

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.

already taught, in a stronger, stricter sense, and such as exacted a much higher degree of perfection than before was commonly understood. But in the first place he declares, that the whole law should be in force as long as the world lasted. And he denounces the penalty incurred by those, who, in their practice and doctrine (for in this discourse, as was noted before, he instructs the apostles in their ministerial office;—he denounces, I say, the penalty incurred by those, who, in their practice and doctrine), should deliberately omit one of the least precepts of the law, *viz.* that they should be excluded from his kingdom; for so commentators explain the original, observing, that as in Latin, *nullus dixeris* is the same as *non dixeris*, so *minimus in regno cælorum* has here the force of *minimè*, and imports an exclusion from the gospel dispensation. And, finally to shew the importance of an exact observation of the law, he declares, that without a more than ordinary proficiency in it, no one could *begin* to be a Christian, I mean not a *nominal*, but a *real* Christian; for such only are said to enter the kingdom of heaven, which, as has been said at large before, means the church of Christ, or gospel dispensation, as that is distinguished from, and succeeds, the legal state.

Such is the purport of the verses last read; from which it clearly appears, that our Lord

certainly forefaw the great abufes that would be made of his religion; how fome would think they might compenfate for the neglect of moral duties by deeds of fuperftition and will-worship; and others, glorying in their prefumptuous ASSURANCES, would *contradiftinguish*² faith from morality; and, by taking away the law, which is the only true foundation of all religion, leave Chriftianity a mere caftle in the air, an enthuftaftic fystem of abfurdities. Chrift, therefore, folemnly, and with great emphasis, afferts the perpetual obligation of the law, till nature itfelf fhould be fo changed, as to render its dictates ufelefs.

In the prefent courfe of things the law is fo far from abating, or being abrogated, in any effential point of duty, that, on the contrary, all, who faithfully praftife the law, find, by experience, that it increafes, and fpreads its jurisdiction farther, in proportion to the progrefs they make; for the moral fenfe greatly improves by exercife: and as men advance in obeying the law, they alfo advance in the knowledge of it, fo as to difcover new duties, and ftricter obligations, which before they had not been fenfible of: and thefe too muft be faithfully complied with, and perfevered in, before they can be qualified for that fuperior difcipline, which is peculiar to the gofpel of Chrift: *Unless*, fays

² It is the term ufed by Antinomians.

he, your justice shall surpass that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord goes on :

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 by the tribunal 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 whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be punished by the Sanhedrim : and whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be punished with hell fire.

It was said to them of former time—but I say to you—So our Lord introduces his several improvements of the law under the different articles hereafter specified. The text in our public translation is, *It was said BY them of old time* ; and the margin has *to them*, because the original is capable of either sense ; but I prefer the latter, *viz. to them of old time*, for the sake of the antithesis, *but I say TO you*. Christ here distinguishes his doctrines from those which in former times had been publicly taught and enforced by the authority of law. For as there is a gradual increase of knowledge in every man who faithfully practises what he knows already ; so by divine appointment it has proved in the course of the world. Natural religion was the

general rule of life till Moses, who gave the revealed law which bears his name; and was the standard of duty till the coming of Christ, whose instructions are the completion of all that appertains to moral rectitude: upon which account the season of his dispensation is called *the last days*³, as the ages preceding it are here named *the former time*; and it is with this view that our Lord, when he was going to extend the boundaries of duty, takes distinct notice how far they were advanced already. *It was said to them of former time—but I say to you—* The Greek for *them of former time* is ἀρχαῖοι, which may well be rendered *beginners* or *novices*, and so rightly opposed to the apostles, who were in a *state of proficiency*.

Ver. 22.] The tribunal of the judges, and that of the Sanhedrim, were different courts of judicature, whereof the latter took cognizance of the greater crimes. For *hell-fire* the original has *Gebenna of fire*. Gehenna was a valley near Jerusalem, which was used for a lay-stall, and where a continual fire was kept, to consume such impurities, as might otherwise infect the air. These three, *the tribunal of the Judges, of the Sanhedrim, and Gebenna of fire*, intimate different penalties, which offenders, in each case, would respectively be liable to: and the last imports a very heavy one.

³ See page 178.

As to the term *Raca*, it is not Greek; and St. Augustin says, that inquiring of a Jew what it meant, he was answered, that it was an interjection used to express great indignation, which, like other passionate interjections, as *hem!* in Latin, could not be exactly translated. He goes on to say, that here is a gradation in the faults reprehended: the first is, anger deliberately and causelessly conceived in the mind; the second, when that breaks forth in wrathful expressions; the third, when it vents itself in contumelious abuses. It is by these steps that a man, enraged with anger, sometimes proceeds to actual murder, but much oftener to the commission of it in his thoughts and intention: and we are here warned, that all these steps are criminal in their several degrees; and that the law not only prohibits murder, but even the remotest tendencies towards it.

And farther, to quench the first and smallest sparks of enmity, and prevent all occasion of angry resentments, our Lord adds what follows from the twenty-second to the twenty-seventh verse; for so far his advice extends with regard to the sixth commandment. The next in the order of the Decalogue is, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*; whereon his comment is as follows:

²⁷ *Ye have heard, that it was said to them of former time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

R 3

²⁸ *But*

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.*

Figurative and proverbial speeches, which may have great beauty and force in one language, often lose their grace and energy, when translated into another tongue, wherein the novelty and exotic air of the expression may greatly obscure the sense intended by it. All our translations of the scripture must labour under this difficulty: the words last read are a strong instance of it. A superficial reader will find his imagination shocked at the bare proposal of pulling out an eye, and cutting off an hand; being not aware, that by the *eye* is meant *the intention*; and by the *hand*, the *execution* of it. In the very next chapter we have again *eye* in this sense, *viz.* to denote the intention, view, and design; and to express performance by the *hand*, is so agreeable to the general tenor of scripture language, that it is needless to insist on it.

With

With this explanation it appears, not only that the precept is reasonable and expedient; but also that the terms, by which our Lord chose to express it, are remarkably proper to the occasion. The occasion was, the prohibition of impure desires, and the mental adultery; an odious subject, which requires great reserve, and a covering of darkness, even in reproving it: but you know, by your reading at least, how those, who are possessed with that criminal passion, are apt to be transported by it; and that the exaggerating metaphors, in which they delight to express their infatuation, amply justify the sacred language of *pulling out a right eye, and casting it away*, to express the extreme violence which they ought to do themselves.

But I refrain from enlarging upon a subject, which is nauseous, or infectious.

³⁴ *But I say to you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, &c.*

Not at all relates only to the forms of swearing subjoined, or others like them: for swearing by the name of God with due reverence, and upon proper occasions, has always been held an act of religion, and enjoined as such in scripture.

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, &c.*

The apostles were, like the devoted Decii, destined victims for the reformation of the world. The last and most effectual proof of their doctrine was to be their martyrdom: and their blood so shed was to be the seed of the church, which has since so abundantly sanctified and overspread the earth. In this view what we read here, may be accounted among the especial directions, peculiar to the *apostolical* character, which were spoke of, p. 237: but if we apply them as I believe our Lord intended) to all who are *called* to genuine Christianity, then the following observations may be useful to set them in their proper light.

The essence of virtue consists in mental disposition, in our temper and frame of mind: but as human language is adapted to express bodily action much better than mental disposition, it is usual to express the latter, the mental disposition, by the action it would naturally produce. And as the principles of action are complicated and various, and prudence or necessity may often oblige us to act differently from what the frame and temper of our mind inclines to; hence it comes to pass, that some evangelical counsels, which prescribe an outward action, mean, in particular cases, only the proper inward disposition, *viz.* a readiness and inclination to perform it: so that the *will*, though not formally mentioned in the precept, is always required; and

and the *deed*, though nominally expressed, may, on many occasions, be omitted. For instance, it is said at ver. 42. *Give to him who asketh you, and turn not away from him who would borrow of you.* Now this precept is, in the letter, and with regard to the outward act it commands, very often impossible, very often improper, to be put in practice: but in the spirit of it, *i. e.* in the disposition of heart which it enjoins, it is always possible, always practicable, always obligatory. The narrowness of our own circumstances may make it impossible, or the circumstances of him, who asks our bounty, may make it improper, to put this precept in execution, as to the outward act: for we may be so poor ourselves, or the person who applies to us, may, by his vices, or other qualities, be so circumstanced, that we either cannot, or ought not to relieve him: but an inclination to assist him, and do him service, is always in our power: the poorest man may have, in the *good treasury of his heart*, wherewithal to defray this universal debt of benevolence, to all who ask, or need his assistance. And thus the precept will be *virtually* fulfilled, *i. e.* the virtue of the act will be imputed to him, who has the dispositions which would produce it.

So again, when our Lord, as here, commands us *not to resist the man who injures us, &c.* his meaning is, that we should not repel and strive
against

against the occasions of suffering, which occur in the order of Providence, but readily accept every cross that comes in our way. Those who are capable of this lesson know full well how salutary sufferings are; and that it is not possible to carry on their purification without them.

48 Be ye, then, perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.

Ver. 48. *Be ye, then, perfect, as your Father, &c.]* The perfection here recommended consists in such a generous benevolence to mankind, as is proof against their ill usage and misbehaviour towards us: for that is what our Lord had immediately in view, and had just before enjoined as a principal point wherein we should imitate the Deity, and by so godlike a disposition become his children. *That* (says he, ver. 45.) *ye may become the children of your Father, who is in heaven: for he causes his sun to shine on bad men and good; and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust.*

THE INTERPRETATION.

CHAPTER VI.

TAKE heed not to do your justice before men, that you may be seen of them: otherwise you will have no reward from your Father who is
in

in heaven. ² Therefore, when you do good offices, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the assemblies and public places, that they may have the applause of men. I assure you; they have their reward. ³ But, when you do good offices, let not your left-hand know what your right-hand doth; ⁴ That your good offices may be secret: and your Father, who seeth what you do in secret, will reward you in public. ⁵ And when you pray, you shall not do as the hypocrites, who affect to pray standing in the assemblies, and corners of streets, that men may take notice of them. I assure you, they have their reward. ⁶ But you, when you would pray, enter into your closet; and, having shut the door, pray to your Father, who is present in your retirement: and your Father, who sees what passes there, will reward you publicly. ⁷ And, when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. ⁸ Do not ye like them: for your Father knoweth what ye want, before you ask him. ⁹ To this effect, then, pray ye: “ Our Father, who art in heaven, “ hallowed be thy name: ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come: “ thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven: “ ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread: ¹² And “ forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: “ ¹³ And expose us not to temptation: but deliver “ us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the “ power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

¹⁴ For

¹⁴ For if ye forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their offences, neither will your Father forgive yours. ¹⁶ Moreover, when ye fast, do not put on a mournful look, as the hypocrites do; for they appear dejected, that men may take notice of their fasting. I assure you, they have their reward. ¹⁷ But, when you fast, do you anoint your head, and wash your face; ¹⁸ That your fasting may not be observed by men, but by your Father, who is in secret; and your Father who sees what passes in secret, will reward you publicly. ¹⁹ Make not for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do spoil, and where thieves break in, and steal: ²⁰ But make for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do spoil, and where thieves do not break in, and steal: ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. ²² The eye is the lamp of the body: if, then, your eye be single, your whole body will be enlightened. ²³ But if your eye be evil, the whole body will be darkened. If, then, the light which is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness? ²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will adhere to the one, and neglect the other. Ye cannot serve GOD and Mammon. ²⁵ Therefore I say to you, Be not solicitous about your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor about your body, what ye shall wear.

wear. Is not life more than food, and the body than cloathing? ²⁶ Consider the birds of the air: they neither sow, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much greater value than they? ²⁷ Who of you, by his solicitude, can prolong his life one hour? ²⁸ And why are ye solicitous about cloathing? Observe the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil, nor spin; ²⁹ And yet, I tell you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these: ³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe an herb of the field, which is to-day, and will to-morrow be thrown into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? ³¹ Be not, therefore, solicitous, saying, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-
 "withal shall we be clothed?" ³² For it is bea-thenish to be taken up with such cares: and your heavenly Father knows, that these things are necessary for you. ³³ Do you, therefore, in the first place, seek THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS JUSTICE, and all these things shall be super-added. ³⁴ Be not, then, anxious about the morrow, for the morrow shall have its own cares; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.

* Take heed not to do your justice before men, that you may be seen by them, &c.

Our

Our translators, instead of *justice*, have put *alms* in the text, according to the printed Greek copy: but, doubting upon good grounds, whether that were the true reading, they have for *alms* put in the margin *righteousness*, i. e. *justice*, as it stands in the Vulgate: *Attendite, ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus*; which lection is supported by great authority from MSS. and commentaries of ancient fathers upon the place. However, if this were merely a verbal criticism, I should not have troubled you with it; but I think the sense is much better, if, instead of *alms*, we read *justice*, and that the evangelist so intended it: for the proper reward, not only of almsgiving, but of every other virtue, will be forfeited, if a desire of worldly applause be our motive to the practice of them. And therefore I take this first verse to be a general caution against vain-glory in our good works, as what makes void the merit of all virtuous actions, which are here summed up, as usual, in the comprehensive name of *justice*: which general caution our Lord applies in the sequel to the three principal branches into which that *justice* is divided; viz. 1st, Justice to our Neighbour⁴ by acts of kindness and beneficence (for, merely not to hurt him, when we can do him good, is not doing him justice); 2^{dly}, Justice to God⁵ by devotion; and, 3^{dly}, Justice to Ourselves⁶

⁴ At verse 2, &c.
verse 16, &c.

⁵ At verse 5, &c.

⁶ At

by mortification : which three branches of justice our Lord here treats of severally. With this view Beza, who was for restoring *δικαιοσύνην*, *justice*, into the Greek text, says, “ Hebræis, “ *justitiam, facere est idem atque juste & recte* “ *vivere, quod generaliter initio dictum, postea* “ *speciatim illis tribus, scilicet eleemosynæ,* “ *precibus, & jejunio applicatur.”* And St. Augustin, who found *justitia* in his copy, gives the same account of it, *De Sermone Domini, Lib. 2.* “ *Cavete facere justitiam vestram coram* “ *hominibus, &c.* Generaliter hic justitiam no- “ *minavit, deinde particulariter exequitur. Est* “ *enim pars aliqua justitiæ opus quod per elee-* “ *mosynam fit, & ideo connectit dicendo, Cum* “ *ergo facis eleemosynam, noli tubâ canere,” &c.*

^a *Therefore, when you do good offices, &c.*

The term *eleemosyna*, which we render *alms*, has a much larger signification, and imports all acts of kindness by which we can benefit others. In all these our Lord warns us against ostentation, and the desire of applause; and not only that we should not seek the praise of others upon such occasions, but also heedfully abstain from all vain-glorious reflections upon the good we have done: which advice he couches in those emphatical words, *Let not your left-hand know what your right-hand does.*

After

After instructing us in the right performance of our duty towards our neighbour, he goes on to the service of God in religious worship:

⁵ *And when you pray, you shall not do as the hypocrites, who affect to pray standing in the assemblies, and corners of streets, that men may take notice of them. I assure you, they have their reward.* ⁶ *But you, when you would pray, enter into your closet; and, having shut the door, pray to your Father, who is present in your retirement: and your Father, who sees what passes there, will reward you publicly.* ⁷ *And, when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.* ⁸ *Do not ye like them: for your Father knoweth what you want, before you ask him.*

Concerning PRAYER.

PRAYER is the most important of all duties, because the right performance of all other duties essentially depends upon it; and therefore, before I enter upon a particular discussion of our Lord's instruction upon the subject of *private prayer* (for it is That he here treats of), I shall premise some general considerations concerning it, as among us it is commonly practised.

Pious

Pious men, in order to teach us how to pray, have published books, wherein they have expressed their own devotion as a model for ours. But it is a common misfortune, that things intended for our help often prove hindrances, by our relying upon them too much: and thus it has certainly happened with books of devotion. They were designed only to excite in us the spirit of prayer, by suggesting proper sentiments and desires, wherewith we should address ourselves at the throne of grace: and men, instead of entering into those sentiments, and forming those desires, content themselves with reading over the words that express them: for instance¹, one form of prayer begins with an invocation of the Holy Trinity to *have mercy upon a miserable sinner*. Now, what I object to, is, The saying over these words, without that humiliation of spirit, which they imply. A miserable sinner is a poor wretch indeed; and when we first discover ourselves to be such (I mean effectually, and by the light of grace), we must be filled with such grief, and shame, and confusion, as will render even our countenances mournful and dejected, till, after a due progress in the ways of repentance, God vouchsafes to speak peace to our souls. Yet many, who have never known this godly sorrow, or have stifled it before it has

¹ At the end of the *Whole Duty of Man*.

had its perfect effect in them, by relapsing into worldly cares or pleasures; many such, I say, still vain and haughty, and in every respect unmortified, cry *miserable sinner* without compunction, without once reflecting how miserable, odious, and despicable a thing a sinner is: but they mean no more in their prayers to God, than in their compliments to men: *miserable sinner* is a word of course, like *humble servant*.

However, in such phrases of humility they say what is true, at least, although they do not mean it; but at other times they, who repeat such prayers without due attention, affirm direct falsehoods; as when they declare, *that their soul magnifies the Lord, and all that is within them praises his holy name*²; though at the same time they scarce think of him, or have, at best, but a lukewarm unaffecting sense of his goodness. This is truly blameable; but the greatest mischief of all is, that when they have made these kinds of repetition, they think they have done their duty. If they had said no prayers at all, their consciences would alarm them, and they would not dare to go on in a state of apparent reprobation. But having thus discharged the form and ceremonial of prayer with bended knees, and moving lips, they think themselves acquitted; and stifle the inward motions of grace, by having recourse to outward perform-

² In the same form.

ances, wherewith they flatter themselves in a fatal security.

As this sort of men commonly set themselves a certain *quantity* of prayers, they usually go through their task pretty fast; and custom renders it so familiar to them, that they often go on by rote; and then it is no wonder, that God does not accept prayers, which they so little mind themselves.

But, supposing they *do* preserve an actual attention to all the words they utter; yet still there may be a great difference between *repeating* prayer, and *praying*. And here I must remark a very prevailing fallacy in the heart of man: we often mistake our speculative opinions for actual desires; what we think should be, for what is: for instance, we know that it is reasonable to love God with all our hearts: now, I say, many mistake this conviction, that they ought to love God, for an actual love of him; and accordingly scruple not to use the warmest expressions of devotional writers upon that subject, as if they really *meant* them, when indeed they only approve them: but there is often a wide distance between the approbation of truth and the practice of it; and many, who deal in expressions that might besit the mouth of a seraph, have not as yet the first principles of the love of God in their hearts. Of this God complains by the prophet Ezekiel: *With their mouth*

*they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness*³. And our Lord himself rebukes such hypocrisy in the language of another prophet: *Ye hypocrites, saith he, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*⁴. The words in Isaiah are, *This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me; but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men*⁵; which last words are very applicable to our present purpose. *Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; i. e. their religion does not come from their heart, but consists only of expressions which they learn of men, and speak after them, just as they are prompted, without having the inward pious dispositions, which those words express. Their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men.* The fear and the love of God are no human sciences; they are not arts to be taught by method and book; but they are most real and lively affections, produced in the soul by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. I shall shew by-and-by how far books of devotion are useful: all I mean here is, that

³ Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

⁴ Matt. xv. 7, 9.

⁵ Isa. xxix. 13.

they alone are not sufficient: they may be good accessory helps for our infirmity; they serve to recollect the mind, and suggest, if I may so speak, the *materials* of devotion; but devotion itself must be excited by the *concurfus* of the Holy Spirit moving our hearts; and inspiring such desires, as God will accept and ratify.

And upon this account the form of prayer, which I have already mentioned, after invocation of the Trinity for mercy upon a miserable sinner, as before, adds immediately a confession of our incapacity for prayer, and a petition for the Holy Ghost to assist and direct us: “ Lord, “ I know not what to pray for as I ought: O “ let thy Spirit help my infirmities, to enable “ me to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable “ to thee by Jesus Christ.”

To *pray by the Spirit* is a phrase, which has been so often abused by enthusiasm, and ridiculed by profaneness, that it is highly fitting in this place to establish a right notion of it, by shewing the reasons upon which it is grounded. To apprehend these reasons, we must look into the nature of man, and, by the defects we find in his present state, judge what need he has of supernatural assistances.

By *nature* man seeks only to please himself; he is his own end; he is to himself the *reason* of all he does. This is properly a state of sin; and yet this is our natural condition. Reason,

perhaps, may shew us the partiality and injustice of our self-love, and convince us, that God, who is our *author*, must be our end too; that we are not *our own*, but *his* who made us; and that we should live *for* him, *by* whom we live; that we ought to prefer him infinitely to ourselves, and renounce our own will, to receive his for the perpetual rule of our conduct. Reason, I say, may perhaps *discover* the injustice of self-love measuring all things by its private interests, and drawing all things to its own ends: but reason cannot *cure* it. Only the *Author* of our nature can change this universal spring of action. He only can, if I may so speak, *unbidge* the soul from the centre of self, which it has always turned upon, to make it move by the rules of truth and justice. He only can renew in us that right spirit, which can make us effectually prefer his judgment to our judgment, his will to our will, in a word, him to ourselves; without which there is no truth nor goodness in us.

Hence I would shew, that we cannot pray worthily, but by the Holy Ghost. To *pray* is to *desire*; for by *prayer* we here mean a *desire addressed to God*. Now unassisted nature cannot form any desire worthy to be offered to him, because all its desires are naturally selfish, that is, unjust, unholy, and void of the preference which is due to him.

To

To illustrate this in one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer: we say, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* Here we desire, that our own will may be sacrificed in the most perfect manner to that of God; or, in other words, that we may have no will but *his*; for so it is in heaven. Now reason may teach us that this is just and right; but reason cannot so alter our nature, and, as it were, raise us above ourselves, as to make us prefer the will of God to our own, and that too habitually, and in all the accidents of life. Only the Spirit of God can so change our will, and set it against itself, making it seek its own destruction: or, rather, to speak with more exactness, the Spirit of God only can *create a new will* in us, different from, and opposite to, our natural inclinations.

This *new will* produces new thoughts and desires; desires worthy of God, for they proceed from him. When we present these desires before the throne of grace, we are said to *pray by the Spirit*; and such prayers always find acceptance there. *Lord* (saith the Psalmist), *thou bearest the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart; thou wilt cause thine ear to hear*⁶. God prepares our hearts by pouring into them this Spirit, which his prophet calls *a Spirit of grace and supplication*⁷. This Spirit forms in

⁶ Psal. x. 17.

⁷ Zech. xii. 10.

us proper desires, and inflames them with a due degree of fervor.

Our Lord instructs us, that God must be worshipped *in spirit and in truth*; and the Holy Ghost is therefore called *a Spirit of Truth*, because *He*, and only *He*, infuses into us those *true* sentiments of God, wherewith we should address him; He and He only gives us the *true* knowledge of ourselves (of our wants as creatures, of our guilt as sinners), wherewith we should appear before him. The Holy Spirit, I say, makes us to know effectually *God* and *ourselves*; ourselves as a vast vacuity, God as infinite fulness. Here the soul contemplates the immense distance between the creature and the Creator; and, from the abyss of its own wretchedness, rises up to the supreme and infinite perfection: from sinking into the thought of its original nothing, it is elevated to the meditation of that *Eternal Being*, by which *it is*: and, joining in one view these strange extremes, it pays a homage worthy God, and annihilates itself in the contemplation of his grandeurs. And upon this account our church begins her most solemn service, that, I mean, of the Communion, by praying, “That
 “ God would cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
 “ by the INSPIRATION of his Holy Spirit, that
 “ we may *perfectly* love him, and *worthily* magnify his holy name.”

I might

I might quote many other passages to the same purpose; but let these suffice to shew the reason why we invoke the Holy Ghost to assist our devotion. Let us now consider the consequences of it. We must not, after imploring his help, think of him no farther; but we must wait upon God to receive the effect of our prayers; we must subject our minds to his influence, that he may enlighten our understanding, reform our will, and, in a word, *cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by his inspirations*. Thus we should dispose ourselves for the Spirit of God; and, if we have asked in faith, we shall also, by faith, know, that we receive him: his power will work in us to produce holy affections, and ardent desires after God and virtue. And we must on our part faithfully co-operate with this Spirit, by entertaining and keeping up this devout frame of mind by pious thoughts, that it may not languish and decay. The books you use are intended to suggest such thoughts to you, thoughts proper to exercise devotion, to feed this holy flame; and, keeping the mind so employed, thereby to defend it from worldly thoughts, which would seduce its attention. When these, worldly thoughts I mean, break in upon us (as too often they will), we must reject them, and calmly return to God. Nor should we disquiet ourselves upon account of such frailties; for to reject other thoughts, that we
may

may persevere in our application to God, is no inconsiderable part of devotion: it is a fruit of our desire to adhere to him; and, as such, cannot but be acceptable in his sight.

But we must take great care, that such wandering thoughts do not happen by our own fault, and an heedless inadvertent repetition of words, without solid and effectual desires, which kind of repetition our Lord treats as profane and heathenish. *Use not (saith he) vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.* He means not, that we should not repeat often the same desires, and that too in the same words, if we are so inclined: for That he did himself in his agony, when he prayed three several times with exceeding vehemence; yet, as St. Matthew remarks, *using still the same words*^s. And indeed nothing is more beneficial, than to persevere, as long as possible, in the same act of desire, and to renew it again and again with fresh zeal and intenseness; this is what our Lord both taught and practised: and the repetition, which he calls vain, and condemns of paganism, is that long and thoughtless tautology, wherewith some fill up the time appointed for devotion. *They think (saith Christ), that they shall be heard for their much speaking: Be not ye, therefore, like unto them; for your Father knoweth what ye have need of before ye ask him.*

^s Matt. xxvi. 44.

and

and it is only for your sakes that he requires you should ask it of him; it is to exercise your dependence upon God, to improve devotion, and, in a word, to make you fit to receive the graces, which he *desires* to confer. His goodness is a sufficient motive to itself; it needs no solicitation; it wants nothing but proper objects, upon whom to bestow itself: and those only are such, who are *so* sensible of their wants, as humbly and sincerely to seek a supply from him.

For this *few words*⁹ are needful, as the form he taught us demonstrates. Few words, I say, are needful; but all the application of our mind, all the desires of our heart, are indispensably requisite.

S E C T. II.

AFTER these general observations concerning prayer, and the mistakes or abuses which I conceive most frequent in the performance of it, I now proceed to a more distinct discussion of our Lord's instructions upon this subject.

At ver. 5. he says, "You shall not, when
 " you pray, do as the hypocrites, who affect
 " to pray standing in the assemblies, and cor-
 " ners of streets, that men may take notice of
 " them——But you, when you pray, enter into
 " your closet." By which words he does not

⁹ Eccl. v. 2.

forbid public worship, but shews only, that private devotion is more essentially necessary: and at the same time warns us of the abuses that public worship is liable to, when men frequent it for other reasons than that for which it was instituted; as for instance, when *they love to pray standing in the church, that they may be seen of men*; or that they may see them, and indulge vanity, curiosity, or other worse affection. Such practice is hypocrisy; an odious name, yet justly due to those who profane this place, by entering it with any other intention than the pure worship of God.

But the abuse of things sacred must not divert us from the use of them. Christ himself frequented the synagogue and the temple upon proper occasions; and he here meant only to recommend private prayer in a more particular manner, as comparatively more necessary; and without which it is not possible to perform the public offices with due devotion. For it is certain, that whoever neglects private prayer, cannot do his duty in the church. He is an *indevout* person, and consequently not fit to appear before God in the congregation. An habit of devotion cannot be obtained but in retirement and solitude. *Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret.* We must withdraw from the world, not only our persons, but

but our thoughts too. We must shut out all worldly cares and considerations; *as if we, and God, were alone in nature.*

The fathers teach us, that our Lord here principally meant the *heart*, by the *closet* which he bids us enter into. “The heart (saith St. Ambrose) is a retiring place always private, always at hand, and ready to receive you.” Indeed a mind long practised in piety can easily recollect itself in every place, and maintain devotion in the midst of a crowd; but the novice in Christianity should here understand our Lord literally, and take all proper occasions of being by himself in solitude: *Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and there enter into thyself* by devout recollection; for the bodily retirement avails nothing, but in as much as it serves to promote the mental, which is a disposition essentially necessary to prayer, and sometimes difficult to beginners, by reason of the contrary habit, which their minds have contracted, by living ever abroad, and being dissipated among sensible objects: but a sincere endeavour will soon help that frailty, if we faithfully bear in mind the fundamental truth which our Lord here instructs us in; *viz.* that the Almighty God *is with us* in our secret retirement. *Pray to thy father who is in secret*, is there present with thee. God, we know, is in all places; but his spiritual nature lies beyond the reach

reach of bodily senses. He is hidden, if I may so speak, in the centre of our souls. There is his *secret dwelling-place, where he will be found of those who diligently seek him.*

When, therefore, you are retired from the world, and have shut the door of your closet, and of your heart too, as close as possible, by devout recollection; turn all your attention to *God present in you*, and humble yourselves before him with a full assurance of faith, of actual faith, I mean, *that we are in his presence*: and, believe me (for this is a truth of the utmost consequence), as the faith of the diseased woman, who touched our Saviour's cloaths, drew forth a miraculous power to heal her infirmity; so this faith, wherewith we approach to God in prayer, will infallibly draw forth the divine co-operation to our endeavours. *He is a living God*, and his spirit will unite with ours, to help our infirmities, and enable us to offer up such prayers, as will find acceptance at the throne of grace.

Such is the preparation or disposition with which we should address ourselves to God in prayer. The following words of our Lord instruct us in what is farther requisite for the right performance of it. *When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.* To repeat words without *meaning them*, is certainly a *vain repetition*; and therefore we must be extremely
careful

careful in our prayers to *mean* what we say, and to say only what we *mean from the bottom of our hearts*. The vain and heathenish repetitions, which we are here warned against, are a most dangerous, yet very common error, which has long been the reproach of Christendom, and is the principal cause why so many, even of those who still profess religion, are a disgrace to it: and how is it possible they should be otherwise, while they want the only foundation of all true religion, *viz.* an inward devotion?

To teach, therefore, and to persuade this most important duty, I shall mention, in the first place, that advice of the preacher, *Before thou prayest, prepare thyself; and be not as one that tempteth the Lord*¹. To tempt, is to try; and men are said to *tempt* God, when they put his knowledge to the trial, and act as if they doubted whether he could discover their inward sentiments: as if the form and appearance of devotion, as if bended knees, and moving lips could impose upon God, and pass with him for prayer: and such are the vain repetitions, which our Lord here rebukes as heathenish: they are indeed absurd and impious; and their frequency is a deplorable instance of the great depravity of mankind. No wonder that men find no benefit from such prayers, and thence by degrees quite desist from praying: this is a desperate

¹ Ecclus xviii. 23.

but

but natural consequence of a long lifeless formality in the offices of religion.

To prevent such total apostacy, men should consider with themselves, what is the reason of these vain and heathenish repetitions; how it comes to pass, that they are so apt to be cold and unattentive in a work of so solemn a nature as *the worship of God*. They will find the true cause to be this: in the course of the day they suffer their minds to be so entangled in secular interests, that, when the season of prayer returns, they cannot, without great difficulty, call in their wandering thoughts and desires: their heart is gone out, and so far engaged in worldly cares or pleasures, that they must do themselves violence to get it home again; I mean, to recollect themselves in such a pious frame of mind, as is requisite to true devotion: and therefore, to quiet their conscience for the present, they pay God with lip-service, and *repeat prayers* instead of praying.

The proper advantage of stated times of prayer, is, that men should then recover themselves from those deviations or wanderings from God, which business, or other intercourse with the world, may have occasioned; that they should put a stop to their passions, and bring back their minds into a state of meekness, simplicity, and unity, which is requisite for religious worship. But this is a spiritual work, an
up-hill

up-hill way of self-denial and heavenly-mindedness, quite contrary to the bent of the animal man: and many had rather read over fifty pages in some prayer-book, than apply themselves to disintangle their minds, and set free their hearts from the sensible objects that engage them.—Therefore they endeavour to compound with God, and give him *good words* instead of *holy desires*; *they flatter him with their mouth*¹ (so the scripture reproaches them); *they flatter him with their mouth, and they lye unto him with their tongues: for their heart is not right towards him.* And again, *they draw nigh unto him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips; but their heart is far from him.*² Many modern books of devotion furnish men abundantly with long set speeches to be made to God: but you must have observed, even in the affairs of this world, that speech-making is commonly a mere formality; and that those general addresses, which are got ready before-hand for thousands to subscribe, pass often as things of course; for they can hardly be accommodated to express each man's peculiar sentiment: yet they serve well enough for compliment and ceremony, where little is meant on one side, or believed on the other. The verbose compositions of some devotional writers have been often abused in the same

¹ Pſal. lxxviii. 36.² Matt. xv. 8.

manner. Men, too slothful and sensual to lift up their hearts in devout sentiments, can easily repeat devout orations, and *think that they shall be heard for their much speaking*; but all the words in the world are not equivalent to one holy thought: and the best prayers, I mean forms of prayer, that ever were made, even that which Christ himself taught us, will be but a vain repetition, if not animated with an internal piety. *Use not, then, such vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking: but be not ye like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.] These words are highly instructive, and may serve to give us a solid and practical knowledge of the true nature of prayer. The proper end of prayer is not to *inform* God of our wants, nor to *persuade* him to relieve them. Omniscient as He is, He cannot be informed: merciful as He is, He need not be persuaded. The only thing wanting is a fit disposition on our part to receive his graces: And the proper office of prayer is to produce such a disposition in us, to render us proper subjects for sanctifying grace to work in: or, in other words, to remove the obstacles which we ourselves put to his goodness. Now the principal obstacles are *worldly-minded-*
ness

ness and *self-love*, whereby our desires cleave to earthly goods, and corrupt, selfish interests. But in prayer we suspend these desires; our heart being turned to God only: and, by whatever means we attain such an holy posture of mind, they are the proper means of true devotion. As long as our minds are attentive to God only (by whatever sentiment that attention is maintained), so long we pray: when such attention flags, we must renew it by passing on to some other consideration proper to keep our hearts attached to God, and open to receive his sanctifying communications.

Such, for instance, is the *confession* of sin, which we all know is not for God's information, but to convince ourselves of our guilt, and mortify our pride by an humble acknowledgment of it: 'tis to beget in us regret, compunction, self-abhorrence, and a just aversion to those evil actions, whose guilt we deplore: and thus *the mind is held in fit posture for God to operate upon it*, and gradually change those evil dispositions, which we lament, and abhor ourselves for. Thus we render ourselves, in some sort, proper objects for the mercy of God, which he bountifully extends to all who are so qualified.

Again, in acts of *praise* and *thanksgiving*, we endeavour, under the influence of divine grace, to impress upon our own minds, high

and worthy notions of God : our heart is warmed with a sense of his goodness, and dilated in the contemplation of his grandeur; so that worldly objects dwindle, and grow contemptible in our esteem, as the stars lose their lustre, when the sun rises.

Now these things pass in the inward man, in the thought; and few words serve to express them. The form of prayer, which Christ taught us, is a very short one; yet the subjects therein proposed are an inexhaustible entertainment of devotion, if we use them rightly; *i. e.* as subjects whereon we may hold communion with God, and *long persist in his sanctifying presence*, which is the main design and advantage of all the offices of religion.

This must be impressed deeply upon our minds, that our principal business in prayer is *to seek the face of God* (as the psalmist expresses it), and continue before him with a suitable reverence. For this end our Lord advises us to enter into our closets, not only that we may shut out the *noise* of the world, but much more, that we may shut out the *thoughts* of the world, and thereby gain access to God, who *is in secret, in our inmost parts*, as the scripture speaks, even in the centre of our souls. *Upwards* and *inwards* signifying the same in the language of religion: and as the material heavens are far above the earth; so, in the spiritual world,

world, that *kingdom of heaven*, which Christ expressly affirms to be *within us*, is situated (if I may so speak) in the highest region of the mind; and no man can enter into it, till he be raised above low-thoughted cares, and groveling earthly affections.

I do not mean by this, that we must be wholly free from what we call *wandering thoughts* in prayer: for, when they are quite involuntary, they are harmless. But, to explain this better, we must distinguish such wandering thoughts into two kinds: one sort are the mere growth of human infirmity, relating to things which we are quite indifferent about. They arise in the imagination as floating transient shadows which the heart takes no interest in; these we should meekly put aside, to persevere in our devotion. But there is another species of *wandering thoughts*, which spring directly out of the heart, from some preconceived desire or aversion: such are resentment of an injury; the projects of covetousness or ambition; a fond and vain complacency in ourselves, or the fallies of any other corrupt affection: these are indeed blameable; we must renounce them, we must strive against them, and in our prayers sacrifice and extinguish them.

For the rest, our principal care must be to persevere in our attention to *God present within us*, as in his sanctuary; upon which account

Christians are said to be his *Temples*—But this I have sufficiently represented already, though in figurative expressions, ascribing locality to the deity: yet such expressions are unavoidable upon this subject, which, being of a spiritual nature, cannot otherwise be treated of with human language. Those, who have some little experience, will understand me sufficiently; for the drift of my whole discourse is only to inculcate that recollection, abstraction, and elevation of mind, which every reasonable man must acknowledge to be necessary, when we address ourselves to worship the great author of our being.

This, as I observed, may at first be a little difficult to a beginner, by reason of his habitual dissipation among the objects of sense: but our sincere endeavours will soon correct this frailty; for, if we seek God in sincerity, he himself will kindle devotion within us, and give us such an experimental sense of *his presence*, as will render our attention to him easy, familiar, and at length habitual. In the mean time the serious supplicant must do the best he can, and begin his prayer—we will suppose, for instance, that form which Christ has taught us. As he pronounces it, he must heedfully consider the meaning of the words: and as the sense of them affects him, he must pause to ruminate upon it: and (which is a rule of the utmost importance)

importance) he should never proceed to a new sentence, so long as the former will occupy his mind with devotion. When we call God *Our Father*, it is natural to be touched with some sense of his goodness; or perhaps we may reflect upon our own unworthiness; what *prodigals* we have been; what ungrateful returns we have made to his bounty, &c. In these, or whatever other pious sentiments may offer themselves, we ought to dwell for a time revolving them in our minds as long as our heart can relish them, and be entertained by them.

As we proceed in the Lord's prayer, we must ponder the meaning of each petition; and then make it our own meaning, by actually desiring of God what the words express. Thus when we say, *Thy kingdom come*, considering, as I said before, that *the kingdom of God is within us*, that he is our rightful king, and desires to govern in our hearts, we should offer up our hearts to him: we should earnestly call upon him to govern us, to subdue our rebellious appetites and passions, and establish his kingdom within us, by subjecting all our faculties in a perfect obedience to his laws. As long as we find our minds composed in this sentiment, we should continue and rest in it: we should yield ourselves passive to God, that he may operate in us. To persist in our desire, is the disposition which God requires on our part, for his

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accomplish-

accomplishing what we desire; and we should do this in tranquility, confiding in his goodness, that he will assuredly give us that which He himself commands us to ask of him.

When the mind tires of this posture, and will be held no longer under restraint, we should pass on to another petition.

But I stop here for the present; and as the Lord's Prayer is of continual use, and contains the amplest materials for devotion, I shall resume this subject in my following discourses, and endeavour so to explain the several petitions, as may tend to our mutual edification.

Of the LORD'S PRAYER.

WHEN Jesus, attended by a great multitude, went to heal the daughter of Jairus, a certain woman who had been twelve years afflicted with a grievous infirmity, struggling thro' the heedless throng that crowded about him, devoutly approached his sacred person with a lively faith in his power and goodness: *For she said within herself, If I may but touch his cloaths, I shall be made whole; and when she had touched his garment, she was made whole.* Our Lord presently enquired, who had touched him? Peter, and they who were with him.

him, said, "Master, the multitude throng and press you, and do you ask, Who touched you?" But Jesus replied, that some one had touched him in a peculiar manner; for *virtue was gone out of him*.

What thus happened to the person of Jesus is very applicable to the prayer he taught us: multitudes have it by heart: it is in every mouth; every tongue pronounces it; yet, how few extract the *virtue* contained in it? The devout use of this prayer is an assured remedy for our spiritual maladies, and an effectual means to procure all the graces and all the virtues that can adorn a soul. It delivers from evil, repels temptation, and obtains pardon of sin: it procures all things needful both for soul and body: it restores the mind to an angelical conformity with the divine will: it establishes the kingdom of heaven within us; and produces such an efficacious knowledge and sense of God, as would render him the predominant notion in all our thoughts, the ruling object and final aim of all our actions.

Such virtue is in the Lord's prayer; for such is the purport of the several petitions whereof it consists: yet of the multitudes that use it, few extract this virtue; and though they repeat it daily for many years, yet they continue as ignorant of God, as proud and passionate, as self-willed and unmortified; in a word, as defective

titute of the graces which this prayer was designed to procure, as if they had never learnt it.

What distinguished the diseased woman, who touched our Lord so successfully, were her *sincere desire*, and her *lively faith*. The rest of the crowd, that thronged about him, neither sought a healing power, nor expected it; and consequently, found no salutary effect.—So, alas! among us, many use this prayer unprofitably, because they neither *seek* nor *hope* for the benefits implored in it. They repeat the words; but they do not pray the prayer. Our Lord's direction is, *When ye pray, say*; but they *say* it, and *pray not*. Some say it by rote, without heeding the sense. Others, though they attend to the sense of it, yet do not make it *their own* sense: though they understand the meaning, they do not *mean* it themselves. They say, *Thy kingdom come*, yet desire not to become subjects of that kingdom: and they add, *Thy will be done*, yet they daily seek, and do their own. So again, the first words, *Our Father*, imply a filial reverence and obedience to God, as our *Father*; and a brotherly love towards all men, as the children of one common parent; yet many say, *Our Father*, who have no such sentiments. *A son honoureth his father: if, then, I be a father, where is mine honour? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you that despise*

*despise my name.*¹ This is despising the name of God, and most inconsistent with the petition that follows, *Hallowed be thy name.*

The psalmist says, that *God is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth:*² and our Saviour declares, that *they who worship God, must worship him in spirit and truth.* Truth is always necessary, but never more than in our prayers: and to utter falsehoods in our address to God, is both hypocritical and profane.

This, therefore, must be our first care in repeating the Lord's prayer; *viz.* that *we worship God in truth*; that we really mean what we say, and from our heart desire those things, which we pretend to ask: and for this end we should, when we retire for private devotion, seriously consider each petition, and at the same time examine our hearts, whether they are sincerely disposed to join in it.

Such *sincerity* is one of the necessary dispositions for prayer: the other, which I remarked in the woman cured so miraculously, was her *faith*: for *she had said within herself, If I may but touch his cloaths, I shall be made whole.* Such was her confidence in his power and goodness: which disposition is in many places of scripture required of us as a needful ingredient of devotion: but here, if we consider Who is the author of this prayer, That alone is a suf-

¹ Mal. i. 6.

² Psal. cxlv. 18.

ficient inducement to address it to God in a full assurance of faith. Our Lord here teaches us to ask for nothing but what he himself is ready to bestow. ¹ “ He who best knew what we
 “ ought to pray for, and how we ought to
 “ pray ; what matter of desire, what manner
 “ of address, would most please himself, would
 “ best become us ; has here dictated to us a
 “ most perfect and universal form of prayer,
 “ comprehending all our real wants, expressing
 “ all our lawful desires ; a complete directory,
 “ and full exercise of all our devotion.”

If some monarch should, on the behalf of his subjects, himself draw up the form of the petition which they should present to him ; this would justly be looked upon as a great encouragement for them to apply to him with an assured dependence on his bounty.

I put the case of a king instructing his subjects how to petition him : but the first words of this prayer express a more encouraging, more endearing relation, even that of a *Father* ; a name that might seem presumptuous in our mouths, if God himself had not taught us so to invoke him. Yet thus He vouchsafes to allure us, that *we may come boldly to the throne of grace with full assurance of faith*, arguing with ourselves, as our Lord has instructed us, that *if earthly parents, evil as they are, have yet such*

¹ *Barrow.*

care of their children, that *if they ask for bread, they will not give them a stone; much more will our heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him.*

The first of the *good things* we here ask of God, is, that his *name may be hallowed or sanctified*: which request some understand as meant to bespeak the favour of God, by expressing, in the first place, a zeal for his glory; but I apprehend, that it directly tends to our own sanctification, and that we are as much personally concerned in this, as in the following petitions.

For, in order to our sanctification, or to use the modern phrase, our attaining moral rectitude, our notions and opinions must first be rectified; because our notions are the source and rule of our actions. We are solicitous, or indifferent about things, not according to their intrinsic merit, but according to the notions or opinions which we have conceived of them as desirable or of no moment: so that a change of manners must ever begin in a change of opinion. Now before conversion, a man's notions of worldly goods are lively and animating, as of things highly desirable; but his notion of God is a faint and insipid idea, as of *somewhat remote*, and which he cares not to be concerned with. The thought of *wealth*, and *glory*, and *pleasure*, move his heart strongly; but the thought of God lies dormant in him, as a barren and disagreeable

agreeable speculation. What we want, therefore, is a due and worthy notion of God; I mean an high, and lively, and affecting sense of Him, such as may have its proper ascendent in our minds, such as may rule in our hearts, and make us behave towards Him in a manner suitable to his dignity. And this I take to be the drift of those words, *Hallowed be thy name.*

For the ¹ *name* of God signifies that idea or notion whereby we conceive Him in our minds: and to *hallow* a thing signifies to give it that distinction and preference which religion confers: for as things excelling upon a worldly account are called *honourable*, so things excelling upon a religious account are called *holy*; and therefore by these words, *Hallowed be thy name*, we pray, that our thought, or sentiment of God, may be magnified and exalted according to its proper excellence; or, in other words, that God would give us such a knowledge of Himself, that we may have worthy and salutary apprehensions of Him.

We ask this in the first place, because this is the source of all truth and virtue; for things

² *In Juda is God known: his name is great in Israel*, Psal. lxxvi. 1. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe*, Prov. xviii. 10, &c. So when we use those words, *In the name of God*, as a preface to some solemn act, it is to be understood, that we then have God in our thoughts, and are in that right disposition of mind which an actual, deliberate regard to Him produces.

affect our mind only as they are *known*; and therefore the wicked, who *know not God*, are said *to live without him*, as if there were no such being. But the actual knowledge of God must produce, in a suitable degree, the love of Him (*for he that loveth not, knoweth not God*); and the love of God must produce obedience to his commands, because we are always governed by what we love. Here, then, virtue takes its rise, even in *hallowing the name of God*, i. e. raising the conception we have of Him to its due preference in our minds. So I understand the words: but, fearing that I have not yet sufficiently explained myself, I shall go on to propose some farther considerations to the same purpose.

The mind does not comprehend things themselves, but the ideas of them; and, by the *name* of any thing, we mean not only the sound conveying the idea by which such thing is understood, but also the idea itself, which is properly called its *name*, being that whereby it is known: so by the *name* of God I here understand our notion of Him, the conception which we form of Him in our minds. And hence we see the reason why it is not said, *Be thou hallowed*, but, *Hallowed be thy name*: because God himself cannot be affected by any action of his creatures; he cannot be magnified or diminished, hallowed or profaned, by any thing

thing they can do: but his *name*, i. e. the notion they conceive of God, is in their power; they may profane it by a mean place in their esteem; they may pollute it with falshood and superstition; or *hallow* it, by giving it that religious preference which it deserves. They cannot make God more pure or holy; but they may, and ought to purify and exalt their notion of Him; or, to speak more properly, they must by prayer obtain from God such a lively and efficacious knowledge of Him, as will make them treat Him worthily, i. e. prefer Him infinitely to all created good.

The sense, therefore, of this petition, *Hallowed be thy name*, is, that the conception or thought of God should be so exalted in us, that all our thoughts may fall down before it, and be brought in subjection to it; that the names of grandeur, and riches, and voluptuous joy, may sink beneath the name of the Lord our God; may fade, and lessen, and vanish in his presence.

It is most certain, that the name of God, if it were duly *hallowed* in us, must produce this effect, because all our judgments are by comparison; and things become less estimable to us in the measure we become acquainted with other things of a nobler kind. In infancy we are fond of baubles, till our capacities enlarge to worthier objects: and, in like manner, men ignorant

ignorant of God place all their affections on worldly goods, because they know no better: but when the day-spring from on high visits the soul, when the knowledge of God is powerfully displayed there; *i. e.* when the *name* of God is *hallowed*; then those, who walk in the light thereof, grow indifferent to worldly interests, as to the toys of childhood; their former desires are lost and extinguished in the nobler motives that animate them: and the *name* or thought of God, gradually increasing, grows at length so mighty and predominant, as to become the universal spring of their actions, the sole reason of all they do. Thus they fulfil that precept of the apostle, *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord*²; for in scripture style those actions are said to be done in the name of God, which spring from our regard to Him: and the prophets give it as the character of men consummate in virtue, that *they walk in the name of the Lord their God*³; *i. e.* they have such due apprehensions, such worthy notions, such an affecting sense of God, as regulates the whole tenor of their conduct.

This is hallowing the name of God, and treating it with the reverence it deserves. This is the end of all religion, and therefore first proposed in this divine prayer. The following pe-

² Col. iii. 17.³ Mich. iv. 5. Zech. x. 12.

titions relate to the means of attaining it, as will appear in the sequel.

Thy kingdom come : thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

I read these two petitions together, because they have a mutual dependence, and may best serve to explain one another. The latter, wherein we pray, "That we may do the will of God" "in earth, as the angels do it in heaven," might seem a strange, perhaps a presumptuous, certainly an impossible request, if we had not been first taught to say, *thy kingdom come*. If the kingdom of God comes, *i. e.* if God vouchsafes to govern us, He will subdue all enemies under his feet. *A sceptre of justice is the sceptre of his kingdom*⁴. It will bring every thought into subjection : it will animate and govern our souls, as our souls do our bodies ; and make us do his will in earth, as the angels do it in heaven.

But as faith is a qualification necessary to prayer (for it is absurd to ask what we do not think attainable ; and indeed we can never heartily pursue any thing, unless we be persuaded at least of the possibility of acquiring it) ; therefore it is needful, in the first place, that your faith in this kingdom should be established ; I

⁴ Psal. xlv. 6.

mean, that you should believe, that God does actually govern in hearts rightly disposed; and
“ that if *you* give diligence, to make your calling and election sure, an entrance shall be
“ administred unto *you* also, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
“ Christ.”

The first who preached this *kingdom* in the New Testament was John the Baptist, who proposed it as the great motive to repentance: *Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* A pious and ⁶ learned doctor of our church, thus explains this kingdom: “ It is the rule or
“ dominion of the Spirit of God in the soul;
“ who takes the reins of all our powers, faculties, and affections, into his own hand; and
“ curbs them, and excites them according to
“ his own most holy will.” This the Baptist proposes as the great motive to repentance. And indeed there cannot be a *greater*: to be assured of success is the best encouragement we can have in any enterprise: and to know, that, in consequence of our endeavours to reform ourselves, God himself will perfect that work in us; that when we, using faithfully the grace he bestows, have *prepared the way of the Lord* by repentance, mortification, and a total oblation of ourselves to his Divine Majesty, he will, in his due time, accept our meanness; that *He will*

⁵ 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

⁶ Dr. Henry More.

manifest himself unto us, and dwell in us ⁷, and rule and direct us in all his ways; this, I say, is the most powerful inducement to repentance that can be proposed.

And therefore the whole Christian dispensation is called from it, the *gospel of the kingdom*, i. e. the good news of the kingdom of God: this Christ himself published continually. He went (saith St. Luke) *through every city and village, preaching, and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God* ⁸. And the doctrine he taught, is called from it, the *word of the kingdom*. And when he sent forth his twelve apostles into the towns of Judea, he commanded them to preach, saying, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand* ⁹. And when afterwards he sent his seventy disciples, he gave them the same commission, *Say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you* ¹. And he elsewhere declares, *That this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world* ².

And after his death, in the interval between his resurrection and ascension, he continued to entertain his disciples upon the same subject, *speaking* (saith St. Luke) *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God* ³; ordering them to *wait for it*; and assuring them, that it should be speedily established in their hearts by the mission

⁷ John xiv. 21, 22.

⁸ Luke viii. 1.

⁹ Matt. x. 7.

¹ Luke x. 9.

² Matt. xxiv. 14.

³ Acts i. 3.

of the Holy Ghost; for he added, *Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*⁴. They, knowing that such baptism with the Spirit was the immediate preparation for entering into that kingdom (though perhaps at that time they did not perfectly apprehend its nature), inquired, whether it would at the same time become universal, and take in the whole Jewish church, as all the prophets had declared it one day should? The passage in the first chapter of their Acts, runs thus: after Christ had said, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence; *therefore*, when they were come together, they asked him, saying, Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” Christ, rejecting what was of needless curiosity in their question, answered it only so far as concerned themselves: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has reserved in his own disposal; but ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”

The following history of their acts shews how they fulfilled this prophecy: they are said there, *to preach the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ. To dispute*

⁴ Ver. 5. See John iii. 5.

*and persuade the things concerning the kingdom*⁵.
*To expound and testify the kingdom of God*⁶: and
 the book concludes with this account of Paul,
 that *he continued in Rome, preaching the kingdom
 of God*⁷. And the apostles, for our encourage-
 ment, testify, that they themselves, by the di-
 vine goodness, were admitted into that king-
 dom, *giving thanks (saith Paul) unto the Father
 —who hath delivered us from the power of dark-
 ness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of
 his dear Son*⁸.

I have brought together all these quotations
 on purpose that the great importance of this
 subject may be taken notice of; for, after all this
 publication of the *kingdom of God*, it is still, as our
 Lord said, like unto *hidden treasure*, little spoken
 of, less understood, and least of all experienced.
 There are few that enter into it, because there
 are few that seek it the right way, *viz. in dying
 to themselves, that Christ may live and reign in
 them*. They do not seek it with their whole
 hearts, as the one thing needful; and therefore
 they cannot enter into it. It is, as you have
 heard, like a treasure hid in a field, and a man
 must sell all that he hath to purchase it. He
 must renounce all other desires, sacrifice all
 other interests to this, as his chief and only
 good. *Seek ye first*, saith our Lord, *the king-*

⁵ Acts viii. 12. xix. 8. xx. 25.
⁷ Acts xxviii. 31.

⁶ Acts xxviii.

⁸ Col. i. 12, 13.

dom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you Cast off, therefore, all solicitude for other things, that you may unite your whole desire in seeking the kingdom of God, and his justice. Where God's kingdom is, *i. e.* where he governs by his Spirit, justice must ensue: and although this is produced in *us*, yet it is still called *his justice*, because He is the immediate author of it: but this I have spoken of⁹ before; and shall hereafter often have occasion to speak of it: therefore I pass on to the next petition, which relates to the same subject, and is the best illustration of it.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

The will of God is indeed, in some manner, always done upon earth. He rules over all events here. All creatures are as instruments in his hands, to fulfil his good pleasure; and those, who do not *perform* his will with a spontaneous concurrence, do, nevertheless, *suffer* it themselves, and execute it upon others, by an over-ruling compulsion. In this sense it is that *the Lord ruleth over all*: but, in a moral respect, God ruleth principally in heaven, where his dominion is founded in the voluntary obedience of his subjects; and therefore, in consequence of that petition, *that his kingdom should*

⁹ § 2. *Of Justice*, p. 156.

come, we add, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

The sense, then, of this petition is very plain; and the reasonableness of it is also as apparent; for whose will should be done, but God's? His wisdom knoweth, his goodness chuses what is best, and his almighty power will not fail to execute it: so that there cannot be greater folly or madness, than not to unite our wills to His, and earnestly join in this petition, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* Nothing, I say, is so reasonable; but reason, alas! is a feeble principle in human nature. Our stubborn will easily casts off that yoke: nor can we, by our own power, subdue this rebel within us. All our own endeavours are vain; and therefore we must add our prayers too, humbly and ardently beseeching God, that He would, by the unfearchable powers of his grace, subdue our wills to a perfect conformity with his.

But that is a long and painful work; for God having made us perfectly free, he will not incroach upon the native liberty of our minds. Our will must be subdued with our own consent; we must continually renounce it, mortify it, and sacrifice it to Him: in consequence whereof He will accept it, gradually possess it, and finally unite it to His own, immutably, eternally.

God

God has abundantly provided for us opportunities of renouncing our *own* will for *His*, in the two ways by which He reveals his will, *viz.* in his *laws*, and in the *dispensations* of his providence. We must *do* what he commands, and *suffer* what he appoints; both which are often very opposite to our natural inclinations. I shall speak briefly of each: and,

First, Of the *law* of God. We need go no farther than this Sermon upon the Mount for instances to shew how very repugnant the divine precepts are to the common inclinations of human nature. They restrain, not only the outward action, but the intention, the imagination, and all the most secret motions of the soul. Not content with prohibiting the overt-acts of violence, they forbid an angry word, or evil thought, to the disadvantage of our brother. Our appetites are confined not only by temperance, but by fasting. Our passions must be subdued to such a degree, that they must sometimes, as it were, change their nature, and act from principles directly contrary to those, which ordinarily move them: as in loving enemies, and requiting injuries with offices of friendship.

It is needless to multiply instances upon this occasion. We are all sufficiently convinced, that the law of God, *i. e.* the revealed will of God with relation to our conduct, stands in great opposition to the natural will of man:
and

and obedience, which is so essential a point of religion, is nothing else but a conformity of our will to the divine.

Another way, by which we receive the orders of God concerning us, is *the dispensations of his Providence*, which as expressly signify his will to us, as his most positive commands do. Are you in sickness or poverty? Are you envied or despised? Have you lost a friend, or your substance? It is God's will it should be so. Your own folly, or other mens malice, may be the accidental occasion of what you suffer; but the suffering itself is the positive and declared will of God. Receive it, then, with the submission that is due to it. Here sacrifice your own will to his good pleasure. Approve the state he chooses for you. This is a necessary duty, “ and the neglect of it is as certainly
 “ a sin; for the reason why we call any thing
 “ sinful, is taken from its repugnancy to the
 “ will of God. If, then, the very essence of
 “ *sin* consists in cherishing a will which is con-
 “ trary to that of God, it is plain, that we are
 “ justly reputed *sinners*, and shall suffer as
 “ such, if, when He is pleased to discover his
 “ will to us by events, we do not endeavour to
 “ conform ourselves to it by a ready compliance
 “ and submission.”

Consider, then, all crosses accidents, as what they really are, as opportunities of embracing

* Pascal.

God's will at the expence of our own; and, consequently, as so many steps, by which we may advance towards perfection. We should make a swift progress in the spiritual life, if we were exactly faithful in this practice. Crosses are so very frequent, that whoever makes advantage of them, will soon be a great gainer. Great crosses are occasions of great improvement; and the lesser ones, which happen daily, and even hourly, make up in number what they want in weight. We may in these, daily and hourly, make effectual oblations of our will to God: which oblations, *so frequently* repeated, will soon amount to a great sum.

Such profit might we make of the cross accidents in life, as well the *small*, as the *great* ones; but men excuse their not submitting to either upon different pretences. They revolt under *great* crosses, because they are *great*; and they neglect *little* ones, because they are *little*: and so they comply with neither. When they fall into some considerable misfortune, they think that sufficient to justify their impatience. And, in the little daily provocations that happen to them, they give their passions a loose, as judging them not considerable enough to exert their virtue in. Thus they deceive their own souls; they persist in their own wills; they live not to God, but themselves; *i. e.* in a state of reprobation.

The

The only remedy for this is, to remember what I have said so often, but can never sufficiently inculcate, that *God is the author of all events*. That no accident is so small or inconsiderable, as to escape his notice, and his direction. In every event, therefore, the will of God is declared to us; and we, thus knowing his will, must heartily submit to it. We must renounce our own, to embrace it. We must approve, we must choose, what his choice, so declared, warrants as best for us. This should be our practice all the day long. We should in humility accept the little crosses that are dispensed to us, as what best suit our weakness. Let us shew God, that we will at least bear these little things for his sake; that we will at least prefer his will to ours in matters of so small importance. His goodness will accept these mean oblations; for *he despiseth not the day of small things*. And our self-will, thus weakened and broken by such habitual mortification, will gradually decrease and decay in us. Custom will render submission easy, almost natural; and we shall daily make advances towards that sublime state we aspire after, when we say, *Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*.

Give us this day our daily bread,

Bread

Bread here signifies all things necessary for our maintenance, for the maintenance of the whole man, both body and soul; for each of these have their proper sustenance: to one belongs the *natural* bread, to the other the *spiritual*; and both are included in this petition.

The natural bread means all things needful for the subsistence of the body: and as it is a general rule, which belongs to all the petitions of this prayer, that we must prefer them in faith, in a full assurance that God will hear us, and grant our request; so, when we have prayed to God, that he would give us our daily bread, it is our bounden duty to expect it from him, believing assuredly, that he will provide for us. His commanding us to seek to him for subsistence, is one argument to convince us, that he will certainly bestow what we ask in obedience to his command. That he bids us call him *Father* in the beginning of the prayer, is another encouragement sufficient to dissipate all shadows of doubting or distrust: and he has been careful himself to explain and apply that encouragement in repeated confutations of infidelity: *Your heavenly Father* (saith he a little lower) who feeds his brute creation, and clothes even vegetables, even the grass of the field, with inimitable beauties; *shall not be much more feed and clothe you? Are ye not much better than they? Therefore, be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat?*

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eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth, that ye have need of all these things.

If we consider only the reasonableness of the thing, we might judge these arguments more than sufficient to establish our faith in his providential care for our maintenance. But he knew well the *stubborn* infidelity of the heart of man; and therefore, in the following part of this divine sermon, he attacks it again with new reasons, and repeated assurances of his paternal care to provide for us. *What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?*

I insist the more upon these positive asseverations, that God will provide for all, who put their trust in him; because the *fear of want* is a very common and dangerous temptation: for, besides the worldly cares, which our Lord, upon this occasion, so earnestly forbids, blaming them as fruits of unbelief, and certain obstacles to our entering into the kingdom of heaven: besides these, I say, the fear of want is a great source of injustice in the world: and many minds naturally honest, and even generous, have been seduced by this to use unworthy artifices,

to

to make fraudulent perquisites, and other unwarrantable advantages, which are very inconsistent with that fair and open dealing, which our Christian profession requires of us. Let us, therefore, search this temptation to the bottom, and lay open the wickedness and falshood of its seductions.

To do this, we must distinguish between a *real* and an *imaginary* want, or poverty. I call that an *imaginary* poverty, in which only our vanity, or our luxury, are sufferers: which deprives us only of the ornaments and superfluities of life. Such poverty is no evil in the Christian scheme; it is, on the contrary, the state which Jesus Christ himself chose to live in, and which he required many of his followers to embrace; and which all Christians, without exception, must be willing cheerfully to submit to, when his Providence calls them to it. It is, I say, a disposition indispensably necessary for all disciples of Christ, that they should be ready and willing to resign all their worldly goods, and to depend purely upon his Providence for a subsistence. *Having food and raiment, we must be therewith content:* and food and raiment he has promised to all who depend upon him. You see, therefore, the delusion of this temptation by the fear of poverty; since the imaginary poverty is, to a *Christian*, no evil; and of the real poverty, to a *Christian*, there

there is no danger. I say, to a *Christian*; for he, who is *truly* such, will be as far from a presumptuous idleness, as far from an unbelieving solicitude; as far from neglecting the proper business of his calling, as from a distrust of Providence. Although *he labours not for the bread which perisheth*, being secure in the bounty of his heavenly Father; yet he will labour diligently in God's service, and faithfully do his duty in that state of life, to which God appointed him.

The nature of a moral action depends upon the motive from which it proceeds: and this makes a wide difference between the labours of covetousness and Christian industry. The application to business may be equal in both: yet the one is serving Mammon, while the other is serving God. Now worldly-minded men, who have been always used to apply themselves to business from worldly motives, are very backward to conceive other principles of action: they have so long laboured only for gain, that they can scarce apprehend how a man can do otherwise: they cannot easily separate, even in imagination, two things which they have so long joined in their practice. To such, this very petition of the Lord's Prayer may seem unreasonable: why should they say, *Give us this day our daily bread*, when they think only of earning it by their industry? They do so
perhaps;

perhaps ; and then they have it for their pains : they have their reward here : but their labour is unprofitable for eternity, since no works are acceptable to God, but in such measure as regard is had to Him in the performance of them.

The sum of all is, that God requires our whole heart : he would have us *so* intent upon serving him, that we should be, in a manner, indifferent to all besides, even to the needful provision for our livelihood : and for that end he has commanded us to cast all our care upon him, in a perfect reliance upon his providence.

There is another matter worthy our observation in this petition, *Give us this day our daily bread.* As we must ask and expect from God things needful for our daily maintenance, so we ought not to ask for more ; at least, we have not Christ's authority for so doing : we cannot ask in the name of Christ, because he teaches no such request. His prayer is a general model and rule for all prayer : and, short as it is, includes all desires which are proper to be addressed to God.

It is, at least, a probable conclusion, that we Christians ought not to pray for wealth, or honour, or greatness, because our master omitted these things in the prayer he taught us. But I find another reason, that absolutely determines the point, which is this : “ It is not lawful to

“ desire That of God, for which we must beg
 “ his grace, that we may not desire it at all.”
 We must renounce the *love* of riches and honour; we must, therefore, certainly not pray for them. It is wrong to wish for them in a transient thought: this is an infirmity which we must strive against; but to indulge those wishes so far as solemnly to avow them before God, to offer them up to Him, and beseech Him to ratify them; this is not like a disciple of Christ, who has renounced the world in his baptism: this is seeking our portion in this life; and the great danger is, lest God should hear such prayers, so as to grant them in his indignation, as he threatened the Jewish elders, who came to consult him by his prophet Ezekiel: *When the word of the Lord came to that prophet, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquities before their face—therefore, say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Every man of the house of Israel, that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face—I the Lord will answer him according to the multitude of his idols.*¹

I now proceed to treat of the *spiritual* bread, the proper nourishment of souls: and here I find myself embarrassed with a figurative lan-

¹ Ezek. xiv. 2, 3, 4.

guage, which is an unavoidable inconvenience in such subjects; for spiritual things, having no proper names of their own, we are forced to call them by names borrowed from the material world; which names, although they are authorised by a certain analogy, which God has established through all his works; yet they so obscure and debase the spiritual truths expressed by them, that no man can duly apprehend them, without the assistance and illumination of the spirit of God. They will appear sometimes an insipid notion, and sometimes an absurd paradox, to a carnal understanding; which our Lord was well aware of, when he said, as he did often: *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. They only who are taught of God, can understand these things of God:*¹ but we are all inexcusable, if we are not so taught, seeing He is ready and desirous to instruct us. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally,—and it shall be given him:*² It shall be given him to know, and to receive this spiritual bread: which I shall endeavour to explain by laying before you what our Lord elsewhere saith of it, particularly in the sixth chapter of St. John, where he treats of it at large.

Our Lord had fed five thousand men with five loaves, and two small fishes: the persons

¹ John vi. 45.

² James i. 5.

who partook of this miracle, were so affected by it, that they said, *This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world*; and they would have made him their king, even by violence; but he withdrew himself from their mistaken zeal, and afterwards crossed the sea to avoid them. They also the next day took shipping, and crossed the sea in search of him. When they had found him, and saluted him, he immediately reproached them with the base selfish ends for which they followed him: *Ye seek me not* (said he) *because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*³ And then, (as was ever his custom) he endeavoured to raise their notions from sensual things to spiritual, saying, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life; which the son of man shall give unto you.*⁴ As if he should have said: You follow me for the sake of the food I gave you, and in hopes of more; but you are ignorant of Me, or use me very unworthily, who seek nothing from Me better, and of greater importance. I contain a divine substance, the food of immortality, which I am ready and desirous to impart to those who seek it. *Labour not for that meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life; which the son of man shall give unto you.* They, not

³ John vi. 26.⁴ Ver. 27.

yet apprehending what he meant by this heavenly diet, object to him the manna, which their fathers ate in the wilderness: *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*⁵ Christ replied, that the manna was only a type of Him; it was only a figure, whereof *he*, the spiritual food of souls, was the substance and signification; and therefore adds, *My Father giveth you the TRUE BREAD from heaven,*⁶ by sending Me into the world; *for the bread of God is He, who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

Inasmuch as this *manna* is the type of Christ, the true food of souls, we may receive some farther light in this matter, by considering the occasion upon which it was given in the Wilderness.

⁷ The history of the Jews passing from Egypt into Canaan is an allegory, representing the progress of the soul from the state of corrupt nature to the perfect enjoyment of God. The Jews, in subjection to Pharaoh, represent the natural man under the tyranny of his appetites and passions. The Jews going out of Egypt through the Red Sea into the wilderness, represent the man renouncing and forsaking the world in conversion and repentance. He fore-

⁵ John vi. 31.

⁶ Ver. 32, &c.

⁷ 1 Cor. x. & Augustin, in Psal. lxxii, post init.

goes his former pleasures, he deserts his accustomed entertainments and enjoyments of sense, that he may seek the *heavenly Canaan*: but Canaan is still far off; and whereas he is for the present as in a *wilderness*, his mind starves for want of satisfactory entertainment. *The flesh-pots of Egypt* are forsaken, and the delicious plenty of Canaan not attained to: what must maintain him here? Whereon can he subsist in this intermediate state? Here God works a miracle for the support of souls, who, betwixt the enjoyments they have forsaken, and those they aspire after, are *quite destitute*. He feeds them with the spiritual manna, which is Jesus Christ. So he testifies: *My Father giveth you the TRUE bread from heaven; for the bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven; and giveth life unto the world.—I am that bread of life—I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread, that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*¹

The nature of Christ communicated to us, as light from the sun, is the support of our spiritual life. This is the daily bread of pious souls, whereon they subsist during their pilgrimage in the wilderness, till they arrive at the land of Canaan; *i. e.* whereby they grow in grace, till they are fit for the kingdom of hea-

¹ John vi. 32, 33, 48, 51.

ven. The nature of Christ, thus communicated to us, he calls his *flesh* and *blood*, to signify that it is his proper *self*, as essential a part of him as his bodily flesh and blood.

This is so very material a point in our religion, that our Lord has erected it into a sacrament: he has appointed *two* in his church; the first *baptism*, which is the sacrament of repentance, figured by the passage through the *Red Sea*, and conferring a *death unto sin; with a new birth unto justice*; ¹ the second, that of the *Lord's Supper*, typified by the manna which feeds and maintains in us the *new life* of justice.

To this it may be objected, that since the bread we pray for, is called our *daily bread*, it either is not the same with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or that sacrament ought to be received every day. To answer this, we must distinguish, as our church teaches us, the two parts of a sacrament: *The outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace*. This heavenly bread is the spiritual grace, which we must receive daily, that we may live thereby; and this is communicated to the living members of Christ (as often as they seek it in faith), independent of the outward and visible signs of bread and wine. For the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not yet instituted when he discoursed, as you have heard, concerning

¹ 1 Cor. x. 2.

this spiritual bread, adding, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.*

And a considerable time afterwards, near the close of his life, even the evening before his crucifixion, that he might, in the most effectual manner, impress this upon our minds; *viz.* that he would become the nourishment of our souls, as ordinary food is of our bodies; and that, as he himself *lived by the Father*, so his true members *should live by Him*; to imprint this, I say, upon our minds, and make our *senses* in some sort minister to faith, he instituted the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist: he gave his disciples bread and wine, to signify his imparting to them his body and blood; and to instruct them, and assure them, by so sensible a representation, that, as the bread and wine united itself to, and nourished their bodies, so his body and blood, that is, *he himself* would unite with, strengthen, and refresh their souls.

And

And he commanded, that we should at the same time make a solemn thankful commemoration of his death, by which he purchased for us this inestimable privilege.

The sacrament of his supper, therefore, may be considered as a *solemn festival*, in which we participate of this bread of heaven, with the sacred formality of visible signs and pledges of the inward grace purchased for us by the death of Christ: but that same grace of Christ, spiritually communicated to us, must be also our daily bread, for our daily maintenance and growth in virtue. Our Lord commands us to pray for it every day, saying, *give us this day our daily bread.*

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

As the virtues are all comprehended in *justice*, so all faults are here called *debts*, because justice is obstructed, or, at least, suspended by them; and for the same reason, the word *debtors* stands here for offenders, who, having done wrong, stand *indebted* to justice for the wrong they have done. So much for the terms *debts* and *debtors*, which I think are rightly placed in our public version, where a scrupulous fidelity to the original was intended; and the equivalent, but more familiar, terms of *trespass* and *trespasses*

trespasses were as properly retained in the form recited in our liturgy.

As to the petition itself, you observe, that it is conditional; we desire God only *so* to pardon *us*, as *we* pardon *others*. It is also remarkable, that these are the only words in this venerable form, which our Lord was pleased himself to comment upon, and give a reason for, in the close of it: “*For* (says he, ver. 14.) *if ye forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you do not forgive men their offences, neither will your Father forgive yours.*”

Such are the terms upon which we ask forgiveness; and therefore we should weigh them well, that we may not fail in the performance of them. The terms are as plain as words can make them: “*We must forgive others in the same manner as we hope to be forgiven by Almighty God.*” Yet, plain as the words are, men, who have a strange facility in deceiving themselves, find various ways of mistaking them.

The most common delusion of this kind is, when they say, and fancy, that they forgive, yet continue to *indulge* angry and resenting thoughts, and deliberately suffer their minds to dwell long and often upon the injury they have received. Now they aggravate their wrongs: now they despise or detest the author
of

of them, according to the different workings of their pride or malice: and above all, they cherish a secret hope, that he, who had injured them, shall one day suffer for it himself, and dearly pay for his folly—Yet, notwithstanding such wrathful reflections wilfully persisted in, they still say, “They forgive him; they wish him no harm.”—Nay, often they boast of their forgiveness, and so add to their prevarication the vain-glory of an imaginary charity. Sometimes they shew the insincerity of their hearts, even in their expressions of forgiveness. Such is that common one, “I will forgive: but I will not forget it.” Now these assertions are inconsistent, and the second contradicts the first. If you truly forgive the injury, you would certainly endeavour to forget it, and ease your mind of grating reflections. For, after all your endeavours, resenting thoughts will recur but too often, and make dangerous trials of your reconciliation. You *resolve*, you say, *to remember it*: you *resolve*, therefore, *not to forgive it*; for, to what purpose serves the remembrance of an injury, but to supply continual fuel to your indignation; to refresh and provoke your anger, which, without such incitements, would gradually slacken and decay? But you seem afraid it should: and therefore gratify and nourish your passion with these assurances of its continuance.

Those

Those who truly forgive, act quite otherwise; they resolve, they strive to forget the injury; and, to the utmost of their power, they blot it out of their imagination, that they may treat the offender as if the fact were really annihilated, or had never been. In the style of law, we call a general pardon an *act of oblivion*: and, in the style of scripture, when God forgives the sins of men, it is said, that he *blots out their iniquities, and remembers their sins no more.*¹ And although in a strict sense, omniscience cannot forget, and nothing can escape infinite thought; yet, to express his plenary remission of our offences, he is said *to forget them*: as, on the other hand, when it is said, that *he will remember their iniquity,*² the phrase imports, that he will certainly punish it.

Another very suspicious expression of reconciliation is, “I forgive him; but I will not see him: I will have nothing more to do with him; yet I forgive him.” Such language gives reason to apprehend, that your forgiveness is not sincere; and that your heart still burns with animosity, so that you cannot bear his presence. If God should *so* forgive you, what would become of you? Would you be content with such a pardon as shuts the gates of heaven against you? *Depart from me, I know*

¹ Psal. lxxix. 8. Isa. lxiv. 9. Jer. xxxi. 34, &c.

² Hosea viii. 13, &c.

*you not, is the sentence which God passes upon the reprobates; and they will incur that sentence, who, themselves using it to others, have mocked his laws with feigned reconciliations. So likewise shall our heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your HEARTS forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*¹

If we would seriously consult the fundamental law of equity, *viz. To do as we would be done by*, that would exclude all these subterfuges which the leaven of malice is apt to suggest; that would both instruct and persuade us: for it not only rectifies our notion of this duty; but at the same time it represents the strongest arguments for the practice of it. Let us then consider, that we are desirous to have our faults passed over; and that we may not suffer in the esteem and affection of others, for the many miscarriages we are guilty of. Now, if it is reasonable to desire such indulgence, it is as reasonable, that we should grant it, and shew that lenity to others, which we expect, and so often stand in need of. In many things we all offend, not only against God, but man too. We are guilty of many follies, and humours, and passions, which sufficiently exercise the patience of those we converse with. If they should renounce our friendship, when they might take offence at our perverseness or indiscretion, we

¹ Matt. xviii. 35.

should

should soon have no friends left. But we expect that they should continue their benevolence to us, notwithstanding our misbehaviour; and therefore we ought not to refuse that indulgence to them, which, in parallel circumstances, we require of them.

And farther, as the justice of this law appears upon human views, betwixt man and man; so its obligations are greatly enforced by the express command of GOD, whom we offend daily, without a possibility of making any requital, and discounting with him, as we may to one another. Notwithstanding the infinite distance there is betwixt the creator and the creatures, which renders our offences against Him so much more heinous than any that can happen among ourselves; yet he recedes from his prerogatives, and, in this respect, puts himself, as it were, upon the level with us. He offers forgiveness for forgiveness, divine pardon of sins for human remission of injuries—Passing over the immense disproportion betwixt his supremacy and our vileness, he refers us to the great law of humanity, *To do as we would be done by*, to pardon others, as we hope to be pardoned ourselves; and, to bind this home upon us, that there might be no possibility of forgetting it, he has been pleased, you see, to join these terms with the very petition for forgiveness. And in other parts of this sermon he
has

has repeated this doctrine oftener than any other duty there recommended.

Expose us not to Temptation :

Or, as the common form, *Lead us not into Temptation* : the sense is the same ; and in both expressions, we equally acknowledge the divine agency, which the words of the original expressly import. For, as God is the *only potentate*, the sole governor of the world, so that nothing can possibly fall out, but by his allowance and permission : it is usual upon that account, in the style of scripture, to impute all things to Him as the first cause, and, as such, the author of them. Thus he is said to have *sent Joseph into Egypt, to preserve life* ;¹ though, in fact, his brethren, out of envy, had sold him thither. And Job said, that *the Lord had taken away*² those things, which the Chaldeans, and Satan acting in person, had been the instrument to deprive him of. And it is in this sense that God is said to *lead into temptation*, or *expose to temptation*, because all temptations come by his allowance ; for the tempter and the tempted are his ; all the powers of nature are his ; and what we call *chance*, or *fortune*, is nothing else but the incessant administration of

¹ Gen. xlv. 5, 8.

² Job i. 21.

his providence : but of this we shall speak more largely in the explication of the doxology.

The general intent, as I conceive, of these words, *Lead us not into Temptation*, is, that with a just distrust of ourselves, and an humble sense of our weakness, we should deprecate such trials as may endanger our feeble virtue : but as some trials, *i. e.* temptations, are necessary and inevitable, we therefore add the following petition ;

But deliver us from Evil :

Or, as some choose to render it, *the evil one* ; for it is dubious whether $\tau\tilde{\epsilon} \ \omega\upsilon\nu\eta\rho\tilde{\epsilon}$ is to be taken here in the masculine or neuter gender, *i. e.* to mean a person or a thing ; but, whichever way we take it, the sense is the same ; and therefore it is needless to enlarge upon it.

*For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the
Glory.*

This is the reason of the foregoing petitions, as it evidently appears in all but that one, *Thy kingdom come* ; which may seem inconsistent with this conclusion of the prayer, *For thine is the kingdom* : why, then, *Thy kingdom come* ? as if there were somewhat not yet subject to his dominion.

As

As strange as this may seem, it is too apparent, that a considerable part of his creatures are (according to the moral relation of things) subject to other laws, and governed by other powers, than His. There is a law of sin, there are powers of darkness, there is a kingdom of Satan, founded on an open apostacy from the king of heaven.

For, God having endowed his rational creatures with a free-will, that he might not be served, as by slaves, with a forced obedience, but honoured by the generous submission of free agents, who should *choose* him to reign over them; this innate dignity of the creature has been fatally perverted; and, the liberty to choose him implying necessarily a liberty to refuse him, the evil angels, in the first place, and men seduced by them, have chosen the worse part, and fallen into rebellion against the Creator. But the goodness of God has, by the appointed mediator Jesus Christ, opened a way for men to return to their allegiance, and their happiness. That way is revealed to us in the gospel, which is therefore called *the word*, i. e. *doctrine of the kingdom*: and, by the practice of the doctrine there taught, we actually *enter into the kingdom of God*, I mean, here upon earth; because we thereby subject ourselves to his government, and obey his laws. That we may

¹ Matt. iv. 23. ix. 35. xxiv. 14.

do this, is the plain import of that petition, *Thy kingdom come*; i. e. may it be established in the voluntary obedience of us thy free rational creatures: whereas *Thine is the kingdom* expresses the *right* which God has to such obedience, whether we pay it, or no.

We must, therefore, here distinguish between the *natural* and the *spiritual* kingdom of God. His natural kingdom is *universal*, comprehending all creatures, maintaining them in existence, and appointing to each their respective courses by the great laws of nature and providence. His spiritual kingdom is peculiar to intelligent beings, beings endowed with consciousness and liberty, and thereby capable of moral good and evil. Such subjects being able to know and submit to his will, he requires of them an active concurrence with it, a free and a voluntary obedience to his laws. This is God's spiritual kingdom, or reign over spirits, called in scripture, *the kingdom of heaven*, because such dominion is there principally exercised. It is also established in the hearts of all good men, who have chosen God for their Lord, and behave as his subjects and servants. I suppose, that both these senses are comprehended in this doxology, by which we acknowledge God's *actual* dominion over all things in the *natural* state, and his *rightful* dominion over spiritual beings

beings in their *moral* capacity : that the one *is*, and the other *ought* to be.

In forming our notion of God's natural kingdom, we must be careful to conceive of it in a very different manner from what passes in the kingdoms of this world, where the rulers govern their petty territories by issuing commands to places distant from their residence : whereas God is present in all parts of his dominion ; He *resides* in all his works, and supports and actuates the whole frame of nature. This omnipresence of the Deity is an article of natural religion, as appears from many passages in heathen authors, such as *Jovis omnia plena*, &c. And the Jews expressed the same sentiment, by comparing God to infinite space, and naming him *Hammachom*, *i. e. locus*, the place in which all things are. In the prophecies of Jeremiah, God himself says, " I am a God at hand, and not " afar off. Do not I fill heaven and earth ' ? " So that there is no place void of the Deity, no creature in which he is not actually present. *He is* (says St. Jerom) *infused through and about all things ; so as to penetrate them within, and contain them without*².

We should habituate our minds to such extensive views of the divine infinity, because

¹ Jer. i. 22.

² In omnibus infusus & circumfusus, ut cuncta penetret interior, & contineat exterior.

they would rectify a common prejudice, which inclines us to estimate all other things by what we find in ourselves. Our bodily presence is confined to a certain space; and our attention, which is the presence of the mind to the object under consideration, is circumscribed by such narrow limits, that, while it fixes upon one point, it *must* leave the rest, and, advancing to new objects, lose in one part what it gains in the other. Now this imperfection being natural to us, we are apt, without reflection, to ascribe it to God. It seems strange to us, that he should attend equally to all things at once, so as not to overlook the least particle in the immense variety of his works. But this is (as the psalmist speaks) because we foolishly think God *such an one as ourselves,*¹ and impute our infirmities to Him, who is infinitely infinite in all perfection.

We labour under the same infirmity in respect to *time*, as well as *space*. We have but a bare remembrance of things passed, and of things to come we are ignorant; but God takes in past, present, and future, in one compendious view of omniscience. And therefore we must not measure the knowledge of God by the low methods in which we apprehend things. It is the prerogative of Deity to reach at once through all *time*, as well as all *space*: as his pre-

¹ Psal. l. 21.

sence is immense, so *his understanding is infinite*¹: as he *fills heaven and earth*², so he *inhabits eternity*³; and has the whole duration of *time*, with all the various circumstances attending his creatures through all its several stages, as well as the whole extent of *space*, wherein they act, or shall act, ever open and present to his infinite thought.

Such are the *presence* and *knowledge* of God; add to these the *power* he exercises in his natural kingdom. *Thine is the power*, we say; and indeed there is no power but his, for he is the fountain of all power; and whatever degrees of it appear in the creatures, they are derived from him, and depend upon him. The strongest arm would wither, the most penetrating thought would sink into idiotism, if he should cease the secret efflux of his power, by which they act; by which all creatures live, and move, and have their existence.

Nature and *fortune* are the two names, to which we ascribe things and accidents; but these are, in truth, no other than the operations of God, by which he governs the world. Those we call *the laws of nature*, are the settled method of his Providence, whereby he maintains the order of the universe; producing, preserving, and directing the several species of his creatures, so that nothing may deviate from the course, or transgress the bounds he has pre-

¹ Psal. cxlvii. 5.² Jer. xxiii. 24.³ Isa. lvii. 15.

scribed it. The laws of nature are inviolable, because he himself puts them in execution: he himself is the master spring, which sets the lesser wheels of the machine in motion. Those who have studied nature best, and penetrated farthest into her secret recesses, have discovered themselves, and have demonstrated to others, that God is, if I may so speak, the prime agent in every being. They scruple not to say, that the great principle of gravitation is an immediate impression from the first Mover, and the Divine Energy exerted in his creatures. Or, if we pass from the material to the animal world, some think, that no account can be given of those surprising instincts in brute creatures, which in many instances surpass the boasted reason of men, but that they are the power of God determining such creatures to the work he has appointed them. A modern naturalist has expressed this in very bold, and, I think, very improper language, where he says, “Deus est anima brutorum.” It is, doubtless, the *power of God* that disposes them to their several functions: but to say, therefore, that God is their soul; or, as the old philosophers, that he is *animi mundi*, the soul of the world; this is unworthy and degrading: for the soul must share and sympathise in all the interests of the body it animates: but there can be no such reciprocation betwixt God and his creatures. The
sacred

sacred writers use other terms, *Thy incorruptible Spirit is in all things*¹, saith the wise man. The reason, I suppose, of that epithet *incorruptible*, was to signify, that God is no way affected with the vicissitudes of his creatures—*Thy incorruptible Spirit is in all things*, not united to them as a soul to its body, but presiding in them, as their Lord and Sovereign, with power irresistible. This is magnificently expressed in the verses preceding that last mentioned: “The
 “ whole world is before thee as a little grain of
 “ the balance; yea, as a drop of the morning
 “ dew, that falleth down upon the earth: how
 “ could any thing have endured, if it had not
 “ been thy will; or been preserved, if not
 “ called by Thee? But Thou sparest all; for
 “ they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls².”
 And then follows, *Thy incorruptible Spirit is in all things*.—Thus you see how *nature* is the minister of God; and those, which we call the *laws of nature*, are the laws he prescribes it, the fixed and uniform method by which he governs the world.

As men ascribe things to *nature*, so they ascribe events to *fate* or *fortune*, which are fictitious beings, and mere creatures of imagination; for God is the sole author of all events happening to his creatures, as he is of the creatures themselves. So he speaks by his prophet,

¹ Wisd. xii. 1.

² Wisd. xi. 22, &c.

“ I form the light, and create darknes; I
 “ make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do
 “ all these things ³. It is by him kings reign,
 “ and princes rule; for promotion cometh nei-
 “ ther from the east, nor from the west, nor
 “ yet from the south; but God is the judge:
 “ he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”

Nor must we think, that crowns and sceptres, thrones and empires, are the only care of Providence: his kind regard condescends to the lowest of his creatures; “ He provideth the
 “ raven his food; the young lions seek their
 “ meat from him: and his open hand filleth
 “ all things living with plenteousness. He
 “ clotheth the grafs of the field with inimitable
 “ beauties, and reneweth the face of the earth.”
 In a word, “ He giveth life, and food, and
 “ breath, and all things, unto all.” But the point we had more immediately in view, was, to shew, that those loose fickle uncertainties, which we ascribe to chance or fortune, are all under his disposal. An hair cannot fall from our heads, nor a sparrow to the ground, without the will of our heavenly Father. Nothing is *casual* to him. He hath laid the *train* of events from the foundation of the world, and produces them successively each in their proper season.

³ Isa. xlv. 7.

Such is God's dominion in the *natural* world: so universal is the obedience paid him by all the hosts of his creatures. The stars of heaven never deviate from the course he has appointed them. The sea, with its proud waves, is curbed and confined by his decree. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind and tempest, fulfil his word: and we see all the world about us yield an implicit obedience to his laws: while we ourselves are the only disobedient, the only rebellious part of his kingdom: I speak of us now in our moral capacity, as we are spiritual creatures, and consequently proper subjects of God's *spiritual* dominion; which is founded in the voluntary obedience of free agents, who choose God for their Lord.

As God is pleased to style himself particularly the Lord of men, so all good men have thought the appellation of *his servants* the greatest dignity; for this David forgot his royalty, and rather styled himself ⁴ *the servant of the Lord*. And St. Paul, in the beginning of all his epistles, does himself the honour of this title, *Paul the servant of the Lord*, or *Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ*, i. e. a servant sent by him. He saith not Paul the Roman; or, Paul, the doctor of Christianity: Paul, the worker of miracles; or, Paul, ravished into the third heaven; but *Paul, the servant of the Lord*. That

⁴ See the inscription of Psal. xxxvi, &c.

was all his glory, the utmost of his ambition, the highest title he could wish, or be capable of.

This also is the glory and the happiness of the angels. The supreme orders of the celestial hierarchy know no higher praise, no more exalted honour, than this, that they are *God's servants, his ministers that do his pleasure*: nor do they ever appear more glorious, than when
 “ they cast down their crowns before his throne,
 “ saying, Thou art worthy, O LORD, to re-
 “ ceive all glory, and honour, and power: for
 “ thou hast created all things, and for thy plea-
 “ sure they are, and were created ⁵.”

Heaven is therefore *heaven*, because it is God's *spiritual kingdom*, and all its bright inhabitants pay him true allegiance, as their sovereign Lord and King: nor may any enter those blessed mansions, who have not, by confirmed habits of virtue, approved themselves his dutiful subjects. *His is the kingdom* of right; to him our allegiance is due; and, in paying him our humble and sincere obedience, we commence his subjects, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

¹⁹ *Make not for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do spoil, and where thieves break in, and steal: ²⁰ But make for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust*

⁵ Rev. iv. 11.

do spoil, and where, thieves do not break in, and steal: ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. ²² The eye is the lamp of the body: if, then, your eye be single, your whole body will be enlightened. ²³ But if your eye be evil, your whole body will be darkened. If, then, the light which is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Mr. Locke has observed, that the *modes of thinking*, as he speaks, *i. e.* the several operations of the human mind, are in all languages expressed by figurative terms, which belong to sensible ideas in their primary signification. Now, if all languages used the same figures, this would bring no additional obscurity to our translations. But it is well known, that the oriental tongues have, upon these subjects, quite a different set of metaphors from those in use among the Greeks and Romans; and consequently among us, who so generally follow their phraseology. Many difficulties in scripture are to be imputed to this cause; and, to solve those difficulties, we must have recourse to the context, and collect the meaning of this unusual dialect from the occasion upon which it is spoken. I choose, therefore, here to make a review of what we have been hitherto taught in this divine sermon; because the method our Lord proceeds

proceeds in, will directly lead us to the meaning of the words now to be explained.

After the beatitudes, and a particular application of the last of them to the apostles, with some especial advice to them for the right discharge of the ministerial function ; he goes on to treat of *justice* (i. e. duty in general) : and first he shews the *extent* of it. I mean, what degrees of it are necessary, and how far its obligations reach. He begins with the general proposition, *Unless your justice surpass that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.* And this he illustrates and exemplifies in many instances, which fill up the remainder of the fifth chapter. After thus shewing the *extent* of justice, he comes, in the next place, to rectify the *motive* to it ; as at the first verse of this chapter, *Take heed that ye do not your justice* (i. e. acts of justice) *before men, to be seen of them, &c.* And here again he gives particular instances in the three principal acts of that justice (*viz.* beneficence to mankind, devotion to God, and mortification which concerns ourselves) ; with a strict caution not to let the merit of them evaporate in vain-glory. And as vanity is not the only wrong motive ; and as the deeds of justice last mentioned are not our only occupation ; but, besides these, we have each of us his secular employment, or worldly business, to discharge ; our Lord, therefore,

fore, goes on to regulate our whole course of action, by setting the *heart* right, and in the proper disposition for the performance of it: *Make not for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do spoil, and where thieves break in, and steal: but make for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do spoil, and where thieves do not break in, and steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Instead of *Lay not up treasures*, as our public translation, I put, *Make not for yourselves treasures*, which the original imports, and the sense requires; because, whatever we place our happiness in, that we *make our treasure*. The treasure of the covetous is literal treasure; and that of the rest of the world consists of those things which they desire, and count upon, as a fund for enjoyment: for, as where our *treasure* is, there will our heart be also; so, where our *heart* is, there also is our *treasure*.

If we could look into the minds of men, we should see, that with the younger sort this *treasure* is often a mere toyshop. The treasure of the ambitious consists, too, of baubles: for the truncheon, the mitre, and the coronet, are but more solemn vanities. Malice and lust, too, have their treasures; which, to minds unprejudiced, appear horrid and detestable. More ludicrous are the riches of the virtuoso, who
can

can make his treasure of old coins, shells, or insects. But the fantastic treasures of mankind are too bizarre and various to be enumerated. As almost every animal has had its idolaters; so almost every kind of object has become a *treasure* to some or other of the sons of Adam. But as *true* religion is but one, so there is but one *real* treasure, one only that is worthy our option, and will answer our expectation; and that we make for ourselves in heaven, when, by the assiduous practice of virtue, we secure our everlasting interests there, as our Lord advises.

In the mean time the whole circle of sublunary things lies open to our choice; and, when we have made our choice of any part, so as to set our affections upon it; then it becomes our *treasure*, and, for the time, has the preference in our esteem. As in a globe any one point may be set uppermost; and, when it is so, the rest are ranged below it, and gradually pass out of sight; so, in the mind of man, that, which he chiefly sets his affection on, has the preference to all beside, and all beside become subordinate, and are estimated only according to the relation which they bear to it. Such is our treasure, which wherever it is, *there* (as our Lord speaks) *will our heart be also*.

His next words are those, which, by their obscurity, gave occasion for what was said at the beginning of this note concerning the different

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ferent metaphors used by distant nations; upon account of which I have made this general review of the tenor of our Lord's discourse, and particularly of the context, which distinctly leads us to the meaning of the words now to be explained.

The eye is the lamp of the body. *Body* here signifies, as it sometimes does in our own language, the *person*, the man himself. And *eye*, in the Hebrew idiom (as was shewed in the last chapter, and will be again in the next), signifies the *intention*⁶. *Eye*, I say, signifies the intention, which casts a light upon whatever it aims at. Like a microscope, it magnifies its

⁶ To pass over other authorities which prove that *eye* here means *the intention*, it may suffice to say, that Thomas Aquinas and Thomas à Kempis so understood it. I have recollected one passage in the latter to this purpose, which is so excellent that I have chose to transcribe it.

“ Stat super hæc mutabilia sapiens & benedictus in Spiritu,
 “ non attendens quid in se sentiat, vel quâ parte flet ventus
 “ instabilitatis, sed ut tota intentio mentis ejus ad debitum
 “ & optimum proficiat finem. Nam sic poterit unus &
 “ idem, inconcussusque permanere, simplici intentionis
 “ oculo, per tot varios eventus, ad me imprætermisè di-
 “ recto. Quantò autem purior fuerit intentionis oculos,
 “ tantò constantius inter diversas itur procellas. Sed in
 “ multis caligat oculus puræ intentionis; respicitur enim
 “ citò in aliquod delectabile quod occurrit. Nam & rarò
 “ totus liber quis invenitur à nævo propriæ exquisitionis.
 “ —Mundandus est ergo intentionis oculus, ut sit simplex,
 “ & rectus, atque ultra omnia varia media ad me dirigen-
 “ dis.” *Thomas à Kempis, Lib. III. Cap. 33.*

object,

object, it illustrates it, and renders the minutest parts of it conspicuous; for, having made it its *treasure*, it treats it as *such*, and counts upon it as a fund for happiness. And although the object be void of real worth, yet the intention imputes to it all the advantages that credulous desire and active fancy can suggest. We may *attend* to a thing with impartiality and indifference: but not so, when we *intend* it. Our choice is *then* determined: the will has *then* got the other faculties into its management; and exerts them only to feed expectation, and discover more and more whatever may serve to confirm the choice it has made.

Thus the intention is the force of the mind turned one way; and therefore our Lord compares it to a *lamp*, which, when directed to one particular object, greatly enlightens that, and makes other things visible only in proportion to their nearness. In like manner, whatever is the direct object of the intention, receives from it a lustre, which shews it to the greatest advantage; and shews other things in a good or bad light, as they seem favourable or prejudicial to the execution of our design.

The intention, I say, aiming at the *end* proposed, views other things, not simply as they are in themselves, but rather as *means* to that end, or as *obstacles* to the attaining it. And hence it follows, that an *evil* intention must induce

induce us to make a *false* judgment concerning those practices which are necessary for the accomplishing it; because such practices, though *wrong* in themselves, are yet *right* for the purpose which we *intend* by them.

It is the privilege only of a good intention to be free from prejudices; because the means, which that is to employ, are as right in themselves, as they are for the end to which they are designed. We have here no mistaken interest to blind our judgment. Designing only what is *right*, we see only what is *true*, and our whole mind is enlightened.

Such right intention our Lord calls *the single eye*; and with good reason: for, as only one straight line can pass between two given points; and as the truth upon every stated question is but one, while error and mistake are almost infinitely various; so there is not, there cannot be, but one such right intention: what that is, our Lord had just before declared, when he directed us to *make for ourselves treasures in heaven*. And that we might be induced to recollect and unite all our desires in that *one thing necessary*, he here calls an intention to do so, the *single eye*; and, on the contrary, every other intention, an *evil eye*; for, every other deliberate purpose, that does not coincide with, or become subordinate to, the right intention, though we could suppose it innocent in itself,

yet will prove an obstacle to that right intention; because the right intention cannot succeed but by a perfect renunciation of all other projects and designs. And therefore our Lord immediately subjoins, *No man can serve two masters, &c.*

²⁵ *Be not solicitous about your life, - what you shall eat, &c.*

The public translation has, *take no thought, &c.* but the Greek imports such anxiety, as causes an intestine strife by contrary reasonings, with opposite hopes and fears. This is so strictly the sense of the original, that a word of the same derivation is used by our Lord, where he says, “A kingdom ⁷ *divided* against itself, cannot stand.” So that this precept only forbids that perplexity and distraction of thought, which is inconsistent with the *single right intention*, and interrupts our resignation to the divine will.

Far be it from me to widen the *narrow ways* prescribed in the gospel: but, to make them *narrower* than the literal sense imports, will render them quite unpassable. For men engaged in business and the tumult of the world (as the best Christians sometimes are), not to have their minds entangled in secular interests; not to be

? Μερισθῆσα, Matt. xii. 25.

anxious and disquieted about future events, wherein either their reputation, or their fortune, or perhaps both, are at stake; this is an high degree of virtue, which can be maintained only by an habitual devotion: but, to say absolutely, *take no thought*, is a misrepresentation of our Lord's doctrine. All his intention here was, to teach the virtues in the most radical manner, by extirpating the remotest tendency to the contrary vices. As, under the sixth commandment, which prohibits murder, he forbids an angry word, or malicious thought; so here, to preserve us from worldly-mindedness, he forbids all anxious care, even for the necessaries of life: and he enforces his prohibition with such cogent arguments, as must convince all who piously attend to them. *Is not the life more than food, and the body than clothing?* He, who has given us the greater, will he deny us the less? He, who gave us our being, will he refuse what is necessary for the support of it? It is as absurd as it is ungrateful, to distrust a benefactor, whose goodness we have so largely experienced, and who takes upon himself the care to provide for us. *Consider the birds of the air: they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not of greater value than they?* Are ye not the children of God? And, when ye see him make so plentiful a provision for his inferior creatures,

can you suspect, that He will leave you his *children* destitute of necessary subsistence ?

A fear of wanting necessaries is the most specious pretence for *covetousness* : and it is in order to repress the remotest tendencies to that base disposition, that our Lord is thus copious and emphatical in assuring us of the superintending care of providence. But let no perverse spirit mistake his declarations here as a dispensation from industry. He never meant to abrogate that sentence passed upon our whole race : *In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread.* Daily labour is a principal part of the penance imposed on mankind, and is included in the *daily cross* which he has commanded us to take up. It is only by taking up that cross, and punctually discharging our duty in that state of life to which God has called us, that we have a claim to his fatherly protection : but then we ought to depend upon it ; for a trust in God, and diligence in our calling, are connected like faith and obedience, which are so far from interfering, that they are in their own nature inseparable. Duty is very extensive, consisting of many parts, which must be performed at once ; yet cannot be spoken at once, but must be detailed in separate precepts. Virtue consists not merely in *action*, but also in the *motive* which animates it. Our course of *action* is taught elsewhere, and our *worldly calling*, which

which is to us the order of providence, prescribes the daily work we have to do; the doctrine now under consideration relates to the proper *motive* of our actions, directing our view towards the great end to which they all ought to be ultimately referred. Our actions are upon earth, but the right motive is in heaven, where only *faith* can penetrate: and therefore our Lord, exhorting with his disciples upon their want of sensibility to that *motive*, subjoins (at ver. 30.), *O ye of little faith*. Of this I shall speak presently; but first I would give an account of the alteration I have proposed of ver. 27.

²⁷ *Who of you by his Solitude can prolong his life one hour?*

The public translation here, instead of *prolong his life one hour*; has, *add one cubit to his stature*. I think a version strictly literal should be, *add any length to his age*, for ἡλικία signifies both *age* and *stature*; and is to be rendered by either, as the occasion requires. Our translators have rendered it by *age*, John ix. 21, 23. and Heb. xi. 11. Πῆχυς indeed commonly means a cubit; but it is not unfrequent to transfer the measures of space, to express those of time, as Psal. xxxix. 5. *Thou hast made my days as it were a SPAN long*, and Dr. Hammond, upon the

the place, shews, that *cubit* has been used in the same manner. Thus far we have seen what senses the terms are capable of; what their proper sense is here, we must gather from the context. At ver. 25. our Lord dissuades anxiety about food and cloathing; food for the life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ in the original, *i. e.* *soul*, or animal life), and clothing for the *body*. He then treats of these separately. The words under consideration conclude what he said concerning the maintenance of *life*, to which *stature* is not applicable, but *age*, as I would render it. What he adds concerning the *body*, begins at the next verse. Besides, he was speaking to adult persons, who probably had no solicitude about their stature, and certainly had no imagination, that such solicitude could make them grow a foot and a half taller: but a care for the maintenance of *life* is the common care of all men, and apt to run into excess, where it is not moderated by religion. I am more confirmed in the interpretation here proposed, by observing that the parallel text in the gospel by St. Luke (xii. 25.) follows the parable of the Rich Man, who had projected larger barns to receive the increase of his store, and reckoned upon *many years of life* for the enjoyment of it, when God said to him, “Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, &c.” The application is, “Therefore take no thought for
“ your

“ your life—And which of you with taking
 “ thought can add to his *stature one cubit*? If
 “ ye then be not able to do that thing which
 “ is *least, &c.*” So our public translation. But
 surely to add one cubit to the stature (though it
 be but *one*) is no *little* matter. And besides this
 would be quite impertinent to the foregoing
 parable of one whose thoughts were taken up
 with the large provision he would make for his
 supposed length of days. His concern would
 be to live longer, not to grow taller.

3^o *O ye of little Faith.*

This is the first place in which we meet the
 word *faith* in the New Testament; and, of all
 the terms in theology, there is none that more
 requires explanation, upon account of the dan-
 gerous mistakes that have been made about it;
 none that better deserves to be largely insisted
 on, upon account of the great importance of
 its signification; and therefore I shall make it
 the subject of some following lectures, and at
 this time I shall only caution you against a vul-
 gar error, which confines the notion of faith to
 the Christian revelation, whereas the word is
 originally of the Jewish church, and of frequent
 use at the time of our Lord, who certainly spoke
 it in the sense then commonly received. As
 most of you know the Hebrew, I shall tell you

its root and cognate derivatives, which will contribute to your forming a right notion of it.

The root is *aman* nutritivit, from which comes *amen* veritas, and *emunah* fides, quasi veritatis receptio in nutrimentum animæ. The word *amen* is of such frequent use in the New Testament, and in the public offices of all Christian churches, that I shall take this occasion of explaining it.

Amen, as was said, properly means *truth*, but is differently used upon different occasions; sometimes as an affirmative, and sometimes as an optative. It is often an affirmative, as when our Lord uses it to introduce his more solemn asseverations, Ἀμὴν Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, *Verily verily I say unto you*. And it is to be noted, that where St. Matthew retains the Hebrew Amen in our Lord's discourses, there St. Luke renders it by καὶ xi. 51. and ἀληθῶς, ix. 27.

The other use of Amen is an optative wherewith we conclude our prayers, declaring thereby our full assent to the foregoing petitions with a desire they may be ratified. And to this purpose the word has been retained in the liturgies of the Christian church through all ages, and therefore I thought it worth the while to go somewhat out of my way to put you in mind of it.

Our proper subject is the cognate derivative of this *amen* veritas, viz. *emunah* (from *aman* nutritivit.)

nutrivit.) Fides, quasi receptio veritatis in nutrimentum animæ. So we say in English *nurture*, for good instruction. Nor is this a fanciful application, but most consonant to the whole tenour of scripture style in both Testaments, where the practical truths of religion are continually expressed by the various species of nourishment, as well *meat* as *drink*, in all the different forms they are used for bodily sustenance.

Maimonides in his explanation of the word *achal* comedit, shews, “ that it is most frequently
 “ applied to express the reception of wisdom
 “ and doctrine, and universally all information
 “ of the mind, whereby it [the mind] is main-
 “ tained for growth to the perfection of *its* na-
 “ ture, as the body is maintained by the food
 “ proper for its nourishment. Thus Isaiah
 “ [lv. 1, &c.] inviting men to attend to his
 “ doctrine, says, *Come ye, buy and eat,—hearken*
 “ *diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is*
 “ *good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.*
 “ *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and*
 “ *your soul shall live.*” And after quoting two
 passages from the Proverbs, where the same
 word is used, he says, “ Wherever *eating* and
 “ *drinking* are spoke of in that book, *wisdom*,
 “ or the *law of God* is always to be understood,
 “ as the mental food.” And hence it may be
 inferred that the Hebrew term for faith, ac-
 cording

according to the derivation before-mentioned, may denote the proper disposition on man's part for receiving and digesting the great truths of religion.

Buxtorf in his Talmudic Lexicon, explains *emunab fides*, by *religio quæ quis Deum colit, amplectitur, & reveretur*. Faith indeed commonly means the same as *piety* or *godliness*. I will name an instance which you may consult yourselves; it is in the first verse of the twelfth psalm, where *pious* and *fide præditus* are quite synonymous, our translation is; "Help Lord, for the GODLY MAN ceaseth, for the FAITHFUL [*emunim*] fail from among the children of men." Thus the Jews understood the word in our Saviour's time, and in this sense doubtless He used it, as particularly when he reproached them with neglecting *faith*, which he names *a weightier matter of their own law*.¹ And this very phrase in which he rebukes his disciples, O YE OF LITTLE FAITH, was then of frequent use among the Jews, as is notorious from many passages in the Talmud: *Talmudicis frequentissime*, says Lightfoot upon the place. He and other commentators have collected many instances, of which I shall mention only two. The first is, "Whosoever has bread in his basket, and says, What shall I eat to-morrow? He is one of those who have

¹ Matt. xxiii. 23.

“ little faith.” The second is, “ He that has
 “ what to eat to day, and fays, What fhall I eat
 “ to-morrow? He wants faith.”

To conclude, the term *mammon*, i. e. riches, has the fame derivation with the original word for *faith*, and for the fame reason, *viz.* because men are fo apt to confide in riches, as a true and ftable fund on which to build their happinefs. When the Divine BEING holds that place in our minds which worldly wealth has in the minds of covetous men, then indeed we have faith in him.

DISSERTATION I.

WORDS, by long ufing, ftuggle away from their firft fignification, and acquire a new meaning, greatly different from what was at firft intended by them. Thus the words *knight* and *knave* had formerly the fame fenfe; both fignified *servant*; though the meaning of thofe words have fince run afunder, upwards and downwards, fo far, that one of them is become an appellation of honour, and the other of infamy. Yet, as this change of fignification comes on gradually, it has no inconvenience in ordinary converfation; and, in that refpect, it matters little to know what words meant formerly, as long as we know at what rate

rate to take them, according to the present currency. But if we should meet such words in some ancient writer, without knowing what sense they bore in his time, there would be great danger of mistaking him. And, in that case, if we retain a deference for the writer's authority, we shall be misled by him: Or, if his authority be of no weight with us, we shall charge him with an error, which is owing only to our own ignorance.

Thus it happens with the terms of theology, when, by vulgar usage, they have been distorted from their primitive signification. And therefore, although it is very irksome to be often disputing about the meaning of words, yet it is a necessary task; because the errors of those who profess Christianity, or the objections of those who deny it, cannot be fully exposed, or answered, by any other method.

This might be exemplified in many names, which have imposed upon some, and offended others: Such are *Church*, *Mystery*, *Predestination*, *Reprobation*, &c. which are of great moment in the debates that have been moved, or the difficulties that have been raised, among us. But the term, which I have now immediately in view, concerns the very essence of religion, importing that pious consciousness of the deity, which is the ground of all duty, and is well expressed by that almost-antiquated
word

word *godliness*; I speak of *faith*, which many, who profess Christianity, mistake for *a blind assent to some system of opinions*; while the adversaries of Christianity take advantage, from their mistake, to decry religion, which, they say, is founded on *credulity*. Now the only way to instruct the former, and convince the latter, is, to represent the genuine signification of the word *faith*, as it is used in the scriptures; for as faith is a term of art proper to the science there taught, it would be subverting the rules of all science, not to abide by the signification there given it.

To shew what that is, I have collected many passages of scripture, where faith is treated of, that, from them, you may form your own notion of it, and judge for yourselves; but, upon reflection, I have chosen first to give you my opinion concerning it, that you may be the better prepared to judge of the reasons upon which it is grounded, when I recite the several passages from which I have gathered it.

“ By faith, then, I understand such a real
 “ and efficacious ¹ knowledge of God, as is
 “ proper to our present state of probation.

I call

² I have thought the following quotations from De Lingendes worthy the perusal of the learned reader. “ Sicut
 “ in rebus omnibus moralibus principium totius motûs est
 “ cognitio, quæ præcedit omnem motum voluntatis: ita
 “ initium³ omnis motûs in Deum est fides, quia est prima
 “ Dei

I call faith a *real* knowledge of God, to distinguish it from the speculative knowledge of Him by reason or tradition. Speculative knowledge may be of things absent, and by that we know not the things themselves, but our own imaginations about them. The real knowledge, I speak of, is only of things present, and those things present are themselves the cause of that knowledge in the mind disposed to receive it. Thus a man in a dark dungeon knows there is a sun; but, actually to know the sun (in the sense here intended), he must be brought into

“ Dei cognitio supernaturalis. Hinc etiam prima est unio
 “ animæ cum Deo; est enim prima ad Deum erectio, et
 “ postea adhæsiō: (sibi videlicet intellectus unit objectum
 “ suum) ad hæc, fides est initium in homine totius entis
 “ Spiritualis.” *De Lingendes Concionum in Quadragesimam.*
 tom. I. p. 311. And again in the same tome, p. 321.

“ Certè res omnes respectu naturæ intellectualis non aliud
 “ habent esse quam per cognitionem, alioqui penes illam
 “ perinde se habent entia atque non entia; unde dicuntur
 “ res omnes quoddam esse habere in intellectu; imo corpo-
 “ ralia nobiliùs existunt in intellectu quam in seipsis: multo
 “ magis id dicendum est de iis rebus quæ nullo modo cadunt
 “ sub sensum. Sed quia quædam sunt quæ non tantum sen-
 “ sus superant, sed etiam vim naturalem intelligendi, ideo
 “ ejusmodi, respectu nostri non subsistunt, nisi per cogniti-
 “ onem supernaturalem, quæ in hac vitâ nulla alia foret esse
 “ quàm fides; unde dicitur ab apostolo *substantia rerum spe-*
 “ *randarum*, quasi in nobis res illæ non habeant aliter esse
 “ quàm per fidem, quâ collapsâ res illæ omnes quasi esse
 “ desinunt, seu amittunt esse. Ita infideli nullus est Deus,
 “ &c.”

the

the sunshine, and exposed to its influence. Here the light shews itself, and with itself it also shews other objects, according to the situation of the spectator. After the same manner, in the real knowledge, which we ascribe to faith, God himself enlightens the mind, and, by the light he diffuses there, illustrates such truths, moral and divine, as we are concerned to know, and our present capacity will admit.

Whereas I said, that faith is an *efficacious* knowledge of God; I mean, that it is an active principle, and naturally productive of all virtue.

And whereas I said, that it is *such a knowledge of God, as is proper to our present state of probation*; this was to distinguish it from the *intuitive* knowledge of the holy angels, which confirms them in an impeccable state. That kind of knowledge will be the reward of our perseverance, and is reserved for the next life; but it would be most unseasonable in this, because it would put a stop to progressive virtue; it would overbear the freedom of the will, and extinguish at once both good and ill desert; *i. e.* it would put us out of that state of trial, to which the Almighty has appointed us. He has placed us here as at a great distance from his throne and beatific presence; therefore, our knowledge of Him is obscure, commencing from feeble notices, and, as it were, by hearsay;

say ; and this I take for one reason why this kind of knowledge of God is called *faith*.

A second reason for the propriety of the term, is the use we are to make of this knowledge in the many trials and difficulties we are here exposed to. If we know God, we shall securely rely upon his power and goodness ; *i. e.* we shall have faith in him, according to the common acceptation of the word.

Such are the two reasons, why our knowledge of God, during this state of probation, is named *faith*. The first is the manner of our acquiring it : the second is taken from one principal effect which it produces ; *viz.* trust and reliance upon God. Thus, with regard to its origin, it is called *believing* ; and, with regard to the consequence last-mentioned, it is called *confiding* in God ; both which notions are expressly comprehended in the word *faith* ; and (which deserves your particular notice) both those notions are peculiar to that kind of knowledge of the Deity, which is proper to man in this world. For the knowledge of God in heaven is not faith, but intuition, even the beatific vision ; and the effect of this knowledge in the angels is fulness of joy, and pleasures evermore ; but they can have no occasion to apply it for support under a sense of want, and danger, and distress, which is one principal occasion

fion

sion upon which men ought to have recourse to it.

What I have been shewing here, is the *reason* of the term *faith*; but the *meaning* is much more extensive, and comprehends, together with our knowledge of God, all the effects and consequences, which that knowledge will produce. In a word, it is the same as piety, or religion, even the whole of that duty, which we owe immediately to the Creator.

I now come to the scripture account of it: and here, if, to comply with the present vogue, we distinguish natural religion from that which is revealed; we shall find that the sacred writers make faith the common foundation of both. Witness the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where this subject is treated of more copiously and distinctly, than in any other part of holy writ. There we read, that, *without faith, it is not possible to please God; for he that cometh to God, must believe, that, HE IS.* The existence of God, which is the first article of the natural creed, is here declared an article of faith. The second article of the same creed has here again the same character. *Through faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God.* In the same chapter the patriarchs, as well those before as after the flood, are celebrated for their *faith*, and all their virtues imputed to it. Moses indeed, in the

account he gives of those holy men, says, that they *walked with God*; by which phrase he expresses that *habitual consciousness of God's presence, and conformity to his will*, which constitutes the essence of *piety*; and he means precisely the same that the apostle does by the term *faith*. For whereas the apostle says, *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*: What could merit such preference in an act of religious worship, but a superior *piety*? Again, he says, *By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death*: And what could obtain so singular an exemption from the common fate of mortality? What could qualify him for an immediate admission into heaven, but a superlative degree of *piety*? And again, *By faith Noah was preserved from the deluge, to survive the old, and to found the new world*: And what reason can be assigned for so distinguished a choice, but his ardent and persevering *piety*?

The next person in this sacred catalogue is Abraham; and it is to be observed of him, that Moses speaks the same language as the apostle: for whereas Moses had said of the former patriarchs, that they *walked with God*, in his account of Abraham, he, for the first time, speaks of *believing*, i. e. having *faith* in God. This change of style is remarkable: I think it
 may

may be accounted for by the following observation.

In the beginning of time a new world could not but make so forcible an impression on its inhabitants, as left no room in them for any doubt concerning the Creator. Every thing then witnessed the recent miracle; and, as it was not possible for them to *disbelieve*, so neither could they properly be said to *believe*, what they actually knew, as it were, by ocular demonstration. Adam lived above nine hundred years, and so long mankind saw that very man whom the Lord had formed out of the dust of the ground. They all owned him for their common parent, and might hear himself relate the story of his creation. They saw, that he had no predecessor, but came immediately out of the hand of God. Their knowledge of a Creator was, therefore, clear and invincible; and they could not themselves efface it, grounded, as it was, upon sensible demonstration. They might indeed, and the greater part actually did, divert their attention from this knowledge. The greater part forgot God, with their obligations to him; and wholly addicted themselves to the devices and desires of their own hearts: while the better few piously *retained God in their knowledge*, and passed their lives in obedience to his will; which holy disposition, as was be-

fore noted, Moses expresses by *walking with God*, and St. Paul calls *faith*.

In the mean time, as the world grew older, and creation was more remote, the knowledge of the Creator became matter of tradition: that tradition, from age to age, gradually decayed: and, while the great machine moved on with an uniform course, thoughtless men forgot the hand which set it in motion. So that at the time of Abraham, which was above two thousand years after the creation, the gross of mankind was sunk into idolatry. The Chaldeans, among whom he was born, being addicted to the study of astronomy, looked no farther than the visible heavens, and worshipped the celestial bodies as the authors and governors of the lower world. To remind the Israelites of this idolatry of their ancestors, Joshua says, *Your fathers, even Terah, the father of Abraham, served other gods*². In this dark night of irreligion, Abraham, raising his mind above things visible and material, attained the knowledge of THE FIRST CAUSE, the Maker and Governor of the world.

² *Above three thousand*, according to the chronology of the Septuagint. See a Dissertation on the Chronology of the Septuagint, with an Appendix, shewing that the Chaldean and Egyptian antiquities, hitherto esteemed fabulous, are perfectly consistent with the computations of that most ancient version. London, 1741.

² Josh. xxiv. 2.

And

And he persisted to cultivate this knowledge with such assiduous piety and devotion, that God vouchsafed to manifest himself to him; for it is said, *The Lord appeared unto Abraham*, and from time to time gave him particular directions for his conduct, which are not material to our present purpose; but we must not omit the great lesson which God taught him, as we read, *The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, WALK BEFORE ME, and be thou perfect*³. You remember how the phrase of *walking with God* was before used to express the faith of his holy ancestors. That *walking with God*, which imports an habitual knowledge of God, ever was, and is, the substance of the first theological virtue, called *Faith*; but the term *Faith* was first used, when, a particular revelation being made to Abraham concerning the production of the Messiah, it is said, *Abraham believed*⁴, i. e. had faith *in the LORD, and he counted*

³ Gen. xvii. 1.

⁴ Gen. xv. 6. The full explanation of this text must be reserved for its proper place: yet, besides what you find in the following quotation from Philo, I would briefly shew here, that faith is therefore *counted for justice*, because by faith man does his part towards acquiring it.

It has been often said already, that all duty is comprehended under the name of Justice; and very lately I observed, that this Justice is rightly distinguished into three principal parts, as it relates to ourselves, our neighbour, and our CREATOR. The last of these, viz. the duty we owe to

counted it to him for justice. From this passage the name *Faith*, as a term of theology, bears date: it was delivered down through the Jewish church to the Christian; and Christ, with his apostles, used it in the sense they found it.

How the word was *then* understood, appears very clearly from the Jewish writers themselves, as you will find by the following quotations from a cotemporary author; I mean Philo the Jew; who, speaking of Abraham, says^s: “That, “being born of a father, who was an idolater, “he forsook his family, kindred, and native “country, left by the superstitions there prac- “tised, he should be diverted from his studious “search after the Only God, Creator of all

God immediately, and as distinguished from the other two, is called *Faith**. Now it is universally agreed, that men, in their natural state, are greatly defective in all these three branches of justice; and the scriptures declare, that faith is the only means by which we can acquire it. The reason is, because by faith we have access to God, we come under his powerful influence, and receive his gracious communications. Our devout attention to him obtains his favourable regard to us, which operates powerfully upon the soul, to excite its latent abilities, and to infuse new ones, which will gradually dispose it for the performance of all justice.

As there are different degrees of faith, so there are different kinds of justice; but they lie beyond our present design, which is only to treat of faith in general, and give so radical a notion of it, as may hereafter be branched out to its various effects and operations.

^s Vol. II. p. 442, and p. 602. Edit. Lond. 1742.

* Matt. xxiii. 23.

things :

“ things: that he was greatly encouraged in
 “ this search by divine inspirations; and that
 “ he incessantly persevered in it, till he had
 “ attained a satisfactory notion, not of the es-
 “ sence of God, for that cannot be known, but
 “ of his existence, and over-ruling providence;
 “ for which reason he is first recorded for ha-
 “ ving *faith* in God, because he *first*” [of those
 who had not been taught it by tradition] “ held
 “ a firm and unshaken persuasion, that there
 “ was One Supreme Author of all things, by
 “ whose providence the world, and all things
 “ contained in it, are disposed and governed.
 “ Abraham having attained this *knowledge*, the
 “ most fundamental of the virtues, he at the
 “ same time acquired all the rest.” And
 again ⁶:

“ It is said, to the praise of Abraham, that
 “ *He Believed God*” (or *had Faith in God*; both
 are expressed in the original.) “ Some one may
 “ perhaps say: Do you judge This worthy of
 “ praise? What man is there so bad, who would
 “ not give attention to God, when he speaks or
 “ promises any thing? To such an one we an-
 “ swer: Beware, O Sir, beware, that you do
 “ not rashly refuse this wise man the praise due

⁶ Vol. I. p. 485. A large collection of quotations to the
 same purpose from other Jewish writers, may be found in
Christiani Schoëttgenii Horæ Hebraicæ & Talmudicæ, Tom. II,
 Edit. Dresden 1742. from p. 682 to p. 687.

“ to him, nor ascribe to unworthy persons *faith*,
 “ which is the most perfect of the virtues, nor
 “ censure our doctrine upon this subject. For,
 “ if you will consider this matter not superfi-
 “ cially, but search it to the bottom, you shall
 “ plainly see, that it is no easy thing to have
 “ faith in God only, without any other pledge:
 “ this, I say, is no easy thing by reason of the
 “ close relation that we bear to what is *mortal*,
 “ with which we are yoked, and which forcibly
 “ persuades us to have faith in riches, glory,
 “ power, friends, health and strength of body,
 “ with many other things. Now, to efface
 “ each of these, and put No faith in the crea-
 “ ture, which is never to be trusted; and to
 “ have faith in God alone, who alone can be
 “ securely relied on; to do This, I say, is the
 “ act of a great and heavenly mind, a mind,
 “ that can no more be ensnared by the things
 “ of this world. And it is well added, that
 “ *his faith was counted to him for justice*; for
 “ nothing is so *just*, as to carry ourselves to-
 “ wards God with a sincere and perfect faith
 “ in him alone: but this, which is so *just*, and
 “ agreeable to the nature of things, is accounted
 “ a paradox, because of the want of faith in the
 “ most of us, to whom, by way of reproof,
 “ the sacred word says, *That firmly and inces-*
 “ *santly to rely upon HIM WHO ONLY IS, seems*
 “ *a wonderful thing to men, who possess no real*
 “ good;

“ good ; but is not wonderful to a true discernment, for it is the proper work of JUSTICE.”

So this Jew explains how the *faith* of Abraham *was counted to him for justice* ; and, if faith had been considered in this light, when the question of justification by faith only was so warmly agitated, the controversy might soon have been composed, and great scandals prevented.—But I return to our author, who, in all his writings, speaks of faith in the sense here represented ; and, several times finding occasion to quote this 6th verse of *Gen. xv.* upon which the doctrine of justification by faith is founded, explains it in such a manner, as shews, that it was then an established doctrine in the Jewish schools of divinity ; and that St. Paul’s insisting on it, as he does so copiously to the Jewish converts, was a seasonable and judicious application of a doctrine, then commonly understood and admitted.

But as nothing is more changeable than the meaning of words, and that especially when they come into vulgar use ; this word *Faith* got a new sense in the first age of the christian church, and was transferred to signify a belief of the gospel history. Many of the new converts took faith in this cheap sense : and whereas St. Paul had, in his writings, retained the original signification, which he had been accustomed to in *the school of Gamaliel* ; some mistook his expressions

sions so far, as to assign those high advantages to a notional belief of Christianity, which he had ascribed only to a confirmed habit of piety, even such as Abraham had attained to, and whereby he had merited the title of *Father of the Faithful*. When this error spread in the church, St. James zealously confuted it: and, not standing to dispute about words, which is needless, when we clearly see in what sense the opponents means them, he used the term as *they* understood it, and severely censured *the nominal* faith, with which they deceived themselves; yet, at the same time, by calling it a *dead faith*, he sufficiently intimated, that the name of *Faith* was as improperly applied by them, as when the name *Man* is given to a dead carcase, or when a dry stick, resting in the earth, is called a *Tree*.

In the succeeding ages of the church, the signification of the word *Faith* degenerated still more and more; and was adulterated to such a degree, that every sect had its own *Faith*, as they called it: so that, instead of *an habit of piety*, which is its genuine signification, men came to understand by it, *some transient acts of credulity to nonsense*.

S E C T. II.

THE human mind is naturally and necessarily *dependent*, because it cannot suffice itself; but

but must depend, and, as it were, rest itself, upon somewhat conceived as a fund for happiness, and proper for it to acquiesce in. When the things, which we had depended on, fail us, we presently catch hold of some other fancied good; for the mind cannot bear to be left quite destitute; it wants somewhat to *rely* upon, as verily as the body wants somewhat to *stand* upon; and, without some such support, it becomes insupportable to itself, and sinks down in agony and despair.

Placed as we are in this world, we cannot, at first, but put our unexperienced *trust* in the sensible objects that surround us. We are, for a time at least, ignorant of the Creator; and, during that ignorance, we have nothing to *confide* in but the transitory fallacious goods of this world, which lie within our reach. That they are *vain* and *vexatious*, is what we soon discover by a woful experience; but it may be asked, Why, then, has our Creator placed us Here, in this scene of vanities? Since reliance is so necessary, why are we put Here, where there is nothing that can securely be relied upon? Why, it is for our trial, and for our improvement: it is, that free-will may have its proper exercise; and that, in consequence of a virtuous choice, we may disintangle ourselves from these *delusions*; and, raising our minds above all creatures, we may rely and *depend* upon HIM alone, who
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is our true and only good. To do this, is to have *faith in God*; for by faith we withdraw and recollect our mistaken misplaced confidences in all other objects, to re-establish them united in the Divine Majesty. Thus to *trust in God only*, is to use Him worthily, as we ought, as our GOD; as his goodness deserves, and his justice requires.

Such trust in God goes by the name of Faith, but strictly speaking, and in the precision of the *schools*, this is not faith, but an effect of it. For, as in human affairs *Belief*⁷ is not action, but the cause of action: so in religion, *Faith* is the reason or cause of all religious actions; which are several, but the cause is single, and therefore I chose to form my definition of Faith upon it, which was, as you may remember, that “Faith is such a real, and efficacious knowledge of God, as is proper to this present state of probation.” This I take to be the primitive and precise sense of the term *Faith*, which term is also extended to signify *that reliance on God* which is the effect of it last-mentioned. And there are two other effects which this real knowledge of God produces, *viz. the knowledge of our duty towards him*, and *the per-*

⁷ *Belief* is used variously, sometimes to express a *dubious opinion*, and at other times a *total conviction*: when in matters of great moment it amounts to a total conviction, we naturally and without deliberation follow its dictates.

formance

formance of it, both which are called in scripture by the name of *Faith*.

An inconsiderate reader may perhaps cavil at these different senses of the same word; but that will be only because he is *inconsiderate*: for half the words we use have as diverse significations, and not a few of them have five times as many, as may be seen in every dictionary; where you may farther observe that the different meanings of the same word often stand wide asunder, and some so distant from the primitive sense, that it is difficult to shew their alliance with it: whereas the few various senses of the word *Faith* are natural and obvious, because those which are secondary have an intimate connexion with the primitive signification, and bear its name by that very common figure [metonymy or trope] which mingles the cause with its effects under the same appellation.

Now the knowledge of God has other effects besides that of confiding in him, *viz.* the knowledge of our duty towards him, and also the performance of that duty. I name these distinctly, because I shall treat of them distinctly, as different heads under which the scripture-account of Faith may be farther distributed; for it will be found, that the *knowledge of God*, and, in consequence of that, the *knowledge of our duty* towards him; and, in consequence of that,

that, the *performance of that duty*; are all three called *Faith*.

I begin with *the knowledge of God*; by which we mean not a philosophic, but a practical knowledge of the Deity, and the relation towards him in which we stand: for the divine nature is an object too bright and dazzling for our contemplation; but, though unknown as in himself, he is to us the great *Father of Light*; and source of all true knowledge, moral and divine: in like manner the nature of the sun is to us an inexplicable mystery; but his heat and his splendor are sensible benefits; they cherish life, and direct its functions: we are animated by his warmth, and guided by his light: by him the visible world stands open to us; and by him we are maintained in a capacity to enjoy it: and in these respects we are said to know the sun, since we know him to all useful purposes.

It is in this sense we call Faith a knowledge of God. We are in a proper disposition to receive that knowledge, when, recollected in devotion, we humbly present ourselves before him. This is in scripture called *coming to God*. The actual exercise of that Faith is called *walking with God*⁸, as was shewed before: and the ceasing to persist in it, is called, *departing from God*⁹. So Moses, reproaching the children of

⁸ Heb. xi. 6.

⁹ Heb. iii. 12.

Israel, “that they forsook the God who made them,” calls them, *Children in whom there is no FAITH*: for, as knowledge is a mental presence with the thing known; so, in that respect, to forget it, is to forsake it.

Secondly, This sense of the Divine Presence is luminous, it enlightens the conscience, and causes there a proportionable sense of our duty towards him. This is a certain effect of the *real* knowledge of God; and therefore This, too, is in scripture called *Faith*. In the xivth chapter of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, he, speaking of some who had needless scruples about the use of certain kinds of food, says of such, that they are *weak in the Faith*, ver. 1. and, exhorting their christian brethren, who were more enlightened, to be indulgent to their infirmity, he says, ver. 22. “If ye have the Faith [whereby to discern that all kinds of food are in their own nature indifferent] keep it to yourselves before God—but he, who imagines that there is any moral difference between foods, yet eats of that, whereof he doubts the lawfulness, is condemned, because he acts not according to his Faith; and whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin.” It is apparent, that *Faith* here means Conscience, or the inward sense of duty; and the apostle confirms this meaning, 1 Cor. viii. 10, 11, 12. where, treating the same

^a Deut. xxxii. 18, 20.

subject, he, for *Faith*, uses *Knowledge*; and for *weak Faith*, *weak Conscience*.

Thirdly, As this divine knowledge causes a proportionable knowledge of our duty, so, in like manner, it also produces the performance of that duty, and thence *Faith* in scripture, sometimes means *Obedience*. Thus *Ecclus xv. 15. Thou shalt keep the commandments, and practise the acceptable faith*². The expressions here are synonymous; but as it is of great use, for finding out the true value and force of words, to consider not only the synonyma, or terms of a like sense; but also the antitheta, or words of a contrary meaning; I shall, upon this occasion, give instances of the last kind, where *Disobedience* is directly opposed to *Faith*, as its contrary.

Faith and *Belief*, you know, are but different renderings of the same word, in the original. Now in the Gospel by St. John, iii. 36. our Lord says, “He who *believeth* in the Son, hath “everlasting life; but he who *believeth not* the “Son, shall not see life.” So our translation; but the original is, “he that *obeyeth not* the “Son.” The antithesis is between *believing* and *not obeying*; so that he, who *obeys not*, is said *not*

² πίστιν ποιῆσαι εὐδοκίας. *Eudokias* is, by a Hebraism, put for *eudokhios*, as Grotius observes upon the place. Accordingly we read, *Ecclus i. 27. ἡ εὐδοκία αὐτῆ πῖστις καὶ πραότης. Faith and meekness are his delight.*

to believe. In many other places the Jews, who receive not the Faith of Christ, are called the *disobedient* Jews, which our translators render *unbelieving*³ Jews; but it were to be wished, that the literal translation had been preserved, as a caution against that dangerous error, which has so much prevailed, *viz.* that *Faith* was so distinct from *Obedience*, that it could subsist without it; whereas Faith is never mentioned in scripture, as conducive to salvation, but Obedience is always included as an essential ingredient.

St. Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, directing how the public alms of the church under his care should be distributed, orders him to relieve the widows that were really destitute; but, says he, “if any widow have children or grandchildren, let them maintain her—for if any does not provide for his relations, especially those who are nearest to him, he hath *denied the Faith*, and is worse than an infidel⁴.” A man might let his mother come upon the parish, and still continue to repeat and believe his creed as founded on divine authority; yet according to St. Paul, such an one *denies the Faith*, and is *worse* than an infidel, because he offends against *greater* knowledge. As an act

³ Acts xiv. 2. xvii. 5. xix. 9. Rom. xi. 30, 31, 32. xv. 31. Heb. iii. 18, 19, &c. &c.

⁴ 1 Tim. v. 3, 4, 8.

of folly is a negative of wisdom; as an act of injustice is a denial of justice, a disowning its obligations; so every wilful act of disobedience is a denial of *faith*, i. e. the religious principle, even that regard which we owe to the Creator, and which is the general source of all virtue.

Let so much suffice at present for the scripture-doctrine concerning faith, since occasions for a farther detail will occur so frequently hereafter. The subject is so copious, that we must divide it into several parts, to treat each of them distinctly. I have, therefore, now spoken of faith, only as it concerns religion in general; and indeed the words, which gave occasion to these discourses, did not lead me farther. Our Lord, to dissuade anxious cares for our subsistence, was arguing from the goodness of God, that, as he had given us life, he would not refuse what is needful for its maintenance; and, enforcing this argument by examples of the superintending care of Providence for the inferior animals, and even the vegetables, he infers from these last, “If God so clothe the grass of the field—how much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith!” As if he should have said, “O ye, who so little know God, as to distrust his paternal bounty!” Here was no mysterious article to be received, no supreme authority to be submitted to; nothing but what mere human reason required: it, therefore, may
be

be objected, that what we ascribe to faith is the office of reason, since the truths of natural religion only have been hitherto insisted on: yet you have heard from the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where faith is so amply described and exemplified, how the inspired author premonishes the reader, at ver. 3. that “through faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God;” and at ver. 6. he adds, that “without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God, must believe that HE IS.” The existence of God, and that he created the world, are the fundamental articles of natural religion, which is commonly supposed to be the province of reason; yet they are here described to be articles of faith.

It is, therefore, necessary, before we quit this subject, that we should explain these two great principles, *reason* and *faith*; which have been *confounded* in the articles of the natural creed, and *set at variance* in the articles of revealed religion. Our first business, therefore, is, rightly to distinguish them: which we shall attempt to do in the following dissertation.

Of FAITH and REASON.

REASON and faith are two principles from which proceed all that is here admired in *wisdom*, and all that hereafter shall be rewarded in *virtue*. The first disposes for the second: *reason* should serve to introduce us to *faith*. But if men reject the dictates of reason in that momentous concern, they then actually deprave and corrupt their own reason; and, having degraded it from its office of guiding to truth, they render it the *tool* of their passions, an obsequious instrument of error and delusion.

And as reason leads to faith, so faith will maintain reason in its due authority; for it will confirm us in the right use of our reason, and prevent the abuses of it, by setting our real interest in the true point of view.

But before we enlarge upon the different offices of *reason* and *faith*, we must first fix some certain meaning to the term *reason*; for in common usage it is very ambiguous. Among the various meanings that are given it, I have selected three, which properly relate to the present subject.

Reason, in its first and most usual sense, signifies that faculty of the soul, by which we form our judgment of things; and by which, at least by greater degrees of which, we differ from

from the rest of the animals. It is distinguished from *sense* and *intuition*, both which are immediate perception; whereas reason here means the *discursive* faculty; which, surveying different ideas, *running* from thought to thought, and comparing them together, makes inferences from the whole view it has taken. This faculty is weaker or stronger in different men, and even in the same man at different times; but in all it is fallible, and very often abused: yet (which is a strange instance of human blindness and presumption) the word *reason* has got to signify, not only the discursive faculty, but also the right use of that faculty; and, from this double sense of the substantive, we derive two adjectives of different signification, *rational*, I mean, and *reasonable*. When we say a man is a *rational* creature, we mean, that he has a faculty called reason, by which he is capable of discovering certain truths, which it concerns him to know: when we say of a man, that he is *reasonable*, we mean, that he actually discovers and practises them. These are very different characters; for the first suits all men; the second, very few: yet both the faculty, and the right use of the faculty, are called *reason*; and, various notions being thus confounded together, reason is become much in vogue, and all lay claim to it.

A second sense of the word reason is, when it signifies the proper object of that faculty, *viz.* the *truth sought by it*. In this sense Solomon says of himself, that he *applied his heart to know and search out the reason of things*¹; i. e. their nature, their end, and use. It is a misfortune in language to have so different ideas expressed by the same name. The understanding, by which we search, is one thing, and the truth sought, is quite another; yet both are expressed by the same name, both are called *reason*. We might as well call hunger and food by the same name. And yet, by means of this gross equivocation, reason and faith have been set at variance; and superficial men have been imposed on by perplexed arguments, which they were not able to unravel. I shall, therefore, dwell a little upon these different senses of the word *reason*, that they may be thoroughly observed and comprehended. One while reason means the understanding, at other times the thing that is to be understood. It means that which *knows*, and also that which is *to be known*. In the last mentioned instance of Solomon seeking to know the *reason* of things, it is evident, that reason signifies something that *is* to be known. No inanimate substances have a *reason* that can know; but they have a *reason* that may

¹ Eccl. vii. 25.

be known ; something which Solomon, by his *reason*, sought to discover.

To illustrate these two different meanings of the word *reason*, we may compare it with bodily eye-sight, wherein the same ambiguity happens to occur. The seeing faculty is called *our sight*, and the thing seen is also called *a sight* ; these are different, distant things ; and the intercourse between them cannot be maintained but by a third thing quite different from the two former, I mean *light*. The most piercing *eye* is useless, and the most magnificent scenes are no spectacle, till the light intervenes, and becomes a medium, to unite the faculty and the object : and if *then* we shut our eyes against the light, or turn away from the object it illustrates, we in so far render the *light* useless. The application of this to our moral conduct, belongs to

A third sense of the word *reason* ; viz. when it is made synonymous with *right, truth, justice* ; as in the following phrases, “ Reason requires,” “ He has reason on his side,” “ Contrary to reason,” “ Beyond all reason,” &c. Here *reason* does not signify the private judgment of any particular man, but *somewhat universal*, which all, in the proper dispositions, may have access to ; which all are obliged to consult, and to whose decisions all profess themselves ready to submit. In this sense it is often called *right reason*, which, when it is repre-

presented to our understanding, we may, by *our own reason*, investigate, and assure ourselves of, the certainty of its determinations. And here we discover the wide difference there is between right reason and the personal reason, or intellect, of every particular man. Right reason *is one only*; yet *universal*, and communicable to all intelligent beings. It is *eternal* and *immutable*, which are essential attributes of the Deity². It is indeed, THE REASON OF THE INFINITE MIND, the Divine Logos, of whom St. John declares, that *He is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*. He is an intellectual light, which dawns upon every human mind, and thereby renders us moral agents: as such, as moral agents, we have it in our choice, whether we *will* receive, or *not* receive, the truth presented to us. In either case, we must have some knowledge of it; but that knowledge will be greatly different in those, who, admitting it no farther than the *head*, only reason about it, and those, who desirously receive it into their *hearts*, and follow its guidance.

There are, then, two kinds of moral knowledge; the one a mere speculation, the other a practical conviction. These two differ by the whole nature of things; they differ as a shadow does from a substance; and it is therefore fitting to distinguish them by different names: the first

² See *Clem. Alexandr. Pædagogus*, Lib. 1. cap. 13.

we may call the knowledge by *reason*; the second, by *faith*.

In the first, the knowledge by reason, that divine, universal light, which enlightens all men, testifies to them the existence of God, with their consequent obligations. So his apostle, “That, which may be known of God, is
 “ manifest in them; for God hath shewed it
 “ to them. For the invisible nature of God,
 “ even his eternal power and Deity, are clearly
 “ seen from the creation of the world, being
 “ understood from the things that are made³ ;”
i. e. by the creatures: so that men, by their own reason, may investigate this truth with infallible assurance, and yet without any effect; no worship, no gratitude, no obedience ensue: then is fulfilled the scripture, which says, *Seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not;* the expressions sound absurd, but they are just and proper: the absurdity is only in the thing expressed, in the inconsistent and inexcusable behaviour of men, who subvert the order of nature, who go contrary to the express dictates of their own reason, and, instead of following their guide, drag him after them, yet at the same time, perhaps, applaud themselves for having *known* the truth, although they do not *practise* it. And thus will their knowledge become a snare to them; for, having nothing more at

³ Rom. i. 19.

heart than their own approbation, to maintain that, they will be tempted to mistake notions for realities. They know the existence of God; they know much of his attributes, and perhaps can reason about them with force and subtilty: hence (prone as men are to deceive themselves) they may conclude that they believe in God, that they have *faith*, with all its promised advantages: but if, *knowing God, they do not glorify him as God; if they do not worship him; if they have not so grateful a sense of his goodness, as to prefer his will to their own, and deny themselves to obey him, they will become vain in their reasonings, and their foolish heart will be darkened*⁴. Truth will float in the mind a superficial, transient, useless thought, a mere notion void of reality.

But faith is the notion of God *realized*, if I may so speak; it is an impression of the Almighty upon the heart of man. For, in order to its production, our *will* must *turn* to God with earnest desires of conformity to the divine will; *i. e.* we must put in practice the first lesson of reason, which teaches, that the Creator ought to be obeyed; that he, who made us, has a right to our subjection:—our will, therefore, I say, must turn to God with sincere desires of conformity to the divine will; and then God also turns to us, and excites in us just and effi-

⁴ Rom. i. 21.

efficacious sentiments of himself; which, in the measure we cultivate them with persevering piety, dilate themselves, and gradually gain the ascendant in our minds. For while we adhere to God in devotion, he, the omnipresent Deity, is not wanting on his part, but puts forth divine energy, which will produce all the good effects we are capable of in our present disposition. This experimental efficacious knowledge of God manifesting himself to his worshippers, and thereby disposing and inclining them to their duty; this knowledge, I say, is what we call *faith*, and is the proper basis of all religion.

Our excellent Cudworth, in the preface to his Intellectual System, says, that “ Scripture
 “ faith is not a mere believing of historical
 “ things upon testimonies only; but a certain
 “ higher and diviner power in the soul, that
 “ peculiarly correspondeth with the Deity.”
 And the great Paschal, in his Thoughts, observes, that “ there are three means of believing; rea-
 “ son, custom, and inspiration. The Chris-
 “ tian religion, which alone has reason on its
 “ side, does yet admit none for its true disci-
 “ ples, who do not believe by inspiration. Nor
 “ does it injure reason or custom, or debar them
 “ of their proper force: on the contrary, it di-
 “ rects us to open our mind by the proofs of
 “ reason; and confirm it by the authority of
 “ custom. But then, it chiefly engages us,
 “ with

“ with all humility, to offer ourselves to the
 “ divine inspiration, which alone can produce
 “ the true and salutary effect.” And again,
 “ It is the heart, and not the reason, which
 “ has properly the perception of GOD. *God,*
 “ *sensible to the heart,* is the most compendious
 “ description of true and perfect faith.”

I return now to the words from which I took occasion to treat of this subject; and observe, that our Lord does not reprove his disciples for want of faith, till after he had convinced them, by many indubitable arguments, that the duty, he was then instructing them in, was what reason plainly required: yet, blaming their failure in that duty, he says, *O ye of little faith!* Some may think, that, in propriety of speech, he should have said, *O ye of little reason!* for he had shewn, that a distrust of Providence is contrary to the clearest dictates of reason; yet it is not the defect of reason, but of faith, that he reproaches them with; because reason does its office right enough, when we ourselves do not pervert it, and disown its plainest inferences.

Reason, for instance, sufficiently instructs us that there is a GOD—There is a *God*, Creator, Governor, and Judge of the world. What consequences do immediately flow?—If we will suffer none of these to affect us, then our reason becomes useless in the one great concern, and the rest of life is a perpetual error. For rea-
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soning is a kind of calculation, and when the capital sum is omitted, when God is left out of the account, what errors must ensue? No wonder, then, that those, who, as St. Paul speaks, *do not retain God in their knowledge; become vain in their reasonings*⁵, either reasoning *falsly*, or reasoning to no purpose, even when they reason *right*.

As to the *falsity* of mens reasonings; all, who know themselves or others, must be sensible, how very apt men are to find reasons, such as they are, for every thing they are inclined to; and that the chapter of *false reasonings* is the largest chapter in the history of human nature.

But farther, even when men reason *right* in matters of morality, we daily see them reason to no purpose; because they have not the *power* to follow their reason, when it represents, as it often does, the many evils incurred by uncontrolled appetites and passions. For there are sober intervals, in which even the most extravagant reason with themselves upon these subjects, and conclude with good purposes of amendment. Yet nothing is more common than to see such reasonings vain and fruitless, when they are not supported by religion; by religion, I say, wherein the mind returns to its dependence

⁵ For *reasonings* our translation has *imagination*s; but the original is *διελογισμοῖς*, Rom. i. 21.

upon the Creator, and earnestly ⁶ *cleaving* to him, with an humble confidence in his power and goodness, draws down that light and assistance, which is the necessary remedy for our frailty, the proper supplement for the imperfections of our nature.

Such devout adherence to God is what the scripture means by faith; whereof there are many various degrees, rising one above another like the increase of light from the morning dawn to the noon-day splendors. And as, in the human sciences, learning one lesson well, is a necessary preparation for understanding the next, so certainly it is in theology; the revealed doctrines can never be rightly understood by those, who have not earnestly applied themselves to practise the duties of natural religion. We must be well exercised in piety towards the *Creator*, before we can be duly sensible of our obligations to the *Redeemer*: and it is only by the progress we make in natural religion, that we come to feel our want of a Saviour. *No one can come to me, says our Lord, unless my Father draw him; and those, who will not worship the Great Father of the universe, render themselves unworthy of his attractive influence.*

⁶ *Faith is the beginning of cleaving unto God, Eccclus xxv. 12.*

INTERPRETATION.

C H A P. VII.

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. ² For, according as ye judge others, ye shall be judged yourselves; and ye shall receive such measure as you give. ³ Why do you observe the mote which is in your brother's eye; and do not consider the beam which is in your own eye? ⁴ Or, how can you say to your brother, Let me take the mote out of your eye, while there is a beam in your own? ⁵ You hypocrite, first remove the beam from your own eye; and then you will see clearly to take the mote from your brother's eye. ⁶ Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine; lest they trample on them, and, turning upon you, tear you. ⁷ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened to you: ⁸ For every one who asks, does receive; and he who seeks, does find; and to him who knocketh, shall the door be opened. ⁹ Who of you, if his son should ask bread of him, would give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or, if he should ask a fish, would you give him a serpent? ¹¹ If ye, then, bad as ye are, know how to bestow good gifts upon your children; how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to them who ask him? ¹² All things, therefore, which ye would that men should do for you, do ye the same for them;

them; for this is the substance of the law and the prophets. ^a ¹³ Enter through the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, which leads to perdition; and they who pass through it, are many. ^b ¹⁴ But the gate is strait, and the way narrow, which leadeth to life; and those who find it, are few. ¹⁵ But beware of false prophets, who come to you clothed as sheep, but inwardly are ravenous wolves: ¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? ¹⁷ Even so every good tree yields good fruit; but a corrupt tree yields bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹ (Every tree which does not produce good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire). ²⁰ By their fruits, then, ye shall know them. ²¹ Not every one who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but only such as do the will of my Father, who is in heaven. ^c ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not preached in thy name? and cast out demons in thy name? and in thy name wrought

^a Ver. 13.] *The strait gate* is the law just before mentioned, viz. *That we should do as we would be done by.*

^b Ver. 14, 15.] The connexion here is remarkable. One characteristic of false prophets, i. e. preachers, is, that they widen *the narrow way.*

^c Ver. 22. *in that day.*] The day of judgment (so called by way of eminence) when the bad trees, ver. 19. shall be cast into the fire.

many

many miracles? ²³ Then will I declare to them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that have practised iniquity. ²⁴ Whosoever, then, hears these my instructions, and puts them in practice, I will compare him to a prudent man, who built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; yet it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock: ²⁶ But every one who hears these my instructions, and does not practise them, shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: ²⁷ The rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. ²⁸ When Jesus had finished this discourse, the people were astonished at his doctrine: ²⁹ For he taught them as having authority, and not as the Scribes.

† Judge not, that ye be not judged, &c.

God proposes and recommends his mercy to our imitation: he commands us in this, in mercy, to be perfect as himself; but judgment is his reserved prerogative; and they shall feel the weight of it, who rashly invade its office.

To judge, is an act of sovereignty; it is an exercise of such authority, as is indeed very considerable, if we were really possessed of it. Pride, among its other usurpations, arrogates to

itself this province ; it raises us above our brethren in an imaginary tribunal, from whence we affect to distribute praise or blame in the sentence we pass on them ; and which is commonly to their disadvantage, because the first-born of pride is malice. He that loves himself *more* than he ought, must love others *less* than he ought ; and the same principle, which makes us overvalue ourselves, makes us undervalue our neighbour. For, as our notions of excellence are by comparison, we cannot ascribe it so immoderately to ourselves, but upon a supposed defect of it in others. Their abasement seems to set us higher, and we erect trophies to ourselves upon their ruins. And this is the reason why our judgments err so much oftener to the prejudice, rather than to the advantage of our neighbour. Mere ignorance has an equal chance either way ; what is thrown in the dark, and at random, might as probably hit above, as below, the mark. The reason why we are so often under it, is the malice of our hearts, which makes us delight to find faults in others, as excuses for our own faults, or foils to our virtues.

³ *Why do you observe the mote which is in your brother's eye, &c.*

See chap. v. 29. and vi. 22. where *eye* signifies, as here, the *intention*, which is the usual subject

subject of rash censures; because actions are self-evident, and thence not so liable to misconstruction as the intention wherewith they are performed. This latter is not apparent, and therefore leaves room for that rash judgment, which our Lord had just before prohibited.

The word, which we render *mote*, signifies a splinter or shiver of wood; in Latin, *festuca*, whence the English, *fescue*. This, and a *beam*, as its opposite, were proverbially used by the Jews to denote small infirmities, or gross faults, each of which proportionably obstruct the moral discernment.

⁵ *You hypocrite, &c.*

It is hypocrisy to pretend a zeal for others, if we have not first had it for ourselves. True zeal is uniform, and even begins *within* to remove the *beam* from our own eye, which is its proper and peculiar work, and a necessary qualification for reforming others: and even when it is so qualified, yet still it must proceed with a prudent caution; as our Lord instructs us in the next verse, *Give not that which is holy to dogs, &c.*

⁷ *Ask, and it shall be given, &c.*

There is often a latent connexion in the discourses of our Lord, which obviates difficul-

ties, and answers doubts that may arise upon what had been said. As here, when he had taught how they, who take upon them to instruct others, ought to be qualified; and cautioned them, who were so qualified, not to prostitute the precious truths of religion to such as were not in a condition to profit by them; a doubt might justly arise in their minds how they should be able to discern who were proper, or not proper subjects for admonition; and to answer this, I conceive, he subjoined what immediately follows, *Ask, and ye shall receive, &c.* When the case is dubious, and the monitor himself so far purified as to have no *beam in his own eye*, there will then be no danger of enthusiasm, if, after lifting up his heart to *the Father of lights*, he in simplicity does what he finds himself inclined to, *Ask, and it shall be given, &c.*

²² *Have we not cast out demons, &c.*

For *demons* our public translation has *devils*: but as an evil spirit is called by two different names in the original, *viz.* Διάβολος, where he is spoke of as the *tempter*, or the *accuser* of mankind; and Δαίμων, where bodily *possessions* are spoken of: I have rendered the first by *devil*, and the second by *demon*. There certainly is a material difference, although we can give no account of it.

I N T E R-

INTERPRETATION.

C H A P. VIII.

¹ **W**HEN he was come down from the mountain, a great multitude followed him. ² At the same time a leper came, and adoring him said, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. ³ Then Jesus putting forth his hand, touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And instantly he was cured of his leprosy. ⁴ And Jesus said to him, See that you tell no man, but go, shew yourself to the priest, and offer the gift directed by Moses for a testimony of your cure. ⁵ When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came and besought him, ⁶ Saying, Lord, my servant lies at home, grievously afflicted with the palsy. ⁷ And Jesus said to him, I will come and heal him. ⁸ The centurion answered, Lord, I am not a fit person that you should come under my roof: do but speak the word, and my servant will be cured. ⁹ For though I am under the authority of others; yet, as I have soldiers under my command, I say to one, Go, and he goes; to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. ¹⁰ Jesus hearing this, wondered; and said to them who followed, I solemnly declare to you, that even in Israel I have not found so great a faith. ¹¹ And I tell you that many shall come from the east and west, and sit down to table with Abraham, and

Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; ¹² but the children of the kingdom shall be ejected into external darkness: there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth. ¹³ Then Jesus said to the centurion, Go, and according to your faith be it done to you. And his servant was cured that very hour. ¹⁴ After this Jesus went to Peter's house, where seeing his wife's mother lying sick of a fever, ¹⁵ he touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then she arose, and served them. ¹⁶ When it was evening they brought to him many that were possessed; and he cast out the evil spirits with a word; and healed all that were sick: ¹⁷ Whereby that was fulfilled, which was said by the prophet Esaias, "Himself took our ^f infirmities, and bore "our diseases." ¹⁸ Jesus seeing a great croud about him, gave orders to pass over to the other side of the lake: ¹⁹ And a certain Scribe coming to him, said, Master, I will follow you wherever you go. ²⁰ Jesus replied, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. ²¹ Another of his disciples said to him, Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father. ²² But Jesus said to him, Follow me, and leave the dead to bury

^f Ver. 17. *Infirmities.*] The LXX and St. Peter, 1 Ep. ii. 24. renders this *sins*. The evangelist uses the ambiguous word *infirmities*, which may be understood of bodily or of mental diseases, to inculcate what was our Lord's principal view in his miraculous cures. See the dissertation at the end of the ninth chapter.

their

their own dead. ²³ Then going aboard the vessel he was followed by his disciples: ²⁴ And on a sudden there arose so great a tempest in the sea, that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. ²⁵ And his disciples coming awoke him, saying, Lord save us; we are lost. ²⁶ He said to them, Why are ye afraid, O ye little of faith? Then arising, he rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men were amazed, and said, What a man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey! ²⁸ And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two demoniacs, who came out of the tombs ^g, and were so furious, that it was not safe for any to pass that way. ²⁹ And suddenly they cried out, saying, What have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of God, are you come hither to torment us before the time? ³⁰ Now there was ^h at some distance from them a large herd of swine, feeding. ³¹ So the demons besought him, saying, If you cast us out, permit us to enter into the herd of swine: ³² He said to them, Go: accordingly, they coming out of the men entered into the herd of swine: and immediately the whole herd rushed down a precipice into the sea, and were drowned. ³³ And those who had kept them, fled into the city, where they re-

^g Ver. 28. Tombs.] The sepulchres of the Jews were in subterraneous grottos.

^h Ver. 30. At some distance.] Non longè. *Vulgate.*

lated the whole matter, with what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴ Upon which the whole city went out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they desired that he would leave their country.

Concerning the Faith of the CENTURION.

¹⁰ *I have not found so great a faith, &c.*

I HAVE already treated of faith in general, and more particularly as it concerns natural religion: the history here related is a remarkable instance of it in that degree; and shews at the same time the natural progression of that virtue to greater illumination.

The narrative which St. Luke gives of the centurion's behaviour, is larger and more distinct than this in St. Matthew, and therefore I shall put them both together; only premising, that as it is not unusual in all languages, so in the Hebrew particularly it is very usual to ascribe to the person himself what has been spoke or done by his order⁷: and accordingly St. Matthew relates, as said by the *centurion* himself, what was really spoke by those whom he had deputed to address our Lord on his behalf:

⁷ So chap. xi. ver. 2, 3. "When John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come?" &c. John said by the mouth of his disciples.

which

which sufficiently accounts for the seeming difference that is found in the two evangelists.

The *centurion* was a pagan, who attending to the light of nature with a solid piety, had attained to the knowledge of THE ONE GOD: and finding that fundamental truth so well established in the Jewish religion, had upon that account taken a great affection to the Jewish nation, and done them all the good offices which lay in his power. His advancement in natural religion made him ripe for the revealed, and his knowledge of God led him by a just transition to the knowledge of Christ, for whom he had so awful a veneration, that when he was to apply to him for the cure of his servant, he had recourse to the intercession of the elders of the Jewish church, who, at his request, came to Jesus to intreat him, that he would come and cure the sick servant in consideration of his master who had sent them, and to whom they acknowledged great obligations. So we read, Luke vii. 4. “ They besought him earnestly, “ saying, He, for whom we ask this favour, is “ one who well deserves it; for he loves our “ nation, and has himself built us a synagogue.” Jesus went along with them as they desired; but while he was yet on the way, and not far from the house, the *centurion*, who had refrained from addressing Jesus in person, out of an humble sense of his own unworthiness; (and perhaps too

too from having observed how the more religious Jews made a scruple of conversing with the heathen, such as he himself still was to outward appearance); when he heard that Christ was actually coming to his house, reflected with himself, upon more enlarged views of faith, that the intended visit was a needless condescension in our Lord; and therefore sent some of his friends to prevent it by the following message in his name. “ Lord, do not give yourself farther trouble, for I am not a fit person that you should come under my roof; and that indeed was the reason why I judged myself unworthy to come to you myself. Do you but speak the word only, and my servant will be cured. For although I am under the authority of others, yet, as I have soldiers under me, I say to one, Go, and he goes; to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it^s.” As if he should have said: I am but a subaltern, and have only a delegated and subordinate power; yet what I bid be done, is immediately executed: you then, who are Lord of nature, what cannot you do by your bare command?—

“ When Jesus heard this, he wondered: and turning about he said to the people that followed him, I profess that I have not found

^s Luke vii. 6, &c.

“ so great a faith even among the Jews themselves ?”

It is very remarkable that through the whole gospel Jesus is never said to ⁹ *wonder* at any thing but faith. Now things difficult, and rare, and extraordinary in their kind are the proper objects of admiration. But it may be said, Is not faith *the gift of God*? And is God's bounty so penurious, and his gifts so rare, that he himself, who has the distribution of them, (our Lord I mean) should wonder to find a mind greatly enriched by them? To this we answer, that most indubitably faith is *the gift of God*, and that a man might as soon create in himself a new sense, as produce a true and lively faith by his own abilities. And it is not the gift, but man's persevering acceptance of that gift which was the subject of Christ's admiration. To pass over what was peculiar in the case of this *centurion*, whereof we are not competent judges, as Christ alone discerned his inward sentiments—therefore to pass them over, and bring this matter home to ourselves, we may upon due reflection be convinced that *divine faith* in general, when it is actually received and embraced in the heart of a Christian, produces

⁹ Wonder in Christ is to be interpreted as an high expression of esteem; such is that to the woman of Canaan, *Matt. xv. 28. O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

there

there such strange and wondrous effects, as cannot but raise our esteem and admiration. For faith is a *divine light*, by which *conscience* will presently read us our duty, and urge such *mortifying* consequences, that it is no wonder men shut their eyes against it: the wonder is, when they persist to receive its illumination, notwithstanding the deep sentiments of humiliation, of remorse and compunction, which it must necessarily excite in them. But I have found this matter so emphatically represented by the judicious Dr. Barrow in his Discourses concerning *Faith*, that I have transcribed from him, as follows.

“ The first step into the Christian state is a
 “ sight and sense of our own imperfection, weak-
 “ ness, baseness and misery: we must discern,
 “ and feel, that our mind is very blind, our
 “ reason feeble, our will impotent and prone
 “ to evil: that our life is void of merit, and
 “ polluted with guilt: that our condition is
 “ deplorably sad and wretched: that of our-
 “ selves we are insufficient to think, or do any
 “ good in order to our recovery: whence we
 “ are obliged to fore compunction of spirit for
 “ our deeds, and our case; to humble con-
 “ fession of our sins, and miseries; to earnest
 “ supplication for mercy, and grace, to heal,
 “ and rescue us from our sad estate. *Lord,*
 “ *have mercy on me a sinner: what shall I do to*
 “ *be*

“ *be saved? Wretched man that I am, who shall*
 “ *deliver me from this body of death! Such are*
 “ *the ejaculations of a soul teeming with*
 “ *FAITH.*

“ *He that entereth into the snare, must*
 “ *therewith entirely submit his understanding,*
 “ *and resign his judgment to God as his mas-*
 “ *ter, and guide,” &c. The admirable author*
 goes on with his usual copiousness, and cogency
 of argument. But I must stop here, and dis-
 miss the subject for the present, as I shall have
 occasion to resume it.

INTERPRETATION.

CHAP. IX.

¹ *AND* returning into the ship he crossed the
 lake, and came to his own city; ² where they
 brought to him a paralytic lying on a bed; and
 Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, Have
 confidence, my son, your sins are forgiven. ³ Where-
 upon some of the scribes said within themselves,
 This man blasphemeth. ⁴ And Jesus perceiving
 their thoughts, said, Why think ye evil in your
 hearts? ⁵ For which is easier, to say, Your sins
 are forgiven; or to say, arise and walk? ⁶ But
 that ye may know that the son of man hath autho-
 rity on earth to forgive sins (turning to the para-
 lytic

lytic he said) Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house. ⁷ Then the paralytic arose, and went to his house, ⁸ and the multitude was amazed at the sight; and glorified God, who had given such authority to men. ⁹ And as Jesus passed along from thence, he saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom; and said to him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. ¹⁰ And it happened afterwards that, as Jesus was at table in the house^a, many publicans and sinners came, and sat down with him and his disciples; ¹¹ which the Pharisees observing, said to his disciples, Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners? ¹² And Jesus hearing this, said to them, Those who are well, do not want a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go then and learn, what that means^b, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” Moreover I am not come to call the just, but sinners to repentance. ¹⁴ Then John’s disciples came to him, saying, Why do your disciples never fast, whereas we, and the Pharisees fast often? ¹⁵ Jesus answered, Can the atten-

^a Ver. 10. *In the house.*] Of Matthew, Luke v. 29.

^b Ver. 13. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, &c.*] Mercy, i. e. doing a good work, such as converting sinners, rather than sacrifice, or any other observance of the ceremonial law. The negation imports not a total exclusion, but a comparative preference. What follows is an additional reason for our Lord’s conduct, moreover, I am not come to call, &c. The Greek particle γάρ is sometimes an affirmative, and may be rendered by *porro* in Latin.

dants of the bridegroom mourn, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then they will fast^c. ¹⁶ No man puts a piece of new cloth upon an old garment: for the piece put on will tear from the garment, and a worse rent will be made. ¹⁷ Nor do men put new wine into old vessels; else the vessels burst, the wine is spilled, and the vessels are lost: but they put new wine into new vessels, and both are preserved. ¹⁸ While he was thus discoursing, a certain ruler came and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is just now dead; yet come and lay your hand upon her, and she shall live. ¹⁹ Then Jesus arose and followed him, as did also his disciples. ²⁰ At the same time a woman, who had been diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. ²¹ For she said within herself, If I can but touch his garment I shall be cured. ²² But Jesus turned about, and beholding her, said, Have confidence, daughter, your faith has cured you. And the woman was cured from

^c Ver. 16, 17.] These shew the necessity of accommodating doctrines to states: the former must vary with the latter. Souls of an advanced degree come under a different discipline, which would be prejudicial to novices in the heavenly kingdom, as Christ's disciples yet were. The fast which he predicts for *them*, was of a far deeper kind, than the bodily abstinence which the disciples of John practised; it was to be deprived of those vital consolations with which they were now supported by his *sensible* presence with them.

that

that instant. ²³ And when Jesus was come to the ruler's house, and saw the ^a musicians and a tumultuous crowd; ²⁴ he said to them, Withdraw, for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth; and they derided him. ²⁵ But when the people were put out, He entering, took the maid by the hand, and she arose. ²⁶ And the fame of this was spread through all that country. ²⁷ As Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, Son of David, have mercy on us. ²⁸ And when he went into an house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, Do ye believe that I am able to do this? They answered, Yes, Lord. ²⁹ Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you; ³⁰ and their eyes were opened, and Jesus gave them a strict charge that no man should know it. ³¹ However, when they were gone, they spread his fame through all that country. ³² As these were going out, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon: ³³ And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man recovered his speech; and the people were amazed, and said, Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel; ³⁴ But the Pharisees said, He casteth out the demons by the prince of the demons. ³⁵ And Jesus went about all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and curing diseases and in-

^a Ver. 23. Musicians.] Or pipers, who then were usual attendants at funerals.

firmities of every kind. ³⁶ And beholding the multitudes, he had compassion on them, because they were tired and lay down^e, as sheep that had no shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, The harvest indeed is plentiful, but there are few labourers. ³⁸ Beseech, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest.

Concerning the miraculous Cures wrought by
CHRIST.

² He said to the Paralytic, Have Confidence, &c.

THE first and most obvious use intended by the miraculous cures, which our Lord performed, was to convince men of the truth of his doctrine; and that they might have sure ground to reason as Nicodemus did, when he said to him, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him.” The first effect therefore which his miracles ought to have with us, should be to make us cordially embrace his doctrines, and exert our utmost endeavours to put them in practice. Those who apply them-

^e Ver. 36. *They were tired and lay down.*] So the public translation in the margin.

² John iii. 6.

selves to this with the greatest fidelity and earnestness, will sooner or later meet such difficulties, or perhaps real obstacles in their religious course, as will convince them that mere *instruction* is not sufficient; that besides *advice* they must have *assistance* too, and that the same divine power, which was exerted to convince them of the truth of his doctrine, must concur to enable them to practise it: and they will by degrees come to feel such a weight and burden of sin, as will greatly oppress, and not a little discourage them. Here then a second lesson is to be learnt from the miraculous cures wrought by Christ; for those great instances of his goodness and power will raise the languishing hopes of his distressed servants. And, as every man naturally transfers the notions he is full of to the objects that come in his way; and our minds are ever quick at applying things to what we have most at heart: so when they reflect upon his bounty to the diseased of every kind that were addressed to him in Palestine; they too will hope for some share in his favours, and accordingly address themselves to Him as the great physician of souls. This is a general consideration applicable to every miraculous cure which he performed: but I choose to treat of it upon the occasion of this paralytic, because Christ took that occasion to explain his intention to the purpose I have now represented.

In St. Luke's narration of this miracle there is a very material circumstance premised, *viz.* that "some Pharisees and doctors of the law" (who came out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and from Jerusalem) were sitting by him, while he was teaching: and *the power of the Lord was present to heal THEM*," *i. e.* those his auditors, of their spiritual maladies. And then it immediately follows: *And behold men brought on a bed one sick of a palsy*, and because there was then no other access to Christ, by reason of the crowd that encompassed him, they let him down through the tiling upon his couch into the midst before Jesus, who, full as he was of the divine *sanative* power before-mentioned, and accordingly considering the object so presented to him, not only with regard to his bodily disease, but more especially with regard to his spiritual infirmity by the prevalent power of sin, which incapacitated his mind for virtuous actions, as the palsy did his body for the natural functions.—Christ, I say, considering this, applied, in the first place, to what was most important, and released him from the power of sin, saying, *Have confidence, my son, your sins are forgiven*; or, as the original signifies, *Your sins are dismissed*, and shall no longer have dominion over you.

¹ Luke v. 17.

The scribes, who were present, being disappointed in their curiosity, for they expected to see an outward bodily cure; and startled to hear our Lord express himself in such unusual terms, took offence; and in their hearts condemned him of blasphemy for assuming to himself an authority to dismiss sin. *Who, say they, can forgive sins but God only? But Jesus perceiving their thoughts, said, Why think ye evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven; or to say, arise and walk? As Christ is the Almighty word, which maketh all things by speaking them: So with Him to say and to do is the same thing, which he plainly signifies here in his manner of expressing him. Whether it is easier to say to this paralytic, "Thy sins are dismissed." Or to say, "Arise and walk!" i. e. which is easiest to be performed, to set him free from sin, or to deliver him from his disease? But that ye may know that the son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins, (He added, turning to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up your bed, and go home. And he did so.*

Our Lord, as I observed before, seeing *through* the diseased object presented to him, and considering as well the spiritual, as the bodily disorder that oppressed him; first applied a remedy where the want was greatest, and delivered him from his sins. But this was an invisible operation, and although of a much higher nature than

any

any bodily cure, yet was it no object of sense, and consequently not discernible by the spectators, some of whom were so far from believing Christ's power to dismiss sins, that they were scandalized at him for assuming it: he therefore, to instruct them, and us, in a matter of so great importance, reasoned in the following manner: "Which is easiest, think ye, to deliver a mind from the power of sin, or a body from disease? To cure the body is certainly the easiest work. For it requires another kind of power to reach and operate upon the mind, to rectify its vicious inclinations, and repair the disorders induced by sin. This I have effected in the paralytic here present: I have dismissed his sins, I have healed his disordered soul. But as this divine operation is internal, and consequently not discernible to you that are spectators, I will add a second miracle, which, though in all respects of an inferior nature, yet has the advantage of being visible, and therefore is a proper proof of what I assert. Judge of my power to heal souls by the cures I work upon bodies. And that all may know the authority I have to dismiss sins, and cure the depravations of the mind, I say unto thee, (*i. e.* the paralytic then present) I say unto thee Arise, and, taking up thy bed, return to thine own home." The sick person did so, and they were all amazed, and glorified God.

We may extend the same way of reasoning to all the miraculous cures recorded in the gospel, and infer from all and every one of them the divine power of our Saviour to reform the souls of men. When we read with what success the blind, the lame, the deaf, the lepers, and in short the diseased of every kind were addressed to him: so that no patient ever came to him in vain, but all distempers, though of the most malignant nature, though most obstinate and of many years continuance, though such as had baffled all other remedies; were infallibly cured by him—When I say we read these instances of his almighty power and goodness, our *own spiritual infirmities* should occur to our thoughts.

Have you nothing to ask of this divine physician? Do you not with a sigh, and as it were some sort of envy, think how fortunate they were, who had such easy access to him in *Palestine*? And does not their success raise some hope in your breast? In reason it ought to do so: for *spiritual maladies* are his proper province, and it is in the cure of these that his goodness principally delights to exert itself.

I say that to be a healer of bodily distempers was a foreign character, which our Lord assumed only to make way for what is his genuine office, even *to heal souls*. For he wrought the outward cures only to convince us of his divine power, because such cures were visible
to

to all: they were, as he said himself to John's disciples, such things *as they could bear and see*¹: they were such gross palpable proofs, as suited all capacities; whereas the operations of his spirit are invisible, and are no ground of faith to any, but those who experience them. In condescension therefore he gave those outward demonstrations of omnipotence, restoring senses, limbs, and life itself: but these temporal favours may be accounted as very trivial, even as *crumbs that fall from his table*, in comparison of what he then did, and still actually does in the souls of those who apply to him with the proper dispositions. He cures the spiritual blindness and insensibility to divine truth. He takes away hydropic avarice, paralytic laziness, the leprous pruriency of foul desires, and every evil lust and passion. To cure these is his profession and character: It is the work for which he came into the world, as the name Jesus testifies: and so the angel, who appointed that name, did at the same time explain it: *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, i. e. Saviour, for He shall save his people from their sins.*

Nor let us imagine that He is less powerful now that He sitteth at the right hand of God, than He was formerly, when in the days of his flesh he sojourned in Judea. The fulness of the Godhead does actually reside in him for our

¹ Matt. xi. 4.

use: I say the fulness of the Godhead, *i. e.* Deity in its plenitude of power, does actually reside in the person of Christ for our use: and He is ready, He is ever desirous to communicate it; so that there is nothing wanting but capacities on our part to receive it. What those are, I shall shew in the following particulars.

First, whosoever would be cured of any spiritual malady, must go to Christ.

It is a wretched mistake of ordinary Christians that they consider Christ as *inaccessible* since his ascension, and conceive of Him only as highly exalted, and remote, at an unmeasurable distance from us: but this comes from not effectually believing, or, what amounts to the same thing, not considering the DIVINITY of our Saviour.

The divine nature of Christ has been treated of late as a speculative question to dispute about: but it is really one of the most practical, as well as one of the most important points of our religion. For by this He is ever, *everywhere* present: He is *in* all things: He is *in* every man, as numberless passages of scripture testify. Every man therefore is to seek Christ, where he is nearest at hand, *i. e.* within himself. But few men look into themselves: their soul is always abroad (if I may so speak) and converses only with outward things. Those who would approach to Christ, must turn
away

away from the world, and all outward sensible objects, to seek him inwardly, as in their hearts, by devout recollection; and they will then infallibly find him.

Christ, I say, by his divine nature is omnipresent: he is therefore present within our minds, and we ought not to search after him, as far distant from us. So St. Paul to the Romans: *Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (i. e. to bring Christ down from above) or who shall descend into the deep? (i. e. to bring up Christ from the dead) but Christ is nigh thee, even in thy heart.* By devotion we enter into our hearts, where Christ is present, where *our* Christ is present, I mean Christ for our use, to receive our addresses and communicate his graces.

Secondly, when by devotion we are thus introduced into the presence of Christ, we must declare our wants to him, we must humbly expose our miseries before him with earnest prayer for deliverance. For this there is no need of studied speeches: let us only imitate some of those diseased persons whose story we read in the gospel: the paralytic for instance, whose double cure has been already mentioned. Although great efforts, and even violence, had been used to introduce him to Jesus; for the roof of the house had been broke open, and he was let down through the tiling: yet when he
was

was presented before our Lord, all the difficulty was over: his circumstances spoke for him sufficiently, they needed no interpreter: prostrate on his bed he turned his eyes to our Lord; and our Lord beheld him with compassion, He saw his misery, his helpless misery, and that he had no hopes, but in the mercy of his Saviour. This sufficed to obtain his mercy. All his maladies were cured; his sins, the source of all, were dismissed; and he was restored to all that is valuable, *health and innocence*. We too shall find the same success, if to the dispositions before recommended we add,

In the third place, *faith*, i. e. a worthy opinion of Christ. This is apparently necessary, for to distrust his power or his goodness is an injurious thought, which renders us unworthy of his favour. And it is remarkable that he insists upon faith, more than any other qualification, in the persons who apply to Him for relief.

In all divine operations upon the creatures God requires their concurrence, as far as they are able. Consequently He requires of every sinner a sense of his guilt, a sincere desire to be delivered from it, and (which is a necessary effect of such desire) that the sinner do all that is possible on his part for his own reformation: but as all his endeavours are not sufficient, and God has vouchsafed to *promise* that He will make up what is wanting with the succours of
grace;

grace ; He farther requires our *faith* in those *promises* : we must do homage to the divine truth and goodness with a sincere and pious persuasion, that God will supply what is defective by his redundant mercy ; and help the real infirmity of our nature by supernatural assistance. This is having a worthy opinion of God ; and he demands it as a previous disposition in all subjects that are capable of it.

To teach us this, (besides the apparent reasonableness of the thing) our Lord in working his miraculous bodily cures, which, as I said, are emblems of his divine operations on souls, frequently required a public declaration of such devout confidence in his goodness and power, before he exerted them for the relief of those who implored his assistance. So when two blind men had followed him home, with cries soliciting his mercy ; He said unto them : *Believe ye that I am able to do this ? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And straightway their eyes were opened.*¹ We have another very edifying instance of the efficacy of faith in disposing us for supernatural graces, in the man who besought our Lord for his son, who had been distracted from his infancy by the possession of a malignant spirit, that had often endangered his life. *If thou canst do any thing,*

¹ Matt. ix. 27, &c.

said

(said the father, after representing the deplorable condition of his child) *have compassion on us, and help us.* Jesus said unto him; *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* and straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*². Jesus accepted his humble faith, and ratified it in the cure of his son.

Many other instances of the same kind are recorded in the gospel for our instruction and encouragement, that we sink not into despair upon the sad experiment of our weakness and misery; but that we should approach with an holy confidence to the throne of grace, secure in his goodness, and careful only not to distrust Him.

And lest we should fondly imagine that the supernatural assistance, which Christ communicates to believers, was confined to the days of his flesh; even after his resurrection he declared to his disciples, as a fundamental principle of his religion, *That all power was given to Him in heaven and in earth*³. All Christians acknowledge *his power in heaven*, but many forget *it upon earth*; they forget to have recourse to it for their sanctification, which is the work in which he principally delights to exercise it. He therefore ordered his apostles to publish it through the world: and at the same time that

² Mark ix. 23, &c.

³ Matt. xxviii.

they

they instructed men to obey his commands, lest the persons instructed should be discouraged with the seeming difficulty of his sublime precepts, they were to deliver down as an article of faith to all his true disciples, *That He would be with them always, even unto the end of the world: that He—He who hath all power in heaven and in earth, He would be with them unto the end of the world.*

Fourthly, and lastly, to obtain the amendment, and finally perfect the cure, which we seek from this divine physician; we must, as becomes every reasonable patient, and the nature of the case requires; we must, I say, give ourselves up to his management, abandon ourselves to his care, and endure his operations, though painful to our corrupt nature. We must drink of the cup which he presents to us, even the cup of suffering. Fear it not when his hand administers it. He has tried the utmost force of it, and drank it to the dregs himself: but tenderly compassionate as He is, and conscious of our weakness, he will administer it to us in such due proportions, and with such sweet infusion of heavenly peace and consolation, or other spiritual support, that it will prove the cup of health, the cup of salvation.

Of the Kingdom of HEAVEN.

³⁵ *Jesus went about all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and curing diseases and infirmities of every kind.*

THE subject which Jesus Christ most insisted on, certainly deserves most to be insisted on in every treatise of Christian Theology. I therefore treat again of that kingdom which was the general subject of his sermons; for *He went about all the towns and villages, preaching the gospel of the kingdom.*

The *kingdom*, so named here by way of eminence and distinction, is in most other places explained by calling it, sometimes *the kingdom of God*, sometimes *the kingdom of heaven*, which are synonymous; for in the Hebrew, and most other languages, *heaven* is used to signify *God*, as in that confession of the Penitent Prodigal, *I have sinned against Heaven*¹. And our Lord himself used the word in the same sense, when he demanded of the Pharisees concerning John's baptism, whether it were from *heaven, or of men*², i. e. whether it were of divine or human institution. We say too in our own language, *heaven defend, bless, reward you, and the like.*

¹ Luke xv. 8.

² Matt. xxi. 25.

Perhaps

Perhaps one reason why in this phrase, *the kingdom of heaven*, *heaven* is often put instead of *God*, may be to distinguish the *peculiar* government of God there spoke of, from his *universal* kingdom, or government of all creatures by the uniform course of nature; in which course of nature they are passive, so that reason and choice on their part cannot interfere: whereas his *kingdom of heaven* implies, on the part of the creature, such a liberal, generous obedience, as the angels pay in heaven. Now somewhat of the same nature commences, and is carried on to various degrees of improvement in all true Christians: for Christ came to infuse and cultivate in men those holy dispositions, which will, when perfected, actually render them fit subjects of God's everlasting kingdom in the heavens. And with this view his doctrine is called *the word of the kingdom*, and those who embrace it, or even are capable of it, are called *the children of the kingdom*; and when they do cordially receive and practise it, then they are said to *enter into the kingdom of heaven*, by which kingdom we are not to understand a place, but a state or mental disposition, *near at hand*, as the scripture speaks, *i. e.* attainable by All who are in this life called to the knowledge of Christ.

I have hitherto explained the *kingdom of heaven* only in this sense, because this is our immediate and personal concern; but there is another

more

more general sense, in which it signifies the Christian Church : for the gospel treats of it in two different respects ; the one *singly* with regard to individuals in whom it is to be established ; the other *collectively* with regard to the whole body of believers : when it is spoke of *singly*, i. e. with regard to individuals, we often find it opposed to the initiating doctrines of conversion, repentance, and obedience to the moral law : when it is used in the second sense *collectively* of all believers, it is often opposed to the Mosaic dispensation, and signifies, as was said, the Christian Church. With this distinction we shall be able to explain the many various passages where the kingdom of heaven is mentioned in the New Testament ; and most frequently we shall find the phrase applicable in both senses, there being a similarity between the church and its members, which commonly renders the same assertions equally true of both.

But committing the church to the care of that inscrutable Providence which conducts it, we shall continue to speak of this kingdom, according to the first sense wherein it regards individuals, and is opposed to the initiating doctrines of conversion, repentance, and obedience to the moral law ; being a state of an higher order, and farther attainment in religion, to which no man is admitted till he has made some proficiency in that preparatory discipline. I have already spoke
at

at large of the necessity of such a preparation, and shall speak of it again in the comment upon the next chapter.

But as there are some who have truly repented, who have also *brought forth the proper fruits of repentance*¹, and thereby are actually prepared for this divine kingdom; it may reasonably be asked on their behalf, How shall they know when they enter into the kingdom of God? What are the tokens of it? or How can they discern it in themselves?

We cannot answer this question so as to gratify curiosity, but our Lord's discourses and occasional answers upon this subject will satisfy and instruct every honest heart. We read in St. Luke that being enquired of by the Pharisees, *when the kingdom of God should come*²? He replied, *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.* So our translators, and in the margin for *observation* they have put *outward shew*. The sense of the original is, that *it cometh not with sensible marks whereby it may be discerned outwardly: nor* (so our Lord proceeds) *may men say: See it is here; or, see it is there; for the kingdom of heaven is within you.* It is a spiritual principle latent in the heart of man, which when it *cometh*, i. e. beginneth to exert itself, acts feebly, and slow as to our apprehension, and is not perceptible to our gross sensations.

¹ Matt. iii. 8.

² Luke xvii. 20, &c.

As in the production of animal life, in an egg, for instance, the principle of life lies hid: and when by incubation it is kindled, and actually exerts itself, yet no sense can discern it, by reason of its secret situation, and the minuteness and subtlety of the gradual change that is wrought by it: so the spiritual life (wherein is that *kingdom of God* which we now treat of) has a secret beginning, hid from selfish inquisitiveness, yet felt by the soul in such a manner as suffices to excite its co-operation; for our Lord says of a man in whom it commences, that “he is like
 “unto one who has discovered a treasure hid in
 “a field, which treasure engrosses all his attention, and care, and desire; so that he sells all
 “that he has to purchase that field, and thereby
 “get the beloved treasure into his possession’.”
 And again our Lord compares him to “a merchant seeking goodly pearls, who when he
 “had found one pearl of great value, went and
 “sold all that he had, and bought it.”

The truth taught in these parables is of so great importance, that I would fain add somewhat by way of illustration: but they are in themselves so full and clear, that I find nothing which may serve to explain or enforce them; nothing which can so feelingly represent how a man, who is so far advanced in religion as the persons we now speak of, will break all other

³ Matt. xiii. 44, &c.

engagements, and sacrifice all other interests to that single pursuit. He has found *the pearl of great price*: he has discovered his proper *treasure*: this shall be his portion in time, and in eternity.

The disposition here expressed is what our divine Master always required as the indispensable terms of discipleship. He admitted none to follow him, but Those who would *leave all to follow him*. *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the Spirit of God begins to rule in their hearts: the divine seed is sown and taketh root there, hidden indeed and little to be noticed; for our Lord compares it to the small seed of mustard⁴, which in the eastern parts, where he taught, becomes one of the biggest of shrubs, so as to lodge the birds, and give shade and shelter to passengers. In another place our Lord compares his kingdom to *leaven*⁵, a few particles of which, lodged in a quantity of meal, insensibly diffuse a ferment through the whole mass. And in other places he repeats his comparison of *seed* as the most proper to represent the leisurely progress of regeneration. *So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground: and while he is sleeping or waking, as well by night as by day, the seed springs, and groweth up he knoweth not how. For the earth*

⁴ Matt. xiii. 31.

⁵ Luke xiii. 21.

*bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear*⁶.

From this and many other parables of the same tendency, those who are called into *this kingdom of God*, are instructed in the most important lesson which they have to practise, *viz.* persevering *faith* and *patience* under the divine operations, a lesson of which there is great occasion often to remind them.

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

C H A P. X.

¹ *AND* having called to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power to cast out impure spirits, and to cure every kind of disease and infirmity. ² Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, ³ Philip, and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew the Publican, James the son of Alpheus, and Lebbeus whose surname was Thaddeus, ⁴ Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, even he who betrayed him. ⁵ These were the twelve whom Jesus sent, after having given them the following instructions. Do not go towards the Gentiles, nor enter any city of the Samaritans: ⁶ But rather go

⁶ Mark iv. 26.

to the lost sheep of the house of Israel^a. ⁷ And as you go, publish that the kingdom of heaven is near. ⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. ^b Freely you have received, freely give. ⁹ Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses: ¹⁰ Nor bag for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staves: for the workman deserves his maintenance. ¹¹ And into whatever city or town you enter, inform yourselves who in it is worthy to receive you; and lodge with him till you leave that place. ¹² And when you come into an house, salute it^c: ¹³ And if the family be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return unto you. ¹⁴ If any will not receive you, nor bear your instructions; when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. ¹⁵ I declare to you, that at

^a Ver. 6. *Do not go towards the Gentiles, &c.*] Their commission was thus confined, because the vocation of the Gentiles was reserved till after the more copious effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

^b Ver. 8. *Freely.*] Gratis.

^c Ver. 12. *Salute it:*] Here the Vulgate and many MSS. add, *saying, Peace be to this family*, which words we find in the parallel place, *Luke x. 5*. I chose to mention them here, because they serve to explain the verse following, which shews that this salutation was no formal compliment in the mouths of the apostles, but efficacious to minds rightly disposed. A calm and composed spirit, with a total silence of the passions, is necessary for hearing the word of God profitably.

the day of judgment, Sodom and Gomorrah shall be treated with less severity than that city. ¹⁶ Take notice that I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be you therefore prudent as serpents, and simple as doves. ¹⁷ But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the consistories, and scourge you in their assemblies. ¹⁸ And you shall be brought before governors and kings upon my account, that you may bear testimony of me before them, and before the Gentiles. ¹⁹ And when they deliver you up, be not anxious how, or what you shall speak; for at the very instant you shall be inspired what to say: ²⁰ For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, that speaketh in you. ²¹ A brother shall deliver up a brother to death, and a father a son, and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. ²² And ye shall be hated by all for my name's sake: but he that perseveres to the end shall be saved. ²³ When they persecute you in one city, flee to another: for I assure you that ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come. ²⁴ The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. ²⁵ It is enough that the disciple be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the master of the house Beëlzebub, how much more will they call his servants so? ²⁶ Therefore fear them not: for there is nothing hid, which shall not be

be

be discovered; or secret, which shall not be made known^a. ²⁷ What I tell you in private, declare it in public; and what is spoke in your ear, that proclaim upon the house-tops. ²⁸ And fear not those who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? yet one of them shall not fall to the ground without the permission of your Father. ³⁰ Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear ye not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. ³² Whosoever shall own me before men, him will I also own before my Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven. ³⁴ Think not that I am come to send peace upon earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. ³⁵ My coming will occasion discord between a son and his father, between a daughter and her mother, between a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law: ³⁶ And a man's own domesticks shall prove his enemies. ³⁷ He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ And he that doth not take his cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me. ³⁹ He that would preserve his life, shall lose it: and he that

^a Ver. 26. There is nothing hid, &c.] Every calumny will be discovered, and your innocence at last justified.

loseth his life for my sake, shall preserve it. ⁴⁰ He that receiveth you, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him who sent me. ⁴¹ He that receiveth a prophet because he is a prophet, shall have a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a just man as such, shall have the reward of a just man. ⁴² And whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only, to one of these little ones on account of his being a disciple, I assure you, that he shall not fail of his reward.

Of the Allegorical SHEEP.

THE distinction of the sacred writings into chapters and verses, which is a modern invention to facilitate references, has, with that advantage, great inconveniencies; because it often breaks that *thread* of discourse, which is the proper *clue* to lead us into the meaning of what follows. It will be seen how reasonable this reflection is, if we look back to the 36th verse, &c. of the preceding chapter, where we read that *Jesus beholding the multitudes* [in their spiritual capacities, which were ever the principal object of his regard] *had compassion on them, because they were tired and lay down as sheep that had no shepherd. Then he said to his disciples: The harvest indeed is plenteous, but there are few labourers,*

labourers. Beseech therefore the Lord of the harvest, to send labourers into his harvest.

After this, as he himself was ever foremost, on all proper occasions, to do what he commanded others, he passed the following night in prayer¹: and the next morning he chose twelve from among his disciples, whom he constituted *Apostles*, i. e. especial messengers; and sent them forth with a peculiar commission, as *shepherds* to raise and guide those *dejected forlorn sheep*, who had moved his compassion; and as *labourers*² to be employed in the *harvest*, which was now mature, and fit for *the threshing-floor*.

The language you see is figurative, and there is an absolute necessity that it should be so, because the mental dispositions here spoke of have no proper names in human language, which consists only of terms that, in their first signification, all belong to the objects of sense³.

The language therefore is figurative, and even different figures are here made use of to express the same object: which also cannot sometimes be avoided; for every similitude is defective, and can shew but a part, because the likeness holds but in part: therefore where one

¹ Luke vi. 12, 13.
John iv. 35.

² Matt. vi. 12. Luke x. 2.

³ See Mr. Locke of Human Understanding, Book III. cap. 1. §. 5.

similitude falls short, another may aptly supply its deficiency, and represent by new images the whole of what was intended. Thus in the passage now under consideration, the same mental disposition is expressed by two metaphors, both highly instructive, yet in different respects; for each gives a different lesson: the first shews what kind of persons are rightly disposed to be admitted into that last and peculiar dispensation which is called *the kingdom of heaven*; and the second intimates to them who are to be admitted, what kind of treatment they are to expect there. I shall attempt to explain these two distinctly; and

First, of the allegorical *sheep*, so called to denote their temper and frame of mind. In the account before given of John the Baptist, it was occasionally observed that “men, quatenus
 “ animals, have each of them a peculiar re-
 “ semblance to some particular species of the
 “ other 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 his disciples, are named *sheep*. As
 “ on the other hand the politic Herod is called
 “ a *fox*; and persons noted for an insidious, ra-
 “ venous, profane, or sensual disposition, are
 “ respectively named *vipers*, *wolves*, *dogs*, and
 “ *swine*; which terms, when they occur in the
 sacred

“ sacred pages, are not the random language of
“ passion, but a judicious and instructive de-
“ signation of the persons meant by them.”
I now farther add, that these appellations are
upon no account to be taken for indelible cha-
racters ; but those to whom they are applicable
at one time, may in the future course of life so
far control their wrong propensions by a steady
practice of the contrary virtues, as to merit a
quite opposite character. To effect this is the
proper work of repentance, thence called *μετένοια*,
i. e. *a change of the mental disposition*, whereby
the crafty, rapacious, mischievous, stubborn, or
other savage temper, may be transmuted into
that simplicity, meekness, harmlessness, and
ductility, which constitute the character of *sheep*,
and will gradually qualify their professors to be
received into the christian fold. I say *gradually*,
because it suffices not to have attained this in-
offensive state, but they must persist in it with
continual endeavours after greater improvement,
till they have exhausted their active force, and
are become incapable of farther advancement in
their present circumstances. This is intimated
by the situation our Lord is said to behold them
in, *viz. tired, lying down, and without a shepherd*.
When, in consequence of this view, he directs
his apostles to go in quest of them, he calls them
the lost sheep, not that they had gone astray from
their shepherd, for they wanted one: but *lost*
here

here imports that they were quite at a loss how to proceed, and actually perishing for want of a guide. The word in the original for *lost*, is the same which the disciples used, when they awoke our Lord in the storm, saying, *Lord, save us: we perish* ⁴. We are lost, and despair of safety, but from your assistance.

Such were the persons who had moved the compassion of our Lord, and for whose sake he had sent forth his apostles *to publish the glad tidings of his kingdom*, with assurances, that divine power was at hand to take them under his more immediate regency. And as that kingdom was mental, and therefore not obvious to sense, the apostles were at the same time to give visible proofs of its reality *by healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and casting out demons*. These miraculous testimonies were, to those who were rightly disposed, a sure ground of faith in Christ; and concurring with the attractions of heavenly grace, or rather to use his own words, *the drawings of his Father* ⁵, would induce them to resign themselves with an implicit submission to the conduct of his Spirit, even that *divine nature* which was incarnate in Jesus, and was from him communicable to those whose hearts were prepared to receive it.

It is observable that the apostles, in this their particular commission, were not to say, as was

⁴ Matt. viii. 25.

⁵ John vi. 44.

usual upon more general occasions, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near*, but barely to notify the nearness of that kingdom, and that access was now opened to it; because Those to whom they were now sent, had repented, and had brought forth the proper fruits of repentance, which *fruits* were also come to maturity, were ready for the *harvest*, and to be carried off the ground they grew on, into the *threshing-floor* ⁶, where the farther purification foretold by John was to be accomplished.

The metaphor, you see, is changed; the allegorical *sheep* are now spoke of as *corn ripe for the harvest*, to intimate what kind of treatment the persons here signified were to expect, which has been already represented in the comment upon the tenth and eleventh verses of the third chapter of this Gospel ⁷. But as this very pregnant similitude of *fruit growing from seed*, is frequently used in scripture to represent, first the production of virtue from its principle, or *seed*, which is knowledge of the divine *law*; and after that, in its state of *maturity*, to express the farther progress of virtue in the *gospel* dispensation; I shall again treat of it in the following dissertations.

⁶ Matt. iii. 11, 12.

⁷ See page 145—161.

*Of the Origin and Progression of Virtue through
the legal to the evangelical Dispensation.*

CERTAIN misanthrope philosophers, who wantonly affect to display the pravity of human nature, taking for granted, as an allowed truth, that *self-love* is the source of all human actions; infer that no genuine virtue can be produced from so base a principle. But these men omit the characteristic excellence of mankind, *viz.* the *law* of God^{*} notified in their consciences by that divine *light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.* This law differs from selfishness, as a seed differs from the earth in which it is sowed. The earth is a dead mass, and ever must remain so, till the seed, containing a *vital* principle, takes root in it, draws nourishment from it, arises above it, and at length brings forth its fruit of quite another species than the vile clod it sprung from. After the same manner in the production of moral virtue the selfish nature is as the soil, quite distinct from, and in some re-

* Whosoever denies that there is such a divine law, denies what he and all other men feel in themselves, their own reflections *accusing* or *excusing* them according to their moral conduct [Rom. ii. 15.] And although no fruit or effect of the law may appear in their actions, yet they give undeniable proof of their knowledge of the law, when they judge, as they continually do, other men by it.

spects opposite to, *divine law*; yet, in other respects, susceptible of it, and disposed to embrace it by reason of the rewards and punishments with which it is accompanied. For self-love, being an active restless principle, vents itself in quest of happiness by all the appetites and passions, as occasion offers: but as the objects of these are vastly various, and often inconsistent; there is a necessity that some of them must be renounced, in order to pursue others of a contrary tendency. Thus the desire of sensual pleasure and the desire of health often interfere, and one of them must be denied, when the other is gratified. Man therefore has some power over himself, and commonly can by his free-will determine his choice among the objects which present themselves. Yet this alone could no more produce virtue, than the earth by its different qualities could produce an ear of corn if seed had not been cast into it.

But the divine seed of God's law is already sown in conscience, and accommodates itself to the sordid soil of selfishness by the hopes and fears it suggests. Where the motions of conscience are totally disregarded, self-love continually defeats its own general purpose, by giving way to some particular inclinations, which are inconsistent with others of greater importance. The poor man (for instance) indulges sloth; and want with infamy punish his negligence:

gence: while the rich man makes a toil of his pleasures, and suffers greater mortification by their excess, than the most rigorous temperance would exact of him. It is needless to multiply instances of this kind, since our own experience must teach us, that our discordant appetites and affections constitute an anarchy within, which renders men their own tormentors, as long as they continue under its dominion. But the law of God, by his minister conscience, offers itself for our deliverance from these intestine tyrants; and when we cordially embrace that law, it enables us to assume our rightful dominion over them, and directs us in the exercise of it. For our desire of happiness is not opposed by the law, but only turned to its proper objects, at least the best that we can then relish and enjoy: and our aversion to pain concurs with that desire to fortify us against those evil inclinations, which might otherwise seduce us.

Thus, self-love becomes *a kingdom divided against itself*, wherein, an higher interest better understood controlling a lower, forbidden pleasures are refused in view of the pain and remorse that must attend them; and painful self-denials are compensated by the joys of a good conscience. Even temporal happiness joins here to strengthen the side of virtue, and keep the man steady in the right choice he has made.

made. For *diligence in his calling*, which is a capital virtue, and especially to be cultivated in a state of conversion, as a seasonable defence from many temptations which might prevail in a mind unoccupied, and at leisure to hearken to their suggestions—Diligence in his calling, I say, will naturally be attended with success in his honest labours; and plenty, and fair fame, the esteem at least of all whose esteem is valuable, with probable hopes of worldly prosperity, will reward the violence he does himself by his perseverance. It is well known how obedience to the law is perpetually enforced by such encouragements under the Mosaic dispensation; and our own public instructors still insist on the same very copiously, recommending virtue to the esteem and practice of men from the consideration of its manifold advantages even in this life. Indeed they have reason with regard to the far greater part of their auditors, to whom such remonstrances are seasonable, in order to reclaim them from the delusions of sin: for it is indubitably certain, that moral virtue is far more eligible with regard to our *temporal interests*, than the unbridled licence of those who are governed by their appetites and passions.

If any should here form an objection from the *Christian doctrines* of renouncing the world and ourselves, (i. e. *all temporal interests*) of taking up the daily cross, and being conformed

to the sufferings and death of the crucified Saviour: we answer that these are the *Christian doctrines*, doctrines of *perfection*, peculiar to selected spirits, who are able to drink of the cup which Christ drank of, and to be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized¹. It is not of these we now speak, but only of those who have happily entered the legal state by repentance, who are yet novices in virtue, infants whose feeble tender minds require the soft nutriment of *milk*², and would be surfeited or suffocated with the *strong meat* which is proper only for those who are adult and in perfect manhood. St. Paul, who was most zealous to propagate the sublimities of Christianity, in comparison of which he has depreciated the servile *works of the law* in those well-known terms which our Antinomian fanatics have wrested (as another apostle foretold they would) unto their own destruction³—St. Paul, I say, when he had disciples of this lower class under his tuition, accommodates his instructions to the meanness of their capacities, and sometimes plainly tells them so. For in his first epistle to the church at Corinth, reasoning about the doctrines he had taught there, he says, “I could not speak
“ to you as to spiritual persons, but as to
“ carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 6. Matt. xx. 23.² Heb. v. 13, 14.³ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

“ fed you with milk, and not with meat: for
“ hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither
“ yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal—
“ and walk as men ⁴.” We have elfewhere a
more particular account of thofe initiating doc-
trines which are meant by the *milk* here men-
tioned, or the *rational milk*, as ⁵ St. Peter ftiles
it; they are *repentance from dead works, faith
towards God* [the fundamental article of all re-
ligion] *the doctrine of baptifms, and laying on of
hands* ⁶, [i. e. fuch doctrine as was taught the
catechumens who were preparing for baptifm
and confirmation], *and of refurrection of the
dead, and of eternal judgment*, which are the
moft cogent motives the *law* can employ to al-
lure, or terrify thofe who are under its regency,
the more fpiritual doctrines would be loft upon
fuch; and not only loft, but become prejudi-
cial and do much hurt, when they are mifap-
prehended and mifapplied.

Our Lord himfelf warns us of this danger
where he fays, “ No man puts a piece of
“ new cloth upon an old garment; for the
“ piece put on will tear from the garment, and
“ a worfe rent will be made. Nor do men put
“ new wine into old veffels; elfe the veffels
“ burft, the wine is fpilled, and the veffels

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 3.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 2. Το λογικὸν γάλα.

⁶ Heb. v. 13, 14. Heb. vi. 1, 2.

“ are lost: but they put new wine into new
 “ vessels, and both are preserved’.” These
 parables were very intelligible to the Jews
 of that age, for we find in their authors *the*
old nature of man used to express his cor-
 rupt unreformed nature; and by *old and new*
wine they understood different kinds of doc-
 trine suited to different capacities, as may be
 seen in *Schoëttgenius* his annotation upon the
 place, the purport of which is to shew, that the
old corrupt nature of man cannot at first admit
 those strange emendations, which will after-
 wards be easily made, when his mind is renewed
 by a due proficiency in repentance. And as to
 the second metaphor of *old and new wine*, we
 may see the application of it in the mischiefs,
 which ensue from a premature knowledge of
 the mysteries of religion in those giddy enthu-
 siasts, who, being intoxicated with high notions
 of the spiritual life, and before they have well
 practised the first lessons of self-denial, set
 themselves up for evangelical teachers, although
they understand neither what they say, nor whereof
*they affirm*².

It would therefore be a great advantage to
 those who are addicted to religion, if they had
 such³ intelligent doctors, as could set each man

¹ Mat. ix. 16, 17.

² 1 Tim. i. 7.

³ Our Lord speaks with commendation of such spiritual
 directors, Mat. xiii. 52. and xxiv. 45.

his proper lesson, *i. e.* such as suits his present capacity; to which lesson the docile disciple should apply himself till he became so far master of it as to want farther instruction. A second lesson well learnt and digested would prepare him for a third, and that third would facilitate what was to follow till the whole course was finished.

We have indeed an infallible director in the holy scriptures: but as they contain *a complete system* of salutary knowledge, they must of course propose to the reader all *kinds* of instruction; not only *milk* for babes, but also *strong meat* for those who have long been proficient in religion. Now this *latter* is liable to a double abuse, when men assume it to themselves, or exhibit it to others before the proper *season*.

For in the far advanced stages of the spiritual life, where the most refined abnegations, and such as surpass all natural abilities, are essential to perseverance; there are annexed to *them* peculiar PROMISES of extraordinary assistance, and supernatural protection, which promises concern only those who are in the high situation to which they relate: but presumptuous novices, or merely nominal Christians, who were averse to all self-denials, have been taught to LAY HOLD of those PROMISES in defiance of the context, which would clearly evince their total disqualification for what they rashly lay claim to.

And as *the promises* have been abused, so also the sublimer duties to which they appertain, have been grossly misapplied by undistinguishing zealots, who exact the performance of them from those who are in the lowest class under the tutorage of the law. The new convert has even in that class a sufficient task, yet such as is suited to his abilities; and his diligence in performing it will strengthen those abilities by a gradual improvement: but it is absurd to impose *Herculean labours*, while Hercules is yet in his childhood. He acted up to the height of his character, when he strangeld the snake which insinuated itself into his cradle. In like manner those who are yet in the infant state of virtue, have their proper conflicts wherein to signalize their courage; for by the *snake* in the fable now alluded to, I mean the malignancy of self-love, whose poisonous insinuations greatly endanger the growth of virtue, and will certainly destroy it, if not repressed with vigour. But this needs farther explanation.

Human virtue has its origin from a divine *seed*, as was said before, which seed is sowed in the selfish nature, as natural seeds are in the ground. Now as rude indigested earth cannot be incorporated with the growing herbs which are rooted in it, and nourished by it: So self-love cannot mingle with virtue as a constituent part,

part, till its gross nature be highly refined and subtilized; and even that which so enters, costs dear in a future purification: but to keep to our present subject, which is virtue in its nascent state, wherein self-love, then *divided against itself* by the new hopes and fears which the law introduces, becomes favourable to the right side, and coincides with duty; yet still that self-love must be greatly restrained and held subordinate to a higher principle, even the divine command; or else no virtue can ensue. An instance will better explain this, than many speculative reasonings. It is a sure maxim that *honesty is the best policy*: but he that is honest for no better reason, may indeed prove a thriving man, but can have no pretensions to a virtuous honesty. The same may be said of abstinence from sensual pleasures: our health, or reputation, or discreet frugality may exact it of us; and a reasonable mind may fortify itself in the hour of temptation by such considerations: but if the nobler motive of obedience to the law of God be not the predominant principle, no virtue will be produced. Self-will gains on one hand what it loses on the other: the change of manners makes no real amendment; but is, as that of Solomon's Sluggard, *like the turning of a door on its hinges*¹: the mind con-

¹ Prov. xxvi. 14.

tinues in the same situation, still centered in selfishness.

This is at best but mere worldly prudence, and has its reward in the more commodious method of life it prescribes. To obey the law of God we must consider it as his law, and raising up our thoughts to him our Creator, and our judge, solemnly recognize his right to our subjection. We should consider that the happiness we aspire to, is solely in his disposal; so that it is absurd to seek it by any other means than those which He has appointed: and therefore our interest, as well as our duty, obliges us to have recourse to him. We must cultivate such thoughts with great assiduity, and they will naturally lead us to prostrate ourselves before the Divine Majesty in humble prayers that He would *incline our hearts to keep his law*. We on our part must put forth all our abilities, but *they* will nothing avail us without the gracious aid of the Almighty Legislator, for it is a certain truth, that if piety does not keep pace with moral virtue, it is not possible to proceed in it.

S E C T. II.

HUMAN virtue is a wondrous composition. On one hand it is of heavenly extraction, for its first cause and mover is divine will notified by the *law*: on the other hand it is *terri*
gena,

gena, earthborn, rooted in selfishness, and partly nourished by it; yet being cherished with assiduous piety, and guarded by prudence and fortitude through the inclemency of various seasons which it passes through, at last it attains a state of maturity, after which it is not capable of farther improvement, till it is cut off from the sordid root it grew from.

For *human* virtue, like all sublunary things, has its stated period, to which some arrive in this life, and then they are in that condition which our Lord expresses by the metaphor of *lost sheep, tired, laid down*, and unable to proceed, because *they have no shepherd*, their former guide, the law, having now discharged its office of conducting them: or, as the similitude is changed for farther illustration, they are as ripe corn, ready for the *reaper*, who will cut them off from the *earth* they grew in, to transport them into the *threshing-floor*, where by a new operation the pure wheat will be separated from the chaff, in order to be laid up in the granary. My present purpose is not to treat of that second purification, but only to shew the want of it, by adding some farther considerations concerning the nature of moral law, that from its imperfection we may the better apprehend the reason and propriety of those doctrines which are superadded by Christianity.

Moral

Moral law is peculiar to mankind, for good angels do not want it, and the fallen angels are not capable of it. Men also are fallen to a certain degree, yet as they have within them a SENSE OF DUTY, which is *the law of God written in their consciences*¹, they are thereby in a capacity of resisting their depraved desires; not indeed all at once, for that would be an impossible task: but the law, by the hopes and fears it suggests, being accommodated to their infirmity, instructs and enables them to make a right choice among the opposite interests which solicit them. And although this right choice may cost them dear by the violence they must often do themselves in adhering to it, and suppressing contrary inclinations: yet a rational view of their true interest may support them under such difficulties, and animate them to persist in the arduous path of duty.

Thus the pravity of our nature is the subject in which virtue is exercised; and the stronger our inducements are to give way to evil desires, the greater is our desert in surmounting them. The very name of VIRTUE implies an effort, an exertion of manly vigour; and without this it is not possible to discharge our duty, *i. e.* the daily task imposed by the *law*, which it is dangerous to neglect, and most advantageous to perform by reason of the certain reward that

¹ Rom. ii. 15.

will ensue. And upon this account the moral law is called in scripture the *law of works*¹, works done for hire, works done with toil and labour.

However, such *works* are, in their order, highly commendable, and argue much personal desert in the performer: but at the same time they argue an horrid depravation in his nature, which is so very inapt to virtue, as to stand in need of such unworthy motives; and even with their assistance still to find so great difficulties in doing merely what is just, and that too so very imperfectly. Such *works* compared with pure and genuine virtue, must appear very fordid and despicable. Yet this is all the man can do in his present situation.

No wonder that those who are got so far, do not rest here, but are greatly dissatisfied with themselves. For their *sense of duty* is exceedingly increased, and their practice lags behind at a reproachful distance. This is an insupportable burden; they are *wearry, and heavy laden* under it. Much might be said of this disconsolate state: but it suffices to observe, that such is the state of those whom Christ invites into his kingdom, “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and become my disciples; for I am meek and lowly in heart: (or, I am a mild and condescending master) and ye shall find

¹ Rom. iii. 27.

“rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and
 “my burden is light¹.” This yoke and bur-
 den, compared with what they deliver us from,
 and supported, as they are, by the spirit of
 Christ in all his true disciples, are indeed light,
 and easy, and most desirable.

But once more to resume the parable of Corn
 ripe for the Harvest, as it represents those whose
 proficiency in moral virtue renders them capable
 of the Christian discipline: does not this de-
 monstrate the necessity of entering into the *le-
 gal state* in order to qualify us for the high ad-
 vantages of the gospel dispensation? For of
 what use can the *reapers*, and the subsequent
threshing-floor, and the winnowing *van*, and the
fire consuming the chaff—of what use, I say,
 can these be, where the *seed* has not yet taken
 root in the ground?

I thought to have left off here, but recol-
 lecting what has been said concerning the *works
 of the law*, I have judged it necessary to take
 notice of an error which has been mischievously
 spread, and incautiously admitted, *viz.* that
works of the law and *good works* are the same²:
 whereas

¹ Matt. xi. 28, &c.

² *The works of the law* are often named only *works*, but
 the context always shews those works to be the same we are
 speaking of. Now these *works* are not only distinguished
 from the evangelical, which are called *good works*; but they
 are

whereas the *former* are depreciated in scripture as a low and impure species of virtue, even as the works of children, which like other *childish things must be put away*³ in the riper age of manhood: and the *latter*, viz. good works, are highly commended, and the best actions of the best men are called so. As this error seems to be the strong-hold of Antinomian fanaticism, it is very material that it should be clearly examined and discussed.

A work of the law is such an action as the man would not have performed, if the law had not obliged him to it; but allured by the rewards, or standing in awe of the penalties denounced, he controls his natural desire; and does a right action notwithstanding his wrong inclination. All who truly enter into a course of repentance must abound in such *works*: these are their daily task, and their proficiency depends upon the performance of them. Indeed I cannot help commending them, for surely all degrees of virtue are amiable: yet these are of a low kind, by reason of the servile and mercenary motives which concur to their production. Such works are constrained, and in some sort unnatural, because the man acts contrary to what he is, consequently his action must be

are expressly opposed to them, as wrong is to right, or what is defective to what is absolutely perfect. See particularly Eph. ii. 9, 10.

³ 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

feeble and imperfect, and would not be at all, but that the law compels him.

On the other hand, *a good work* is absolutely such: it is doing what we ought to do in the manner it ought to be done, *i. e.* from a worthy motive. But motives are such slim notions in the imaginations of most men (though, in reality, they are chiefly to be regarded in a true estimation of virtue) that for a farther illustration of these two, *a work of the law*, and *a good work*, I shall propose a case wherein a specimen of each will clearly shew their distinction.

Immediately before the taking of Jericho, Joshua published a law ⁴, that no Israelite should appropriate to his own use any part of the spoil, but that the gold, silver, and other metals should be reserved for religious uses. Achan transgressed this law by seizing a considerable part of the forbidden treasure, and hiding it in his tent. His crime was discovered by an extraordinary method, and he was punished, as he deserved. Now the case I would put, in order to shew the difference between a work of the law and a good work, is as follows. There were, I suppose, many other Israelites, besides Achan, who saw the plunder with *covetous desires*, as he confessed that he had done; and they might like him have taken a part of it with present impunity, in the tumult and confusion

⁴ Joshua vii.

of a town taken by storm: but the command of God restrained them; they had regard to the law, they feared the penalty, and therefore they kept back nothing from the sacred treasury. This was properly a *work of the law*, for it was purely owing to the law; and if there had not been such a law, they would have kept the plunder for themselves. Now let us suppose that no such law had been given, and yet some good Israelite, who had got a large share of the spoil, should with a pure intention devoutly consecrate the whole to religious uses: this is what I understand by a *good work*, as distinguished *from a work of the law*, because it proceeds from no foreign motive, but merely from an internal principle of piety.

Concerning a National CHURCH.

^s *These were the twelve whom Jesus sent, after having given them the following instructions, &c.*

SOME fanatical men have taken occasion from the singular circumstances of this apostolical mission to censure the distinguished habits of our clergy in their sacred functions, with other judicious regulations now legally established in the church. It may therefore be
proper

proper here to take notice that, at that time, there was already a public national church, constituted by divine authority, which our Lord himself enforced, when he said, not only to *the multitude*, but also to *his disciples*, “ The
 “ Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. All
 “ therefore which they bid you observe, that
 “ observe and do ^s.” And to this precept he added his own example, by a punctual observance of the religious rites then legally enjoined. For these at that time, and afterwards other equivalent, but better suited to the changeable state of the world, were, and will be necessary for the bulk of mankind.

At that time there was the holy temple, whose lofty and magnificent fabric would naturally excite reverence in those who approached it: its stately ornaments and hallowed furniture, with the sumptuous vestments and solemn demeanor of the priests discharging their sacred offices, were wisely designed to excite a reverential awe in the multitude; to call off their thoughts from the busy vanities of the world, to recollect and elevate their sentiments, and open their minds to great conceptions.

The same right design was afterwards pursued in Christianity, when that became the national and fashionable religion of diverse countries. It is needless to mention the excesses

^s Matt. xxiii. 2, &c.

which

which superstition has committed in the ornamental parts, since among us they are sufficiently retrenched: but the general intention was certainly right. For the outward visible church is not instituted only to convey the sacred depositum of the sublimer doctrines to those who were in a fit disposition to profit by them; but also, in its exterior form, it must be suited to the capacities of all men. Its ceremonies should be solemn and august, its general doctrines adapted to the general dispositions of those who are to be instructed, and all proper means should be used to beget in them a docile attention, with an high veneration for things sacred.

Thus every national establishment of religion should be furnished with all proper allurements to piety, suited to the general conceptions of the great majority. But those to whom the apostles were sent, were, comparatively, a few private persons, who wanted not such motives; for they had felt, and had exhausted all the force of them. They wanted new abilities from heaven to advance in their spiritual progress, which was now their only concern. The apostles too were ordained to be examples of the doctrine they taught, bearing the cross while they were preaching it. And they gave ample proof of the divine power of the gospel in the sacred energy which accompanied their

declarations: for that *peace of God which surpasseth all conception*⁶, overspread the minds of their competent auditors, and thereby disposed them to that total resignation of themselves to the Spirit of Christ, which was necessary for the farther purification which they were to undergo.

⁶ Phil. iv. 7.

T H E E N D.