here is the bread of life!" Take it down by attention, and digest it by meditation and practice: and with me consider,

\* "Behold the bread; prepare your throats."—EDIT.

1. First, the duty proposed by way of—negation, shall I say? or—caution: “Receive not the grace of God in vain.” For the civilians will tell us, *Vetita quiddam exceptione corrigunt que jubentur*: “A negative precept by a kind of cautelous exception doth restrain and correct a positive.” To “receive the grace of God” is a Christian’s best *Recipe*: for with it he “receiveth” all things. It is his wealth, to supply his poverty; his strength, to establish his weakness; his happiness, to sweeten all the misery of the world. It is ἀλεξίκακον, “a catholic remedy against all evil.” But “not to receive it in vain,” is a restriction, a direction how we should receive it. It is not in the gift, but in the hand; not in the meat, but in the stomach; not in the physic, but in the *Recipiatis*; not in the grace, but in the “receiving” of it. *Volenti est salus, nolenti supplicium*, saith St. Augustine: “As I receive it, it may be my physic; and as I receive it, it may be my poison.” Great care then to be had to the *Recipiatis*, how we “receive” it.

2. But then, in the Second place, consider St. Paul’s motive or insinuation. He draws his argument *ab officio*, “from his high calling and dignity:” Συνεργοῦντες παρακαλοῦμεν, “We as fellow-workers together with God exhort and beseech you;” we who have obtained a dignity above the very angels themselves, συνεργοῦντες, “working together with” God, as God by us; we from God, and God by us, “beseech you.” For this end we received our commission, that you might “not receive the grace of God in vain.” So the *Ne recipiatis* is both an exhortation and a command. *Potestas, cùm rogat, jubet*: “The insinuations of authority are commands; their entreaties, precepts.” But this circumstance perhaps will be neither seasonable, nor welcome. The dignity and high calling of a priest is no argument now-a-days, but only then when malice can draw it close to meet with our infirmities. We are never so high as angels till we are lower than men, even like to the beasts that perish. Then *argumentum a personâ*, “an argument from our person,” from our office and dignity, is readily taken up; and we are very skilful in these topics. *Humanum aliquid patimur?* “Do we betray ourselves to be men of the like passions and infirmities with you?” Do we fall like other men? Then, and then only, we are angels. Then Lucifer is fallen from heaven, the worker hath forgot his rule, and the helper is in the ditch. When we sow our spiritual things, we are not helpers: when we should reap your temporal things, we are not helpers: when we do not help ourselves, then we are, and we hear it loud enough. When our mouth is open unto you, and our affections vehement and vocal, then your mouths

are open against us, and our titles of honour accuse us : a main reason, I persuade myself, that the *Ne recipiatis* finds so hard an entrance into your hearts, and that so many “ receive the grace of God in vain.”

But I will wave this circumstance, and in this spare you. And indeed the duty here, the *Ne recipiatis*, is of such consequence that it commends itself without a preface : nor needs there any motive where the prescript is salvation. *Multùm valet oratio remedio intenta*, saith Seneca : “ That speech is powerful which is fixed and intentive and levelled on the good of the hearer.” It is easy, one would think, to persuade a sick man to be well, a poor man to be rich, and a wretched man to be happy. Not to receive a gift in vain,—what need there any art to commend it? We will therefore fix our meditations here, and carry them along by these steps or degrees. We will show you,

I. What this grace of God is :

II. That received it must be.

III. And these two will serve for an introduction to the last, and bring-in the caution, *Ne recipiatis*, which casts a kindly reflection on, and sweetens and seasons, both the other : for, what is grace, if it be “ not received ?” and what is the *Recipiatis*, if it be “ in vain ?” Of these in their order.

I. There is nothing more talked of than grace, nothing less understood, nothing more abused. Every man fills his mouth with it ; *justus ad æquitatem, perjurus ad fraudem* ; “ the upright man for honesty, the perjured man for deceit ;” the humble for piety, the proud for emulation ; *ebrius ad phialam, mendicus ad januam* ; “ the drunkard at his cups, the beggar at the gate,” the tradesman in his shop. The Schools are intricate, and the fathers profuse, in this argument. *Totius mundi una vox gratia est* : “ Men mention nothing oftener ; as if they had studied nothing else.” By grace we are good, by grace we are rich, and by grace we are honourable : and if we be evil, it is for want of grace. But bring the greatest sort of men to a trial, and we shall find them no better proficients in the study of grace than Boethius’s scholar in poetry, who, having a long time studied Virgil, asked at length whether Æneas was a man or woman. Not to trouble you with curious speculations, which commonly make things more obscure by interpretation, and the commentary harder than the text ; the grace of God is *πολύσημον*, “ hath divers significations.” It is taken for the favour of God, inherent in God himself ; and it is taken for sanctifying grace, inherent in the regenerate person, a gift flowing from the former : it is taken for habitual grace, and it is taken for inherent grace. In

the language of the Schools it is *auxilium speciale*, "that special and immediate furtherance" by which God moves us to will and to do; a supernatural quality, which sweetly and readily directs us in our way unto the end, by illuminating our mind, by inflaming our love, by strengthening our hand, that we see how to work, and are willing and able to work,—the three necessary requisites to the performance of every good action. It works in us, without us; and it worketh in us, with us: it prevents, and it follows, us. By it we begin, and by it we persevere, and by it we are brought unto glory. By it, saith St. Augustine, we are healed, and by it we are made active; by it we are called, and by it we are crowned.

And this is that which St. Paul mentioneth, 1 Cor. xv. 10: "By the grace of God I am that I am: and his grace was not in vain." For see the blessed and fruitful effects it wrought, in the next words: "I laboured more abundantly than they all." Yet, startling, as it were, and afraid of the very mention of himself, he corrects himself: "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Would you know what materials grace had to work upon? He tells you that he was a persecutor of the church of Christ. (Verse 9.) Strange materials to square an apostle out of, and a statue of Christ! *Primus pietatis aries evangelii retusus est mucro*, saith St. Jerome: "He who was as a battering-ram or engine to shake the gospel, by the grace of God had his edge taken off and his force abated, and was made a pillar of that truth which he sought to ruin." Thus can the Spirit of God work miraculously where it pleaseth, and, to sow the seed of grace, alter the complexion and nature of the soil. Though the heart be as hard as flint, and barren as the sand, he can make it as soft as wax, and as fertile as Canaan or the Paradise of God. Indeed no man can deny the operation of grace but he that feels it not: and such a man's denial can be no argument that there is no grace; for his very want of grace confutes it. *Noctua non præjudicat aquilæ*, "The bat doth not prejudice the light which the eagle sees:" nor would we credit a blind man that should tell us there were no sun.

This grace then we must acknowledge: but this is not the grace meant in the text; nor indeed (as we are made believe by some) can it be. For this grace, say they, *ided datur ut non recipiatur in vanum*, "is therefore given that it may not be received in vain." When it is offered, it is received; and when it is received, it is received to that end and purpose for which it was offered. No heart is stone enough to beat it back, no soul so stubborn as to resist it: neither height, nor depth, nor the

devil, nor sin itself can evacuate it. The *Recipiatis* is unavoidable, and the *in vanum* impossible. And every man is a St. Paul, a privileged person, not sweetly watered with abundance, but violently driven on with a torrent and inundation of grace. We must therefore find out another sense of the word : although, for aught that can be said, the exhortation may concern us in this sense also, and teach us to hear when God speaks, to open when he knocks, not to be deaf to his thunder, nor to hide ourselves from his lightning, nor to “quench the Spirit,” nor ἀντιπίπτειν, “to resist and fall cross with the Holy Ghost.” (Acts vii. 51.)

But in the scripture two words we find by which the graces of God are expressed. There is χάρις, here in the text; and χαρίσματα, “spiritual gifts.” (1 Cor. xii. 4.) Plainly, there are more common and necessary graces, which concur to sanctification of life, as uprightness and common honesty : and there are peculiar graces, as quickness of will, depth of understanding, skill in languages ; or supernatural, as gifts of tongues, gifts of healing, of miracles, of prophecy, and the like. These are not χάριτες, but χαρίσματα, rather “gifts” than “graces,” and are distributed but to certain persons in such measure as seems best to God’s wisdom. Why men are not as strong as Samson, or as learned as Solomon ; why they prophesy not as Jeremy, and work not miracles as Paul ; all this is from God. But why men are not righteous as Noah, devout as David, zealous as Elias, we must find the cause in ourselves, and not lay the defect on God.

Now the grace in the text is none of all these, but is that *gratia evangelii*, “the grace of” reconciliation by Christ, the doctrine of “the gospel,” which Christ commanded to be “preached to all nations.” (Luke xxiv. 47.) And in this sense it is most frequently used in holy scripture, in the epistles of St. Paul, where we so often find it placed in opposition to “the works of the law.” This is it which he so oft commends unto us : this is it which he here exhorts us to receive. This is it for the propagation of which he was “in afflictions, necessities, distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in labours, in tumults ;” which are a part of the catalogue of his sufferings in this chapter. (2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.) And this is not only χάρις, but χάρισμα, “a grace,” and “a gift” too, without which all other gifts and graces *aut nihil sunt, aut nihil prosunt*,\* “deserve not that name ;” strength is but weakness, learning is but folly, prophecies are but dreams, miracles are sluggish ; all are not worth the receiving, or are received εἰς κενόν, “in vain.” Shall I say it is a greater gift than that robe

\* “Either are nothing, or profit nothing.”—EDIT.

of righteousness with which God clothed Adam in Paradise? It so far exceeds it that we dare not compare them. There is a *multò magis*\* set upon it by St. Paul, and a *non sic*: "Not as the offence, so is the free gift;" the loss not so great as the recovery. (Rom. v. 15.) Nay, *Cui angelorum?* What speak we of Adam? "To whom of the angels" did God give such a gift? What a glory would we count it, out of nothing to be made an angel, a seraphim! By this gift, by the grace of Christ, we are raised from sin, above the perfection and beauty of any created substance whatsoever, above the hierarchy of angels and archangels. A Christian, as he is united to Christ, is above the seraphims. For take the substance of a seraphim by itself, and compare it to a man reconciled to God by this grace, and the difference will be as great as between a picture and a man. An artificer may draw his own picture: but he can only express his likeness, his colour, his lineaments; he cannot represent his better part, his soul, which constitutes and makes him what he is. Take all the creatures of the universe, and they are but weak and faint shadows and adumbrations of divine perfection. God is not so expressed by an angel as by a Christian, who is his lively image, as the son is the image of his father, by a kind of fellowship and communication of nature. The creature represents God as a statue doth the emperor; but a Christian, as the son his father, between whom there is not only likeness but identity, and a participation of the same nature. For by this gift, "by these promises," we are made "partakers of the divine nature," saith St. Peter. (2 Peter i. 4.) And as a father takes more delight to look upon his son than upon his picture and figure, so God looks more graciously upon a Christian than upon any created essence, than upon the nature of angels.

He that gave the Gift, he that was the Gift, prays for us, that we "may be all one;" and as his Father is in him, and he in his Father, so we "may be one in them, as they are one." (John xvii. 21, 22.) This is the gift by which God did *ἀνακεφαλαίωσασθαι*, saith the apostle, "gather together and re-establish" the decayed nature of man; (Eph. i. 10;) *σύνναψαι*, saith St. Chrysostom, "knit and join together" heaven and earth. And as Christ spake of John Baptist, *Hic est Elias, si vultis recipere*: "He shall be Elias to you, if you will receive him:" (Matt. xi. 14:) so, *Hæc est gratia Dei*, "The gospel, the reconciliation made by Christ, is the grace of God, if we will receive it:" which is my next part.

\* "Much more."—EDIT.

II. And what is a gift, if it be not received? Like a mess of pottage on a dead man's grave, like light to the blind, like music to the deaf. The dead man feeds not, the blind man sees not, the deaf man hears not. What were all the beauty of the firmament, if there were no eye to descry it? What is the grace of God without faith? The receiving of it is it which makes it a grace indeed, which makes it gospel. If it be not received, it is *εἰς κενόν*, "in vain." An unbelieving heart turneth this bread into gravel, this honey into gall, and, as much as in him lies, doth not only "crucify," but annihilate, "the Lord of life." We usually compare faith to a hand, which is reached forth to receive this gift. Without a hand a jewel is a trifle, and the treasure of both the Indies is nothing: and without faith the gospel is but *Christus cum sua fabula*, as the Heathen spake in reproach, but "a fable or relation." And therefore an absolute necessity there is that we receive it. For without this receipt all other receipts are not worth the casting up. Our understanding receives light, to mislead her; our will, power, to overthrow her; our affections, which are *χειρες ἀσώματοι*, "incorporeal hands," receive nothing but vanity. Our moral goodness makes us not good: our philosophy is deceit. Our acquire habits lift us no further than the place where they grow, that is, earth and nature. But with this gift we receive all things: we receive the favour and gracious countenance of our Creator, who in Christ is well pleased, and in him looks upon us, as the emperor did behold wars and slaughter and ruin and desolation in a large emerald, whose colour tempered the object, and made it appear less horrible than it was. *Unum est donum, et unius sunt omnia dona*: "It is but one gift, but it turns all things into itself, and makes them a gift." All the works of nature, all the wonders of grace, all the saints are shut up in this receipt. All happiness, all misery, that which we long for, that which we run from, that which we roar under, with this grace is a gift. Nay, our very sins are made useful and beneficial to us by the light of the gospel; as light cast upon a dark body, which it cannot illuminate, is doubled by reflexion. And therefore every man in respect of grace should be *ad instar materiæ*, "like as the matter" is to the form, which Plato calls *ὑποδοχὴν*, which comes from the word *δέχομαι* in the text, "the receptacle of the form;" should be so inclinable to receive it as if he could have no existence without it; should even labour and "travail," as the apostle speaks, "till Christ be fully formed in" him. (Gal. iv. 19.) For, what, though we receive the good things of this world? There is a *Nunc autem* follows them, "Now art thou

tormented," in the end of that receipt. (Luke xvi. 25.) What, if we receive honour? Shame follows at the very heels of it. What, if we receive those ornaments of the mind which philosophy calls virtues? They are but *splendida peccata*, but "glorious sins," like glow-worms, which in the night cast some brightness, but will not warm us. Till we receive this grace, we are nothing; we are worse than nothing, but *Nehushtan*, "a lump of brass," (2 Kings xviii. 4,) till by this grace we are reformed and transfigured into a statue of Christ.

I need not stand longer on this point; and I intended it but as an introduction. For I am sure all here have received this grace, at least profess they have. And there is as great danger in receiving it as in unbelief. For the philosopher will tell us, *Quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipientis*: "All is not in the gift; the greatest matter is in the manner of receiving it." The gospel is grace indeed; but it will not save a devil, nor an obstinate offender. *Stomachus vitiatus*, saith Seneca, *alimentum in causam doloris trahit*: \* "A foul stomach corrupts all that it receives, and turns that meat, which should nourish the body, into a disease:" and a corrupt heart poisons the very water of life, *ut evangelium Christi sit evangelium hominis*, saith St. Augustine; it alters the very nature of the gospel, and "makes it not the gospel of Christ, but of man." Judas receives a sop, and with it the devil. The grand mistake of the world is in the manner of receiving Christ. For as, in the dogmatical part of Christianity, we find that in former times they could not agree in the manner of receiving Christ, *πάλιν ἄλλον τρόπον ἐπιζητοῦντες καὶ, ἄλλου δοθέντος, πάλιν ἄλλον* † but "some would receive him after this manner, some after another," they knew not how themselves; some, a created Christ; others, a half-Christ; some, through a conduit-pipe; others, less visible than in a type, in an aërial, fantastical body; a Christ, and not a Christ; a Christ divided, and a Christ contracted; and *πολλοὺς Χριστοὺς*, saith Nazienzen, "many Christs," indeed as good none at all: so, in the practical part, we often err, and dangerously, in our receiving him. We say Anathema to the Arians, and Manichees, and Anabaptists; and let them pass with the censure of the church upon them; but how do we receive him? Our own conscience will tell us: With his curled locks and spicy cheeks, with his flagons and his apples; to save sinners, not to instruct them; with grace as much as he will, but with no command or law; a Physician that should heal us without a prescript; a

\* SENECA *De Beneficiis*, lib. v. cap. 12.  
Orat. xxvi.

† GREGORII NAZIANZENI



King, without a sceptre; a Son, that would be kissed, (we like that well,) but not be angry. (Psalm ii. 12.)

Nor can we now impute this to the gospel and the grace of God: for that is *μονοπρόσωπον*, “of but one shape and hue,” and presents salvation to every receiver. The fault is not in the grace, but in our receiving it; as we do not blame the table for a rude piece that is drawn upon it, but the painter, who forgot his art. The Stoics conceive that every thing hath two handles; and as men take hold either of one or other, so they prove either delightful or irksome. The truth is, the gospel hath not two handles; but we rather have two hands, diverse manners of receiving it. “To one it is the savour of life unto life; and to others the savour of death unto death.” (2 Cor. ii. 16.) Great care then must be taken how we receive it, that we may “not receive it in vain.” We must receive this grace of God to that end it was given. I know you will quickly say, “That was to save us. For this end ‘Christ came into the world:’ we have scripture for it. (1 Tim. i. 15.) ‘The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.’ (Titus ii. 11.)” But doth it not follow, “Teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts?” (verse 12:) and that is scripture too. We must receive it as law as well as physic,—his *Do, ut des; et facio, ut facias*: God “gives us this gift, that we may give him our obedience; and he hath done this for us, that we may do something,” even “work out our salvation with fear and trembling.” This grace, then, we must receive both to save us and instruct us; as a royal pardon, and as a “royal law.” (James ii. 8.) To interline the pardon, and despise the law, makes a nullity: and this is *εἰς κενὸν δέξασθαι*, “to receive in vain.”

I. And, in the First place, a pardon we must not interline. For to mix and blend it with the law of works, or our own merits, is to disannul and make it void, and, in St. Paul’s phrase, *ἀθετεῖν*, “to cast away the grace of God.” (Gal. ii. 21.) “By grace you are saved, and not by works,” saith the apostle. (Eph. ii. 8, 9.) Works, though they be *conditio justificandi*, “a condition required of a justified person,” yet are not *pars justificationis*, cannot be brought in as “a part or helping cause of our justification.” Satisfaction and merits are but false interlineary glosses, and corrupt the text: and to receive the grace of God with this mixture is, in Tertullian’s phrase, *Galaticare*, “to be as foolish as the Galatians.” For indeed a great folly it is, when God hath plainly revealed his will, when he “hath concluded all under sin,” (Gal. iii. 22,) and St. Paul proves both against Jew and Gentile that “all have sinned,” (Rom. iii. 9.)

when God is pleased to “justify us freely by his grace,” (verse 24,) then to bring-in our inherent righteousness to join with grace, as if we were unwilling to be too far engaged to God’s mercy.

It is true, indeed, every good act doth justify a man so far as it is good, and God so far esteems them holy and good. He taketh notice of his own graces in his children : he registers the patience of Job, the zeal of Phinehas, the devotion of David. A cup of cold water, a mite flung into his treasury, shall have its reward. But yet all the good works of all the saints in the world cannot satisfy for the breach of the law, no more than a traitor can redeem his treason against the king by giving an alms, or, which is more, by dying for his country. The point is plain and easy, delivered *in terminis* \* in scripture, urged, proved, and strongly confirmed by St. Paul in almost every Epistle, that all is from grace. *Et cùm de voluntate Dei constat, omnis de merito quæstio vana est* : “When we know God’s will, what dispute we any longer of merit?” But such is our ingratitude and curiosity, that we will not take God’s grace as we find it : we will not take God’s gifts in the bullion, but we beat and work them out into what form we please : we come and stamp them ; and, be the piece what metal it will, we set our image and superscription upon it. God in scripture sets these two terms, “grace” and “works,” at extreme opposition ; but, by a trick of wit, we have learnt to work them into one piece, making a good work meritorious because it is of grace ; as Pelagius of old confounded nature and grace, because even nature itself is a grace :—a flat contradiction. For if it be of grace, how doth it merit ? unless we will say, that the gift deserves something of the giver, or that a charitable man is indebted to a beggar for the penny and alms which he gave him.

I have said enough to clear the point, which hath been too much obscured with needless disputes. I will not say with Calvin, *Diabolica illa ars quæ scholasticæ nomen obtinet*, “That devilish art of wrangling, which we call ‘School-divinity,’ hath put out the light of this truth ;” nor with Martin Luther, *Theologia scholastica est mater ignorantiae*, that “scholastical disputations are the mother of ignorance :” but, as Pliny spake of the Grecians, *Cùm gens ista literas suis dedisset, omnia corripit*, † they have corrupted the truth, and put her in such a dress that we cannot know her ; they have shut up this doctrine in perplexed obscurity, which before was plain and easy to the

\* “In express terms.”—EDIT.

† “When that nation had imparted letters to her sons, universal corruption was the consequence.”—EDIT.

understanding. For what hath been observed of the study of philosophy, is true also in the pursuit of divine knowledge: When men made wisdom the only aim and end of their studies, then was philosophy referred to its proper end: but when they used it only to fill up their time, or satisfy their ambition, or delight their will, then philosophy lost her complexion and strength, and degenerated into folly; then Diogenes got him a tub, and Epicurus a swarm of atoms; then the Stoics brought-in their decrees and paradoxes; then were there *mille familiarum nomina et discrimina*, "so many sects that it is not easy to name them;" and some there were who did show the diversity of their opinions by outward signs alone, by weeping and laughing. So in divinity we find it, that truth never suffered till she was made a matter of wit and ambition, till out of private respects policy was made a moderator and stater of questions: then for one justification we had two, nay, three; then *meritum de condigno* and *de congruo*, "merits of condignity and congruity, of worthiness and fitness," were brought-in to help at a dead lift; and, that they may appear more glorious, *tinguntur sanguine Christi*, pains have been taken to "dye them over with the blood of Christ;" and in these red colours they are presented, which they borrowed from art, and not from scripture. Sure I am, in St. Paul's phrase, this is to "cast away the grace of God," (Gal. ii. 21,) and to "evacuate the death of Christ;" (1 Cor. i. 17;) this is against the nature of grace, which, blended with human satisfaction and merit, is no more grace; this is against the evidence of the prophet Habakkuk, often repeated by St. Paul, "The just shall live by faith," or, as some render it, "The just-by-faith shall live." (Hab. ii. 4; Rom. i. 17.) And if their divinity on their death-bed be not better than that in their Schools, I fear me, there will be a *frustrà*. For thus to receive the grace of God, is to deny it, or rather to despise it: and to despise it, I think I may boldly say, is to receive it "in vain."

Beloved, if it were but for this alone, for this derogation from the grace of God, yet even for this alone might we justify our separation from the church of Rome, and send home the loud imputations of heresy and schism to her own gates, where first they were conceived. For where false conclusions are obtruded for truths, or truths corrupted with false additions, there to consent were conspiracy; and open contestation is not faction or schism, but Christian animosity. *They* rather are guilty of the schism *who* made it necessary. It was a weak and foolish speech of Bosius in Tully, who professed that, if his friend Gracchus would bid, he would set fire on the Capitol. Christianity admits

no such friendship. If that church will commend to us works of piety, we will hear with reverence; if enjoin us to fast on Friday, or observe Lent-fast, we condemn it not; we will fast with her, we will pray with her, we will be reverent in God's house with her: but if she bid us set fire on the Capitol, on this main and capital point of religion, (for so I may call it, *arcem et Capitolium religionis*,\*) here to obey were to be a schismatic, to separate ourselves from the truth and comforts of the gospel, and from Christ himself. *Non tanti est, tibi ut placeam, perire*: "Better it is that our opposers should be angry than we perish."

2. But we leave this vain receiving, and proceed to the other no less dangerous than this, when we receive the grace of God only as a pardon, and not as a law. For who is not willing to be justified by Christ? "To be freed from the law, to be delivered from the law, to be dead to the law,"—it is music to every ear, and a continual feast. Evangelical righteousness we are glad to hear of; and we could wish perhaps that there were no other mentioned. *Lex ligat*: enact a law, and "we are in fetters." Nay, *lex occidit*, "the law is a killing letter" in this sense also. Who would look to find the law in the gospel? But we must remember that there is *lex evangelica*, "an evangelical law;" that the grace of God, as it excludes the law *sub ratione fœderis*, "as it is a covenant," so admits it *sub ratione regulæ*, "as it is a rule." The rigour of the covenant is abolished, but the equity of the rule is as everlasting as the Lawgiver. It is our happiness by grace to be freed from the covenant and curse of the law; but it is our duty, and a great part of our Christianity, to square our lives by the rule of the law. Therefore religion was called in her purer times *Christiana lex*, "the Christian law;" and the bishops, *episcopi Christianæ legis*, "bishops of the Christian law." *Evangelium commentum Divinitatis*, saith Tertullian: "The gospel was the invention of the Deity." And God did not set up the gospel to destroy, but to reform, the law. No, saith Nazianzen: *Τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐργωδέστερον καὶ μοχθηρότερον*, "The gospel of Christ is more laborious than the law." Pythagoras is reported to have commanded his scholars, when they saw a man burdened, not to go about to ease him, but add rather unto his load: so our Saviour was so far from easing our burden, that he seemeth rather to add weight, and make it much heavier than it was before. For whether he did advance and increase the strictness of the law, as the ancients did conceive, or whether he did but only clear the

\* "The citadel and Capitol of religion."—EDIT.

law from those corrupt glosses with which the Jewish doctors had infected it, certainly in show and appearance he leaves it much heavier than it had formerly been understood by the Jew.

Innocency and obedience to the law hath always been the badge of a Christian. "Look into our prisons," saith Tertullian; "you find no Christian there. If you find a Christian there, the fault that laid him there is but this,—that he is a Christian. We sail with you, we traffic with you, we go to war with you." *Plus nostra misericordia insumit vicatim quàm religio vestra templariò*: "Our charity spendeth more on the poor in our streets, than your superstition on your gods in your temples!"\* *Nihil Christiano felicius, nihil laboriosius*: "Nothing is more happy than a Christian, nothing more painful."

Thus the grace of God presents us with two things quite contrary, with comfort and labour; that comfort might not puff us up, nor abundance of pain deject and throw us down. For the grace of God appeared not to enfeeble our hands, or with a dispensation from the works of piety; nor to make us more indulgent to ourselves; but that we might abound more and more in virtuous actions. I will not say with Socinus, that upon the very receiving of this grace we receive also *afflatum quendam divinum*, "a kind of divine inspiration," which toucheth the heart, and raiseth our hope, and warmeth our affections, and setteth our hands to work. For every one that receives this grace doth not work. Nor can I think that all the world is damned for infidelity. But a strange thing it may seem, that after we have given up our names unto Christ, after this certainty of knowledge and conscience of the truth, our ingratitude should kick with the heel, and despise these promises, though an angel from heaven should persuade them. It is a good saying of St. Augustine's, *Nemo sibi permittat quod non permittit evangelium*: "Let no man make the promise larger than the gospel hath made it," nor presume too much on the grace of God. For such is the nature of grace that it will not be fashioned to our actions, but we must proportion our actions to it. It is not *κόρυθος*, "a buskin," to be indifferently drawn on upon any design. It will not fit my ambition in the eager pursuit of honour, nor my covetousness in the grasping of wealth, nor my luxury in doting on pleasures. But if I shape my actions to it, it is my honour, my wealth, my pleasure, my all. We are told by those who have written in the praise of music, that it holdeth great sympathy with the nature of man; that it applies itself to all occasions,—of mirth, of sorrow, of company, of solitude, of

\* *Apologeticus adversus Gentes*, cap. xlii.—xliv.

sports, of devotion. And such is the wonderful harmony of grace that it fits itself to all estates, all degrees, all sexes, all ages, all actions whatsoever. It will labour with thee at the plough, trade with thee in the shop, study with thee in thy closet, fight with thee in the field: and it keeps every man within the bounds of his calling and honesty. But if I make it a pander to my pleasure, a stirrup to my ambition, a steward to my unbounded avarice; if I make it my parasite to flatter me, and not my counsellor to lead and direct me; I am injurious to that grace for the publication of which the Lord of life was crucified; I receive this grace, but "in vain;" and by my ungrateful receiving turn my antidote into poison.

We cannot better conclude than with that of St. Jerome in his Epistle to that noble matron, Celantia: *Illi terrena sapiant qui caelestia promissa non habent*: "Let them grovel on the earth who have not received these 'exceeding great and precious promises.'" (2 Peter i. 4.) Let the epicure be wanton, and the atheist profane, and the philosopher vain-glorious. Let them perish to whom the gospel is hid. But let Christians imitate their Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus: and as he was crucified for us, so let us crucify ourselves, even our lusts and affections; that we may receive him, and not receive him "in vain;" but as we receive him here, and with him his grace, his gospel, his glorious promises, so we may receive him at the last day, when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead according to this gospel, and with him glory, immortality, and eternal life.

---

## SERMON XCIII.

### ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CHRIST'S PROMISED ADVENT.

*And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.—*  
 Luke xxi. 28.

It was my labour the last day to arm you against the glittering sword and terrors of persecution;\* and I have now thought it fit to lead you further in these ways of horror, and to raise and build up in you a holy constancy and resolution against those fearful signs and affrightments which shall usher-in the

\* See sermon xi. vol. i. pp. 286—308; and sermon xlv. vol. ii. pp. 432—450.  
 —EDIT.

end of the world. Then I strengthened and established you against the sons of men who are set on mischief, and whose right hand is full of blood: (Psalm xxvi. 10:) Now I am to prepare you against the coming of the Son of man and the Son of God to judge both the quick and the dead, to plead the cause of the innocent, but to punish the hypocrite and oppressor with unquenchable fire; that is, to set the world at rights again, and to bring every man to his own place.

Our Saviour in this chapter foretelleth the dreadful signs and apparitions that shall go before his second coming, to the end that when they come, we may not be dismayed and affrighted at the sight, but may entertain them as angels which bring us good tidings of good things; that we may look upon them as objects of joy, rather than of amazement; that they may not dead our spirits, or change our countenances, or trouble our joints, or make us hold down our heads like a bulrush, but rouse up our hearts, and fill us with joy, and make us to say, " 'This is the day which the Lord hath made,' (Psalm cxviii. 24,) a day of exaltation and 'redemption,' a day of jubilee and triumph;" and so "look up, and lift up our heads."

And here, methinks, I see in my text a strange conjunction, of night and day, of brightness and darkness, of terror and joy; or a chain made up as it were of these three links,—terror, exultation, and redemption. Yet they will well hang together, if redemption be the middle link: for in this they meet and are friends; redemption being that which turns the night into day, maketh affliction joyful, and puts a bright and lovely colour upon horror itself. " 'When these things come to pass:'—why? 'these things' are terrible." It is true; yet "lift up your heads." "But how can we 'lift up our heads' in this day of terror, in this day of vengeance, in this day of gloominess and darkness? Can we behold this sight, and live?" Yes; we may. The next words are quick and operative, of power to lift up our heads, and to exalt our horn and strength as the horn of an unicorn, and make us stand strong against all these terrors: "Look up, lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Not to detain you longer by way of preface, four things there are which in these words that I have read are most remarkable:

I. The persons unto whom these words are uttered, in the particle "your:" "Lift up your heads."

II. What things they are of which our Saviour here speaks, in the first words of the text: "Now when these things begin to come to pass."

III. The behaviour which our Saviour commends unto us, in these words: "Look up, lift up your heads."

IV. Last of all, the reason or encouragement; words of life and power to raise us from all faintness of heart and dulness of spirit: "For your redemption draweth nigh."

I have formerly upon another text spoken of the two first points,—the persons to whom, and the things whereof, our Saviour here speaketh.\* Before I come to the third point,—the behaviour prescribed to be observed by them who see the signs foretold in this chapter come to pass,—it will not be amiss a little to consider whence it comes to pass that in the late declining age of the world so great disorder, distemper, and confusion have their place: and it shall yield us some lessons for our instruction.

1. And, First of all, it may seem to be natural, and that it cannot be otherwise. For our common experience tells us, that all things are apt to breed somewhat by which themselves are ruined. How many plants do we see which breed that worm which eats out their very heart! We see the body of man, let it be never so carefully, so precisely ordered, yet at length it grows foul, and every day gathers matter of weakness and disease, which, at first occasioning a general disproportion in the parts, must at the last of necessity draw after it the ruin and dissolution of the whole. It may then seem to fall out in this great body of the world as it doth in this lesser body of ours: by its own distemper it is the cause of its own ruin. For the things here mentioned by our Saviour are nothing else but the diseases of the old decaying world. The failing of light in the sun and moon,—what is it but the blindness of the world,—an imperfection very incident to age? Tumults in the sea and waters,—what are they but the distemper of superfluous humours, which abound in age? Wars and rumours of wars are but the falling out of the prime qualities, in the union and harmony of which the very being of the creature did consist. It is observed by the wise, *Libidinosa et intemperans adolescentia effæctum corpus tradit senectuti*: "Youth riotously and luxuriously and lewdly spent delivers up to old age an exhaust and juiceless and diseased body." Do we not every day see many strong and able young men fade away upon the sudden, even in the flower of their age, and soon become subject to impotency and diseases and untimely death? These commonly are the issues of riot, luxury, and intemperance: nor can it be otherwise. Therefore we cannot but expect that the world should be exceedingly dis-

\* See sermon lxxii. pp. 239—252 of this volume.—EDIT.



eased in its old decaying age, whose youthful days, and not only those but all other parts of its age, have been spent in so much intemperance and disorder.

Scarcely had the world come to any growth and ripeness, but that it grew to that height of distemper that there was no way to purge it but by a general flood, *purgati baptisma mundi*, as St. Jerome calls it, "in which, as it were in the baptism, its former sins were done away." And after that, scarcely had three hundred years passed, but a general disease of idolatry overspread and seized on all well-near, Abraham and his family excepted. Yet, after this, once more it pleased God to take the cure into his hands, by sending his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, the great Physician and Bishop of our souls. But what of all this? After all this was done, *tantorum impensis operum*, "by so much cost and so much care," his physic did not work as it should, and little in comparison was gained upon the world. For the many of us, we are still the sons of our fathers. Therefore we have just cause of fear that God will not make many more trials upon us, or bestow his pains so oft in vain. Christ is the last Priest and the last Physician that did stand upon the earth; and if we will not hear him, what remains there, or what can remain, but "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the world?" (Heb. x. 27.) "Ephraim is turned unto idols: let him alone:" (Hosea iv. 17.) I will spend no more labour in vain upon him." Thus, as Physicians, when they find the disease incurable, let the diseased go on unto his end; so God, having now as it were tried his skill in vain; having invited all, and seeing so few come; having spoken to all, and so few hear; having poured out his Son's blood to purge the world, and seeing so few cleansed; for aught we know,—and it is very probable,—hath now resolved the world shall go unto its end; which in so great a body cannot be without the disorder and confusion our blessed Saviour here speaketh of.

2. But you may peradventure take this for a speculation, and no more; and I have urged it no further than as a probable conjecture. And therefore I will give you a Second reason. Besides this natural inclination, God himself hath a further purpose in it. He that observes the ways of God as far as he hath expressed himself, shall find that he hath a delight to show unto the world those that are his; to lift them up on high, and mark and character them out by some notable trial and temptation. Thus he made trial of Abraham's faith by such a command as struck at the very foundation of his faith: "In Isaac

shall thy seed be blessed ;” (Gen. xxi. 12 ;) and yet, “ Take thy son, thy only son, thy son Isaac,” (Gen. xxii. 2,) in whom alone all the promises made to Abraham were to be made good. Ill signs for Abraham to look upon, signs that with him the world would soon be at an end ; yet God set them up before him to look upon : but by looking upon them he became the Father of the faithful. Thus God made trial of Job, by putting all that he had into the power of Satan, who presently sent Sabeans to fall upon his servants and oxen, fire upon his sheep, Chaldeans upon his camels, and a great wind to beat down the house upon his sons. Ill signs for Job to look upon : but by looking upon them he became *operarius victoriæ Dei*, as Tertulian speaketh, “ God’s workman, hired as it were and pressed by God to gain a conquest for him,” and in him to triumph, and erect a trophy over Satan.

To draw this down to our present purpose : To try the strength, the faith, the love, the perseverance of those who are his, God is pleased to give way to this tumult and danger in the last days. And as the eagle brings out her young, and then counts them hers if she can make them look up against the sun ; so Christ here in my text brings forth those who are his, and proposeth before them the dreadful spectacles here mentioned, to try whether they can ἀνάκνυψαι, as the text speaks, whether they can “ out-look ” them, and “ lift up their heads ” when all the world doth hang down theirs. Or he deals with his as the Jesuits are said to deal with their novices. They are wont to try of what courage and heart they are by frightening them with feigned apparitions of hobs and bugbears in the night : and if they find them stout and fearless, they entertain them as fit for their use ; if otherwise, they dismiss them as not for their turn and purpose. Even thus may God seem to deal with them whom he means to make his, of the order and “ general assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in heaven,” whom he means to place amongst the great and few examples of eternal happiness : he “ scareth them with dreams, and terrifieth them with visions.” (Job vii. 14.) He sets before us these terrors and affrightments, to see whether we fear any thing more than him, or whether any thing can shake the reliance and trust which we repose in him ; whether our faith will be strong when the world is weak ; whether our light will shine when the sun is darkened ; whether we can establish ourselves in the power of God’s Spirit when “ the powers of heaven are shaken.” (Matt. xxiv. 29.)

And indeed what are all these signs here mentioned but

mormoes, mere toys to fright children with, if we could truly consider that, if the world should sink, and fall upon our heads, it cannot hurt a soul, nor yet so grind the body into dust that God cannot raise it up again? Can the heavens, with all their blackness and darkness, have any operation upon a soul, which is of a more noble essence than they? Can the waters drown, or the plague devour, or famine starve, or fire consume and waste, a soul? Can an immortal soul be lost in the noise and tumults of the people? For all these signs and apparitions, if we know whom we have believed, or believe what we have read in St. Paul, "neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

3. Now, in the Third place, I will add one reason more, and so make an end of this point. If fear will give us leave to consult with our reason and with scripture, we shall find that all this army of dismal events are nothing else but the effects of that love which God bears to the world, especially to man, the creature which he made after his own image, and therefore cannot hate him because he so made him. As men are wont to say of sick persons, that so long as there is breath, be they never so sick, there is hope of their recovery; for our hope expires not but with our soul: so, though we be far gone, though we be dead in sin, though we be sick of a consumption of grace, yet God lays not down the expectation of our recovery, so long as there is breath in us. Many examples we have of God's long-sufferance in scripture. Betwixt Nineveh and final desolation there stood but forty days, or, as the Septuagint render it, but three; for whereas we read it, "forty days," they render it, *Ἐτι τρεῖς ἡμέραι*, "Yet three days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed:" (Jonah iii. 4:) yet God sent his prophet unto them, and upon their repentance turned away those evils which he had denounced against them, and which were now in their approach, even at their very doors. Many messages had God sent unto king Ahab to reclaim him; yet amongst them all none was more signal than that which was sent him immediately before his fall. It should seem that God had already determined with himself the destruction of Ahab, and that he should fight and fall at Ramoth-Gilead; yet, notwithstanding, Micaiah the son of Imlah, a prophet of God, even against the king's will, is brought before him, and telleth him to his head that he should go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead. Nor can we now

think that this was done by chance : for notwithstanding four hundred prophets of his own had smoothed and flattered him with hopes of good success, yet Micaiah, one whom the king hated, against the king's will, is constrained to come ; and when he seemed at first either to mock or fail in the delivery of his message, he is deeply adjured to deliver the truth. "How many times," saith the king, "shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?" (1 Kings xxii. 16.) Now from whence did all this come but even from this,—that God had not laid down the care of Ahab's conversion, but truly desired that he would return and live ?

To apply now all this to our present purpose : From hence, even from God's love, it is, that the last and worst age of the world is attended upon with dreadful signs and wonders. For God, who delights to be called a "Preserver of men," (Job vii. 20,) will never forsake his creature whilst there is any hope of return. "'O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?' (Hosea vi. 4.) Canst thou find out any thing? Alas ! what canst thou find out, who 'art as a silly dove, without heart?' (Hosea vii. 11.) But whatsoever my wisdom, my infinite wisdom, can find out, whatsoever may forward thy conversion, whatsoever may be done, I will do it." And therefore as sin and iniquity have increased, so have the means to reclaim it. As wickedness hath broken-in as a flood, so hath judgment been poured forth, and doth swell, wave upon wave, line upon line, judgment upon judgment, to meet it, and purge it, and carry it away with itself, and so run out both together into the boundless ocean of God's mercy.

This is God's method ; who knows whereof we are made, and therefore must needs know what is fittest to cure us. For as, when our bodies have been long acquainted with some gentle kind of physic, and the disease at last grows too strong for it, it commends the art of the good physician to add strength to his potion, that so at last he may conquer the malady ; so man's sinful disease in the last age of the world being much increased, it pleaseth God to use stronger means to cure it. If his little army of caterpillars, if common calamities, will not purge us, he brings-in sword, and famine, and pestilence, to make the potion stronger. If the enemies' sword cannot lance our ulcers, he will make us do it with our own. If "fightings without" cannot move us, he will raise "terrors within." He will pour down hailstones and coals of fire, that we may thirst for his dew and gentle rain. He will set us at variance with one another, that we may long to be reconciled to him, and by the troubles

of one kingdom learn to pray, and pray heartily, for that other which is to come : That so, if possible, he may save some, and pull them as brands out of the fire, singed and scorched, but not consumed : that if men will repent them of their evil ways, he may repent him of the evil he imagined against them, as he sometimes told his people by the mouth of his prophet Ezekiel.

III. Our Third general part was the consideration of the behaviour which our Saviour commends unto us in these words : 'Αναύψατε, καὶ ἐπάρατε τὰς κεφαλὰς ὑμῶν' "Look up, and lift up your heads;" words borrowed from the behaviour which men use when all things go as they would have them. When we have what we desire, when success hath filled our hopes and crowned our expectation, then we "look up, and lift up our heads." As herbs, when the sun comes near them, peep out of the earth, or as summer-birds begin to sing when the spring is entered, so ought it to be with us "when these things come to pass." This winter should make us a spring; this noise and tumult should make us sing. Wars, famines, plagues, inundations, tumults, confusion of the world, these bring-in the spring of all true Christians; and by these, as by the coming of summer-birds, we are forewarned that our Sun of righteousness draws near. Indeed, unto nature and the eye of the world such are sad and uncouth spectacles, sights far from yielding comfort, or being taken for authors of welcome news: and therefore our Saviour, pointing out to the behaviour which in this case the world doth use, tells us in the words foregoing my text, ἀποψυχόντων ἀνθρώπων ἀπὸ φόβου, "men should be ready to swoon for fear;" *arescentibus hominibus*, saith the Vulgar, "men should dry and wither away for fear;" as leaves smitten with mildew or blasting, or fading away with unreasonable heat. Lest therefore our hearts should fail us upon the sight of these signs, our Saviour forewarns us that all these *ostenta*, these "apparitions," bode us no harm, nor can bring any evil with them but what we ourselves will put upon them; that for all these signs in the heaven, for all this tumult and confusion upon earth, even then, when the foundations are shaken, and the world is ready to sink, we may "lift up our heads:" "When you see these things come to pass, look up, lift up your heads."

Let us a little weigh these words. For they are full and expressive, talent-weight. They are a prediction, and they are an admonition: which is, saith Clemens, as the diet of the soul, to keep it in an equal temper and a settled constitution, against those evils and distempers of the mind which, as Tully speaks,

do *tumultuantem de gradu dejicere*,\* “cast it down with some kind of disorder and confusion” from that εἴθυμία, that “quietness and silence which is the best state and condition of the soul;” as fear and sorrow, the unhappy parents of murmuring and repining, which press down the soul εἰς ὕλην καὶ ἀσθένειαν, “into the gross and brutish part,” which they call πτώμα ψυχῆς, “the fall of the soul;” the symptoms and indications whereof are a cast-down look, and a head bowed down like a bulrush. For,

1. Fear is a burden that maketh us not able to look upwards, towards that which might rid and ease us of it, but towards something that may hide and cover us. When Adam had sinned, God comes toward him “in the cool of the day;” “in a wind,” as it is rendered by some, and as the word signifies; in such a sound as he never heard before; and he presently runs into the thicket, “hides himself amongst the trees of the garden.” (Gen. iii. 8.) If the king of Jericho pursues Joshua’s spies, they run under the stalks of flax; (Joshua ii. 6;) and if Saul pursues David, he betakes himself to some cave. (1 Sam. xxii. 1.) Fear may make us look distractedly about, with a wandering, inconstant, unsettled eye; but not to look up: it may make us hide our heads, but not lift them up. If an evil bite, fear is the tooth; and if it press down, fear is the weight. Behold, here this tooth is broken, and this weight is taken away, by Wisdom itself, in these words: “Look up, lift up your heads.”

2. Grief is another weight that presseth down. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” saith David: (Psalm xlii. 5, 11 :) and, “Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop,” saith Solomon. (Prov. xii. 25.) Sorrow kept Aaron from eating the sin-offering, cast Job on the ground, and David on the ground, and Ahab on his bed. An evil disease it is under the sun: but here you have a medicine for it, a medicine to make a merry heart: “Look up, lift up your heads.”

3. These two, fear and sorrow, are the mother and the nurse, the beginners and fomenters, of all murmuring and repining. For as fear, so sorrow, is nothing else but a kind of distaste and grudge of the mind. *Imperari dolori silentium non potest*: “the murmurer cannot be silent:” he will complain to any man, to any thing; to the night, to the day; to the sun, to the moon; as he in the comedy. He will reproach his head, his belly, his stomach, any part that causes grief: as tragedians used to chide their eyes, as if they heard; as the poet brings-in Ulysses in a

\* *De Officiis*, lib. i. cap. 23.

dialogue and contention with his own heart. When he is fed with manna, he will ask for garlick and onions. When he is in the way to a land flowing with milk and honey, he will return to sit by flesh-pots: he will chide with Moses, and chide with God, and prefer a calf to them both. He will have this to-day, and will not have it to-morrow. He will have night when it is day, and day when it is night. He will have miracles, and slight them; signs, and run from them. He doth *palos terminales Deo figere*, as Tertullian speaks, "bound and circumscribe God," "limitate the Holy One of Israel," set up a stake and landmark to which God must come, and yet not know where to place it. He loathes the meat [which] should feed him, and the physic which should work his health.

In a word, murmuring and repining is a monster that, as the proverb is, is "never well, neither full nor fasting." I call it "a monster:" for it is the issue of diverse passions,—fear and sorrow, which, meeting in the heart, engender and bring it forth, to quarrel with the wisdom and question the providence of God; to censure his counsels, and to condemn his proceedings; to approve of that which he complains of, and complain of that which he dispenseth for our good. "Why was I not made impeccable?" saith one: "why was not I so made up that I might not sin? Why do I feel this fight and contention between the Spirit and the flesh? Why was I made weak, and commanded to be strong?" "Why was I born in these times of hurry and noise," saith another, "and not in those haleyon days of peace and plenty? Why was I reserved to these last days, to hear of wars and rumours of wars, of earthquakes, and famine, and plague; to see the church broken into sects, and crumbling away into conventicles; to see the world return into a worse chaos and confusion than that out of which it was made?" That is, "Why am I a man?" The language of the murmurer is, "Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. ix. 20.) The power of God, the wisdom of God, the goodness and mercy of God cannot quiet and silence him who, wavering and double-minded, resting only on his own fickle, flitting, abortive thoughts, is never at rest. For he that doth do nothing but what he [may] list, will do nothing that he should. He that will be nothing but what he [may] please, is his own idol, and so is "nothing in this world." (1 Cor. viii. 4.)

Now these words here of our Saviour are like that pitch and fat and hair which Daniel did see the together: and if we can put them into this monster's mouth, it will soon burst asunder. (Bel and the Dragon, verse 27.) If we can take them down

and digest them, they will remove our fear, dry up our sorrow, and stop the mouth of the murmurer for ever. For when Christ bids us "look up, and lift up our heads," his meaning is, that we should so fit and prepare ourselves that we may "look up, and lift them up." He would not bid the covetous man, who is buried alive in the earth, "Look up:" he would not bid the wanton, who is drowned in lust, "Look up:" he would not bid him who is dead in sin, "Look up:" or, if he did, his meaning would be, "First learn to hate the world, to fight against thy lusts, to 'arise from the dead;' and then 'Christ shall give thee light' and strength, that thou mayest 'look up, and lift up thy head.'" Then thou art his servant; and when he says, "Go," thou must go, though it be upon the point of the sword; or else thou art not his servant. Then thou art his merchant; and when he holds forth his rich pearl, thou must buy it, though it be with thy blood; or else thou art not his merchant. Then thou art his soldier; and thou must fight when and where he placeth thee, against all terrors whatsoever; or else thou art not his soldier. "Lo, I have told you before," saith our Saviour; (Matt. xxiv. 25;) "see that you be not troubled." If you be not wanting to your Captain, your Captain will not be wanting unto you; he "will neither leave us nor forsake us." In this one "Look" there is more than a look: there is charity labouring, faith quickening, hope reaching forth her hand. These three will lift up our heads above these terrors, into the highest heavens. We read in the Book of Judges, that when Gideon set upon the Midianites, his army had nothing but empty pitchers and trumpets and lamps in their hands; yet was this enough to put to rout the whole army of the Midianites. (Judges vii. 16—25.) Even thus doth our Captain Jesus Christ. For this army of signs in heaven, in the sea, in the earth, famine, plague, persecution, and the like,—what are they but trumpets and empty pitchers to them that know them? And if we fear them, and disorder and rout ourselves, and run away, we are not of the army of God and of Gideon; we are but Midianites.

I know these things may seem somewhat hard, nay, peradventure, utterly impossible, with men who are but dust and ashes. And I may be thought to speak *tanquam in republicâ Platonis, non tanquam in fœce Romuli*;\* as if I were in a congregation of saints, and not in an assembly of men subject to passions and so to sin; ready to fear where no fear is, to grieve

\* CICERONIS *Epist. ad Atticum*, lib. ii. ep. 1. "As if in Plato's imaginary republic, and not as if amid the dregs of Romulus's commonalty."—EDIT.



for that which is pleasant and behoof-full, to murmur where there is no cause, to hang down their heads like a bulrush when they should lift them up. "Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?" (Job vi. 12.) *Illi ferrum et æs triplex circa pectus*.\* Is it possible we should see the world fall down about our ears, and not fear? and, in famine, to hear our children calling for bread, when there is none to give them, and not be disconsolate? in time of plague, to see ourselves forsaken of all, and constrained perhaps to breathe out our last upon no better pillow than a stone or a turf, under no better canopy than the cold air, and be content? Can we hear "the noise of the whip, and the jumping of the chariots, and the prancing of the horses," (Nahum iii. 2,) nay, the noise and groans of dying men, who would, but cannot, die; and be unmoved? Can we see the tears of widows drilling down their cheeks, behold little orphans made miserable before they know what misery is, and deprived of their fathers before they could call them so; can we see rivers of blood, and have dry eyes? Shall a whole nation totter, and we stand fast? Shall we have no safe place for our heads, and yet lift them up? I know compassion is a virtue; and to "weep with them that weep" is a virtue: but then even when we weep, we must also "rejoice in tribulation." Nature may draw tears, but grace must dry them. And can we do all this? If we be truly Christians, we can; yea, "in all these things" ὑπερνικᾶν, "be more than conquerors;" (Rom. viii. 37;) not only be undaunted, but even joy in them; as if now, and never till now, the world went as we would have it.

What manner of men, think you, must they be who do thus? Do not put on wonder: "Let not your hearts be troubled." (John xiv. 1.) For truth itself will tell you that, if you be the men whose name you bear, if your eyes, your ends, your hopes, be fixed upon Christ alone, then are you all such persons as I have now described. *Tantum distat a Christiano*: Look, how much every man is defective and wants in this kind of constancy and resolution, and "so much he comes short and wants of his Christianity." What are all the pleasures, what are all the terrors, of the world to him that is made one with Christ, who conquered also? That therefore this doctrine may pass the better, which at first sight is but harsh and rugged, we will show you, 1. That it is possible to arm ourselves with such courage and resolution in common calamities; 2.

\* HORATII *Carm.* lib. i. od. iii. 9. "Hard is his heart, enclosed in folds of brass."—Translation by several Hands, 1713.

That it is great folly not to do so; 3. What impediments and hinderances they be which overthrow our courage, and take our hearts from us, when such things as these come to pass.

1. And, First, of the possibility of this doctrine. And, if we look a little upon the manners of men, we shall find them very apt and ready to plead impossibilities and difficulties where their own practice confutes them. One saith he hath "bought five yoke of oxen, and must go to try them:" another saith he hath "married a wife, and therefore he cannot," that is, he will not, "come." (Luke xiv. 19, 20.) *Hæc omnia dura invitis*, saith Jerome: "All things seem hard and difficult to them who have no heart, who easily persuade themselves that cannot be done which they will not do." Go to a rich man, and require him to lay down his wealth at the feet of the poor, or otherwise to sacrifice it to the service of Christ: how hard a lesson is it! how ill-sounding! how ridiculous and absurd a proposal! What a fool will he soon conclude you to be, and how prodigal of your good counsel, when you advise him to be wise! But yet let some flattering pleasure come in the way, or some spleen against his neighbour, or some suit of law, or the like, or something that may forfeit his soul; and how easily shall all go to the final hazard and undoing of him and his posterity! I see, he can do that for his spleen, his humour, his strumpet, which, when he is to do for his God, he startles at as a thing impossible. In the one is his desire, in the other death. To gain the earth with him is to enter Paradise: but to knock and strive to enter into heaven is as terrible as hell itself. Go to one of our painted gallants, and require him to do but what an Ethnic man can do by no better help than the light of nature; even rather to lay down his life than to do any thing that common reason checketh at, and which a good man thinks a shame to speak of; rather to leave off to be a man than in that shape and likeness to become a beast: *μέγα λίαν αίτημα*, "how great a request do you move!" Yet how prodigal will he be of his life when his lust or some drunken quarrel shall call for it! To fetch home a fancy, a fashion, a toy, we will go as far as France, or to the Indies for a clod of earth, or a piece of glass: but to visit the fatherless and widows, a sabbath-day's journey is too far. Every thing that may make us happy is hard; but we never boggle at that which leadeth to destruction. Heaven, with all its allurements, with all its beauty and glory, with all its everlastingness, cannot win us to that which the glistening of a diamond, which the shadow of a trifle, which the dream of a shadow, will do. God with all his besecching and entreaties and

rich promises shall not move us, when the cringe of a flatterer, the oily tongue of a parasite, the smile of a courtesan, shall carry us about the world. Nor is glory so eloquent to prevail with us for itself as shame and dishonour is to our confusion. *Nemo non in causâ suâ potest, quod in causam Dei dubitat*: "Every man can do that in his own cause which he cannot in Christ's; can do that for the devil which he cannot for himself." So that the reason why many suppose this behaviour here required by our Saviour to be a matter so hard and difficult, is from the same error.

Now to manifest the possibility of this, I think I cannot do it better than by an ensample: and I will give you one, and that too of an Ethnic man, that knew not Christ, nor his rich promises, nor ever heard of the glory of the gospel. There is a hill in Italy, Vesuvius they call it, which is wont sometimes to break out in flames of fire, to the terror and amazement of all that dwell nigh unto it. The first time that in the memory of man it fired, was in the days of Vespasian the emperor; at which time it brake forth with that horrible noise and cry, with that concussion and shaking of the earth near about it, with that darkness and stench, that all within the compass thought of nothing now but *æternam illam et novissimam mundo noctem*, "that time was ended, and the world drawing to its dissolution." Pliny, the great philosopher, and the author of the famous "History of Nature," lay then at Misenum, not far off: and out of a desire he had to inform himself, he drew near to the place where he thought the fire began. And in the midst of that horror and confusion so undaunted and fearless was he that he studied, and wrote, and ate, and slept, and omitted nothing of his usual course. His nephew, a great man afterwards with Trajan the emperor, out of whom I take this history, reports of himself, that being there at that time, notwithstanding all the terrors and affrightments, yet he called for his books, he read, he noted, as if he had not been near the mountain Vesuvius, but in his study and closet: and yet was at that time but eighteen years of age.\* I have been somewhat the more large, besides my custom, in opening the particulars of this story, because it is the very emblem, the very picture, of the world's dissolution, and of the behaviour which is here enjoined Christians when that time shall come. All these fearful signs which here our Saviour reckons up, if we but follow the ensamples which I have now proposed, ought not so much to prevail with us as once to make us break our sleep;

\* PLINII *Epistolarum* lib. vi. cp. 16 et 20.

much less to torment and amaze us ; much less to take off our chariot-wheels, to retard and cripple us in the ways of righteousness, and in that course which leads to bliss ; much less to drive us out of the way.

What, though there be signs in the sun and moon and stars? must my light therefore be turned into darkness? must my sun set at noon, and my stars, those virtues which should shine in my soul, fall out of their sphere and firmament? What, though the seas roar and make a noise? shall my impatience be as loud? and if they break their bounds, must I forget mine? What, though there be a famine in the land? must I make my soul like unto the season, lean and miserable? What, though there be "wars and rumours of wars?" must I be at variance with myself, and bid defiance to the Lord of hosts? What, though my friends betray me? must I deceive myself? And if the world be ready to sink, must I fall into hell? Nay, rather, when we see "these things come to pass," "when these signs come to pass, let it be that we do as occasion serves us ; for God is with us" in these signs. (1 Sam. x. 7.) Let them be as signs to us, persuading signs : let them have the commanding eloquence of signs. Let them not be as shadows, which pass by us, and we regard them not : but let them be *signa significantia*, "signs that signify something ;" signs to represent something to our understanding, and so make an impression on our wills. Let them be as the voice of God calling us out of Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey. Let them be as the finger of God, and let us follow in that way the line is drawn. Let them be as the hand of God, and let us "humble ourselves under his mighty hand." Let them be "the great power of God," and let us fall down and worship ; that so we may *in his signis signari*, "with these signs be signed" and "sealed up to the day of our redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.)

When the sun is darkened, think it is to upbraid thy ignorance, and learn to "abound more in knowledge and all judgment." (Phil. i. 9.) When the moon shall be turned into blood, think it is to chide thy cruelty, and "put on the bowels of mercy and loving-kindness." (Col. iii. 12.) When the stars fall from heaven, the professors of truth speak lies, do thou "stand fast in the faith." (1 Cor. xvi. 13.) When the powers of heaven are shaken, when there be many sects and divisions, do thou "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ;" (Eph. iv. 3;) every man's brother if he will ; and if he will not, every man's brother. If the plague break in, do thou purge the plague of thine own heart, and "keep thyself unspotted of the

world." (James i. 27.) If there be a famine in the land, do thou fill thyself with the bread of life as with marrow and fatness. If banners be displayed as signs, as the Psalmist speaks, (Psalm lx. 4,) let them be as signs to thee to fight against thy lusts. When parents and brethren and kinsfolk are false, do thou look up to thy Father in heaven, who is Truth itself. When the world is ready to sink, do thou raise thyself with expectation of eternal glory. This constancy, this resolution, this behaviour Christ requires at our hands: and it will be in vain to plead impossibilities. For could these men under nature go so far? and cannot we, who are under grace, do so much? Could they think that nothing without them could hurt them? and shall we fear nothing more than that which is without? Good God! how comes it to pass that nature should bear more sway in a Pagan, than the grace of the gospel in a Christian? Or have we disputed and trifled grace out of its power? or hath our abuse of grace swallowed even nature and reason itself up in victory? *Tanti vitrum, quanti margaritum?* Were these men so rich that they could bestow "so much upon a trifle, upon a toy of glass?" and cannot we, who are under grace, give "the same price for a rich jewel?"

When Themistocles was leading forth his army, by chance he passed by where cocks were fighting; and showing them to his soldiers, "Lo," saith he, "these have neither altars, nor temples, nor children to fight for; and you see how stoutly they fight for no other end but who shall be the conqueror." And to this end have I shown unto you the examples of these Heathen men, as Themistocles did the cocks to his army. For these men *nec aras habebant, neque focos*.\* They were without Christ in the world, "received not the promises," neither "saw they them" so much as "afar off;" saw not so much as a glimmering of that "Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world." Of immortality and eternal life they knew little. What were their hopes? what was their end? As for heaven and hell, their knowledge of them was small. Yet their stomach and courage was such that we, who are Christians, hear it only as a tale, and can scarcely believe it. Beloved, I speak this to our shame. For a great shame it is that nature, defamed nature, should more prevail with them than God and grace with us; that they by the power of their reason should stand the strongest assault and shock of misery, and we run away affrighted from the very fancy and shadow of it. For "to whom more is given, of them more shall be required." (Luke xii. 48.) And if we Christians

\* These men "had neither altars nor hearths."—EDIT.

cannot look undauntedly when we see "these things come to pass," how shall we behold "the heavens gathered together as a scroll, the elements melted, and the earth burned up?" how shall we be able to hear the trump and the voice of the archangel? If we cannot "look up, and lift up our heads," when we see "these things," with what face shall we meet our Saviour in the clouds?

Therefore as our Saviour in this chapter exhorts, let us "possess our souls with patience." (Verse 19.) Let us withdraw our souls from our bodies, our minds from our sensual parts; that what is terrible to the eye may have no such aspect on the mind, and what is dreadful to the ear may be as music to the spirit, and what wounds and torments the body may not touch the soul; that so we may be what we should be, ourselves, our own lords, in our own possession; that Christ at his coming may find us not let out to pleasure, not sold to this vanity, nor in fetters under that fear, nor swallowed up in that calamity, nor buried in the apprehension of those evils which shall come upon this generation; but free in Christ, alive in Christ, active, making these our adversaries friends, these terrors blessings, these signs miracles; by Christ's power working light out of darkness, plenty out of famine, peace out of these wars; that at his second coming he may find us "looking up" upon him, "and lifting up our heads," "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," that so we may "be caught up together in the clouds," and "be for ever with the Lord" in his everlasting habitations.

2. I have done with the First point,—the possibility of the doctrine, that we must arm ourselves with courage and resolution against common calamities. I proceed now to the Second,—that it is an argument of great folly not to do so. What is folly but a mistake of things, a mistake of their nature and of their end? not only a privative ignorance, which may be in children and simple men; but, as the Hebrew doctors call it, "a possessive ignorance," possessing us with false opinions of things; making us run counter to that light which wisdom holdeth forth; placing pleasure upon that which bringeth no delight, and horror upon that which rightly considered hath no terror at all; transforming a devil into an angel of light, and turning light itself into darkness; making the signs of God's favour arguments of his wrath; calling afflictions and calamities, which are the instructions of a Father, "the blows of an enemy;" and if calamities be whips, making them scorpions. "An unwise man," saith the Psalmist, "knoweth it not; and a fool doth not consider it:" (Psalm xcii. 6.) he doth not consider either the

nature of these signs, or the end for which they are sent ; but is led by likeness and opinion. "The natural man perceiveth not the things of God's Spirit : but they are foolishness unto him ;" (1 Cor. ii. 14;) as the words of fools, which signify nothing : and therefore he puts what sense and meaning he [may] please upon them, "an interpreter" the worst "of a thousand." (Job xxxiii. 23.) And so he finds not evils, but makes them ; makes *them* the mothers of his sorrow, *which* might be the helpers of his joy. When reason and religion are thrust out of the chair, the passions full soon take their room, and dictate heavy things. Then either fear shakes us, or hope makes us mad ; either grief pulls us down, or joy transports us. One is "afraid where no fear is," as the Psalmist speaks : (Psalm liii. 5 :) another is struck dead at the sight of a statue : and to some even joy itself hath been as fatal as a thunderbolt.

All is from opinion, the mistress of fools, which makes the shaking of a leaf as terrible as an earthquake ; makes poverty more sad, the plague more infectious, famine and the sword more killing, than they are. It is not the tooth of envy, it is my fancy, [that] bows me. It is not the reproach of an enemy [which] hurts me : it was but a word, and opinion hath turned it into a stone. It is not an army of sorrows, it is my own fancy, [that] overthrows me. What St. Ambrose speaks of poverty, is true of all those evils which are so terrible to flesh and blood : *Non naturæ paupertas, sed opinionis vis est* : "Poverty, as men call it, is but a fancy ; there is no such thing indeed." It is but a figment, an idol : men first framed it, and set it up, and trembled before it. As some naturalists tell us that the rainbow is *oculi opus*, "a thing framed only by the eye," because there are no such colours on the cloud as we see ; so this difference of rich and poor, of honourable and dishonourable, of wars and peace, of sorrow and joy, is but a creature of the eye. Did we not think the soldier terrible, we had disarmed him : did we not think calamities grievous, we might rejoice in them : did not our folly make these signs terrible, we might then "look up, and lift up our heads." We read of Smindyrides the Sybarite, that he was so extremely dainty that he would grow weary at the sight of another man's labour ; and therefore, when he sometimes saw a man labouring and painfully digging, he began to faint and pant, and desired to be removed. *Quàm inclementer fodicat !* saith he : "What a cruel and merciless digger is this !"\* So it is with us. Our delicate and tender education, our familiarity with the vanities of this world, have betrayed our reason

\* SENECA *De Irâ*, lib. ii. cap. xxv.

to our sensual parts, so that we startle at every unusual object, tremble at every apparition, make war and famine and persecution more terrible than they are, sink under those signs and warnings from heaven at which we should "look up, and lift up our heads." "This our way uttereth our foolishness," as the Psalmist speaks. (Psalm xlix. 13.) For is it not a great folly to create evils, to multiply evils; to discolour that which was sent for our good, and make it evil; to make that which speaketh peace and comfort unto us a messenger of death?

3. Let us now consider the lets and impediments, or the reasons why our hearts fail us at such sights as these. I shall at this time only remove a pretended one; having formerly at large, upon another text, (Matt. xxiv. 25,) spoken of self-love and want of faith, which are real and true hinderances of Christian courage.\* The main pretence we make for our pusillanimity and cowardice is our natural weakness, which we derived from our first parents, and brought with us into the world. For thus we lay every burden upon our forefather's shoulders, and Adam is arraigned every day as guilty of every defect, of every sin which is committed in the world. *Homo sum*, "I am a man," the child of Adam, born under wrath," is the common apology of the men of this world, when they fall into those sins which by watching over themselves they might, and which in duty they are bound to, avoid. As we fell in Adam, so Adam falls in us, falls under fears and sorrows and calamities, unto the end of the world. And, if we observe it, this is so common a plea, and so stoutly and resolvedly stood to, as if men did rather boast of it than bemoan it, and did rather make use of it as a comfort after sin, than fear it as a burden pressing and inclining to it. For the best excuse they have, the best plea they make, is, that they are the children of Adam.

I deny not that we drew this weakness from our first parents: I leave it not after baptism as subsistent by itself, but bound to the centre of the earth, with the Manichee; nor washed to nothing in the font, with Pelagius: but yet (and it will be worth your observation) I take it to be a matter of difficulty to judge of what strength it is. I fear we make it stronger than it is; and I am sure a Christian is bound by that religion which he professes to encounter and tame and crucify it. For take us in our infancy, not altered *a puris naturalibus*, "from that which we were made;" and then we do not understand ourselves, much less the weakness of our nature. And then take us in our years of discretion: before we can come to discover it, custom

\* See Sermon lxxii. pp. 239—252 of this volume.—EDIT.



and education, if good, hath much abated—if evil, hath much improved—the force of it, and our sloth or cowardice hath made it strong. A strange thing it is to see little children in their tender years prompt and witty to villany, as if they had gonē to school to it in their mother's womb: and this we may impute to original sin. But yet divines generally consent that this original sin is alike in all; only it works more or less according to the diversity of men's tempers, as water runs swifter down a hill than in a plain. Again: even in children we see many good and gracious qualities, which by good education come to excellent effect. *In pueris elucet spes plurimorum*, saith Quintilian; *quæ cùm emoritur ætate, manifestum est non defecisse naturam, sed curam*:\* “In children many times there is a beam and hope of goodness, which, if not cherished by discipline, is damped and darkened; a sign that nature was not wanting, but our care.” Now from whence this difference should come, is not easy to discern: but this we cannot but observe, that be the strength of original sin what it will, yet there is no man but is more wicked than the strength of any natural weakness or primitive corruption can constrain. For when evil education, bad ensamples, long custom, and continuance in sin have bred in us a habit of sinning, *cùm per secordiam vires, tempus, ingenium defluxere, naturæ infirmitas accusatur*, “when through sloth and idleness, through luxury and distemper, our time is lost, our bodies decayed, our wits dulled, we cast all the fault upon the weakness of our nature;” and our full growth in sin we attribute to that seed of sin which we should have choked.

Behold the signs in the heaven,—the sun darkened, the moon turned into blood. See poverty coming towards you “as an armed man;” famine riding upon a pale horse, killing with hunger and with death. Behold the plague destroying, persecution raging. I say, Behold these: for to this thou wert made, for this thou wert sent into the world, to behold and “look up” upon these; to “look up,” and be undaunted; nay, to “look up,” and leap, and rejoice. For thy whole life is but a preparation and eve to this great holiday of sights. If the eye of nature be too weak, thou hast “an unction from the Holy One,” the unction of the blessed Spirit. (1 John ii. 20.) For this end Christ came into the world, for this end did he pour forth his grace, that he might refresh thy spirits, and clear thy eye-sight, that thou mayest “look up, and lift up thy head.” For, tell me, why were we baptized? why are we Christians? Is it not to mortify our earthly members and lusts, to dead in our-

\* *Instit. Orat.* lib. i. cap. 1.

selves the bitter root of sin? Is it not to spiritualize, to angelify (I had almost said, to deify) our nature? For we are no further Christians *nisi in quantum cœperimus esse angeli*, "but so far forth as we are like unto the angels;" I may add, and St. Peter doth warrant me, "so far forth as we are made 'partakers of the divine nature.'" (2 Peter i. 4.) Were we not baptized into this faith? I speak to Christians, whose life should be a continual warfare, not against beasts, but our passions, which, if they be not tied up and held in with bit and bridle, are as fierce and violent as they. And a strange kind of weakness it is to talk of weakness when we are to fight: for this is to yield before we strike a stroke; not to be put to flight, but to run away. *Nec mirum, si vincantur, qui jam victi sunt*: "And it is no marvel if we fall by conquest, who in our own opinion are already overcome." Beloved, are we weak in Adam? Yet are we strong in Christ. "I can do all things," saith Paul, and suffer all things, "through Christ that strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.) Though many blemishes befall us by Adam's sin in our understandings and in our wills, yet what we lost in Adam, that with infinite advantage is supplied in Christ. Are we truly Christians? Then "these things," these fearful sights, cannot hurt us. If they hurt us, it is because we are not Christians. There is a fable that passed amongst the Heathen, that Vulcan, offended with the men of Athens, told them they should be all fools; but Pallas, who favoured them, told them they should indeed be fools, but withal that their folly should not hurt them. Our case is not much unlike: for though the devil hath made us fools and weak, yet Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, hath given us this gift, that this weakness shall never hurt us unless we will. Fear not therefore: why should we fear? Christ hath subdued our enemies, and taken from them every weapon that may hurt us. He hath taken the sting not only from sin, but from those evils which are the natural issues and products of sin. He hath made afflictions joyful, terrors lovely, that thou mayest "look up" upon them, and "lift up thy head."

I have done with this pretence of natural weakness, and with my second [third] part; and I come now to the third [fourth] and last, the encouragement our Saviour giveth: "For your redemption draweth nigh."

IV. And "when these things come to pass," when such terrible signs appear, this news is very seasonable. "As cold waters to a thirsty soul," (Prov. xxv. 25,) so is the promise of liberty to those "who have been in bondage all their life long,"

(Heb. ii. 15,) under the fear of those evils which show themselves unto us, and lead us captive, and keep us in prison, so that we cannot look up. When we are sold under sin, and by that sold under fears of calamities, of death, of hell; when the heaven lours upon us, and hell opens its mouth; then a message of redemption is "a word fitly spoken," a word upon its wheels, guided and directed by art, and is as delightful "as apples of gold with pictures of silver." (Prov. xxv. 11.) It is that penny in the evening which makes the labourer bear the burden all the day. How will that soldier fight who heareth of a reserve and party at hand to aid him! How will the prisoner even sing in his chains, when news is brought that his ransom is paid, and his redemption near at hand! It is a liberty to be told we shall be free: and it is not easy to determine whether it more affect us when it is come, or when it is but in the approach, drawing nigh; when we are free, or when we are but told that shortly we shall be so. And indeed our redemption is *actus individuus*, "one entire act;" and we are redeemed at once from all; though the full accomplishment of it be by degrees. When we are redeemed from sin, we are redeemed from the grave, redeemed from the fear of death, redeemed from all fear of these fearful signs and apparitions, redeemed by our Captain, who, besides the ransom he paid down, hath taught us to handle the weapons of our warfare, hath proposed a crown, hath taught us to shake off our fetters and break our bonds asunder. For to this end he paid down the ransom: and, if we do it not, we are not redeemed, no, not when we are redeemed. It is enough for him to open the prison-doors: certainly it is our duty to come out, and not still to love our fetters, because our Redeemer hath "led captivity captive." But we may say truly of this first redemption what some in St. Paul said falsely of the second resurrection, This redemption "is past already;" (2 Tim. ii. 18;) past on our Redeemer's side, nothing left undone by him: only it remains on ours to sue out our pardon, and make our redemption sure. Nor is it any derogation from our Saviour's merit that we have a part in this work. For would we have our Saviour redeem them from prison who will not go out; free them from sin who are resolved to "continue in sin because this grace hath abounded," and will be more slaves because they had leave to be free; or seal up their redemption who will not sue it out?

But now this is but *redemptio elevans*, as the Schools speak, "a redemption which lifts us up from our former low condition," and puts us in a fair possibility of enlargement; nay, in a certainty, if we ourselves hinder not. But yet when it hath

its proper and natural working, when we do not *ponere obicem*, when we "hinder it" not, it works according to the capacity of the subject. It works out sin, yet leaves us sinners; it regulates our passions, yet leaves us subject to them; it works out fear, yet leaves us fearful. The old man is crucified, but not yet dead; the passions are subdued, but not quite extinguished. The inward man dare look death and all the terrors of the world in the face; but the outward man turns away from such sight. And therefore there is another redemption that they call *præservantem*, "which settles and establishes us, preserves" us in an angelical state, free from sin, from passions, from fear. And when this comes, we shall sin no more, hope no more, fear no more: all sins shall be purged out, all hope shall be fulfilled, all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and all trembling from our hearts. And this is the redemption here meant, the only trust of the Christian, the expectation of the faithful, the water of life to refresh them in this valley of tears, the only cordial for the passion of the heart, the only rock for hope to anchor at, the true fountain from which the waters of comfort and salvation are to be drawn.

But then I must tell you, This fountain of comfort is like the pool of Bethesda; it is not medicinable till an angel hath stirred it. For our own carnal imaginations may be as so many evil angels to trouble it; and then we draw bitterness and poison instead of comfort. For,—a little to change St. Paul's words, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible?" (Acts xxvi. 8),—why should it be thought a thing desirable with some men, that the world and all that is in the world should have an end? Why should they desire the coming of Christ? Should he come to meet the hypocrite with his form of religion, his feigned sighs and cheating groans, as he is acting his part, and playing Judas in the shape of Peter? Should he meet Balaam, when he is not so wise as his ass? or Jonah, when he runs from Nineveh to Tarsus? Should he come to us at midnight, when we are in our beds of lust and sensuality? Can there be any comfort to the wicked in that "fire which devours before him," or in that "tempest which is round about him?" But if we be qualified as we ought to be, if we repent of our sins, and bring forth fruits worthy of amendment of life; if we keep our loins girt, and our lamps burning; if we be doing our Master's will, and waiting for his coming; then the signs of his coming, that fill the hearts of others with dread, will fill ours with joy. Then, when the ungodly shall cry to the mountains to cover them, we shall "look up" with confidence, "and lift up our heads; for our redemption draweth nigh."

## SERMON XCIV.

## DUTY OF THE MAGISTRATE.

PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE JUDGES AT AN ASSIZES  
HELD AT NORTHAMPTON.

*He beareth not the sword in vain.*—Romans xiii. 4.

THE words are St. Paul's. And it sounds well when an apostle blows the trumpet before the magistrate, and proclaims his power. But as the sound was good, so was it now high time it should be heard. Christianity was at the bar, and the gospel arraigned of high treason. Christ and Cæsar were set at odds: and, as if his disciples had forsaken him to follow Judas the Galilean, and of Christians were turned Gaulonites, (Acts v. 37,) the rumour was, that this new doctrine endangered the state, and one kingdom was set up to ruin another, and the knitting of a church was the untying of civil society. This was one of the devil's first assaults against the church: and he made it not but upon advantage. For a sect of people there were who, as Josephus saith, would have *μόνον Ἡγεμόνα καὶ Δεσπότην τὸν Θεόν*, "no lord but God, no king but the King of kings;" and all this under the fair pretence of maintaining their privilege and freedom. They would have heard with delight St. Paul speak of "a quiet and peaceable life:" (1 Tim. ii. 2:) but his *ὑποτασσεσθω*, "Be subject," (Rom. xiii. 1,) was a word which bored their ears, and changed their countenance. What? sell their freedom to buy their peace, and after an entail of liberty yield their neck to the yoke of subjection? This was not for the honour of a Galilean or a Jew, of those who had Abraham to their father. This coat of disobedience, you see, was made up by others: but some said Christianity did wear it. Therefore the apostle here presents her in an humble posture, upon the knee, bowing to the sword, and kneeling to authority. And he proceeds like a perfect methodist. In the former chapter he laid open and unfolded *τὴν πολλὴν φιλοσοφίαν*, "that large body of philosophy," those numerous precepts of mutual conversation; he levelled the hills, and raised the valleys; he disarmed men of all instruments of private revenge: and he points in this chapter to "the higher powers," and enjoineth loyalty and obedience. And having laid his groundwork, and drawn that first and fundamental axiom, that all power and jurisdiction is from God; he brings-in the magistrate *καθάπερ τινὰ στρατιώτην*, "as a soldier," with a sword

in his hand ; and the motto is, *Non frustrà* : “ For he beareth not the sword in vain.”

We no sooner hear of a sword, but we think of power. When the angel held one at the east side of Paradise, it was “ to keep the way of the tree of life.” (Gen. iii. 24.) When Abraham drew one for recovery of his nephew Lot, he had *jus gladii*, “ the power of the sword ;” and so had David, when he “ smote his enemies on the hinder parts.” (Psalm lxxviii. 66.) Do we hear the word called “ a sword ?” it is *ἐνεργής*, “ mighty in operation.” (Heb. iv. 12.) Is the Spirit a sword ? that sword is power. So saith St. Ambrose : *Spiritus, gladius verbi ; verbum, gladius Spiritus* : “ The word is the sword of the Spirit, and the Spirit the sword of the word ;” both are swords, both powerful. The sword was *insigne magistratús*, “ an ensign and badge of authority,” put into the hand of kings and emperors when they put-on their robes, their purple, *ἐνδύματα βασιλικά*, those “ princely and peculiar vestments,” to work obedience in the people, and to win reverence from the subject, *ne crederentur esse privati*, saith Aquinas, “ lest the people should mistake them, and esteem them as private men,” as fit to feel a sword as to bear one.

Not to be too anxious in cutting out our way and making our passage, the civilians will inform us that the word “ sword ” is not taken merely *pro telo*, “ for a material sword ;” but that it includes *merum imperium*, “ the right of drawing the sword,” that vindicative and coercive power, pressing on, and breaking through the strongest opposition, battering down tumults, sedition, disorders, and making way to the peace of the weal-public.

Well, then, we see, a coercive and restraining power, a “ sword,” there is. For the Almighty teacheth not man only by his immediate wisdom, nor guideth him alone by his invisible finger ; but with a finger hath drawn out many visible copies of his words and works, that man may even see and feel and handle those instructions which may make him wise : so neither doth he govern the world alone by his immediate unapprehensible power, by that fulness and infiniteness which he is ; but he also derives a power, conveys an instrument, lets fall a sword, to be employed in the very eyes of men. But, in the next place, a sword is but a dead instrument, able of itself to produce no effect : all you find in it is an aptness and disposition to obey the force and virtue of the agent. Goliath’s sword, if Ahimelech wrap it up in a linen cloth behind the ephod, what is it ? what doeth it ? But let David take it to pursue the Philistines, “ there is none to that.” (1 Sam. xxi. 9.) Therefore St. Paul not only shows

the sword, but also points out to the hand that bears it: ὁ ἄρχων, and ὁ διάκονος τοῦ Θεοῦ,\* “the prince, the judge, the magistrate,” he is the swordsman.

But, now the sword is in the hand, what must our expectation wait for? Doth it come forth against an adversary? or will it strike at random? *Omne instrumentum disponitur ad virtutem agentis*, say the Schoolmen: “The instrument obeys the agent.” A sword it is, and there is much in the hand that bears it. He may latch it in the side of innocency, and wound justice herself: Naboth may lose his vineyard and life too, John Baptist’s head go off, and St. Paul be smitten against the law. I say, the sword neither hurts nor helps: it is the hand that doth it. We must, then, in the next place, fix up the motto, engrave St. Paul’s *Non frustrà* upon the sword; and then strike he must, or else he doth but “bear;” and in the right place, too, and our fear is vanished.

We may now behold the magistrate placed as he should be, in his proper place, in the midst between the offender and the innocent, looking upon both. To the good the word is, Μη φοβείσθε: “It is a sword; but ‘fear not:’ thy innocency hath made him that beareth it both thy friend and champion.” But if thou hast done evil, the dialect is altered, and he speaks in thunder, Φοβοῦ, “‘Fear;’ it is a sword, and terrible.” So then we have here wrapped up the power and the subject; the instrument, the agent, and the end; authority granted, confined, and directed; a sword committed, borne, and used. The parts then are these, and by these lines we are to pass:

I. First. We must place the sword, and fasten it, too, in its proper place, the hand of the magistrate.

II. Secondly. We must join the *non frustrà* to the sword.

III. And that will bring us, in the Third place, to the most proper and peculiar work of the magistrate, to his prime care,—that he “beareth it not in vain.” Of these in their order.

I. “He beareth the sword:” that is his authority, his commission. For of God it cannot in strict terms and properly be said that “he beareth a sword.” God is omnipotency, and eternity, and power; *πέλαγός τι τῆς οὐσίας*, “a sea of essence,” saith Nazianzen, and *πέλαγός τι τῆς ἐξουσίας*, “a sea of power:” but the magistrate is the channel and conveyance of the rivulet. God giveth the power, the magistrate hath it; God lendeth the sword, the magistrate bears it. *Authoritas dicitur de diplomate*

\* “The ruler,” and “the minister of God.”—EDIT.

*principis manu obsignato* : " Authority presumes a commission." And though ambition (as one observeth) hath presented this power under divers forms and complexions, of popularity, aristocracy, and monarchy, which is the fairest and completest piece, yet the commission and seal is still the same. For behold him who beareth this sword, and is invested with this power ; and you shall see him sealed, and that *divinâ manu*, " with the very finger of God." The king's Broad Seal, what is it? The matter is wax ; a small piece of money will buy a greater quantity : but having the image and superscription of my prince, it is either my pardon, or my liberty, or my charter, or my possessions. So the magistrate, what is he? Behold the man, my fellow, dust and ashes, of as near alliance to the worm and corruption as myself : nay, behold a sinful man, of as near kin to Adam as myself. And yet he awes me, and he bounds me, and he keeps me in on every side. One monosyllable of his turneth me about, and is my motion. If he say, " Go," I go : if he say, " Come," I come : if he say, " Do this," I do it. For he is sealed, and hath the image and superscription of the Deity. And as we say that laws are *numismata reipublicæ*, " the coin, the money, in which we may behold the face and the livelihood of a commonwealth ;" so is the magistrate *numisma Dei*, " a piece of coin taken out of God's mint." We need not ask whose image or superscription he hath ; for he hath God's : and though he bear the sword, yet he had it from Him who is said to " bear all things." (Heb. i. 3.) And being thus armed, like to God himself, he keeps every wheel in its due motion, every man in his right place ; the master on horseback, and the servant on the ground ; and where impudence increaseth, he checks it with a, " Friend, sit down lower." (Luke xiv. 9.) He keeps the hands of the ungodly from the white hairs of the aged, and the teeth of the oppressor from the face of the widows. He lays his hand upon the orb of that commonwealth, *μὴ ἀτάκτως φέροιτο*, " that it move not incomposedly and unsteadily." And in this he doth " give unto God those things which are God's," his own coin, his own image, not clipped, not dashed, not defaced ; a powerful just man, the fairest picture and representation of his Master.

But though God hath conveyed his power, and given his sword, yet he hath not done it to every man upon the same terms ; not to Joab the captain of the host as to David the king ; not to Shaphan the chancellor as to Josiah on the throne ; not to Gallio the deputy as to Cæsar the emperor ; not to the under-officers as to the lower justices ; not to the justices



as to the judge ; not to the judge as to the king. *Non variatur prerogativa autoritatis aut differentiae numero illorum quibus est concredita potestas*, that “the prerogative of authority is the same in all,” that a burgomaster of Amsterdam shall stand in competition with the greatest monarch for right and sovereignty, is a doctrine which trips at the very chair of majesty, and calls for parity and popularity. But let it die, and be buried with the author, that man of contention ; or if not, let it breathe in its own coast, and be a beyond-sea doctrine still. Here is no such equalizing of powers, no print or footstep thereof in the apostle. For see here even an “order of order,” τάξιν and διάταξιν. These powers are, 1. *Ordinatæ*, not permitted, but “ordained ;” 2. Ὑπὸ Θεοῦ, subordinate, “under God ;” 3. Τεταγμέναι, “marshalled, set in order ;” constituted, decreed, subordinate, ordained. Here *rota in rotâ*, “a wheel within a wheel,” and a sphere within a sphere. God, the first orb, the great compassing wheel ; the king’s is *absolutum dominium*, “absolute” under God ; yours, *concredutum et delegatum*, “dependent and by way of delegation.” *Mutuato splendetis lumine*, “You spangle in your spheres like stars, but it is with a borrowed light :” and he who holds you now in his right hand, may let you fall, and fix up others. For he it is who by you conveyeth and lets forth himself to his subjects : his house is the tribunal while you are sitting : when you bespeak the jury, the charge is his ; and when you give sentence, he condemns the guilty. Therefore Nazianzen, where he tells us that “magistrates are the very image of God,” thus sorteth he :—the king, a complete piece ; the middle sort, but half-pictures ; the lowest like those εἰδύλλια,\* drawn but to the shoulders.

But yet again, all carry the image of God, and every one “beareth the sword,” though delivered some at the second or third hand, as they say. And God hath both appropriated and fastened it. No private man may be a swordsman. If Peter will be drawing to lop off an ear, *Christi patientia in Malcho vulneratur*, saith Tertullian : “Christ’s patience is wounded by Peter’s impatience ; and he must hear, ‘Put up thy sword into its place : for he that draws the sword shall perish by the sword.’” (Matt. xxvi. 52.) God puts the sword out of our reach : for revenge is ἀνθρωπικώτερον, “an inbred desire, kindled in the very heart of man by nature.” And to that lesson and dictate of our first mother, *vim vi repellere*, “to defend ourselves, and to drive back force by violence,” we have added

\* “Small pictures or portraits,” like the kit-cats of modern times.—EDIT.

διώκειν ἀνταπόδομα, “the thirst and pursuit of retaliation.” And this lesson the world hath long since taken out and digested, and reads it in its own corrupt edition, and calls it “justice.” Esau will kill his brother Jacob; for, “Should he have my birthright?” Every male of the Shechemites must fall under the sword; for, “Should Shechem abuse our sister as a whore?” (Gen. xxxiv. 31.) But our later and more gallant times have commented and glossed upon this lesson, have drawn out *leges μονομαχίας*,\* a method of quarrelling, and an art of murder. And they proceed *sub formatâ*, “under a set form;” as legally as you use to do in your courts of justice. Every hand with them is fit for a sword; every arm, an arm of justice: the right sword is not thought on, till they feel it.

Further yet: as God hath appropriated the sword, to make it the magistrate’s, so hath he fastened it, to keep it in his hand. No discontent shall move it, no argument stir it, no murmuring sheath it; no time, no calling, no liberty free or privilege from the power of it. It may be drawn at Jerusalem as well as at Athens, in the land of Jewry as well as in the streets of Askelon, amongst the faithful as well as amongst unbelievers. “Let them accuse one another,” may be the voice of a Christian as well as of the town-clerk of Ephesus. (Acts xix. 38.)

A generation there are that would long since have wrenched the sword out of the magistrate’s hand, and broke it: a generation that had raised themselves to such a pitch of perfection that they could be wicked, and not guilty; to such a health of spiritual goodness, that sickness itself might be their health; to such a constitution and temper of holiness, that no acrazy, no “distemper,” could alter it: like those *Bequinæ* in the historian, or those Indian Gymnosophists, who by a few years’ austerity had purchased an age of licentiousness and luxury. They were now become *νόμου νομιμώτεροι*, “more regular than the rule, more exact than the law,” more bright than light, above the command. Will you hear them in their own dialect? “A Hezekias is no better than a Sennacherib, a Constantine as unsufferable as a Julian; every magistrate a tyrant, and every tyrant a devil. What need of other guide than the Spirit, of other court than heaven, of other lash than that of conscience?” Speak we of tribulation? it is their portion. Injury is a benefit. Take away their cloak, they punish it with the gift of a coat. *Meum* and *tuum* † are harsh words in the church. They are almost of the mind of the Carpocratians in Clement, who,

\* “Laws of single combat.”—EDIT.

† “Mine” and “thine.”—EDIT.

because the air was common, would have their wives so too. Ridiculous men! who not only mistake their God, but would teach him. It is true, rather than thou shouldst take the sword into thy own hand, let thy eye go out, thy coat be lost, and thy right hand be cut off: but let the magistrate strike, and the blow is not a blow of revenge, but of justice. Morality teacheth us to do no wrong: that which religion addeth is no more but this,—to keep our mind in an habitual preparation for suffering it. And thus the Schoolmen and casuists out of Augustine interpret those precepts of our Saviour,—that we ought then to retain the heart of a friend when we have taken upon us the name of an adversary, and so compose ourselves that we should choose rather to lose our right than our charity.

But “charity seeketh not her own:” (1 Cor. xiii. 5:) a good argument not only to keep me from the tribunal, but to drive me also from the church. And yet he who bid me “cast my bread upon the waters,” hath prescribed me also that form of prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread.” It is true, *regulæ caritatis latius patent quàm juris*, “the rules of charity are of a larger extent than those of the law.” If thou owest a hundred measures of oil, charity takes the bill, and sits down quickly, and writes fifty: (Luke xvi. 6:) and if thy vessels be quite empty, she cancels the bill, and teareth the indenture. But it is as true, too, that “charity begins at home,” and “he that provides not for his own family is worse than an infidel.” (1 Tim. v. 8.) These precepts of our Saviour *non consistunt in puncto*, “are not to be read in that narrow compass [in which] they lie,” but have their certain latitude. Let my charity shine forth like the day, but not to darken the lustre of justice: let her stretch out her hand to the furthest, but not to reach at the sword of the magistrate.

And as they mistake our Saviour, so would they take upon them to teach him. A trick the world hath long since got, to be angry with God’s providence, to teach his wisdom, to guide his hand, and, as he in Photius, “to put their own shape upon the Deity,” and to confine and limit God to their own fancy. If that be thwarted, the most blessed peace is but tumult, the most gracious government tyranny, and order itself disorderly. “Why should Christ become man?” say some. “He might have satisfied” *γυμνή τῆ Θεότητι*, “with his bare, naked Divinity.” “If he will take flesh and redeem, he may do that and not satisfy,” say others. And saith the cardinal, “God had not dealt discreetly, if he had not established a visible and infallible, a universal, catholic, and yet particular,

church." And "if God be Judge of all men and *Deus ultionum*,\* what need then βουλευτήρια and δικαστήρια, these 'council-tables' and 'seats of judgment,' and the dread and horror of an earthly tribunal? what use of a sword in the hand of a magistrate?"

I have grappled, you see, with a mean adversary; but I found him in my way, and could not well balk him. I leave him to that censure of the philosophers on those who should deny either worship to God or love to parents, Κολάσεως δέονται. "He should smart under the authority he denies, and be confuted with the edge of that sword he questions."

But we shall meet with giants indeed. Not a sword you see but they snatch at. If they meet with two at once, *Ecce duo gladii*,† both theirs: and they take them, and put them into the hand of that man of pride; and he fights against authority, sword and bearer, king and Cæsar, Christ and all. They read these words as we do: and this "sword" is secular power with them too. But then this power is a subordinate and dependent power; this sword is a sword at will, as we say; a sword which, like Joseph's brethren's sheaves to his sheaf, must bow and make obeisance to the high priest's sword. And the magistrate is left palsy-stricken, and the sword tottering in his hand: a breath, a frown, of the supreme head disarms him. But O the artifice and sleight of Satan! The conclusion is, "He must be disarmed;" but the first proposition is, "He beareth his sword." For by these degrees and approaches they reach at it. The first step is, "He beareth the sword;" and "therefore he must be able to wield it; and therefore he must have some master of defence," the Pope forsooth, "to instruct him; and therefore he must guide his arm by his direction, and strike as he prescribes. If he misplace his blow, he must be corrected; if he be incorrigible, he must be disarmed." There is the last; *sylogismus verè destructivus*, "a bloody, destructive syllogism." Inauguration is the *medium*, and deposition inferred. This is a chain to bind kings in, and the first link is power. Here is a building ruined by the foundation which should sustain it, and the magistrate disabled by his commission.

Thus hath the yielding devotion and forward piety of some Christian emperors warmed and animated the bishops of Rome, and made them active to question that power which once did shelter them; and then the sword became their port and argument which was before their terror. For look back, and behold

\* "The God to whom vengeance belongeth." (Psalm xciv. 1.)—EDIT.

† "Behold, here are two swords." (Luke xxii. 38.)—EDIT.

them *temporibus malis*,\* when persecution raged; they were no sword-men then. You might see them in another posture; a borer in their eyes, a whip on their backs; no sword, but what was drenched in their own blood; and their crown was martyrdom. Or look and behold St. Paul here pleading the right of this magistrate, upholding that sword which he was to feel, adoring that power he sunk under, and bowing to majesty when the throne was Nero's. It is the gloss of a Jesuit upon the apostle; but he glosseth too upon that gloss: *Ecclesia non subvertit regna*: "The ephod and the robe suit well: the church thwarts not secular power, nor is one sword drawn to break another; but both together glitter in the face of disobedience, to strengthen the pillars of a kingdom." Let then both swords be drawn together: the one, to pierce through the heart, (Luke ii. 35,) the other, to drink the blood, of the wicked: (Deut. xxxii. 42:) the one, to cut out those *causarias partes animæ*, "those maims and bruises of the soul;" the other, to cut off the ungodly from the earth: the one, to hang over *ἐργαστήριον τῆς ψυχῆς*, "that laboratory and work-house of the soul," that no Babel be erected there, no curious piece of guile shaped there, no refuse silver come there, no works of iniquity set up there; but then vengeance lying at the door, and the other sword ready, if they come forth and appear, to abolish them, to pull down that Babel, to break those carved pieces, to dash those plots, to demolish these works: the one, to guide us *ἐν τοῖς πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν*, "in things pertaining to God;" the other, *ἐν τοῖς βιωτικαῖς*, "in matters of this present life."

We have now put the sword into the magistrate's hand. It is now time to proceed, and place the *non frustrà* upon the sword. Having settled authority in its proper subject, our next task must make good that it is not there "in vain:" our Second part.

II. Those actions which are irregular, and swerve from the rule, the philosopher calls *μισητὰ καὶ φαῦλα*, "odious, frivolous actions, to no purpose." *Nec quid, nec quare*: "No reason can be given why they should be done." Adultery to-night is pleasure; to-morrow, my disease. Murder is now my thirst; anon, my melancholy. Here is a *frustrà* indeed: I am more vain than vanity itself. But put the *quare*, the "wherefore," to me, and you have silenced me. But those things which are laid and driven to a right end will admit a *quare*: "Wherefore the sword? wherefore authority?" The apostle is ready, and meets you with an answer: "That we may lead a quiet and

\* "In bad times."—EDIT.

peaceable life in all godliness and honesty ;” (1 Tim. ii. 2;) that every man may sit under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree ; that the poor man may keep his lamb, and the jaw-bone of the oppressor be broken ; that peace may shadow the commonwealth, and plenty crown it. There is scarce one *quare* resolved with so many answers. Οὐ παιδιὰ τὸ πρᾶγμα, saith Basil : “This is not a matter of jest,” but earnest. For would you have divers families drawn into one body politic? This is *συνεκτικὸν τῆς ἀπάσης κοινωνίας*, “the very bond and tie of society.” Would you have the laws kept? This is *νομοφύλαξ*, “a watch, a guard set upon the laws.” Nay, would you have any laws at all? This is *νομοθέτης*, “the lawgiver.” For, as Julian calls the law *ἔκγονον τῆς δικῆς*, “the child of justice,” so may we call it the child of authority. For as authority nurseth and defendeth and strengtheneth it, so it was the midwife which brought it forth, and the mother too which conceived it. When it was *in semine, in principiis*,\* when it lay hid in the lap of the law natural, authority framed and shaped and limbed it ; gave it voice, and taught it to speak its own language, but more audibly ; declared, expounded, amplified it, and was its interpreter.

Will you have a church? Authority gathers it. Would you have the church continue so, a church still ; and not fall asunder into schisms, nor moulder into sects, nor crumble into conventicles? Authority is the juncture, the cement, the contignation, *φράγμος τῆς ἐκκλησίας*, “the pale, the fence, the wall of the church,” keeping it so that neither the wolf break in, nor the sheep get out ; that neither heresy undermine the bulwarks without, nor schism raise a mutiny within. Such an accord and sympathy there is between the secular and spiritual sword, between the church and body politic, that if the one be sick, the other complains *αὐτῷ τῷ χρόνῳ*, saith Socrates, “at the same time.” If the commonwealth swell into tumours and seditions, you may see the marks and impressions thereof in the church : and if the church be ulcerous and imposthume, you may see the symptoms and indications in the body politic. So that now we may well render *οὐκ εἰκῆ*, *non sine causâ* : † There is good cause, good reason, that a sword should be held up, that authority be established.

And to this *non frustra* we may add τὸ χρήσιμον. Authority is not only “not in vain,” but “profitable.” And we may now ask not only *Quare?* but, *Τίς ἢ ὠφέλεια* ; not only, “Wherefore? but, “What profit is there?” And we can answer and resolve

\* “But in its seed, in its first principles.”—EDIT.

† “Not without cause.”—EDIT.

with the apostle, Πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, "Much every manner of way." (Rom. iii. 1, 2.) For let cities talk of charters, and tradesmen of gain; let scholars speak of learning, and noblemen of honour; let the church sing of peace to the commonwealth, and the commonwealth echo it back again to the church: attribute these to what you will; this is τὰ πάντα, this is "all." This is Isaiah's "nail in a sure place," (Isai. xxii. 23,) on which hang both laws, and church, and commonwealth. If you but stir it, you endanger—if you pluck it out and remove it, you batter—all. And this argument *ab utili*\* quite shuts up *frustrà*. Τὸ συμφέρον, ἀγαθόν. "That which is profitable is good:" and that which is good is "not in vain."

But, to step one degree further: to this τὸ χρήσιμον we may add τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, "necessity" to "profit." Profit may lead me, necessity chaineth me. I run and meet with profit, but I am forced and plucked by necessity. And if it be not only well [that] it should be so, but be so as that it cannot be otherwise, then is it "not in vain." If not profit, yet necessity excludes *frustrà*. And necessary authority is, not so much on God's part as on ours. For, as Aquinas speaks of the natural temple, *Propter Deum non oportuit templum fieri*, "God had no need of a temple made with hands, but man had need that God should have one:" so God could have redeemed us by his own immediate absolute sovereignty; he could have governed us without a sword; but it was not good for man to be so governed. We were gone away from God, and [had] set ourselves at such a distance that it was not good he should come too nigh us. And therefore St. Basil calls it φιλανθρωπίαν, his "love to man," that as he had drawn heaven as a curtain, and made it παραπέτασμα τῆς Θεότητος, "the veil of his Divine Majesty," so in all his operations and proceedings upon man he is still *Deus sub velo*, "God under a veil;" hidden, but yet seen; in dark characters, but read; silent, and yet heard; not touched, but felt; still creating the world by conserving it. I say, Necessity hath put the sword into the hand. For God appears through other veils, by other mediums; but we hide the face, and will not see that light which flasheth in our eyes.

1. He is, First, *sub velo naturæ*, "under the veil of natural impressions," speaking to us by that law which Tertullian calls *legem naturalem*, and *naturam legalem*; † and speaking in us, but at a distance, preventing us with anticipations, dropping on us and leaving in us ἐννοίας κοινὰς καὶ ἐμφύτους, those "common notions and practie principles." To love God, hate evil, to wor-

\* "From utility."—EDIT.

† "Natural law, and legal nature."—EDIT.

ship God, and the like, *domi nascuntur*.\* To do as I would be done to, ἀρχαία ἐντολή καὶ ἡμῶν ὁμόχρονος, "it is my contemporary, my domestic, born and bred with me." I received it with my first breath; and it will live in me, though I attempt to strangle it; it will live with me, though I would chase it away. *Non iniquitas delebit*, saith Augustine: These things are written with the finger of God, and "sin itself cannot blot them out." But though I cannot blot them out, I may interline them with false glosses; though I cannot rase them out, I may deface them. My envy may drop on them, my malice blur them, and my self-love misplace them. On this foundation of innocence I may build in blood; on this groundwork of justice I may set up oppression. I may draw false consequences from these true principles: "I must do good;" I do so to myself when I wrong my neighbour: "I must shun evil;" I think I have done that when I run from goodness. Like those δύσκολοι in Aristotle, those "stiff and stubborn defendants," to what is first proposed we easily yield assent; but at last τερθρεύομεν, "we hunt-out tricks and evasions:" we are all sophisters; but it is to cheat and delude ourselves. And now if we read these principles in the world's corrupt edition, if unjust man may be the scholiast, thus they lie: see and read them: *Injuriam fecisse, virtutis est*: "'To do injury is virtue;' to oppress is power; craft is policy, murder is valour, theft is frugality; the greatest wisdom is, not to be wise to salvation."

2. And therefore, in the Second place, God presents himself again under another medium, *sub velo legis scriptæ*.† He would be read as it were in tables of stone. And in these tables he writes and promulges his law moral. Will this prevail? No; he must back and strengthen it with the judicial. Sin must be brought forth and seen in its own shape, murder wallowing in the blood she spilt, fornication in a white sheet with shame upon her forehead, blasphemy with its brains dashed out, idleness starved, theft *sub hastâ*, "brought to public sale, and condemned to slavery." But under the gospel hell itself is unlocked, her mouth opened, and all her terrors displayed. Who would now think that this were not enough to stay our fitting humour, to quell our raging temper, to bind our unlimited desires? Who would not think that this two-edged sword of the word would frustrate and annihilate all other swords? If I had set my face to destruction, this should turn me; if I were rushing forward, this should stay me.

\* "They are born in the home of the heart."—EDIT.

† "Under the veil

of the written law."—EDIT.



But, alas! we break through these *repagula*, we run over these *sufflamina*.\* God speaks in us by the law of nature; but we hear him not. He writes to us by way of letter and epistle in his divine law; but we answer him not. Besides this, we too often reject and reverberate his gracious instructions and incitements by the wise counsel and examples of good men. In both God beckoneth to us. It is now high time he speak to us through a veil of blood, that he put the bridle into our mouths. If hell will not fright us, then we must hear those more formidable words, as St. Augustine saith, more formidable to human ears, *Occido, proscribo, mitto in exilium*, "Death, proscription, banishment." *Tribuno opus et carcere*.† Lay the whip upon the fool's back. For to be thus questioned many times prevails more than a catechism.

Therefore Theodoret calls this sword, this power, *ἀλεξίκακον φάρμακον*, "a most catholic and sovereign remedy;" and Luther, *necessarium corruptæ naturæ remedium*, "a necessary remedy for weak, decayed nature." When the fear of God boundeth us not, *imponit timorē humanum*, saith Irenæus, "he awes us with the sword and human authority." When the distillation of his dew and small rain will not soften us, down come his hailstones and coals of fire to break us. A remedy it is [which] our disposition and temper looks for and requires. For we are led for the most part by the sense. We love and fear at a distance. And as the object is either nigh or remote, so it either affects or frights us. *Μάλιστα κακά, ἥκιστα αἰσθητά* "The greatest evils," and so the greatest goods too, "are least sensible." *Villam malumus quàm cælum*, saith Augustine: "We had rather have a farm, a cottage, than Paradise; and three lives in that, than eternity in heaven." We had rather be rich than good, mighty than just. St. Ambrose gives the reason: "For," saith he, *quis unquam justitiam contrectavit?* "who ever saw virtue, or felt and handled justice?" And as our love, so stands our fear: *Cæsarem magis timemus quàm Jovem*: "We fear man more than God," and the shaking of his whip than the scorpions of a Deity. A dag at hand frights more than great ordnance from the mount, and a squib than a crack of thunder. He that could jest at a Deity trembled at a thunderbolt. "The adulterer," saith Job, "watcheth for his twilight;" (Job xxiv. 15;) as if God had his night. And, "The ungodly lieth in wait to spoil the poor," saith David. He seeketh a day and an opportunity, as if God had not one every moment; and he doeth it

\* "Bars" and "impediments."—EDIT.

† "There is need of the judge

and of the prison."—EDIT.

“secretly,” (Psalm x. 9,) as if that ἔκδικον ὄμμα, that “revenging eye,” were put out. And though he stand as a butt for God’s vengeance, and a mark for his arrow, and fuel for his fire, the very centre wherein all God’s curses may meet; yet he cleaves to his sin, he hugs and embraces it. Would you have a separation and divorce made? It is more probable a whip should do it than a sermon, an officer than a preacher, a warrant than an anathema. You must sue for it in the court of justice, not in the church. So sensual, so senseless many are. Therefore the Holy Ghost in scripture presents and fashions himself to the natural affections of men. And that we may not turn bankrupts, and sport or sell away our livelihood and estate in heaven, and so come to a spiritual nothing, to bring us to the other world, he tells us of something which we most fear in this. To those who love liberty, he speaks of a prison, a jailor, an arrest: those who dare not step into the house of mourning, he tells of weeping and gnashing of teeth: and to those tender constitutions who can endure no smart, he threatens many stripes. *Non sine causâ gladium*,\* is the servant’s and hireling’s argument; and many times it convinces and confutes him, it dulls and deadens the edge of his affection. It destroys murder in anger, quenches adultery in the desire, sinks pride in the rising, binds theft in the very purpose; and, *ut seta filum*, “as the bristle draweth the thread,” it fits and prepares a way for charity and religion itself.

We may now, then, engrave this *non frustrâ* upon the sword; and settle it as an undoubted conclusion, that authority was not granted “in vain:” unless you will say that the law was in vain, and reason in vain, and man in vain: unless you will put the *frustrâ* upon the church, the world, hell, heaven itself. And if the sword be not in vain, then, in the next place, by an easy illation, the duty of the magistrate will follow; which is, *operam fortem et diligentem dare*, as the form runs, “strenuously to contend” *μήπως εἰκῆ, ne frustrâ*, “that he bear not the sword in vain;” my Third and last part.

III. There is no danger of a *frustrâ* but here. For *potestas habet se indifferenter ad bonum et malum*, saith Aquinas: “Authority, though directed and ordained to good alone, yet stands in an even aspect and indifferency to both good and evil.” In it is the life of the innocent, and in it is the destruction of the wicked; and it may be the flourishing of the wicked, and the death of the innocent. The magistrate may (as the devil is said to do) *ἀντιστρέφειν τὴν τάξιν τῶν πραγμάτων*, “invert the order of

\* “He beareth not the sword in vain, or without cause.”—EDIT.

things," put shame upon integrity, and security upon sin. The sword is an instrument; and he may use it as he will: and so of a fiery and sharp sword he may make it *gladium ficulneum*, "a wooden and unprofitable sword;" and then the drunkard may reel in the streets, and injury may rage at noonday for all that: or *pictum gladium*, no better than "a sword in a painted cloth," only to be looked upon. He may use it, not like a sword, but like David's razor, to cut deceitfully: (Psalm lii. 2 :) or he may let it rust in his hands, that, as that lawyer complained of the sword in his time, it may be fit for nothing but to cut a purse, let out a bribe.

Thus it may be. But our task is to keep off this *frustrà* from the magistrate. And see, in my text they are severed and diametrically "opposed;" *frustrà* is placed *e regione* point-blank to the magistrate. For the apostle lays it down *θετικῶς* and *ἀποφατικῶς*, he puts a *non*, a "negation," between them. He speaks it "positively," and he speaks it "destructively," *Οὐ φέρει*, "He beareth not the sword in vain." The *τὸ προσῆκον* and the *τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι*, "the duty" and "the power," "the office" and "the definition," [are] the same. "That which should be so is so, and it is impossible it should be otherwise," say the civilians. For at this distance these terms naturally stand. But when we read "a corrupt judge, a perjured juror, a false witness," we have conciliated them, and made up the contradiction.

These terms naturally stand at a distance: we must then find out something to keep them so, to exclude this *frustrà*, to safeguard the magistrate, that "he bear not the sword in vain." And we need not look far. For it is the first thing we should look upon; and the philosopher pointeth it out to us, *τὸν σκοπὸν ἔχειν*, "to propose an end." *Non agitur officium, nisi intendatur finis*, say the Schools: "I stir not in my duty, if this move me not;" and I faint and sink under my duty, if this continue not that motion. And down falls the sword with a *frustrà* upon it, if this uphold it not. I am but man, and my actions must look out of themselves and beyond themselves. I have not my completeness, my perfection, my beatitude within myself; and therefore I must take aim at something without myself to enfeoff and entitle me to it.

Now the magistrate hath divers ends laid before him: first, that first and architectonical end,—the glory of God; and then, that which leads to that,—the peace of the church; and that which procures that,—the preservation of justice; and that which begins that, the proper work of justice itself,—to stand

in the midst between two opposite sides till he have drawn them together and made them one; to keep an equality even in inequality; to use the sword not only *rescindendo peccatori*, "to cut off the wicked," but *communi dividundo*, to give Mephibosheth his own lands, "to divide to every man his own possessions." Then the *non frustra* is upon the magistrate as well as upon the sword, when the law is not only the edge of this sword, but *flabellum justitiæ*, "a fan to blow and kindle up justice" in the breast of the magistrate, that it may warm and comfort the oppressed, but to the wicked become *πῦρ καταναλίσκον*, "a consuming fire;" (Heb. xii. 29;) when he layeth not these ends aside, and instead thereof placeth others; for the glory of God, some accession and addition of honour to himself; for the good of the commonwealth, the filling of his coffers; for the peace of the church, the avoiding of a frown; for the right of the oppressed, his own private conveniences; and for the truth, mammon. There are many ends, you see; but that is most pertinent to our present purpose which the apostle sets down in this chapter,—terror to the wicked, security of the good, justice on both sides.

1. And, First, the magistrate, like God himself, *παιδεύει δι' ἐναντίων*, "governs us by that which is adverse to us," curbeth the transgressor by the execution of penal laws; which St. Basil calls *πῦρ πυρὸς ἑτέρου καθαρτήριον*, "a purging, cleansing, refining fire, even of that other fire," which, when it breaks forth, is lust, adultery, murder, sedition, theft, or what else may set the church and commonwealth in a combustion.

2. And, in the next place, this end hath its end too. For no magistrate doth simply will the affliction and torture of the offender, or punish only to show his authority, but *ἕνεκα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ*.\* He hath an end for that too. His power rests not in the evil of punishment, but looks further, to the good of amendment, and to the good of example; not to the taking off heads, but piercing of hearts; not to binding of hands, but limiting of wills; not to the trouble of the sinner, but the peace of the commonwealth. This is the very end of punishment, to destroy that proclivity and proneness to sin which every evil action begets in the very committing of it. Lay the whip upon the fool's back, and slumber is not so pleasant; bring him to the post, and he unfolds his arms. Set up the gibbet, the gallant's sword sticks in his scabbard; exact the mulct, and he hath lost the grace of his speech and half his gentility. Let the sword be brandished, and sin is not so impudent, but croucheth and man-

\* "For the sake of good."—EDIT.

tleth herself, and dares not step forth before the sun and the people.

“Gird then the sword upon the thigh, O most mighty.” (Psalm xlv. 3.) You who are invested with this power, remember the end. Remember you were placed with a sword, *hostire iniquitatem*, “in a hostile manner to pursue the wicked;” to run after the oppressor, and break his jaw, and take the prey out of his mouth; to destroy this wolf; to chase away the asp, the poisonous heretic; to cut off the hands of sacrilege; to pierce through the spotted leopard. And in doing this you perform the other part: you defend and safeguard the innocent. The death of one murderer may save a thousand lives; and the destruction of one traitorous Jesuit, as many souls. *Qui malos punit, bonos laudat*: “The correction of the evil is the commendation,” nay, it is the buckler, the castle, the defence, “of the good.” And it may prove, too, the conversion of the wicked. The blood of one wolf may work an alteration and change of another; the leopard may come to dwell with the kid, the wolf may feed quietly with the lamb, the lion may eat straw like an ox, and the asp play with a child. (Isai. xi. 6—8.)

The penal statutes are *πρωτότυπα*, “copies and samplers:” and a judge must do as a painter doth, saith Plato,—follow and imitate his forms and draughts. Where the law is drawn in lines of blood, he must not lay-on colours of oil: where the law shows the offender in chains, he must not present him at liberty: where it frowns, he must not draw a smile, nor, Timanthes-like, draw a veil, as not able to express that frown. No; he must take his proportions and postures from the law. Oppression must be portrayed with its teeth out; murder, pale, and wounded to death; idleness, whipped; the common barrator, with papers in his hat. He must *similem pingere*,\* not a man for a beast, not a dog for a lion, not a fox for a wolf, not manslaughter for murder, not usury for extortion, not deceit for oppression, not a sin of daily incursion for a devouring one. He must not depose and degrade a gallant boisterous sin, and put it in a lower rank, to escape unpunished with a multitude. The neglect hereof brings-in, not only a *frustrà*, but a *nocivum* with it: it is “hurtful and injurious.”

(1.) It heaps injury upon injury: and the first lights upon God himself, of whose divine power this power is a very beam; which, falling upon a minister of justice, falls as the rays of the sun upon a still quiet cloud; the reflexion is equal and glorious: but falling upon a corrupt unjust man, it falls as upon St. Jude’s

\* “Paint a resemblance.”—EDIT.

“cloud without water,” (Jude 12,) or St. James’s “wave of the sea, tossed with the wind and carried about;” (James i. 6;) the impression is flitting and vanishing, and the reflexion unsteadfast and unequal. That this beam from heaven should be cast away upon an empty cloud or a wave, is a piece of injustice. Besides, it is contumelious to God. For by injustice men undervalue him, and put him below his vassal, as if his omnipotency were weaker than man, his honour cheaper than a fee, heaven at a lower price than a bribe, and Christ himself not worth forty pieces of silver.

(2.) From God the injury descends to the commonwealth. It brings-in that which it should cast out. Sin unpunished makes a greater breach than sin committed. For adultery and murder, drunkenness and deceit, may give the blow, but injustice wounds: they may call for the vials of God’s wrath, but this poureth them forth: they may invite his vengeance, but this pulls it down. Talk of those numerous volumes of sin; but this is all, this doeth all. This dislocates and perverts the course of nature; this changeth it, saith Basil, εἰς ἀλλοκότους κράσεις, “into another temper.” It puts supernatural aspects upon natural effects. If it be a comet, it makes it ominous; if a vapour, it dampeth it with a plague. Will you have no sword hang over the commonwealth? Then use that power which is put into your hand. Would you have her of a healthy constitution and temper? Then cut off putrid and festered members. *Turpis est pars quæ toti suo non convenit*: “It is an ill member for which the whole body is the worse.” *Ut in sermone literæ*, saith St. Augustine, “As letters in a word or sentence, so men are” *elementa civitatis*, “the principles, the parts, which concur to make up the *syntaxis* of a commonwealth.” Ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις, saith he in Thucydides: “For men are the city.” But then each capital and grand offender is a letter too much, or rather a blur, in the sentence. Blot it out therefore, wipe him off from the face of the earth, and the composition is entire.

(3.) Thirdly. Many times the injury falls upon the offender; who hath lost his physic; (for punishment is *ιατρικὴ τῆς πονηρίας*, “medicinal, and doth heal;”) whose greatest punishment it is that he is so much wronged as to be befriended, and so much favoured as to be unpunished, to have his wounds exulcerate by a gentle hand, to be poisoned with oil, to be chained with liberty, and, being freed from prison, to bear about with him the cause of his imprisonment.

(4.) But the wrong rests and dwells in the magistrate; who in a manner abjures his office, degrades himself by his conni-

vance, and makes the sword less terrible by not using it; the not executing the law upon the greatest working a secret and reserved contempt thereof in the meanest. What speak you of the law? I can have it *in sudariolo*, "in the corner of my handkerchief." What, though it be vocal against me? I can silence it. What, fright you me with a sword? I can play with it. 'Ο ἀφανής τύραννος, "That invisible tyrant, gold," as Nazianzen speaks, domineers and kings it over the magistrate himself; and it is the judge, the advocate, the law, the sentence; and the magistrate sits guilty on the bench, and the lesser thief, saith Basil, holds up his hand at the bar.

Here is then the danger of a *frustrà*. And this is the authentic and original *frustrà*. And from the magistrate we transcribe this *frustrà* upon the law and authority too: for the law of itself is *surda res*, as the young men in Livy complained, "deaf and unexorable."\* Though thou speak aloud, it hears thee not; and though thou speak it fair, it regards thee not: it is immovable, like a rock; and it keeps its countenance, and stares the offender in the face. Thou canst not compliment with it. No riches can batter it, no power move it, no bribe alter it. If it seem to change countenance, it is not its own face, but the paint and visor of the magistrate. When injustice drives and beats upon this rock, that falls out which Tertullian observes of infidelity meeting with a convincing argument: Injustice prevail-eth, and the law is vanquished; and (which is monstrous) the ship is safe, and the rock shipwrecked. For the magistrate, as he is the life, so may be too the death, of the laws. In the law there is *vis movens*, and *vis obligans*, say the Jesuits; there is *regula* and *imperium*; and it looks upon two faculties of the soul. It is both "directive and co-active;" it is "a rule and a command," a rod and a staff. It hath its lightning and its thunder; it flashes upon the understanding, and it thunders upon the will; it directs and regulates, it obligeth and constrains. These be its proper and peculiar functions and operations. But then the magistrate may slumber and benumb it in all these; he may dead its force, and weaken its power, and slug its motions. He may beat back this lightning, and drown the noise of this thunder; he may put a *frustrà* upon it; that it would be better to have no laws, than to give them life, and then bury them alive; or, if you suffer them to live, to rack and torture them; to sell them to those crimes [which] they frown at; to give them to my wife, my friend, my servant, my lust.

\* *Historiarum* lib. ii. cap. 3.

Better no sword, than that a *frustrà* should be upon it, than that injustice should draw it.

O, then, you that have this sword put into your hands, as you tender the life of the laws, the peace of the commonwealth, the good of your brethren, the glory of God, the dignity of the sword itself, "bear it not in vain." Sever not the duty from the power: let not the sword destroy the bearing; nor one sword be living and eminent in the text, and the other ἐξίτηλλον, "like a flower in its fading, ready to wither and vanish and steal away." Think of your power, but think of your duty too: think of the sword, but think of the hand that bears it; and think of that Hand that put it into the hand, whose every finger is power. Think, then, it is a sword; and draw it against the most giant-like sinner, the most proud and insolent offender; and draw it for those grass-hoppers, even those who seem little and mean in the eye of the world, and those who perhaps lose in their esteem to preserve their honesty. Draw it *πρὸς φόνον*, and *πρὸς ἄμυναν*, "to cut off the hand of violence, and to guard and shelter the innocent, and revenge his cause." Let wisdom direct your hand, and courage strengthen it. With the one pierce through to the truth, even through those black mists of trade and overture, and false accusations and crafty undermining, and those mists which either the lawyer, or witness, or informer shall cast, and those fogs, which the corrupt heart of man may send up, of ambition, covetousness, pride, uxoriousness: and then, like good archers, having found your mark, be men, and draw up your arrow to the head. End not, where you began, with a fair intent and good resolution; but crown it with performance. March forward to the end; go on in that strength, O thou man of power. Let not a gift out of the bosom stay thee, nor a letter divert thee, nor a frown from greatness tire thee, till thou come *ad terminum*;\* till thou hast taken justice, and drawn her out of these mists, and dispersed these fogs, and led her through those retardations and encumbrances; till thou hast clothed thyself with her, and canst say thou hast finished thy course.

And to this end give me leave, Right Honourable, by way of conclusion, to be to you *a memorià*, not *a consiliis*,† for this time to be your "register," and to reach into your hands the book of records. And I find therein a curse enrolled for the souring of justice, for turning judgment into wormwood by corrupting, and into vinegar by delaying, it: and I find a day of visitation for not executing the judgment of the fatherless.

\* "To the goal."—EDIT.

† "A counsellor."—EDIT.



(Jer. v. 28.) But then in this book too I find as many blessings, in a fair and legible character, for executing of judgment, and destroying the wicked. Take, read them to your comfort: for the *non frustrà* of bearing the sword, many *non frustrà s*:—a *non frustrà* upon the church; “peace within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces:” a *non frustrà* upon the commonwealth; gold there as silver, and silver as brass: a *non frustrà* upon the laws; they shall now be seen and heard; they shall lighten, and they shall thunder: and a *non frustrà* upon yourselves. To you that thus bear the sword, it shall “not be in vain:” but in life it shall be your crown and garland; and in death, when the sword falls out of your hand, no cries of orphans, no tears of the widow, no groans of the oppressed, will disquiet your peace: but having resigned your power, delivered up your sword, *Jovi Vindici*, “to the God of revenge;” having, Curtius-like, given yourselves for your country, sacrificed yourselves, all yourselves,—your covetousness, your ambition, your self-love; he will receive his own, his deputy, his representative; and the *non frustrà* shall be seated with an *Euge*, not only “not in vain,” but “Well done.” And for a tribunal on earth you shall have a mansion in heaven. Your circuit shall be enlarged: you shall judge, not some shire or county, but the world; and be arrayed in whole robes of innocence, even of that innocency which you have protected. And for mortality you shall receive eternity, for power glory, for a sword a crown: which God grant us all for his Son Christ Jesus’ sake.

---

## SERMON XCV.

### CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

*Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.—*  
1 Peter ii. 13—16.

“LET every soul be subject to the higher powers,” saith St. Paul, the doctor of the Gentiles. (Rom. xiii. 1.) “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man,” saith St. Peter here, the

apostle of the circumcision. So this precept of obedience to governors reacheth home unto all: there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, but cometh under this law. We have two apostles (one whereof in another case "withstood the other to the face," Gal. ii. 11) both jointly standing up for the higher powers, even for that authority which struck off the head of the one, and nailed the other to the cross. Both deliver what they received from Christ: for what they lay down concerning authority is but an exposition and commentary upon Christ's, "Give unto Cæsar those things which are Cæsar's." (Matt. xxii. 21.) Obedience, submission, and subjection take in all, all even to a penny. Above all, we cannot but observe how wisely and fully both the apostles press this doctrine; how they fight with the same weapons to defend the king on his throne; how they bring the same arguments, arguments as irresistible as that power which they defend. Ὑποτασσέσθω, saith St. Paul;\* Ὑποτάγητε, saith St. Peter: † "to the higher powers," saith the one; "to kings, and to governors sent by them," saith the other. And they both walk by the same rule, ground their precepts upon the same reason. "All power is from God," saith St. Paul; and, "Submit for the Lord's sake," saith St. Peter. They both hold up the same sword, terrible to evil-doers, (Rom. xiii. 3, 4,) and which shall win "praise to them that do well." Again: "Not for wrath, but for conscience sake," saith the one: (verse 5:) "For so is the will of God," saith the other. And the will of God is in a manner the essence of every duty: it brings it home to the inward man, and to the very conscience; and leaves it not as matter merely arbitrary, but which must be performed upon pain of death and damnation.

Hitherto both these glorious apostles, as they "minded the same thing," so speak almost the same words; scarce any difference between them. But St. Peter seems to be more particular, and at large to unfold what is more briefly wrapped up by St. Paul. First, he strives to take off a foul imputation which was laid upon Christianity,—that it made men disobedient and refractory to government,—in these words: "That by well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Secondly, he taketh away all pretence from the Christian which might shake his loyalty, or make him cast a favourable eye on that disobedience which might open the mouth of an infidel, not only against the Christian, but even against Christianity itself; in these words: "As free, and not using your liberty as a cloke of maliciousness." Take the conclusion

\* "Let every soul be subject."—EDIT.

+ "Submit yourselves."—EDIT.

of the whole matter: 'Ανάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, "We must needs be subject." The king is placed in his throne; his governors sent abroad by him: and we must submit, 1. *Propter Dominum*, "because the Lord hath so commanded it." 2. *Propter nos ipsos*, "for our own sakes," "that we may live a godly and peaceable life," whilst the wicked are punished, and the good praised. 3. *Propter imprudentes*, "for those fools' sake," *qui hominum vitam rebus assignant*, "who are very ready to draw an argument from the person to blemish and deface his calling and profession." Nor can our freedom by Christ privilege us: for we must submit *quasi liberi*, "as free," and *quia liberi*, "because we are free." For to this end we are made free, that we should work all righteousness, and not make our freedom ἐπικάλυμμα τῆς κακίας, "a cloke of maliciousness;" that by obeying of kings and governors we may be the servants of God.

This is the sum of these words. In them there be divers circumstances observable, which we cannot handle now. We will therefore confine our meditations, and consider,

I. The object, which is πάντα ἀνθρωπίνῃ κρίσει, "every human ordinance;" which hath here its distribution into superior and inferior: First, the king; Secondly, those governors who are sent by him, and are his vicegerents.

II. What is meant here by "submission."

III. The motives to win us to the performance of this duty. One is drawn *ab autoritate*, "from the authority" of God himself, whose deputies kings and governors are: we must submit "for the Lord's sake." Another, *ab utili*, "from the good and benefit" we receive from them, in the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise and encouragement of those that do well.

Of these in their order; and, First, of the object: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man."

I. What this κρίσει ἀνθρωπίνῃ, this "ordinance of man," this "human creature," is, there is some dispute; and by divers hands it hath been fashioned and shaped as it were into divers forms. Some have tendered it as a law, as "a constitution, made by man." Others have presented it as a man, though not invested with authority; and so have made every man both a king and a subject: a king, to receive honour; and a subject, to give it: every man being bound by Christianity, as by a law, to esteem every man his superior, and better than himself. Some take it for the civil power itself, which though it be "ordained of God," and so is his "creature," yet it was first received and approved of men, and so may be said to be "a human constitution:" *a Deo*, saith St. Paul, because all power is derived "from

God ;” *humana creatura*, saith St. Peter, because even nature itself hath taught men this lesson, that “two are better than one,” (Eccles. iv. 9,) and that every family and every man is most safe in a collection and society, which cannot subsist but by a mutual dependence and a friendly subordination of parts, where some are governed, and others bear rule. To reconcile all, we may observe that rule in St. Augustine : *Turpe est disputantibus in verborum questione immorari, cum certamen nullum de rebus remanserit* : “It is a thing not seemly to dwell long upon the words, and to contend and criticize thereupon, when the sense is plain.” Though we cannot separate the power from the man whose power it is, yet it is plain, by the distribution which follows, that it cannot be meant of the power, but of the man upon whose shoulders the government lieth. For we cannot properly say of power, that it is either king or his deputy. It is very probable, what a late writer hath observed, that by this phrase the name of magistrate is expressed in general ; and that St. Peter calls him *κτίσιν*, “a creature,” as the Latins say, *creare consulem*, “to make or create a consul ;” and that he styles him “a human creature,” not that the magistrate hath his authority from men, but because magistrates themselves, who are endowed with this authority, are men. So that the word *ἀνθρωπίνη* hath reference, not to the efficient cause, but to the subject ; to the man in authority, who is the creature of God, from heaven, heavenly. Nor indeed is it much material which sense we take, but that the words will bear this last better than the other. For “as the man is, such is his strength ;” (Judges viii. 21 ; ) and as the magistrate is, such is his power. They are *ἐν τοῖς πρὸς τὶ*, and bear so near a relation that they cannot subsist but together : and St. Paul joins them together, and makes them one. For whom he calls “rulers” in one place, he calls “the higher powers” in another. They are “human creatures,” as being men, and for men ; but in respect of their power, “neither of men, nor by men,” further than their consent. No ; *Θειότατον ὁ βασιλεύς*, could the Pythagoreans say : “Kings and governors are creatures of God’s making :” and we may say of them as the people spake of Paul and Barnabas, “Gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.” (Acts xiv. 11.)

Now this human ordinance or creature, if you take it for the power itself, is still the same : and though it be conveyed by divers subordinations unto divers, yet it differs no more than water in the channel doth from what it was in the fountain. For as the king rules *in nomine Dei*, “in the name and place of

God;" so doth the lower magistrate judge the innocent and punish the offender, but withal *in nomine regis*, "in the king's name." But if we take it for the magistrate himself, then it hath degrees of *sub* and *supra*.\* 'Ο βασιλεύς, "the king," is ὑπερέχων, "supreme and transcendent:" the rulers and governors, which are sent and appointed by him, move in a lower sphere, and, as the stars, "differ from one another in glory." For, as we say in logic, that the middle *species* is the *genus* in respect of a lower, yet but the *species* in respect of the *genus*; so magistrates in comparison of inferiors are public persons, and yet again but private men in respect of him who is supreme. There is indeed a derivation, but no equalizing, of power. *Regis absolutum dominium*, "The king's dominion is absolute under God;" theirs who are sent, *concreditum et delegatum*, "dependent and by way of delegation." For the king is in the kingdom as the soul in the body: and the philosopher will tell us, *Anima est ubi animat*, "The soul is wheresoever it hath its operation." And so is the king wheresoever he ruleth: for he sends his governors, and by them conveyeth and lets forth himself, into every corner of his kingdom. His house is the tent, whilst the captain is a-commanding; the province, whilst the deputy is a-governing; the tribunal, whilst the judge is a-sitting; the consistory, whilst the bishop is a-censuring. And there is no place hid from his power; but his power is every where, where his laws are in force. For these governors are taken-in *in partem curarum*, "to ease the king of his burden;" not *in partem imperii*, "to share with him in his supremacy." The king, then, or emperor, is still ἐν ὑπεροχῇ, "in his sublimity," in the very zenith of state, and admits none to be above him, or in the same altitude. He is the first compassing wheel: others are carried about by his motion, moving as the king's law moves; and, as he gives charge in the comedy, *ubi hic respicit, illi continuo respiciunt*, "watching his eye, and commanding the execution of his laws."

In a word: the king is sent from God, *a quo est secundus, post quem primus*, "from whom he is the second, and after whom the first:" and the lower governors are sent from the king, who hath power from God thus to send them. Their sheaves must stand round about and make obeisance to his sheaf; the sun, and the moon, and the stars must yield submission to him, *ut supereminenti*, "as to one super-eminent;" (Gen. xxxvii. 7, 9;) and all men must yield obedience to the governors and magistrates, as to gods indeed, (for so they are called,) but *missis ab eo*,

\* "Of inferiority and superiority."—EDIT.

as "sent and deriving their power from him" who is supreme. And in this eminency the king stands *pro omnibus et supra omnes*, "for all and above all." Nor can any hand depose or draw him lower. None can draw him from that pitch and height where God hath placed him: but he is still supreme, as over the people, so over the priest. Nor doth the water of baptism wash off his ointment: he is not less a king because he is a Christian; but then supreme when he makes himself a servant to all. The Holy Ghost hath thus stiled him. And it may more truly be said of the words of God than of the words of consecration, *Id operantur quod indicant*, "They work that which they signify," and make him supreme whom they style so: supreme in temporal things, to appoint officers, to send out governors; and supreme in spiritual, "to punish them that do evil, and encourage them that do well." He is bound, indeed, *sceptra subjicere Christo*, "to lay down his sceptre at the foot of Christ," to "serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life," to "punish wickedness and vice," and to "maintain God's true religion and virtue." But all this, I am sure, cannot amount to this,—that he should come down a step lower, and yield to that *spiritual* power of the Pope, who pretends to direct and guide, but will at last devour, his *temporal*, and disrobe the king because he is a Christian. This were to make his supremacy, not a privilege, but a bare title, to be played withal, and tossed from gloss to gloss, from distinction to distinction; to call him "supreme" as they did that Pope "Boniface," who had indeed but a hard and displeasing countenance. Therefore, though the high priest turn politician, and take up two swords at once, the spiritual and the temporal, and by the word of God will make himself a God, to set up kings and depose them at pleasure; yet the king is in his zenith, in that pitch of majesty in which the hand of God hath placed him; and the nobles and magistrates whom he sends forth, circle and compass him about as a ring; using his power to defend his power; holding up his hands, as Aaron and Hur did the hands of Moses; ruling under him and for him, and keeping him still ἐν ὑπεροχῇ, "supreme above" both priest and people.

And "to the king, as supreme," and "to the governors, as sent by him," we stand here commanded to "submit ourselves:" which is the duty, and comes next to be considered.

II. To submit ourselves is a hard duty, from which our very nature is averse. Not to do what we would, and to be subject to whom we would not, is a hard saying, and few there are [who] can

bear it. (John vi. 60.) Such is the perverseness of our dispositions, that we would do many things which we omit, were they not tendered unto us under the high terms of a command. And this indisposition of our minds, this unwillingness to be brought under, though many times it hinders our submission, yet, when we subdue and master it, it crowns our obedience. We had need therefore of these remembrances, which may kill this humour in us, and make us obey, "not grudgingly, but with a willing mind." (2 Cor. ix. 7.) For this submission, how harsh soever the name sounds, is that by which we purchase our liberty. And as it is "perfect freedom" to serve God, so is it no impeachment to our liberty to submit ourselves to the magistrate, but we are then most highly exalted when we couch and lie down at his feet. *Dementia est potiùs trahi quàm sequi*: "It is a kind of madness, when authority speaks, to hold back and withdraw ourselves, to be drawn rather than to follow, and to submit rather upon the noise of the whip than of the law." We may perhaps think it a gay and pompous thing to sit in the throne or seat of justice; from thence to breathe forth words of power; to say to one, "Go," and to another, "Come;" to show what wonders we can work with a frown; to send forth edicts, and promulge laws. This may fill the minds of those whose eyes dazzle at the beams of majesty. But it is no paradox to say, that there is as great glory in obedience. For he who subjugates his will to the lawful commands of others, hath set up a throne within himself, and commands that which no king can force: nay, he sets up a tribunal in his soul, and passeth sentence upon the judge himself, and shows that he is as able to obey as the other is to command. He who is thus a servant is "the Lord's freeman;" and he who can thus obey is his own king and judge.

Now this submission consists not in the casting-down of the eye, or in the bend of the knee only, but in the yielding up and surrendry of the whole man:

1. Of the hand: not to lift it up against that power which is God's, and which, if we do not submit, will crush us to pieces. To say, "Hail, master," to the magistrate, and then to oppose him, is but, Judas-like, to kiss authority, and betray it. To say, with the church of Rome, "O king, live for ever," and yet to strike at his crown and dignity, is to leave him a crown indeed, but made of thorns, and to make his power more irksome than subjection. To stand up against those governors who are sent, and not to give them their due honour because they are not Cæsar, is a breach of the same law, and a flat defiance of the king, only one removed, and at the second-hand.

2. And as we must submit the hand, and not lift it up, so must we also the tongue. This member is very apt to swell, and lift itself up, and speak proud things. It will sooner blaspheme than pray; because prayers are troublesome, being to be uttered with an humble and submissive voice; but railing and liberty of language seem to place me above my betters, make me superior to my governors, a king of kings, and a lord of lords. Now this liberty of the tongue is well-near as dangerous as that of the hand. For no sooner hath discontent breathed itself forth, but it infects like the plague, because it commonly meets with those dispositions and tempers which are very apt to take it. No sooner is the word gone out of the mouth, but it enters the heart of the standers-by; "who," saith Mr. Hooker, "are very attentive and favourable hearers, to suck-in any poison which is breathed forth against the king or the governors who are sent forth; and anon it multiplies, and every valley and obscure corner is ready to echo it back again."

3. Lastly: as we must submit the tongue and the hand, so the thought also. Else the tongue will be a sharp sword still, and the hand ready to reach at every weapon and instrument of cruelty it finds. *Benè subactum cor*, "a heart well subdued and conquered," will nail the tongue to the roof of the mouth, and make the hands hang down as not able to strike. But if the heart be not hammered and softened and kept under, then the tongue will be loose, and run through the earth; and the hand will be lifted up to pull the king and his governors on the ground, and lay their honour in the dust. That disobedience which at last is talkative, and proves as violent as a tempest, was at first but a whisper in the heart: and an army drawn out in the field was at first mustered up *in cogitatorio*, as Tertullian speaks, "in the fancy," which is the shop and "elaboratory of the thoughts," and sets up a whole family of them in the soul. Kingdoms have been ruined, magistrates have been slain, states have been distracted, seditions raised: and all these had no more solid foundation at the first than a thought. That we may, therefore, truly "submit to the king and his governors," we must *κοιμίξιν τῶν ἀτόπων λόγων τὰ πάθη*, as Chrysostom speaketh, "slumber all vain and absurd imaginations;" lest that pleasure which we do not repress in the fancy, do at last break forth and domineer in action; lest that which is now but a discontented thought, may gather strength by degrees, and at last break forth into open impatience and disobedience. And if our own safety and security, if the peace of the commonwealth, if plenty and prosperity, be not of force enough to shackle our hands, to shut up our lips, and to keep down our thoughts from



rising in our hearts; if these be weak motives, let him that shakes the heaven and the earth move us, and let us "submit to" at least "governors for the Lord's sake:" which is the first motive, drawn from the authority of God himself, and comes now to be handled.

III. 1. And this is a motive indeed, τὸ μέγιστον καὶ κυριώτατον, "the greatest and most winning" motive. For the will of God is the rule of all our actions. Man, who is a reasonable creature, made after God's own image, must hearken to God's voice, bow down to his authority, and, amongst all his attributes, especially look upon his will. If he had no eye to see us, no hand to strike us, no thunder to destroy us, yet what he willeth we must do, because we are his creatures and the work of his hands. Hath discontent drawn thy sword? Let the will of God sheath it. Do thoughts arise in thy heart? Let the remembrance of this slumber them. Art thou now ready to smite the magistrate, and those who are in authority, with the tongue? Seal up thy lips "for the Lord's sake:" not for fear of the whip, or the keen edge of authority, which commonly cuts through the heart of those who rise up; not because the magistrate's hand is too heavy for thee, and keeps thee under; but "submit for the Lord's sake."

Now we may be sure it is to be done "for the Lord's sake:" for, "All power is from God," saith the apostle; (Rom. xiii. 1;) all authority is his. *Ille regna dispensat cujus est orbis qui regnatur, et homo qui regnat*: "He disposeth of kingdoms who made the world which is governed, and the men that govern." *Inde imperator unde homo antequàm imperator*: "The king receives his power from that hand which made him, and his commission from that mouth which first breathed into him the breath of life." For the emperor to say, *Mihi hoc imperium peperit*, "This sword hath gained me the crown," is foul ingratitude. And for the Pope to say, *Mihi data est potestas*, "All power is given to me, to root up and plant as I please," is high treason against the Majesty of heaven and earth. Indeed St. Peter calls the king "the ordinance," or "creature, of man:" and so he may be, and yet the creature of God also. For though this power be communicated by the consent of men, yet notwithstanding it is also from God; as water is from the fountain, in what channel soever it is carried along.

Behold, then, it is God's power; and if thou lookest upon the man, who is thy fellow, dust and ashes; if thou lookest upon his weakness and infirmities, which peradventure thou mayest discover in the midst of all his glory and majesty; and

thereupon art unwilling to submit for the man's sake, who is of like frailty and passions with thee; or for the king's sake, who is but a man; or for authority's sake, which hath no pleasing aspect; yet do it "for the Lord's sake," and because the authority is his. For his sake do it, though it be to a man; though it be to a man of infirmities; though it be to authority, which sometimes speaks bitter things. It may peradventure be a sin for thee to obey; but it shall never be laid to thy charge, if thou "submit." This, I say, is a strong motive. And indeed that is true submission which draws a *Jove principium*, "its beginning from God," which is from heaven, heavenly, which is brought about by religion and conscience. That obedience is a sacrifice which I offer up "for the Lord's sake." That obedience more resembles God and his eternity, because it is constant and lasting. But that submission which, like Pharaoh's, is driven on with an east wind, passeth away with that wind, or moves—like the wheels in a clock, no longer than the plummetts are on—no longer than fear or hope, or other human considerations, stir it about. When these are taken off, or fall to the ground, *propter Dominum*, "for the Lord's sake," will little avail: though God speak once and again, yet we lift up our heads, and stand stiff against authority. And therefore, though this be a motive one of a thousand, one that may stand alone by itself, our apostle here backs it with another,—not so powerful in itself indeed, but to flesh and blood more persuasive,—which he draws *ab utili*, "from the good and benefit" we receive from kings and governors, in "the punishment of evil-doers, and praise of them that do well:" with which we will conclude.

2. These two, reward and punishment, are as two pillars to uphold the body politic. For though we ought, as the orator speaks, *virtutes propter seipsas gratis diligere*, "to love every virtue for itself," and for that native beauty which the eye of reason doth soon discover;\* and though *interest omnium rectè facere*, "it concerns every man," though there were no cord of love to draw him, "to do that which is right and just;" yet if the sword be not as ready to protect the innocent as to devour the wicked, if there be not praise for the one as well as punishment for the other, the best will soon fail in their duty, and sink and fall in the performance, wanting that spirit which should cheer them up, and keep them in life and action. The king and his governors, as they "scatter and fan away evil with their eyes," (Prov. xx. 8,) so do they derive a kind of influence on goodness, to make it grow and flourish.

\* CICERO *De Finibus*, lib. ii. cap. 26.

Authority is both a sword and a buckler; a buckler for the innocent, and a sword to cut off the wicked from the earth. And in this respect Synesius, in his twelfth Epistle, tells us that this δημόσιον ξίφος, this "public sword" of justice, is as necessary for the purging of a city, for the scouring of all mischief out of it, as the great basins, which were wont to be set at the entrance of temples, were for the cleansing of their hands who were to enter. And therefore it is an axiom in policy subscribed to long since, that it is better to live *sub durâ lege quàm sub nullâ*, "under the hardest law than under none at all;" to live in a state where the least apparency of offence is punished with rigour, than under such an one where every man may do what is pleasing in his own eyes without restraint. For severity, or tyranny, (as one observeth,) is but like a tempest or whirlwind, that throweth down here and there a fruitful tree, and here and there peradventure a tall cedar: but confusion and anarchy, like a deluge, sweepeth away all before it, all the fatness of the earth, all the increase of cattle; beats down towns and countries, and makes of walled cities a wilderness. Whilst justice and authority prevails, "he that soweth, soweth in hope; and he that thresheth, thresheth in hope, that he may be partaker of his hope," as the apostle speaks: (1 Cor. ix. 10:) but in confusion the proverb is fulfilled: "One soweth, another reapeth;" (John iv. 37;) and, as it is said of that community of the first Christians, no man can say that that which he possesseth is his own. (Acts iv. 32.)

Now the proper work of the magistrate is not only to cut off the wicked from the earth, but to divide to every man his own possessions; to "break the jaw of the ungodly, and to take the prey out of his mouth;" to be a wall of brass to the innocent, and terror to the wicked. And this will usher-in a myriad of blessings, and make up that hymn, that angelical anthem: "Peace on earth, good-will towards men, and glory to God in the highest heaven." (Luke ii. 14.) For to punish evil persons, is to do a cure upon those who have broken the laws, and upon others also, that they may not break them. And the magistrate, like God himself, doth *de perverso sanare*, "govern us by that which is adverse to us;" and in the way of the transgressor he placeth *contrarium aliquid et impedicans*, "sets up something to stop his course," to check his violence, to curb him in his full career; to wit, the execution of penal laws, which is the execution of the very anger of God. Nor doth he βούλεσθαι ἀπλῶς, "simply will," the affliction and torture of the offender, nor rests in the evil of punishment; but he looks forward to the good of amendment. For this is the very end of punishment,

to destroy that proclivity and proneness which is in evil men to break their bounds ; to take off the *illicebæ*, “the enticement and allurements,” of sin ; to wash off its paint ; to pull the honeycomb from the lips of the harlot, to wipe the oil from off her mouth ; to sour the sweetness of stolen waters ; and by the sharpness of external terror to take away the savour and complacency of some habitual delightful sin : that so “every man may sit under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, and drink waters out of his own cistern ;” (Isai. xxxvi. 16 ;) that peace may shadow the commonwealth, and plenty crown it ; that oppression grind not the face of the poor, nor lust climb up to an unlawful bed, nor deceit remove the landmark, nor sacrilege destroy the temple ; *ut peccare non liceat*, “that evil-minded men may not be so miserable as to carry a licence about with them to commit sin,” nor a protection in their bosom from the stroke of punishment.

Thus doth, not only the hand, but the eye, the counsel and wisdom of the king, who is “supreme,” and of the governors, whom he sends, “scatter away all evil ;” fight against corruption in religion, in manners, in doctrine ; that “truth and peace may kiss each other.” (Psalm lxxxv. 10.) Thus are they sent out to watch over us for our good. This they do for us : and we cannot do less than submit unto them, if not “for the Lord’s sake,” yet for our own, whose affairs they manage, whose estates they secure, whose sleep they make sweet, and labour fruitful ; by whose means we enjoy much peace. *Parce tibi, si non Carthagini* : \* If we will not submit unto them for the commonwealth’s sake, yet let us do it for our own ; if not submit unto them, yet at least to our own good, to that which is our wealth, our safety, our happiness. And let us not only submit unto them, but bow the knee and fall down before that God “by whom kings reign, and governors decree justice ;” (Prov. viii. 15 ;) and offer up strong cries and supplications to him, that he would preserve our most pious and religious king Charles, and “bind up his soul in the bundle of life ;” (1 Sam. xxv. 29 ;) that he would “give his judgments to the king, and his righteousness to” those “governors who are sent by him ;” (Psalm lxxii. 1 ;) that so the Lord may speak peace unto us, and to our land ; that we be not led into captivity, and that the enemy be never able to shoot an arrow amongst us ; that whatsoever the king doeth may please the people, and whatsoever the people do may be for the safety of the king ; that God would bless and protect both king and nobles, and the “governors who are sent,” and the people, for evermore.

\* TERTULL. *Ad Scapulam*, cap. v. See also vol. i. p. 460.—EDIT.

## SERMON XCVI.

## THE DESTRUCTION OF GOD'S ENEMIES.

*Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish in the presence of God.—Psalm lxxviii. 1, 2.*

I WILL not stand to reconcile opinions which may arise concerning the title and occasion of this Psalm; whether it be τῷ Δαβὶδ, or τῷ Δαβὶδ, “A Psalm of David’s” composing, or, “A Psalm made for him,” and delivered *per manum David*, “by the hand of David,” “to him that excelleth,” or “the master of music.” Whosoever composed it, at the first hearing of the words you cannot but apply it to our present occasion. For enemies God hath, who are gathered together; and our prayer is, they may be scattered: enemies that hate him, and defy him to his face; and these we should be glad to see fly from his face. Our hope is, they are but smoke, and may be driven away; but wax, in appearance a hard and solid body, strongly united and compact together by the devil’s art; but yet, as wax, will “melt before the fire” of his wrath, and, when it shall please God to arise, shall “perish at the presence of God.”

You may, if you please, take the words either as a prayer or as a prophecy: as a prayer, that they *may*—or as a prophecy, that they *shall*—be scattered. Or you may read it, *Surgente Domino*, “As soon as the Lord shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered;” and so make it a theological axiom: and so it is a proposition *aternæ veritatis*, “everlastingly true;” true in the first age of the world, and true in the last age of the world, and will be true to the world’s end. We may make it our prayer that they may be destroyed; and we may prophesy that they shall be destroyed. *Summa votorum est, non ex incerto poscentis, sed ex cognitione scientiæque sperantis*, saith Hilary: “It is a prayer, not proceeding from a doubting and wavering heart, as if God did at some times deliver his church, and at others fail and leave her to the will of her enemies; but grounded upon certain knowledge and infallible assurance that he will arise, and not keep silence, and avenge himself of his enemy.” For there is a kind of presage and prophecy in prayer: if we pray as we should, he hath promised to grant our request; which is

a fairer assurance than any prophet can give us. "Let God arise," and, "God will arise," is but the difference of a tense; and the Hebrews commonly use the one for the other.

Whoever compiled this Psalm, most plain it is that he borrowed it from Moses, who, when the ark set forward, used this very form: "Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee fly before thee;" and, when it rested, "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel." (Num. x. 35, 36.) Now the occasion of this Psalm is diversely given. The Jews refer it to the overthrow of the army of Sennacherib, when the angel of the Lord smote in one night a hundred four-score and five thousand of the Assyrians. (2 Kings xix. 35.) Others, to David's victories over his neighbouring enemies, the Ammonites, Moabites, Syrians, and Idumæans. Others, to the pomp and triumph in which the ark was removed by David from Kirjath-jearim to the house of Obed-Edom, and from thence to Sion, its resting-place. (2 Sam. vi.) The fathers, most of them, apply it unto Christ, who most gloriously triumphed over the devil and the powers of this world, and "showed them openly;" who "led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men," as St. Paul himself borroweth the words out of this Psalm. (Eph. iv. 8.) Take the clef how you please, the notes will follow, and we may take them up. No Assyrian so cruel, no Rabshakeh so loud, no Ammonite, no Moabite, no Philistine so bloody, as a Jesuit, or a Jesuited Papist. Take in the devil himself; and then you have a parallel, the wicked one, indeed, *παντοίας κακίας δημιουργός*, as Basil terms him, "the wonderful mischief," who, like the tyrant in the story, if all men in the world had but one neck, would strike it off at a blow; as his instruments at this day would ruin three kingdoms by shaking of one. Or, if you please, suppose now you saw the children of Israel moving their tents, and the ark, which was the pledge and testimony of God's presence, on the Levites' shoulders; and the same thought almost will apply it to the church, where we may be sure God is as present as he was in the ark. Indeed wicked persons, as wicked as the Amalekites, have a long time endeavoured, and do now strive, to throw it down from the shoulders of those that bear it, and cannot endure to hear that God should be worshipped in spirit and truth. But no Amalekite, no Ammonite, no Jebusite, no Philistine did overthrow the one; no Jesuit, no devil shall prevail against the other: but the ark shall be brought to its resting-place, and the church, which is "the pillar of truth," shall be upheld by the truth; and, after many removals, after many

persecutions, after many oppositions, though the devil rage, and wicked men take counsel together, shall be brought in triumph to its resting-place, and appear before God in Sion. God will never fail his church. Though his enemies gather themselves together, they shall be scattered; though they fight against him with hatred and malice, they shall fly before him. They are but smoke, and they shall vanish; they are but wax, and they shall melt away. Upon an *Exsurgit* follows a *dissipabuntur*. If "God arise," all the plots and machinations of his enemies "shall be but as smoke." You may pray for it; you may conclude upon it: "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered:" or, "God will arise, and his enemies shall be scattered: they also that hate him shall fly before him," &c.

In which prayer, or prophecy, or conclusion, you may, as in a glass, behold the providence of God over his people, and the destiny and fatal destruction of wicked men. Or you may conceive God sitting in heaven, and looking down upon the children of men, and laughing to scorn all the designs of his enemies; his *Exsurgat*, his "rising," as a tempest to scatter them, and as a fire to melt them. And these two, *Exsurgat*, and *dissipabuntur*, the "rising" of God, and the "destruction" of his enemies, divide the text, and present before our eyes two parties, or sides as it were, in main opposition. Now though the *Exsurgat* be before the *dissipabuntur*, God's "rising" before the "scattering," yet there must be some persons to rouse God up and awake him, before he will rise to destroy. We will, therefore, as the very order of nature required, consider,

I. First, the persons; who are noted out unto us by three several appellations, as by so many marks and brands in their forehead. They are, 1. Enemies, 2. Haters, of God; 3. Wicked men.

II. But God rising in this manner is more especially against the fact than the person, and against the person but for the fact. We must therefore search and inquire after that; and we find it wrapped up and secretly lurking in the *dissipabuntur*, in their punishment. For "scattering" supposeth a gathering together, as corruption doth generation. That, then, which moved God to rise was this: His enemies, they that hated him, the wicked, were gathered together, and consulted against God and his church: as we see it this day; and, seeing it, are here met together to fall down before God in all humility, that he may arise and scatter them. This is *nunc opportunitatis*, "the very time, and appointed time," for God to arise: in which phrase is implied a kind of pause and deliberation, as if God were not

always up, and ready to execute judgment. And hereby he manifesteth, 1. His patience to the wicked: he is not always up, as it were, to destroy his enemies. 2. His justice, which cometh at length, though it come not so soon as men in misery expect. 3. His mercy to his children: though for a while he seem to sleep, and not to hearken to the voice of their complaints, yet at last he rises up and helps them.

III. Lastly, we shall take notice of the effect or end of this rising; and that is the destruction of his enemies, here drawn out to our view in four several expressions, as in so many colours: 1. *Dissipabuntur*, "They shall be scattered;" 2. *Fugient*, "They shall fly;" 3. *Deficient*, "They shall vanish like smoke;" 4. *Liquefient*, "They shall be melted as wax:" which all meet and are concentrated in *Peribunt*, "They shall perish at the presence of God." And of these in their order.

I. We are to find out, First, the parties here to be scattered: and they are termed,

1. The enemies of God. And we may conceive it a very hard matter to find out any at jar and opposition with God, whose very essence is goodness, whose power is irresistible, whose justice is impartial, whose "eye is ten thousand times brighter than the sun," whose "word runneth very swiftly," and whose word did make, and whose word can dissolve, the world. "I know," saith Job, "that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." (Job xlii. 2.) And from this knowledge of his he draws this conclusion and resolution,—to "abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Verse 6.) Behold the angels: they are ravished with his infinite beauty, and fall down at his feet. The creature keeps itself in a natural and constant league and friendship with him. He commands the sea, and it obeys: the moon knoweth her "seasons, and the sun his going down." (Psalm civ. 19.) All the creatures observe that course which he hath established; not guilty of sacrilege, as Tertullian calls it, or rebellion against the Lord their Maker; which is their concord and sympathy with his eternal goodness. Look on the whole universe, and you find no enemies to God but the devil and those *quos perditus cupit perdere*, "whom, being destroyed himself, he desires to bring into the same destruction." Here, then, we may find God's enemies, even amongst those whom he created after his own image, whom he made capable of eternal happiness, whom he was willing to call his friends. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib:" (Isai. i. 3:) every creature is at his beck, and bows down in an humble sub-



mission unto his will. Only man doth not consider the wonderful beauty and love and goodness of his Maker; but embraceth vanity, and makes leagues with death itself, and, for the love of every trifle that flatters his fancy, is presently at odds and opposition with his Creator.

2. Amongst men, then, are God's enemies; nay, *θεοστυγεῖς*, as St. Paul calls them, and as they are here termed in the text, "haters of God;" not only *odio inimicitiae*, "by being at odds and variance with him," and by the neglect of his commands, but *odio abominationis et fugæ*, "by running back from him in all their ways," being angry with his providence, ready to teach his wisdom, controlling his precepts, loathing his ordinances, which is in effect to wish there were no God at all. Consider God in himself, as he is *τὸ χρηστόν*, as the philosophers call him, "the perfection of goodness;" as he is *ἀρχέτυπον κάλλος*, "that infinite and exemplary beauty;" as he is *φιλόανθρωπος*, "the Lover of mankind;" (for so he delights to be called;) and in this perfection and beauty and love we cannot more hate him than we can be ignorant of him who filleth all things. But then consider and behold him in those beams and radiations which flow from him, in the effects of his providence and justice, which though they always fall even in a right line where they should, yet many times they thwart and fall cross to our inordinate wills and affections; and so the world is full of "enemies and haters of God;" men who are angry with the commands of Godness, because they will be evil; men who repine at his instructions, because they will not obey; men who murmur at his threatenings, because they deserve his judgments; men who would, if it were in their power, pull him out of heaven, because he sitteth there to fling them down to hell.

We have a common saying, but it is not so true as common, that "all men are naturally enemies to God." This cannot hold of that nature in which we were created. For no man doth or can hate God till he have first given God a just occasion to hate him; no man can be his enemy till he offend him: for to keep God's commandments is to love him. But "then when lust hath conceived, and hath brought forth sin," as St. James speaks; "and when sin is finished, and hath brought forth death;" (James i. 15;) then when men fear the heat of God's displeasure, and look upon his hailstones and coals of fire now ready to fall upon them; there ariseth that dissonancy and disaffection which is the cause of hatred between God and man. *Odium timor spirat*, saith Tertullian: "Hatred is a kind of exhalation, and breatheth from fear." And as it is amongst

men, so is it here: *Proprium est humanæ infirmitatis odisse quem læseris*: "It is proper and peculiar unto us to hate those whom we have wronged." So here, when we have drawn God's sword against us, and tremble at the blow which is ready to be given, then we turn countenance against God, and are not only *inimici*, "enemies," but *osores*, "haters," of God. Then the very common notions with which we were born begin to be slurred and blemished in us: our envy drops on them, our malice discolours them, and our lust polluteth and defaceth them. As for God, the thought of him is not in all our ways. And now when God saith, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," no bed is pleasant but that of the harlot; and when he says, "Thou shalt not steal," no bread is sweet but the stolen; and though he say, "Thou shalt not lie," yet we make lying as common as our language: and we break the two tables of the law, not in zeal, with Moses, but in opposition, with a heart full of rancour and malice against God himself.

And this is it, I conceive, which Aquinas meaneth when he tells us, *Prius est odium proximi quàm Dei*, "We first wrong our neighbour, and then God." First we oppose those decrees which God hath passed to bound and limit us in our conversation, and so by consequence bid defiance to the eternal Lawgiver. For he that slanders his neighbour, will be as ready to blaspheme God; nay, in slandering his brother he doth blaspheme his Father which is in heaven. He that taketh his brother by the throat rather than his humour should be crossed, if God were within reach, would pluck him out of heaven. And thus we grind him in our oppression, we rob him by our sacrilege, we wound him by our cruelty, we pollute him with our lust. If he make laws, we make it our strength to break them. If he raise one to the pinnacle of state, and leave us in the dust, we quarrel at his justice. If he establish government, we desire change. And though he build his church and found it upon himself, yet we are ready with axes and hammers, and all the power we have, to demolish it. When he hath a controversy with us, we hold a controversy with him; and nothing pleaseth us but the work of our own hands. Men never fight against God till the thunderbolt is in his hand, ready to fall on them.

And now we may descry those peculiar "enemies and haters of God" whom the prophet here prays against, even those who are enemies to the truth and the peace of the church. I told you that this prayer was uttered by Moses at the removing of the ark. When the ark was lifted up on the Levites' shoulders, the voice and acclamation was, *Exurgat Dominus*, "Let the

Lord arise." (Num. x. 35.) And therefore we may observe, that Moses and David did call the very ark itself "God;" not that they were so idolatrous as to make a wooden god, but that they knew the ark to be the surest testimony of God's presence here on earth. So that God's enemies are those who are enemies to the ark, to the church of God, and to the peace of the church. And let men flatter themselves as they please with this or that fair pretence, they shall certainly learn this lesson in the end,—that they may as well fight against God himself as against the church; that neither they nor the gates of hell can prevail against it.

To draw this yet closer to our purpose: The ark was a type of the church; nay, by the apostle's quotation of this Psalm, the words, though they are verified in both, yet are more applicable to the church than the ark. And though we do not call the church "God," yet we shall find that God is married unto her; that he is ready to hide her under his wing; that he is jealous of the least touch, the least breath, that comes toward her to hurt her; that he that toucheth her toucheth the apple of his eye. When the church complains to God of her enemies, God also complains as if he himself suffered persecution. When Saul "breathed forth threatenings and slaughters against the disciples of the Lord," he presently hears a voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And that voice was the voice of God, which struck him to the ground. (Acts ix. 1—4.) When St. Stephen tells the "stiff-necked" Jews that they "always resisted the Holy Ghost;" he presently in the next verse gives the reason: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" (Acts vii. 51, 52.) So that to persecute the prophets—that blessed proto-martyr may make the commentary—is "to resist," ἀντιπρέπειν, "to fall cross with, the Holy Ghost," with God himself. "Touch not mine anointed," saith God, "and do my prophets no harm." (Psalm cv. 15.) "Touch them not; for they are mine." And, "Whatsoever you do unto one of them is done unto me," is true in the bad sense as well as in the good. (Matt. xxv. 40, 45.)

For certainly God cannot be touched any other way. Our blasphemies, our uncleanness, or rebellions, though they fight against him, yet touch him not: but when wicked men conspire against the truth and the professors of it; when their swords are drawn, not only to touch, but to strike them through; then up God riseth, and bestirs himself, as if he were in danger to be touched and hurt. We know, all that the devil worketh against mankind is done out of malice to God himself. *Prius volum*

*dæmonis fuit Deum esse ; alterum, ne Deus esset :* "His first attempt was to be God ; his second, that there should be no God at all," to destroy that majesty which he could not achieve. Which since it is impossible for him to compass, all his devices and machinations are, *nullum sinere ex portione Dei esse*, as the father speaks, "to rob God of his inheritance ;" to strike at *his* heart *whose* knee bows unto him ; to persecute them that sincerely worship him ; and to make all men like unto himself, enemies to God. To this end he sets upon the ark, he levels his forces against the church of Christ, he sends forth his emissaries, his instruments, "his apostles," as Synesius calls them, to undermine it without, and raises mutinies within. Not a heresy but he hammers it, not a schism but he raiseth it, not a sword but he draws it, not a rebellion but he beats up the drum. *Inimici ejus*, "God's enemies," are the devil and his complices ; who say of Jerusalem, the place of his rest and delight, "Down with it, down with it, even to the very ground." (Psalm cxxxvii. 7.)

We know now where to rank his disciples, our enemies this day, who have already shaken the pillars of one kingdom, and, if God rise not up, will ruin all ; whose religion is rebellion, and whose faith is faction ; whom nothing can quiet, but a *Desunt vires*, a "want of strength." Poor souls ! they are willing to suffer for "the holy cause ;" they are obedient to government, loyal to their prince, true to their country : that is, they are very willing to suffer any thing when they can do nothing. They will not strike a stroke, not they : not, indeed, when authority is too strong for them, and hath bound them hand and foot ; but if some wished opportunity unshackle them, if these cords fall from them, and they are once loose, then these dead men arise, and "stand up upon their feet," and make up "an exceeding great army." They were before as Ezekiel's dry bones, "very dry : " but when some fair opportunity, as a gale of wind, hath breathed upon them, behold, they live. (Ezek. xxxvii. 2, 10.) *Live?* ay, and come to the field, and fight against that authority under which they lay before as quietly as if they had been dead. And where can we rank these but amongst the enemies of God ? They saw the ark in its resting-place, the church reformed and flourishing, settled and established by the religious care of three glorious princes. They beheld their holy father the Pope every day more and more in disgrace amongst us : and I am half persuaded, had it not been for the turbulent and irregular zeal of some few amongst us, who think they never love religion till they toy and play the wan-

tons with it, his honour had ere this lain in the dust. For when were the skirts of that church more discovered, when was her shame more laid open to the world by many amongst us, who for their great pains have no better reward than to be called his "shavelings?" This they saw, and their heart waxed hot within them, and at last this fire kindled which is now ready to consume us. Before, they whispered in secret; now, they speak it on the house-top: before, they hushed up their malice in silence; now, they noise it out by the drum; enemies to the ark, enemies to the church, enemies to government and order, enemies to peace; which particulars make up this entire sum, *Inimici Dei*, "Enemies to God."

But now, what, if we see *Religionis ergó* written upon their designs; and that this rebellion was raised, and is upheld, "for the cause of God and religion?" Shall we then call them "God's enemies," who fight his battles, who venture their lives for the common cause, for Christ's vicar, for religion, for the church, for God himself? Πάντ' ἀγαθὰ, ὡς ἔφη Κιλλικίων· "All they intend is good." *Nihil malè, sed rem sacram facio*: "So said Cillicon: 'I do no evil; I do but sacrifice,'" when he betrayed a city.\* "Let us rise up in arms, let us cut the heretics' throats, let us destroy them that they be no more a nation: it is no harm at all, but an acceptable sacrifice to God." *Sed quid verba audio, cùm facta videam?* "What are words, when we feel the smart of their blows?" All this will not change their title, nor blot their names out of the devil's calendar, out of the number of those that hate God. For a man may be an enemy to God, and yet do some things for God's sake. And it is too common a thing in the world *sub religionis titulo evertere religionem*, "to cry up religion when we beat it down." The father well said, "Many good intentions are burning in hell." *Multa non illicita vitiat animus*: it is true, indeed, "The mind and intention may make a lawful action evil;" but it cannot make an evil action good. Propose what end you please; set up religion, the church, and God himself; yet treason and rebellion are sins which strike at his majesty. No enemies to those who stroke us with one hand, and strike us with the other; who dig down the foundation, and then paint the walls. We may observe, when reason and scripture fail them, they bring-in the church at a dead lift; and when they are put to

\* Cillicon was a Milesian who enriched himself by the betrayal of his country to the Prieniens. In the course of his preparations for this base act, being asked what he was about to do, he replied, "All right: nothing bad." (See ERASMI *Adagia*, sub tit. *Magnifica Promissa*; also ARISTOPHANIS *Par*, 363.)—EDIT.

silence by the evidence of the truth, then they urge the authority of the church, and make this word to be like Anaxagoras's *mene* in Aristotle, to answer all arguments. The church is their scare-sun by which they fright poor silly souls from their faith. The church must make good purgatory, transubstantiation, invocation of saints, &c. And indeed this is the best and worst argument they have. And as they make it an argument for their grossest errors, so they have learnt to make it an excuse for treason, for rebellion, for murder: and to the church they are enemies, because they love the church.

*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum :*

“Such heart and life and blood doth the fair pretence of the church and religion put into wicked men:” so desperately do they fight against God under his own colours! no sin, (I will not say, venial,) but meritorious, drawn on for the advantage of the Catholic cause!

3. But, for all these glorious pretences, enemies they are, and haters of God, and, to bring-in the third appellation, “wicked” persons; not sinners of an ordinary rank, but giant-like sinners, who fight against God with a high hand. Now there is a great difference, saith Hilary, *inter impium et peccatorem*, “between a sinner and a wicked man: for every wicked man is a sinner, but every sinner is not a wicked man;” *et carent impietate qui non carent crimine*, “and they may be guilty of sin who are not guilty of impiety.” “The justest man alive falls seven times a-day;” (Prov. xxiv. 16;) but this fall is not a rising against God, not contumelious to his majesty. But the wicked make sin their trade, nay, their religion. *Deum, non ex Dei ipsius professione, sed ex arbitrii sui voluntate, metiuntur*, saith the same father: “They measure God, not by those lines by which he is pleased to manifest himself, but by their own perverse will. They entitle his wisdom to their fraud, his justice to their rebellion, his truth to their treason.” He could not have given us a better mark and character of these men. What pretend they the holy cause, the honour of God, the liberty of conscience, the promoting of religion? And these pretences make the fact fouler, and their rebellion more abominable, because they thwart the plain definitions and the evident commands of God, and break his law under colour of doing his will. *Nec minoris est impietatis Deum fingere quàm negare*: “It is as great impiety and wickedness to frame a God unto ourselves as to deny him;” to feign a God who will applaud sin, countenance murder, reward rebellion, and crown treason. So that, to conclude this,

these men may well bear all these titles of "enemies," of "haters of God," of "wicked persons." If there were ever any such in the world, these are they.

But, to drive it yet a little more home: There is not the like danger of enemies when they are severed and asunder, as when they are collected as it were into one mass and body; not so much danger in a rout as in a well-drawn army. *Vis unita fortior*:\* Let them keep at distance one from another, and their malice will not reach to the hurt of any but themselves; but being gathered and knit together in one band, their malice is strong to do mischief to others. "The rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed." (Psalm ii. 2.) Paquin renders it, *fundati sunt*, "were founded:" before, they were but as pieces scattered here and there; but, being gathered together, they have a foundation to build on. While the vapours are here and there dispersed upon the earth, they present no appearance of evil; but when they are drawn up into the air, and are compact, they become a comet, and are ominous, and portend shipwrecks, and seditions, and the ruin of kings and commonwealths. And such a comet hangs over us at this day, in which we see many thousands are drawn together, not by virtue of the stars or any kindly heat from heaven, but by an irregular zeal and a false persuasion that they can do God no better service than to destroy us. Before, they were gathered together in mind and resolution; but that was but as the gathering together of a heap of stones in a field: now, they are knit together as in a building. And now we may cry out with the prophet, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion: for the time to have mercy upon her, yea, the appointed time, is come." (Psalm cii. 13.) When God's enemies, when they who hate him, when the wicked are gathered together, then is the time for God to arise. And so I pass from their part, which is to gather themselves, to God's, which is to arise and scatter them: *Exsurgat Deus*, "Let God arise."

II. By this rising of God we may perhaps be induced to conceive that God doth sometimes sit down, and sleep, and not regard us; that he is willing his people should suffer, and that his enemies should wash their feet in their blood; that he lets loose the reins to the wicked too long, and maketh not that haste which he promiseth to help the oppressed. But this were to make him like the Heathen gods, who did *meridiari*, "sleep at noon:" which was the reason the Gentiles never entered their temples at that hour of the day, for fear of waking them.

\* "United force is stronger."—EDIT.

No: "He that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep," (Psalm cxxi. 4,) but is awake at all times and hours and moments unto all the world. And the reason is manifest: *Non habet in se diversitatem sui quicquid est simplex*, saith Novatian well: God is "a most pure and uncompounded essence, and therefore not capable of any diversity in himself;" not awake to-day, and asleep to-morrow; not sitting now, and rising anon; but everlastingly present to all the world. From him no cloud or darkness can shadow us, no secret grot or cave hide us. He hath ἀκοίμητον ὄμμα, as the Greek father speaks, "an eye which cannot sleep." He seeth all things *ad nudum et lucidum*, "naked and plain," even when they are veiled over with the darkest night.

Why, then, is God said to arise? St. Hilary gives the reason: *Per corporalem significationem spiritualis instruitur*: "We must upon this corporal and sensible expression build up a spiritual sense," and not so much consider God as ourselves. He doth neither sleep nor arise, nor forget nor remember, nor depart nor draw near; but *secundum nostrorum meritorum differentiam*, but "fits himself to the different quality of our works." When our enemies consult together against us, and are ready to prevail, then to us he is asleep: when he breaks them to pieces like a potter's vessel, then he is risen. When we offend him, he is absent: and when we repent, and fulfil his will, he is present with us. Whilst we are his servants and obey him, his friends and love him, *nemo officiosior Deo*, "none more officious and more active to help us than God:" but when we dissemble with him, and call him "Father," but honour him not, *non est prævaricator suæ perspicaciæ*; though his forbearance makes us believe he sees us not, yet "he is no doubter and prevaricator, nor will he betray his omniscience." His sleep is his patience, which he shows both toward the righteous and the wicked. For "God is not slack" in rising, "as some count slackness;" (2 Peter iii. 9;) not slack to the wicked, for vengeance hangs over their head; not slack to the righteous, for salvation is at hand. To the one he is as asleep, to heap coals of fire upon his head, to leave him without excuse: to the other he seems not to be risen, that, being exercised under the cross, they may awake him, and long and cry for deliverance. *Hoc est paululum unde pendet æternitas*: "On this little space, of his seeming rest, depend eternity of punishment to the one, and eternity of peace to the other." God hath these pauses and intervals in all his proceedings; in his punishments, and in his deliverances: and he useth a kind of deliberation, and works as



it were by the rule. When God would build up Jerusalem, he promiseth that "a line should be stretched forth upon" her: (Zech. i. 16:) and when he would destroy the Idumæans, he threatens, *Extendetur super eam mensura*, that he would "stretch out upon it the line of confusion." (Isai. xxxiv. 11.) When he will destroy, and when he will build, he stretcheth out a line. Which is a metaphor taken from building: and it shows that he doth not suddenly lift up his hand to strike, nor stretch it forth to help; but applies the lines, prepareth his instruments, works by line and measure, and takes as much leisure-time in destroying as artificers do in building. He waits, and expects that his patience may make way for his justice on the one, and magnify his mercy and goodness on the other. How long did the Lord endure the old world? even an hundred and twenty years, while the ark was a-preparing. The Amorites? till their wickedness was full. How long did he bear with his own people, first the ten tribes, then the other two? even till there was no hope of amendment; till the prophets cried out, נֹאֲשׁׁ Noash, "It is desperate." (Jer. ii. 25.)

Now the reason of this his delay, of this his not rising at that instant we expect, is to make it manifest to the world that his ways are not as our ways. Therefore many times he presents himself in a shape contrary to our expectation, and doeth those things which bear a resemblance of some repudiancy to his known and declared will, as it were on purpose to put our faith and constancy to a trial, whether we will take him to be our God or no, and worship him as well in his thunder as in his still voice; or else to besiege and compass-in the wicked and obstinate offenders, to shut them up in their own net, to bury them in the pit which they have made, to strike them through with their own sword, and, as they have trifled with his judgments, so to deal with them as that they shall not easily know how or when they are led to destruction, or not know it till it be too late. For many times "the wrath of God comes upon them," as the Psalmist speaks, "when the meat is yet in their mouths," (Psalm lxxviii. 30, 31,) when they feed sweetly upon their hopes, and dream of victory and triumph. Thus he, who promises to love and defend his children as with a shield, sometimes handles them as if he never loved them, or had left off to love them, or would not hear and help them; and he stands as it were at a distance from them, though even at this distance he is nigh to them that fear him. Again: though he have threatened to rain fire and brimstone upon the wicked, yet many times he delays, and makes as if he would not punish

them. Nay, he seems to cast a look of favour upon them, delays not the blow only that it may fall the heavier, but many times gives them those rewards which are promised to godliness, fills their garners, makes them mighty in power, crowneth them with happiness, and gives them their heart's desire. But then, in this great security, upon the sudden, when their prosperity hath befooled them, when they are ready to conclude they are therefore good because they are temporally happy, he falls upon them, and makes that which was their triumph their ruin. And now he strikes them once for all; strikes the tabret out of their hand; infatuates their counsels; makes them see that they are the poorer for their riches, the weaker for their power, the baser for their honour; and leaves them to their captain the devil, who always leads in the forefront of a rebellion: and then how fearfully and horribly are they consumed and brought to utter desolation! "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be." (Psalm xxxvii. 10.)

Nor is this unjust with God. For he doth not tell the wicked that this "little while" is theirs, and that they may do what they please without fear of punishment. But the wicked abuse this his long-suffering and indulgence; sport in this "little while," though the end be death: which should have been looked upon as an invitation to repentance. Therefore this stay, "yet a little while," before God arise, this his patience, hath its effect answerable to the disposition and temper of those on whom it is showed; a bad on the unrepentant, and a good on the penitent, sinner. For as God is said in scripture to laugh at the destruction of those who run on in their evil ways, so he may seem in a manner to mock their security with his proceedings, and to use the same method in punishing which they do in offending. They defer their repentance, and he defers his punishment. He hath them in a line; and when they are run on to the end of it, he pulls them on their backs.

It is the nature of delay in other things to keep back and hinder proceedings, which fail many times and sink to the ground in the very pause: for not to do a thing seasonably is to rob ourselves of the faculty and power of doing it at all. But in God's punishing of the wicked it is otherwise. *Gravitate supplicii moram pensat*: "He supplies and makes up the delay in punishing with the smart of the blow when it lights." His wrath, like wind shut up long in the caverns of the earth, at last breaks forth in a tempest. His patience makes way for his justice. Though he seem to be asleep, and not to see what is done by his enemies, yet at the appointed time he will not

fail an inch. *Plures idcirco Domino non credunt, quia seculo iratum tamdiu nesciunt*: "Many men think that God observes not what they do, because he presently thunders not from heaven, nor sends into the world, what the tyrant wished for in his days, some strange and unheard-of calamity." Many men run on in their sin, because God sends not a fire into their bones to make them sensible of his displeasure. But *de artifice non nisi artifex*: \* Ignorance of God is the cause why we judge so corruptly of his providence and justice. Sometimes he displays it before the sun and the people, in the open destruction of the wicked. Sometimes it works invisibly; and we can no more find it out than the way of an arrow in the air, or of a ship in the sea: and this peradventure we may esteem a sleep. But, whether secretly or openly, he doth at last make it evident that he hath set banks, and prefixed a time, which his enemies shall not pass. Though they work never so secretly, though they make religion a veil to cover and mantle their designs, yet he will find them out, and strike them to the ground, even in those meanders and labyrinths which they made to hide themselves in. And when they are risen, and think they stand strong and can never be moved, in an hour when they think not on him, nay, in an hour when they think he hath been with them in their armies, and fought their battles, and been their Lord of hosts, he will arise as a man out of sleep, and make his sword drunk in the blood of his enemies. We may pray for it, we may prophesy it: *Exsurgat Deus, &c.*: "Let God arise, and his enemies shall be scattered: they also that hate him shall flee before him." And so I pass to the effect or end of God's arising: *Dissipabuntur inimici*, "His enemies shall be scattered," &c.

III. And we need not doubt of the event. For when God ariseth, there ariseth power and wisdom, in respect of which all the strength in the world is but weakness, and all the wisdom in the world but foolishness. A look of his is able to disperse all the nations of the earth: what, then, is his rising? In St. Jerome's time the sun was darkened by a tempest, and men presently thought the world was at an end: and so it is with the wicked. When God begins to look up, they dive under water like ducks at every pebble that is thrown. What, then, will they do when he shall speak in thunders, and rain down hailstones and coals of fire upon them? Look forward, and you shall see their end: "They shall be scattered; they shall

\* "None can rightly estimate the works of an artist, but he who is one himself."  
—EDIT.

flee; they shall vanish; they shall melt away." What did Senacherib get by advancing his banner against the city of the Lord? Even this,—to preach by his statue, "Let him that looketh upon me learn to fear God." What did Herod get by casting Peter into prison? He was smitten by an angel, and eaten up of worms. (Acts xii. 23.) What did Pharaoh gain by flinging the children of Israel into the river? He brought *him* into his court *who* deprived him of his crown and life. "The wicked are ensnared in the work of their own hands," saith David. (Psalm ix. 16.) For "this," saith Basil, "is not only inflicted as a punishment, but it is the very nature of sin to make a net and dig a pit for itself."

What gained those hellish traitors in the time of the virgin queen, and in the time of that king of peace, king James? I am almost ashamed in this place to tell you: Nothing but a halter, and everlasting ignominy and shame. Let the wicked be never so wise, yet there is a wiser than they; and let them be never so strong, yet there is a stronger than they. Do you yet doubt whether God's rising be visible in the execution of his wrath upon his enemies? Behold, then, his creatures up in arms with him. There is a spiritual writ of outlawry gone out against them; and every man they meet, every stone in the streets, every beast of the field, is ready to become their executioners. When God riseth up, every creature is a soldier: an angel overcomes the Assyrians, an army of frogs and lice overrun Egypt, hailstones from heaven destroy the Canaanites, the powder flasheth in the faces of the traitorous pioneers. *Infelix exitus hæreticorum*, "The unhappy end of heretics," is not so good a note of the church as the cardinal would make it: but, sure, it is an evident mark that God is risen up, and shows the *EXSURGAT* in capital letters. Many glorious examples we have of God's rising of old in human and divine histories. As the apostle speaks, (Heb. xi. 32,) "The time would fail me to speak of" his leading his people out of Egypt, his bringing them again from captivity, and the like. How many millions of his servants hath he delivered, how many of his enemies hath he destroyed, whose names notwithstanding are nowhere recorded! It was an observation of the junior Pliny, *Facta dictaque illustrium virorum alia majora, alia clariora*: All men have not gained credit in the world according to their desert. "Some things of no great worth are very famous in the world, whenas many things of better worth are less spoken of, and perchance lie altogether buried in obscurity," *caruerunt quia vate sacro* "because they lighted not on such who would transmit them to

posterity.\* But God is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" the same in the preservation of his people Israel then, and the same in the preservation of his servants now; the same in these his risings which have left no mark or impression behind them, and the same in those which are writ in the blood of his enemies; *Adjutor in opportunitatibus*, "a Helper in time of need;" a God who, when we are fallen lowest, and when our enemies are even treading us down under their feet, if we trust in him, will up and arise.

For, in the next place, if we weigh it well, it cannot be otherwise; the parties being so opposite, God and the wicked, that they cannot both subsist together. Either God must be disarmed, or his enemies be scattered. If, then, God ariseth, the dispersion of the wicked is a kind of emanation from him. For they cannot stand in his sight. And you may observe it, they seldom gather together till they are half persuaded there is no God at all. Again: the strength of the whole is not only from the union, but from the parts: and such parts there may be as you can never collect and draw together so as to make the collection strong; but at last, though it hath been artificially wound together, it will fly to pieces. And therefore, when a greater power appears, it must needs be broken and scattered. What parts has smoke? But thin and vanishing ones. *Vides magnam molem: habes quod videas, non habes quod teneas*, saith the father: "We may see as it were a mountain of smoke: we may see it, but we cannot hold it;" it may be terrible to the eye, but we cannot grasp it in our hand. And commonly such are the congregations and collections of the wicked. They are but as wax; hard in show, but inclinable, in respect of the materials it is made of, to melt. They are like smoke; *humidâ, non solidâ, magnitudine*, "of some bulk, but of no solidity, ready to vanish and fly asunder." Their very consultations are but as smoke; the parts of them, we see, will scarce hang together.

Lastly: Their very gathering together is one cause of their scattering; as plants naturally breed that worm which destroyeth them. Do the wicked gather together against God and his church? This collection is one degree and approach to scattering and dissolution. For when their thought is as high as the crown, their head deserves to be as high as the gallows. It is now but a lump of wax: anon, having felt the heat, you cannot discern the form that it had. It is but smoke; and its very elevation is its dissolution: *Quantò sit superior, tantò faciliùs disperit*: "The higher it is raised, the thinner it grows, and the

\* HORATII *Carm.* lib. iv. od. ix. 28.

sooner it vanisheth." You see it lifted up, and anon you see it not at all.

So, then, to conclude all: God's enemies may gather themselves together; but they shall be scattered: they may stand out against him in some show of opposition; but at last they shall flee: like wax, their consultations may have some form and shape; but at the fire of God's *Exsurgat*, at his "rising" who is "a consuming fire," they shall melt and be spread abroad and dilated, and receive no other impression but that of God's wrath. And we may make it our prayer, or we may prophesy, "Thus 'let God arise;' and 'so let thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.'" (Judges v. 31.)

That we may prophesy, it is most certain: for, *Prophetia vox Domini*, saith Tertullian, "Prophecy is the voice of God." Nay, without any divine inspiration we may foretell the destruction of the wicked, as a thing as certain as if it were done before our eyes. They have their destiny in their name. If enemies to God, they must be scattered and perish. "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will surely come to nought," said Gamaliel, that great doctor of the law. (Acts v. 38.) It is true, God's enemies shall perish; but not whilst they are ours, unless we make it a prayer as well as a prophecy. For God many times raiseth up those whom himself will at last rise against, to punish *their* sins *who* profess his name. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." (Isai. x. 5, 6.) As if he had said, "I will send the Heathen, that know me not, to punish my people in Jewry, who call upon my name. I will send the superstitious Papist to whip the hypocritical Protestant. I will make a rod to whip my people; and when that is done, I will burn it." And therefore, that God may scatter the wicked whilst they are our enemies, we must not be too bold to prophesy, till we have fallen on our faces before God, and tendered these words as a prayer for ourselves, and for our distressed brethren in Ireland.

And this is our duty as we are brethren, and members of that body which is one: this God commands,—that we do good unto and pray for all sorts of men, but "especially those of the household of faith." (Gal. vi. 10.) Ἑπὲρ νοσοῦντων καὶ αἰχμαλωτῶν, was in the ancients' *Συναπτῆ*, part of their "Litany," as it is of ours. They prayed "for men diseased, for prisoners and

captives, for men in persecution." And they prayed *προσκαρτεροῦντες*, "with great earnestness and intension." *Pete, quære, insta: petendo et quærendo crescis ut capias*: "Let us put up our petitions; let us renew them, and press them again and again; let us multiply them every moment, till we come to the growth to be fit to receive that which we pray for;" till we and our distressed brethren be rid both of our enemies and of our fears. And are our prayers of such force as to chase away our enemies? Yes; St. James saith they will "prevail much," if they be "fervent." (James v. 16.) For as our enemies are only *nostris vitiis fortes*, "made strong by our sins," and armed as it were against us with our iniquity; as they fight against a nation not so much with their own sword, as with the luxury and pride and wantonness of that nation; (all which are our sins and our enemies' weapons;) so, *Non gladiis pugnamus, sed orationibus; non telis, sed meritis*, saith Ambrose: "We fight against them, not with sharp swords, but with strong supplications; not with weapons, but with alms and fasting, with sighs and groans." And as, when we sin, we put deadly weapons into their hands, so, when we repent, we shall disarm them. And indeed it is repentance which kindles this heat, and makes our prayers fervent; which otherwise will be but so many sins to help our enemies. Without repentance our prayers are indeed but "the sacrifice of fools." For what more foolish and ridiculous *quàm quod voto volumus actu nolle*, "than to pray for that which we will not have;" to cry for help against our enemies, and by our continuance in sin to increase their number; cry, "Help, Lord; how long shall the wicked prevail?" and yet to help them more by our transgression than we do God by our contribution; to call upon God to fight for us, when we fight against him; to desire peace, when we are the only incendiaries; to fight it out, and pray for a blessed commonwealth, and yet not be willing to reach forth so much as the little finger to uphold it? Certainly this noise will never awake God; nor can we think he will be raised up with words; with empty, flattering, deceitful words; with "words," as Job speaks, "without counsel." (Job xxxviii. 2.) No: if we will have our prayers make a noise to awake God, we must drop our tears upon our prayers, which we drop "out of our own substance, as it were the blood of martyrs," saith Anastasius. And blood, we know, will cry and be loud. *Non sileat pupilla oculi tui*: "Let not the apple of thine eye cease" or "be silent." (Lam. ii. 18.)

And then we must feed our prayers with fasting. This doth nourish our devotion, as a woman doth her child with the teat.

God hath an ear to hearken to our fasting. *Ostendit se Mosi jejunii collega*, saith Tertullian: "He shows himself presently to Moses, his co-partner in fasting." And after this we must adorn them with our alms, our free-will offering, our contribution to the work. For can we pray for that which we will not forward? And then as our "prayers are heard," so shall our "alms come up before God," and with a holy importunity urge and provoke him to arise: for in the midst of so many prayers, of so many sighs and groans, of so many tears, and when our charity speaks, whose voice is shriller than the tongues of men and angels, God cannot rest, but will "hear from the heavens our prayer and supplication, and maintain our cause." He will clothe us with salvation, and our enemies with shame; that we may "enter his house with joy, and his courts with praise;" that we may "sit every man under his own vine and under his own fig-tree," (Micah iv. 4,) and may make our lives a continual holy-day, singing praises to the God of our deliverance. This duty let us so perform here that, after we shall have finished our course, we may be admitted unto the choir of angels, with them to praise God for evermore.

We will add but one word, to bring it home to our present occasion; and it will apply itself. This is a day of thanksgiving, and here is a feast of thanksgiving: a day of thanksgiving for our deliverance from our outward fraud; a feast of thanksgiving for our redemption from our spiritual enemies. Let us offer up therefore *sacrificium eucharisticum*, "a pay-offering," or "sacrifice of payment:" let us pay to God confession and thanks for our deliverance and for his mercies in both. Let us, as Jacob exhorts his sons, "take of the best fruits of the land," (Gen. xliii. 11,) "of the music and melody of the land," as the word signifieth: let us bring with us "the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." (Gal. v. 22.) Let us "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," meet for these blessed mysteries, which will be as musics, even those songs of Sion which God is most delighted with. For if there be a blessing even in a cluster of grapes, what songs of praise are due to him who is the true Vine, and hath given us "wine to make our hearts glad," (Psalm civ. 15,) pressed blood out of his very heart, that we might drink, and be nourished up unto everlasting life!

Let us, then, praise him for our deliverance this day: praise him, and not be like them out of whose snare we have escaped; not imitate their actions whose ruin we tremble at: but praise him by our meekness and gentleness, by our patience and



obedience to lawful authority. For what praise is that which is breathed out of the mouth of a traitor? If we be as ready to spoil others as our enemies were to devour us, our harp is but ill-strung, and our songs of thanksgiving will be quite out of tune. Let us double our praises, and magnify God for that which is presented to us in the sacrament, our deliverance out of hell, the destruction of our worst enemy, sin, and our last enemy, death. Here is that Red Sea in which that spiritual Pharaoh and his host were overthrown. And what is our praise? to "speak good of his name?" This is not enough: we may do this, and crucify him. We must praise him by obedience, by love, by sincerity, and by a lively faith. This is indeed to eat of his body which was broken for us, and to drink of that blood which was shed for remission of sins. For he that truly believes and repents, as he is sick of sin, so he is sick of love, even of that love which in this sacrament is sealed and confirmed to us. He is ever bowing to Christ's sceptre; he is sincere, and like himself in all his ways; he makes his faith appear in the outward man, in godly lips and in liberal hands; he breathes forth nothing but devotion, but hallelujahs, glory and honour and praise for this great love: and so he becomes Peniel, as "the face of God," (Gen. xxxii. 30,) as the shape of Christ, representing all his favours and graces back upon him, a pillar engraven with the bowels of Christ, a memorial of his love thankfully set up for ever.

It is usual with the fathers to make the ark a type of Christ, his word as the two tables, his discipline as Aaron's rod, and the sacrament of his supper as the pot of manna. *Exurgat Christus*, "Let Christ arise," who is a brighter image of God than ever the ark was. Let us take him up, but not upon profane shoulders, lest we die. First, let us be priests unto the Lord, without blemish; not blinded by the prince of this world, not halting between God and the world; but perfect men in Christ Jesus, to offer up sacrifices to the King of heaven. When we receive him by a lively faith, we may say, "He is risen." To this end he lifted up himself upon his cross, that we might lift up our hearts, and so lift him up again, and present him to his Father; who, for his sake, when he sees him, as the ark, lifted up, will bring mighty things to pass; will scatter our sins, which are our greatest enemies, and separate them from us "as far as the east is from the west." And though they be as the smoke of the bottomless pit, he will "drive them away;" and though they be complicated and bound together as wax into a kind of body, he will melt them, and "deliver us from this

body of death." (Rom. vii. 24.) For what sin of ours dares show itself when this Captain of ours shall arise?

"Let God arise;" that is the first verse of this Psalm; that is our prayer: and let us conclude with the Psalm in thanksgiving, and "ascribe the strength unto God," saying, "His excellency is over his Israel," to deliver them from their enemies, and to deliver them from their sins, "and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible in thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power to his people," against the machinations of men, and against the wiles of the devil; against sinful men, and against sin itself. "Blessed be God." (Psalm lxxviii. 34, 35.) "And let all the people say, Amen." (Psalm cvi. 48.)

---

## SERMON XCVII.

### ADAM'S VAIN EXCUSE FOR HIS SIN.

*And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*—Genesis iii. 12.

WE have here the antiquity of apologies: we find them almost as ancient as the world itself. For no sooner had Adam sinned, but he runneth behind the bush. No sooner had our first parents broken that "primordial law," as Tertullian calleth it, which was the womb and matrix of all after-laws, but they "hide themselves amongst the trees of the garden;" (verse 8;) and, as if they had made a covenant and agreement, they jointly frame excuses. The man casteth it off upon the woman, and in effect upon God himself: "The woman gave it me, and thou gavest me the woman:" and thus he lieth down, and sleepeth, and is at rest. The woman removeth it from herself upon the serpent: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (Verse 13.) So that now, God having made inquisition for the fact, neither Adam nor Eve are returned, but the serpent: nay, indeed, God himself, who maketh the inquiry, is charged as a party and accessory. The man did eat because the woman gave; and God gave the woman: and Adam thinketh himself safe behind this bush. And therefore, as Adam hideth himself from God, so doth God return his folly upon his own head, and seemeth to seek him as if he were hid indeed: "Adam, where art thou?" (Verse 9.) In a kind of irony he acteth the part of

an ignorant person; he calleth as at a distance, and seemeth not to know him who was so unwilling to be known.

Or, if we take Tertullian's interpretation,\* we must not read it *simplici modo, id est, interrogatorio sono, Ubi es, Adam?* "as a plain and easy and kind interrogation, 'Where art thou, Adam?'" *sed impresso, et incusso, et imputativo, Adam, ubi es?* "but as a sharp and smart demand, as a demand with an imputation, 'Adam, where art thou?'" that is, *Jam non hic es,* "Thou art not here, not where thou wast, not in Paradise, not in a state of immortality; but in a state of perdition, in a state of corruption, never more open and naked than in the thicket and behind the bush." This was not *questio*, but *vagulatio*,† as it is called in the Twelve Tables. All the thick trees in the garden could not conceal Adam, and keep him from the eyes of his God; but thus God was pleased to question his folly with some bitterness and scorn.

It is the first question that was ever put to man. And we may be sure all is not well when God asketh questions. His laws, his precepts, his counsels, yea, his comminations, are all delivered *per rectam orationem*, "by a plain and positive declaration of his mind:" *Hoc fac, et vives*, "Do this, and live." (Luke x. 28.) "If thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die the death." (Gen. ii. 17.) What he commandeth to be done he supposeth will be done, and never beginneth to ask questions till our disobedience questioneth his law. Then he proceedeth against us *ex formulá*, "in a kind of legal and judiciary way." When the angels fall, he calleth after them, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isai. xiv. 12 :) and when Adam is in the thicket, he seeketh him: "Adam, where art thou?" A question, one would think, of force to plough up his heart, and to rend it in pieces, that so his sin might evaporate and let itself out by an humble confession; a question sufficient, one would think, to fill his soul with sorrow, horror, and amazement. But though Adam were now out of the thicket, he was behind the bush still. He striveth to hide himself from God when he is most naked; and speaketh of his fear, and of his nakedness, but not at all of his sin. "I heard thy voice," saith he, "in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Gen. iii. 10.) He was sensible, not of the breach of the law, but of his nakedness: it was the voice of God that frightened him, not his transgression. We commonly say, *Suum quisque homo rem benè meminit*, that

\* *Adversus Marcionem*, lib. ii.

† Not "a question," but "a complaint."

“every man hath a good memory for that which concerneth him.” Only sin, which is properly ours, and whereof we are the proprietaries, to which we can entitle neither God, nor the devil, nor any other creature but ourselves, we are unwilling to own and to call ours. Ours it is whilst it is in committing: on it we spend and exhaust ourselves; we prostitute our wills, we give up our affections; we sell ourselves, all the faculties of our souls and all the parts of our bodies; we woo it, we wait for it, we purchase it. But when it is committed, we cast it from us, we look upon it as upon a bastard issue, we strive to rase it out of our memories; we are afraid when we are deprehended, we deny when we are accused; when we are questioned, our answer is an excuse. *Nolumus esse nostrum, quia malum agnoscimus*: “Ours we will not call it, because we know it to be evil.”

One would think that excuse were the natural offspring of sin; or rather, that sin and excuse were twins. *Omne malum pudore natura suffundit*: “No sooner hath sin stained the soul, but shame dyeth the face with a blush.” The philosopher will tell us that shame is nothing else but φόβος δικαίου ψόγου, “fear of just reprehension;” which to avoid, we seek out many inventions. We run behind the bush; and when the voice of God calleth us from thence, we make a thicket of our own, a multitude of excuses, where we think ourselves more safe than amongst all the trees of the garden. Behold here the first sin that ever was committed, and behold our first father Adam ready with an excuse as soon as it was committed. God came unto him, not in “a fire devouring before him,” nor in “a mighty tempest round about him,” (Psalm l. 3,) but “in the cool of the day:” (Gen. iii. 8:) he cometh, not with a rod, but with meekness. (1 Cor. iv. 21.) He inviteth him to mercy, and prompteth him to repentance: he asketh him, “Adam, where art thou?” not out of ignorance, as if he saw him not; but as a remembrance, that he might see himself. And when he cannot extort from him so much as a bare mention of his sin, but only of his fear and his nakedness, which were indeed the bitter effects of it, he cometh nearer to him, and is instant with him, as if he would dictate to him, and bespeak him to confess, and put a form of words into his mouth: “Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” (Gen. iii. 11.) A question so plain, so keen, of such an edge, that it was able to have cleft his heart in twain, and let his sin out at his mouth by an humble confession. What was it but as the handwriting upon the wall? and sure now it cannot be but Adam’s “countenance is changed, his thoughts troubled, his

joints loosed, and his knees smiting each other." (Dan. v. 5, 6.) Against this battery what hold can prevail? But O the sinfulness of sin! O the mighty power of sin! which so stupifieth the heart, and so filleth it with itself, that it feeleth it not; which transformeth a heart of flesh into brass or marble, that no hammer can malleate it, no sword can pierce it, no influence from God himself can mollify it. *In ipso peccato impudentiam discimus, et ab ipso*: "In sin itself we learn a kind of impudent remorselessness, and we learn it from it." "These two are contrary," saith St. Chrysostom, "sin and repentance. In sin we see shame and confusion; in repentance, hope and confidence: but the devil hath changed and inverted this order, and hath placed upon sin boldness and confidence, and shame upon repentance." Adam here was not ashamed to commit sin, but he is ashamed to confess it; and therefore he maketh an apron for his sin, as he had done for his body: but he was never more naked than in his fig-leaves: "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

My text, then, ye see, is not an answer, but an excuse; and therefore will not so easily admit a methodical division. For in these *ambages*, in the "turnings and windings," in the mazes and labyrinths of excuses, what order can we find? But though we cannot orderly divide this excuse, we will dissect and anatomize it, and make some use of our father's sin. God may seem sometimes to have been more ready to discredit his saints than to honour them, in that he setteth down oftentimes and recordeth their faults, but wrappeth up their repentance in silence. The story of Noah is shut up with his drunkenness. (Gen. ix.) After the relation of Lot's incest we hear no more of him. (Gen. xix.) After the story of Solomon's idolatry, it followeth immediately, "And Solomon slept with his fathers." (1 Kings xi. 43.) Adam no doubt did repent; yet we see his story concluded with his punishment. Nor may we think that this was done by chance; but, as the apostle speaketh, "all these things are written" *πρὸς νοθεσίαν ἡμῶν*, "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.) As therefore they who come to see dead bodies cut up, although they purpose not to learn anatomy, yet by that sight go away informed, what manner of substance the heart, the spleen, the liver are of; so by dissection of this excuse of Adam's, and by view and inspection as it were of the very entrails of our progenitors, we may read our own disease, we may learn to search and examine our own hearts, and find that our *κρῆσις* and "constitution" is the very

same with theirs; that we resemble them not only in their fall, but also in their excuse; and that we are as skilful artificers to sew fig-leaves together, to apologize for our sins and to extenuate them, as ever our first father was. The lines, then, by which we are to pass are these:

I. First, we will anatomize and dissect this excuse of Adam's.

II. Next, we will look into ourselves; take some notice of our own hearts, and of those excuses which we commonly frame.

III. And then, to make an exact anatomy-lecture, we will lay open the danger of the disease, that we may learn to avoid what was fatal to our parents, and, though we sin with Adam, yet not with Adam to excuse our sin. Of these in their order.

I. "And the man said, The woman," &c.: I told you this was no answer, but an excuse; for indeed an excuse is no answer. An answer must be fitted to the question which is asked; but this is quite besides it. We find indeed *ambages*, "a circuit of words," which the philosopher calleth τὰ κύκλωφ, because they run round as it were "in a circle," and never point in a direct line to the matter in hand, never present it with what the question expecteth, but something else instead of it. The question here is, "Hast thou eaten of the forbidden tree?" The answer is wide from the purpose, an accusation of the woman, yea, of God himself: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." In civil courts *patronus negat, defendit, transfert, minuit, deprecatur*, saith the orator: "It is usual and commendable for him who taketh upon himself to be an advocate either to deny the fact, or defend it, or translate it, or extenuate it, or put it off; and he who falleth short of this act, deserveth not the name of a patron." But in the court of conscience there is no room for this act: here every man must be, not his own advocate, but accuser and judge. For when God asketh the question, maketh inquisition for blood or any other sin, to extenuate the offence is to aggravate it, to put it off is to draw it closer on, to defend it is to augment it. There is no answering of God, when he questioneth us, but by acknowledgment.

But to proceed orderly in our dissection: We find the man doth not deny, but in plain terms confess, that he did eat. And, *Comedi*, "I have eaten," by itself, had been a wise answer: but it is *Comedi*, with *Mulier dedit*, "I did eat," but "the woman gave it," a confession with an extenuation: and such a confession is far worse than a flat denial. "I did eat," were words that might have proved as sweet as the rivers of Paradise, had it

not been for the poison of the excuse. But Adam's last words are lost in the former, as the lean and ill-favoured kine in Pharaoh's dream ate up the fat ones. (Gen. xli. 4.) Deny indeed the fact he could not. For as God had built him up in his own image and likeness, so he had raised up within him *φυσικὸν κριτήριον*, "a natural tribunal," his conscience, and made him thus far a god unto himself, as not only to discern evil from good, but also to search the very inwards of his own heart. Πάντες ἄνθρωποι, καὶ μὴ θρόνον ἔχουσι, μηδὲ δημίους, μηδὲ ξύλον, κ. τ. λ. saith St. Chrysostom: "All men, of what rank soever, though they sit not in the throne of justice, though they be not judges and magistrates, though they have no executioners, nor prisoners, nor gyves, nor bolts, yet they judge and condemn sin in themselves and others, and that by the common principles of discourse and reason, and by that secret verdict and sentence which every man carrieth in his own breast." The first man that condemneth a sinner is a sinner himself: *Se judice nemo nocens absolvitur*:\* "In himself he beareth about him a court and seat of justice from which no appeal lieth." His reason is his judge, his conscience is his accuser, himself his own prisoner: the terrors of an afflicted conscience hang him up and crucify him every day, though no foreign authority arrest him. For, "as the shadow followeth the body," saith Basil, "so doth sin the soul;" and whithersoever we go, it presenteth itself before us. No sooner do we reach out our hand to the apple, no sooner is our "eye full of the adulteress," (2 Peter ii. 14,) no sooner hath "lust conceived and brought forth sin," (James i. 15,) but presently *verberamur tacito cogitationis nostræ opprobrio*, as St. Ambrose speaketh; "our own thoughts are as whips and scorpions to scourge us." Our conscience striketh us with amazement and horror, when no man pursueth us: she plougheth up our soul, and maketh deep furrows there, *laniatus et ictus*, as the historian speaketh,† "stripes and wounds," when no other hand is lifted up against us.

But as judges would see more clearly, and judge more uprightly, if they were not blinded with a bribe, so would the conscience speak more plainly if we did not teach her broken and imperfect language, to pronounce "Sibboleth" for "Shibboleth," (Judges xii. 6,) to leave out some letter, some aspiration, some circumstance in sin. But to speak truth, the conscience cannot but speak out to the offender, and tell him roundly that he hath broken God's law. But as we will not hearken to reason when she would restrain us from sin, so we

\* JUVENALIS *Sat.* xiii. 3.† TACITI *Annalium* lib. vi. cap. 6.

slight her when she checketh us for committing it; we neither give ear to her counsel before we eat, nor to her reproof after we have eaten; we observe her neither as a friend nor as an enemy. Adam's conscience told him he had broken the command, had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and must die: but the shame of what he had done, and the fear of what would follow, made him as deaf to his conscience after his fall as he was before, as unwilling to acknowledge his sin as to prevent it. And therefore he seeketh to palliate and colour over what he could not deny; he faltereth in his language, and, instead of a confession, tendereth nothing but an excuse, an excuse which indeed is nothing.

Now, to dissect and examine the excuse: we shall find that Adam dealeth like an unskilful physician, *qui pro morbo extinguit hominem*; he "removeth not the disease, but destroyeth" himself, and, by applying a remedy worse than the disease, maketh the disease incurable. His apology upbraideth him, and he condemneth himself with his excuse.

1. For, First, *Mulier dedit*, "The woman gave it me," weigh it as we please, is an aggravation of his sin. We may measure sin by the temptation: it is always the greatest when the temptation is least. A great sin it would have been to have eaten of the forbidden fruit, though an angel had given it: what is it, then, when it is the woman that giveth it? Why should the woman prevail over the man, the weaker over the stronger vessel? He was made her head, and was to rule over her. His duty, saith St. Chrysostom, was not only to have refused the woman's offer, but also to have showed her the greatness of the sin, and to have kept her from eating; not only to have saved himself, but to have plucked her also out of the fire. But for strength to yield to weakness, for the head to be directed by the body, for him to put himself in subjection who ought to command, for him to follow to evil who should lead to good, was to invert the order which God had constituted. What a shame do we count it for a man of perfect limbs to be beaten by a cripple! for a son of Anak to be chased by a grass-hopper! (Num. xiii. 33;) for Xerxes's army, which drank up the sea, to be beaten out of Greece by three hundred Spartans! Certainly *he* deserveth not power *who* betrayeth it to weakness. "The woman gave it me," then, was a deep aggravation of the man's transgression.

2. Again: It is but, "The woman gave it." And a gift as we commonly say, may be either taken or refused; and so it is in our power whether it shall be a gift or no. Had the man been unwilling to have received, the woman could have given him



nothing. *Nunquid obsecravit? num disseruit? num decepti?* saith the father: "Did she besiege him with her entreaties? did she use the battery of discourse? did she cunningly undermine him with a fallacy?" No, it is but *dedit*; she only "gave" it him. The orator will tell us, *Necessitas est magnum humanæ infirmitatis patrocinium*, that "necessity is the best plea that human weakness hath for the misery that befalleth us:" but it is too common a thing, as Tertullian saith, *licentiam usurpare prætextu necessitatis*, "to make necessity a pretence for our liberty and licentiousness in sinning." At this door enter-in covetousness, intemperance, revenge, pride, which we might easily keep out, even with one of our fingers. *Nusquam est necessitas, nusquam violentia, sed electio et voluntas*: "Here was no necessity, no violence." It is but *dedit*, she "gave" it him: and he was willing to receive it.

O, "how are the mighty fallen" in the midst of the battle! how is Adam fallen in the midst of his strength! He who had the graces of God encompassing him about as a ring; who had his understanding richly adorned, and his will obedient to his understanding; who had a harmony in his affections, and a heaven in his soul; who had the angels for his guardians, and God for his strength; who was himself a kind of god upon earth, and had dominion over all the creatures; surrendereth up all at the sight of a gift, a gift which he might have refused, and which he was bound to refuse. *Ἀνάγκη οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται*, saith the proverb:\* "The gods themselves have not strength enough to strive against necessity:" but *he* is weaker than a man *who* yieldeth where there is no necessity. "The woman gave it me," then, is but a weak apology.

3. Further yet: What was the gift? Was it of so rich a value as to countervail the loss of Paradise? No; it was *de fructu arboris*, "the fruit of the tree." We call it "an apple:" some would have it to be an Indian fig. The Holy Ghost vouchsafeth not once to name it, or to tell us what it was. Whatsoever it was, it was but fruit, and of that tree of which man was forbidden to eat upon penalty of death. (Gen. ii. 17.) *Quasi verò rationis aliquid haberet hæc defensio!* saith a father: "As if this defence had any show of reason in it," when he confesseth that he preferred this apple, this slight gift of the woman, before the command of God: "The woman gave me of the tree, and I did eat!" Here are two,—God and the woman, the gift and the command, the apple and obedience. To hearken to the woman and to be deaf to God, to forsake the command for the gift, to

\* PLATO *De Legibus*, lib. v.

fling off obedience at the sight of an apple, is that which showeth Adam's sin in its full magnitude, and yet is taken-in here for an apology. But perhaps this fruit may be of high price, this apple may be an apple of God, with this glorious inscription upon it, *Eritis sicut dii*, "If ye eat it, ye shall be as gods." (Gen. iii. 5.) Who would not venture then to touch upon such hopes? Who would not eat an apple, to become a god? It is true, if this had not been the devil's inscription, whose every letter is a lie, and whose greatest gift is not worth an apple, whose "kingdoms of the world and glory of them" are over-bought with a thought. (Matt. iv. 8.) *Mala emtio*, saith the orator, *semper ingrata est, quia semper exprobrare videtur domino stultitiam*: "An evil bargain is an eye-sore, because it always upbraideth him with folly who made it." And such a bargain here had our first father made. He had bought gravel for bread, wind for treasure, *spem pretio*, "hope for a certainty," a lie for truth, an apple for Paradise. The woman, the gift, the gift of an apple,—these are brought-in for an excuse, but are indeed a libel.

4. Further still: To aggrandize Adam's fault, consider how the reason of his excuse doth render it most unreasonable. Why doth he make so busy a defence? Why doth he shift all the blame from himself upon the woman? Here was no just detestation of the offence, but only fear of punishment. The fruit of the tree had been "pleasant to the eyes" and taste; (Gen. iii. 6;) but *Morte morieris*, "Thou shalt surely die," was bitter as gall. (Gen. ii. 17.) He would offend with the woman; but with the woman he would not be punished. For love of her he did eat; but, now he hath eaten, see how he loveth her. Behold, the Lord cometh with a fiery sword to take vengeance for his sin! Doth he oppose himself to the danger? Doth he stand between the sword and his wife? Doth he urge her weakness? Doth he plead for her? Doth he call for the blow on himself? No: "She gave, and let the blow light upon her." *Perniciosè misericors, et perniciosiùs crudelis*, saith Bernard: "He had been too pliant and kind to sin with his wife, but now most cruel when he should be merciful. It was too much mercy to join with her in the sin, but cruelty without mercy to leave her in the punishment."

And here is a sign that Adam is fallen indeed, even fallen from the high degree of a lord to the low condition of a servant; who feareth, not to offend, but to be punished; would break the command at pleasure, but that death is the best reward that followeth. To a good man punishment appeareth not in so horrid a shape as sin: for punishment is but the evil of passion inflicted

for the evil of action, and of the two the evil of action is far the worse. The lips of an harlot are far worse than the biting of a cockatrice: theft is far worse than the whip: yea, to sin, as Anselm saith, is far worse than to be damned. For there is a kind of justice in punishment which is not in sin. Οὐδείς οὔτε θεῶν, οὔτ' ἀνθρώπων,\* “Neither God nor man” will deny but that it is most just that he who sinneth should suffer for his sin. *Omnis pœna, si justa est, peccati pœna est*, saith Augustine: “But for sin, punishment were not just.” We may bespeak Adam in the style of the imperial law: *Ipse te subdidisti pœnæ*, “‘Thou hast brought thyself under punishment,’ and deservest to have it doubled for shifting it off to thy wife.” He had taken possession of Paradise upon condition, and had made a contract with God: and the scholiast on the fifth of Aristotle’s “Ethics” will tell us, Γέγονε τρόπον τινὰ δόσις καὶ λήψις ἐν ταῖς κολάσεσι, “There is in punishment a kind of giving and receiving;” in which the nature of all contracts doth consist. He who receiveth by theft, δώσει ἀντ’ ἐκείνων εὐθύνας.† The Latin phrase is, *Dabit pœnas*, “He must give punishment.” Adam receiveth an apple, and he must give Paradise, yea, his life, for it. We have said enough to show that Adam did but *parimentare peccatum*, as St. Augustine speaketh, “parget and plaster over his sin,” and did ἀναίτιον αἰτιάσασθαι, “allege that for a cause of his transgression which in truth was none.” But,

5. In the last place: That which maketh his apology worse than a lie, and rendereth his excuse inexcusable, is, that he removeth the fault from the woman on God himself. Not the woman alone is brought in, but *Mulier quam tu dedisti*, “The woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” Which indeed is a plain sophism *non-cause pro causâ*: that is made “a cause which is not a cause,” but an occasion only. It is a common axiom, *Causa causæ est causa causati*, “That which produceth the cause, produceth also the effect of that cause:” and it is true in causes and effects essentially co-ordinate. But here it is not so. God indeed gave Adam the woman: but he gave him not the woman to give him the apple. *Dedit sociam, non tentatricem*: “He gave her for a companion, not for a tempter:” he gave her not to do that which he had so plainly forbidden. The true cause of Adam’s sin was in himself and in his own will. It was not the woman which God gave him, but the woman which he gave himself, who gave him the fruit. God gave him a woman to be obedient

\* HOMERI *Ilias*, i. 548.

† “Shall render account of his deeds,” that is, “shall be punished for them.”—EDIT.

to him, not to command him. God gave him a will to incline to his command, but not to break it. Whatsoever God gave him was good: the woman was good, the fruit was good, his will was good, the command was good. But he gave himself a woman who was a seducer, fruit which was poison, a will which was irregular; and the command he made his ruin. And now he who affected to become like unto God, doth desire also to make God like to himself: he who would be made a God, maketh God a man, and bringeth him in as guilty of the transgression. And so he added to his guilt by defending it: *Ut culpa ejus atrocior fieret discussa, quàm fuit perpetrata*, saith the father: "His sin was greater being excused than it was when first committed." To exalt it to the highest, we may well call it "blasphemy." For as we may blaspheme by giving that to the creature which is proper to God, so may we also by attributing that to God which is the creature's only. To worship an angel, or a saint, is contumelious to God; to make God an angel is blasphemy; what is it then to make him a man? What is it to make him a sinner? I know nothing that Adam could call his own but the transgression. There is some truth in the *Tu dedisti*: for his wife God had given him; so Paradise was God's gift, and his body God had created him. But if we bring-in his sin, then *Tu dedisti* is blasphemy: for God gave him not that, nay, God could not give it him; but *he* must father it *who* was the father of us all.

To re-collect all, and lay before you these *bella tectoriola*,\* these excuses, in brief: What, if "the woman gave" it? The man was stronger than the woman, and lord over her. What, though it were a gift? He had will to refuse it: his hands were not bound, nor his feet put into fetters; there was no chain of necessity to force him. "But then it was but an apple:" and what was all the fruit in Paradise to the loss of his obedience? What was the devil's promise to God's threatening? How unjust and cruel was he to his wife, in transferring the fault upon her! Lastly: how blasphemous was he against God, in imputing his very gift unto him as the only cause of his sin! If the woman seduce him, must it be with a gift? If a gift will prevail, must it be no more than an apple? Must an inscription, a promise, a lie deceive him? and must he buy the false hope of eternity with the certain loss of Paradise? If he sin with Eve, why is he unwilling to be punished with Eve? And why doth he dispute with God, and "darken counsel by

\* CICERONIS *Epist. ad Fam.* lib. ix. ep. 22. "Pretty plasterings," or "daubings."—EDIT.

words without knowledge?" (Job xxxviii. 2.) We may well cry out, "Adam, where art thou?" In a thicket, "amongst the trees," nay, amongst the leaves. For all excuses are so, even leaves; nay, not so good shelter as leaves; for they do not cover, but betray, us. Adam increaseth his shame by endeavouring to hide it. *Mulier quam dedisti*, is not an excuse, but an accusation.

II. And now I wish that the leaves of those trees among which Adam hid himself had cast their shadow only upon him. But we may say as St. Ambrose doth of the story of Naboth and Ahab, *Adami historia tempore vetus est, usu quotidiana*: "This history of Adam is as ancient as the world; but is fresh in practice, and still revived by the sons of Adam." We may therefore be as bold to discover our own nakedness as we have been to pluck our first father from behind the bush. We have all sinned "after the similitude of Adam's transgression," and we are as ready to excuse sin as to commit it; that we may seem to take this at least from Adam, as Pelagius thought we do all other defects, only by imitation. Do we only excuse our sin? No; many times we defend it by the gospel, and even sanctify it by the doctrine of Christ himself. Superstition we commend for reverence, profaneness for Christian liberty, indiscretion for zeal, will-worship for obedience. Nay, doth not rebellion come towards us under the grave habit of religion, with a sword in one hand, and a Bible in the other; as if God himself had decreed to set up these men of Belial against his own ordinance, and the word of God were powerful not to 'demolish imaginations, but kingdoms? The orator telleth us, that *honestia verba moribus perdidimus*, "by our evil manners we have lost the proper and native signification of many good and honest words:" so have we also almost lost the knowledge of our sins in words, in borrowed titles and assumptitious names. And hence it cometh to pass that neither our virtues are as they appear, nor our vices appear to us as they are; but we look upon our defects without grief, and applaud our false virtues with joy,—our feigned temperance, our adulterate charity, our mock-fasts, our superficial mortification, our spurious humility, our irregular devotion, our pharisaical zeal, our obedience with a sword drawn and ready to strike. Nor are we content alone to be deceived, but we affect it, *et sub nomine religionis famulamur errori*, "we talk of God, but worship our own imaginations;" *et sub velamento nominis Christi adversus nomen Christi militamus*, "we fight against Christ even under his own colours." This disease of Adam's runs through each vein and passage of our soul, by which we are still

unlike ourselves ; like Adam, indeed, in Paradise, but then when he was in the thicket ; and like unto him out of the thicket, but with an excuse in his mouth. We may observe, that many things in themselves not commendable do yet help to make up our defects, and one vice serveth to set out another. Impudence promoteth ignorance : for do we not see many whose boldness is the greatest part of their learning, and whose confidence is taken for judgment and wisdom ? Good God ! what cannot a brow of brass, a sad countenance, and a forced deportment do ? This Quintilian maketh one reason why amongst the vulgar sort ignorance many times beareth the bell, and is more amiable and gracious than knowledge. And may we not in like manner think that that peace and quietness we have at home in our own breasts, and that approbation we gain abroad, is due, not always to our virtue, but oft-times to our whorish and impudent looks ; not to that constant tenor and equality of life which reason prescribeth, but to this art of apologizing, to our manifold evasions and excuses, which, if we look nearer upon them, are of a fouler aspect than those sins they colour and commend ?

To come close home, therefore, we will stay a little, and draw the parallel, and show the similitude that is betwixt Adam and his sons. We shall still find a *Mulier dedit* to be our plea as well as his. Some “woman,” something weaker than ourselves, overthroweth us, and then is taken-in for an excuse. *Omnes homines vitiis nostris favemus ; et quod propriâ facimus voluntate ad naturæ referimus necessitatem*, saith Jerome to Amandus : “We all favour ourselves, and our vices too ; and what we do willingly, we account as done out of necessity of nature.” If we taste the forbidden fruit, we are ready to say, “The woman gave it us.” Again : it is some gift, some proffer,\* that prevaileth with us, something “pleasant to the eye,” something that flattereth the body and tickleth the fancy, something that insinuateth itself through our senses, and so by degrees worketh upward, and at last gaineth power over that which is *αὐτοκράτωρ* and should “command,”—our reason and understanding. Whatsoever it is, it is but a gift, and may be refused. *Homo potest peccare ; sed, si nolit, non facit*, saith St. Augustine : “Man may fall into sin ; but if he will not, he doth not.” What, though it be pleasant ? I may distaste it. What, though it flatter ? I may frown upon it. What, though it be honour ? I may look down upon it. What, though it be wealth ? I may “cast it upon the waters,” or fling it into the sea. (Eccles. xi. 1.)

\* See note, vol. ii. p. 59.—EDIT.

What, if the devil say?—"All these things will I give thee." (Matt. iv. 9.) If we will not reach out the hand, they are not a gift. No insinuation, no flattery, no smiling temptation, no argument, no rhetoric is of more power and activity than the will, which may either take or refuse the gift as it [may] please.

Further: As it is something presented in the manner of a gift which overcometh us, so commonly it is but an apple; something that cannot make us better, but may make us worse; something offered to our hope, which we should fear; something that cannot be a gift till we have sold ourselves, nor be dear to us till we are vile and base to ourselves; at the best but a gilded temptation; an apple with an inscription, with an *Eritis sicut dii*,\* upon it; with some promise, some show, and but a show and glimpse, of some great blessing; but earthy and fading, yet varnished with some resemblance of heaven and eternity. Look upon those gifts which are most welcome unto us; and which we run after, as unwilling to stay till they be proffered; and ye shall find an *Eritis sicut dii* upon them. There is upon honour such an inscription: for honour either maketh us gods, or at least maketh us think we are so. There is the like upon wealth: for when our chests are full, how do we worship ourselves, and "sacrifice to our own net!" (Habak. i. 16.) Nay, ye may see it written in the dresses and paint and forehead of the harlot: for are not the strumpet's smiles the wanton's Paradise? Are not her embraces his heaven? In a word: it is written upon every thing that is offered as a gift, and being received is a sin: for, when we sin, *volumus divinam excellentiam imitari*, saith the father, "we emulate the majesty of the Highest;" we acknowledge no superior, but would "be as gods," to do what we please.

Lastly. The *Tu dedisti* † will come in too. For, be it the world, God created it; be it wealth, he openeth his hand and giveth it; be it honour, he raiseth the poor out of the dust; be it our flesh, he fashioneth it; be it our soul, he breathed it into us; be it our understanding, it is a spark of his Divinity; be it our will, he gave it us; be it our affections, they are the impressions of his hand. But, be it our infirmity, we are too ready to say that that is a woman too of God's making. But God never gave it. For, suppose the flesh be weak, yet the spirit is strong: *Et si spiritus carne fortior, nostrá culpá infirmiora sectamur*, saith Tertullian: "If the spirit be stronger than the flesh, it is our fault if the weaker side prevail." And therefore let us not flatter ourselves, saith he, because we read in scripture that

\* "Ye shall be as gods."—EDIT.

† "Thou gavest."—EDIT.

“the flesh is weak :” for we read also that “the spirit is ready ;” (Matt. xxvi. 41 ;) that we might know that we are to obey, not the flesh, but the spirit. Of all discourses those of our own infirmity prove many times most dangerous : for this indeed is the woman which giveth us the apple. If we blaspheme God’s name, it is our infirmity ; if we revenge ourselves, it is our infirmity ; if we steal, it is our infirmity ; if we taste of forbidden pleasures, it is our infirmity : when our greatest infirmity is, to talk so much of infirmity, and still to allege it as an excuse of our faults. In every sin we commit we renew this ancient story, and Eve continually overcometh Adam.

Nay, further yet : As Adam excused himself by Eve, so do we excuse ourselves by Adam ; we lay all our sins on his shoulders, and hide all our actual transgressions within the folds of original corruption. When God cometh to question us, and to ask us where and in what state we are, we cannot but be guilty and conscious to ourselves of sin ; we cannot but say that we have eaten, and done that which was forbidden. But then *nolumus esse nostrum, quia malum agnoscimus* ; though the sin be ours, “we are unwilling to own it, because of its deformity.” “We carry sin about us :” Nay, saith Luther, *unusquisque infernum in se habet*, “every man hath a hell within himself ;” and therefore he casteth-in this water, these cold excuses, to cool and allay it.

III. And thus ye see what a near resemblance and likeness there is between Adam and his posterity ; that we are so like him in this art of apologizing, *ut sit tam similis sibi nec ipse*,\* that we cannot easily tell whether had most skill to paint sin with an excuse,—the father, or the children. Adam behind the bush, Adam with a *Mulier dedit*, is a fair picture of every sinner ; but it is not easy to say that it doth fully express him. But now, to draw towards a conclusion, that we may learn *exuere patrem*, “to cast off the old man,” and to avoid that danger that was fatal to him, we must remember that we are not only of the first Adam, but also of the Second ; not only “of the earth, earthy,” but also of “the Lord from heaven : and as we have borne the image of the earthy, so we must also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Cor. xv. 47, 49.) We must remember that we are born with Christ, that we are baptized and buried with Christ, and that we must rise with Christ ; that the woman was given to be in subjection, the flesh to be subdued by us, and the world to be trodden under our feet ; that we must not count these as enforcements and allurements before sin, lest

\* “That he scarcely resembles himself more than we do him.”—EDIT.



we take them up as excuses after sin ; that we must not yield to them as stronger than ourselves, that we may not need to run to shelter ourselves under them in time of trouble.

A strange weakness it is to talk of weakness when we are to fight : for this is to yield before we strike a stroke ; and no wonder *si vincantur qui jam victi sunt*, "if they fall by conquest who in their own opinions are already overcome." And as great weakness it is, when the woman hath prevailed, and we have given up our strength to infirmity, then out of that to draw an apology, from whence by resistance we might have raised that virtue which would have crowned us with honour and glory. "It was the woman," saith Adam : "It is my melancholy," saith the envious : "It is my blood," saith the wanton : "It is my appetite," saith the glutton : "It is my choler," saith the murderer. But God gave Adam a wife, not a tempter : and God gave an appetite, not gluttony ; natural tempers and constitutions, not envy, not luxury, not revenge. And the envious should clear-up the cloud of melancholy with the light of reason, the furious gallant purge his choler, the wanton quench the fire in his blood, and "make himself an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. xix. 12,) and the glutton *τῆ γαστρὶ πολεμεῖν*, "wage war with his appetite," "put a knife to his throat," (Prov. xxiii. 2,) and "beat down his body" with fasting and abstinence. (1 Cor. ix. 27.)

Beloved, if this care were general and serious, we should not hear Adam complain of Eve ; nor should we complain of Adam, nor make our infirmity an apology for sin, nor our weakness to resist temptation a temptation to those sins which increase our weakness. God sendeth us into the world as the Romans did their armies against Carthage,—not to return but with conquest. If we fail and be foiled, it will be in vain to urge and plead our infirmity. "It is the perverseness of the will," saith St. Ambrose, "that damneth the wicked : but no necessity of nature nor infirmity of the flesh can excuse them." God indeed gave the woman to Adam, but *dedit in adjutorium*, "he gave her him to be a helper." So there is not any thing which God hath given us that of itself can hurt us. "There is no natural appetite or inclination in man," say the Schools, "which may not be drawn up to a virtuous act." There is no fuel, no spark, in our nature, which may not be improved and fixed up at last as a star in the firmament of the soul. For every inclination is from God, and therefore is good, and tendeth to good. My inclination to anger may end in true Christian fortitude ; my inclination to sorrow may be perfected in repentance ; my inclination to meats, in

sobriety and abstinence. If the woman had been given to Adam to have given him the fruit, he might have tasted and not died: and if our natural inclination did necessitate us to the act, we may say it, and be no liars,—that we have no sin.

What pretence, then, can we find, what excuse can we possibly frame, when we break God's command? That sin doth insinuate? A Christian hath a charm. That it is invisible, and so insensible? Faith unfoldeth it. That our nature is weak? Christ doth strengthen us. That there is a woman with an apple in her hand, many incitements to sin? There are more and stronger to goodness. "There needeth no instructor to teach us," saith St. Basil, "no orator to persuade us, to hate a loathsome disease; and by the common principles of reason we commend justice and temperance, and condemn that which is evil." "Ἔστι τις ἀδίδακτος ἑκκλησίας τοῦ κακοῦ." "There is," saith he, "in the soul of man an averseness from evil, which he never learned, but brought with him into the world." But then, what, if evil look well, and speak well, and appear in some glory? We have light enough to discover that imposture. For the fruit with the inscription, there is a *Morte morieris*.\* If the world flattereth, God threateneth: if nature incline, grace is a bridle: if the devil suggest, the angels are our guardians: if he fetch his circuit and compass to see where he may foil us, they are ready to pitch their tents round about us. What speak we of temptations? They are *officina meritorum*, "a shop to build good works in." If temptation clothe itself with lust, I may make it chastity and temperance: if it smile in a piece of gold, I may make it poverty of spirit: if it cringe to me in his knee that honoureth me, I may shadow it with humility. Our passions which have *quandam mulieritatem*, "a kind of womanishness," in them, and are many times as froward and perverse as any of that sex, yet may be made useful and serviceable, *cùm illud quod in illis femininum est virile facimus*, saith the father, "by turning their effeminacy into true manhood;" by making my fear a sentinel to warn me of danger, my anger a magistrate to punish my sin, and my sorrow a penitentiary to water my couch with tears; nay, *cùm illud quod in illis ferinum est divinum facimus*, "by making that divine which was bestial and brutish in them."

And, indeed, wherein can we more nearly resemble God than in the destruction of sin? And this we may work by help of our passions. This fleshly part of ours God hath given us; but *dedit sociam*, "he gave it for a companion," not an enemy. Nyssen will tell us that the soul may set it in tune, as a musi-

\* "Thou shalt die the death."—EDIT.

cian doth his harp and lute, and make such an harmony as shall be very delightful in the ears of God. And a friend also we may make it to exalt and promote us. It may help us to a confessor's place in heaven by the confession of the tongue; it may procure us a virgin's place by chastity, and crown us with martyrdom by dying for Christ. *Nemo non in causâ Dei facere potest quod in causâ suâ quotidie facit*: "We are prodigal of our blood and of our life, if our lust or some quarrel call for it: why should it then be so difficult a matter to employ and spend it in the cause of God?" If we shall search the scripture, to improve our knowledge; if we shall earnestly beg of the God of grace, to inflame our love; let the woman tempt never so much, we shall not hear her: let our natural endowments be what they will, he that doeth little amongst us shall do much, and he that doeth much shall do much more. And for our enemies which we so fear, and which we bring-in as an excuse of our cowardice, one of us (as it was said of the Israelites) "shall chase a thousand" of them; (Deut. xxxii. 30;) and if "they come out against us one way, they shall flee before us seven ways." (Chap. xxviii. 7.). Nor shall we ever so forget ourselves as to palliate our offences, and, when God and our conscience—or our conscience, which is our God—shall call us to account, put them off upon Adam, as Adam did here upon Eve. There shall never come a *Mulier dedit*, or a *tu dedisti*, "The woman hath done this," or, "Our flesh hath done this," or, "God hath done this," into our apology. Nor will we hide ourselves under any tree but that whose leaves are to heal the nations, (Rev. xxii. 2,) nor run unto any rock but the holes and sides of the Rock Christ Jesus.

1. To shut up all, and conclude: (for I fear I have trespassed:) my advice shall be, First, that of Arsenius the hermit: *Impera Evæ, et cave serpentem, et tutus eris; tutior autem si arborem non inspexeris*: "Command Eve, and beware of the serpent, and thou shalt be safe: but, if thou wilt be out of the reach of danger, do not so much as look towards the forbidden tree." Let thy reason take its place, and hold dominion over thy will: "Look not upon the wine when it is red," (Prov. xxiii. 31,) nor upon beauty when it smileth, nor upon the apple when it is "pleasant to the eye;" but "fly all occasion and appearance of evil," (1 Thess. v. 22,) and hate sin even in a picture: and this, that thou mayest not sin.

2. But, in the Second place, if thou hast sinned, if thou hast tasted of the forbidden fruit, if thou hast meddled with the accursed thing, then, as Joshua speaketh to Achan, "My son,

give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him." (Joshua vii. 19.) Run not behind the bush, study not apologies: make not the woman, who should help thee to stand, an excuse of thy fall: nor think that paint or curtains can hide thy sin from Him whose "eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun," (Ecclus. xxiii. 19,) and in whose bosom thou art, even when thou runnest into the thicket of excuses. No: "Give glory to God," that God may seal a pardon to thee. Open thy sin by confession to God, and the mercy of God will hide it: condemn it, and judge thyself for it; and thy excuse is made, thou shalt never be judged for it by the Lord: lay it open before the Lord, and he will blot it out for ever. Excuse can make but an imaginary saint; and such saints shall howl in utter darkness: but confession maketh us glorious in his sight who cannot be deceived; it maketh our head fit for a diadem. It lifteth us up when it casteth us down, maketh us appear lovely in our deformity, and by condemning absolveth us, *ἐκδυσωποῦσα τὸν Κριτὴν*, (as the Greek fathers were bold to speak,) "making the Judge even ashamed" of our shame, working in him compassion, that his bowels yearn at our sighs and groans, that he maketh haste, and falleth upon our necks, and embraceth us, "cancelleth the hand-writing that was against us;" (Col. ii. 14;) and seeing our sins lie open before him, he covereth them with his mercy, forgiveth them, forgetteth them, as if they had never been; and finding us thus humbled under his hand, with his hand he lifteth up our heads, and crowneth them with glory and immortality.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

BX  
5133  
.F3  
1849  
VOL. 3

FARINDON  
SERMONS

A2477

ISSUED TO

BX  
5133  
.F3  
1949  
Vol 3

- JORTIN'S (JOHN, D.D.) SERMONS ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS:** also, Doctrine of a Future State; and Four Charges, 4 v. 1s. 8vo. cloth, 7s. 6d.
- JORTIN'S REMARKS ON ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,** 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 14s.
- KING'S (DR. DAVID) NEW AND COMPLETE CONCORDANCE,** on the basis of Cruden, post 8vo. cloth, 5s.
- LATROBE'S SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS,**  
A Series of 84 Engravings illustrative of the Bible, 4to. cloth, 15s.
- LELAND'S (DR. JOHN) DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,** 8vo. cloth, 5s.
- LOWTH'S (BISHOP) SERMONS.**  
With Memoir, by Rev. P. Hall, M.A., 8vo. cloth, 4s. 6d.
- LOWTH'S LITERAL TRANSLATION OF ISAIAH,**  
With Notes, 8vo. cloth, 4s. 6d.
- LUTHER'S COMMENTARY ON THE GALATIANS,** 8vo. cloth, 7s.
- LYALL'S (DR. W. R.) PROPÆDIA PROPHETICA:**  
A View of the Use and Design of the Old Testament, 8vo. cloth, 4s. 6d.
- MASSILLON'S (BISHOP) SERMONS,** 8vo. cloth, 6s.
- M'ILVAINE (C. P.) EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY,** Fcp. 8vo. cloth, 3s.
- MODERN (THE) PULPIT, BY EMINENT DIVINES,** Fcp. 8vo. cloth, 2s.
- MORNING EXERCISES AT CRIPPLEGATE AND ST. GILES'S,** 6 vols. 8vo. cloth, £3 14s.
- MOSHEIM'S ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,** 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 15s.
- NEWTON'S (BISHOP) DISSERTATIONS ON THE PROPHECIES,** 8vo. cloth, 7s. 6d.
- ORTON'S (REV. JOB) PRACTICAL WORKS,** 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 9s.
- PALEY'S (DR. WILLIAM) THEOLOGICAL WORKS.**  
New Edition, with Illustrative Notes, Life, and Portrait, super-royal 8vo. cloth, 12s.
- PATRICK, LOWTH, ARNOLD, WHITBY, AND LOWMAN, ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,** 4 vols. imp. 8vo. cloth, £3 3s.
- PEARSON'S (DR. JOHN) EXPOSITION OF THE CREED,** Portrait, 8vo. cloth, 8s.
- PITMAN'S (REV. J. R.) SERMONS,**  
Course of Sermons from the Book of Psalms, 8vo. 5s. Course of Sermons for the Year, 2 vols. 8vo. 7s. Second Course of Sermons for the Year, 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 15s.

---

W. Tegg and Co., 85, Queen Street, Cheapside, London.

**PRIDEAUX'S CONNEXION ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.** New Edition, by Talboys Wheeler, 2 vols. 8vo. cloth. *Just Ready.*

**RELIGIOUS EMBLEMS AND ALLEGORIES,**

A Series of Engravings designed to illustrate Divine Truth, by the Rev. W. Holmes; a New Edition, with an Introduction by the Rev. James Smith, author of "The Book that will suit you," fcp. 8vo. antique cloth, red edges, 5s.

**ROBINSON'S ORIENTAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE,** 8vo. cloth, 5s.

**ROBINSON'S (REV. THOS.) SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS.** 8vo. cloth, 8s.

**SHUTTLEWORTH'S (BISHOP) SERMONS,**

On the Principles and Practical Duties of Christianity, 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 10s.

**STUART'S (MOSES) CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON,** New Edition, by the Rev. Dr. Lorimer, 8vo. cloth, 5s.

**STUART'S (MOSES) COMMENTARIES :**

On the Apocalypse, 8vo. cloth, 7s. 6d. On the Hebrews, 8vo. cloth, 7s. 6d. On the Romans, 7s. 6d.

**TOPLADY'S THEOLOGICAL WORKS,**

1 thick vol. 8vo. cloth, 12s.

**TOWNSEND'S (GEORGE, D.D.) ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVIL HISTORY,** 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 12s.

**WARBURTON'S DIVINE LEGATION OF MOSES,**

3 vols. 8vo. cloth, 18s.

**WARDEN'S (REV. J., M.A.) SYSTEM OF REVEALED RELIGION,** 8vo. cloth, 7s. 6d.

**WELLS'S (DR. E.) GEOGRAPHY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,** 8vo. cloth, 8s.

**WESLEY'S SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS,**

With Memoir by Samuel Drew, M.A., 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 10s.

**WHEATLEY ON THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER,**

8vo. cloth, 4s. 6d.

**WHITEFIELD'S SERMONS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS,** with Memoir by Samuel Drew, M.A., &c., 8vo. cloth, 8s.

**WILLIAMS'S CHRISTIAN PREACHER,**

With Appendix on the Choice of Books, by Jackson, 12mo. cloth, 3s. 6d.

**WOOD'S (REV. JAMES) DICTIONARY OF THE HOLY BIBLE,** forming a complete Body of Scripture History, Chronology, Divinity, &c., New Edition, 2 vols. 8vo. cloth, 10s. 6d.

---

W. Tegg and Co., 85, Queen Street, Cheapside, London.

