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Alexander Jolly.

SELECT DISCOURSES

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ON THE PRINCIPAL POINTS OF

NATURAL AND REVEALED

RELIGION.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

THEOLOGICAL LECTURES

ON THE TEN FIRST CHAPTERS OF ST. MATTHEW;

DELIVERED AT

WESTMINSTER ABBEY,

By JOHN HEYLYN, D. D.

LATE PREBENDARY OF WESTMINSTER, AND RECTOR OF
ST. MARY LE STRAND.

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DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XXXV.

The CANAANITE.

MATT. XV. 21, 22.

Jesus went thence and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts and cried unto him, saying: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

ALL the vices do so grievously vex and torment men even in this life, that those who indulge them, often cannot help acknowledging, that sin brings with it its own punishment: for they have many lucid intervals, wherein they regret the wrong they have done, wherein they blame themselves as the authors of their misery, and therefore desire and design to amend their lives. A drunkard, for instance, while he is doing penance for a former debauch, will often resolve to become temperate: and yet, the first occasion that offers, he shall run into the same excess; the painful effects of

which may perhaps revive his good purposes, till they too are lost, as the former, in another fit of riot. In his sober intervals, as was said, his reason may represent to him that such excesses are destructive of his health, his reputation, and his fortune; to say nothing of their consequences in a future state: yet the man often has not the strength to follow his reason, but goes on knowingly and deliberately to destruction.

This will appear unaccountable to those who have not considered that vice is as *real a distemper of the mind*, as any natural disease of the body: a *real distemper of the mind*, I say, which actually weakens it, and renders a man incapable of doing what he knows he ought to do, and even would do, if he were perfect master of himself. And therefore where we read in the gospel, that *Christ taught the people*, it is commonly added, *that he cured their diseases*; by which we are to understand, not only bodily diseases, but much more those mental ones I have been speaking of. His miraculous cures were intended not barely to authorise his mission, but they too were instructive as his sermons, teaching us to have faith in his divine power to heal the maladies of our souls. When he bid a lame man walk or a leper be cleansed, he at the same time communicated a sanative power which enabled them to follow his directions: and when
he

he bids us practise the christian virtues, he at the same time communicates the graces which are necessary for their performance.

There is indeed this difference between the bodily cures he wrought, and the operation of his Spirit upon our souls, that the former were commonly instantaneous; and when a diseased person besought his assistance with faith in his power and goodness, which *faith*, by the way, he always required of every subject that was capable of it: when, I say, a diseased person sought from him a cure with the proper disposition, he obtained it immediately: but in his spiritual cures our Lord usually proceeds more leisurely. Distempered matter may be instantly set to right, since that is merely passive: but in reforming minds, the will must be changed deliberately, and with its own concurrence. This is a work of infinitely greater importance than bodily health, a work for eternity; and, therefore, single acts of faith will not suffice here: we must long persist in our pious desires with an intenseness that bears some proportion to the infinite good we aspire to: and our faith must be long exercised in various trials, temptations, and seeming discouragements, till that exercise raise, improve, and perfect it in such a degree as may render us capable of those higher attainments to which we are called.

These difficulties and discouragements, with the manner we ought to behave under them, are well represented in the story now proposed of the Canaanitish mother addressing our Lord for the cure of her daughter, who was grievously tormented by an evil spirit: for St. Jerome upon this occasion teaches us to consider our own soul, under the tyranny of sinful habits and passions, as represented by the distressed daughter: and then the case of the Canaanite will become our own; and we shall learn our duty from her behaviour, which was recorded on purpose for our instruction.

Her story begins as you have heard, *Jesus departed thence into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon: and behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts and cried unto him saying: have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.* The greatness of her grief raised her voice, and made her cry aloud to our Lord. Prayers uttered in deep distress have an unusual force and vehemence. Sorrow is oftentimes a great friend to devotion, and exalts it to a higher pitch than the calmer seasons of life are capable of. This inflamed the devotion of our Canaanite, *Have mercy on me, O Lord* (she cried) *thou Son of David! Son of David* was, among the Jews, the usual appellation of the Messiah, and is here an express declaration of her faith in him: she adds,
My

My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. She plainly relates her misery to move his compassion, but adds nothing farther, either wholly relying upon his goodness, which needed no other motive than the distress of the supplicant; or not presuming to prescribe any method to his mercy, which she had no ways deserved, and therefore durst not direct: but barely laying open her grief, she casts herself upon his goodness with a general, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David.*

To this prayer so fervent, so resigned, so humble, so full of faith, our Lord returned no answer. It is said, *He answered her not a word.* But she nothing dismayed by his silence, renews her request with greater earnestness; and, as it should seem by the sequel of the story, solicits the disciples of our Lord to intercede on her behalf, so that *they came, and besought him, saying send her away, for she crieth after us.* But our Lord, who had not vouchsafed to make her any answer, so answered his disciples intercession for her, as should seem to exclude her from all hope of obtaining her request. *I am not sent* (said he) *but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* An answer much more discouraging than his former silence, excluding her from all pretensions to, or even capacity for his favour.

But nothing could rebuke her: she again renews her importunity with fresh ardor. And whereas she had hitherto kept at an humble distance, as we gather from those words of the disciples, *she crieth after us*: she now advances with a religious boldness. Misery, she knew, has a privilege to be importunate: and the vehemence of her desire broke through all restraints of a timorous bashfulness: therefore coming forward, she cast herself at our Lord's feet, impatient of denial, and resolute to persist in her request at any rate. *She came* (saith the evangelist) *and worshipped, saying: Lord help me.* But he replied, *it is not meet to take the childrens bread, and cast it unto dogs.* This was all the return our Lord made to this humble, persevering, importunate, adoring petitioner.

His silence, at her first address, was very discouraging: his answer to the disciples, who interceded in her behalf, *that he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, and therefore that it was not in his commission to relieve her; this seemed to exclude all hope: but this last denial, with such severe upbraidings, should, one would think, drive her into utter despair, and make her desist from a pursuit, in which she met with, not only a flat refusal, but also contemptuous reproaches. *It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and cast it unto dogs.* She was denied, rejected, rebuked, and upbraided
with

with her unworthiness in the sharpest terms. Such opprobrious treatment was very discouraging, and apt, not only to divert all farther importunity, but even to provoke her rage to find herself used so contumeliously. Yet so far from this, she renews her petition still with more vehemence, and pleads for mercy from that very argument, which, as it should seem, might drive her to despair. She saith, *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters table.* She approves the sentence which condemns her unworthiness. Those whom our Lord stiles *children*, she owns for her *masters*: she freely admits and acknowledges the justice of his reproaches; she takes shame to herself, and humbly acquiesces in the base rank he allotted her. She is willing to be reckoned among the *dogs*. But yet, as such, even by that title, she still implores his mercy. *The dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters table. Then Jesus answered and said: O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole even from that very hour.*

Strange alteration! she had been told just before, *that it was not meet to take the childrens bread, and cast it unto dogs*: yet now she has her petition granted to the full. How comes this to pass? Can our Lord do that which is not meet, is not fitting to be done? Can he

contradict himself, and do that very thing which he had before declared improper, and unreasonable? No, that cannot be. But *such prayers* had altered the nature of things. The humility, the faith, the fervency, and perseverance of this devout Canaanite had raised her from the base rank in which she first addressed our Lord. She was no longer to be reckoned among the dogs, but was exalted to a place at our Lord's table among his children. She was become worthy (with such worthiness I mean as God requires of his poor creatures) to partake of his choicest favours: and accordingly her request was granted without any limitation, and her humble perseverance obtained the highest honour that can dignify any creature, even the praise and commendation of our Lord. *O woman (said he) great is thy faith! be it unto thee, even as thou wilt, and immediately the evil spirit was dispossessed, and her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

And this is the example which the wisdom of our church has proposed to the consideration of penitents in this Lent season. For the gospels and epistles appropriated to each Sunday, are not taken at random, but judiciously adapted to those purposes which the church has immediately in view in her respective seasons¹.

¹ This is the gospel appointed for the second Sunday in Lent.

Repentance is now her principal concern, and therefore she provides against the difficulties that attend it, by proposing to her new converts this example of an irresistible perseverance: for notwithstanding their confessions, and pious resolutions, they will soon be perplexed and entangled with their old temptations: the adversary will *grievously vex and torment* them by the hold he still keeps in their hearts through the force of inveterate habits, and their having long indulged their natural corruptions. Though they begin the day with their devotions, and a serious renewal of their religious purposes; and for some time keep their minds steady in spiritual watchfulness, and attention to the presence of God: yet the evil one will by degrees insinuate himself; and by company, their meals, their diversions, their worldly concerns, or other incidents, expose them to new trials, wherein their virtuous purposes will be often frustrated, and *they return like the dog to his vomit, and the swine that was washed to wallowing in the mire.* Let not such comparisons offend our delicacy: there is no creature so vile, as not to be disgraced, when compared to a relapsing sinner. The expressions indeed are shocking and nauseous, but that is their commendation, for therein their fitness consists.

But to go on in our subject. The reason of these horrible relapses is, because the *evil one*
is

is not yet intirely dispossessed of their hearts. They have indeed renounced his authority, and they endeavour to resist it, but he is still too strong for them, and will not suffer them to escape his power. I speak a feeling truth, and many can bear witness to it by their sad experience, but we may vouch here the testimony of an apostle, even St. Paul, who while he was yet fighting the good fight, and before he had finished his course, saith of himself, *I am sold under sin,—for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. And the good that I would do, I do not: but the evil, which I would not, that I do: I find then a law, (i. e. an obliging and constraining power, which every law has over those who are subject to it) I find then a law, a compulsive force, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I find another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin. This law of sin is the power of Satan over our corrupt nature. He is called in scripture the prince of this world, he has his kingdom in the hearts of men, and is the author and maintainer of the great law of concupiscence, whereby he tyrannizes over mankind. He does, in a word, after a spiritual manner possess their souls with such dominion over them, that our Lord calls him the strong one*

one armed to keep his possession there, and defend it against all invaders. *When* (saith he) *the strong one armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace*², i. e. he has the quiet possession of them: for as long as men are his voluntary vassals, and follow the inclinations he suggests or excites in them, they are not sensible of their bondage; they live in *self-will*, which is the element and kingdom of Satan. But when they renounce their own will to do the will of God, then they feel their captivity, then they perceive that they are *tied and bound with the chains of their sins*, which being put to the stretch by their struggles for liberty, *grievously vex and torment them*.

But this must not discourage us. Such a painful sense of our bondage is a good symptom, which should kindle devotion, and make us call earnestly upon the Redeemer for deliverance. Remember then the example of the Canaanite: you have heard her prayers, and how she prospered: if you imitate her perseverance, you will be blessed with her success. Think not that this devout woman had any advantage, which you are not equally capable of. *Jesus Christ is ever the same*, he is ever present with us, and he daily works those spiritual miracles of grace in the hearts of true believers, whereof his visible miracles, while he lived on earth, were

² Luke xi.

only types, and thence in the gospel so often called *signs*, because they are signs and representations of the power of Christ to heal our distempered nature. Far be it from us to think that such miracles, I mean the spiritual miracles of his grace, are ceased since the primitive times of christianity; *the arm of the Lord is not shortened*, but extends itself through all ages for the relief and defence of those who are duly qualified by faith and persevering prayer. He still casts out devils, and leads captivity captive by the powers of triumphant grace.

But do not imagine that God must take the first hint, when you take it in your heads to become religious. He has long called and invited you to virtue, and you have long been deaf to his sollicitations. It is fit that you should wait a little in your turn, and have your patience exercised with these seeming denials of the Lord. I say *seeming denials*, for the truth is, that his Spirit really operates to purify your hearts from the moment you apply to him. But your hearts are so corrupted, that you are not yet fit objects of those high degrees of mercy you request of him. You have degraded and debased your nature by your obstinacy in sin. You have forfeited all title to his favour by your rebellion. You are yet to be reckoned among those unworthy ones, upon whom it is not fitting that the childrens bread should be bestowed.

Yet

Yet be not therefore disheartened: do not therefore abate your religious efforts: but remember well the story of this Canaanite: imitate her humility, her faith, her indefatigable perseverance in prayer, and a due continuance in those good dispositions will insensibly change your heart, raise your fallen nature, and render you, by degrees, worthy objects of the choicest mercies of God. Then Jesus Christ will not fail to work a miracle on your behalf, and cast out Satan in every form, whether of pride, envy, sloth, or sensuality, by which he possesses us, and like the demoniac among the tombs, breaks every band of pious vows and resolutions wherewith we have bound our souls: Christ I say will totally eject him, and establish our hearts in that divine liberty, peace, and joy, which anticipate heaven in this life, and are the sure pledges of it for eternity.

DISCOURSE XXXVI.

On RESTITUTION.

LUKE xix. 8.

Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor : and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.

OUR translators have put in *false accusation* very needlessly ; for the sense is more general, *if I have taken any thing from any man wrongfully* : or, as the original is truly rendered in the office for the communion, *if I have done any wrong to any man I restore four-fold.* Zaccheus had before declared, that *he gave the half of his goods to the poor* : so that in both these duties of *restitution*, and *alms-giving*, he sets an example which calls upon us to consider how far we are obliged to follow it.

First in *restitution*, wherein Zaccheus, by a supererogating justice, made, what was prescribed

scribed by the Levitical law¹ in one particular case, the general rule of his practice. In that particular case it had been adjudged, that when a sinner, *transgressing* the commands of God, had broke in upon the property of his neighbour, he should be obliged to return, not only to the precise limits of justice, by giving up what he had taken wrongfully, but that he should, by way of expiation, add three times as much of his own. To restore one-fold would indemnify the person offended, but it was judged proper to add three-fold more, by way of punishment upon the offender. This, in his abundant zeal for justice, Zaccheus took to himself, as a general rule for his own conduct: but I must not propose the ample reparation he made as a standard which we are strictly bound to come up to. My purpose is to shew what we are indispensably obliged to, and therefore I shall insist barely on the *single* restitution, only that when we have wronged any person, we return to him strictly as much as we have wronged him of, and fully repair the damage he has sustained. I except only the case of an absolute incapacity, which is indeed an universal dispensation: but with this one reserve, I say, that in all other cases we are indispensably obliged to make an equivalent reparation for the injuries we have done, as I undertake to demonstrate in the following discourse.

¹ Exod. xxii. 1.

As God is the author, so he is the guardian of human society ; and has taken the properties of men under *his* protection. To secure these, and preserve the world in peaceable order, he fences the possessions of every man with a strict command to the rest not to *covet* or desire them. That is the last commandment of the second table ; which ratifies and establishes the rest. For he who does not covet his neighbour's goods, will not disturb his peaceable possession of them. When that fundamental law is violated, and inordinate desires break loose, then to prevent our putting them in execution, other commandments are opposed to secure property in its several branches. When we transgress *these* commandments too, and actually invade the rights of our neighbour, then the sin is completed, and woeful is our condition. Yet God, whose mercy is over all his works, as a supplement to the former laws, has added this now under consideration, *viz.* that after we have wickedly coveted, after we have unjustly taken the goods of our neighbour, we should restore them to him again, and re-establish the order we had violated. There is no room for *farther* precepts upon this head. If we continue to transgress this last, this merciful commandment, no shadow of excuse remains ; *we shall die in our sins.* The Almighty Legislator
will

will proceed to judgment, and sad will be his sentence against the transgressors.

Thus revelation represents God interposing his authority to defend the civil rights of mankind, and taking upon himself the cause of the injured to judge and to avenge it. So his apostle Paul, *We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you, by the Lord Jesus Christ, that, as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God; so ye would abound more and more: for ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus—That no man defraud or oppress his brother in any matter: because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified.*

But although no inspired writer had thus forewarned us, yet the mere light of nature has sufficiently revealed this truth to the understanding of all men. Who can deny, who can doubt, that we are obliged to be just; obliged not to do wrong? If we ought not wrongfully to *take* the goods of our neighbour; then certainly we ought not to *keep* them: and as long as we wilfully keep them, we continue in the same injustice, with which we first invaded them. The theft or fraud was a transient act; a sin indeed, yet sins will be forgiven upon repentance; but the deliberate keeping the unjust gain is a permanent habit of injustice: and as long as that lasts, we can have no reasonable

hopes of God's mercy, we render ourselves incapable of it.

All sins, as I have said, will be forgiven upon repentance. But without restitution (where that is possible) there can be no true repentance. An effectual repentance ever includes these two necessary parts: a sorrow for sin, and a determined resolution to forsake it. Looking backward upon our past life, we condemn and regret what has been done amiss: looking forward, we steadfastly purpose to amend for the future. These are two essential parts of repentance, both which necessarily imply restitution, as will appear when we consider them severally.

The first is *sorrow for sin*, which, where it is sincere, must beget earnest wishes that we had not committed it. Lamenting the past folly with contrite pangs, we wish we had never done it: we would give the world to undo it, if that were possible. Now this is what restitution directly tends to: in some sort it undoes the deed, it effaces the wrong, it takes away the injury, and makes atonement to justice. He, therefore, who does not endeavour to make restitution, has no real contrition. For if he is truly grieved that he has gotten another man's goods, why does he keep them? If he wishes he had not done it, why does he per-

sist

sist in it? These things are inconsistent, and destroy each other.

The second material part of repentance is a resolution not to repeat the crime. As long as we wilfully detain what belongs to another, we do repeat the crime, or what is equivalent, we continue and persevere in it. Now is it reasonable to hope that God will forgive a sin which we obstinately persist in? If we die without making restitution, do we not die in our sin? and can we then have any hopes of mercy? the holy Scriptures assure us, that we cannot. The same merciful God, who has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people being penitent the absolution and remission of their sins, the same God, I say, has commanded us to declare and pronounce the contrary to all those, who do not to the utmost of their power repair the wrongs they have done. We are bound to assure them, that God will not hold them guiltless of those crimes, which they (if I may so speak) still enjoy, while they wilfully retain the wicked fruit of them. Even the Romish church, with her supposed relaxations, her dispensations, indulgencies, and pardons; all her powers, and all her keys, declares that she has no power to absolve without restitution. Indeed all the divines of all the sects of Christendom agree in this, however divided in other

points: and so universal a concurrence leaves no room to doubt of the indispensable necessity of this obligation.

Yet, as a farther proof of it, you may observe, that in the warning given for the celebration of the Lord's supper, our own church has been particularly careful to remind all her members of this, among other conditions requisite in a worthy communicant. " My duty (saith the minister) " is to exhort you to consider the dignity of that holy mystery, and " the great peril of the unworthy receiving " thereof; and so to search and examine your " own consciences, (and that not lightly and " after the manner of dissemblers with God; " but so) that ye may come holy and clean to " such an heavenly feast.—

" The way and means thereto is, first to " examine your lives and conversations by the " rule of God's commandments—and if ye " shall perceive your offences to be such, as " are not only against God, but also against " your neighbours, then you shall reconcile " yourselves to them, being ready to make re- " stitution and satisfaction according to the ut- " termost of your powers, for all injuries and " wrongs done by you to any other:——for " otherwise the receiving of the holy commu- " nion doth nothing else but increase your dam- " nation." And then follows a charge to all
such,

such, that at their peril they come not to the holy table. So that he, who refuses to make restitution, stands excommunicate in the sense of our church, seeing she so solemnly forbids his approach to her altars.

The same injunction is implied, in those words of our Lord, *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee: leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* If we have wronged any person, he certainly has just matter of complaint against us: possibly indeed he may not know it, but his ignorance does not diminish our guilt; a theft is no less a theft, because it is private: we do not deserve that he should be reconciled to us, till we have made him amends for the wrong we have done him. Without this our oblations will be rejected, and our prayers ineffectual. *Leave there thy gift before the altar* (saith Christ) *and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother by doing him justice: for justice must be satisfied, before there is room for charity.* God will not accept the one for the other: and indeed it seems impious to think he should. For to put a parallel case, if you should sue one who has defrauded you, in a court of civil justice; and the judge should accept, as a bribe from your adversary, a part of the spoil, and so ac-

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quit

quit him ; would you not account such a judge an accomplice in the robbery ? Far be it from us to entertain such unworthy notions of God, and imagine that religious offerings can compensate for injustice ; I mean when the person injured, or others who succeed to his rights, are to be found : for when they are not, the unjust gain must then be paid into the hands of the poor, as the proper receivers. In all other cases the satisfaction is to be made to the person wronged : how else indeed is it satisfaction ? in the example of Zaccheus, you see that notwithstanding he gave half his substance to the poor, yet he made four-fold satisfaction for the damages he had done. He was not liberal at the expence of others ; he did not confound charity with restitution, his alms with his debts ; but he discharged each obligation separately : and therefore his example too is proposed in the communion service, not only to excite our bounty towards the poor, but also to remind us of the indispensable obligation of restitution, without which we cannot be worthy partakers of the Lord's supper.

Almsgiving indeed is a necessary duty, but justice is *a weightier part of the law* : and if those who have neglected the former, shall be condemned at the day of judgment, as our Lord so pathetically declares in St. Matthew¹ : what

¹ Chap. xxv.

will be the doom of those who have persisted in a wilful violation of justice? *Si tantâ pœnâ multatur, qui non dedit sua; quâ feriendus est, qui abstulit aliena*²? saith one of the fathers. If he is so punished, who gave not of his own; what will be the condemnation of him, who has unjustly taken, and detained what belongs to others? if there shall be judgment without mercy for him, who shewed not mercy: what judgments await him, who has obstinately persisted in injustice? truly, sirs, these are very important considerations. Wo to them who do not lay them to heart.

I will say more at present of the necessity of restitution, but I will not let pass this occasion of persuading you not to put yourselves under such necessity: I mean of persuading you from doing wrong, that there may be no occasion for reparation. Restitution is a certain remedy indeed, but a painful one: it is best not to want it; as health is preferable to physick. Therefore to prevent this I exhort you, in the name of God, and in the words of his apostle, *That ye do not oppress, or defraud your brother in any matter*³.——But will not this be thought a needless caution? Will not some, even of those who are guilty, think themselves injured by such a surmise? to cheat and to oppress are actions so truly mean and unworthy, that the bare

² Gregor. super 25. St. Matt.

³ 1 Thess. iv.

suspicion of them is resented as a great disparagement: and indeed with reason; for they argue such a base, odious temper, as ought to be abhorred and detested: and we do justly detest such actions in others:—but have we the same opinion of them when we commit them ourselves? Have we here the same sensibility, the same indignation? Injustice is certainly a very common sin, and all the world complains of it: we apprehend we guard against it carefully in our dealings with one another. Although charity inclines us to judge no man in particular, yet prudence obliges us to be cautious of every man: and the longer we live in the world, the more cautious we grow; because daily experience teaches us, that men are naturally prone to injustice. Now what I would persuade you to is, that we being of the same nature, and liable to the same temptations, should diligently watch *ourselves*, and guard against our own injustice with the same attention and sagacity, as we do in our commerce with the rest of the world. I mean that *we should be as careful not to wrong others, as we are that others should not wrong us*. We shall not be answerable for the injustice which we suffer, but for that which we do.—It concerns us much more not to cheat, than not to be cheated. This therefore should be our principal care. Here lies our greatest danger: all degrees

degrees of men are liable to it. Almost every state in life has its peculiar temptations to fraud or oppression ; and to be aware of them is one necessary step towards escaping them. Let us therefore briefly take a view of the several ranks of men, and remark the various snares of this kind, to which their respective conditions render them obnoxious.

Servants may injure their masters not only by defrauding them, or suffering others to defraud them ; but also by wastefulness of their master's goods, when they are not as careful of them as they ought to be of their own : as also by wastefulness or other misapplication of their master's time ; for as long as he pays for it, it is *his* : and to mis-spend it in idleness, or any other way than he appoints, is an actual fraud and injury.

The masters defraud their hired servants by not paying them the due price of their labour ; and their *apprentices* by not sufficiently instructing them, by not supplying them with the necessaries or conveniencies agreed for, by requiring of them excessive or unreasonable services, or in any other respect not fulfilling their covenants.

Persons concerned in trade defraud by false weights or measures, by exacting an exorbitant price for their goods, by making undue perquisites : as also by bringing in false accounts, charging

charging things that have not been delivered, or over-charging those that have.

I must add to these, that delaying to pay our debts, when they become due, is an act of injustice. We then detain wrongfully what appertains to another. And though there was no injury in our taking it, yet to defer restoring it after a proper time, is often a grievous damage to the creditor.

Again, commissions of trust are often dangerous occasions of injustice. Men are too apt to confound *right*, and *power*: and to do things merely because they can. Public offices frequently prove snares of this kind, as is too notorious by daily experience.

In these, and all other cases whatsoever, where we have committed injury, restitution must be made as far as possible, or there can be no remission of sin. This thought therefore should be a perpetual check upon us, to restrain all acts of fraud or violence, because it represents the unprofitableness of them, and takes away the force of temptation, which consists only in the supposed advantage they may bring. When such temptations solicit us we should argue thus with ourselves, “ Why should I take
 “ this? since I must restore it again, (that is
 “ the best that can happen) or I must perish
 “ everlastingly. What good will it do me, if I
 “ give it back again? what harm, what un-
 “ speakable

“ speakable harm if I keep it?” All unjust gain is a bait, a specious bait covering a cruel hook, which, when swallowed, must be painfully disgorged; or retained, will drag us to sure perdition. To this purpose may be applied those words in the book of Job, *he hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again*⁵; a painful operation: but there is no other remedy.

Thus far have I treated of *justice*, which is indeed a principal and most weighty point of the law. A second, and one like unto it, is *almsgiving*, for which too the example of *Zaccheus* is very instructive. The first thing to be remarked in it is, that he set aside a certain proportion of his income for charitable uses. This is a practice which I would earnestly recommend. Every man, who is in a condition to give alms, should set aside a certain proportion of his income for charitable uses. He who never thinks of giving alms, but when some pressing occasion calls upon him, is in danger of losing the heavenly reward in the worldly motives which solicit, and perhaps extort his contributions. A regard to the opinion of men, fear of censure, or desire of applause, may have a great share in such unpremeditated accidental bounties. But when in religious privacy, with a heart raised in devo-

⁵ Job xx. 15.

tion,

tion, we have *prepared our offering*, and solemnly dedicated some certain part of our income to the service of God, the future distribution of it upon proper occasions will be purer and more available to our salvation.

In this therefore we ought to follow the example of Zaccheus, and consecrate some certain proportion of our gains, or annual income: but what that proportion should be is no where determined; every man, as to that particular, being left to the dictates of his own conscience. In this respect, *viz. The quantity of our alms*, the example of Zaccheus is of a high order, and proper to excite liberality, but it is not a rule to which we are obliged. He gave the half of his goods to the poor; and there are, comparatively, but few men whose circumstances will afford so generous a partition; and yet fewer, who have hearts so bounteous as to be capable of it, even when they can afford it. But this is a matter in which no fixed rule is prescribed. We can only say in general, that all who are not poor themselves must give some part of their substance to the poor: the proportion is left to their own determination.

If it be inquired what other good men have done, many we know have given all they had; others, as Zaccheus, the half of their goods; but the common proportion, whereof we have in ecclesiastical story many instances, is the

tenth part. Yet even this is not to be insisted on. We only admonish you, that he that soweth little, shall reap little; and he that soweth plenteously, shall reap plenteously. Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart. And when such a fund for charity is settled, it will be very easy to make a right distribution of it.

D I S C O U R S E XXXVII.

The PHARISEE and PUBLICAN.

LUKE xviii. 9, 10.

He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican.

THERE are so few who make any pretensions to religion, that it is great pity any of those pretensions should be false and groundless. The generality of the world, we see, quite neglect it. They neither have it,
nor

nor seem to have it, nor desire to be thought to have it: and of the remainder who concern themselves about it, many mistake its nature, they mistake the superficial and ritual part for the whole of religion: and having discharged its facile offices, they pride themselves in their vain performances, and treat the rest of the world with contempt and aversion. While *they trust thus in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others*, their case is commonly more dangerous than that of open sinners: because their recovery is far more difficult. For they play the hypocrite, not only with the world, but also with themselves. They christen their ill-nature by the name of zeal; and whoever attempts to undeceive them, is like to incur the worst effects of it. This our Lord found by sad experience from the Pharisees, who upon this account long persecuted, and at last destroyed him. So pernicious a principle is this pharisaical righteousness. Such reason have we all to guard against it; which we shall be better enabled to do, if we consider its nature as here represented in the behaviour of the Pharisee in the temple; with the beautiful illustration of it by the opposite character of the humble Publican.

You have heard the occasion of the parable in the words I have read: our Lord spake it to certain, *who trusted in themselves that they were righteous,*

righteous, and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself. God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

It may be asked, what is the fault of this prayer? If our Pharisee mentioned his own good qualities, he seemed to do it with thankfulness, as ascribing them, and the glory of them, to God. Thankfulness arises from a sense of obligation and dependence; so that thanking God for the good he hath enabled us to do, implies an humble confession of our own inabilities, and a grateful acknowledgment of the divine favour.

But see the deceitfulness of the heart of man exemplified in this Pharisee. His giving God thanks was but a pretence; it was a mere artifice to introduce his own praise; to authorise, and as it were sanctify his vain-glorious boasting. He meant not to praise God, but himself; and it was a kind of sacrilege thus to abuse the name of God to screen his pride, and serve only as a plausible introduction to his arrogant commendations of himself, and his uncharitable censures and insolent contempt of others. *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners,*

extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. See how he seasons his private panegyric with public satire; and tramples upon the rest of the world to extol his own merit as if were upon their ruins. All inordinate self-love is necessarily attended with a proportionable want of charity: a redundance in the former must cause a defect in the latter, so that pride and ill-nature are inseparable. But what alliance have they with religion? What fellowship have light and darkness, what connexion is there between calumny and devotion?

Yet many men, pretendedly religious, have been so remarkable for these two devilish qualities of pride and ill-nature; have been so notoriously arrogant, supercilious, morose; so full of malicious censoriousness, and contempt of the rest of the world, and this with such hypocritical pretences of zeal for virtue and religion; that they have given a handle to wicked men to charge religion itself as accessory to such criminal affections, though the tenour of all its precepts tend to their utter extirpation.

Our *Pharisee* could boast of his alms, and his religious austerities: that he fasted twice a week, and gave the tenth part of his substance in charity. How ill he performed those duties is not here specified, but we may make a just estimate of them from his devotion, which is represented to us as exceeding corrupt and profane. It is
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said *He went up to the temple to pray*, but when he came to the temple, he did no such thing. He indulged his pride, and he vented his malice: he boasted, and he railed; but he did not offer up one petition. No, he was so full of his own praises, that he forgot his prayers: and when he named the name of God it was only as a preface to his self-applause and opprobrious calumny of the rest of the world.

This wicked practice of concealing the true purpose of his heart under more specious pretences is very common; for men are intimately conscious that pride is an odious quality, odious to God and man; and therefore they disguise it with false colours. To brag and extol one's self openly, is not only sinful, but ridiculous. And hence come so many shifts and artifices to insinuate clandestinely, what they are ashamed to mention without disguise.

Whoever has kept a due watch over his own heart, must have often observed these mean contrivances. Sometimes we pretend to blame ourselves for somewhat we are less careful to excel in, that we may make ourselves amends in assuming some other qualities which we have more at heart. Sometimes we veil our pride with an affected humility, and discommend ourselves in hopes to be kindly contradicted, and that our talents may be displayed with greater lustre, when we seem less conscious of

them. Sometimes we take occasion to commend others for some excellence, which we account conspicuous in our own character; hoping thereby to make *our own* taken notice of, and that we shall share at least in the reflection of that glory, which we ascribe *to them*, but mean to ourselves. And at other times with the same base design, but by a more ungenerous method, we inveigh against such faults in others as we judge ourselves most exempt from; that our innocence may be remarked more advantageously with the benefit of such foils. But not to mention any more of these vile disguises of vanity, this before us of our *Pharisee giving God thanks* is a very common, and a very base one. And our Lord has singled it out for rebuke, that he might cure us, if possible, of that hypocritical expression of our vain-glory, of making devotion a cloke for our pride, and venting our vanity in phrases of religious worship.

But this was not the only fault of our Pharisee's address to God; as such follies seldom go single. Besides such insincere thanksgiving, was this all he had to say? had he no sins to confess? no spiritual enemies, from whom he should seek deliverance? Did he want no forgiveness, or no grace, that he had nothing to ask at the mercy-seat? It seems he was not sensible of any such want, but fully satisfied
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with himself and his present attainments. It is strange he could be so infatuated, but this infatuation took its rise from a folly we all are very liable to; when intoxicated with pride we consider only our *good* qualities, when our vanity runs riot in the contemplation of what we judge the bright side of our character, and to heighten the delusion we add only the dark side of other mens, and compare our virtues with their vices. Then we are tempted to *trust in ourselves that we are righteous.*

So fallacious is the sophistry of pride, and of such dangerous consequence, as you have seen in this Pharisee. He was in the presence of his all-seeing Judge: and yet he was so far from owning his guilt and imploring mercy, that he affronted the divine Omniscience with lying boasts of his innocence. Or to set his absurdity in the light wherein St. Austin has placed it very elegantly, “ He was before his physician, and boasted of his health, instead of discovering his distemper.”

But let us see if he was not mistaken even in what he took for the sound part that needed no physician, in his boasted virtues, for which he pretended such devout thankfulness. *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are.* There was no ground perhaps for his thanksgiving. He might be a very *bad* man, though he was not as other men were. Singularity is

often a vice, but can never be a virtue. And he might be as wicked as other men, though not in all respects like them. Error is various. Satan may appear like an angel of light, and be never the *less* Satan, but rather more detestable in that unnatural disguise. Sin is of all modes and professions, but is then most abominable, when it is most concealed, and wears the mask of virtue. So that the Pharisee might be, *not as other men were*, to his greater condemnation.

But supposing his sense of the words, that many others were worse than himself: yet hell as well as heaven has divers mansions, and not to deserve the lowest place in it is small matter of praise or consolation.

You have heard his *general* expression of his own goodness, let us now take a view of the particulars, which he chose to specify, *viz.* that he was not *an extortioner, unjust, an adulterer, or even as the publican: but that he fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all that he possessed.*

Here he commends himself both negatively, and positively. For his merits lying in a narrow compass, he was glad to make the most of them. His vanity wanted room to expatiate, and was forced to seek it in what he was *not*, as well as what he was. *He was no extortioner, &c.* such negative commendations are a wretched
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ed kind of praise; yet we see vanity often have recourse to them. You shall hear an extravagant spendthrift boast that he is not covetous, and a covetous extortioner glorying that he is not extravagant. All the moral virtues stand between two vicious extremes, and the man who is far gone in one, is generally exempt from the other. No man can be so bad as to be disposed to all the vices at once, because they are (many of them) so contradictory and inconsistent as to exclude one another, and leave room for such negative commendations to the worst of men. Our Pharisee was no extortioner, nor adulterer, nor unjust, as he says: but he was proud, and hypocritical, and malicious, and censorious to a heinous degree. Witness his insolent mention of the humble Publican, *nor even as this Publican.* But he that saw the hearts of both, hath told us the difference, and that he was not indeed *as that Publican*, in a contrary sense to that he intended.

Thus much for his negative, speak we now of his positive merits, which were two, *fasting* and *alms-giving*. These are two *externals* of religion, very edifying when they are animated by the proper inward disposition of heart. Fasting is a means which, under the influence of divine grace, much conduces to mortify the passions and appetites; and when we fast with this intention, we grow in virtue, and promote

the great work of salvation. But there are some who, as Isaiah speaks, *fast through self-will, for strife and debate*¹, and grow thereby more wilful, peevish, and contentious: whose fasting feeds their vanity, and strengthens those evils passions which this pious institution was designed to humble: so liable are all the *externals* of religion to be perverted by an evil intention, and so fallacious is the judgment men are apt to make of themselves merely by the outward practice of religious duties, when they do not flow from a pure and humble heart.

After fasting our Pharisee names his almsgiving, that he gave tithes of all he possessed; which, (as St. Austin explains these words,) he freely bestowed upon the poor. This is indeed a most excellent virtue, when it is *at all* a virtue; I mean when it proceeds from virtuous principles. But this, like all other external performances, may be easily perverted. This man gave, as he says himself, the tenth part of his substance: but according to the supposition of St. Paul, he might have given *all his goods to feed the poor, yea and his own body to burnt; yet have wanted charity*²: and thereby his alms and his martyrdom should have profited him nothing.

But enough of this Pharisee: it will be sufficient if you observe with me, that if he had

¹ Isaiah lviii. 3, 4.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

had ten times the good qualities he boasts of, yet his boasting of them rendered them vain and fruitless; and that the pride of virtue is one of the worst of vices.

Let us see now on the other hand the reverse of this character in the poor Publican. He had been probably one of those extortioners (for such his office bespoke him) whom our Pharisee insulted. *Publicans and sinners* are commonly joined in the gospel as one species of men: and this Publican no doubt had been guilty of those crimes, which were incident to his profession. He had no merits to plead, no fasting, alms, or other good works wherewith to justify himself: yet our Lord has declared in his favour, that he returned justified more than the other. And the only reason was because he did not justify himself. He was a sinner indeed, probably a great sinner; but he knew it, he was ashamed of it, he was sorry for it, he confessed it. The Pharisee had despised him, but he despised none but himself. *He stood afar off*, far from the sanctuary, in the entrance perhaps of the temple, as it were excommunicated by his own voice, and fully conscious of his unworthiness to appear there. *He would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast*, filled with a pious indignation against himself and said, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

This is all the account our Lord gives of his behaviour: and adds in the next words, *I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.* This is the moral of the whole parable wherewith our Lord concludes it. And so I conclude repeating and recommending it to your serious meditation. *Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

DISCOURSE XXXVIII.

ON REFORMATION.

 ISAIAH li. 7.

Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

FEAR is the meanest of our passions. We despise it in others, and endeavour to conceal it in ourselves, as the disgrace of our nature, and most sensible experiment of our weakness.

To *surmount* this passion constitutes the *hero*: and to *direct* it right the *Christian*. For it is no useless affection, nor disgraceful, otherwise than as misapplied. There is an *object* worthy our fear, for *whose* sake only it was given, to *whom* only it is a due, and a suitable homage. We *ought* to fear God: and we ought not, (if we fear him, we need not,) fear any thing else.

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So exalted is his supremacy, that to fear him is a *reasonable service*, it is honourable, it is glorious, it is the beginning of wisdom, and the foundation of virtue. Such fear is no anxious servile dread, but a filial generous reverence, the true and genuine source of fortitude and magnanimity. *For in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge*¹.

This then is the proper office of fear, for this end was it planted in our natures, to be subservient to devotion, and bend us low in a reverential awe before the great Majesty of Heaven.

But before our fear is thus rectified, it is a disease of the soul, the cause of many inconveniencies, and a great obstacle to virtue. Destitute of its proper object it becomes a shameful meanness of spirit; and instead of devotion produces pusillanimity: instead of fearing God, we fear one another. Degenerate cowards that we are, we fear not only the violence of men, but their laughter, the laughter of fools, their little talk and impertinent raillery. And it is a righteous judgment of God upon us that when we cease to fear him, we should be held in a slavish awe and subjection to things so mean and contemptible.

¹ Prov. xviii. 26.

In such fear of men is founded the tyranny of fashion, and custom, and vulgar opinion, which usurp upon our natural rights : yet must they be submitted to, as long as they relate only to things indifferent. But when, as it often happens, they extend to things of a moral nature, and require the omission of a duty, or commission a sin ; we must then renounce their authority, and maintain our integrity, with the hazard of incurring censure and reproach.

The hazard indeed is a very trivial one in the eyes of right reason ; but so formidable to the generality of mankind, that they choose rather to offend God than men. Their cowardice betrays them into vile and sinful compliances, and they swim with the stream, as foul as it runs.

To prevent this mischief Almighty God calls, as it were from heaven, to animate the courage of his servants. *Hearken unto me (saith the Lord,) ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law : fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool : but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation. And to the same purpose a little lower he adds, I, even I, am he that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man, that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be as grass ? and forgettest*
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*the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth*² ?

Thus does the Almighty vouchsafe to encourage us against the *fear of men*, a temptation which attends all kinds of reformation, whether of ourselves, or others. For when a man would reform himself, the world treats him as a *revolter*: when he would reform others, as a declared *enemy*, that openly invades, and would seduce its votaries. This will always happen, and those who hate to be reformed, will hate the reformers too.

Yet both these kinds of reformation are indispensably necessary, each in their order; for reformation must begin at home, and end abroad. We must first amend ourselves, and then we shall have authority, and capacity, and may reasonably hope for success in reforming others.

The pious wisdom of these societies has been careful in the useful tracts they publish to inculcate the necessity of this previous qualification for the great work they are engaged in; well knowing, that all pretensions to public reformation without private virtue are as hypocritical, and presumptuous, as they are absurd, and ridiculous.

Thus instructed by your example I shall not separate two things, which have so essential a

² Ver. 12, 13.

dependence on each other, *self-amendment* I mean, and *the reformation of others*; but treat briefly of both with relation to the obstacles they meet with from the censure and reproach of wicked men. And,

First in relation of *self-amendment*. When a man enlightened by divine grace discovers the error of his ways: when he comes (as our text expresses it) *to know righteousness, and have the law of God in his heart*: when in consequence of this he often reflects upon the wretchedness of his condition, his guilt, his danger, with the necessity of conforming to *that law*; and accordingly takes some steps towards it in serious purposes and resolutions; one of the first temptations that assault him, is *the fear of men*, fear of what the world will say of him. If, contrary to St. Paul's example, *he confers with flesh and blood*³ upon this occasion, he will say within himself, "If I should retrench such customary expences, forsake the company I have so long frequented, and renounce the diversions I have been so much addicted to; what will men say of me? How shall I be slighted and contemned?"

Many a hopeful conversion have such thoughts stifled: but let us be assured of this, as a certain truth, that as long as we stand in awe of the opinions of men, we are not fit for the king-

³ Gal. i. 16.

dom of God. Not to dare to do our duty is the basest and most infamous cowardice; and Almighty God will not be served by souls so mean and unworthy. So St. Paul assures us in the clearest terms: *if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* And Christ himself has declared *that he will be ashamed of those before his Father and the holy angels, who are here ashamed of him and his gospel.*

It is strange that men can be so depraved, as to be *ashamed of Christ, ashamed of truth, of virtue, and of the service of God: i. e. of all that is reasonable, and truly honourable; of all that the angels, the archangels, and all the company of heaven glory in; but see the abominable perverseness of sin, how it overthrows all order, and infatuates men to a degree that can hardly be accounted for.* That principle of *shame* which God appointed as a preservative against vice, as a guard and kind of outwork for the defence of virtue, is turned against virtue itself. Men, blinded by habitual sins, are ashamed of virtue, and glory in their shame, I mean the only just cause of shame, their vice and debauchery.

This false detestable shame is one of the devil's strong-holds, by which he maintains his empire in the hearts of men. They know religion to be the better part, and would gladly make it their choice: but the tyranny of fashion,

shion, and human regards, hold them fast, and they dare not be good, at the price of being ridiculous.

And yet, as bad as the world is, it is very rare that the ridicule turns directly upon virtue herself: but is commonly aimed at some wilful and conceited formalities, some folly or weakness, or vain pretension to piety. In this case it is easy to examine ourselves whether the imputation be true or false. If it be false, let us praise God for our innocence, and by perseverance confute the calumny. But if we find any, though never so remote grounds for it, as sometimes will happen; for malice is sharp-sighted, and may discover some infirmities in us, which a fond partiality to ourselves had overlooked: in this case we must take advantage of the censure as a seasonable admonition, and remove all occasion for such reproaches in our future conduct.

It is certain that there *are* many pretenders to religion, who give the world *just* offence by their behaviour. When men instead of correcting their humours by virtue, pretend a virtue in indulging them; when they would make idleness, or spleen, affected singularities, superstition, or bigotry to their party pass for piety; when they would be thought religious, though they want common honesty, and prosecute a mistaken devotion to the neglect of the most
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indispensable duties of morality; when they make unnatural mixtures of humility and pride, fasting and voluptuousness; when they are ridiculously unequal in their conduct, sometimes rigorously austere, sometimes vain and dissolute; painfully scrupulous in trifles, yet taking unwarrantable liberties in things of the greatest consequence, straining at a gnat, while they swallow a camel, and zealous to the death for certain minute obligations, while they neglect judgment and the love of God.

Or lastly, when they make a gain of their godliness, an art and trade of their religion: in these cases the offenders must bear the blame they have deserved, and not *take refuge in the sanctuary*, seeing it is not their piety, but the *want* of it they are reproached with.

And it is observable that the encouragement in the text is given to those only, in *whose heart is the law of God*, and who consequently have an experimental *knowledge of righteousness*. To such saith God, *Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings*. Such have nothing to fear from the world.—If man find fault with their conversion, the angels have rejoiced in it. If men charge them with folly, Christ hath declared them *the children of wisdom*. They may answer with St. Paul: *it is a small thing that I should be judged of you, or of mens*

mens judgment. He that judgeth me is the Lord⁴. It is with pleasure they find their conformity to their Saviour, his predictions verified, and themselves entitled to inestimable blessings: for they are his true disciples to whom he saith, If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you; the servant is not greater than the Lord: if they have persecuted ME, they will also persecute you⁵. And again, Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you⁶.

Let so much suffice to encourage us against the *fear of men*, with relation to self-amendment. I proceed now to exhort you against it with regard to public reformation. For here we must expect that the clamour will be much louder: but by this time we are supposed somewhat inured to it. We have already experienced the rashness, the unreasonableness, the falshood, of the censure of the world, while we only dis-

⁴ 1 Cor. iv. 3.
II, 12.

⁵ John xv. 18, &c.

⁶ Matt. v.

sented from it, and made no other opposition to it than by the silent reproach of our examples.

We were then, as I said, only *revolters* from its party, but we now return in open hostility to oppose and invade it; to prevent some from falling into its snares, and rescue others from its servitude. For this glorious end you, gentlemen, have combined your strength, and have, (if I may so speak) listed yourselves into regular troops, to beat down the strong holds of Satan, and fight the cause of religion under the banners of public justice.

If ever any considerable enterprise truly religious could have long passed uncensured, one might imagine it should be that which you are engaged in. To remove temptations and opportunities of sin; to render vice difficult, and penal; to prevent the infection of bad examples, to which some sins (such as swearing in particular) are almost totally to be imputed; to hinder, I say, the contagion of evil examples by exemplary punishments, which may perhaps sometimes have reclaimed the guilty, but were oftener seasonable warnings to the yet innocent: in a word, to put the laws in execution, and take away that reproach of our nation, that we have the best laws the worst executed of any country in christendom: and this too at your own great expence and trouble, and sometimes danger;

danger; this is such an undertaking, as, one would think, should have obtained a general encouragement, concurrence and applause.

But Providence would not anticipate your future reward by the vain praise of men. It meant rather to exercise and improve your virtue by opposition, and difficulty, and foul misrepresentation; so that many among you might have taken up the complaint of the Psalmist, *We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us*⁷. This has been the common lot of good men. The world and religion have been long at variance, for *as the unjust man is an abomination to the just: so he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked*⁸.

Yet whatever the world may say of your societies, which are an honourable confederacy against vice; you have the satisfaction to reflect, that when you engaged in them, you only renewed the engagement you had before made at your baptism: you undertook no *new* obligation: you united only for mutual counsel and assistance, that you might the better discharge *one* already incumbent, even ever since your first reception into the church: when after being baptized in the name of the most holy Trinity, the minister still retaining you in his arms, pronounced your admission in those memorable words, “ We receive this child into the con-

⁷ Psal. lxxix. 4.

⁸ Prov. xxix. 27.

“gregation of Christ’s flock, and do sign him
 “with the sign of the cross, in token that
 “hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess
 “the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully
 “to fight under his banner against sin, the
 “world, and the devil: and to continue his
 “faithful soldier, and servant, unto his life’s
 “end.”

The wisdom of our national church has retained this holy and significant ceremony in her baptismal service: and the groundless opposition, which has been made to it, I think a melancholy instance of the weakness of men in running from one extreme to the other, and being sometimes more influenced by their aversion to error, than their love of truth.

I readily acknowledge that the sign of the cross has been prophaned by superstitious and sometimes idolatrous abuses: the same thing also has happened to the sacramental bread. Yet it is confessed on all hands, that an abuse of things sacred requires only a reformation, and not an abolishment. But I have no intention here to move a controversy. I would only, as the occasion requires I should, explain a pious and very significant ceremony, so as to mind those who have received it, of the obligations it was meant to express, as they are declared by St. Augustin. “*Ad hoc dominus crucem suam in eorum, qui in illum crederent, frontibus fixit; ubi est quodammodo sedes veritatis: cunctiæ:*

“ *cundia: ut de nomine ejus fides non erubescat,*
 “ *& magis Dei gloriam, quam hominum diligat* ⁹.
 “ *i. e.* To this end our Lord would have his
 “ crosses signed upon the foreheads of believers,
 “ which are in some sort the seat of shame-
 “ facedness, that their faith should not be
 “ ashamed of his name, but prefer the glory
 “ of God to the praise of men.”

You see therefore your profession and signature: how they engage you to encounter the frontless impudence of vice, with a christian assurance and fortitude. Be mindful of the holy boldness wherewith the Lord had inspired the prophet Ezekiel, when he said unto him, *Behold I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy fore-head strong against their fore-heads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy fore-head: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house* ¹.

And who are they, that we should fear them, these patrons and advocates of vice? Are they not sons of *Belial*, the children of disobedience, of riot, and violence? Are they not men, who openly profess not to believe religion, or (which is, if any can be, a greater absurdity) who profess not to practise what they profess to believe? are they not therefore fools, gross fools, whose very commendations would

⁹ Tract. 53. in Joan.

¹ Ezekiel iii. 8, 9.

be disgraceful, as their reproaches are truly glorious? They now sit insolently in the seat of the scornful, and with a profane gaiety deride your pious enterprize. *But he that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision*⁹.

In the mean time, sirs, you have the approbation of good men, and the testimony of your own consciences: you have reason, and religion, and the Almighty God for your defence. When all these concur with the laws of the land, as they do eminently in your case; when the public voice of our national justice requires of us, what our reason and religion command: as it leaves no ground of objection to the adversary, so, I think, it leaves no excuse for us, if we should be slack or negligent in this great work of reformation.

If the laws of our country had been (as those of many countries have been) levelled *against* our holy religion; yet we must not even then have feared to confess it openly, although before the tribunals of Pagan tyrants, although in the presence of racks, and wheels, and fires, under the immediate apprehensions of martyrdom. But since by the mercy of God our laws are constituted for the support and maintenance of religion; since the sword of the civil magistracy is drawn and wielded in the defence of Christia-

⁹ Ezek. iv. 2, 4.

nity: what shall we say of those, who sneak, and draw back, as afraid or ashamed to attack vice, while they stand secured and encouraged by so visible a protection?

In the book of Revelations¹ we find the *fearful* joined with the *unbelievers*, and placed first in the black catalogue of those who shall have their part in the infernal lake. And it is a dreadful sentence which our Lord has pronounced in his gospel, saying, that when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels, he will *be ashamed of those, who have been ashamed of him, and his words, in this adulterous and sinful generation*². It is indeed an *adulterous* and *sinful* world we live in, false to its God, and an utter foe to virtue. How else were it possible, that a design of *public reformation*, a design so serviceable to the government, so beneficial to mankind, so disinterested and expensive, could have met the strange discouragements you have experienced?

But, as I before observed, bad as men are, they rarely have the barefaced impudence to condemn *virtue*, as *virtue*. They must first obscure and blacken it with falsehood and calumnies, a treatment you have long suffered under, and which has misled many well-meaning persons to censure your enterprize, before they were sufficiently informed of its nature.

¹ Rev. xxi. 8.

² Mark viii. 38.

Let me therefore represent the disinterestedness of your conduct to the adversaries, for *their own sakes*, not *yours*: for to be reviled for righteousness sake is a blessing too precious not to be valued by you. It gives such opportunities of patience and humility, and persevering fortitude, that you have great reason, and our Lord has commanded you, to rejoice in it. But though offences must be laid in your way for the exercise and improvement of your virtue in surmounting them; yet there is a woe attends those by whom they come, and we are bound in charity to prevent, as much as in us lies, their hurting their own souls.

I therefore repeat that challenge which you have so often published, and which has never yet been answered: requiring that your enemies, (instead of general clamours and accusations of extorting money from delinquents, and making a trade of reformation,) would produce any one instance during the space of five and twenty years, of any member of these societies taking or accepting any money from offenders. On the contrary, (to prevent, as much as possible, all suspicion of a mercenary design or principle) you have not only recommended, but insisted on it, with those of the societies who have given informations against vice and profaneness, that they should never receive that part of the penalty, which the law allows to the informer.

And

And if at any time hereafter it should happen, that any persons concerned in your societies should be chargeable with any of the evil practices beforementioned, or even with taking the reward which the law allows, you desire of all that are heartily concerned for the interest of religion, that they would give you notice of it. I cannot think your design needs any farther apology. The blame must light upon the laws and those who make them, before it can reach you, who put them in execution.

And before I conclude I would only remind you, that reformation is a branch of charity, and that you must act in it, as with courage, so with great candor and tendernefs, with a heart melting with pity, and discharging those harsh offices with such an affectionate concern as that wherewith you would administer an antidote to a brother who had drank poison, or as one hand would serve the other in pulling out a thorn, or lancing a tumor. This inward tendernefs must be supported with a meek but manly firmness, to guard it from a vicious lenity and condescension; and to give it that natural ascendant and superiority which authorised virtue must often assume upon the occasions in which you are engaged.

“ Almighty and most merciful God, of whose
 “ only gift it cometh that thy faithful people
 “ do

“ do unto thee true and laudable service; grant,
 “ we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully
 “ serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally
 “ to attain thy heavenly promises, through the
 “ merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

DISCOURSE XXXIX.

On REFORMATION.

ROM. xiii. 4.

He is the minister of God to thee for good: but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.

INCONSISTENCY is the most palpable mark of folly. Uniform error may be more pernicious, but inconsistency, *i. e.* the maintaining an error, together with the truths that refute it, is more absurd, and more notorious. And this evidently is the case of those who approving
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the laws now in force against vice and profaneness, at the same time *blame those* who promote their execution, only for that reason, because they endeavour to promote their execution. Such censurers are plainly inconsistent: they contradict themselves: they allow and disallow the same thing: they need no reply, and give occasion only to admire, or pity their weakness.

In *reason* then censure and reproach cannot reach the generous and pious design which you, gentlemen, are engaged in, but they must at the same time impeach the *laws*: and therefore to justify the laws will be your sufficient apology. If the laws are evil, then those who are active to promote the observation of them, share in the guilt: but if the laws are good, then they participate of the merit with the legislature.

To justify the laws against profaneness and immorality (as to their *intent* I mean) may seem very *needless*; but the absurdity of your adversaries makes it *necessary*. To prove the justice and the expediency of such laws is indeed a very *easy* work: yet *nothing* more is requisite to shew the goodness of the cause which you are engaged in; and to animate your zeal for the farther prosecution of it. To this end I shall endeavour to shew,

First, that the magistrate has power to make laws for the good of society. And, secondly,
that

that the laws in question *are* of that kind, *viz.* for the good of society.

And first, of the power of the magistrate to make laws. *He is* (saith our apostle) *the minister of God to thee for GOOD: but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of GOD, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.*

God alone is the supreme governor of men: but in this world he has *partly* suspended the exercise of his regal power until *the appointed day, when* (as the scripture speaks¹) *his hand shall take hold on judgment, and he shall manifest himself the revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.*

In the mean time, to keep the world in some tolerable order, he has constituted *men* to rule over men: he has appointed *magistrates*, who are his *ministers*, his *servants*; and act by an *express* commission from *him*. And he has put the sword of *justice* into their hands, that they may more immediately *enforce* the observation of his laws, in all matters that concern the peace and welfare of society.

He is the minister of God to thee for GOOD. The particular members of a community consult each his own *private* good. But besides this there is a *public* good, a common interest of the

¹ Deut. xxxii. 41.

whole: and the *care* of *that* is the province of the magistrate. The several members of a society have *several* ends, as their views and interests are various: the office of a governor is to *reconcile* these, and *controul* them too, where it shall be needful; so as to render them *consistent* with each other, and *subservient* to the welfare of the whole body.

Thus is the magistrate *God's* minister: and this is the true *origin* of government, as the holy scriptures testify. Reason also concurs, with irrefragable evidence, to confirm it. The magistrate *has* authority to make laws for the *public good*, because the public good *requires* that such laws should be made: and the numberless benefits of civil government are so many arguments to *establish* its authority.

As a farther confirmation therefore it may not be *amiss* here briefly to mention them: and the rather, because, as great a good as civil government is, yet, like most other *goods in possession*, it is rarely valued as it deserves. It is certainly the *chief* of temporal blessings, because the enjoyment of *all* other temporal blessings depends upon it; yet very few, I fear, acknowledge it in their thanksgivings to *God*, or reflect on it with gratitude to his *ministers* the magistrates, to whose protection, under God, we owe the secure fruition of life itself, as well as of its comforts and conveniencies. The *bulk* of a nation,
with

with regard to their governors, are in the same state as the *body* is to the soul, *unconscious* of that by which it subsists. The genius, which presides to secure the tranquillity, is to them an invisible power, whose benefits they enjoy without due sentiments of gratitude.

Our apostle therefore thought it necessary, that men should be put in *mind* of *their own* happiness in being the subjects of a well regulated government. To have *right* apprehensions of that happiness, we should consider, *what* would be our state if we had *no* protection from the civil power: for, to the reproach of our nature, we seldom know how to value blessings, but by the *want* of them. Suppose therefore that God had *not* made this provision for our security, what disorders, what rapine, violence and unspeakable miseries of all sorts would overspread the face of the earth? Whosoever duly considers this, must acknowledge that under God the magistracy *upholds* (as the Psalmist speaks) *the pillars of the earth*², and saves the world from desolation.

Were there *no* government, we should indeed have liberty to *do* what we pleased: but withal we should be exposed to *suffer* as much as it should please any other who should be *stronger* than ourselves. *Strength* then would be *the law of justice* (as the wise man elegantly expresses

² Psal. lxxv. 3.

it) Strength would be *the law of justice, and that which is feeble found to be nothing worth*³. We could not then call our fortunes, our estates, or our lives our own; or enjoy them any longer, than the avarice or malice of our stronger neighbour would permit.

We find that *all* the terrors of government hardly suffice to restrain men from injury and violence. They *will* steal, and cheat, and oppress, although the sword of justice be brandished before their eyes: and they see other malefactors fall under its stroke: but doubtless they would be infinitely *more* rapacious, if they were not deterred by the rigours of authority.

In a word, *all* our tranquillity, *all* the comforts and conveniencies of life: the rest of the night, and the safety of the day are the fruits of *government*, the effects of the divine bounty conveyed *to us through* the hands and by the mediation of our *Sovereign*. *His* navy is our security at sea, *his* armies are our defence by land against *foreign* invasions: while the terrors of his civil justice prevent *domestic* injuries, or the exercise of it redresses those we have sustained.

And thus it appears sufficiently that the magistrate is *the minister of God to us for GOOD*, and consequently has power to make all such laws as are found necessary to *that* end.

³ Wisd. ii. 11.

But

But before I leave this head, I would make one farther use of it, to establish a right notion of that darling boast of our nation, *Liberty*: and shew how it stands distinguished from the two extremes, *Licentiousness* and *Slavery*.

Licentiousness prevails, where due laws are not *provided*, or (which is the same in event) not *executed* for the public good.

Liberty flourishes where they are made and executed, *only* for the public good. And,

Slavery oppresses where the laws are perverted or suspended to serve the interests of the *governors*, at the expence of public good.

Licentiousness has often usurped the amiable name of *Liberty*, and done *much mischief* in that disguise. Of this we have a flagrant instance in what is called the *Liberty of the Press*, whereby our religion and our government have been scandalously vilified with impudence and impunity. Many worthy persons have done all that can be done in a *private* capacity, to remedy this evil, by publishing the fullest and most satisfactory confutations of such pestilent writings. A late *distinguished and truly pastoral* performance has dissipated the cavils of infidelity with arguments so judicious and so forcible, that, if *reason* were to determine the controversy, our religion would need *no* other defence. But no man should be allowed to disperse poisons, although there were sufficient antidotes at hand:

hand: and therefore, with due submission, I cannot but think that in this case the government shall *interpose* in its *own* defence, as well as *that* of Christianity. For the laws, that should prevent or punish such high misdemeanors, are so defective, that blasphemy and treason seem to have been published without *disguise*, or at least with such *thin* disguises, as rather serve for ornaments, exciting only the *reader's* curiosity, without concealing any part of the *author's* malice. The plainest and most intelligible allusions, with some trivial, perhaps ludicrous change of circumstances, serve the libeller for a *varnish*, with which he sets off, and heightens his profane or seditious arguments: but if he be *questioned* for them [in our courts of judicature] *then* this transparent varnish becomes a *veil*, a thick, an impenetrable veil, which (as some have pretended) our public justice must not see through: [but after long debates, and the clearest informations, must declare an ignorance which would be ridiculous and inexcusable in a private man.]

Such absurdities are maintained and defended under the glorious name of *liberty*. But true liberty can lend them no defence. In strictness of speech indeed, liberty is a prerogative peculiar to the *virtuous* man; for *he* only may do all that he is inclined to do. *He* is free to do what he wills; because *he* never wills but what he

ought. Such absolute liberty is not what we now treat of, but civil liberty, or the proper liberty of the subject, which is there maintained (as I said) *not* where there are no laws, but where there are only *good* ones, *i. e.* such as promote the general interest of the subject.

And the same character distinguishes it also from *slavery*. For freedom and servitude differ in *this*, that the *free-man* is under no restraint, but what conduces to his proper interest: whereas the *slave* is made subservient to that of his *master*. Thus the paternal authority directs children for *their good*: while the command of the master exacts only what is serviceable to *himself*. Hence good kings have been deservedly stiled the *fathers* of their country, because they ruled their subjects with a paternal disinterestedness: while the tyrannical prince considers his people as his *property*, and accordingly uses them as the tools of his ambition or avarice. How far the laws of such a prince bind the conscience is a matter of controversy foreign to our present subject, and to our constitution. We treat here only of laws that tend to the *public good*, and from *such* there is no exemption; *all* men are obliged to obey *such* laws, and all *good* men will, and as they love their country, *must* endeavour to promote their execution.

My

My second head was to shew that those laws in particular, for the maintenance of which your zeal has been exerted, are of this *kind*, are for the publick good.

In the most solemn service of the church we pray, that *all that are put in authority may truly and impartially minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and the maintenance of God's true religion and virtue.* The same words, as I apprehend, express the full purport and design of the societies for reformation. Your endeavours tend only to *this*, that those in authority may duly minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of God's true religion and virtue. As the prayer is pious, so the attempt is virtuous: and your deeds worthily correspond with your petitions. For what we *desire*, that we must also *endeavour*. We are obliged (if I may so speak) to *practise* our prayers, and not solicit heaven with *vain* desires, but contribute ourselves, as much as possible, to their execution.

From this abridged account of your pious undertaking we may distinguish the laws, whose execution you endeavour to promote, into two kinds:

First, such as are provided for the maintenance of God's true religion, and its immediate consequence, virtue. And,

F 2

Secondly,

Secondly, those which are enacted for the punishment of vice, and wickedness. I would shew that *both* these are for the public good.

And first of the laws for the maintenance of God's true religion: for such there are in our statute-book; though a stranger, who should come among us, might *suspect* there was no such thing. Of these, I say, that they *are* for the public good. The public good is the good of all the particulars; and *every* man, that has a soul to be saved, has such an unspeakable interest in religion, that *all* other goods are trivial, and ought to be *contemptible* in comparison of it.

As the magistrate is *the* MINISTER of God, he is by that relation bound to be zealous for *his* MASTER'S *service*: as he is God's minister to the people for their *good*, he must promote their *principal good*, their eternal welfare, with the utmost extent of his power. His power indeed cannot reach the *heart* of an infidel; but it may stop his mouth, and hinder the *contagion* of his wickedness.

When a country is visited with pestilence, the magistrate exerts a very *arbitrary* authority. The diseased, and even the *whole*, who are so unfortunate as to have cohabited with them, are shut up, and made a sacrifice to the public safety. A treatment *severe* indeed, but *necessary*. We judge it better that some, though *innocent* persons,

persons, should suffer, than the whole community run the hazard of infection. And it would be a very unaccountable tenderness that should spare the *guilty* in a case where the evil is incomparably greater.

If the magistrate should, to his and our great misfortune, be insensible to the spiritual concerns of the subjects, yet upon a *civil* account the preservation of religion is his *interest*, as well as his duty : and the politician (if not infatuated, as some have formerly been) the politician, I say, must in this respect concur in counsels with the divine.

The government is obliged for its *own* sake to support religion, because religion is the best support of government. When I speak of the governments maintaining religion, I have no regard to the secular interests of clergymen, but only to that of piety and virtue, the only interest which we *ought* to have at heart. And I say it is of the greatest consequence to the magistrate that he maintain and defend these ; *viz.* piety and virtue, as enforced in the system of Christianity, for these are the best security of his civil power. Christianity guards the throne with the terrors of Omnipotence. It represents the supreme magistrate as God's vicegerent. It arms him with divine authority, and exacts obedience to him upon the penalty of damnation. *The powers that be* (saith our Apostle)

are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay you tribute also, for they are God's ministers, &c. So serviceable are the Christian doctrines to the civil establishment. But this is so obvious a truth, and religion appears so perfectly adapted to the political interest of government, that one of the most plausible objections, which the adversaries of religion have raised against it, is, that it was an invention of policy, an engine contrived by statesmen to keep men in subjection: and they must have been wretched politicians, who, negligent of such apparent advantages, have endeavoured to depreciate it in the minds of the people. Could it be supposed an *error*, yet it would be so wholesome, so beneficial, and so eminently serviceable to government, that governors are indispensably obliged to encourage and maintain it: but as it is the most important of all truths, all possible motives concur to engage the magistrate to cherish and propagate it with the whole stress of his authority, and to defend it with that sword which God has put into his hands.

It may be farther considered, that in the legal constitution of these kingdoms, the civil
power

power and the ecclesiastical have a stricter and more intimate union than in other countries. [The title of *Defender of the Faith* is an ornament peculiar to the imperial crown of these realms. We solemnly recognize it in our prayers to heaven : and may those prayers be fervent and effectual to draw down blessings upon the head of his Sacred Majesty. But the title implies *office* as well as *dignity* : and if our religion should be insulted, and our defender should stand by an unconcerned spectator, his title would become his *reproach*.

Another signal prerogative of the *British* crown, and for which it has expressed some jealousy, is that of its *ecclesiastical supremacy* : but the supreme should not only *rule*, but *protect* ⁶.] In the articles of our church *this prerogative* is explained to signify such power, “ as
 “ has been given always to all godly princes in
 “ holy Scripture by God himself, *i. e.* that
 “ they should rule all estates and degrees com-
 “ mitted to their charge by God, whether they
 “ be ecclesiastical or temporal ; and restrain
 “ with the civil sword the stubborn and evil
 “ doers.” The godly princes here proposed as worthy patterns of the ecclesiastical supremacy, are *David, Hezekiah, Asa, Josiah*, and others, who severely punished the impugners of the true religion ; and made such reformation in

⁶ Acts xxxvii.

church and state, that all we need wish for from the *christian* magistrate is to follow their example, as our law here seems to have given them *their* authority.

The example of these pious princes extends its influence to the other branch of your care, viz. *the execution of the laws against vice*. It is recorded of them, not only that they destroyed idolatry, and maintained the true religion; but also that they exerted their coercive power against enormous immoralities. We read particularly of two of them, viz. *Asa*, and *Josiah*, that *they brake down the houses of the Sodomites*⁷, and cleansed the land from their abominations. And they were also vigilant to suppress all other disorderly practices that might offend or injure the community.

It will be acknowledged, that all kinds and all degrees of vices do not come under the cognizance of the civil magistrate: but when they break out and grow notorious, so that the public is scandalized, or disturbed by their exorbitancy, or may be infected by their malignity, then it becomes a public concern to repress their insolence; and as far as possible, to stop their contagion. Of this kind are open lewdness, the infection of night-walkers, and the lately so rife abomination of the unnatural and detestable sin not to be named among *christians*.

⁷ 1 Kings xv. 12. 2 Kings xxiii. 7.

Of this kind also are bestial drunkenness, execrable oaths, and dreadful curses, notorious profanations of the Lord's day, and ruinous gaming, with its train of cheats, quarrels, and blasphemies. All these are public nuisances, injurious to the peace, and pernicious to the welfare of society.

Against these ye have lifted yourselves, champions of the public good, to fight under the banner of the civil magistrate. Assistance like yours is absolutely necessary to *him* for the due discharge of his offices: for justice might be represented *deaf*, as well as blind, if we stop the mouths of informers.

And thus much may suffice to shew the justice and the expediency of the laws now in force against profaneness and immorality, and consequently to justify the cause, which you are engaged in, and to excite your zeal for the farther maintaining of it. Though indeed your zeal has been such, as prevents our incitements, and renders exhortations superfluous. I should rather congratulate your success, not only against the great number of single transgressors, which appears in your printed accounts, but against the strong-holds of iniquity. You have been greatly instrumental in dispersing many conventicles of uncleanness; and made the principal offenders public examples to the terror, and greater restraint at least of all such wicked assemblies.

semblies. You also have been happy instruments in suppressing and dissipating many gaming-houses, which were the haunts of disaffected persons, dens of thieves, and nurseries of street-robbers, and highwaymen. And a much greater progress would have been made in these, and all other branches of public reformation, if you had not met with obstacles, where they should be least expected, a part of which I shall touch upon before I conclude.

When I formerly had the honour to speak before these societies, I represented, to the best of my capacity, the qualifications requisite for such as enter upon the arduous work of reformation; and the temper or disposition with which it should be performed: so that I have nothing farther to suggest upon that head, and indeed little upon any other relating to the present occasion, only I would take notice of the difficulty I mentioned, which lies in your way, and has been, as I believe, the reason why with all your efforts, you have not made *so great* a progress as otherwise might have been expected from your courage and diligence.

You have endeavoured to promote the execution of the laws now in force against impiety and immorality; but have you not found, by a vexatious experience, to your great trouble, and greater expence, that *some of these laws* want reformation? Have they not often proved ineffectual

fectual by reason of certain defects, intricacies, or obscurities, through which the guilty evade, and in which a virtuous prosecutor may be ensnared?

I speak of these laws as they have been descanted on by some, whose interest and abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them.

We acknowledge the profession of the law to be truly honourable, and at this time adorned with many illustrious members, who are also the ornaments of the age they live in. But as there are bad men of *all* professions, even the most sacred; so, I fear there are some professed advocates of justice, and qualified with abilities of learning and eloquence for her defence; who yet unworthily misapply those qualifications to patronize known notorious guilt: who abuse their knowledge of the law to its perversion, and, like Protagoras, make it the glory of their profession to make the worse cause appear the better by subtilty of wit, and volubility of tongue. Against such the prophet Isaiah has denounced a heavy judgment. *Woe unto them who justify the wicked for reward, and taketh away the righteousness of the righteous from him* ⁹.

There are dilatory and evasive forms, and methods of proceeding in our courts of law,

⁹ Chap. v. ver. 23.

which

which often retard or obstruct a just sentence. Justice is among us (if I may be allowed the expression) so entangled in her long robe, that she cannot act with vigour: she is *laden*, she is *oppressed* with formalities, which prove sometimes more grievous to the prosecutor than to the criminal. She is often bewildered, and lost in the mazy paths, which law has prescribed to her.

So our religion was once encumbered with very costly and superfluous ceremonies, which often hindered piety instead of promoting it. But it is our boast, and our glory, that religion is reformed, so as to be neither expensive, nor burdensome to the public; but fitted to promote true piety in its votaries. It was fitting the reformation should begin here: but it is great pity it should stop here, if there be other abuses, which are very detrimental to the public good, and obstruct the exercise of justice, as much as popish superstition did the practice of solid piety.

Much more might be said upon this subject, as concerning the multiplicity of our laws, and the stile of them, which are such, that the science of law is become the most difficult of all sciences: and yet amidst such darkness and intricacy the plea of ignorance is not admitted. Indeed it *ought* not to be admitted: but then the laws ought to be so plain, as to give no just grounds

grounds for such a plea: whereas advice, however dearly purchased from the ablest council, will not always secure him who shall most punctually follow it.

As the laws are the rule by which you are to proceed in the work of reformation, I hope I shall be excused in the few remarks which I have made on that subject. My design was not to quarrel with the provision already made by the legislature for the maintaining and promoting religion and virtue: on the contrary I think every private man ought to be thankful for the assistance which the present laws give in furthering those glorious ends, though that assistance may not be *so* ample as his zeal would wish it to be. But,

Whatever may be defective in our laws, we are to hope that the wisdom of our legislature will supply: and in the mean time you will continue your usual endeavours, that the laws may be exerted, as far as they will reach, to the punishment of vice, and the maintenance of religion and virtue. Your reward will not depend on your success, but will be proportioned to the purity of your intentions: and though the stubborn iniquity of the world may in some measure frustrate your pious labours here, yet they will be available to your own sanctification. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable,*

unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

DISCOURSE XL.

On the RESURRECTION.

JOHN ii. 25.

Jesus said unto her: I am the resurrection and the life.

IT should seem a needless work to do that which is the common business of sermons on this day, *viz.* to prove the truth of our Lord's resurrection, and which is the sure consequence of it, the certainty of ours. It appears superfluous to multiply arguments to confirm an article of faith, into which we were all initiated in our baptism, which we still profess to believe, which we affirm daily in repeating the Creeds, and which on the annual return of
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this season, we assemble on purpose to commemorate.

But when we consider the lives of those who profess this truth, who received the sacramental tokens of it in their baptism, who repeat it daily in their Creeds, and meet here annually for the solemn celebration of it, as a fundamental article of their faith: when, I say, we consider the lives of these professors, there seems but too much reason to suspect, that notwithstanding all our professions, many among us are not heartily convinced of it. For, after all the elaborate discourses upon this subject, where is that indifference for the things of the world, that spiritual joy, that purity, that heavenly-mindedness, which the resurrection of our Lord should inspire? Where is that self-denial, that watchfulness over our own hearts, and attention to the omnipresence of God; that exact justice in our dealing, that warm benevolence towards all men; and in a word, that zealous preparation against the day of judgment, which an effectual assurance of our own resurrection would certainly oblige us to? I might ask the greater part how they would live, if they did *not* believe any resurrection? what alteration would there be in their manners? would they be more addicted to pleasure, more intent upon their temporal interest, or less careful for the good of others, if they had never heard the truths of
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the gospel? yet they lay claim to the venerable name of *Christians*, and assemble here to celebrate the triumphs of our Lord's resurrection. I dare not therefore say of such that they do not believe it; but I fear they have not duly thought about it: they are not sufficiently apprised of the wondrous effects and consequences of this great mystery. It is not enough that we know it by name and by hearsay. All saving knowledge is experimental: and it is not sufficient that we know the history, but we must also *feel the power of our Lord's resurrection*: not only that *he is risen*, but also that he is *the resurrection*. As the sun is light to himself, and the great source of day to all the worlds around him: so is our Lord resurrection to himself, and cause and author of resurrection to all others.

² Leaving therefore the history of our Lord's rising from the dead, as an established and acknowledged truth: and presuming, I hope, not without good reason, upon your constant and open profession of it: I shall at present consider our Lord as he is *the resurrection* not only in himself, whereby he raised his own most holy humanity, but as he works this great work in us, being, as I said, the immediate cause and author of our resurrection. This is what he plainly affirms of himself in the text, *I am*

² This sermon was made, A. D. 1723, when infidelity was not become epidemical, as it since seems to be.

*the resurrection and the life, which St. Paul clearly explains, since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead: for as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*².

This resurrection to be wrought in us by Christ is twofold; relating to the two constituent parts of man, the *body* and the *soul*: for to these two belong two distinct resurrections very different from each other.

The first resurrection, that of the *soul* I mean, is of a moral and spiritual nature: it is the rising of the soul *from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness*; states more different, and infinitely more important than those of natural life and death: it is peculiar to the saints of God: it requires our concurrence with the operations of Grace, to which alone it is to be imputed: *and blessed and holy is he who has part in this first resurrection*³.

The second resurrection is that of the *body* after our natural death. It does not take place till the day of judgment: It is common to all men; it is necessary and inevitable: and is the effect of the justice, rather than of the grace of Almighty God.

Of both these resurrections Jesus Christ is the immediate cause and author: of the *first* as he is the *Saviour* of the world, and of the *se-*

² 1 Cor. xv.

³ Rev. xx. 6.

cond as he is the *Judge* of it. For it is a prerogative very properly annexed to his office of universal judge, that he should, by his own power, summon all mankind to his tribunal.

The power of this second resurrection from the state of natural death seems to have been principally intended in the literal sense of the text, which was spoken on the account of Lazarus, whom our Lord was then about to raise from the dead. *I know* (said Martha) *that he shall rise again at the resurrection of the last day.* Jesus said unto her, “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” I have the power of raising all men and therefore I can raise any of them how or at what time I think fit.

This resurrection from the natural death is, I think, commonly well enough understood in the general. We can all, by a faith in the omnipotence of God, form satisfactory notions of our being raised again at the last day with our bodies: so that the whole man, which acted in this life, may be qualified for the rewards or punishments of the next. There is, I suppose, little difficulty in conceiving this, seeing the experience we now have of the union of soul and body, may inform us in a good degree of what shall come to pass at the resurrection of the dead, when they shall be reunited.

But the spiritual resurrection of our *souls* in this life is a thing less thought of, and less understood

derstood by the generality of mankind. This is one of those *things of God*, whereof the natural or animal man is ignorant. It requires a spiritual discernment, and some spiritual experience for the right apprehending it. The holy Scriptures treat of it very frequently, but nowhere more largely and clearly than in the second lesson of the Morning Service for this day. I shall read the whole passage, only premising that the Apostle here treats of the *death to sin* as well as the *spiritual resurrection*: the former being always necessary to the latter, and so connected and implied in it, that they cannot be easily considered separately. But hear St. Paul, *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death, i. e. into an obligation to be made conformable to it by dying to sin? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin: for he that is dead, is free from sin; now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal*

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*body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof**. You observe here, that the death to sin is joined with the spiritual resurrection, as a circumstance indispensibly requisite to, and implied in it. For no person is capable of a resurrection until he is once dead. It is necessary therefore that we consider this *death* here mentioned, that we inquire what the *old life* is, and how it is extinguished, before we can understand any thing of the spiritual resurrection that follows it, and the *new life* to be conferred. The life to be lost by this death is said to be that of our *old man*, which is a scriptural phrase signifying that nature, temper, or disposition of mind, with which we are born, as we are the sons of Adam, and heirs of original corruption, whereby, as the Scripture assures, and even our catechism instructs us, we are *the children of wrath*. It is this innate depravation which makes us ignorant of God, blind and stupid to all spiritual things, selfish, covetous, unjust, deceitful. Hence arise that pride and arrogance, that envy, malice, and detraction, which make men grievous to themselves and one another: from hence also all other works of the flesh take their original: our sloth, intemperance, and all other evil lusts, which make us odious in the sight of God, and utterly incapable of those pure and

* Rom. vi.

heavenly delights of piety, which constitute the proper happiness of our nature.

Besides those grosser acts of sin which fall under common observation, there is a depth of subtilty and wickedness, an endless train of vanity and self-deceit, which cannot be well described nor rightly understood by any whose minds are not enlightened from above. For, as it would be a hard matter to make a blind man comprehend what darkness is, at least to give him such a notion of it as we have, though he lives in it continually; so it is alike difficult to give unconverted sinners a right notion of what is here meant by the *old man*, because this, as most other things, is *best*, if not *only* known by its contrary. But in general we are to know, that whatever tendency there is in our nature to the commission of sin, it is a part or member of the *old man*: it is the hereditary distemper of our souls, derived from Adam the corrupt source of our race. While we are yet in our natural state, unreformed by divine grace; this lives, this *reigns in our mortal bodies*. Why is this man a drunkard, that malicious, a third unjust in his dealings? the reason is, because the resurrection of Christ has not had its due effect: the mind is not renewed, and the old man of sin is yet unmortified. That corrupt nature, which we received from Adam, is still active and vigorous; the nature, I say, we re-

ceived from Adam ; which, therefore, is called the *old Adam*, bearing his name, from whom it is derived ; it is also called the *old leaven*, because it has infected the whole race of mankind ; as also *flesh* and the *body of sin*, which are different terms for the same thing, even the principle of corruption which is in our nature.

This, as I said, lives and reigns in the hearts of unregenerate men ; and would for ever reign there, for ought that we can do to hinder it, if Jesus Christ did not interpose, and by the virtue of his sufferings and death, communicates to believers such powers of grace as are sufficient to destroy this root of evil in their souls. I say, that this corruption of our nature is such as we cannot possibly resist by our own strength. It is too hard for our most serious purposes, it bears down our feeble resolutions like a torrent, and renders all our opposition fruitless and ineffectual. In vain does the law encounter it with her impotent discipline : in vain does she set before us her rigorous commands and prohibitions ; in vain does she display her rewards and punishments. These all serve only to shew us our guilt and danger ; but cannot work our deliverance. The rod of Moses cannot so expel nature^s, but that she will still recur, she will still return upon us, and take her old courses. We are still the same men, and all

^s *Naturam expellas furca licet usque recurret.*

our struggles after virtue are like the motion of a door upon its hinges, still fixed to the same place.

But behold a greater than Moses is come in the gospel dispensation, even our Lord Jesus Christ : *and what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, i. e. our corrupt nature, which is too violent to be controlled by the dead letter of written precepts : what this law could not do, that (saith St. Paul) hath God done for us, by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh : he has for and through him, granted us new powers and abilities, whereby we are enabled to mortify, i. e. kill and destroy our corrupt nature. Our old man is crucified with him, (saith the same apostle) that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* But this is still insufficient to make us either holy or happy : it is at best but a negative goodness : there is more required of us than a mere abstinence from vice : for example, it is not enough that we do not hate our neighbour, but we must have an actual benevolence towards him. We must, in a word, not only cease to do evil, but also learn to do well : and as *the old man of sin is to be destroyed, so the new man is to be raised up in us.*

And this is a natural consequence of the former : *for if we be dead with Christ, we believe also that we shall be raised up with him. If we*

have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also grow up in the likeness of his resurrection. This is the language of the Holy Ghost, and the best interpretation I can give of it is to be deduced from the following principle, *viz.* “ that every act, or suffering of Christ, as “ it is meritorious of grace, so also is it expressive of it: it represents that very sort or kind “ of grace, which it obtains for us.” As the seasons of the year are properly expressed by saying where the sun is at that time; so the several seasons or states which the soul passes through in the progress of regeneration are properly expressed by the respective parts of Christ’s history which causes them; for what the sun is to the material world, that Christ is to the spiritual. When the sun recedes from the autumnal equinox he brings on the fall of the leaf, with a general withering and seeming extinction of the vegetable life during the dead of winter; and when in his annual motion he rises again towards our hemisphere, nature feels a kind of resurrection. Thus Christ, by his death, put off all that mortal corruptible nature, which he had received from Adam: he destroyed that body which was liable to pain, sickness, death, and all other infirmities incident to the fallen state of mankind: and thereby did he purchase for us those graces, which are effectual for the destroying in each of us the *old Adam*, the corrupt

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rupt principles of sin, derived to us from the guilt of our first parents. And in like manner, at his resurrection, he resumed a new nature; his body was raised incorruptible, impassible, and glorious, such as it now resides at the right hand of the Father: and thereby has he obtained for us also a new nature, a new life, such a frame and disposition of soul as will effectually produce all kinds of virtue, and richly abound in good works.

This is the great and unspeakable advantage which redounds to us from our Lord's resurrection. But how few are there that rightly value it? It produces every thing that is truly great and glorious. It confers a divine life. It makes us partakers of the divine nature, strong by the strength, wise by the wisdom, holy by the holiness of God. But the men of the world relish none of these things; they have no eyes to discern the beauty of holiness: almost all their imaginations and desires run in direct opposition to it: they fear the thoughts of it should make them melancholy; all their concern is about the animal life, all their care is for the old man, for his maintenance and support, and how they may make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. No wonder then that they feel no joy arise in their hearts at the news of our Lord's resurrection, or his assuring us that he is *the Resurrection*, and that he will raise us, as he did

did himself. They have no interest in it: they are not like to be gainers by it; and therefore they see no glories in the gospel that relates it. But St. Paul has taught us *that if the gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost.*

Others, again, who pretend to have an higher opinion of virtue, and own, by their words at least, that it is the most noble acquisition our nature is capable of, yet think that there is no such great difficulty in attaining it, that there is no need of such heavenly machinery (as they may lightly term the mysteries of our redemption.) *Nec Deus interfit nisi dignus vindice nodus.* Good morality, they say, will carry us to heaven; but they cannot see much ground for believing all the abstruse revelations of Christianity; nor how we shall be made wiser or happier by such belief.

But let these men endeavour to live up even to their own notions of morality. Let them try how they can acquit themselves in the duties of temperance, meekness, universal benevolence, and a suitable homage to the Supreme Being; and then, if they do not wilfully deceive themselves, they will learn by their own experience, that they cannot do these things by their own strength, and that they need divine supports and assistances in the arduous task of virtue. The gospel will then appear to them (provided they be sincere, and consequently not
indisposed

indisposed for the illumination of God's holy spirit) the gospel will then appear to them in its proper beauty, and they will find it, according to its true interpretation, *glad tidings*, shewing them that Jesus Christ is ready to do that for them which they cannot do for themselves: that by the merits and power of his death he will destroy their old man, the principle of evil, that now tyrannizes in their souls; and by the power of his resurrection work their spiritual resurrection to the new life of righteousness. *Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: death is swallowed up in victory. The sting of death is sin; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know, that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

END OF THE DISCOURSES.

THEO.

THEOLOGICAL

LECTURES

AT

WESTMINSTER-ABBAY.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

IF the holy Scriptures had been wrote in our age and language, there would be no need of commentators: for the sacred authors used words in the sense then commonly understood, or gave such farther explanation of them as was necessary. But the changeable state of the world has brought great obscurity upon what They delivered in the plainest terms. Their case is the same with that of all other ancient writers; and as one who knows only modern Latinity, would be much at a loss in reading the old Roman authors;

authors : so a mere English reader would often meet insuperable difficulties in the most perfect translation that could be made of the Bible into his own tongue.

Hence Divinity is become a learned science ; and, as in the other sciences, its first lesson should be to teach the meaning of its technical terms, for such they are now become, being translated from dead languages, and alluding to customs, manners, and notions then familiar and well known, but now obsolete, and therefore wanting explanation.

For this reason, it has long been the endeavour of the better part of the learned world to preserve, or to recover the genuine and primitive sense of the terms and phrases used in the sacred writings : and my officiousness to be serviceable in
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so necessary a work, has induced me to publish the following LECTURES to the King's Scholars at Westminster-Abbey. I thought it needless to distinguish what part was read to them: all that is here published might not be proper; yet many of them were auditors better qualified, as well by learning as quickness of apprehension, than Those, who know not their education, may imagine.

T H E O L O G I C A L
L E C T U R E S.

To the KING'S SCHOLARS.

AMONG the many advantages which you may one day reap from the liberal education, with which the Divine Providence favours you in this religious and royal foundation, one of the most considerable is, that you will be capable of reading the best authors in their original languages; but chiefly this book, The Bible, [τὴν Βίβλον] rightly so called by way of eminence; which can never be duly valued but in the measure it is understood.

Learning in general will enlarge your natural abilities, and strengthen the powers of your minds, because the right use of every faculty is a sure way to improve it; and your *skill in the languages* will give you a peculiar key to the sacred knowledge, whereby you may not only

enter in yourselves, but be the happy instruments to introduce others, and *justify the ways of God to men*.

For, by the blessing of God upon a due proficiency in your studies, you will be qualified to see the revealed truths in their genuine native light: you will be competent judges for yourselves, and not take up with the precarious representations of faulty or defective translations. I say *faulty* or *defective*, because many translations are *faulty*, by the ignorance or neglect of those who made them; but all translations are *defective*, by reason of the different phrases in different tongues; which vary so much, that those in the original cannot always be rendered by adequate expressions; and therefore many elegancies must be lost, and much of the spirit evaporate, if I may so speak, in such a transfusion of thoughts from one language into another.

Some modern translators of the classic authors have endeavoured to remedy this inconvenience of languages, by attending only to the sense of the original, and clothing that with the proper idioms of their own language; but, in the Holy Scriptures, even the phrases of the original are commonly held as sacred; and it has been thought proper not to depart from them, tho' at the hazard of being uncouth, obscure, or sometimes scarce intelligible.

One

One of the fathers, who was himself a great translator, and therefore well acquainted, not only with the difficulties, but also the great defects, of such performances, has observed, “ That when Tully himself translated a part
 “ of Xenophon, even his rich vein of eloquence
 “ was retarded, and flowed rough and turbid ;
 “ so that a reader, who did not consider the
 “ work as a translation, would not believe it
 “ to be Tully’s writing .” And yet Tully was not in any degree under such restraints, as those which our translators of the Bible have put upon themselves, through their veneration for the original. And herein they followed the judgment and example of antiquity ; for the Vulgate, and most of the ancient versions, are, in the main, literal. But hence it came to pass, at that time (as the same father has observed),
 “ That when men, of an elegant taste, have
 “ looked into the sacred volumes, and not been
 “ aware, that they were translated from the
 “ Hebrew, they have been so shocked at the
 “ sordid [and exotic] dress in which they
 “ were disguised, that they have, with a rash
 “ precipitate judgment, rejected the sublime

‡ Cum Xenophontis Oeconomicum Tullius ipse convertit, sæpe aureum illud flumen eloquentiæ scabris & turbulentis obicibus retardatur ; ut qui intepretata nesciant, a Cicerone dicta non credant. *Hier. Præf. in Euseb.*



“ substance therein contained ².” You see, he speaks here of the Old Testament, which indeed is liable to much greater disadvantages in a translation, than the New: but even the New Testament cannot possibly be done justice to in any translation which scrupulously adheres to the letter of the original.

The principal part of my office here, is to interpret the Holy Scriptures. The words of our statute are, “ *Lector Theologiæ Sacræ Scripturæ partem aliquam ordine interpretabitur.*”

Now there is a kind of *interpretation* (such as that you have in many of the classics published for the use of the Dauphin ³), which is only a synonymous repetition of the sense of the text, with more freedom and circumlocution than may be permitted in a merely literal translation.

The translation published by authority is, for weighty reasons, strictly literal; but a less confined version will be more intelligible, and frequently prevent the want of farther explanation.

² Inde (viz. ex Interpretatione literali) evenisse, ut cum ex Hebræo conversa fuisset Sacra Volumina ignorarent disertissimi homines, ad eaque accederent; sordidam illam orationis vestem perhorrescentes nobile quoque rerum ipsarum corpus levi ac præcipiti iudicio aspernarentur. *Hier. Præf. in Euseb.*

³ Huet, who had the direction of those editions, calls it, *Interpretation en Forme de Glose.* Huetiana, p. 92.

It will also have this additional advantage, that the Scriptures, thus rendered in different terms from those you have been accustomed to, will sometimes appear in a new light, and sharpen a blunted attention : I say, *blunted attention*, because we have been used to the common version from our infancy ; we read it before we could understand it ; and the misfortune is, that many continue to read it in the same manner : the familiar sounds pass unheeded, or, at most, excite reflection but feebly, and without effect. I shall therefore propose to you a new *interpretation* from the original, such as that before-mentioned ; which shall be accompanied with brief remarks : and to these I shall subjoin, as I find occasion, some larger dissertations upon the principal terms and phrases of the sacred language.

THE INTERPRETATION.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.

¹ **T**HE genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. ² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judas and his brethren : ³ And Judas was the father of Phares and Zara by Thamar ; Phares the father of Esrom, Esrom the father of Aram ; ⁴ Aram the father of Aminadab,

Aminadab the father of Naasson, Naasson the father of Salmon; ⁵ Salmon the father of Booz by Rachab, Booz the father of Obed by Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse; ⁶ And Jesse was father of David the king; and David the king had Solomon by her who had been the wife of Urias. ⁷ Solomon was the father of Roboam, Roboam the father of Abia, Abia the father of Asa; ⁸ Asa the father of Josaphat, Josaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Ozias; ⁹ Ozias the father of Joatham, Joatham the father of Achaz, Achaz the father of Ezechias; ¹⁰ Ezechias the father of Manasses, Manasses the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josias; ¹¹ Josias the father of Jechonias and his brethren, about the time when the Jews were carried away to Babylon: ¹² And, after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias was father of Salathiel, Salathiel father of Zorobabel; ¹³ Zorobabel father of Abiud, Abiud father of Eliakim, Eliakim father of Azor; ¹⁴ Azor father of Sadoe, Sadoe father of Achim, Achim father of Eliud; ¹⁵ Eliud father of Eleazar, Eleazar father of Matthan, Matthan father of Jacob; ¹⁶ And Jacob was father of Joseph the husband of Mary, who was the mother of Jesus, who is the Christ. ¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the carrying away into Babylon, are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon to Christ, are fourteen generations.

¹⁸ Now

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was in this manner: his mother Mary having been espoused to Joseph, before they cohabited, she was found with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ But Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and unwilling to expose her to public shame, was minded to repudiate her privately: ²⁰ And, whilst he was deliberating about it, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said, Joseph, thou son of David, do not scruple to take unto thee thy wife Mary; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit: ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, whom thou shalt name Jesus, i. e. Saviour; for he shall save his people from their sins. (²² Thus was accomplished what the Lord spake by the prophet, saying, ²³ “Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son; and he shall be Emmanuel; that is to say, God with us.”) ²⁴ When Joseph awaked, he did as the angel of the Lord had directed him; and took unto him his wife: ²⁵ But he knew her not, till she had brought forth her first-born son, whom he named Jesus.

WHERE-EVER this interpretation may seem to vary in the sense from the public translation, the reasons for the variation will commonly be found in the lexicon, or some known commentator: it would be very tedious to repeat them all here, and, therefore, I shall only select some particular ones, such especially as
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are of importance, or of frequent use, and may serve as general rules for all the parallel passages: for instance,

V. 16. Instead of *Jesus who is called Christ*, I have put *Jesus who is the Christ*; because *to be called* is a frequent Hebraism, to express, that the person spoke of, shall really and effectually be what he is there called, and actually fulfil that title. Thus, *Unto us a child is born—and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty GOD,—the Prince of Peace*¹; i. e. he shall be all these, though not so much nominally, as really, and in effect. Again, in this chapter, ver. 23. *They shall call his name EMMANUEL*; which is no common appellation of Christ, but indicates his nature and office: a Deity incarnate, who by his spirit dwells in the hearts of the faithful.

As to the name *Christ*, that in Greek, and *Messias* in Hebrew, signify *anointed*, and imply the sacerdotal and regal characters; to both which, *anointing* was the initiating ceremony. One right way of estimating things is, by our want of them; and if we look into ourselves, we shall find our want of Christ in both these offices: for, before some considerable proficiency in religion, men find themselves, as it were, at a distance from God, alienated from him, and incapacitated for that free access to

¹ Isai. ix. 6.

the CREATOR, which it should seem that an intelligent being might naturally hope for. Hence we want a mediator, an intercessor, in a word, a CHRIST in his priestly functions. This regards our situation with respect to GOD. With respect to ourselves, we find within us a strange misrule of appetites and passions, and discordant interests blindly espoused: for these we want a CHRIST in his regal office, to govern our hearts, and establish *his kingdom* within us.

V. 22. We read in the public translation, *All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the prophet.* This sounds as if the prophecy was the cause of the event it predicted. But, generally speaking, things do not come to pass because they are foretold; but they are foretold because they will certainly come to pass. I do not readily see how to remedy such misconstructions in a literal version. You who are acquainted with languages, are sensible how impossible it is always to find words in one tongue, that are precisely equivalent to those in another. The difficulty here, lies in the particle *that*, put for the Greek *ὅτι*, which you find in the lexicon signifies not always the cause, but sometimes the event or consequence. The evangelists so often use it in this latter sense, that there will be frequent

frequent occasion to have recourse to it; and, therefore, I desire you would remember it.

V. 25. *But he knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son.*] Hence some may infer, that she had other children afterwards; but the original here only excludes the time preceding the birth, without any consequence as to the future. Thus, Michal *had no child, until the day of her death*². The LXX here has *ἕως* as in the text; nor do the words that follow, *her first-born son*, alter the case; for there may be a *first-born* without a second; and the commentators abound with instances wherein the term *first-born* is used, though there are no subsequent children.

Upon a revival of the genealogy which begins this chapter, I thought it proper here to take notice that the four women, named among our Lord's ancestors, *viz.* Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, were of reprehensible characters; from whence it is inferred, that seeing he has vouchsafed to make so near an alliance with sinners, no sinner should despair of his mercy.

Nor will I here omit, for the sake of those who can relish such reflections, that Clemens Alexandrinus, p. 409. edit. Oxon. has observed upon ver. 17. that *in the progress to our Lord's incarnation* there are noted three mysterious in-

² 2 Sam. vi. 23.

tervals, each succeeding fourteen generations; and that all the generations together make six hebdomades or sacred weeks.

Besides these remarks, I proposed to add brief dissertations upon the principal terms of the sacred language, as they shall occur in the portion of scripture before expounded. I shall at this time take the subject from ver. 19. of this chapter.

Joseph being a just man, and unwilling to expose her, &c. Some commentators here explain *just* by *merciful*, and alledge particular texts, wherein they suppose, that *δικαιος*, the term in the original, has that signification. Others think, that *quamvis* is here to be understood: and according to these the sense is, “ Although
 “ Joseph was a just man, yet being unwilling
 “ to expose her, &c.” But a right notion of *justice*, as the term is commonly used in scripture, will determine the sense of this, and many other passages, which must be uncertain, or obscure, without it.

Of JUSTICE or RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I ADD *righteousness*, because in the originals, as well Hebrew as Greek, there is but one word for both; and, therefore, we should have one and the same notion of both. It is peculiar to our English translators of the Bible, that they render the single term by two words, sometimes *righteousness*, sometimes *justice*; both which were, I suppose, at first, quite synonymous (as we may collect from that part of the Litany, where we deprecate *those evils which we most RIGHTEOUSLY have deserved*;) yet now, by the change incident to all languages, there is a diversity in the ideas commonly annexed to them: *righteousness* means the performance of what is *right*, *i. e.* virtue in general; and *justice* is confined to signify that particular virtue which regulates the commerce of mankind, and is usually called *honesty*. But in scripture, and also in classic authors both Greek and Latin, *justice* is often used in the larger sense for a combination of all the virtues, giving to each thing its proper due, and treating it according to its respective merit. So the Greek poet, Ἐν δὲ Δικαιοσύνη συλλήβδην πᾶσ' Ἀρετῆ ἔσιν, *i. e.* All virtue is comprehended in justice'. Cicero confirms this in his definition of it: "*Justitia est æquitas,*

† Theogonis, v. 147.

“ *jus unicuique tribuens pro dignitate cujusque* ⁴.”

Such is his general notion of justice; and he elsewhere specifies the particulars whereof it

consists: “ *Justitia erga Deos religio, erga pa-*

“ *rentes pietas, vulgo autem bonitas; creditis in*

“ *rebus fides, in moderatione animadvertandi le-*

“ *nitias, amicitia in benevolentia nominatur* ⁵ :”

Justice to the Gods is called *religion*, to our pa-

rents *dutifulness*, and towards all men *benevo-*

lence: in things committed to our trust, justice

is called *fidelity*; in the moderation of chastise-

ment, *lenity*; and, where we bear a particular

good-will, it is named *friendship*. In like man-

ner, according to the style of scripture, justice to

God is *faith, hope, and charity* [*i. e.* love.] The

first is justice to his *truth*, the second to his *good-*

ness, and the third to his transcendent *excellence*.

Justice to ourselves is temperance, diligence, hu-

mility, and mortification: and justice towards our

neighbour, includes the *social duties*, all which St.

Paul reduces to one branch of justice, and sums

them up under the score of debt: *Owe no man*

any thing but to love one another ⁶. All owings,

i. e. debts, are notoriously in the province of

justice, and benevolence to mankind is become

a due to them in virtue of the command of the

Creator, for really of themselves they do not

always deserve it.

⁴ Rhetor. ad Herennium.
toria.

⁵ De Partitione Ora-

⁶ Rom. xiii. 8.

In brief, *justice* is the compendious name for all duty, because to give each thing its due, and treat it according to its desert, which is the office of justice, comprehends the whole of religion and morality. *Righteousness* does indeed imply the same notion; but I shall always keep to the word *justice* in my interpretation, because the terms which relate to it, *viz.* the *just*, to *justify*, and *justification*, being of the same derivation, the sense of the many passages wherein they occur, will be more obvious. And besides, to some ears at least, cant and fanaticism have tarnished and debased the words *righteous* and *righteousness*; whereas, as long as any spark of conscience remains, justice will be a venerable, an awful name. The obligations of justice are most sensible and pressing to the human mind. *In eâ virtutis splendor est maximus*, says Tully (as you may remember, in his Offices;) Virtue shines here in her strongest light; we may add, most diffusive too, seeing hence she illustrates all the paths of duty; for, as justice is all the virtues, so, in a certain view, it is the only virtue; for all other qualities, called by that name, derive their merit from it, and are only so far genuine, as they bear its stamp and signature. To be frugal, or liberal, or constant, or even zealous for our religion, are not virtues in themselves, till justice animates them, and directs their functions. Where justice

tice

tice does not preside as their motive and guide, frugality may become avarice, liberality a vain profusion, firmness of mind a self-willed obstinacy, and zeal for religion a mischievous persecuting spirit. And farther, among such qualities as those we have been speaking of, there may, and often does happen an opposition and conflict, till justice intervene with her scales to weigh the merits of the cause, and prescribe to each their seasons and limits. *Frugality*, for instance, is opposite to *generosity*, and both liable to excess, till justice determines when, and how far, each of them is to be exerted.

There is much more to be said on this important subject, and I shall hereafter frequently resume it; because justice, in this extensive signification, is the general purport of the sacred writers: and for that reason I have been forward to take this first occasion to treat of it, which, in comparison of many others, may seem a slight one; yet it is not clearly explained without this large comprehensive sense.

Upon the discovery of Mary's pregnancy, it is said, that *Joseph being a just man, and unwilling to expose her to public shame, was minded to put her away privately.* Ignorant as he then was of the divine conception in Mary, there was doubtless a conflict in his breast from opposite considerations. Justice shewed on one hand, what was due to himself; on the other,

what was due to one of Mary's character. In justice to himself, he would not cohabit with one, whom he (ignorantly) thought to be defiled. In justice to Mary, he would not give up to the rigour of the law a person hitherto so blameless. His purity must not consort with (supposed) pollution; therefore he would put her away: her character was in all other respects such, that she ought not to be exposed to public infamy; therefore he would put her away *privately*. While he was thus deliberating with himself, and innocently in danger of doing wrong, heaven interposed for his direction, and associated him with Mary in the most glorious charge, that ever creature was dignified with, even the tuition and care of *the Saviour*.

I N T E R P R E T A T I O N .

C H A P. II.

¹ *N*OW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the reign of king Herod, certain Magi from the East came to Jerusalem; ² saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him. ³ When king Herod heard this, he was ² alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him: ⁴ And
having

² Ver. 3. *Alarmed.*] The Publ. Transf. here has *troubled*; which suits well to Herod, jealous of his crown, but not to

having assembled the chief priests and ^b scribes of the people, he inquired of them, where the Christ was to be born: ⁵ And they answered, In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶ “And thou Bethlehem, ^c a district of Juda, art not the least among the principal cities of Juda; for out of thee shall come the governor, who shall rule my people Israel.” ⁷ Then Herod, having privately sent for the Magi, carefully inquired of them the time when the star appeared: ⁸ And, sending them to Bethlehem, said, Go, and make a strict search for the infant; and when ye have found him, let me know it, that I too may come and worship him. ⁹ When they had heard the king, they departed; and immediately the star, which they had seen in the East, moved on before them, till it came and stood over the place where the infant was. ¹⁰ They greatly rejoiced at the sight of the star; ¹¹ and, entering the house, they found the infant with his mother Mary; and,

the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were oppressed by him; and, according to their notions of a Messiah, would conceive hopes of their deliverance, from the news of his birth. The word, in the original, signifies only *great emotion*, whatever the cause be, whether fear, or joy, or admiration: we find it, in the last sense, of *admiration*, Judith xiv. 7.

^b Ver. 4. Scribes.] Γραμματεῖς. So we say men of letters for learned men. They were commonly chose into the magistracy.

^c Ver. 6. A district of Juda.] Pub. Trans. in the land of Juda. The Greek is only γῆ Ἰούδα, a territory or district of Juda.

prostrating themselves, they adored him: then, opening their treasures, they made oblations to him of gold, incense, and myrrh. ¹² And, being divinely warned in a dream, that they should not go back to Herod, they returned, by another way, into their own country.

¹³ After they were departed, ^a an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream; saying, Arise, take the infant, with his mother; flee into Egypt, and continue there, till I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the infant, to destroy him. ¹⁴ Joseph then arose; and, taking the infant with his mother, by night, retired into Egypt; ¹⁵ where he stayed till the death of Herod: whereby that prophecy was fulfilled, which says, “Out of Egypt have I called my son.”

¹⁶ Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the Magi, grew exceeding angry, and sent and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and its confines, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully inquired of the Magi. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled that passage of the prophet Jeremy, ¹⁸ “In Rama was a cry heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel wept for her children, and refused comfort, because they are no more.”

^a Ver. 13. An angel, &c.] Pub. Tr. Behold an angel, &c. I should have taken notice before, that the particle *idè*, behold, is a frequent Hebraism in the evangelists, which commonly is but an expletive. Sometimes indeed it gives an emphasis; and then it must not be omitted.

¹⁹ But

¹⁹ But as soon as Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt; ²⁰ saying, Arise, take the infant, with his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead who sought to destroy him. ²¹ Then he arose; and, taking the child, with his mother, came into the land of Israel: ²² But, hearing that Archelaus reigned instead of his father Herod in Judea, he was afraid to go thither: and, being divinely warned in a dream, he retired into Galilee; ²³ and went to dwell in a city called Nazareth; so that what had been said by the prophets, was fulfilled, viz. "He shall be called a Nazarene."

The INTERPRETATION.

C H A P. III.

¹ **I**N those days appeared John the Baptist, preaching in the desert of Judea; ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." ³ And this is the person concerning whom the prophet Esaias spoke, when he said: "The voice of him who crieth in the desert, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him." ⁴ And John himself wore a coat made of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all
 Judea, and the whole country about Jordan,
 went out to him: 6 And, having confessed their
 sins, they were baptized by him in Jordan. 7 But
 when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees
 come to his baptism, he said to them, "Ye brood
 " of vipers, who has warned you to fly from the
 " wrath to come? 8 Now bring forth the proper
 " fruit of repentance: 9 And do not pretend to
 " say within yourselves, We have Abraham for
 " our father; for I tell you, that God is able out
 " of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.
 " 10 And even already the ax is laid to the root of
 " the trees: every tree then, which does not pro-
 " duce good fruit, will be cut down, and cast
 " into the fire."

" 11 I, indeed, baptize you with water for re-
 " pentance; but he that cometh after me, is more
 " powerful than I, whose shoes I am not worthy
 " to carry: he will baptize you^e with holy wind,
 " and fire. 12 His fan is in his hand, and he
 " will thoroughly cleanse his floor: he will gather
 " his wheat into the granary; but he will burn
 " the chaff with unquenchable fire."

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan, to
 be baptized by John: 14 But John refused, say-
 ing, I have need to be baptized by you, and do
 you come to me? 15 And Jesus answered, Let it

^e Ver. 11. With holy wind, and fire.] See the Comment,
 p. 142.

be so for the present; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all justice. Then John consented.

¹⁶ *And when Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water: and immediately the heavens opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and lighting upon him.*

¹⁷ *And at the same time a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I delight."*

Of JOHN the BAPTIST.

THE Baptist signifies the Cleanser, the Purifier; for to baptize is the same as to wash, and is so rendered in our translation, where it is said, that *the Pharisees returning from market, do not eat till they wash*¹; the original word for wash, is βαπτίσωμαι, they are baptized: and again in the same verse, that *they hold themselves obliged by their traditions to the washing of cups, and other vessels: for washing, the Greek has βαπτισμὸς, baptisms of cups, &c.*

In most languages and religions, *impurity* has, by way of metaphor, been applied to the mind; and consequently the terms of *washing, purifying, and baptizing*, have been used to signify

¹ Mark vii. 4.

the means that were supposed proper to remove such impurity: and as it is the natural bent of men to heighten and strengthen, and, to the best of their power, ratify their inward sentiments by certain overt-acts, whereby they mean to express them; so the desire of mental purity has vented itself in solemn forms of ablution, in almost all ages and countries.

The universality of this practice demonstrates its propriety for the use intended, which was, as I said, to express mental purification: and accordingly John, who was divinely ordained to prepare the Jewish nation for the reception of the Messias, accompanied his public preaching with this significant ceremony, or sacrament, whereby he initiated his proselytes in such a course of repentance and reformation, as was then, and ever will be, requisite to prepare men for that higher dispensation of the Saviour, called *the kingdom of heaven*, which we shall endeavour to explain hereafter. At present, we shall consider only the character of this Baptist, with so much of his story collected from the other evangelists, as may serve to shew, by what a train of circumstances the Divine Providence had qualified him for the high office he was ordained to.

² Prophecies, vision, and miracle, concurred to make his birth illustrious, and thereby draw

² Luke i.

the attention, and raise the expectation of the Jewish church, with regard to a person, who was so signally the care of heaven. Soon after his birth, he was carried into the wilderness³, to escape (as ancient writers relate) the slaughter which Herod made of the Jewish children. Thus the desert became the school in which he learnt temperance. Want taught him abstinence; till grace and reason gaining strength in him, he embraced that mortification with a deliberate choice, in which the preservation of his life had first engaged him. Inured to a coarse and scanty diet, with hard and incommodious lodging under the shelter of some tree, or rock, or cave, he brought his body into subjection, and quenched, or prevented, all desires that were not founded in reason. He now found the benefit of religious austerities; no longer a fugitive, but a devout hermit; an hermit in his earliest youth. And while others of his age spend their useless days in vain amusements, he, retired from the world and above it, was intent only to prayer and mortification. Treating his

³ There is a tradition, that Herod, having heard of the wonders that accompanied the birth of St. John (which are related in the beginning of the gospel by St. Luke) when he ordered the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem, gave particular directions that John should be put to death, although he was not born within the territory of Bethlehem; and this is said to have been the reason, why his mother concealed him in a cave in the wilderness.

body with extreme rigour, and depressing the flesh with an unrelenting severity, he, as it were, refined himself to spirit; he had his conversation in heaven, and lived with the purity of an angel amidst the cumbrances of frail mortality.

In how different a manner do the rest of mankind pass their younger years? Youth is accounted by many the season of licenced folly; to humour and indulge the appetites, its allowed privilege; and, as if nature were not sufficiently depraved, fond and foolish parents, or friends, solicit and provoke their young desires with new and various delicacies: they train them up in intemperance, and enhance their natural pravity with the acquired malignity of evil habits.

But the Divine Providence secured John from these dangers. Persecution had consigned him over to silence, solitude, abstinence, and mortification; and heavenly grace exerted itself without obstacle, in such kindly circumstances, upon a mind so happily disposed, raised John to such a pitch of virtue, that Christ himself pronounced of him, *that among those who were born of women, there was not a greater than he* *.

Thirty years had he passed in this improving discipline, and was now consummate in virtue, when the Spirit of God led him forth from his

* Matthew xi. 11.

privacy, to execute his great commission; which was to manifest Jesus Christ to the world. He was now a *light set on high*, to illuminate all around: he was a *burning and a shining light*, saith the scripture; *shining* to inform the understanding, and *burning* to inflame the affections with the love of truth. The *splendor* of his virtues spread abroad through Judea, and gained a devout attention to his doctrine. Multitudes assembled from all the parts adjacent. The Priests and the Levites, the Pharisees and Sadducees, the common people, the soldiers, the publicans, the harlots, and sinners of all degrees and characters, came to be instructed by him: even Herod himself, who after murdered him, was drawn to be his auditor, and consequently his admirer too: he stood in awe of his virtue, he was affected with his doctrine, and had begun to put it in practice; for we read, that Herod, *knowing John to be a just and holy man, stood in awe of him, and protected him: that he did many things by his advice, and heard him with pleasure*⁵. Mere merit is so slender a foundation for fame and authority, that he must have a most unusual stock, who upon that alone could thus take the ascendant of such multitudes, and control the vices of a whole nation without reserve, and for a time without opposition.

⁵ Mark vi. 20.

It is really a thing to be admired, how such a preacher should grow so popular, and be so much followed, void as he was of all the arts which might ingratiate him with the multitude: a preacher who had not espoused the interests of a party; one that did not flatter the passions of his hearers; one that said nothing against the Romish usurpation; nor entertained those of Jerusalem with confuting the *dissenting* schismatics of Samaria. He had no elaborate eloquence to amuse and divert; no palliating doctrines, no popular topics relating to church or state; nothing to feed vanity, curiosity, or malice. He preached only to the purpose; only against the vices of those that were present. Nor did he manage the demagogues, and lead those who led the people; but on the contrary, he attacked them with a peculiar sharpness; for, when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said to them, *Ye brood of vipers, who has warned you to fly from the wrath to come?*

But was not this too rigid, too severe a treatment for persons of such distinction, when they left their schools and synagogues to hear his doctrine, and receive his baptism in the wilderness? Was not their presence a shining proof of his extraordinary talents? And was it prudent to rebuke them? Did not the interest of his ministry (which no man ever had more at heart; did

did not, I say, the interest of his ministry) seem to require, that he should, without hesitation, admit such learned men to be his disciples, and not pry too strictly into their manners, since their attachment to him would greatly contribute to spread and establish his authority with the vulgar? But the purity of John's intention would admit no such views. He was above all worldly considerations; and his example, in this particular, is an instruction to us of the ministry, that we should discourage the unworthy, as well as invite those who are duly qualified, to the participation of the sacraments.

As to the term of reproach, *brood of vipers*, used by the Baptist upon this occasion, I take the reason of it to be as follows:

It is a probable opinion, that men (*quatenus animals*) have each a peculiar resemblance to some particular species of animals. Which may be the reason why Jesus is called *the Lamb of God*, or *the Divine Lamb*: and his disciples, or those who are in such a state as renders them capable of becoming such, are named *sheep*. As, on the other hand, the politic Herod is called a *fox*; and persons noted for an insidious, ravenous, profane, or sensual disposition, are named respectively *serpents*, *dogs*, *wolves*, and *swine*: which terms, when they occur in the gospel, are not the random language of passion; and

and *calling names*, as we speak, but a judicious designation of the persons meant by them : for it was fitting, that such men should be denoted by their proper signature, either for a *caution* to others, or a *warning* to themselves. The Baptist probably had both these ends in view, when he called these Pharisees and Sadducees a *brood of vipers*. As they were persons of a *public* character, it was proper that the world should be informed what kind of men they were, to prevent the infection of their bad example : and, upon their own account, it was proper to describe them to themselves, and denominate them (mere *animal* men as they were) by their *animal* properties¹, because, being already hardened in the use of religious ordinances, if they were not thus roughly dealt with, and alarmed by a true sense of their dangerous condition, they would probably abuse baptism, as they had other holy institutions, to quiet their consciences, which were now somewhat awakened, and struck, as with a panic fear, upon the general concourse that was at that time to the predication of St. John.

S E C T. II.

IN the account transmitted to us of John the Baptist, there is the appearance of a difficulty in regard to the name Elias or Elijah, by which

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

he, as harbinger of the Meffias, is denoted in the prophecies and authentic traditions of the Jewish church. In order to solve this, it is to be observed, that famous and highly distinguished names often stand for the characters; by which they who first bore those names were eminent. So a Socrates, a Cæfar, and a Newton, from proper names are become common to all who egregiously excel in the respective characters, for which they were celebrated. After the same manner, in scripture stile, the names of Adam, Moses, Elias, and Christ, express their respective characters, and that system of principles upon which they acted, and which they propagated.

Thus, among the rabbinical writers, Adam is one of the terms by which they express that depravation of our nature by the fall of Adam, which in their theology is called *figmentum malum*, and in ours *original sin*². St. Paul alludes to this in many places, particularly where he calls our innate corruption *the old man*, i. e. Adam. With the same view our church retains the term *Adam* in her baptismal service, where it is said, “Grant that the old *Adam* in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him.” And the next petition thus repeats the same sense in other words: “Grant that all carnal affections may

² Rom. vi. 6.

“ die in him : and that all things belonging to
 “ the spirit may live, and grow in him.” The
carnal affection is our unregenerated nature, such
 as is transmitted from Adam, the degenerated
 father of our race ; and it rightly bears his name,
 from whom it is derived : as, on the contrary,
 those heavenly dispositions, which are to be
 produced in us by the spirit of Christ, are called
 by the name *Christ* ; and of this we have many
 instances in the New Testament, as in those
 phrases, *to learn Christ, to put on Christ, to have*
Christ in us, &c. &c. in all which the sense is
 the same as in that apostolical precept, *Let the*
same mind be in you which was in Christ, even
 that heavenly temper whereof he is the teacher,
 the exemplar, and the author. I add *the author*,
 because we can no more produce that temper
 in ourselves, than we could have created our-
 selves. Nor is our *Adamic* nature susceptible
 of that divine temper, till it has passed through
 other intermediate states, which are appointed
 to prepare and gradually dispose us for it. The
 first of these intermediate states appertains to
 the administration of Moses, and the second to
 that of Elias, upon which account, as I sup-
 pose, those two persons, Moses and Elias, ap-
 peared together with Christ at his transfigura-
 tion, wherein he gave a short specimen of that
 glory, to which, by these gradations, the hu-
 man nature was capable of being raised.

The

The first and more remote of these is called *Moses* after the name of the legislator, and is the same which the Apostle speaks of where he says, That *the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*. That the name of *Moses* is used in Scripture to signify the *law* appears, as from other places, so particularly where the Apostle speaks of *being baptized into Moses*³, i. e. initiated into his discipline, to be purified thereby according to the extent of his prescriptions. This is the first reformer of human nature: by this we have our moral sense cultivated and improved; we learn what to do, and what to forbear, while punishments and rewards awe us on the one hand, and allure us on the other. Self-interest here is a powerful monitor, and if we impartially consult its dictates, and follow its motives, we shall make great advances in self-reformation.

A considerable time after *Moses*, *Elias* appeared in the world, and instituted a new discipline, by which to raise his followers one stage higher than the *Mosaic* institution. He was an inhabitant of the wilderness, and the first upon record, who, not content with the common boundaries of the law, confined himself within the much stricter limits of the ascetic and eremitical life.

³ 1 Cor. x. 2.

I am sensible enough how much that kind of life has been defamed upon account of the hypocrisy or fanaticism of many professors: and I must add to this with regret, that the mean, narrow, contradictory spirit of sectarianism has greatly contributed to bring an evil report upon it. But if we will form our judgment from what we find in the Scriptures, it there appears undeniably, that it has pleased God, in his multifarious wisdom, to *call* in an especial manner some selected spirits—to call them, I say, out of the common train of life, that they may wholly devote themselves to the exercises of piety and mortification in a religious solitude. Where there really is a *divine vocation* to any state of life, it is superfluous to assign any other reason: but we however may see reasons enough, by which they, who are *really* called by God, and consequently led by a divine instinct, may confirm themselves in the choice they make, and the methods they follow: justly fearing the contagion of the world, they separate themselves from it: and seek to shelter their feeble virtues in retirement: they abstain from things innocent, that they may keep at the utmost distance from things *not* innocent; their clothing, their diet, their dwelling, all adapted to this end, singular indeed, and strange to the rest of the world, but they have their reasons, and are too intent upon their main concern, to have any
regard

regard to what the world says, or thinks of them. In brief, they renounce all temporal interests to secure that which is eternal: and they make *the one thing necessary* their only occupation, having well digested that most judicious reasoning of their great founder Elias, *not to halt between two opinions* ⁴, not to be divided betwixt God and the world, but absolutely to renounce the one, that they may inviolably adhere to the other.

Such was Elias and his followers: such above all the rest was John the Baptist, who deservedly succeeded to the name and function of that patriarch; or, as the Scripture speaks, *came in the spirit and power of Elias, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*. He was sanctified from his birth, and quitted the world in his infancy; or rather, he never was of the world, having retired from it before he was capable of its infection. He renounced all the conveniences, and the pleasures, that he might escape the dangers of human society; and, void of all other cares, devote himself intirely to the perpetual exercise of penitence and mortification. After being trained near thirty years in this severe discipline, his clothing hair-cloth, and his food the scanty provision of the wilderness; he shewed himself publicly upon the banks of Jordan, preaching repentance and reformation.

⁴ 1 Kings xviii. 21.

The world confessed his right to teach a lesson he was so much master of; and flocked from all parts to receive his instruction, and admire his example. In brief, the splendor of his virtue so drew the attention of mankind, and gave him such a weight and authority, as fully qualified him for the high office he was ordained to; *viz.* to bear witness, That *Jesus was the CHRIST*, that all men through Him might believe.

Every man should be *believed* in his own science; and (supposing his integrity unquestionable) the force of his evidence rises in proportion to the progress he has made. The most virtuous of men, therefore, was appointed to give testimony concerning Christ, who is *virtue itself incarnate*. He understood it best, who had most practised it.

The Jewish church was then in full expectation of the Messias, because the concurrent testimonies of the prophets had marked out that time for his advent. Upon this public appearance of John, with such visible ensigns of a divine authority, that church sent to him a solemn deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to inquire from himself, if he were not the promised Redeemer. They were already so prepossessed in his favour, that if he had named himself for the Christ, they were ready to acknowledge him, and do him homage. He told them,

them,

them, that he was not the Christ; but only his messenger, sent before to prepare and dispose the hearts of men to receive him: that for this he taught repentance; a lesson which they must learn and be perfect in, before they could be qualified for the sublimer discipline of the Messiah, which is called *The Kingdom of Heaven*.

Of the Kingdom of HEAVEN.

THE *Kingdom of Heaven* and the *Kingdom of God* are two phrases for the same thing, and promiscuously used by the evangelists, not merely to express a future happy state in heaven, but a state that was to be entered into during this life; and it imports rather the proper disposition for heavenly bliss, than the possession of it. That proper disposition or temper of mind was the same in all ages of the world; and, whatever words it may have been expressed by in the changeable language of men, no *saint*, of any age, could be properly so called, till he had attained it. Indeed we cannot say precisely when this name for it, *The Kingdom of Heaven*, was first introduced: but it is certain, that a considerable time before our Lord's incarnation this was commonly used in the Jewish theology, and supposed to be intelligible by all, when the gospel was published. For although

John the Baptist, Christ himself, and his apostles by his direction, treat continually of this kingdom of heaven, yet their auditors never once question them, what was meant by it; but hear it used perpetually, and they themselves reason, and make objections about it, without offering at any explanation: which argues that the expression was then current, and familiar, and all supposed to understand it.

As a farther proof of this, Lightfoot and Schoëttgenius, who both followed the same useful plan, *viz.* to illustrate the language of the New Testament by similar expressions found in the rabbinical writers, have from them¹ on this occasion made large collections of passages, in which the phrase occurs: And Lightfoot thus concludes from the quotations he had alleged in his annotations on *Matt.* iii. 2. “ If
 “ in these and such-like places, which are too
 “ many to be here accumulated, they mean by
 “ *the kingdom of heaven* an internal love and
 “ fear of God, which indeed they seem to do;
 “ they so far agree with the sense of the phrase
 “ as it occurs in the gospel, where (says he)

¹ If it be objected that the Talmud and other writings made use of on this occasion, being posterior to the first publication of the gospel, are therefore not competent proofs of what the Jewish doctrines were at that time; the learned reader may find the contrary demonstrated by Shoëttgenius in the preface to his first volume, and elsewhere.

“ it principally imports the spiritual govern-
 “ ment of Christ in our minds, [*Regnum Christi*
 “ *internum & spirituale*] and if we attend to
 “ this sense, which the Jewish nation put upon
 “ the words, we shall find no difficulty in the
 “ use our Lord makes of them, *Behold, the*
 “ *kingdom of God is within you*². As if he should
 “ have said, Do you think that the *kingdom of*
 “ *heaven* is to be notified by outward appear-
 “ ances? Even your own schools teach that
 “ the *kingdom of heaven* is within the man
 “ [*ipsissimæ scholæ vestræ docent Regnum Cælo-*
 “ *rum esse intra hominem.*”] And in his note
 upon *Matt. vi. 10.* he declares that it was an
 established axiom in the Jewish schools, that
 “ a prayer, in which there is no mention of
 “ *the kingdom of heaven*, is no prayer.”

But notwithstanding this frequent use of those words, and that, to appearance, in a right sense, as has been inferred from many passages in the Jewish authors: yet it is evident from many other passages collected by the commentators beforementioned, that the Jews had commonly but a very defective and superficial notion of that high state, which the holy scriptures intend by *the kingdom of heaven*. I shall transcribe some of those passages, that from a view of the vulgar errors which prevailed at that time, we may better apprehend the propriety

² Luke xvii. 21.

of the evangelical doctrines in which those errors were confuted.

The first is from *Berachoth*, fol. 16. 1. in *Mischna*, as follows :

“ Rabban Gamaliel recited his ³ phylacterical
 “ prayers the very night of his nuptials. And
 “ when his scholars said to him ; Hast not
 “ thou, O master, taught us that a bridegroom
 “ is free from reciting his phylacteries on the
 “ first night ? He answered ; I will not hearken
 “ to you, nor will I lay aside *the kingdom of*
 “ *heaven* from me, no not for an hour.” Now
 one of the chosen portions of the law inscribed
 on the phylacteries, was that of the great com-
 mandment, *Hear, O Israel ! The LORD our*
God is One LORD, and thou shalt love the
LORD thy God with all thine heart, and all
thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy
*strength*⁴, &c. Solemnly to recite these words
 is, in the stile of the Jewish doctors, *To take on*
oneself the kingdom of heaven, or the yoke of the
kingdom of heaven ; for both are used. The next
 portion of the law inscribed on the phylacteries
 was, *If you hearken diligently to my command-*
ments which I command you this day, to love the
LORD your God, and to serve Him with all

³ The *Phylacteries* were parchment labels, on which four selected portions of the law were written, and to recite these was a part of their daily prayers.

⁴ Deut. vi. 4.

*your heart*⁵, &c. And the recital of this they called *To take on oneself the law, or the yoke of the law*. Whence it appears that they made a difference between *the law* and *the kingdom of heaven*, as may be seen more distinctly in their book of prayers before cited called *Berachoth*, where the question is put, Why in repeating the phylacteries they recite that abovementioned from *Deut. vi. 4, &c.* which they call *The taking on oneself the kingdom of heaven*, before this latter from *Deut. xi. 13, &c.* which they call *The taking on oneself the law*? The answer is, “That a man should FIRST take on himself “ the kingdom of heaven, and AFTER THAT, “ the yoke of the law.” The wrong order in which they place these two, as first the kingdom of heaven, and after that the obligation of the law, shews that their notion of the first was very defective, and that they knew not the proper use of the second, nor the end for which it was intended.

From this account of the vulgar opinions which then prevailed among the Jews, we shall (as was said) more distinctly apprehend the meaning and drift of the Baptist, when he said, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near*: because nothing gives more light to any doctrine, than to know the preconceived sentiments of those to whom it is addressed. Now the re-

⁵ Deut. xi. 13.

pentance which John preached [*μετάνοια*] is in effect that very thing which the Hebrew phrase of *Taking on oneself the yoke of the law*, signifies. Vulgar error had made this self-subjection to the law consequent to the kingdom of heaven : but the Baptist puts it *first*, as a preparation for that kingdom, which they ignorantly made previous to it. *Repent* (said he) *for the kingdom of heaven is near*. This shews that the kingdom of heaven was not a state or disposition which they could put on at pleasure, but an advanced state ; though not far off, yet at some distance, with repentance interposed, through which alone they could have access to it.

For God has in the first place given men a law, by which they should reform their lives, and govern themselves, to the utmost of those abilities, with which he has endowed them. This is the proper work of repentance or self-reformation. When they are duly advanced in this, and do really govern themselves in the best manner they are able ; then (as revealed religion teaches) God vouchsafeth to interpose, and take the work of reformation into his own hands : for men could never accomplish it by their own power, but he carries it on by the guidance of his Spirit, and his *kingdom comes* in their hearts.

Thus the legal passes into the evangelical religion ; for *the law is the schoolmaster leading to Christ* :

*Christ*⁶: And Christ, who is the delegated power by which God governs his faithful servants, is *the same* in all ages; *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*⁷. But reserving this to be treated of more at large hereafter, I would now have it observed, how seasonably and judiciously the Baptist enforces his great doctrine of repentance, by the consideration of that divine power, which was *near at hand* to perfect their reformation, when they had sincerely made such advances in it, as their own efforts could attain to. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near*. The hope of *entering God's kingdom* is the fittest, and most powerful motive to engage men in repentance, as an assurance of success in what they undertake is the justest encouragement. Nor can there be any ground of assurance more alluring than this, *viz.* that in consequence of their utmost endeavours to govern themselves by the law of God, he himself would take them under that his more immediate government, which is therefore called *the kingdom of heaven*.

This is so plain and intelligible, and consonant to reason, that one would wonder how the rabbins could mistake it, and confounding two states so distinct, leave no sense to the words *kingdom of heaven*, by making that precede the *assuming the yoke of the law*, as they phrase it, *i. e.* repentance. [*Homo prius suscipiat regnum*

⁶ Gal. iii. 24.

⁷ Heb. xiii. 8.

cælorum, deinde etiam jugum præcepti, was their established maxim.] By the way I cannot but observe, that even *they* did not exclude the obligation of the law, as their successors in the christian church have done, and thereby opened a gate to all enthusiasm. But to return to our proper subject, which is the preposterous misinterpretation of the Jewish doctors: I would here inquire into the cause of it, because that may serve to account for errors of the same kind, by which many terms of the christian theology have in the same manner been misrepresented, and in effect rendered insignificant.

However this phrase, *The kingdom of heaven*, came to be introduced; it is notorious that long before this discourse of the Baptist, and probably from the time of the prophet Daniel, it was received into the Jewish church, as authentic and of great authority; so that their school-divines were obliged to admit it, as a familiar term, in their national theology: but as the true meaning was absolutely inconsistent with their worldly pursuits and engagements, they would not attend to that, but explained the words only in such a sense as they could receive without any difficulty, and were willing to practise themselves. For they made it consist in reciting, as you have heard, those words of *Deut. vi. 4, &c.* wherein the perfect love of God was enjoined. Yet the choice they made in this piece of formality

mality plainly intimates, that those who first instituted it, were not wholly ignorant of the genuine meaning intended by the *kingdom of heaven*; for whoever actually fulfils this high command, and loveth God with the united force of all his faculties, as the words of it prescribe; he doubtless *has entered the kingdom of God*: for love is the ruling principle within us, and the kingdom of God prevails in such measure as the love of God overspreads the mind. Now to be fully and effectually convinced of the full importance of this first and great commandment, and devoutly to receive it, with an ardent desire that it may be fully accomplished in us;—This indeed is a commendable disposition; it is one requisite, on our part, for attaining that high end; and to persist in such sentiments is to advance towards it. *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God*³, said our Lord himself to the discreet scribe, who warmly asserted it to be the capital article of religion. He was *not far from the kingdom of God*, but still he was *from it*; he was not entered into it: for the strongest *conviction* that we ought in all things to be conformed to the will of God, and the most zealous *desire* that we may be so, is no more an actual conformity to it, than hunger is food, or the want of a thing the possession of it. But credulous desire leads men to

³ Mark xii. 34.

call their wish, by the name of what they wish for; and after this degradation false teachers farther deprave it, till the genuine sense is quite lost, and somewhat very superficial and unedifying is substituted in its stead.

“ ‘ I, indeed, baptize you with water for re-
 “ pentance; but He who cometh after me, is more
 “ powerful than I, whose shoes I am not worthy
 “ to carry: He will baptize you with holy wind,
 “ and fire; ’² His fan is in his hand, and he will
 “ thoroughly cleanse his floor: he will gather his
 “ wheat into the granary; but he will burn the
 “ chaff with unquenchable fire.”

I SHEWED before, that to *baptize* is the same as to wash, cleanse, or purify: and I gave an instance of this from *Mark* vii. 4. where the word is used for washing cups, or other vessels, as also for mens washing themselves. I added, that, in almost all ages and countries, religion had adopted the word and the thing, to express mental purification. That the Jews did so with regard to the baptism of John, appears from the evangelist⁹, where we read, that when the disciples of Jesus were *baptizing*, while John yet exercised his ministry, there arose a dispute between some of John’s disciples (who were chiefly of Galilee) and some men of Judea, about

⁹ John iii. 25.

purifying,

purifying, *περὶ καθαρισμῶν*. I mention this, not so much by way of proof, for that is needless, as for the sake of rendering the notion familiar to your minds; so that baptism, as a term of religion, may ever carry with it the conception of some mental purification, whatever the kind or degree of it may be: I say *kind* or *degree*, because the whole work of religion, on our part, is *purification*; and Jesus, as well as John, is a Baptist, *i. e.* a Purifier: *He will baptize you with holy wind and fire*. But John must first prepare our hearts by his baptism of repentance; I say our hearts, for this is an eternal truth grounded in the nature of things; and we must not here consider John only as one who preached in Judea seventeen hundred years ago, but his name in scripture often stands for his character, even that temper and disposition of mind which he taught, and in which he so much excelled. As you find in the classic authors, that the names of the heathen deities, Mars, Phœbus, Mercury, &c. signify their attributes, those distinguished properties which constitute their character, and are ascribed to their influence; so, in the name of John the Baptist, his discipline is personified. He is spoke of as *Numen Pœnitentiæ*, the genius of repentance and self-amendment. And as repentance is a capital duty through all ages and successions of men, so we too must be John's disciples in
this

this sense, before we can be qualified for that higher dispensation which is peculiar to *the Christ*.

The ceremony of baptism is now performed in infancy ; but the substance of that sacrament, incumbent on us, as soon as we become susceptible of its obligations, is repentance, which the fathers rightly call *secundum & laboriosum baptisma*. This begins in confession of sin with compunction, and all good purposes of amendment. These are the dispositions, which the preaching of John produced in his proselytes ; and it is needless to say, that such good impressions must still be made upon the mind of every true penitent.

Now such good impressions are frequently called *the good seed sown in the heart*, which metaphor of *seed* must be here well attended to, because the whole passage now to be explained is a continual allusion to it. John had said just before, *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*, i. e. the proper fruits of repentance. These fruits, the offspring of the *good seed*, are all the virtues grown up into habits, and overspreading the mind. Now suppose this to be happily accomplished, and that, by a steady perseverance, these virtues, the blessed *fruits* of repentance, were come to their full maturity ; i. e. were carried to the greatest heights, which are to be attained by our own endeavours, with
the

the concurrence of those divine graces conferred in this first baptism, which are typified by *water*; yet still, according to John, there remains another purification, which was beyond his commission, and of which Christ is the only minister: *He shall baptize you with holy wind and fire; His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor: He will gather his wheat into the granary, but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

For those *fruits* of repentance, the virtues which are the product of the first baptism, are yet inveloped with the husk they were bred in. They must be brought to the threshing-floor, and there separated, not without violence, from the chaff which adheres to them. The *wind* and the *fire* must do their offices in this purification: the *wind* excited by the *fan* must winnow the grain, and the *fire* must annihilate the chaff.

He will baptize you with holy wind, and fire; His fan in his hand, &c. Observe here, that it is not, as in our public translation, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost*; for there is no article in the Greek, but *an Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit*. Now the terms *Ghost*¹, *Breath*, *Spirit*, and *Wind*, are nearly, if not quite, synonymous

¹ Skinner, in his *Etymologicon*, says of *Ghost*, “Non dubito quin hæc vox, ut & Lat. Spiritus, & Græc. πνεῦμα, primariò Flatum seu Halitum denotârint.”

in English, but the word *πνεῦμα*, which is in the original, certainly means them all; for our translators themselves have rendered *πνεῦμα* by *wind* in *John* iii. *τό πνεῦμα, ὅπερ θέλει, πνεῖ.* *The wind bloweth where it listeth;* and the *Fan*, or *Van*, to winnow corn, which immediately follows, shews, that *πνεῦμα* is here intended in the sense of *wind*: for the fan only operates by the wind. it raises to cleanse *the floor*; i. e. by a common figure, *the corn in the floor*. And as the *wind* blows away the chaff, the *fire* does its office in consuming it. And therefore, to preserve the analogy here intended, I think the translation should be as I have rendered it, *He shall baptize you with holy wind, and fire; his fan, &c.* I said before that there is here no article in the Greek, nor indeed is there any in the parallel texts in the three other evangelists, nor in *Acts* i. 5. where our Lord assures his apostles that they should soon experience what John had foretold. *John* (said he) *indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with a holy Wind, or Spirit, not many days hence.*

By this *holy Wind, or Spirit*, doubtless we are to understand the third person of the ever-blessed Trinity, the whole purification of human souls being in scripture ascribed to him; the reason of which I have transcribed from Dr. Barrow in his Sermon *on the Divinity of the Holy Ghost*, “Whereas in every intellectual
“ being

“ being there are conceived to be three prin-
 “ cipal faculties, *viz.* will, understanding, effi-
 “ cacy ; and correspondent to these, three per-
 “ fections, *viz.* goodness, wisdom, power ; a
 “ certain one of these is appropriated to each
 “ person of the blessed Trinity ; namely, to the
 “ *Father* it is ascribed that he freely decreeth
 “ what things should be done ; to the *Son*, that
 “ he disposeth them in a most wise method and
 “ order toward their effecting ; to the *Holy Ghost*,
 “ that he by a powerful force does execute and
 “ effect them : whence, as the *Father* is said
 “ according to his pleasure to decree and de-
 “ termine all things, and as the *Son* is called
 “ *The Wisdom* of God, so the *Holy Ghost* is
 “ named *the Power of God*, his *substantial Power*,
 “ as we shall shew,” &c. Thus the *Holy Ghost*
 is represented as *Terminus Deitatis*, in whom the
 divine will is ratified, and by whom it is exe-
 cuted : but his energy is various with respect
 to the subjects in which he operates, and there-
 fore it is expressed by various symbols. With
 regard to those who are in a state of conversion,
 it is typified by *water* (and without this, John's
 baptism could have no efficacy) ; with regard to
 those who are advanced in virtue, the higher
 energies of the Spirit are expressed by *wind*
 and *fire*.

The use of the following symbol, a *Fan*, or
Van, for winnowing corn, to represent a spiri-

tual purification, was not new, or peculiar to John the Baptist; but we find it applied to the same purpose in the heathen authors. You may remember, that Virgil, in the first Georgic, where he reckons up the instruments of husbandry, puts the epithet *mystica* to *vannus*, because the ancients used it in their religious mysteries; therefore *mystica vannus Iacchi*. Servius, in his note upon the place, says, *Ideo quod Liberi patris Sacra ad purgationem animi pertinebant: & sic homines ejus mysteriis purgabantur, sicut vannis frumenta purgantur*. And Philo the Jew, who was cotemporary with the Baptist, brings this very comparison of corn in the threshing-floor, where the grain is cleansed from the straw and chaff, to represent the mental purification, whereby That which is gross and sensual is separated and rejected from what is holy and divine². These two instances from the Pagan and Jewish theology shew, that the similitude of winnowing corn to cleanse away the chaff, was not only natural, and proper to the occasion, but was then well understood.

For the *Van* is one of the most ancient religious symbols, the figure of it enriches the earliest monuments of antiquity, and if *Iacchus*, *Bacchus*, *genialis Consitor uvæ*, be *Noah*, as is most probable, we may date its institution from

² De Sacrificiis Abelis & Caini, p. 184. *last edit.*

his time. In his time our globe had its *watry baptism* [1 *Pet.* iii. 20.]; he was a distinguished *preacher of justice* [2 *Pet.* ii. 5.], which cannot be practised but in the measure the mind is purified. It is reasonable to suppose that he meant to intimate This to his posterity by his mysterious Van, upon which (as we learn from *Potter's Antiquities*) it was anciently the custom to lay their new-born infants, a significant ceremony at the entrance of life, to inculcate what ought to be the main use of it, *viz. Purification*. But the world cannot relish such a notion. *They account our life a pastime, and our time here a market for gain*⁴. They think their business here is to take their pleasure, or make their fortunes, as the phrase is; and are not sensible that they want any such purification as has been suggested.

And there are many commentators who apply these 10th and 11th verses only to the last and universal judgment; but I think both the sense and grammar require that we should understand them of those persons to whom the Baptist spoke; and that they were to expect the performance of them in this life. “I purify YOU with water, but He, who succeeds me, will purify YOU with wind and fire; his fan IS in his hand.” Already in his hand to begin

⁴ Wisd. xv. 12.

this purification in YOU, and not postpone it to the day of judgment.

Clemens Alexandrinus, till whose time tradition might probably have preserved the meaning of the Baptist, quotes the text in such a manner as shews how he understood it. *Eclogue xxv. p. 995. Ed. Oxon.* “ I indeed baptize you
 “ with water, but He who cometh after me
 “ will baptize you with wind and fire, for his
 “ fan is in his hand, &c.” Observe that he omits *holy* in the 11th verse and adds *for* in the 12th, and thus explains the whole, “ The wind
 “ is joined with the fire in this purification,
 “ because the wind distinguishes the corn from
 “ the chaff, *i. e.* from the terrestrial integument,
 “ and the chaff is separated by the wind agitated
 “ with the van. Thus the wind has a separating
 “ quality with regard to terrestrial actions.” (By a *terrestrial* action the author means a human action, which if it be virtuous, proceeds from *grace* co-operating with *nature*. Now follow his own words,) “ That which
 “ is the product of the incorruptible seed [of
 “ *grace*] is the pure corn, and to be laid up in
 “ the granary. That which *nature* contributed
 “ to the action, while it remains with the better
 “ part, is preserved; but when separated
 “ from it, is destroyed, for it hath its subsistence
 “ in what was of a different kind. And
 “ thus the wind hath the power to separate,
 “ and

“ and the fire to destroy.” In the next eclogue he shews, in what sense God is called *a consuming fire*⁵; and Christ says of himself that *He came to send fire upon earth*⁶; by which fire he understands *Virtutem quæ sanctos purgat*, that power which purifies the saints.

The whole passage I have been explaining is indeed figurative, but the nature of the subject requires it should be so; because the things here spoke of have not proper names in human language, and therefore cannot possibly be treated of but in figurative expressions, as there will be occasion to shew more at large hereafter. I shall now only observe, that, as these figures are proper, so also they are noble and magnificent. The four elements are aptly employed in this account of the progress of virtue. The earth is assigned to man as the soil in which *divine truth* is sown, in order to fructify there by repentance. Now as in the natural world the material heavens must co-operate with the earth for the production of its *fruits*; so in the spiritual world nothing good can be produced, but by a divine influence, which influence, commonly called *the Grace of God*, is of different kinds and degrees, according to the different states of the mind upon which it operates: and upon that account it bears the different names of *Water, Air, i. e. Spirit*, and

⁵ Deut. iv. 24.

⁶ Luke xii. 49.

Fire, respectively, as its effects bear a certain analogy to the natural effects of those elements. To return now to our similitude: Man is the figurative *earth*, in which the seed of *divine truth* is sowed. *Water*, viz. the rain and dews of heaven, fructify this seed; and, from the dead and dirty soil, produce somewhat of a much purer nature, with a principle of life inherent in it. This soon raised above the earth it grows in, and fostered by the ambient *air*, and genial *warmth*, shoots still upwards, till the blade, the ear, and the grain in the ear, are at length brought to perfection, and that course of things is consummated. Then a new course of things commences with the harvest; the corn is carried off from its first station into the threshing-floor; where the *air*, which before contributed to its growth, now strongly agitated, becomes *wind*, to drive away its impurities, and *fire* is kindled to destroy them.

The *harvest* indeed is not named by the Baptist, but it is a necessary part of his allegory, and must intervene betwixt the full growth of the corn, and its being cleansed in the threshing-floor: and our Lord himself frequently speaks of it, and uses the metaphor of corn *ripe for the harvest*⁷, to express the disposition of souls so far advanced in the legal state, as to be mature for

⁷ Luke x. 2. John iv. 35.

his peculiar discipline⁸. Thus immediately before he sent forth the twelve apostles, and after them the seventy-two disciples, to call those, who were duly qualified for the practice of genuine Christianity, he each time speaks of this spiritual *harvest*, in which they were to be employed.

There had been some *in all ages* so addicted to the practice of virtue, that they improved themselves to the extent of their natural abilities, with the ordinary succours of divine grace; and in *that age* their number was considerably increased by the powerful preaching of the Baptist, whose office it was to *prepare a people ready for the Lord*. The good seed, which he sowed, had produced its proper fruits: the ripened corn now only wanted reapers, and to be transferred into the threshing-floor for its farther purification. It is, you see, all a parable, a similitude; but, as I said before, mental dispositions cannot otherwise be expressed in human language, all the terms of which do originally belong to things corporeal. Now, as a similitude can describe only a part of the thing represented, and must be defective in other respects to which it does not extend, therefore there is a necessity of having recourse to other similies, to express other parts not contained in the first. Thus, *Matt. ix.* immediately before our Lord

⁸ See the comment upon *Matt. x.*

speaks of *the harvest*, and the *labourers to be employed in it*, we read, “ That seeing the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they were tired, and lay down, as sheep having no shepherd. Then said he to his disciples, the harvest truly is plentiful, &c.” Those who are here meant will recognize their own state in this description, and may depend upon the seasonable guidance of the Great Shepherd to lead them into his fold.

The truths couched under this train of metaphors will become more intelligible, as we proceed in the remainder of this chapter.

¹³ *Then Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan, to be baptized by John.* ¹⁴ *But John refused, saying, I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?* ¹⁵ *And Jesus answered, Let it be so for the present; for thus it becometh us to fulfil All Justice. Then John consented.*

You will observe here, that John at first refused to baptize Jesus, because he was conscious how greatly inferior his own state was to that of the Messiah, to which his discipline was only as a prelude or preparation. And of this he had just before informed the people, as you heard, *ver. 11. I indeed baptize you with water for repentance: but He who cometh after me (meaning Jesus)*

Jesus) is more powerful than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry [*i. e.* for whom I am not fit to perform the meanest offices]: He will baptize you with holy wind and fire: His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor: He will gather his wheat into the granary; but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. Now John considered Jesus only in that character, as the *purifier* of those virtues which were produced and cultivated in his baptism of repentance; and therefore, when Jesus presented himself to receive at his hands that sacrament, John refused, and said, *I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?* But Jesus was in his own person to pass through and sanctify all states: and although the last stage, wherein virtue attains its highest purity, was his reserved province with regard to others; yet he himself began in the first; so that there was no *kind* or *degree* of moral goodness, in which he did not excel. He was, if I may so speak, at the head of every form in the school of virtue. He *had in all things the pre-eminence*⁹, as his apostle declares. To this end he practised the virtues of every rank and condition: he accordingly appeared among the penitents at Jordan: and when John objected to him his superior character, incompatible, as he thought, with such condescension, saying, *I have need to be baptized*

⁹ Col. i. 18.

by you, and do you come to me? Jesus replied, Let it be so for the present; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all justice.

Concerning JUSTICE.

IT was shewed in a former Lecture¹, that *justice*, taken in general, as it commonly is in scripture, signifies a *combination of all the virtues*, and is used as a compendious name for *all duty*; because, to give each thing its due, and treat it according to its desert, which is the office of justice, comprehends the whole of religion and morality.

It was observed at the same time, that in our translation of the Greek *δικαιοσύνη*, i. e. *justice*, is frequently rendered by *righteousness*, as synonymous; but, for reasons then assigned, I judged it proper, in a subject of such importance, to keep strictly to the same term, *viz. justice*: for which I have the example of all other versions, I believe, without exception.

The passage under consideration is, *thus it becometh us to fulfil all justice.*

Justice, as was said, is all the virtues; we are now to explain what is meant by *all justice*, *πάντα δικαιοσύνη*, which is a Grecism for all kinds of justice. So we have, in the next chapter,

¹ Page 110.

πᾶσαν νόσον, καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν, *i. e.* all kinds of sickness, and all sorts of disease.

The subject of this chapter is two kinds of baptism or *purification*; the first, that of John, to prepare men for the second, which Christ was to administer. Now purity and justice have the connexion of cause and effect. That which purifies the mind, must, in consequence, render it just; for when wrong motives are purged away, right ones take their place; and right motives make right, *i. e.* just, actions. And as there are two kinds of purification, so there are two kinds of justice, which answer to them, and are the respective product of each. I say, as there are two kinds of purification, the first called the baptism of John, the second that of Christ; so there are two kinds of justice, which answer to them, and are the respective product of each. I have repeated this, that you may take a more distinct notice of it; for these two kinds of justice must be heedfully distinguished, because they are **CARDINAL POINTS**, upon which the whole system of revelation turns.

The first, belonging to the first purification by repentance, is called *the justice of the law*, and *our own justice*.

The second, belonging to the second purification by the Spirit of Christ, is named *the justice of God*.

In order to explain the first, called *the justice of the law*, we must shew what is here meant by *law*. Now we are not to understand by it solely the law of Moses, or any other written system of morality; but somewhat more general, *viz.* the obligations which every man lies under from the *sense* he has of his duty; all the dictates of conscience, whatever way conscience has been informed, as well by outward instruction, as inward sentiment: in brief, *all the convictions a man has of what he ought to do, are to him this law.*

Our natural inclinations commonly lead a contrary way; but the *law* is given us, that we should restrain such inclinations, and do ourselves violence that we may conform to its direction. So far as we exert our own abilities with the *concurfus* of divine grace, which is never wanting to virtuous endeavours; so far, I say, as we exert our own abilities, so far we advance in this first kind of justice; which is called *the justice of the law*, because, being contrary to our natural inclinations, it proceeds only from the happy constraint which we put upon ourselves, in obedience to the *law*.

This is also called *our own justice*, because, under the never-failing influence of heaven, we ourselves are here the principal agents. We strive against our own depravity, we interrupt evil habits, and fortify our minds with vigorous
 resolutions

resolutions of amendment: we controul our appetites, we subdue our passions, - we regulate our imaginations, and combat evil thoughts with good ones.

There is yet another reason why it should be called *our own justice*; viz. because, as we are active ourselves to produce it, so *our own* interest is the principal motive; for the law displays its rewards and punishments to bribe or threaten us into obedience; and a reasonable *self-love* urges us to seek our true welfare in submitting to it. When we speak of the rewards and punishments, which enforce the law, we mean not only those future ones in another life, which reason foresees, and revelation certifies; but also those present pleasures and pains, which arise from reflection, and in some measure compensate self-denial, and chastise self-indulgence, upon the spot, if I may so speak, by the approbation or remorse which respectively attend them. Such is the first kind of justice, into which we are initiated by repentance; and which, faithfully persisted in, will produce *the worthy fruits of repentance*, in the practice of all the virtues; as was before represented in the account given of John's ministry.

This kind of justice, if we look downwards upon the *injustice* of the unconverted, who still grovel in their vices, is highly valuable, and of great desert: but if we look upwards to that
most

most perfect kind, which is called *the justice of God*, whereof Christ is the great exemplar, and which he produces, by his sublimer baptism, in those who are prepared for it, by their fidelity under the lower dispensation; then this *human justice*, compared with *the divine*, will be found very defective. These fruits of repentance, though come to maturity, yet want a farther purification in the *threshing-floor*, where the flail and the fan, with blows and blasts, must separate the adhering chaff, now called *chaff*, though formerly it was a constituent part of the ear, without which the corn could not have grown; but it is now become an impure incumbrance, and must be destroyed with fire, before the corn is laid up in the granary. By the *chaff* we understand the imperfect motives of servile fears, and mercenary hopes, which, in the beginning, serve to enforce the *law*, and contribute to the first production of virtue: these will be consumed, as with fire, in the second purification. But this is not a seasonable doctrine for beginners; they must be intent upon their proper lesson; they must first get a *justice of their own*; and, as they advance in that, they will become more and more sensible of what higher attainments are requisite. You see how John, although he had gone the greatest lengths in his own dispensation, so that among those who were only *born of women*, and consequently

quently had no more than human abilities¹, *there was not a greater than he*; yet, when Christ appeared, he readily acknowledged his own unworthiness and want of that higher purification, which Christ administers, and by which alone the higher kind, called *the justice of God*, could be produced: *I have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?* But Jesus, who was to pass through and sanctify all states, would not be dispensed from any human duty. As he was *born of a woman*, so he was *born under the law*²; and he discharged all its

¹ Matt. xi. 11. *Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.* I have transcribed the text, that I might subjoin to it the following explanation by S. Isidorus Pelusiota, Epist. LXVIII. lib. 1. “One perfect in the law, as John was, is altogether inferior to one who is *baptized into the death of Christ*. For this is *the kingdom of heaven*, even to be *buried with Christ*, who came down to despoil death; and to be *raised again together with him* (a), who giveth the victory over it. John was greater than all who were born of women, but was cut off before *the kingdom of heaven* was given. He was blameless as to that justice, which is by the law, but he fell short of those, who are perfected by the Spirit of Life which is in Christ, he having first departed this life, as we wrote before. Whosoever therefore is least in the kingdom of heaven, that is, in the christian regeneration, he, as was said, is greater than any one who has attained only the legal justice; because the law maketh nothing perfect.”

(a) Rom. vi. 3, 4.

² Gal. iv. 4.

obligations with the exactest fidelity, whereby he attained the *justice* that belongs to that order of things, in its greatest perfection; and this was signified by his receiving John's baptism. Thus he *fulfilled all justice*, both human and divine. Nothing that deserved that name, the name of *justice*, was too low for him, as nothing was too high. The higher kind of *justice* did indeed more immediately appertain to him, as his *peculiar* province, and he wonderfully accomplished it in his passion and death; for it is of that he speaks, when a little before his death, he says, *I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished*³! No wonder he was *straitened* while he was pressed, on one hand, by the full apprehension of that grievous load of suffering which would overwhelm him; and, on the other, by that immense desire of his Father's glory, which urged him to complete his sacrifice.

This second kind of justice, called the *justice of God*, whereof Jesus is the model and the minister, as John was of the lower kind, which is to be attained by his baptism of repentance; this second kind, I say, *the justice of God*, is an high lesson which none can rightly learn, who have not already made some progress in the preparatory discipline of the *law*, as that has been

³ Luke xii. 50.

before explained; for nothing is more certain, than what St. Paul has declared upon this occasion, *viz.* that novices in religion, *who are to be fed with milk*, as his phrase is, *are unskilful in the doctrine of this justice* *. And Christendom has seen sad instances of such *unskilfulness*, in the wild notions of Antinomian enthusiasts.

I have therefore here principally insisted upon the first kind of justice, which is the fruit of the first purification by repentance; and I am sensible, that, even in this part, there are some things which may appear obscure, and *hard to be understood*, by those who have no experience in the ways of religion. But thus it is, and must be, with beginners in every science; the terms are the first difficulty: for the master, who is to convey new notions to his disciples, must use either new words, or (which is most frequent) old words in a new sense, which to novices are at first quite unintelligible. And when the master gives his definitions and explanations of them, learners are bound to take his meaning upon trust; they must receive it in faith; for they cannot yet see the reason of it. They must commit his explanation to memory, because, as yet, little of it can enter the understanding: but the memory keeps it in readiness for the understanding to have recourse

* Πᾶς ὁ μετέχων γάλακτος, ἀπειρος λόγῳ δικαιοσύνης. Heb. v. 13.

to; and they gradually apprehend the meaning, as they advance in the application and practice of the rules they are taught.

The substance of what has been said hitherto will be frequently repeated in different expressions, and with new lights, which will abundantly explain and confirm it.

¹⁶ *And when Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water: and immediately the heavens opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and lighting upon him.*
¹⁷ *And at the same time a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I delight."*

In whom I delight.] Consider here what an encomium this is! How poor are all other kinds of praise! To be the delight and joy of God, this is praise indeed; this is true glory; this is the highest, brightest light, that virtue can appear in.

That virtue is the object of divine complacence, as it is a most important truth, so it is obvious to all: for it is a principal article of natural religion, which hereby offers to every virtuous mind a sure foundation, whereon to build hopes and confidence in the Creator. And hence the poet, with great propriety, has put it in the mouth of dying Cato, when standing
 anxiously

anxiously on the brink of life, perplexed with the intricate ways of Providence in this state, and dubious of a future; to stop the agitation of his mind fluctuating in these uncertainties, he says:

“ Here I will hold. If there’s a Pow’r above us,
“ (And that there is, all nature cries aloud
“ Thro’ all her works,) he must delight in virtue:
“ And that, which he delights in, must be happy.”

God must delight in virtue, for the same reason that he delights in himself: for virtue is his own *image* and *likeness*, which, extinct in the first Adam, and revived in the second, even Jesus Christ our Lord, began her mysterious course at his incarnation, and went on gradually through all her process with the highest perfection in each degree, till she had finished the first stage, which is called *the justice of the law*, at his baptism by John, when the Almighty Father pronounced *audibly* to the lower world *his* approbation.

For such is the analogy between the spiritual and material world, that transactions of the highest importance in the former, pass on, and express themselves in the latter, so as to become the objects even of sense. Thus, at the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, his symbols, so lately mentioned, of *wind* and *fire*, sensibly appeared in outward nature; there

was heard a sound from heaven, as of an impetuous wind, and there was seen the semblance of ⁵ distinct flames residing over each of them. And at this great period, which I am now speaking of, when the first species of justice, the justice of the law, was consummated in Jesus, and ratified at his baptism in Jordan, the heavens visibly opened, and a voice thence audibly congratulated his success, pronouncing him the delight of the eternal Father, “ whose delight is “ virtue.”

“ And that which he delights in, must be happy.”

For it is the nature of joy to be bounteous, and communicate the delight it receives to the object that causes it. We ourselves, *evil* as we are, yet desire to please that which pleases us; and are eager to return the happiness we receive. How much more then must the Infinite Goodness be munificent to that which pleases it, and pour forth redundant blessings, upon the person in whom it delights! Accordingly, upon this great occasion, the applause of heaven was accompanied with a copious profusion of its most substantial graces. The Holy Ghost visibly, as a dove, descended on Jesus, to possess his soul with all his energy, and commence

⁵ Acts ii. 3. Διαμεριζόμεναι, disparted, severed, or distinct; and γλαῦσαι πυρὸς is an Hebraism for flames; see Isa. v. 24. perhaps *lambent flames* express the original.

that

that sublime purification by the *divine justice*, which still remained to be accomplished.

Virtue is her own reward in all senses, and particularly in this, that, as long as she is in a state of progression, the proper recompence for the virtue already attained is a capacity for greater improvement. Jesus had as yet passed only the first stage, and, to reward that, a new career was opened to him. He had hitherto perfected only the lower, human justice, and *he was to fulfil all justice*: after his baptism with water, the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to ensue; therefore, as soon as he came out of Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon him, took him under its guidance, and led him away into the desert; for so it follows:

THE INTERPRETATION.

CHAPTER IV.

THEN was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. ² And having fasted forty days and forty nights, he at last grew hungry. ³ Then the tempter, coming to him, said, “If thou art ^a a Son of God, ^b bid “these stones become bread.” ⁴ Jesus answered,

^a The Greek has no article here, nor at the sixth verse, nor in the parallel text in St. Luke.

^b Εἰπέ.

It is written, “ Man shall not live by bread only,
 “ but by every word that proceedeth from the
 “ mouth of God.” ⁵ Then the devil carried him
 into the holy city; and, having put him upon a
 pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ said to him, “ If thou art
 “ a Son of God, throw thyself down: for it is
 “ written, that he will give his angels charge
 “ concerning thee; and they shall bear thee up in
 “ their hands, lest thou shouldst strike thy foot
 “ against a stone.” ⁷ To this Jesus answered:
 “ It is also written, Thou shalt not tempt the
 “ Lord thy God.” ⁸ Again the devil conveyed
 him to a very high mountain, and shewed him all
 the kingdoms of the world, and their glory: ⁹ And
 said, “ All these will I give thee, if thou wilt
 “ prostrate thyself, and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then
 Jesus said unto him, “ Depart from me, Satan;
 “ for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord
 “ thy God, and serve only him.” ¹¹ Then the devil
 left him, and immediately angels came and ministred
 to him. ¹² Now when Jesus had heard, that John
 was ^c put in prison, he retired into Galilee; ¹³ and,
 leaving Nazareth, he came to dwell in Caperna-
 um, a maritime town upon the confines of Zabulon
 and Nephthalim: ¹⁴ Whereby that prophecy of
 Esaias was accomplished, ¹⁵ “ The land of Zabu-
 “ lon, and the land of Nephthalim, lying upon the
 “ sea, and beyond Jordan ^d, the Galilee of the

^c Greek, delivered up.

^d So that part of Galilee was called, which was most in-
 habited by the Gentiles.

“ Gentiles;

“Gentiles: ¹⁶ The people, who sat in darkness,
 “saw great light: and to those who were in the
 “region of^e the shade of death, the light is
 “risen[†].” ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to
 preach, and say, “Repent; for the kingdom of
 “heaven is near.” ¹⁸ And as he was walking
 by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Si-
 mon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his bro-
 ther, casting their net into the sea, (for they were
 fishermen:) ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me,
 “and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰ They
 then, immediately, leaving their nets, followed
 him. ²¹ And going on from thence, he saw other
 two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John
 his brother, in a bark with Zebedee their father,
 mending their nets; and he called them. ²² They
 too, immediately leaving the bark and their father,
 followed him. ²³ And Jesus went about all Gali-
 lee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the
 glad tidings of the kingdom, and healing all sorts
 of sickness, and every kind of infirmity, among
 the people. ²⁴ And his fame was spread through
 all Syria: and they brought to him all that were
 afflicted with any diseases or pains, demoniacs, lu-
 natics, and paralytics; and he healed them. ²⁵ And
 a great multitude of people followed him from
 Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from
 Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

^e Region of] not and; so the Vulgate, and Isaiah, whence it is quoted.

[†] Isai. ix. 1, 2.

THE guidance of the Holy Spirit, by which Jesus was led, doubtless tended to greater proficiencie in virtue; and, in order to that, it was necessary, that he should be exposed to suffering and temptation; for, without these, there could not be any proficiencie in virtue; as, without enemies to combat, there cannot be a victory. Where there are no allurements to wrong, there can be no merit in doing right: and the measure of good desert is to be estimated by the temptation there is to the contrary. But surely no temptation could take any hold on Jesus, in the situation he must have been in presently after his baptism in Jordan. As long as that temper of mind lasted, which must be the immediate effect of the immense efflux of celestial grace, with which he was then replenished; while the glorious attestation from heaven was as yet founding in his ears; and the Holy Spirit, sensible to outward view, but infinitely more sensible to his mental perception, was actually diffusing itself through all his faculties with peace and joy ineffable; he must for the time be absolutely superior to all temptation. And this, as I conceive, was the reason why he was led into the desert, and there reduced by forty days abstinence, before he *could* become obnoxious to any evil suggestion or allurement.

He was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil: but diabolical temptation did not, perhaps could not, begin, till after he had fasted forty days: and then, when the first fervors of the new state he was entered upon were considerably abated; when his rare abilities of body and mind were greatly exhausted by so long an abstinence; when nature languished, and hunger called for the needful repair of food; then the tempter found access to him.

To open farther somewhat already hinted concerning the previous fast of forty days, it must be observed, that in the stile of scripture, *feeding, feasting, and fasting*, are applicable to the *mind* as well as the *body*. The mind has its hunger and thirst: it feeds, and *ruminates* on thought; and when it fails of a due supply, it palls, and sickens, and starves for want of entertainment. Now the forlorn wilderness was as barren of what could recreate the mind, as what could feed the body. Here Jesus sojourned in perpetual silence and solitude, with no entertainment of sense, no secular occupation, no amusement, no *useless* thoughts or imaginations to pass the irksome hours. His fast here was total; total, I mean, as to the animal part, which, wasted with long want of necessary refreshment, at last pined with hunger; which hunger would naturally be attended with sadness,

ness, dejection of spirit, or other disorders, which debilitate the mind, and lay it open to temptation.

It was *then* the tempter came to him, and said, “ If thou art a Son of God, bid these stones become bread.” So the evangelist briefly relates the substance of this first temptation, which certainly was then displayed with all the colourings of reason; and which, by way of illustration, and only to shew what might be suggested upon the occasion, may be thus represented :

“ If you really are a Son of God, and the
 “ voice you imagine to have heard from heaven
 “ be no delusion, assert your prerogative; do
 “ not let a Son of God starve. Vindicate your
 “ Sonship, and justify your Father’s goodness,
 “ who has not given you the miraculous powers
 “ you think yourself endowed with, for no-
 “ thing. If those miraculous powers are to be
 “ used, when so seasonably as now? Can any
 “ one want them more? Can any one deserve
 “ them better, than you do? Consider what
 “ you owe to yourself, and to your Father’s
 “ glory, if you be indeed his Son. His Spirit,
 “ as you deem, led you into this inhospitable
 “ wilderness: for what? to perish here? and
 “ so to frustrate all the prophecies which you
 “ conceive yourself destined to accomplish?
 “ and deprive men of the salvation you un-
 “ dertake

“dertake to earn for them? For your own
 “fake, for their fake, for the fake of your Fa-
 “ther’s glory, which is so highly interested in
 “your preservation, hearken to the just call of
 “nature in you: speak the word: *bid these*
 “*stones become bread.*” Jesus answered:

⁴ *It is written, “Man shall not live by bread
 “only, but by every word that proceedeth from
 “the mouth of God.”*

The quotation is very apposite; for it is taken from Deuteronomy, chap. viii. where Moses, recapitulating to the Jews the hardships and temptations, with which *they* had been exercised in the desert, the more effectually to remind them of the great lesson which that discipline was to inculcate, says, “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God
 “led thee these forty years in the wilderness,
 “to humble thee, and to *prove* thee.” (The original here is the same word, which in other places is rendered *to tempt thee*,) “to make
 “known what was in thine heart, whether
 “thou wouldst keep his commandments, or
 “no. And he humbled thee, and suffered
 “thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna (a
 “food before unknown), that he might make
 “thee know, that man doth not live by bread
 “only, but by every word that proceedeth out
 “of

“ of the mouth of the Lord ;” *i. e.* by whatever God appoints, or whatever way he pleases.

This answer, you see, was fully to the purpose, and decisive, so as not to admit a reply : yet the adversary, though baffled, did not desist, but renewed the attack with a second temptation ; whereby it should seem, that he hoped to take advantage from the total resignation, wherewith Jesus confided in the divine protection, so as to drive him into some excess ; for we read,

⁵ *Then the devil carried him into the holy city ; and having put him upon a pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ said to him, “ If thou art a Son of God, throw thyself down : for it is written, that he will give his angels charge concerning thee ; and they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou shouldst strike thy foot against a stone.”*

I take the sense to be as follows : if indeed you are a Son of God, you may most securely rely upon his paternal care. Make trial, then, of his goodness : cast yourself down, and verify the oracles which you quote ; for, according to them, his angels have their charge already, and are all upon the wing to fly to your assistance.

⁷ *To this Jesus answered : “ It is also written, “ Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”*

This scripture, as that cited in his former answer, again relates to the children of Israel, exercised in circumstances not unlike his own, in the wilderness; when, murmuring and impatient for want of water, as they had before been for want of food, they *tempted the Lord, saying: Is the Lord among us, or not*¹? They questioned his presence with them, and wanted proofs of it by a new miracle. To *tempt*, is to try; and the trial they would make, argued their doubt and distrust. The perfect faith of Jesus excluded all diffidence, and therefore would not admit any act on his part, whereby to put the Divine Goodness to the test; since he already had the fullest assurance of it.

⁸ *Again the devil conveyed him to a very high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory: ⁹ And said, All these will I give thee, if thou wilt prostrate thyself, and worship me. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said unto him, “ De-
“ part from me, Satan; for it is written, Thou
“ shalt worship the Lord thy God, and serve only
“ him.” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and immediately angels came and ministered to him.*

The adversary, enraged, as it should seem, at his ill success in the two former attempts, casts off all disguise in this. He speaks no

¹ Exod. xvii. 7.

more of *a Son of God*; but, desperate, and thence impudent and audacious, he offers at once his whole stock of gaudy trumperies, all worldly power, dominion and glory; and arrogantly sets the price, at which they are to be purchased. This appears not so much a temptation, as an insult upon Jesus; who resented it accordingly, and repelled the temptation and the tempter together: *Depart from me, Satan, &c.*

¹⁷ *From that time Jesus began to preach, and say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is near.*

Although to establish the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men, is the peculiar province of Jesus Christ, yet he himself begins his preaching in the same words with *John the Baptist*, because the repentance which John taught, still was, and ever will be the necessary preparation for being admitted to the higher state, named the *kingdom of heaven*, as before it has been explained. But I must now open the larger sense of the phrase, not only as it is used *singly*, with regard to the individuals in whom it is to be established, but also *collectively*, with regard to the whole body of christian believers, who, as such, are candidates for that kingdom. When it is spoke of with regard to individuals, we find it commonly opposed to repentance, with its necessary

necessary consequence, obedience to the moral law : when it is used collectively of all believers, it is commonly opposed to the Mosaic dispensation, and signifies in general the christian church, which succeeded it : for things are often called, not precisely what they are, so much as what they ought to be, and then their names import the end intended by them.

As to the external forms of religious worship, which are so different in the Jewish and the Christian institution, we should consider that the increase of *moral knowledge*, as in each particular man, so also in the world in general, is doubtless under the conduct of a superintending Providence, which directs by what steps and degrees, and at what seasons, such knowledge should be promulgated. There can be no difficulty in this, if we hold, as an unshaken truth, that, at the day of judgment, no man can be accountable for more than he has received, or censured for the breach of any law, the obligation of which he was not fully apprized of. Leaving therefore the distribution of spiritual light to its great Author, who dispenses it in such measures, and at such times, as best suit his designs, and the method proposed for the government of the world¹; I

¹ Hodierni homines æquum esse censent mundum illico nasci senem : sunt autem, ut hominum, ita & populorum ætates. *Burnet Archæologiæ Sacræ*, p. 324.

shall here consider the progress of religion in its different dispensations, only as it concerns ourselves, and observe that,

As the age of the world is divided into three remarkable periods, before the law, under the law, and then under the gospel dispensation; so the life of a particular man, with regard to his progress in religion, may be distributed after the same manner ²:

First comes *infancy*, before he has a moral sense of good and evil.

The second stage *should* commence, from the time that conscience begins to exert itself; and then he is under the *law*, which is given to prepare him for

The third state, which is that of the *gospel*, properly so called; I mean, in a strict sense, the Christian dispensation, which is *the kingdom of heaven* we now treat of. As this is to each individual person the last stage in the progress of religion, it is often called in scripture the *last days* ³, altho' seventeen centuries are now passed in the age of the world, since its publication. Now as all men set out in the same state of ignorance and corruption; so, in reality, they have all the same ways to pass through; for the same intrinsic means are still necessary for their

² See Augustin's Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, chap. v. 17.

³ Isai. ii. 2. Micah iv. 1. Acts ii. 17. Heb. i. 2, &c.
restora-

restoration : and as before the coming of Christ in the flesh, as also before the publication of the Mosaic law, the holy patriarchs went all the lengths of religion, and were consummated in the evangelical state, by that spirit of Christ, which is *the same yesterday, to-day, and through all ages* ⁴ : (for it is said in so many words, that *the gospel was preached to Abraham* ⁵, and there are many other proofs of what is here advanced) —As, I say, the patriarchs before the incarnation, by their proficiency attained the gospel state ; so, since the incarnation, we must still begin, as they did, in a laborious subjection to the law of God : we must put forth all our force of mind to *govern* ourselves by his commandments, before we can be duly qualified for that his actual and more immediate *government*, which is called here *the kingdom of heaven*.

I return to the first state, that of children, who are *governed* by their appetites and passions. Reason has yet no hold of them. Self-love is blind to their true interest, and intent only upon present gratifications. If afterwards, when conscience performs its office, and (assisted, as it commonly is, by outward instruction) discovers to them the moral law, with the obligations they lie under to take it for their rule of life, and *govern* themselves by its precepts ; if, I say, when they are become conscious of

⁴ Heb. xiii. 8.

⁵ Gal. iii. 8.

the law of God, they neglect it, to follow their natural inclinations; then, according to the *spiritual*, i. e. the *true* view of things, they continue in the *puerile state*: they lose nothing of childhood, but its innocence; the toys are changed, but the follies the same, only more mischievous. The longest life, so spent, is spent in vain; because it does not promote the true end of life, which is the acquisition of virtue. I suppose the prophet Isaiah had this *prolonged* childhood in view, where, speaking of a general reformation one day to be accomplished, he says, *There shall no more be an infant of days* (*days* here stand for *years*, by a common Hebraism; *there shall no more be an infant of days*), *an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; and the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed* ⁶. The passage deserves your serious notice; and therefore I shall repeat it as it stands in the Vulgate: “ Non erit ibi amplius infans
 “ dierum, & senex qui non impleat dies suos;
 “ quoniam puer centum annorum morietur, &
 “ peccator centum annorum maledictus erit.”

Altho' this first state, the state of fallen nature, was mentioned only occasionally, as antecedent to the *law* and the *gospel*; yet I have chosen to dwell a little upon it, and shew how wrong and dangerous it is; because a due sense of its

⁶ Isaiah lxxv. 20.

pravity and danger is the introduction to the second state, which I named the state of *the law*; wherein a man, conscious of his duty, earnestly applies himself to the performance of it; and, whereas before he was *governed* by his appetites and passions, now, striving against their enormities, he zealously endeavours to *govern* himself by the *law* of God.

John the Baptist, Jesus himself, and the disciples of Jesus by his command, all began their public instructions by exhorting men to enter into this state of the *law*, as a necessary preparation for evangelical grace; because the peculiar benefits of the gospel are not attainable but by passing through it. *Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is near.* Yet, *near* as it is, it cannot be come at, till repentance, which is the entrance into the legal state, has opened the way to it.

It may be objected, that *repentance* must appertain to every stage of religion; because, as long as we live in this world, human infirmity will make repentance necessary; seeing every misbehaviour will require a suitable regret. But the repentance we now treat of, signifies, not any single act, or particular concern for a particular failure; but, in general, a total conversion to the duties of religion. The word in the original is *μετάνοια*, which means *a change of mind and manners.* The author to the Hebrews

calls it a *foundation*: now a foundation must be perfected, before it is built upon, or the superstructure will prove ruinous. This is a certain and momentous inference from that expression of the apostle which you will find, where he declares, that he purposely omits the initiating doctrines (and the first he names is repentance, *not laying again the foundation of repentance*⁷), that he might give them higher lessons, lessons more suitable to the proficiency which he hoped they had made. The persons to whom these higher lessons appertain, are in scripture still termed *the just*: and our Lord himself says of such, that *they do not need repentance*⁸. Our public translation here is, *need no repentance*; which is incorrect, and liable to the objection lately obviated. The original is, *ὅτι χρείαν ἔχουσι μετάνοίας*, “non indigent pœnitentiâ;” which means only, that they do not want that general change of thought, judgment, and practice, which is commonly meant in scripture by *μετάνοια*, i. e. repentance.

This repentance is a mortifying work; it is to blame and condemn ourselves; to regret and deplore our faults; which surely must be no small sorrow, if it bears a due proportion to the cause. Those, who know not a virtuous, repentance, may remember what pangs they have felt, when their heart has smote them for follies

⁷ Heb. vi. i.⁸ Luke xv. 7.

they were conscious of; and thence they may make some estimate of the nature of contrition.

And this contrition must not be a barren grief; but bring forth the *proper fruits of repentance*; which will be a work of difficulty, because mens evil inclinations, strengthened by inveterate habits, will daily and hourly combat their good resolutions, which they will not be able to persist in, without doing themselves great violence.

But, whatever violence men do themselves, they cannot alter their nature: they may hinder it from growing worse, by a perpetual opposition: they may commonly prevent its bad effects, by stifling evil thoughts at their first appearance in the mind; and thus they may cut away the branches, as fast as they sprout; but the root still remains the same; that is beyond the power of the moral law, whose province is only to retrench the effects, but cannot reach the cause.

And therefore John the Baptist, who was the model and minister of repentance, and the legal state carried to its highest perfection, carefully warned his auditors, that *that alone* would not be sufficient; that his baptism of repentance was, as with *water*, a superficial purification, which washes off only the outward defilement, but has little or no effect upon the constitution:

⁹ Matt. iii. 2.

and yet it was necessary, in order *to prepare the way of the Lord*, as he speaks, *and to make straight paths for him*, so that his Spirit may have free access to our hearts, to direct and govern them, and establish his *kingdom* within us, even *the kingdom of heaven*. And accordingly John too had proposed this as the great motive to repentance, *Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is near*¹; therefore prepare yourselves for it by your own virtuous endeavours. Strive, in the first place, to govern yourselves. Be temperate, humble, just, and benevolent, to the utmost of your abilities: in a word, do all that you yourselves *can* do; and then, and not till then, you will be qualified for *the kingdom of heaven*: you will then become a proper subject, in whom divine power will be exerted, to change your nature, gradually to extinguish all its pravity, and, through a due progress in his kingdom of grace, finally translate you into that of glory.

But no step can be taken towards this, till you begin the work yourselves by repentance. The human nature must be first improved to the utmost of its capacity. If we could suppose, as some naturalists have imagined, that there was a transition from the vegetable kingdom into the animal; it would be reasonable to expect, that the vegetable, which is to be trans-

¹ Matt. iii. 2.

muted,

muted, should be perfect in its own order, before it was transferred into the higher: that all defects and imperfections in its own low rank should be remedied, as far as its original nature will admit: in a word, that it should be raised to the highest pitch attainable in its own *kind*, as a needful preparation for its being *regenerated*, if I may so speak; and, from a vegetable, become an animated being.

The same ratio, or rule of proportion, must take place in the moral and spiritual worlds, where infinite justice more immediately presides, to regulate the progression of intelligent agents. Their first nature must be reformed and improved according to its abilities, before a second and higher nature can be superinduced. We must, therefore, by repentance, and obedience to the law, make the greatest progress we can in human virtue; and our proficiency will be rewarded with a new capacity for improvement; a new nature will be conferred, and divine power will be communicated: for God, seeing and pitying our virtuous endeavours to *govern* ourselves by his laws, will himself interpose, to *govern* us by his Spirit: he will himself *write his laws in our hearts*², so that they shall finally become the *laws of our nature*, as they are already of the angelical nature: we shall become their fellow-subjects in a spontaneous beatifying

² Jer. xxxi. 33.

obedience; and thus *God's kingdom shall come, and his will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

I have before treated of these two states, the law and the gospel, in the explanation of the two baptisms. As repentance, signified by the water baptism, is the entrance into the state of the law, so the entrance into the gospel state, *i. e. the kingdom of heaven*, is there represented by the second purification, which Christ alone administers by his Spirit. This is his reserved province; and it is very observable, that although he taught repentance as a necessary preparation, and his disciples, by his command, administered the sacrament of repentance with water baptism³, yet it is said expressly, that he himself did *not baptize*⁴ any in that manner, which was only to render them proper subjects, upon whom he should, in due season, confer his peculiar baptism with the Holy Ghost.

²³ *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom.*

³ The proper Christian baptism, which is now solemnized in the name of the Holy Trinity, and consequently is an initiation to the whole of religion, was not instituted till after our Lord's resurrection: yet the different kinds of purification still preserve their order. As far as we can judge, the nature of things requires it; and we are certain, that the experience of holy men confirms it.

⁴ John iv. 2.

For

For *glad tidings* the public translation has here the *gospel*, which is a Saxon word, that signifies *good news*, or *good tidings*; and accordingly our translators themselves sometimes render the verb *εὐαγγελίζομαι*, by *bringing good tidings*; thus when the angel revealed the birth of our Lord to the shepherds, we read, *I bring you good tidings of great joy*⁵, for *εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῶν χαρὰν μεγάλην*. And at the viiith chapter of the same gospel, ver. 1. we have, *Jesus went throughout every city and village, preaching, and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God*: *κηρύσσων καὶ εὐαγγελίζόμενοι τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Again, Rom. x. 15. a quotation from Isaiah is thus rendered: *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things*⁶! *τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων εἰρήνην, τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων τὰ ἀγαθὰ*.

I have cited these passages only for the sake of spreading the thought, that it may be more attended to, and remembered. *The gospel, the joyous message*, is the proper name of our religion; and will be amply verified *for such* to all that cordially embrace it.

If I could effectually represent the full purport of this joyous message, so as to make you sensible, what a solid and superlative happiness it imports; your hopes would presently be raised, and all your desires engaged in pursuit of the promised good: but though all men incessantly

⁵ Luke ii. 10.⁶ Isai. lii. 7.

seek after happiness, yet they are commonly so mistaken in their notions of it, that these heavenly tidings make no impression on them.

Consider then, that happiness of every kind requires a proper disposition for its enjoyment. Without bodily *health* we cannot relish the pleasures of *sense*; and, for the same reason, without virtue, which is the soul's *health*, we cannot participate of *spiritual* joys. To judge, therefore, what interest we have in the gospel, or glad tidings of the kingdom of God, consider the holy angels, who are its native inhabitants: they, doubtless, are happy in the supreme degree; but their happiness is the result of a more intrinsic part of their character, *viz.* holiness. And this brings to my mind a fine saying of a modern writer:

“ Then, to be *good*, is to be *happy*: angels

“ Are *happier* than men, because they're *better*.”

They are perfectly happy, because they are perfectly holy. Now holiness consists in having only *pure* desires, *i. e.* *just* desires: they cannot desire any thing but what is just, fit, and proper for them: and thence, although their desires may be various, yet they can never be (as in the human race) inconsistent; but, being excited with due subordination and harmony among themselves, they are all fully gratified. In a word, duty and pleasure are the same in heaven. The angels have all they can wish,

wish, because they can wish only for what they ought to have. And the more intense their desires are, the higher are their virtues, and the greater is their beatitude.

Things are quite contrary in the present state of the human nature; for holiness there is so distinct a thing from the gratification of our natural desires, that it principally consists in denying them. Our natural desires, *viz.* our appetites and passions, are often unjust, and so exorbitant, that, for the sake of our own ease, and the little happiness which can be found here, we are bound to resist and subdue them. And herein (quite opposite to the angelical nature) consists the human excellence.—To refrain from what we wish; to chuse what we are reluctant to; to reject the poisonous sweet, and prefer the wholesome bitter; to strive against sloth and voluptuousness, with other numberless follies, to which we are prone; and climb the arduous rugged paths of duty; these are our first task, in which we shall often miscarry. But this will not *always* be the case: we shall not always be left to our own mismanagement; for if we persist in doing the best we can, God will at length take us under *his more immediate government*; and, by a faithful perseverance, we shall *enter into his kingdom*.

This momentous truth is the genuine gospel of Christ: such are the glad tidings he publishes, assuring us, that God's kingdom is accessible,

cessible, is *near*; so that all may enter it, who will make their way to it through the works of repentance.

I N T E R P R E T A T I O N.

C H A P. V.

¹ **A**ND,² seeing such a multitude, he went upon a mountain; and when he was set down, his disciples came to him. ² And, addressing himself to them, he thus instructed them: ³ Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ^b ⁵ Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the earth. ⁴ Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. ⁶ Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. ⁹ Blessed are the peaceable; for they shall become the children of God. ¹⁰ Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of justice: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed shall ye be, when, upon my account, men shall revile and persecute you, and falsely charge you with all manner of evil: ¹² Rejoice and be exceeding glad, because your reward in heaven will

^a Observe the connection with the last verse of the chapter preceding.

^b Ver. 5. is here placed before ver. 4. for reasons given in the notes.

be great : for so they persecuted the prophets your predecessors. ¹³ *Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the salt become insipid, with what shall it be seasoned ? It is no longer fit for any thing but to be thrown away, and troden under foot.* ¹⁴ *Ye are the light of the world, a city, that is situated on a hill, cannot be concealed :* ¹⁵ *nor, when men light a lamp, do they put it under a bushel, but on a stand, that it may give light to all the family.* ¹⁶ *Even so let your light shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father, who is in heaven.* ¹⁷ *Think not that I am come to abolish the law or the prophets : I am not come to abolish, but to fulfil.* ¹⁸ *For verily I say to you, that until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law, till all things be performed.* ¹⁹ *Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, he shall be least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall keep them himself, and teach others to keep them, he shall be great in the kingdom of heaven.* ²⁰ *For I declare to you, that except your justice shall surpass that of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.* ²¹ *Ye have heard, that it was said to them of former time, Thou shalt do no murder : and whoever committeth murder, shall be punished^c by the tribunal*

^c Ver. 21. Pub. Transf. *Shall be in danger of the judgment.* But our translators have themselves rendered *ἐνοχος* by *punished*, 1 Maccab. xiv. 45.

of the judges. ²² But I say to you, that every one, who is angry at his brother without cause, shall be punished by the judges: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be punished by the sanhedrim: and whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be punished with hell-fire. ²³ If, therefore, when you bring your offering to the altar, you there remember, that your brother has any matter of complaint against you; ²⁴ Leave there your offering before the altar; go, first be reconciled to your brother, and then return to present your offering. ²⁵ Agree with your adversary speedily, while you are in the way with him; lest the adversary should deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ I assure you, that you will not be discharged thence, till you have paid the last farthing. ²⁷ Ye have heard, that it was said to them of former time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: ²⁸ But I say to you, that whoever looketh on a woman with impure desires, has already committed adultery in his heart. ²⁹ And if your right eye cause you to offend, pull it out, and cast it from you: for it is better that you should lose one part, than that your whole body should be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand cause you to offend, cut it off, and cast it from you; for it is better that you should lose one part, than that your whole body should be thrown into hell. ³¹ It has been said, Whosoever will put away his wife, let him give her
her

her a writing of divorcement : ³² But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except in the case of adultery, is the occasion of her being an adulteress : and whosoever shall marry one so divorced, himself becomes an adulterer. ³³ Again, ye have heard, that it was said to them of former time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. ³⁴ But I say to you, Swear not at all ; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God ; ³⁵ Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool ; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King : ³⁶ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. ³⁷ Let your assertions, then, be simply affirmative, or negative ; as yes, or no : for whatsoever goes beyond these, comes from evil. ³⁸ Ye have heard, that it has been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : ³⁹ But I say, Do not resist the man who injures you : but if one strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if any man will go to law with you for your coat, let him have your cloak too. ⁴¹ And whosoever would force you to go with him one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asketh you, and turn not away from him who would borrow of you. ⁴³ Ye have heard, that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them who curse you, do good to them who hate you, and pray for them

who calumniate and persecute you: ⁴⁵ That ye may become the children of your Father, who is in heaven; for he causeth his sun to rise upon bad men and good, and sends rain upon the just and the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if ye love only those who love you, what reward can ye have? Do not even the publicans the same? ⁴⁷ And if you are civil only to your brethren, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans as much? ⁴⁸ Be ye, then, perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.

Of the BEATITUDES.

BEFORE I enter upon a distinct consideration of these weighty sentences, I shall mention some observations, which have been made upon them all in general.

To bless men, i. e. to make them happy, was the great business for which our Lord came into the world: and accordingly, in the beginning of this his sermon on the mount, he pronounced eight blessings together, annexing them to so many Christian virtues, and assigning the particular beatitude which attends each of them. Knowing that happiness is our common aim, and that an innate instinct continually urges us to the pursuit of it, he, in the kindest manner, applies directly to that instinct:

stinct: He directs it towards its proper object, and shews the way to attain it.

Though all men necessarily desire happiness, yet the greater part continue miserable, because they seek it where it is not to be found. Our Lord, therefore, begins his divine institution, which is the complete art of happiness, by laying before us, the true and only method of acquiring it.

We may here farther observe the benevolent condescension of our Lord; how he seems to lay aside his supreme authority, as our legislator, that he may better act the part of our friend, and our saviour: and, instead of using the lofty, imperative style in positive commands, chuses rather, in a more gentle and engaging way, to insinuate his will, and our duty, by pronouncing those blessed, who comply with it. He also indulgently considered the great depravation of our nature: how its original corruption, and acquired malignity by evil habits, together with the force of bad examples, and the sinful conversation and fashions of the world, had so darkened the understanding, and perverted the judgment of men, that they could but obscurely discern the genuine beauty of the sublime doctrines, which he was to inculcate; and therefore he proposed them in such a light, as would most effectually recommend them. He named the duty and its happy

consequences together, guarding and enforcing each virtue with a beatitude: that those, who were not yet capable of being affected with the intrinsic merit of holiness, might be allured to the practice of it by the reward that attends it.

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

His first benediction is pronounced upon the *poor in spirit*; which phrase expresses an inward disposition, or state of mind, by an outward worldly circumstance, *viz. poverty*; which signifies *want, the sense whereof obliges men to dependence upon others for supply, by begging, or by servitude*: I say, poverty signifies want, the sense whereof obliges men to seek supply from others, by begging, or servitude. And I have repeated this description of outward poverty, that you may more distinctly apprehend the *poverty in spirit*, which, by an exact analogy, implies *want, and consequently an habitual address to, and dependence upon God for supply, by prayer and obedience.*

And first of *poverty*, as it signifies 'want, a general universal want; the having nothing our own, or at our own disposal. Now, in a spiritual sense, *i. e.* in a religious view of things, all men are absolutely and intirely *poor*. We have nothing that we may justly esteem, or
properly

properly call *our own*; for, in strictness of speech, God is the sole proprietor of all things; nor does he so communicate ought to his creatures, as to divest himself of his right and title therein. Every thing has an *immutable* relation to him as *Lord*, and cannot, by any means, be alienated from him. Behold (saith Moses) *the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's; the earth also, and all that is therein.* And in the xcvith psalm, read in every morning-service, we acknowledge, that, *the sea is his, and he made it*: so our translation; but it should rather be, *for he made it*; this is the reason why all things are his, because he made them: creation gives him an indefeasible right in them. We have nothing, therefore, that we can strictly call our own; but are supported by pure bounty; we live upon the alms of our maker.

And thus all men, and indeed all created beings, are, in a religious view, *poor*: poor, as having nothing of their own, as having no just claim to any thing, nor any authentic right to use and dispose of things according to their own will: which is all we mean by poverty. But religion goes still farther, and fixes an higher sense upon this word, than it can possibly bear, when applied to worldly concerns. The poorest man among us is commonly the owner and possessor of his own person: and though claims of debt, and, as is practised in other parts, sale

in the public market, may give others a property in that, in his body; yet every shackled slave has his mind at liberty; his thoughts are free and uncontroled; they are his own, and always at his disposal. Such is the condition of worldly poverty between man and man: but, in regard to God, all creatures are incomparably poorer than this; for even *we ourselves* are not our own: so St. Paul expressly, *Ye are not your own: your bodies and your spirits are God's;*¹ and that by the same title, that all other things are his: *For he made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture, i. e. maintained by him.*—And this suggests his additional claim by continual preservation; and, besides that, he has a more peculiar right in us, as *men*, by conquest, and purchase, on his part; and, on ours, by voluntary contract in our baptism. And these necessarily lead me to explain another branch of our poverty with regard to God, which does far surpass all kinds of that state in concerns merely secular: I mean *the poverty of sin*. All hitherto said concerns only the poverty of our nature: as we are creatures, we *have* nothing, we can *do* nothing, we *are* nothing of ourselves: yet the poverty of sin is incomparably greater than that of nature.

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

At our first creation, there was nothing indeed on our part, that could merit the beneficence of our maker; nothing that could be a motive to him, but his mere goodness: yet there was at the same time no demerit on our part; nothing that could be an obstacle to his free love and bounty: but since our fall and corruption, there is found on our side a notorious unsuitableness, opposition, and resistance to the influence of his grace: so that much stronger and more vigorous efforts of the divine goodness are necessary to surmount these obstacles, to transcend our unworthiness and indispositions to the ordinary efflux of his bounty. God must discharge our debts before he can enrich us. We must be saved from our sins, we must be rendered *innocent*, before we can be truly *happy*. Without this his mercy would in vain set open the gates of heaven for our reception. As we say, and that truly, of bankrupts, that they are worse than nothing; that they are not merely poor, as having nothing of their own; but are still farther charged with debts, which they can no ways answer; so it is with us: this superlative degree of want, this excess of poverty, is our condition, as *sinners*.

And here at last we find somewhat properly our own; sin, in the whole extent of its nature; in its dark causes, voluntary ignorance,

and wilful obstinate folly; in its direful effects, guilt, infamy, and punishment: These are our acquisitions: These are our works, and the fruit of our doings: These, I say, are properly our own; and therefore they are in scripture called our *ways, our invention, our devices*: These are wholly imputed to us, and we must account for them to the justice of God.

Thus have I endeavoured to represent our great and multiform poverty, because it is a truth of the greatest moment, an intimate conviction of it being the indispensable condition for future felicity. Although we have hitherto found no subject for a beatitude, but rather great matter of blame and malediction; yet that *poverty in spirit*, which inherits the blessing, consists only in a proper consciousness of this wretched state, with a suitable behaviour under it. Poverty in spirit, I say, consists in a due consciousness of our real state, with a suitable behaviour under it. As in other parts of scripture Those are said to *be wise in their own eyes, and wise in their own conceits*, who imagine themselves wise; so here They are called *poor in spirit*, who have in their *spirit* a thorough habitual sense of This their poverty.

For this conviction must be wrought in the *spirit*, and not barely in the speculative ideal faculty, wherein many *hold the truth in unrighteousness*, and entertain moral notions that are directly

directly opposite to the tenor of their practice. There are, for instance, few so deliberately impious, as to say with those in the Psalmist, *Our lips are our own: Who is Lord over us?*¹ Yet there are very few, who do not use their lips as *their own*, and as if they were not accountable for every word they form with them; which example alone may serve to shew, how widely our speculative notions differ from our practical judgment. In our speculative notions we are all convinced of our poverty according to the sense here explained. Our forms of prayer make frequent mention of it in the customary phrases of humiliation. We confess it too upon other occasions: and if any should assert the contrary, we are ready to prove it by scripture, and reason, and experience. Thus we are sometimes *poor* in words, *poor* in transient reflections, and accidental sentiments; but few are *poor in spirit*: for though men cannot deny such their poverty, yet they almost perpetually forget it; and consider themselves under other notions and characters. But he who is *poor in spirit* has a solid, habitual, and efficacious sense of his real state and condition; his *spirit* is filled with *living* operative truth; his eyes are opened; and *the day-spring from on high visits him*. He no more usurps upon the rights of his Maker, but does God and himself justice. He sees, that he is

¹ Psal. xii. 4.

not his own, and therefore may not dispose of himself according to his own inclinations: but *as the eyes of a servant look unto the hand of his master; and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress: so his eyes wait on the Lord his God, until that he have mercy upon him*². In a word, he returns to his allegiance, becoming a true and faithful subject of God's *kingdom*, which our Lord assigns as the ground and reason of the beatitude: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

The original here may, and perhaps ought, to be rendered, *Of them is the kingdom of heaven*; meaning, that the kingdom of heaven consists of such subjects. In the sixth chapter, ver. 14. of this gospel, our translation has, *Of Such is the kingdom of heaven*: and by the same construction this place should be rendered, as I said, *Of Them is the kingdom of heaven*; i. e. God's kingdom consists of the poor in spirit. And when any of his subjects, of how high degree soever (witness Lucifer and his angels), forget their genuine poverty, with their absolute dependence upon God, and, consequently, withdraw their submission, they are cast out of his kingdom; as, on the contrary, They are said *to enter into his kingdom*, who effectually recognize his dominion, and subject themselves to him in a voluntary obedience.

² Pſal. cxxiii. 2.

We, by a mysterious dispensation, are born out of *his kingdom*. We are, by nature, insensible of our dependence, and the subjection which we owe him. We conceit ourselves to be our own masters, and masters of all that we can get into our power: we mistake that *power* for *right*; and behave, not as stewards, but as proprietors, of the goods intrusted to us. Hence our *pride*, by which we fondly glory in them as our *own*: hence our *sensuality*, by which we use them in direct opposition to the will of our Lord: hence our *covetousness*, by which we strive to extend our usurpations, and gain more materials for *sensuality* to misuse, and *pride* to appropriate. These vices have their foundation in this capital falshood, that *we are our own*, that we are masters of ourselves, and what we possess. *Therefore* we boast of them; *therefore* our avarice grasps at more, to gain a larger scope for luxury and vanity. But these cannot subsist with *poverty in spirit*, which makes us renounce our unjust claims, and restore all things to the Sovereign Lord. *Pride*, for instance, cannot subsist but upon a supposition that we have a property in the things we are proud of. All vain-glory stands confuted by that question of St. Paul, *What have we that we did not receive? Now if we did receive it, why do we glory, as if we had not received it?* The poor in spirit feel

³ 1 Cor. iv. 7.

effectually

effectually the full force of this reasoning: and they, knowing that All they *have*, and *are*, is *received* from God, cease to glory in it, or misuse it: they gratefully surrender All to the disposal of the Creator, and totally submit themselves to his government: upon which account they are said in scripture to *enter into his kingdom*.

And this is the third particular implied in poverty of spirit; *viz.* after a due sense of it, *a suitable behaviour under it*; (which analogous to worldly poverty, the sense whereof puts men upon seeking a supply from others by *begging* or *servitude*) consists in a devout application to God, and total dependence upon him by *prayer* and *obedience*; which duties comprehend the Whole of religion in its greatest latitude, and, consequently, must insure all that bliss, which is prepared for those who fulfil its obligations.

Now if we seriously consider ourselves in the presence of the Creator, and according to the views here represented; we cannot but be convinced, that such poverty, as has been described, is actually our state and condition. Why then has not this conviction its proper effect in the production of virtue and piety? The reason is, as I hinted before, because it is not sufficient, that this conviction be wrought in the discursive ideal faculty, which is called our *Reason*; although it must begin there, and be studiously cultivated

cultivated by assiduous meditation ; but, to become efficacious, it must pass on into a higher principle, called the *Spirit*. It is not a *speculation* of our poverty, but a lively *sense* of it, that can avail us ; and that *sense* appertains to the *spirit*, as our Lord intimates, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*. At the time when this sermon was delivered on the mount, the term *Spirit* was commonly understood to mean one constituent part of the human nature ; for man was then considered as consisting of three parts, *Body, Soul, and Spirit*. Contemporary writers speak often of this division, which certainly is very just and proper, since it occurs so frequently in the scriptures, where we find Soul [$\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$], and Spirit [$\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$], not only distinguished, but opposed ; as being not only distinct, but even contrary principles. I shall find occasion hereafter to give you the proof of This, in an ample detail of many important passages of scripture. It may suffice at present to have mentioned it, and that this distinction of *Body, Soul, and Spirit*, was well established in the Jewish church, and passed thence into the Christian, where it was very soon abused by some enthusiastic heretics, who assumed to themselves the title of $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\iota$, or spiritual men, and called all others $\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\iota$, soulish or animal men ; meaning, that They were mere animals, and void of the higher principle, which they vainly arrogated

arrogated to Themselves. This abuse of the terms was probably one reason why the distinction between *Soul* and *Spirit* was much disused, and at last quite neglected; so that, to supply the want of it, later writers, using the word *Soul* in a much larger sense than the ancients did, distinguish what they now call Soul into two parts, one called the *inferior*, and the other *superior*. By the *inferior* they mean the seat of the senses, appetites, and passions, and the receptacle of whatever kind of sentiments man may have in common with the rest of the animals: by the *superior* they mean his capacity for religion, to which appertain conscience, the knowledge and love of God, with every thing that conduces to virtue and piety; and, consequently, those nobler faculties of the mind, whereby we controul the low, animal, sensual part of our nature; and, with erected thought, thought raised above sordid transitory interests, which are the bane of our true interest, we follow the dictates of right reason, and behave as intelligent beings ought to do in the presence of their Creator. It is with regard to this superior and divine part of man, that our Lord says, *Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth.

Some, not attending to the natural order and connexion of the beatitudes, have considered them only as loose detached sentences; and thence it has happened, that, in the present Greek copies, and consequently in our translation, this of *the meek* has been transposed (as I conceive), and that of *those who mourn* put before it: but the commentaries of the fathers upon the Sermon on the Mount, with the Vulgate, and many antient MSS. shew, that next after *Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; followed, *Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the earth*. There is an apparent antithesis in the words; but the sense will shew more palpably, that a connexion was intended.

For although the writers of ethics commonly oppose *meekness* only to *anger*, and accordingly define it to be “the virtue whereby we moderate that passion, so that other men may not be injured, nor ourselves discomposed by it;” yet, in reality, *meekness* is much more extensive, and restrains, not only the follies of anger, but of all the passions in general⁴; for no excess of
any

⁴ Clemens Alexandrinus, p. 579. *Mites sunt, qui infidam, quæ est in animâ, pugnam sedaverunt iræ & cupiditatis, ac cæterarum*

any kind of passion can be consistent with it. Thus meekness represses insolence in *joy*, and prevents clamours or despondency in *grief*: it forbids presumption in *hope*, and restrains the impetuosity of *desire*: it permits not *fear* to transgress the bounds of a prudent caution; and moderates even *courage*, which, without it, becomes a savage ferocity: it stops the issues of *vanity* in boasting and self-applause; of *malice*, in railing and calumny; of *ill-nature*, in perverse captiousness or stubborn obstinacy, or rude and fullen churlishness. It is a virtue always in season: it balances the mind in every state: it is as necessary in the most prosperous fortune, as in the most adverse: and the blessed Virgin Mary gave as high an instance of meekness, in her answer to the salutation of Gabriel, as Job had before done in his reply to the provocations of his ill-advising wife.

Among those who are celebrated in the Old Testament for this virtue, the person most distinguished is Moses, of whom it is said, that *he was very meek, above all men that were upon the face of the earth*^s. Meekness, indeed, is

cæterarum specierum quæ his subjectæ sunt. All the passions are here comprehended by one, who was an attic philosopher as well as a Christian, and therefore must know what the original word imported, and what the Christians understood by it.

^s Numb. xii. 3.

the principal feature of his character; and though the perverseness, seditions, and continual murmurs of the Israelites were the most notorious exercises of it; yet it appears very exemplary in all other parts of his conduct. By *this* he stifled all sentiments of ambition, and disowned alliance to the crown of Egypt, preferring affliction with the people of God to all the hopes of secular grandeur, which his royal adoption gave him title to. And by *this*, when he was armed with miraculous power over the seasons and the elements, to make them ministers of divine vengeance, and seemed to hold in his hand the fate of Egypt, so that, as the scripture speaks, *he was made as a God unto Pharaoh*, to humble his pride, and punish his tyranny; yet he never appears elated with any consciousness of his superiority over him; but pronounced and executed the judgments of God, himself serene and dispassionate as an angel.

But This, as indeed all the virtues, is best illustrated in the life of Jesus, who is called *the Lamb of God*, not so much for his innocence, as for his unparalleled meekness. *He was oppressed* (saith the prophet) *and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*⁶. *When he*

⁶ Isa. liii. 7.

*was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously*⁷: so our translation after the printed Greek copy: but many MSS. with the ancient Latin fathers, and Clement of Alexandria among the Greek, confirm here the reading of the Vulgate, which is, *tradebat judicanti se injustè*; he gave himself up to him who judged unjustly; i. e. submitted to the unjust sentence of Pilate: and I think this suits better with the context, wherein St. Peter exhorts servants to bear patiently the injurious treatment of their *unjust* masters, after the example of Jesus, who submitted to the *unjust* sentence of his judges.

Nor were his sufferings the only exercise of his meekness: but he was meek in his zeal, and most sovereign acts of authority; for, as I have observed, there is a meekness even in majesty, as well as in subjection: and at his public entrance into Jerusalem, amid the hosannas of the applauding multitudes, he made this virtue the most conspicuous ornament of his triumph; verifying that prediction of Zechariah, *Tell ye the daughters of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek*⁸.

But the example of Jesus will be our ordinary subject as we proceed in this work, and therefore we shall not now longer dwell on it; but

⁷ 1 Pet. ii. 23. ⁸ Matt. xxi. 5.

go on to consider what is meant by *possessing the earth*.

We have hitherto spoken of meekness as a moral virtue; but, in order to explain this phrase, *possessing the earth*, we must consider it physically; and, besides its mental operations, examine its natural and mechanical effects upon the body; I say, *the body*; for that is the *earth* here meant; and, in possessing it by meekness, both body and soul are beatified.

The immediate office of meekness is to govern the passions; and all the passions depend upon the communication, and mutual action, that subsists between the body and the soul. Thoughts are of two kinds: some are mere speculations that terminate in the mind, and have no influence upon the corporeal part; others, in which the mind takes more interest, pass on to affect the body, and excite some emotion in the blood and animal spirits: *that* bodily emotion acts again upon the mind, and heightens and strengthens the thought to a certain degree. Of the degree I shall speak presently; but first I would render what is said already more intelligible by some instance: as thus,

An opinion of danger may be coolly entertained in the mind without either *fear*, or *courage*; and the supposed danger may be looked on with indifference: but if the apprehension of danger become such, that it alarms the ani-

mal spirits, then passion ensues, the passion of *fear*, or the passion of *courage*, or perhaps both together; for they may act as antagonists in the mind, to keep it erect, and hold it up in the posture proper for the occasion; wherein *fear* should supply the defensive armour of caution and vigilance, while *courage* furnishes the offensive arms of violence to repel the danger. Thus these two passions, if confined to their proper limits, may act in concert to execute what the present exigency requires; for they dispose the man to guard against, and to dissipate the danger, in a quite different manner, than he would have done in the condition first proposed, wherein only a mere opinion of danger was treated with coldness and indifference. In this instance you see *what the passions are*; and of *what use they are*, when duly regulated.

As this subject may be new to you, I shall dwell longer on it, and place it in different lights, that you may the better apprehend it.

I say then, that passions are caused only by such thoughts as reach the body, so as to excite its co-operation. All that passes in the mind, upon whatever subject, does not amount to a passion, till the body be affected by it. In that case (I mean the body being affected) the sentiment conceived in the soul moves some corresponding springs in the machine, so that even the pulse, and tide of the blood flowing there,

is

is altered by it: those springs, so touched, react upon the soul, and strengthen the sentiment that moved them; which is then called a *passion*, because the mind passively receives a new impression from the corporeal system: it is also called *affectus animi* for the same reason.

As to the use of the passions, I find it so well expressed to my hand by a late¹ writer, that I have here transcribed his account of it: “The soul (says he) considered abstractly from the passions, is of a remiss and sedentary nature, slow in its resolves, and languishing in its executions. The use, therefore, of the passions, is, to stir it up, and put it upon action; to awaken the understanding, to enforce the will, and to make the whole man vigorous and attentive in the prosecution of his designs.”

To this end, therefore, the *animal spirits*, affected by some sentiment in the mind, instantly enhance that sentiment: they give it a *momentum*, an additional force, which (supposing the sentiment a right one, and that the super-added force suits the occasion) is the proper assistance which the soul should receive from the body, for the discharge of its functions. For the *vis impressa* in the passion carries on thought to its execution; as kindly and gentle gales forward the bark in its course. Now, as

¹ Mr. Addison.

a mariner, who could command the winds, might promise himself a prosperous navigation ; so, if we had the command of our passions, we could securely direct our course of life ; for then we should never go against our cool deliberate judgment of Things. Our good desires would then become passions, passions adequate to their objects, and consequently such as would never flag, till they attain their end : and our evil desires would then be only feeble volitions, which would dwindle, and soon be extinguished, where no motion of the animal spirits concurred to enflame them. There could then be no ground for that universal complaint, *video meliora proboque ; deteriora sequor*.

Thus it would be, if we could command our passions : we should raise, or sink them, according to our judgment, and carefully adjust them to the nature of things : we should apply them with all their energy, to the prosecution of our greatest interest ; and make them militate with all their force, against whatever might obstruct it. Thus we should do, if we were masters of them : but, as things now stand, what do we do with, or rather what do we not suffer from, our own passions ? Of what use are they to us ? What concern do they take in what most concerns us ? Is not the cause of wisdom and virtue almost totally deserted by them, while our follies and our vices have them thronging
into

into their service? Good thoughts have no assistance from them; while bad thoughts are exceedingly aggravated and made worse by them.

But enough of these complaints, which perhaps involve all the just complaints of mankind. The occasion of mentioning them was, to shew, the little power we have over our animal spirits, and, consequently, our passions, which are the result of *their* impulse upon the mind. Now you will observe here, that though we call these *animal* spirits, yet, in strictness of speech, they are *corporeal*; for they are elaborated or distilled in the brain from the blood, and pervade the nervous system; they are as very a part of the body, as the bones and muscles: yet are they rightly named *animal* spirits, because in the marvellous connexion of soul and body, and through the point of union, they affect the soul, the *anima*, so as to *animate* and invigorate its sentiments, and render them passions; as has been so often said already.

Let us now return to meekness, whose province it is to regulate these passions: in order to which it must have acquired a full dominion over the animal spirits, which are the material, terrestrial cause of them: And this is what our Lord intended, by saying, *the meek shall possess the earth.*

By

By the way, our public translation, for *possess*, has here *inherit*: but the word in the original does not necessarily imply *succession*, and should never be taken in that sense, unless the context require it. And besides, about the time when our translation was made, the *English* word *inherit* signified barely to *possess*, as you find in Shakespeare, and other writers of that age. Here it is to be understood only in this sense, and conformable to the vulgate, *possidebunt terram*. Now *possessio importat quietum dominium* is a maxim of civil law. To possess a thing is to have it in our power, so as to have the free use and enjoyment of it.

To *possess the earth* cannot here signify the having a property in our dirty globe; for *meekness* is not the way to gain it: but the *earth* here meant is the earthy or terrestrial part of our own nature; it is the lower, grosser, brute part of our composition. We are composed of things celestial, and things terrestrial; for our diverse faculties must be of the same nature with the objects to which they are adapted. Upon this account man is said to be a microcosm, an universe in miniature, consisting of similar parts with the whole, which render him capable of having an intercourse with the whole. If man had not in him somewhat heavenly and divine, he could have no interest in heaven: if he had not an earthy corporeal substance, he could not
be

be an inhabitant of this world. The superior part, τὸ θεῖον, the somewhat divine, with respect to which our Lord says, *the kingdom of heaven is within you*, is called the *spirit*: and the inferior part is called *flesh*, or *earth*, which here means the same; for *terra nostra est caro nostra*, says St. Augustin, this he repeats several times in his works; he gives his reasons for it, lib. 2. *de sermone Domini*; and elsewhere he names this inferior part, *mundana pars animæ*.

What I would say, is, briefly, this: among whatever order of beings man is to act his part, he must be prepared for it by suitable faculties. Thus, his *body* made of earth qualifies him to be an inhabitant of earth: and his *spirit*, which is of divine extraction, renders him capable of becoming a subject of the *kingdom of heaven*. For it is by his *spirit* that he is susceptible of religious and moral truth, whereby he may commence candidate for heaven, and gradually, and commonly by a slow progression, attain the real efficacious knowledge of God and of himself: of himself, as a *creature*: of God, as his *creator*, with all the awful consequences, which so demonstrably flow from that relation, which the creature must necessarily bear to the creator. Here he learns his genuine poverty, and, quitting all his usurpations, makes a total surrender of himself to the author of his being. The man being thus disposed in *spirit and truth,*

truth, God takes him under his government, and establishes *his kingdom within him*, even the kingdom of heaven. When the superior faculties are thus restored to their due dependence upon the deity, the inferior will become subordinate to them: conscious *poverty* will induce *meekness*. The man possessed by God in his *spirit*, or heavenly part, will himself possess the terrestrial part of his nature. He will himself have the full dominion over his passions, which belong to that lower region, where the soul confines upon matter.

Such I take to be the purport of these two first beatitudes: *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the earth.* Thus conjoined, they comprehend all the happiness that man is capable of, the full enjoyment of every faculty he is endowed with. And therefore, as judicious instructors in every science first propose the *end*, which, rightly understood, both explains and persuades the use of the *means* necessary for attaining it: so our great master here begins his divine institution by shewing at once the *end* of all his discipline, which is, to reduce the creature to that due sense of his real condition, which constitutes *poverty in spirit*, whereby he is rightly disposed for God's government, and, consequently, admitted into his kingdom. Thus, becoming
subject

subject to God (whose service is perfect freedom), he becomes master of himself; reason has its proper ascendant, and all the lower faculties act in subordination to it. This is well expressed by St. Augustin, where he says, “*Jam ordinata sunt omnia, nullusque motus adversus rationem rebellis est; sed cuncta obtemperant spiritui hominis, cum & ipse obtemperet Deo.*”

This, indeed, is consummate felicity, and, as such, reserved for the future state. It is, as I said, the *end* to which all our Lord's instructions lead; and the six following beatitudes indicate the *means* by which we are to arrive at it, as will be shewed hereafter.

** Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

Of mourners there are two kinds: such as mourn worldly losses, and such as mourn for their sins.

The first sort, the worldly mourners, are not without their share of this blessing, if they make a right use of the advantages designed them by such seemingly severe dispensations, wherein God teaches them their *genuine poverty* and dependence, by sensible experiment. He takes away the good things he had trusted them with, to cure their mistaken presumption,
in

in thinking them their *own*; and his *resumption* demonstrates by whose *grant* they held them. Thus worldly losses are often beneficial, in as much as they serve to humble us, by such feeling proofs of our weakness and indigence. With regard to this first kind of mourners, the blessing is pronounced only conditionally, and upon the terms of their being rightly instructed by their misfortunes.

To the second sort, who mourn for their sins, the blessing is more absolute. When a man, enlightened by divine grace, comes to have some lively sense of his obligations to God, and the base returns he has made to him; when he reflects upon his pride and injustice in robbing God, by appropriating the goods committed to his care, by using them without any regard to his master's will, and often in direct opposition to his commands; when, I say, he becomes sensible of his vanity, arrogance, ingratitude, and the just judgments of God for his offences; he cannot but be filled with grievous regret and remorse: his breast will burn with indignation against himself: he will mourn in the bitterness of his soul, and make a broken and contrite heart his first oblation to justice.

Besides these, there are other occasions of sorrow, which necessarily attend conversion, and the earlier stages of the spiritual life. Not only our past sins, but also our present frailties;
and

and infirmities, administer great matter of grief and mourning. The mind suffers sad distraction between nature and grace; old habits, and new resolutions. The man, for a while, seems divided against himself: he lives in a continual warfare, wherein he is often foiled; and even when he succeeds, and gains ground, it is, for a time at least, in a narrow and thorny way.

But our Lord vouchsafes to encourage these mourners with a certain assurance of consolation: *Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.* What they now sow in tears, they shall reap in joy: their tears shall wash away their guilt, and innocence be crowned with perpetual felicity.

⁶ *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be satisfied.*

Our public translation, for *justice*, here has *righteousness*: but I have told you before¹, that there is but one word in the original languages for both, which our translators render sometimes *righteousness*, sometimes *justice*: all other translations render it constantly by one word; and perhaps it had been better if ours had done so too, and kept to the word *justice*; the ties of justice being of most evident and indispensable obligation.

¹ See page 110.

The word, indeed, is used in two different senses; sometimes for the whole duty of man towards GOD, his neighbour, and himself; sometimes only for that particular virtue, by which our commerce with mankind is regulated, and which we usually call *honesty*. It is taken in this *last* sense, where St. Paul, preaching before Felix, is said to have *reasoned of righteousness and temperance*; i. e. justice and chastity; two virtues very seasonably recommended to that governor, who was notorious for extortion and adultery. There are some other passages, in which justice is used in this restrained sense; but more generally in scripture it signifies universal virtue, giving all things their due, and treating them according to their proper merit. It is with this view that St. Paul says, *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law*. You observe here, that he includes all the social virtues, or duties towards our neighbour, in that of love, and makes this love one branch of justice; because the office of justice is to give every one his due, and consequently it requires, that we should love every thing which is amiable, in the degree that it is so; for, when we say a thing is amiable, we mean that it deserves love, and consequently may claim it as its due. Religion, therefore, as it is comprehended under the great name of

justice,

justice, discharges its office of regulating all our thoughts and actions, by assigning the measure of love due to each object, and thereby directing our whole demeanour towards it.

Justice, in a word, is the same as perfection; and the space of our present life is granted for attaining it: it is the disposition of angels; it is the living image of God impressed upon the soul; it is the highest pitch of glory and excellence: so that it is no great wonder, if frail mortals do not soon acquire it; but it is real matter of wonder, and indignation too, that so few *desire* it. Alas! if we should examine the wishes of mankind, and could discover what their hearts are most set upon; what trash should we see! What various and ridiculous vanities! What mischievous and detestable abominations!

Yet some there are (I pray God to increase the number! some there are) who desire justice, *i. e.* the rectitude of their own nature, which is their chief, their *only* good: they hunger and thirst after it; they seek it with all the powers of their soul, as the *one thing necessary*; and renounce all other desires, which may divert or weaken their pursuit of it: to such, Christ has promised, that *they shall be satisfied*. It is all the happiness they themselves desire; indeed, all that they are capable of: and the truth of God stands engaged, that they shall not fail of it:

it: only they must persist in these holy desires, and wait with patience upon God for the reasonable dispensation of his graces. Their present state, perhaps, is painful; for even the bodily appetites of hunger and thirst are painful sensations: and the spiritual may be more vehement, as holding some proportion to the greater good they aspire to: but pains and sufferings are the known marks of the way to heaven; and we must *endure* justice, before we can *enjoy* it.

Men are commonly so void of justice, that they do not perceive, or concern themselves about, their want of it: the scriptures call this state, *being dead in sin*. The *new life* begins in a real sense of our want of justice, which is naturally a painful sensation. Hence that religious *mourning* mentioned in the former *beatitude*; and hence those anxious and impetuous desires expressed in this, by the metaphors of *thirst* and *hunger*. These are plain indications of the *new life* commenced within us; for they are the genuine acts of that life, tending to growth, and farther improvement: *Blessed, therefore, are they who hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall be satisfied.*

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

The frailty of human nature renders men continually liable to abuse and pervert the good dispositions which religion would excite. Thus *mourning for sin* may degenerate into a gloomy melancholy, and moroseness of temper: and some, because they are displeas'd, as they have reason, with themselves, become peevish and fretful at all about them. And again, with regard to *the hunger and thirst after justice*, mentioned in the next beatitude; in order to produce this, men called to religion have commonly very powerful convictions concerning the turpitude of vice, with the danger and guilt of neglecting virtue. And they ought studiously to cultivate these convictions, and impress them deeply upon their minds by assiduous meditation, as the proper motives to perseverance in their good resolutions. But as the speculations of justice are pleasing, and the practice of it laborious; and as it is much easier to desire that others should be virtuous, than to become so themselves; it too often happens, that they misapply their concern for the interests of virtue to the morals of other men, and are more intent upon their neighbour's faults than their own. Thus they turn their zeal the wrong way, and suffer it to evaporate in chimæras of

reforming the public. But *hunger and thirst* are personal; for no man hungers for another's want, but for his own. Those holy desires, which the spirit of God first excites in his servants, chiefly tend to their own purification; and, in the progress of that work, I mean, while they *grieve* for their own follies, and *pine* for their own want of justice; they will compassionately bear with the follies of other men, and be very indulgent to their want of justice; a want which they so sensibly experience in themselves. To ripen this good disposition, to which their state naturally leads in the measure they advance in it, Christ here so seasonably pronounces his benediction, *blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy*: which a pious reader will thus apply to himself; “Guilty as I am of such
 “ faults, and subject to such infirmities, what a
 “ happiness is it, that I may hope for the mercy
 “ of God? I may *securely* hope for it, if I for-
 “ give the faults of others; and treat them
 “ with that compassion, which God commands,
 “ and I myself stand so much in need of.”

^s *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

I formerly treated of *purification*, when I explained the baptism of John, with the subsequent baptism of Jesus Christ¹. I shewed,

¹ See page 155.

upon that occasion, that it is a long and arduous work, beginning in repentance, and attended with that *mourning* for sin, to which a former beatitude invites. The purification is carried on by that *hunger and thirst after justice* mentioned in the next: and it advances still more and more under the following benediction upon the *merciful*, who, by the violence they do themselves to mortify their own pride and ill-nature, so as patiently to bear with, and compassionate, the infirmities of their brethren, draw down upon themselves the mercy of *God*; which at length so consummates their purification by a superabundant increase of divine grace, that they become *pure in heart*; and are thereby qualified for that sublime and efficacious knowledge of the deity, which is here called *seeing God*.

That we may better apprehend the propriety of this phrase, *seeing God*, it is to be observed, that as the body, so the soul also, has its senses, or perceptive faculties. Conscience is the eternal *Eye*, by which we discern the moral relation of things. And as the bodily eye cannot see without light; so neither does conscience perceive its proper objects but in the measure it is irradiated from above: for *God*, who maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, does also from himself illumine the minds of all men. He himself is, as St. John speaks,

that *true light, which enlightens every man that comes into the world.* Hence we have our general notions of justice and injustice, *i. e.* virtue and vice; and it is evident, that all men have these notions from their speculations about them, and the application they make of them to the conduct of others. By these they shew, that the light shines upon the *superficies* of their mind; that it operates in their *head* to form ideas there, although they do not admit it into their *hearts*, *i. e.* apply it to themselves, and receive it as the guide of life. So again the evangelist, *The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not, i. e.* does not apprehend, receive and embrace it; *but as many as received him* (it was said before, that God himself was this light; *as many as received him*), *to them gave he power to become the sons of God.* We are then said to *receive this light*, when we endeavour to walk by it; *i. e.* conform our lives to the views it gives. These views first discover our moral obligations: hence the *sorrow* for having neglected them: hence the *hunger and thirst* after greater proficiency in the observance of them: hence our indulgence to the faults of other men; for by this time we become extremely sensible how much we want such *indulgence* ourselves: and whereas before, while the light shone, as was said, only on the *superficies* of our minds, we were blind to our

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own defects, and saw only those of others by it; we would now gladly engross all this light for ourselves, we would have it all turn inward, and see no body's faults but our own. Thus our mental darkness gradually dissipates, as the heavenly illumination advances in its course; and that of Solomon is verified, where he says, *The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*¹. By the *perfect day* I suppose is meant the state of mind which those have attained, of whom our Lord here says, that *they shall see God*. For as in the outward world there is a considerable interval between the first dawn of day, and the *day perfected* by the sun's appearance above the horizon; during which interval there is a successive increase of light, all coming from the sun, although he be not yet visible; so, in the spiritual world, *the day-spring from on high* rises leisurely upon the soul: truth, justice, and mercy, which are emanations of the deity, gradually dispel its darkness, with the cause of that darkness, its impurity, by a progressive purification and illumination; till at length the great source of light is himself manifested in the *pure heart*, and fills *the heaven within us* with the glory of his majesty. So the psalmist², *Justice and equity*

¹ Prov. iv. 18.² Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16.

are the³ preparation of thy seat (or residence) : mercy and truth shall go before thy face : blessed are the people, O Lord, who can rejoice in thee : they shall walk in the light of thy countenance. Here the knowledge of God becomes of a different kind from what it was in the previous states, wherein the mixture of darkness occasioned frequent conflicts and perturbations : but in this the light becomes victorious and triumphant by the immediate presence of the deity ; and thereby establishes that *peace* and serenity, which is the necessary disposition for accomplishing the great work of *regeneration* : and which accordingly is the subject of the next beatitude.

⁹ Blessed are the peaceable : for they shall become the children of God.

The literal translation is, as in our public version, *they shall be called the children of God.* But, as I formerly observed, *to be called* is a frequent Hebraism, signifying only an assertion, that such a thing really *is*, or *becomes* what it is said to be *called*. And as to the other term, *the peaceable*, or, as in our version, *peacemakers*, it is to be noted, that in Scripture

³ Our version has here *habitation* : but the original signifies *preparation*, and is so rendered both by the LXX. and the vulgate.

τὸ ποιεῖν, to *make* or *do*, signifies an habit of mind, with its consequent actions. So, by those who *do good*, or *do evil*, we understand *good* or *bad* men; and when St. Paul speaks of *making prayer*,¹ (it is still the same word in the original) by making prayer, he means not to cause others to pray, but to pray ourselves. So the peace here spoken of is personal²: it is the fruit of victory after successful conflicts against the inbred impurity of our nature; and it is an immediate disposition for the accomplishment of regeneration, wherein, as St. Paul speaks, *We shall be renewed by knowledge, after the image of the creator.*³ I shall add only one passage more from the same apostle, where he expresses the result of these two last beatitudes, with their connection, and the transition from the one to the other; *We* (says he), *with open face, beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.*⁴ Instead of, *beholding as in a mirror*, I

¹ Phil. i. 4.

² Qui sint εἰρηνοποιοὶ docent nos sancti patres. Greg. Nyssenus, Orat. vii. de Beatitud. Κερταὶς εἰρηνοποιὸς χρηματίζει, ὁ τὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ σάσιν τῆς σαρκὸς, &c. Proprie pacificus appellatur, qui eam, quæ intra ipsum est, seditionem carnis & spiritûs, atque intestinum naturæ bellum ad pacificam concordiam & consensum adducit, ubi corporis lex, quæ legi mentis repugnat, non amplius erit efficax, sed subjugata meliori regno ministra divinorum præceptorum existit. Transcribed from Suiceri Thesaurus under Εἰρηνοποιὸς, where other quotations to the same purpose may be found.

³ Col. iii. 10.

⁴ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

think the original imports, *receiving as on a mirror*; καταπρίζω signifies *imagines & reflectio-nes facio in modum speculi*. The instance given by Scapula is from Plutarch, καταπρίζων ὁ ἥλιος τὴν ἴριον. Theodoret explaining this verse says, *As clear water represents the face of those who look on it: so the pure heart becomes, as it were, a mirror and effigies of the divine glory*. Therefore the *transformation* is not imputed ultimately to our *seeing God*, but to his favourable regard to us, whereby he impresses his image on the pure heart, as a polished *speculum*, while it persists in his presence steadily and with an uninterrupted serenity.

I think, then, that the verse in question may be thus rendered: *We, on whom the unveiled face of the Lord impresses his glory, as on a mirror, are transformed into his resemblance, &c.* Observe that, in the context, the veil (ver. 13.) was said to be on the face of Moses: the veil removed, should therefore refer to the opposite character.

¹⁰ *Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of justice: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Such is the last of these sacred paradoxes; paradoxes to the world, but favourable and luminous truths in the eye of right reason. This beatitude needs no explanation, nor any other
proof,

proof, than what is obvious from the universal sentiment of mankind, who agree to place the heroic character in *suffering for a good cause*. So our Milton assures,

“ That suff’ring for *truth’s* sake
 “ With fortitude, is highest victory.” b. xi.

This was the prerogative of the martyrs in the primitive church; and justice has since had its martyrs in all ages.

After declaring the general axiom, our Lord applies it to his disciples then present, to animate their zeal, who were to lead the van in this magnanimous combat: for so he proceeds;

¹¹ Blessed shall ye be, when, upon my account, men shall revile and persecute you, and falsely charge you with all manner of evil: ¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because your reward in heaven will be great; for so they persecuted the prophets your predecessors. ¹³ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt become insipid, with what shall it be seasoned? It is no longer fit for any thing but to be thrown away, and troden under foot. ¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is situated on a hill, cannot be concealed: ¹⁵ Nor, when men light a lamp, do they put it under a bushel, but on a stand, that it may give light to all the family. ¹⁶ Even so let your light shine

shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Concerning different DOCTRINES, suited to the different Capacities, States, and Callings of Mankind.

ALTHOUGH the beatitudes are paradoxes, which contradict vulgar opinion; yet, upon mature consideration, it appears, that the situation of mind expressed in each of them, is respectively the proper disposition for the blessing there specified: and therefore, as to these, there is no difficulty, but in the execution. But in the sequel of this divine sermon great difficulties have been found in several of its precepts, which sound harsh, and absurd, and quite impracticable in the ordinary course of human affairs.

Indeed one of the most sensible objections to the Christian religion, is, that some of its doctrines are too sublime to be general rules of life for all mankind: and farther, that if they should be received, and could be put in practice, they would dissolve the bonds of society. There are too austere enthusiasts, who aggravate this objection, by insisting with rigour, and on the dreadful penalty of damnation, upon certain particular texts, which at least are very improper

improper and unseasonable with regard to the persons to whom they apply them.

To prevent or remove this difficulty, some commentators upon the scripture have recourse to *restrictions* and *limitations*, by which they beat down and explain away the true meaning of a text, that they may accommodate it to their own notions: “ They scruple not to offer a
 “ little violence to the words, that they may
 “ pitch the sense at such a convenient height,
 “ as their principles will reach to.” What leads them to this unfairness, is an opinion, that all the instructions given in the gospel equally, and at all times, oblige all Christian professors, without making the due allowance for their different innate capacities, their different states or degrees of proficiency, and the different offices to which some are called and appointed by an especial dispensation of Providence. Whereas it ought to be considered, that the scriptures contain a general system of duty for all sorts of men in all sorts of circumstances: so that every individual may find there his specific duty: but the whole is no more suited to the particular case of each individual, than all the prescriptions in a dispensary to the case of every single patient.

To change that comparison for one more familiar here: the world may be considered as God’s school, wherein immortal spirits cloathed
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in flesh are educated for eternity. Now in a school there are different forms, in which the scholars are ranged according to their proficiency. They have different lessons, and perform different exercises: the lessons of the upper form are not intelligible to those of the lower: and the lessons of the lower are useless to those of the upper. And as their lessons vary, so do their performances, and even their faults: for of faults there are peculiar kinds, to which the more advanced are liable, and of which those of an inferior class are not capable.—But not to pursue this simile farther through many other branches, in which it is applicable, I shall mention only one particular more, which answers directly to the case now under consideration; and it is this: all the learning which some require, terminates in their own improvement: whereas others are designed hereafter to profess science in public, and be teachers themselves. To these latter some peculiar qualifications are necessary, and additional rules are to be prescribed for their personal conduct, and to direct their behaviour in their public capacity. Now the parts most objected to in this Sermon on the Mount are of this kind: they were spoken to the apostles, as apostles.

Jesus had left the multitude, that followed him, below in the plain; and, having ascended the mountain (in scripture even the scenes of
action

action are significant; having ascended the mountain), he addressed this sublime discourse to select disciples apart. Here (ver. 12.) he treats them as *successors of the prophets*. He calls them *the salt of the earth*, and *the light of the world*; high appellations, which could belong to them only in their apostolical character! To qualify them for this, he was to instruct them in the sublimest virtues: and his precepts of this kind are, through all ages, the standing doctrines of genuine Christianity. But, besides these general advices, they were also to have especial directions for the discharge of their high office; which, as it was of a very extraordinary kind, and had extraordinary *powers* annexed to it (for the apostles were under the conduct of a particular Providence, whereof they actually had the experience in the miracles which they themselves were enabled to perform), to qualify them, I say, for the discharge of their extraordinary commission, they had peculiar and extraordinary directions for their behaviour *as apostles*, which it would be *presumptuous* for an ordinary man to take to himself, and *absurd* to exact from others.

As these especial advices are interspersed through this and the two following chapters, I thought it seasonable here to give this plain account of them, as a general solution of the many objections that have been made to them.

I shall

I shall now review the words last read. The beatitudes, containing the principal articles of Christian morality, were as so many texts for the apostles to preach on; and allure men to the practice of them, by shewing the happiness that would ensue: but the generality of the world so little know the way to true happiness, that they scorn and abuse those who propose it to them; like men in a phrenzy, who spurn the offered medicine, and assault those who would administer it. Our Lord, who foreknew this, forewarned his disciples of it: and lest such ingratitude and ill usage should make them desist from their high office, and not persevere in their endeavours to do good to others at the hazard of such indignities, and calumnies, and dangers to themselves, he encourages them with assurances of the great reward with which their patience would be crowned. He animates their zeal by the example of the glorious company of (ver. 12.) *the prophets their predecessors*, who had faithfully persisted in publishing the truth, and doing good to mankind, notwithstanding the grievous persecution which thereby they drew upon themselves. And, farther to engage his apostles to tread in their steps, our Lord represents to them, that this is their bounden duty, the great work to which they were divinely ordained, and for which they were especially qualified by supernatural abilities: and that,

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that, as their reward would be great, if they rightly discharged their ministry; so their punishment would be proportionable, if they neglected it. *Ye are the salt of the earth, and your destined office is to preserve from corruption of manners: But if the salt become insipid, with what shall it be seasoned? It is no longer fit for any thing, but to be thrown away, and trampled on by men.* Their especial duty was, to teach others their duty; but if they flinched from it through fear of persecution, or any other motive, they would be lost irrecoverably, and sink in perdition beneath the rest of mankind, as much as by their sacred office they were placed above them. He goes on, therefore, with repeated admonitions, to remind them of their high station: *Ye are the light of the world, exposed to public view; a light which should illuminate all around, and in which every the least eclipse will be visible, and of bad influence.* They were to be a pattern to others: they were to recommend their doctrine by their example, and shew how amiable virtue is in their own practice: *Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father, who is in heaven.*

¹⁷ *Think not that I am come to abolish the law or the prophets: I am not come to abolish, but to fulfil.* ¹⁸ *For verily I say to you, that until hea-*

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ven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law till all things be performed.

19 Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, he shall be least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall keep them himself, and teach others to keep them, he shall be great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I declare to you, that except your justice shall surpass that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

By the law and the prophets we are here to understand the substance of moral duty, as taught in the Old Testament. So in the sequel of this sermon, our Lord says, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets*¹. And elsewhere, after rehearsing the two great commandments, *That we should love God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves*, he adds, *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*; i. e. the substance of moral duty as taught in the Old Testament, which, as he here declares, he came not to annul, but to amplify and perfect. And accordingly, thro' the remainder of this chapter, he recapitulates the principal duties prescribed to their forefathers; and under each head he supplies what had been omitted, or explains what had been

¹ Matt. vii. 20.