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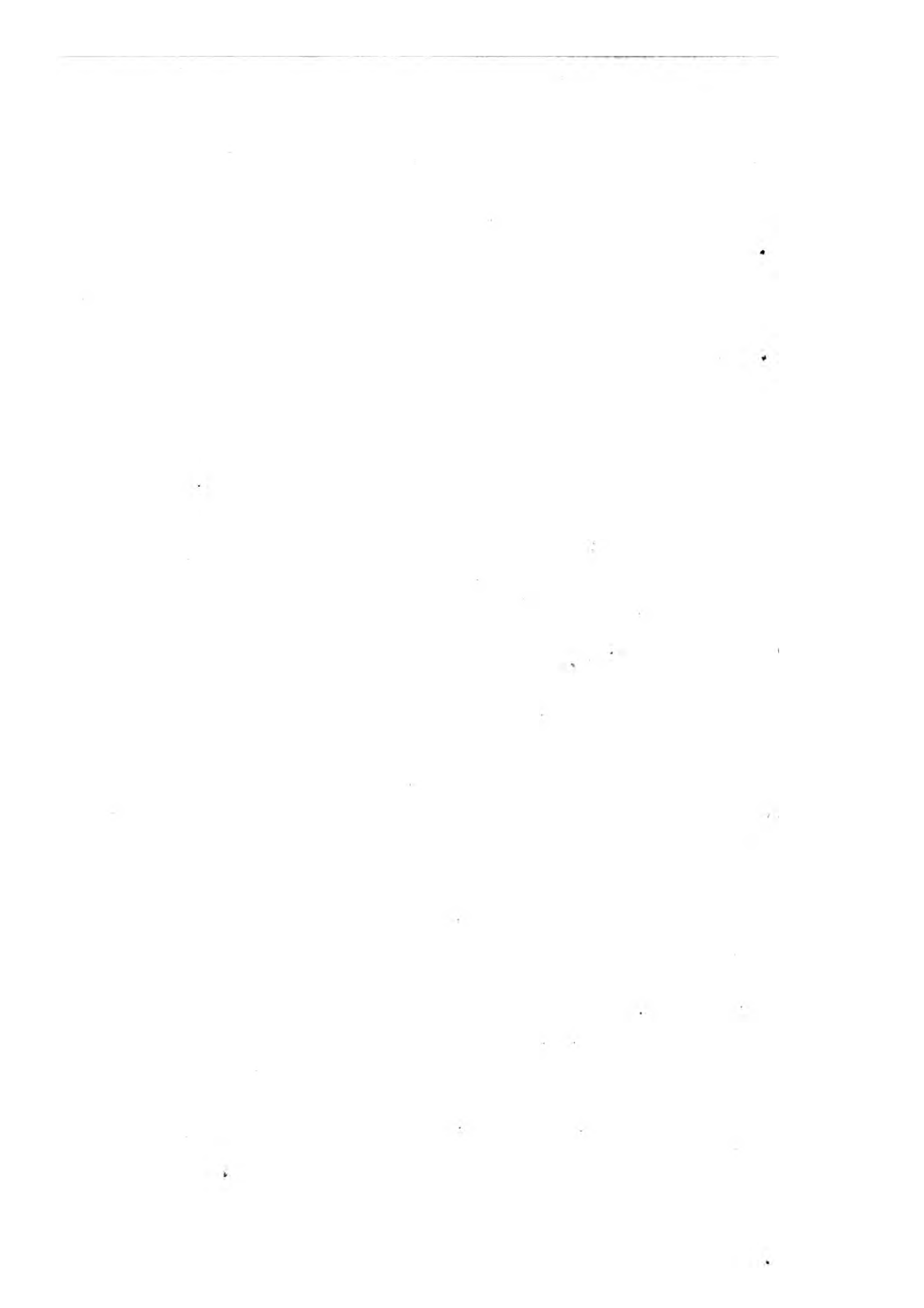


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1419. e. 777





ABP. LEIGHTON'S
SELECT WORKS.

VOL. II.

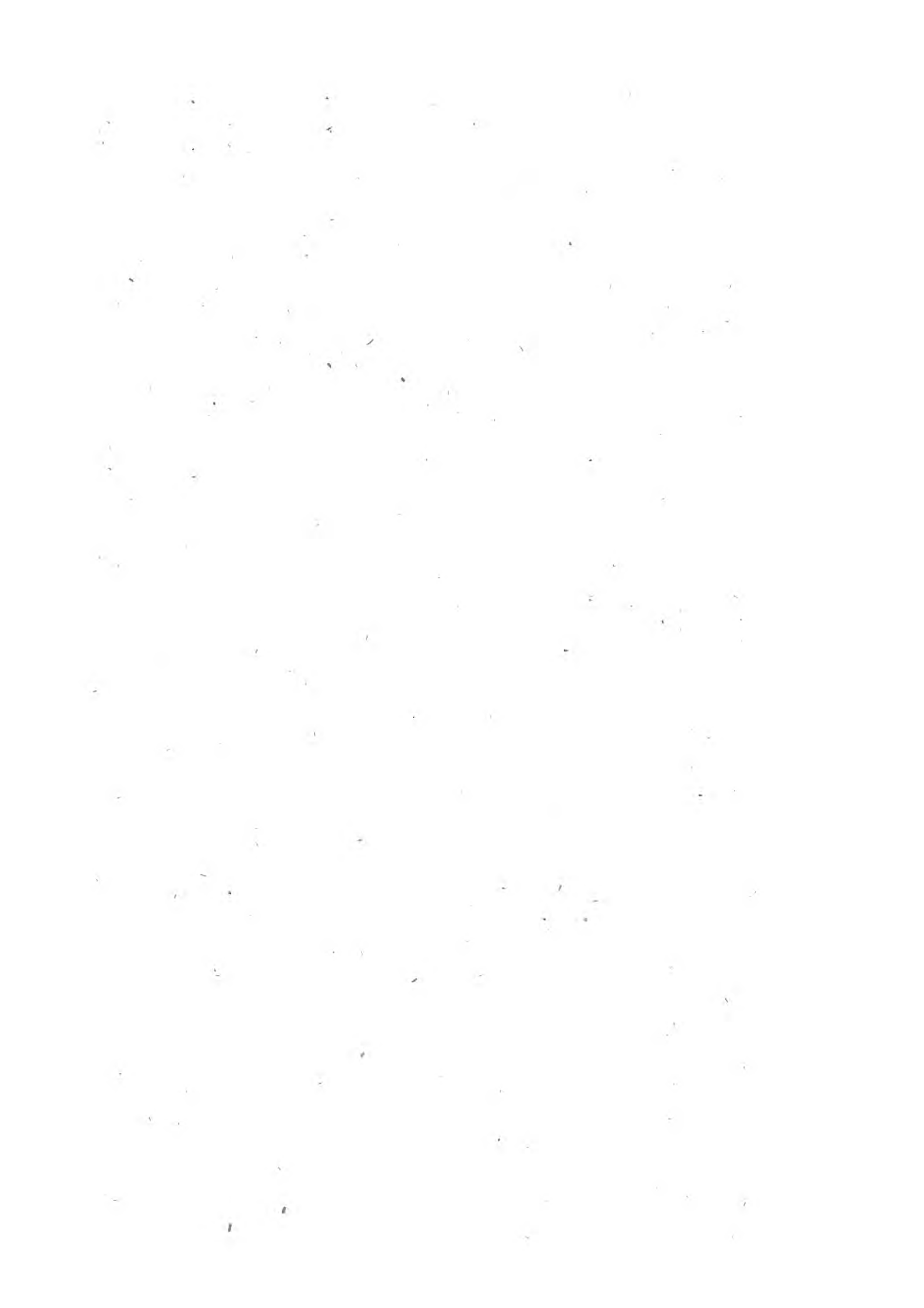


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ABP. LEIGHTON'S
SELECT WORKS.

VOL. II.



THE
SELECT WORKS

OF

ROBERT LEIGHTON, D. D.

ARCHBISHOP OF GLASGOW.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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Eighteen Sermons.
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VOL. II.

Theological Lectures delivered in the Pub-
lic Hall of the University of Edinburgh,
with Exhortation to Candidates, &c.
A Sermon to the Clergy.
Defence of moderate Episcopacy.
Meditations, &c. on Psalm iv. xxxii. and
cxxx.

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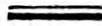


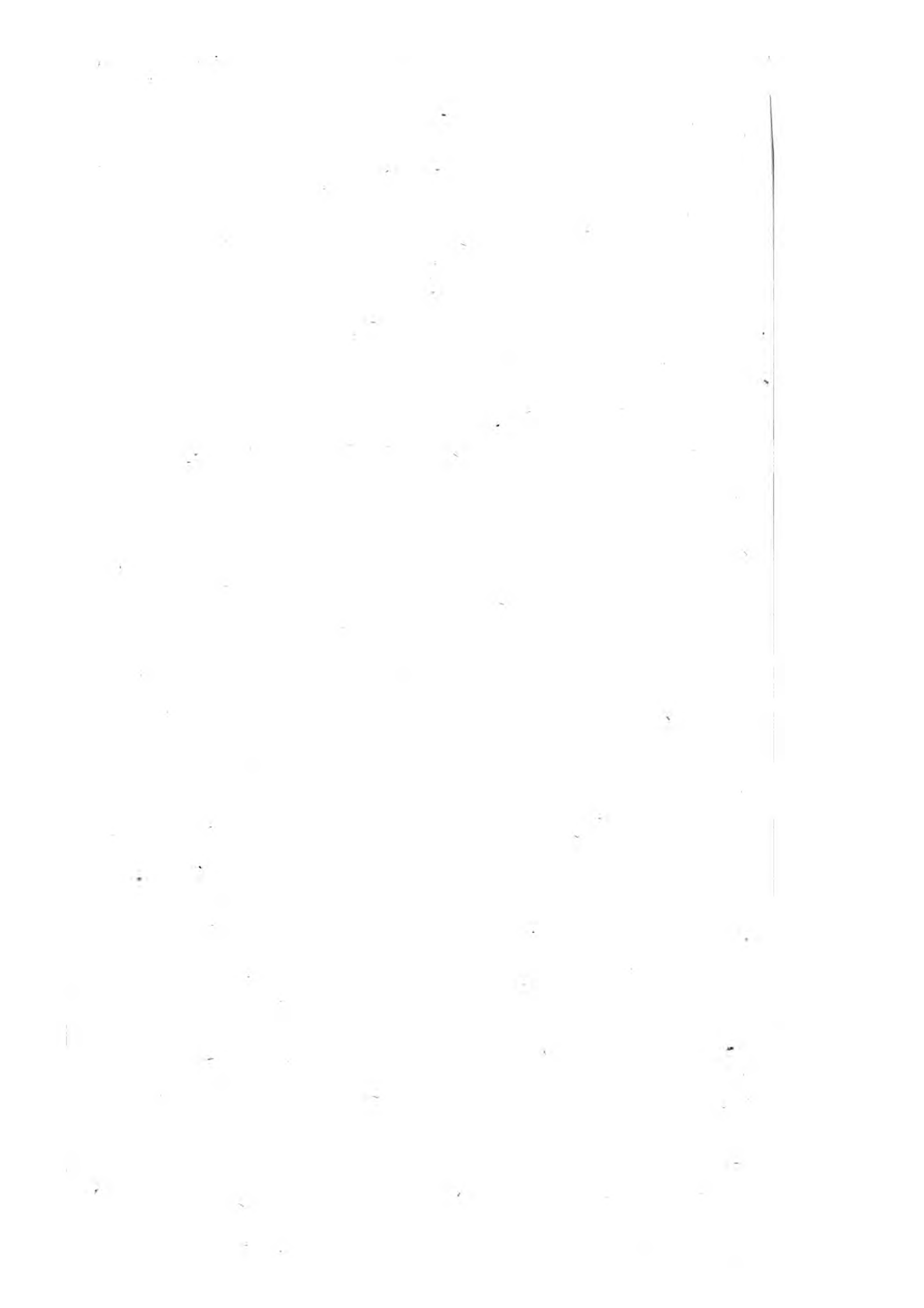
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P R E F A C E

BY THE

PUBLISHER OF THE LATIN EDITION.

TO THE READER.

“WHAT is grand and substantial,” says Quintilian, “pleases long; while that which is only neat and handsome, charms for a while, but soon cloy.”* Now, what can be imagined more grand and substantial than to contemplate the great Creator of the universe, in his visible works—to view, in this vast volume, which lies always open, his infinite power, wisdom and goodness, and admire the instances thereof, that appear always new and astonishing? Again, what can be more agreeable and sublime, than, turning our eyes to

* Quæ solida et ampla sunt diu placent; quæ autem lepida et concinna, paululum quidem mulcent, sed cito satiant. *Fab. Quint.*

the great mysteries of revealed religion, to read with wonder and delight what is contained in the Sacred Scriptures concerning the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race, from the dreadful gulph of death and misery into which they had fallen; to review with attention what is therein discovered, with regard to our highest happiness, the rewards of virtue, and the punishment of an impious life; and to have these important matters deeply impressed upon the heart? These truths, however great and interesting, are laid before thee, pious and Christian Reader, in these Theological Dissertations; where thou wilt find them deduced with great learning, explained with clearness and accuracy, and confirmed with powerful arguments. For our author, now in heaven,* who, while he lived, was equally remarkable for learning and piety, never used to stray beyond the verge of this divine system.

That these remains of his were the sacred Lectures he read in the Public Hall of the University of Edinburgh, while he was principal of that university, will admit of no manner of

* Ὁ μακαριστός.

doubt: there are a great many still alive, who can attest this truth; as they were themselves present at these Lectures, to their great satisfaction and improvement. They all heard them, some took notes of them; and, it is to be hoped, some had the substance of them powerfully impressed upon their hearts. To these I appeal, and to them, I doubt not, this work will be very acceptable; since those instructions, which gave so much pleasure, when heard but once, and that in a cursory manner, they may now have recourse to as often as they please; they may read them at their leisure, and draw from them matter of most delightful meditation. And, to be sure, those who have the least divine disposition of mind, will make it the principal business of their life, and their highest pleasure, to stray through these delightful gardens, abounding with such sweet and fragrant flowers, and refresh their hearts with the celestial honey that may be drawn from them. Nor is there any ground to fear that such supplies will fail; for how often soever you have recourse to them, you will always find them blooming, full of juice, and swelled with the dew of heaven; nay, when by deep and continued meditation, you imagine you have pulled the finest flower, it buds

forth again; and what Virgil writes concerning his fabulous golden bough, is, in strictest truth, applicable in this case :

—*Uno avulso non deficit alter,
Aureus.*

The Lectures I now present thee with, I caused to be copied out fair from a manuscript in the author's own hand-writing ; which was a work that required great care and attention, on account of the blots and interlineations of that original manuscript ; for the author had written them in haste, and without the least thought of ever publishing them. This done, at the desire of a great many, I got them printed, and now lay them before the public, in the same order in which they were read, as far as can be recollected from circumstances.

You must not expect to find in these truly sacred Lectures, the method commonly used in theological systems; for while our reverend author clearly explains the doctrines of religion, he intermixes, to excellent purpose, the principles of piety, and while he enlightens the understanding, he at the same time warms the heart.

Being to treat of religion, he uses a practical method, which is most suitable to his subject, and begins with *happiness*, that being the scope and design of religion, as well as the ultimate end of human life. He begins with an explanation of happiness in general, on which he treats at some length ; then proceeds to consider the happiness of man, which may be called perfect and truly divine, as it has for its object the infinitely blessed and perfect Being who created him, and formally consists in the beatific vision and fruition of him, which is reserved in heaven for those who by faith are travelling through this earth, towards that blessed country. He adds, with great propriety, that happiness, so far as it is compatible with this wretched life of sorrows, consists in true religion, and in religion alone ; not only as it is the way which leads directly to that perfect happiness reserved in heaven ; but because it is itself of divine original, and, in reality, the beginnings of that very happiness which is to be perfected in the life to come.

He observes, that the doctrine of religion is most justly called Theology, as it has the most high God for its author, object, and end. He

suggests many excellent thoughts concerning the Divine existence, and reasons from the common consent of nations, from the creatures we see about us, and from what we feel and experience within ourselves, as all these so loudly proclaim the being of God : but the argument, taken from the harmony and beautiful order of the universe, he prosecutes at great length ; and from this consideration, which is attended with greater evidence than all the demonstrations of the sciences, he clearly proves the existence of an eternal, independent Being.

With regard to the nature of God, he advances but little, and with great caution ; for concerning the Supreme Being he thought it dangerous even to speak truth ; but is very earnest and diffuse in his exhortations, to make the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, that shine forth with great lustre in all his works, the subject of our constant and most serious meditations. As to the unfathomable depth of his eternal decrees, he was greatly pleased with that expression of St. Augustine, "Let others dispute, I will admire."*

* Alii disputent, ego, mirabor.

Amongst his works, the first is that vast and stupendous one, the primitive creation of all things, which, besides the infallible testimony of the inspired oracles, our author, by a concise, but clear dissertation on the subject, proves quite consonant and agreeable to reason. He then treats of man, of his original integrity, and the most unhappy fall that soon followed. But to this most lamentable story he subjoins another, as happy and encouraging as the other is moving, I mean the admirable scheme of divine love for the salvation of sinners. A glorious and blessed method, that to the account of the most shocking misery subjoins the doctrine of incomparable mercy! Man, forsaking God, falls into the miserable condition of devils; God, from whom he revolted, determines to extricate him, by his powerful hand, out of this misery; and that this might be the more wonderfully effected, God himself becomes man. "This is the glory of man, by such means raised from his woful state! This the wonder of angels, and this the sum and substance of all miracles united in one!"* The word was made flesh! He who died as man, as God rose again, and having been seen on

* *Hic hominis ex tanto dedecore resurgentis honos, hic angelorum stupor, hoc miraculorum omnium compendium!*

earth, returns to heaven, from whence he came. On each of these he advances a few thoughts that are weighty and serious, but, at the same time, pleasing and agreeable.

To these Lectures I have added some Exhortations by our Author, to the candidates for the degree of Master of Arts, delivered at the annual solemnity held in the university for that purpose; together with his Meditations on some Psalms, viz. the 4th, 22d, and 130th;* because I was unwilling that any of the works of so great a man should continue in obscurity, to be devoured by moths and book-worms, especially one calculated for forming the morals of mankind, and for the direction of life. For in these meditations, he exhorts and excites the youth under his care, not by laboured oratory, and pompous expressions, but by powerful eloquence, earnest entreaties, and solid arguments, to the love of Christ, purity of life, and contempt of the world.

But what will all this signify to thee, Reader; if thy mind is carried away with childish folly, or the wild rage of passions, or even if thou art

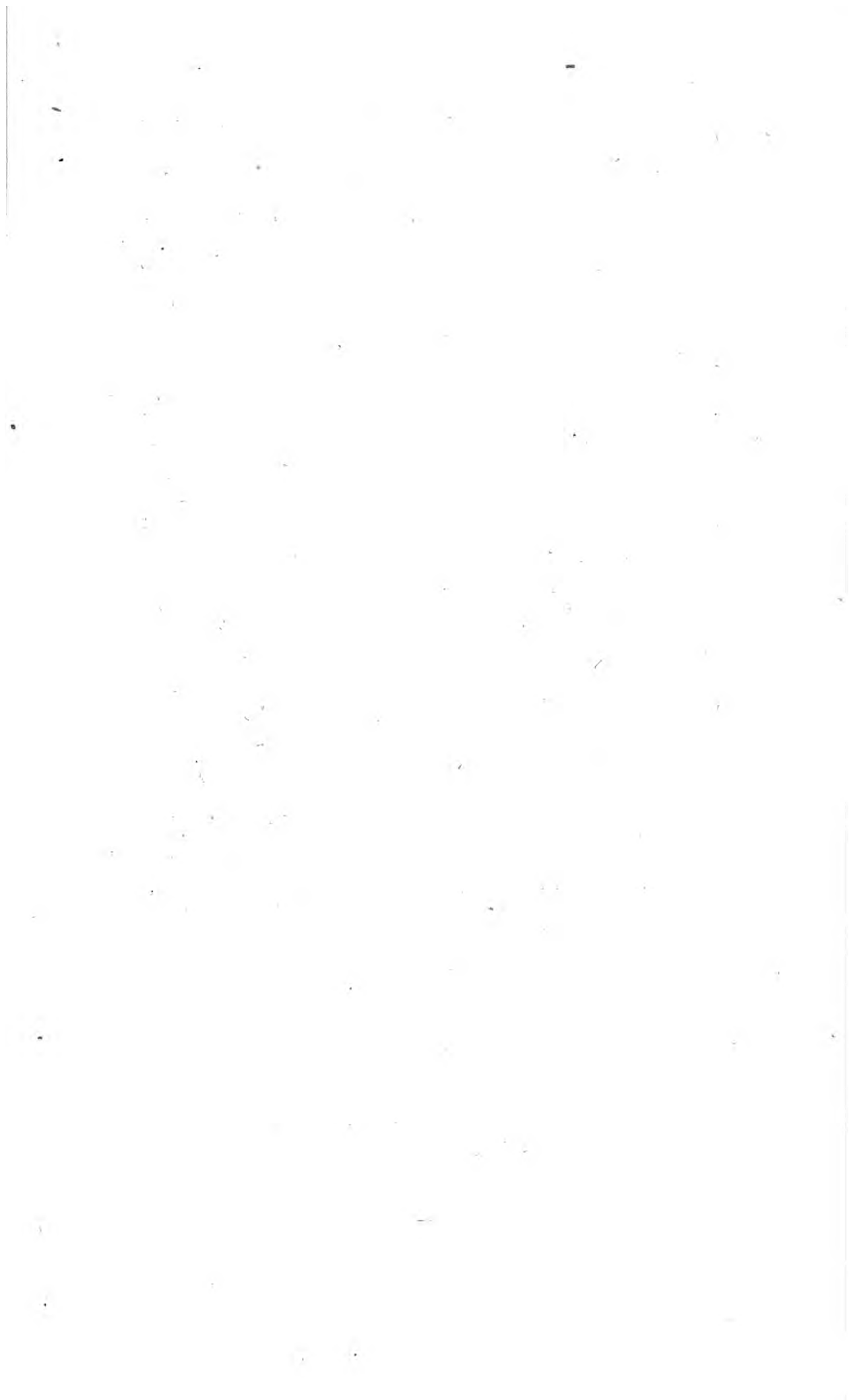
* These were likewise written in Latin, and have been already translated and published.

still labouring under a stupid negligence of the means of grace, and unconcerned about eternal happiness and thy immortal soul? I doubt not, however, but these truly divine essays will fall into the hands of some who are endued with a better disposition of mind; nor are we to despair of the rest, "for the Father of spirits liveth still, and *he* hath his seat in heaven, who instructs the hearts of men on this earth."* May, therefore, the greatest and best of Beings grant, that these academical exercises may have happy effects: and, that our heavenly Father would second these means with his all-powerful grace, shall be, while he lives, the humble and ardent prayer of him,

Who earnestly desires thy salvation,

J. A. FALL.

* Vivit enim spirituum Pater, et cathedram habet in cælo, qui corda docet in terris.



THEOLOGICAL
LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

WITH little strength I undertake a great work, or rather, with the least abilities, I venture upon a task which is of all others the greatest and most important. Among the various undertakings of men, can an instance be given of one more sublime, than an intention to form the human mind anew, after the Divine image? Yet it will, I doubt not, be universally acknowledged, that this is the true end and design, not only of ministers in their several congregations, but also of professors of divinity in schools. And though, in most respects, the ministerial office is evidently superior to that of professors of theology in colleges; in one respect the other seems to have the preference, as it is, at least for the most part, the business of the former to instruct the common sort of men, the ignorant and illiterate; while it is the work of the latter, to season with heavenly doctrine the minds of select societies of youth, who have had a learned education, and are devoted to a studious life; many of whom, it is to be hoped, will, by the Divine blessing, become preachers of the same salutary doctrine themselves. And surely this ought to be a powerful motive with all those

who, by the Divine dispensation, are employed in such a work, to exert themselves with the greater life and spirit in the discharge of their duty; especially when they consider, that those Christian instructions, and seeds of true piety, they instil into the tender minds of their pupils, will by them be spread far and wide; and, in due time, conveyed, as it were, by so many canals and aqueducts, to many parts of the Lord's vineyard. Plutarch employs an argument of this kind to prevail with the philosophers to exert themselves in the instruction of princes and great men, rather than with a haughty sullenness to avoid their company; "for thus," says he, "you will find a short way to be useful to many." And, to be sure, he that conveys the principles of virtue and wisdom into the minds of the lower classes of men, or the illiterate, whatever progress his disciples may make, employs his time and talents only for the advantage of his pupils; but he that forms the minds of magistrates and great men, or such as are intended for high and exalted stations, by improving one single person, becomes a benefactor to large and numerous societies. Every physician of generous principles, as Plutarch expresses it,* would have an uncommon ambition to cure an eye intended to watch over many persons, and to convey the sense of seeing to numbers; and a musical instrument-maker would, with uncommon pleasure, exert his skill in perfecting a harp, if he knew that it was to be employed by the

* Φιλοκαλος.

hands of Amphion, and by the force of its music, to draw stones together for building the walls of Thebes. A learned and ingenious author, alluding to this fable, and applying it to our present purpose, calls professors of theology in schools, makers of harps, for building the walls of a far more famed and beautiful city, meaning the heavenly Jerusalem, in such manner, that the stones of this building being truly, and without a fable, living, and charmed by the pleasant harmony of the gospel, come of their own accord to take their places in the wall.

I am not so little acquainted with myself, as to entertain the least hope of success in so great a work by my own strength and abilities; but, while I humbly depend upon the Divine goodness and favour, I have no reason to despair; for in the hand of Omnipotence all instruments are alike. Nor can it be questioned that he who made all things out of nothing, can produce any change he pleases in his creatures that are already made; he who gives life, and breath, and all things,* can easily strengthen the weak, and give riches in abundance to the poor and needy. Our emptiness only serves to lay us open to, and attract the fulness of Him “who fills all things, and is over all; who gives wisdom to the mind, and prevents its irregular sallies.”†

Under his auspices, therefore, young gentlemen, we are to aspire to true and saving wisdom, and to

* Ζωην, και πνοην, και παντα.

† ‘Ὅς παντα πληροι, ανω παντος μενει’

‘Ὅς νεν σοφιζει, νου φευγει βολαις.

try to raise ourselves above this sublunary world. For it is not my intention to perplex you with curious questions, and lead you through the thorny paths of disputation: but, if I had any share of that excellent art, it would be my delight to direct your way through the easy and pleasant paths of righteousness, to a life of endless felicity, and be myself your companion in that blessed pursuit. I should take pleasure to kindle in your souls the most ardent desires, and fervent love of heavenly things; and, to use the expression of a great divine, add “wings to your souls, to snatch them away from this world, and restore them to God.*” For, if I may be allowed to speak with freedom, most part of the notions that are treated of in theological schools, that are taught with great pomp and ostentation, and disputed with vast bustle and noise, may possibly have the sharpness of thorns; but they have also their barrenness: they may prick and tear, but they can afford no solid nourishment to the minds of men. “No man ever gathered grapes off thorns, nor figs off thistles.” “To what purpose,” saith à Kempis, “dost thou reason profoundly concerning the Trinity, if thou art without humility, and thereby displeasest that Trinity?” † And St. Augustine, upon the words of Isaiah, “I am the Lord that teacheth thee to profit,” observes with great propriety, that the prophet here mentions

* Πτερυγαν τας ψυχας, αρπασαν κοσμου, δειναι Θεω.

† Quorsum alta de Trinitate disputare, si careas humilitate, et sic Trinitate displiceas?

utility in opposition to subtilty.* Such are the principles I would wish to communicate to you; and it is my earnest desire and fervent prayer, that while I, according to my measure of strength, propose them to your understanding, He who sits in heaven, yet condescends to instruct the hearts of men on this earth, may effectually impress them upon your minds.

But that you may be capable of this supernatural light and heavenly instruction, it is, first of all, absolutely necessary, that your minds be called off from foreign objects, and turned in upon themselves; for as long as your thoughts are dispersed and scattered in pursuit of vanity and insignificant trifles, he that would lay before them the principles and precepts of this spiritual wisdom, would commit them, like the Sybil's prophecies, that were written on loose leaves of trees, to the mercy of the inconstant winds, and thereby render them entirely useless. It is certainly a matter of great difficulty, and requires uncommon art, to fix the thoughts of men, especially of young men and boys, and turn them in upon themselves. We read in the parable of the Gospel concerning the prodigal son, that, first of all, *he came to himself*, and then returned to his father. It is certainly a very considerable step towards conversion to God, to have the mind fixed upon itself, and disposed to think seriously of its own immediate concerns; which the pious St. Bernard excellently expresses

* *Utilia non subtilia.*

in this prayer, "May I," says he, "return from external objects to my own inward concerns, and from inferior objects rise to those of a superior nature."* I should look upon it as no small happiness, if, out of this whole society, I could but gain one; but wish earnestly I could prevail with many, and still more ardently that I could send you all away, fully determined to entertain more serious and secret thoughts than ever you had before, with regard to your immortal state and eternal concerns. But how vain are the thoughts of men! What a darkness overclouds their minds! † It is the great complaint of God concerning his people, *that they have not a heart to understand.* ‡ It is at once the great disgrace and misery of mankind, that they live without forethought. § That brutish thoughtlessness, || pardon the expression, or, to speak more intelligibly, want of consideration, is the death and ruin of souls; and the ancients observe, with great truth and justice, "that a thoughtful mind is the spring and source of every good thing."**

It is the advice of the Psalmist, that we should *converse much with ourselves*: an advice, indeed, which is regarded by few; for the greatest part of mankind are no where greater strangers than at home. But it is my earnest request to you, that

* Ab exterioribus ad interiora redeam, et ab inferioribus ad superiora ascendam.

† O vanas hominum mentes! O pectora cæca!

‡ Non habent cor ad cogitandum.

§ Απρονοητως.

|| Αβελια.

** Intellectus cogitabundus principium omnis boni.

you would be intimately acquainted with yourselves, and, as becomes persons devoted to a studious life, be much at home, much in your own company, and very often engaged in serious conversation with yourselves. Think gravely, to what purpose do I live? Whither am I going? Ask thyself, hast thou any fixed and determined purpose; any end thou pursuest with stedfastness? * The principles I have embraced under the name of the Christian religion, the things I have so often heard about a future state, and life, and death eternal, are they true or false? If they are true, as we all absolutely profess to believe they are, then, to be sure, the greatest and most important matters of this world are vain, and even less than vanity itself: all our knowledge is but ignorance, our riches poverty, our pleasures bitterness, and our honours vile and dishonourable. How little do those men know, who are ambitious of glory, what it really is, and how to be attained! Nay, they eagerly catch at the empty shadow of it, while they avoid and turn their backs upon that glory which is real, substantial, and everlasting. The happiness of good men, in the life to come, is not only infinitely above all our expressions, but even beyond our most enlarged thoughts. By comparing, however, great things with small, we attain some faint notion of these exalted and invisible blessings, from the earthly and visible enjoyments of this world. In this respect, even the Holy Scriptures descend to the weakness of our ca-

* *Est aliquid quo tendis, et in quid dirigis arcum?*

pacities, and, as the Hebrews express it, "the law of God speaks the language of the children of men."* They speak of this celestial life, under the representations of an heritage, of riches, of a kingdom and a crown, but with uncommon epithets, and such as are by no means applicable to any earthly glory, or opulence, however great. It is an inheritance, but one that is uncorrupted, undefiled, and that fadeth not away: a kingdom, but one that can never be shaken, much less ruined: which can never be said of the thrones of this sublunary world, as evidently appears from the histories of all nations, and our own recent experience. Here, ye sons of Adam, a covetous and ambitious race, here is room for a laudable avarice; here are motives to excite your ambition, and, at the same time, the means of satisfying it to the full. But it must be acknowledged, that the belief of these things is far from being common. What a rare attainment is faith! Seeing among the prodigious crowds of those who profess to believe, in this world, one might justly cry out, where is a true believer to be found? That man shall never persuade me, that he believes the truth and certainty of heavenly enjoyments, who cleaves to this earth, nay, who does not scorn and despise it, with all its baits and allurements, and employ all his powers, as well as his utmost industry, to obtain these immense and eternal blessings.

Nor is there any thing in the way to these enjoyments that can deter you from it, unless holiness in

* *Lex Dei loquitur linguam filiorum hominum.*

heart and life appear to be a heavy and troublesome task to you : whereas, on the contrary, nothing surely can be named, that is either more suited to the dignity of human nature, more beautiful and becoming, or attended with greater pleasure. I therefore beseech and intreat you, by the bowels of divine mercy, and by your own most precious souls, that you would seriously consider these things, and make them your principal study. Try an experiment, attended with no danger or expense ; make a trial of the ways of this wisdom, and I doubt not but you will be so charmed with the pleasantness thereof, that you will never thenceforward depart from them. For this purpose, I earnestly recommend to you, to be constant and assiduous in prayer ; nay, it is St. Paul's exhortation, *that you pray without ceasing*.* So that prayer may be, not only, according to the old saying, "the key that opens the day, and the lock that shuts up the night ; † but also, so to speak, a staff for support in the day time, and a bed for rest and comfort in the night ; two conveniences which are commonly expressed by one single Hebrew word. And be assured, that the more frequently you pray, with so much the greater ease and pleasure will your prayers be attended, not only from the common and necessary connexion between acts and habits, but also from the nature of this duty ; for prayer, being a kind of conversation with God, gradually purifies the soul, and makes it continually more and more

* 1 Thess. v. 17.

† Clavis diei, et sera noctis.

like unto him. Our love to God is also very much improved by this frequent intercourse with him; and by this love, on the other hand, the soul is effectually disposed to fervency, as well as frequency in prayer, and can, by no means, subsist without it.

LECTURE II.

Of HAPPINESS, its Name and Nature, and the Desire of it implanted in the Human Heart.

How deep and dark is that abyss of misery, into which man is precipitated by his deplorable fall, since he has thereby lost not only the possession, but also the knowledge of his chief or principal good! He has no distinct notion of what it is, of the means of recovering it, or the way he has to take in pursuit of it. Yet the human mind, however stunned and weakened by so dreadful a fall, still retains some faint idea, some confused and obscure notions of the good it has lost, and some remaining seeds of its heavenly original.* It has also still remaining a kind of languid sense of its misery and indigence, with affections suitable to those obscure notions. From this imperfect sense of its poverty, and these feeble affections, arise some motions and efforts of the mind, like those of one groping in the dark, and seeking rest every where

* *Cognati semina coeli.*

but meeting with it no where. This, at least, is beyond all doubt, and indisputable, that all men wish well to themselves, nay, that they all catch at, and desire to attain the enjoyment of the most absolute and perfect good: even the worst of men have not lost this regard for themselves, nor can they possibly divest themselves of it. And though, alas! it is but too true, that, as we are naturally blind, we run ourselves upon misery under the disguise of happiness, and not only embrace, according to the common saying, "a cloud instead of Juno,"* but death itself instead of life; yet, even from this most fatal error, it is evident that we naturally pursue either real happiness, or what, to our mistaken judgment, appears to be such. Nor can the mind of man divest itself of this propensity, without divesting itself of its being. This is what the schoolmen mean, when, in their manner of expression, they say, "That the will is carried towards happiness, not simply as will, but as nature."†

It is true, indeed, the generality of mankind are not well acquainted with the motions of their own minds, nor at pains to observe them, but, like brutes, by a kind of secret impulse, are violently carried towards such enjoyments as fall in their way: they do but very little, or not at all, enter into themselves, and review the state and operations of their own minds; yet in all their actions,

* Nubem pro Junone.

† In beatitudinem fertur voluntas, non ut voluntas, sed ut natura.

all their wishes and desires, (though they are not always aware of it themselves,) this thirst after immortality exerts and discovers itself. Consider the busy part of mankind, hurrying to and fro in the exercise of their several professions—physicians, lawyers, merchants, mechanics, farmers, and even soldiers themselves; they all toil and labour, in order to obtain rest, if success attend their endeavours, and any fortunate event answer their expectations. Encouraged by these fond hopes, they eat their bread with the sweat of their brow: but their toil, after all, is endless, constantly returning in a circle; and the days of men pass away in suffering real evils, and entertaining fond hopes of apparent good, which they seldom or never attain: “Every man walks in a vain show; he torments himself in vain.”* He pursues rest and ease, like his shadow, and never overtakes them; but, for the most part, ceases to live before he begins to live to purpose. However, after all this confused and fluctuating appetite, which determines us to the pursuit of good, either real or apparent, as it is congenial with us, and deeply rooted in the human heart, so it is the great handle by which divine grace lays hold, as it were, upon our nature, draws us to itself, and extricates us out of the profound abyss of misery, into which we are fallen.

From this it evidently follows, that the design of sacred Theology is the very same with that of human nature, and “he that rejects it hates his own

* Psalm xxxix. 6.

soul ;” for so the wise King of Israel emphatically expresses it. He is the most irreconcilable enemy to his own happiness, and absolutely at variance with himself; according to that of St. Bernard, “After I was set in opposition to thee, I became also contrary to myself.”*

These considerations have determined me to begin these instructions, such as they are, which, with Divine assistance, I intend to give you concerning the principles of the Christian religion, with a short disquisition concerning the chief or ultimate end of man. And here it is to be, first of all, observed, that the transcendent and supreme end of all is the *glory of God*; all things returning, in a most beautiful circle, to this, as the original source from which they at first took their rise; but the end of true religion, as far as it regards us, which is immediately connected with the former, and serves in a most glorious manner to promote it, is the salvation and happiness of mankind.

Though I should not tell you what is to be understood by the term *happiness* or *felicity* in general, I cannot imagine any of you would be at a loss about it; yet I shall give a brief explication of it, that you may have the more distinct ideas of the thing itself, and the juster notions of what is to be further advanced on the subject. Nor is there, indeed, any controversy on this head; for all are agreed, that by the terms commonly used in He-

* Postquam posuisti me contrarium tibi, factus sum contrarius mihi.

brew, Greek, and Latin,* to express happiness or felicity, we are to understand *that perfect and complete good, which is suited and adapted to intelligent nature*: I say, *to intelligent nature*, because the brute creatures cannot be said to be happy, but in a very improper sense. Happiness cannot be ascribed to horses or oxen, let them be ever so well fed, and left in the full possession of liberty and ease. And as good in general is peculiar to intelligent beings; so, more especially, that perfect good which constitutes felicity in its full and most extensive acceptation. It is true, indeed, in common conversation, men are very prodigal of this term, and, with extravagant levity, misapply it to every common enjoyment of life, or apparent good they meet with, especially such as is most suited to their present exigencies; and thus, as Aristotle, in his Ethics, expresses it, “The sick person considers health, and the poor man riches, as the chief good.”† It is also true, that learned men, and even the Sacred Scriptures, give the name of felicity to some symptoms, and small beginnings of future happiness; but, as we have already observed, this term, in its true and complete sense, comprehends in it that absolute and full perfection of good, which entirely excludes all uneasiness, and brings with it every thing that can contribute to satisfaction and delight. Consequently that good,

* *Asheri* in Hebrew, *μακαριοτης* et *ευδαιμονια* in Greek, *felicitas* et *beatitudo* in Latin.

† Ὁ νοσῶδης ὑγειαν, ὁ πεινομενος πλεον.

whatever it be, that most perfectly supplies all the wants and satisfies all the cravings of our rational appetites, is *objective felicity*, as the schools express it; and actual, or formal felicity, is the *full possession and enjoyment of that complete and chief good*. It consists in a perfect tranquillity of the mind, and not a dull and stupid indolence, like the calm that reigns in the Dead Sea; but such a peace of mind as is lively, active, and constantly attended with the purest joy: not a mere absence of uneasiness and pain; but such a perfect ease as is constantly accompanied with the most perfect satisfaction and supreme delight; and if the term had not been degraded by the mean uses to which it has been prostituted, I should not scruple to call it pleasure.* And, indeed, we may still call it by this name, provided we purify the term, and guard it by the following limitations; so as to understand by felicity such a pleasure as is perfect, constant, pure, spiritual, and divine; for never, since I ventured to think upon such subjects, could I be satisfied with the opinion of Aristotle and the schoolmen, who distinguish between the fruition of the chief good, which constitutes true felicity, and the delight and satisfaction attending that fruition; because, at this rate, that good would not be the ultimate end and completion of our desires, nor desired on its own account; for whatever good we wish to possess, the end of our wishing is, that we may enjoy it with tranquillity and delight: and this uninterrupted

* Ἡ εὐδαιμονία ἡδονὴ ἀμεταβλητός.

delight or satisfaction, which admits of no alloy, is love in possession of the beloved object, and at the height of its ambition.

LECTURE III.

Of the HAPPINESS of MAN, and that it is really to be found.

YOU will not, I imagine, be offended, nor think I intend to insult you, because I have once and again, with great earnestness and sincerity, wished you and myself a sound and serious temper of mind; for, if we may represent things as they really are, very few men are possessed of so valuable a blessing. The far greater part of them are intoxicated either with the pleasures or cares of this world; they stagger about with a tottering and unstable pace; and, as Solomon expresses it, "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them; because he knoweth not how to go to the city;"*—the heavenly city, and the vision of peace, which very few have a just notion of, or are at pains to seek after. Nay, they know not what it is they are seeking. They flutter from one object to another, and live at hazard; they have no certain harbour in view, nor direct their course by any fixed star. But to him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favourable; neither can he who

* Eccles. x. 15.

has not yet determined at what mark he is to shoot, direct his arrow aright. That this may not be our case, but that we may have a proper object to aim at, I propose to speak of the chief end of our being.

And to begin at the Father of spirits, or pure intelligences. God, blessed for ever, completely happy in himself from all eternity, is his own happiness. His self-sufficiency,* that eternal and infinite satisfaction and complacency he has in himself, is the peculiar and most complete felicity of that Supreme Being, who derives his existence from himself, and has given being to every thing else ; which Chrysostom has well expressed by saying, “That it is God’s peculiar property to stand in need of nothing.”† And Claudius Victor beautifully describes him, “as vested with all the majesty of creative power, comprehending in his infinite mind all the creatures to be afterwards produced, having all the revolutions of time constantly present to his all-seeing eye, and being an immense and most glorious kingdom to himself.”‡

Yet, all we can say of this primary, uncreated Majesty and Felicity, is but mere talking to little or no sort of purpose ; for here not only words fail us,

* *Αυταρκεια.*

† *Θεο μαλιστα ιδιον το ανευδεις.*

‡ *Regnabatque potens in majestate creandi,
Et facienda videns, gignendaque mente capaci,
Secula despiciens, et quicquid tempora volvunt
Presens semper habens : immensum mole beatâ
Regnum erat ipse sibi.*

but even thought is at a stand, and quite overpowered, when we survey the supreme, self-existent Being,* perfectly happy and glorious in the sole enjoyment of his own infinite perfections, throughout numberless ages; without angels, men, or any other creature. So that the poet had reason to say, “What eye is so strong, that the matchless brightness of thy glory will not dazzle it, and make it close?”†

Let us, therefore, descend into ourselves, but with a view to return to him again, and not only so, but in such a manner, that the end and design of our descending to inquire into our own situation, be, that we may, with greater advantage, return and re-ascend to God. For, if we inquire into our own ultimate end, this disquisition must rise above all other beings, and at last terminate in him; because he himself is that very end, and out of him there is neither beginning nor end. The felicity of angels, which is an intermediate degree of happiness, we shall not insist on, not only because it is foreign to our purpose, but also because our felicity and theirs will be found, upon the matter, to be precisely the same.

With regard to our own happiness, we shall first shew, *that such a happiness really exists*; and, next, inquire *what it is*, and wherein it consists. We as-

* Ανδραϊσιν τον οντα.

† Τινος ομμα σοφον
Ταις σαις σεροπαις
Ανακοπιμενον
Ου καταμυσει;

Synos. Hym. Tert.

sert then, that there is such a thing as human felicity: and this ought rather to be taken for granted as a matter unquestionable, than strictly proved. But when I speak of human felicity, I am well satisfied you will not imagine I mean such a happiness as may be had from human things; but that I take the term subjectively, and understand by it the happiness of man. Now, he who would deny, that this is not only among the number of possibles, but actually attained by some part, at least, of the human race, would not only render himself unworthy of such happiness, but even of human nature itself; because he would thereby do all in his power to deprive it of its highest expectations, and its greatest honour: but whoever allows that all things were produced by the hand of an infinitely wise Creator, cannot possibly doubt that man, the head and ornament of all his visible works, was made capable of a proper and suitable end. The principal beauty of the creation consists in this, that all things in it are disposed in the most excellent order, and every particular intended for some noble and suitable end; and if this could not be said of man, who is the glory of the visible world, what a great deformity must it be, how great a gap in nature! * And this gap must be the greater, in that, as we have already observed, man is naturally endued with strong and vigorous desires towards such an end. Yet, on this absurd supposition, “all such desires and expectations would be vain, and to no pur-

* Μεγα χάσμα.

pose ;”* and so something might be said in defence of that peevish and impatient expression, which escaped the Psalmist in a fit of excessive sorrow, and he might have an excuse for saying, “ Why hast thou made all men in vain ?”† This would not only have been a frightful gap in nature, but, if I am allowed so to speak, at this rate the whole human race must have been created in misery, and exposed to unavoidable torments, from which they could never have been relieved, had they been formed, not only capable of a good quite unattainable and altogether without their reach, but also with strong and restless desires towards that impossible good. Now, as this is by no means to be admitted, there must necessarily be some full, permanent, and satisfying good, that may be attained by man, and in the possession of which he must be truly happy.

When we revolve these things in our minds, do we not feel from within a powerful impulse exciting us to set aside all other cares, that we may discover the one chief good, and attain to the enjoyment of it? While we inhabit these bodies, I own we lie under a necessity of using corporeal and fading things ; but there is no necessity that we should be slaves to our bellies and the lusts of the flesh, or have our affections glued to this earth : nay, that it should be so, is the highest and most intolerable indignity. Can it be thought, that man was born merely to cram himself with victuals and drink, or

* Ὡς κενὴ εἶναι καὶ μάταιαν τὴν οὐρανίαν.

† Psalm lxxxix. 47.

gratify the other appetites of a body which he has in common with the brutes ;—to snuff up the wind, to entertain delusive and vain hopes all the days of his life, and, when that short scene of madness is over, to be laid in the grave, and reduced to his original dust? Far be it from us to draw such conclusions : there is certainly something beyond this, something so great and lasting, that, in respect of it, the short point of time we live here, with all its bustle of business and pleasures, is more empty and vanishing than smoke. “I am more considerable,” says one, “and born to greater matters, than to become the slave of my diminutive body.”* With how much greater truth might we speak thus, were we regenerated from heaven ! Let us be ashamed to live with our heads bowed down, like grovelling beasts gazing upon the earth, or even to catch at the vain and airy shadows of science ; while, in the mean time, we know not, or do not consider, whence we took our rise, and whither we soon are to return, what place is to receive our souls, when they are set at liberty from these bodily prisons. If it is the principal desire of your souls to understand the nature of this felicity, and the way that leads to it, search the Scriptures ; for, from them alone we all think, or profess to think, we can have eternal life. I exhort and beseech you, never to suffer so much as one day to pass, either through lazy negligence, or too much eagerness in inferior studies, without

* Major sum, et ad majora genitus, quam ut sim mancipium mei corpusculi.

reading some part of the Sacred Records, with a pious and attentive disposition of mind; still joining with your reading fervent prayer, that you may thereby draw down that divine light, without which spiritual things cannot be read and understood. But with this light shining upon them, it is not possible to express how much sweeter you will find these inspired writings, than Cicero, Demosthenes, Homer, Aristotle, and all the other orators, poets, and philosophers. They reason about an imaginary felicity, and every one in his own way advances some precarious and uncertain thoughts upon it; but this book alone shews clearly, and with absolute certainty, what it is, and points out the way that leads to the attainment of it. This is that which prevailed with St. Augustine to study the Scriptures, and engaged his affection to them. "In Cicero, and Plato, and other such writers," says he, "I meet with many things wittily said, and things that have a moderate tendency to move the passions; but in none of them do I find these words, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

* Apud Ciceronem et Platonem, aliosque ejusmodi scriptores, multa sunt acutè dicta, et leniter calentia, sed in iis omnibus hoc non invenio, Venite ad me, &c. *MATT.* xii. 28.

LECTURE IV.

In which it is proved, that Human Felicity cannot be found either in the Earth, or earthly Things.

WE are all in quest of one thing, but almost all of us out of the right road; therefore, to be sure, the longer and the more swiftly we move in a wrong path, the farther we depart from the object of our desires: and if it is so, we can speak or think of nothing more proper and seasonable, than of inquiring about the only right way, whereby we may all come to see the *bright fountain of goodness*.* I know you will remember, that, on the last occasion, we proposed the most important of all questions, viz. that concerning our ultimate end, or the way to discover true happiness; to which we asserted, that all mankind do aspire with a natural, and therefore a constant and uniform ardour;† or rather, we supposed, that all are sufficiently acquainted with this happiness, nay, really do, or at least may, feel it within them, if they thoroughly know themselves. For this is the end of the labours of men, to this tend all their toils; this is the general aim of all, not only of the sharp-sighted, but the blear-eyed and short-sighted,‡ nay, even of those that are quite blind; who, though they cannot see the

* Boni fontem visere lucidum.

† Διατρεπτω ὄρη.

‡ Μωπαζοντες.

mark they propose to themselves, yet are in hopes of reaching it at last: that is to say, though their ideas of it are very confused and imperfect, they all desire happiness in the obvious sense of the word. We have also observed, that this term, in its general acceptation, imports that full and perfect good which is suited to intelligent nature.* It is not to be doubted, but the felicity of the Deity, as well as his being, is in himself, and from himself; but our inquiry is concerning our own happiness. We also positively determined, that there is some blessed end suited and adapted to our nature, and that this can by no means be denied. For, since all parts of the universe have proper ends suited and adapted to their natures, that the most noble and excellent creature of the whole sublunary world, should, in this, be defective, and therefore created in vain, would be so great a solecism, such a deformity in the whole fabric, and so unworthy of the supreme and all-wise Creator, that it can by no means be admitted, nor even so much as imagined. This point being settled, namely, that there is some determinate good, in the possession whereof the mind of man may be fully satisfied, and at perfect rest, we now proceed to inquire what this good is, and where it may be found.

The first thing, and at the same time a very considerable step towards this discovery, will be, to shew where and in what things this perfect good is not to be found; not only because, this point being

* Πρωτον τε, εχalon τε, και μεγαλυον καλον.

settled, it will be easier to determine wherein it actually consists, (nay, the latter will naturally flow from the former,) but also because, as has been observed, we shall find the far greater part of mankind pursuing vain shadows and phantoms of happiness, and throughout their whole lives wandering in a great variety of by-paths, seeking the way to make a proper improvement of life, almost always hunting for that chief good where it is not to be found. They must first be recalled from this rambling and fruitless course, before they can possibly be directed into the right road. I shall not spin out this negative proposition, by dividing the subject of it into several branches, and insisting separately upon every one of them; but consider all these errors and mistakes, both vulgar and practical, speculative and philosophical, however numerous they may be, as comprehended under one general head, and fully obviate them all by one single proposition, which, with Divine assistance, I shall explain to you in this Lecture, and that very briefly.

The proposition is, That human felicity, or that full and complete good which is suited to the nature of man, is not to be found in the earth, nor in earthly things.

Now, what if, instead of further proof or illustration, I should only say, If this perfect felicity is to be found within this visible world, or the verge of this earthly life, let him, I pray, who hath found it out, stand forth: let him tell who can—what star, of whatever magnitude, what constellation or com-

combination of stars, has so favourable an aspect and so benign an influence, or what is that singular good, or assemblage of good things in this earth, that can confer upon mankind a happy life? All things that, like bright stars, have hitherto attracted the eyes of men, vanishing in a few days, have proved themselves to be comets, not only of no benign, but even of pernicious influence: according to the saying, "There is no comet but what brings some mischief along with it."* All that have ever lived during so many ages that the world has hitherto lasted, noble and ignoble, learned and unlearned, fools and wise men, have gone in search of happiness. Has ever any of them all, in times past, or is there any at this day, that has said, "I have found it"?† Different men have given different definitions and descriptions of it, and, according to their various turns of mind, have painted it in a great variety of shapes; but, since the creation of the world, there has not been so much as one that ever pretended to say, Here it is, I have it, and have attained the full possession of it. Even those from whom most was to be expected, men of the utmost penetration, and most properly qualified for such researches, after all their labour and industry, have acknowledged their disappointment, and that they had not found it. But it would be wonderful indeed, that there should be any good suited to human nature,‡ and to which mankind were born,

* Ουδεις γαρ κομητης, οστις ε κακον φερει.

† Ευρηκα.

‡ Συμφυης.

and yet that it never fell to the share of any one individual of the sons of men ; unless it be said, that the things of life, in this respect, resemble the speculations of the schools ; and that, as they talk about objects of knowledge that were never known, so there was some good attainable by men, which was never actually attained.

But to look a little more narrowly into this matter, and take a transient view of the several periods of life. Infants are so far from attaining to happiness, that they have not yet arrived at human life ; yet, if they are compared with those of riper years, they are, in a low and improper sense, with regard to two things, innocence and ignorance, happier than men : for there is nothing that years add to infancy so invariably, and in so great abundance, as guilt and pollution ; and the experience and knowledge of the world which they give us, do not so much improve the head, as they vex and distress the heart. So that the great man represented in the tragedy embracing his infant, who knew nothing of his own misery, seems to have had some reason to say, "That those who know nothing, enjoy the happiest life."* And, to be sure, what we gain by our progress from infancy to youth, is, that we thereby become more exposed to the miseries of life, and, as we improve in the knowledge of things, our pains and torments are also increased ; for either children are put to servile employments, or mechanic arts ; or, if they happen to have a more gen-

* Το γινῶναι μηδεν εστιν ἡδιστος βιος.

teel and liberal education, this very thing turns to a punishment, as they are thereby subjected to rods, chastisements, and the power of parents and instructors, which is often a kind of petty tyranny; and when the yoke is lightened with the greatest prudence, it still seems hard to be borne, as it is above the capacity of their young minds, thwarts their wishes and inclinations, and encroaches upon their beloved liberty.

Youth, put in full possession of this liberty, for the most part ceases to be master of itself; nor can it be so truly said to be delivered from its former misery, as to exchange it for a worse, even that very liberty. It leaves the harbour, to sail through quicksands and Syrens; and, when both these are passed, launches out into the deep sea. Alas! to what various fates is it there exposed! How many contrary winds does it meet with! How many storms threatening it with shipwreck! How many shocks has it to bear from avarice, ambition, and envy, either in consequence of the violent stirrings of those passions within itself, or the fierce attacks of them from without! And amidst all these tempests, the ship is either early overwhelmed, or broken by storms; and, worn out by old age, at last falls to pieces.

Nor does it much signify what state of life one enters into, or what rank he holds in human society; for all forms of business and conditions of life, however various you may suppose them to be, are exposed to a much greater variety of troubles and

distresses, some to pressures more numerous and more grievous than others, but all to a great many, and every one to some peculiar to itself. If you devote yourself to ease and retirement, you cannot avoid the reproach and uneasiness that constantly attend an indolent, an useless and lazy life. If you engage in business, whatever it be, whether you commence merchant, soldier, farmer, or lawyer, you always meet with toil and hazard, and often with heavy misfortunes and losses. Celibacy exposes to solitude; marriage, to solicitude and cares. Without learning you appear plain and unpolished; but, on the other hand, the study of letters is a matter of immense labour, and, for the most part, brings in but very little, either with regard to the knowledge you acquire by it, or the conveniencies of life it procures. But I will enlarge no farther; you find the Greek and Latin poets lamenting the calamities of life, in many parts of their works, and at great length: nor do they exaggerate in the least; they even fall short of the truth, and only enumerate a few evils out of many.

The Greek epigram ascribed by some to Posidipus, by others to Crates the Cynic philosopher, begins thus: "What state of life ought one to choose?"* and having enumerated them all, concludes in this manner: "There are then only two things eligible, either never to have been born, or to die as soon as one makes his appearance in the world."†

* Ποιην τοι βιοτοιο ταμοις τριβον;

† Ες' αρω τοιν δυοιν ενος αιρεσις η το γεγεσθαι μεδεποτ' η θανειν αυτικα τιχλομαινον.

But now, leaving the various periods and conditions of life, let us, with great brevity, run over those things which are looked upon to be the greatest blessings in it, and see whether any of them can make it completely happy. Can this be expected from a beautiful outside? No; this has rendered many miserable, but never made one happy; for suppose it to be sometimes attended with innocence, it is surely of a fading and perishing nature, "the sport of time or disease."* Can it be expected from riches? Surely no; for how little of them does the owner possess, even supposing his wealth to be ever so great! What a small part of them does he use or enjoy himself! And what has he of the rest but the pleasure of seeing them with his eyes? Let his table be loaded with the greatest variety of delicious dishes, he fills his belly out of one; and if he has a hundred beds, he lies but in one of them. Can the kingdoms, thrones, and sceptres of this world confer happiness? No; we learn from the histories of all ages, that not a few have been tumbled down from these by sudden and unexpected revolutions, and those not such as were void of conduct or courage, but men of great and extraordinary abilities. And, that those who met with no such misfortunes, were still far enough from happiness, is very plain from the situation of their affairs, and in many cases from their own confession. The saying of Augustus is well known: "I wish I had

* Χρόνη η νοση παιγνιον.

never been married, and had died childless :”* and the expression of Severus at his death: “I became all things, and yet it does not profit me.”† But the most noted saying of all, and that which best deserves to be known, is that of the wisest and most flourishing king, as well as the greatest preacher, who, having exactly computed all the advantages of his exalted dignity and royal opulence, found this to be the sum total of all, and left it on record for the inspection of posterity and future ages—“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

All this may possibly be true with regard to the external advantages of men ; but may not happiness be found in the internal goods of the mind, such as wisdom and virtue ? Suppose this granted ; still, that they may confer perfect felicity, they must, of necessity, be perfect themselves. Now, shew me the man, who, even in his own judgment, has attained to perfection in wisdom and virtue. Even those who were accounted the wisest, and actually were so, acknowledged they knew nothing ; nor was there one amongst the most approved philosophers, whose virtues were not allayed with many blemishes. The same must be said of piety and true religion, which, though it is the beginning of felicity, and tends directly to perfection ; yet, as in this earth it is not full and complete itself, it cannot make its possessors perfectly happy. The knowledge of the most exalted minds is very obscure,

* Αἰθ' ὄφελον ἀγαμὸς τ' εἶμεναι ἀγονὸς τ' ἀπολεσσαι.

† Πάντα ἐγενομην καὶ ἐλύσιθελει.

and almost quite dark, and their practice of virtue lame and imperfect. And indeed who can have the boldness to boast of perfection in this respect, when he hears the great Apostle complaining of the law of the flesh, and pathetically exclaiming, “Who shall deliver me from this body of death, &c.?”* Besides, though wisdom and virtue, or piety, were perfect, so long as we have bodies, we must, at the same time, have all bodily advantages, in order to perfect felicity. Therefore the Satirist smartly ridicules the wise man of the Stoics. “He is,” says he, “free, honoured, beautiful, a king of kings, and particularly happy, except when he is troubled with phlegm.”†

Since these things are so, we must raise our minds higher, and not live with our heads bowed down like the common sort of mankind; who, as St. Augustine expresses it, “look for a happy life in the region of death.‡” To set our hearts upon the perishing goods of this wretched life, and its muddy pleasures, is not the happiness of men, but of hogs; and if pleasure is dirt, other things are but smoke. Were this the only good proposed to the desires and hopes of men, it would not have been so great a privilege to be born. Be therefore advised, young gentlemen, and beware of this poisonous cup, lest

* Rom. vii. 24.

† ————— Dives,
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum,
Præcipue fœlix, nisi cum pituita molesta est.

‡ Beatam vitam quærunt in regione mortis.

your minds thereby become brutish, and fall into a fatal oblivion of your original, and your end. Turn that part of your composition which is divine, to God, its creator and father, without whom we can neither be happy, nor indeed *be* at all.

LECTURE V.

Of the Immortality of the Soul.

TH**ERE** are many things that keep mankind employed, particularly business, or rather trifles; for so the affairs which are in this world considered as most important, ought to be called, when compared with that of minding our own valuable concerns, knowing ourselves, and truly consulting our highest interests. But how few are there that make this their study! The definition you commonly give of man is, that he is a rational creature; though, to be sure, it is not applicable to the generality of mankind, unless you understand, that they are such, not actually, but in power only, and that very remote. They are, for the most part at least, more silly and foolish than children, and, like them, fond of toys and rattles: they fatigue themselves running about and sauntering from place to place, but do nothing to purpose.

What a wonder it is, that souls of a heavenly original have so far forgot their native country, and

are so immersed in dirt and mud, that there are few men who frequently converse with themselves about their own state, thinking gravely of their original and their end, seriously laying to heart, that, as the poet expresses it, " Good and evil are set before mankind ;"* and who, after mature consideration, not only think it the most, wise and reasonable course, but are also fully resolved to exert themselves to the utmost, in order to arrive at a sovereign contempt of earthly things, and aspire to those enjoyments that are divine and eternal ! For our parts, I am fully persuaded we shall be of this mind, if we seriously reflect on what has been said. For if there is, of necessity, a complete, permanent, and satisfying good intended for man, and no such good is to be found in the earth, or earthly things, we must proceed farther, and look for it somewhere else ; and, in consequence of this, conclude, that man is not quite extinguished by death, but removes to another place, and that the human soul is by all means immortal.

Many men have added a great variety of different arguments to support this conclusion, some of them strong and solid, and others, to speak freely, too metaphysical, and of little strength, especially as they are as obscure, as easily denied, and as hard to be proved, as that very conclusion in support of which they are adduced.

They who reason from the immaterial nature of the soul, and from its being infused into the body,

* 'Ωτι τοις ανθρωποις κακον τ' αγαθον τε τελικται.

as also from its method of operation, which is confined to none of the bodily organs, may easily prevail with those who believe these principles, to admit the truth of the conclusion they want to draw from them; but if they meet with any who obstinately deny the premises, or even doubt the truth of them, it will be a matter of difficulty to support such hypotheses with clear and conclusive arguments. If the soul of man was well acquainted with itself, and fully understood its own nature; if it could investigate the nature of its union with the body, and the method of its operation therein, we doubt not but from thence it might draw these and other such arguments of its immortality; but since, shut up in the prison of a dark body, it is so little known, and so incomprehensible to itself; and since, in so great obscurity, it can scarce, if at all, discover the least of its own features and complexion, it would be a very difficult matter for it to say much concerning its internal nature, or nicely determine the methods of its operation. But it would be surprising, if any one should deny, that the very operations it performs, especially those of the more noble and exalted sort, are strong marks and conspicuous characters of its excellence and immortality.

Nothing is more evident than that, besides life and sense and animal spirits, which he has in common with the brutes, there is in man something more exalted, more pure, and what more nearly approaches to divinity. God has given to the former

a sensitive soul, but to us a mind also; and, to speak distinctly, that spirit which is peculiar to man, and whereby he is raised above all other animals, ought to be called mind rather than soul.* Be this as it may, it is hardly possible to say, how vastly the human mind excels the other with regard to its wonderful powers, and, next to them, with respect to its works, devices, and inventions. For it performs such great and wonderful things, that the brutes, even those of the greatest sagacity, can neither imitate, nor at all understand, much less invent: nay man, though he is much less in bulk, and inferior in strength to the greatest part of them; yet, as lord and king of them all, he can, by surprising means, bend and apply the strength and industry of all the other creatures, the virtues of all herbs and plants, and, in a word, all the parts and powers of this visible world, to the convenience and accommodation of his own life. He also builds cities, erects commonwealths, makes laws, conducts armies, fits out fleets, measures not only the earth, but the heavens also, and investigates the motions of the stars. He foretells eclipses many years before they happen; and, with very little difficulty, sends his thoughts to a great distance, bids them visit the remotest cities and countries, mount above the sun and the stars, and even the heavens themselves.

But all these things are inconsiderable, and contribute but little to our present purpose, in respect

* Animus potius dicendus est quam anima.

of that one incomparable dignity that results to the human mind from its being capable of religion, and having indelible characters thereof naturally stamped upon it. It acknowledges a God, and worships him; it builds temples to his honour; it celebrates his never-enough exalted Majesty with sacrifices, prayers, and praises, depends upon his bounty, implores his aid, and so carries on a constant correspondence with heaven; and, which is a very strong proof of its being originally from heaven, it hopes at last to return to it. And, truly, in my judgment, this previous impression and hope of immortality, and these earnest desires after it, are a very strong evidence of that immortality. These impressions, though in most men they lie overpowered, and almost quite extinguished by the weight of their bodies and an extravagant love to present enjoyments; yet, now and then, in time of adversity, break forth and exert themselves, especially under the pressure of severe distempers, and at the approaches of death. But those whose minds are purified, and their thoughts habituated to divine things, with what constant and ardent wishes do they breathe after that blessed immortality! How often do their souls complain within them, that they have dwelt so long in these earthly tabernacles! Like exiles, they earnestly wish, make interest, and struggle hard, to regain their native country. Moreover, does not that noble neglect of the body and its senses, and that contempt of all the pleasures of the flesh, which these

heavenly souls have attained, evidently shew, that, in a short time, they will be taken from hence, and that the body and soul are of a very different, and almost contrary nature to one another? And therefore the duration of the one depends not upon the other, but is quite of another kind; and the soul, set at liberty from the body, is not only exempted from death, but, in some sense, then begins to live, and then first sees the light. Had we not this hope to support us, what ground should we have to lament our first nativity, which placed us in a life so short, so destitute of good, and so crowded with miseries; a life which we pass entirely in grasping phantoms of felicity, and suffering real calamities! So that, if there were not, beyond this, a life and happiness that more truly deserved these names, who can help seeing, that, of all creatures, man would be the most miserable, and, of all men, the best the most unhappy?

For although every wise man looks upon the belief of the immortality of the soul as one of the great and principal supports of religion, there may possibly be some rare, exalted, and truly divine minds, who would choose the pure and noble path of virtue for its own sake, would constantly walk in it, and, out of love to it, would not decline the severest hardships, if they should happen to be exposed to them on its account; yet it cannot be denied, that the common sort of Christians, though they are really and at heart, sound believers and true Christians, fall very short of this attainment,

and would scarcely, if at all, embrace virtue and religion, if you take away the rewards; which, I think, the apostle Paul hints at in this expression, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable."* The apostle, indeed, does not intend these words as a direct proof of the immortality of the soul in a separate state, but as an argument to prove the resurrection of the body; which is a doctrine near akin, and closely connected with the former. For that great restoration is added as an instance of the superabundance and immensity of the Divine goodness, whose pleasure it is, that not only the better and more divine part of man, which, upon its return to its original source, is, without the body, capable of enjoying a perfectly happy and eternal life, should have a glorious immortality, but also, that this earthly tabernacle, as being the faithful attendant and constant companion of the soul, through all its toils and labours in this world, be also admitted to a share and participation of its heavenly and eternal felicity; that so, according to our Lord's expression, every faithful soul may have returned into its bosom, "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over."†

Let our belief of this immortality be founded entirely on divine revelation, and then, like a city fortified with a rampart of earth drawn round it, let it be outwardly guarded and defended by reason;

* 1 Cor. xv. 19.

† Luke vi. 38.

which, in this case, suggests arguments as strong and convincing as the subject will admit of. If any one, in the present case, promises demonstration, "his undertaking is certainly too much;"* if he desires or expects it from another, "he requires too much."† There are indeed very few demonstrations in philosophy, if you except the mathematical sciences, that can be truly and strictly so called; and, if we inquire narrowly into the matter, perhaps we shall find none at all; nay, if even the mathematical demonstrations are examined by the strict rules and ideas of Aristotle, the greatest part of them will be found imperfect and defective. The saying of that philosopher is, therefore, wise and applicable to many cases: "Demonstrations are not to be expected in all cases, but so far as the subject will admit of them."‡ But, if we were well acquainted with the nature and essence of the soul, or even its precise method of operation on the body, it is highly probable we could draw from hence evident and undeniable demonstrations of that immortality which we are now asserting: whereas, so long as the mind of man is so little acquainted with its own nature we must not expect any such.

But that unquenchable thirst of the soul, we have already mentioned, is a strong proof of its

* Μεγα λιαν το επιχειρημα.

† Μεγα λιαν το αιτημα.

‡ Ουκ εν πασιν αποδειξεις αιτητεον, αλλ' εφ' οσον δεχεται το υποκειμενον.

divine nature ; a thirst not to be allayed with the impure and turbid waters of any earthly good, or of all worldly enjoyments taken together. It thirsts after the never-failing fountain of good, according to that of the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks:"* it thirsts after a good, invisible, immaterial, and immortal, to the enjoyment whereof the ministry of a body is so far from being absolutely necessary, that it feels itself shut up, and confined by that to which it is now united, as by a partition-wall, and groans under the pressure of it. And those souls, that are quite insensible of this thirst, are certainly buried in the body, as in the carcase of an impure hog ; nor have they so entirely divested themselves of this appetite we have mentioned, nor can they possibly divest themselves of it, so as not to feel it severely, to their great misery, sooner or later, either when they awake out of their lethargy within the body, or when they are obliged to leave it. To conclude : nobody, I believe, will deny, that we are to form our judgment of the true nature of the human mind, not from the sloth and stupidity of the most degenerate and vilest of men, but from the sentiments and fervent desires of the best and wisest of the species.

These sentiments, concerning the immortality of the soul in its future existence, not only include no impossibility or absurdity in them, but are also every way agreeable to sound reason, wisdom, and

* Psalm xli. 1.

virtue, to the Divine economy, and the natural wishes and desires of men; wherefore most nations have, with the greatest reason, universally adopted them, and the wisest in all countries, and in all ages, have cheerfully embraced them. And though they could not confirm them with any argument of irresistible force, yet they felt something within them that corresponded with this doctrine, and always looked upon it as most beautiful and worthy of credit. "Nobody," says Atticus in Cicero, "shall drive me from the immortality of the soul."* And Seneca's words are, "I took pleasure to inquire into the eternity of the soul, and even, indeed, to believe it. I resigned myself to so glorious a hope, for now I begin to despise the remains of a broken constitution, as being to remove into that immensity of time, and into the possession of endless ages."† O, how much does the soul gain by this removal!

As for you, young gentlemen, I doubt not but you will embrace this doctrine, not only as agreeable to reason, but as it is an article of the Christian faith. I only put you in mind to revolve it often within yourselves, and with a serious disposition of mind; for you will find it the strongest incitement to wisdom, good morals, and true piety; nor can

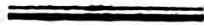
* Me nemo de immortalitate depellet.

† Juvabat de æternitate animarum quærere, imo mehercule credere: dabam me spei tantæ, jam enim reliquias infractæ ætatis contemnebam, in immensum illud tempus, et in possessionem omnis ævi transiturus. SEN. Epis. 102.

you imagine any thing that will more effectually divert you from a foolish admiration of present and perishing things, and from the allurements and sordid pleasures of this earthly body. Consider, I pray you, how unbecoming it is to make a heaven-born soul, that is to live for ever, a slave to the meanest, vilest, and most trifling things; and, as it were, to thrust down to the kitchen a prince that is obliged to leave his country only for a short time. St. Bernard pathetically addresses himself to the body in favour of the soul, persuading it to treat the latter honourably, not only on account of its dignity, but also for the advantage that thereby will redound to the body itself. "Thou hast a noble guest, O flesh! a most noble one indeed, and all thy safety depends upon its salvation: it will certainly remember thee for good, if thou serve it well; and when it comes to its Lord, it will put him in mind of thee, and the mighty God himself will come to make thee, who art now a vile body, like unto his glorious one; and, O wretched flesh, He who came in humility and obscurity to redeem souls, will come in great majesty to glorify thee, and every eye shall see him."* Be mindful, there-

* *Nobilem hospitem habes, O caro! nobilem valde, et tota tua salus de ejus salute pendet: omnino etiam memor erit tui in bonum, si bene servieris illi; et cum pervenerit ad Dominum suum, suggeret ei de te, et veniet ipse Dominus virtutum, et te vile corpus configurabit corpori suo glorioso, qui ad animas redimendas humilis ante venerat, et occultus, pro te glorificando, O misera caro, sublimis veniet et manifestus.*

fore, young gentlemen, of your better part, and accustom it to think of its own eternity; always and every where having its eyes fixed upon that world to which it is most nearly related. And thus it will look down, as from on high, on all those things which the world considers as lofty and exalted, and will see them under his feet; and of all the things which are confined within the narrow verge of this present life, it will have nothing to desire, and nothing to fear.



LECTURE VI.

Of the HAPPINESS of the LIFE to come.

OF all the thoughts of men, there is certainly none that more often occur to a serious mind, that has its own interest at heart, than that to which all others are subordinate and subservient, with regard to the intention, the ultimate and most desirable end of all our toils and cares, and even of life itself. And this important thought will the more closely beset the mind, the more sharp-sighted it is in prying into the real torments, the delusive hopes, and the false joys of this our wretched state; which is indeed so miserable, that it can never be sufficiently lamented: and as for laughter amidst so many sorrows, dangers and fears, it must be considered as downright madness. Such was the

opinion of the wisest of kings: "I have said of laughter," says he, "it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?"* We have, therefore, no cause to be much surprised at the bitter complaints which a grievous weight of afflictions has extorted, even from great and good men; nay, it is rather a wonder if the same causes do not often oblige us to repeat them.

If we look about us, how often are we shocked to observe either the calamities of our country or the sad disasters of our relations and friends, whom we have daily occasion to mourn, either as groaning under the pressures of poverty, pining away under languishing diseases, tortured by acute ones, or carried off by death, while we ourselves are, in like manner, very soon to draw tears from the eyes of others! Nay, how often are we a burden to ourselves, and groan heavily under afflictions of our own, that press hard upon our estates, our bodies, or our minds! Even those who seem to meet with the fewest and the least inconveniences in this life, and dazzle the eyes of spectators with the brightness of a seemingly constant and uniform felicity; besides that they often suffer from secret vexations and cares, which destroy their inward peace, and prey upon their distressed hearts; how uncertain, weak, and brittle, is that false happiness which appears about them, and, when it shines brightest, how easily is it broken to pieces! So that it has been justly said, "They want another felicity to

* Eccles. ii. 2.

secure that which they are already possessed of.”* If, after all, there are some whose minds are hardened against all the forms and appearances of external things, and that look down with equal contempt upon all the events of this world, whether of a dreadful or engaging aspect, even this disposition of mind does not make them happy: nor do they think themselves so; they have still something to make them uneasy—the obscure darkness that overspreads their minds, their ignorance of heavenly things, and the strength of their carnal affections, not yet entirely subdued. And though these we are now speaking of are by far the noblest and most beautiful part of the human race, yet, if they had not within them that blessed hope of removing hence, in a little time, to the regions of light, the more severely they feel the straits and afflictions to which their souls are exposed by being shut up in this narrow, earthly cottage, so much they certainly would be more miserable than the rest of mankind.

As oft, therefore, as we reflect upon these things, we shall find that the whole comes to this one conclusion: “There is certainly some end.”† There is, to be sure, some end suited to the nature of man, and worthy of it; some particular, complete, and permanent good: and since we in vain look for it within the narrow verge of this life, and among the many miseries that swarm on it from beginning to

* *Alia felicitate ad illam felicitatem tuendam opus est.*

† *Εστιν αρα τι τελος.*

end, we must of necessity conclude, that there is certainly some more fruitful country, and a more lasting life, to which our felicity is reserved, and into which we shall be received when we remove hence. This is not our rest, nor have we any place of residence here; it is the region of fleas and gnats; and while we search for happiness among these mean and perishing things, we are not only sure to be disappointed, but also not to escape those miseries which, in great numbers, continually beset us, so that we may apply to ourselves the saying of the famous artist, confined in the island of Crete, and truly say, "The earth and the sea are shut up against us, and neither of them can favour our escape; the way to heaven is alone open, and this way we will strive to go."*

Thus far we have advanced by degrees, and very lately we have discoursed upon the immortality of the soul, to which we have added the resurrection of our earthly body by way of appendix. It remains that we now inquire into the happiness of the life to come.

Yet, I own, I am almost deterred from entering upon this inquiry by the vast obscurity and sublimity of the subject, which in its nature is such, that we can neither understand it, nor, if we could, can it be expressed in words. The divine apostle, who had had some glimpse of this felicity, describes it no otherwise than by his silence, calling

* *Nec tellus nostræ, nec patet unda fugæ,
Restat iter cœli, cœlo tentabimus ire.*

the words he heard, “unspeakable, and such as it was not lawful for a man to utter.”* And if he neither could nor would express what he saw, far be it from us boldly to force ourselves into, or intrude upon, what we have not seen; especially as the same apostle, in another place, acquaints us, for our future caution, that this was unwarrantably done by some rash and forward persons in his own time. But since in the sacred archives of this new world, however invisible and unknown to us, we have some maps and descriptions of it suited to our capacity; we are not only allowed to look at them, but, as they were drawn for that very purpose, it would certainly be the greatest ingratitude, as well as the highest negligence in us, not to make some improvement of them. Here, however, we must remember what a great odds there is between the description of a kingdom in a small and imperfect map, and the extent and beauty of that very kingdom, when viewed by the traveller’s eye; and how much greater the difference must be between the felicity of that heavenly kingdom, to which we are aspiring, and all, even the most striking figurative expressions, taken from the things of this earth, that are used to convey some faint and imperfect notion of it to our minds. What are these things, the false glare and shadows whereof, in this earth, are pursued with such keen and furious impetuosity—riches, honours, pleasures? All these in their justest, purest, and sublimest sense, are

* *Ἀόρητα, ῥήματα, ἃ ἐκ ἐξου ἀνθρώπων λαλῆσαι.* 2 Cor. xii. 4.

comprehended in this blessed life: it is a treasure that can neither fail nor be carried away by force or fraud: it is an inheritance uncorrupted and undefiled, a crown that fadeth not away, a never-failing stream of joy and delight: it is a marriage-feast, and of all others the most joyous and most sumptuous; one that always satisfies, and never cloy the appetite: it is an eternal spring, and an everlasting light, a day without an evening: it is a paradise, where the lilies are always white and full blown, the saffron blooming, the trees sweat out their balsams, and the tree of life in the midst thereof: it is a city where the houses are built of living pearls, the gates of precious stones, and the streets paved with the purest gold; yet all these are nothing but veils of the happiness to be revealed on that most blessed day; nay, the light itself, which we have mentioned among the rest, though it be the most beautiful ornament of this visible world, is at best but a shadow of that heavenly glory; and how small soever that portion of this inaccessible brightness may be, which, in the sacred Scriptures, shines upon us through these veils, it certainly very well deserves that we should often turn our eyes towards it, and view it with the closest attention.

Now, the first thing that necessarily occurs in the constitution of happiness, is a full and complete deliverance from every evil and every grievance; which we may as certainly expect to meet with in that heavenly life, as it is impossible to be

attained while we sojourn here below. All tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and every cause and occasion of tears for ever removed from our sight. There, there are no tumults, no wars, no poverty, no death nor disease ; there, there is neither mourning nor fear, nor sin, which is the source and fountain of all other evils. There is neither violence within doors nor without, nor any complaint in the streets of that blessed city ; there, no friend goes out, nor enemy comes in. 2. Full vigour of body and mind, health, beauty, purity, and perfect tranquillity. 3. The most delightful society of angels, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and all the saints ; among whom there are no reproaches, contentions, controversies, nor party-spirit, because there are, there, none of the sources whence they can spring, nor any thing to encourage their growth ; for there is, there, particularly, no ignorance, no blind self-love, no vain-glory nor envy, which is quite excluded from those divine regions ; but, on the contrary, perfect charity, whereby every one, together with his own felicity, enjoys that of his neighbours, and is happy in the one as well as the other : hence there is among them a kind of infinite reflection and multiplication of happiness, like that of a spacious hall adorned with gold and precious stones, dignified with a full assembly of kings and potentates, and having its walls quite covered with the brightest looking-glasses. 4. But what infinitely exceeds, and quite eclipses all the rest, is that boundless ocean of happiness which results from

the beatific vision of the ever-blessed God; without which, neither the tranquillity they enjoy, nor the society of saints, nor the possession of any particular finite good, nor indeed of all such taken together, can satisfy the soul, or make it completely happy. The manner of this enjoyment we can only expect to understand when we enter upon the full possession of it; till then, to dispute and raise many questions about it, is nothing but vain, foolish talking, and fighting with phantoms of our own brain. But the schoolmen, who confine the whole of this felicity to bare speculation, or, as they call it, an *intellectual act*,* are in this, as in many other cases, guilty of great presumption, and their conclusion is built upon a very weak foundation. For although contemplation be the highest and noblest act of the mind, yet complete happiness necessarily requires some present good suited to the whole man, the whole soul, and all its faculties. Nor is it any objection to this doctrine, that the whole of this felicity is commonly comprehended in scripture under the term of vision; for the mental vision, or contemplation of the primary and infinite good, most properly signifies, or, at least, includes in it the full enjoyment of that good; and the observation of the Rabbins concerning scripture-phrases, "That words expressing the senses, include also the affections naturally arising from those sensations,"† is very well known. Thus, *knowing* is often put for

* *Actus intellectualis.*

† *Verba sensus connotant affectus.*

approving and loving ; and *seeing* for enjoying and attaining. “Taste and see that God is good,” says the Psalmist ; and in fact, it is no small pleasure to lovers to dwell together, and mutually to enjoy the sight of one another. “Nothing is more agreeable to lovers, than to live together.”*

We must, therefore, by all means conclude, that this beatific vision includes in it not only a distinct and intuitive knowledge of God, but, so to speak, such a knowledge as gives us the enjoyment of that most perfect Being, and, in some sense, unites us to him ; for such a vision, it must of necessity be, that converts that love of the Infinite Good, which blazes in the souls of the saints, into full possession, that crowns all their riches, and fills them with an abundant and overflowing fulness of joy that vents itself in everlasting blessings and songs of praise.

And this is the only doctrine, if you believe it, (and I make no doubt but you do,) this, I say, is the only doctrine that will transport your whole souls, and raise them up on high. Hence you will learn to trample under feet all the turbid and muddy pleasures of the flesh, and all the allurements and splendid trifles of the present world. However those earthly enjoyments that are swelled up by false names and the strength of imagination, to a vast size, may appear grand and beautiful, and still greater, and more engaging to those that are unacquainted with them ; how small, how inconsiderable do they all appear to a soul that looks for

* Οὐδεν ἕτω των φιλων ὡς το συζην.

a heavenly country, that expects to share the joys of angels, and has its thoughts constantly employed about these objects! To conclude; the more the soul withdraws, so to speak, from the body, and retires within itself, the more it rises above itself, and the more closely it cleaves to God, the more the life it lives, in this earth, resembles that which it will enjoy in heaven, and the larger foretastes it has of the first-fruits of that blessed harvest. Aspire, therefore, to holiness, young gentlemen, “without which no man shall see the Lord.”

LECTURE VII.

Of the BEING of GOD.

THOUGH, on most subjects, the opinions of men are various, and often quite opposite, insomuch that they seem to be more remarkable for the vast variety of their sentiments than that of their faces and languages; there are, however, two things, wherein all nations are agreed, and in which there seems to be a perfect harmony throughout the whole human race—the *desire of happiness* and a *sense of religion*. The former no man desires to shake off; and though some, possibly, would willingly part with the latter, it is not in their power to eradicate it entirely; they cannot banish God

altogether out of their thoughts, nor extinguish every spark of religion within them. It is certainly true, that for the most part this desire of happiness wanders in darkness from one object to another, without fixing upon any; and the sense of religion is either suffered to lie inactive or deviates into superstition. Yet the great Creator of the world employs these two, as the materials of a fallen building, to repair the ruins of the human race, and as handles whereby he draws his earthen vessel out of the deep gulph of misery into which it is fallen.

Of the former of these, that is felicity, we have already spoken on another occasion: we shall therefore now, with Divine assistance, employ some part of our time in considering that sense of religion that is naturally impressed upon the mind of man.

Nor will our labour, I imagine, be unprofitably employed in collecting together those few general principles, in which so many, and so very dissimilar forms of religion and sentiments, extremely different, harmoniously agree: for as every science, most properly, begins with universal propositions, and things more generally known; so, in the present case, besides the other advantages, it will be no small support to a weak and wavering mind, that, amidst all the disputes and contentions subsisting between the various sects and parties in religion, the great and necessary articles, at least, of our faith, are established in some particulars, by the general consent of mankind, and, in all the rest, by that of the whole Christian world.

I would therefore most earnestly wish that your minds, “rooted and established in the faith,”* were firmly united in this delightful bond of religion, which, like a golden chain, will be no burden, but an ornament; not a yoke of slavery, but a badge of true and generous liberty. I would, by no means, have you to be Christians, upon the authority of mere tradition or education, and the example and precepts of parents and masters, but from a full conviction of your own understandings, and a fervent disposition of the will and affections proceeding therefrom; “for piety is the sole and only good among mankind,”† and you can expect none of the fruits of religion, unless the root of it be well laid, and firmly established by faith; “for all the virtues are the daughters of faith,”‡ says Clemens Alexandrinus.

Lucretius, with very ill-advised praises, extols his favourite Grecian philosopher as one fallen down from heaven to be the deliverer of mankind, and dispel their distressing terrors and fears, because he fancied he had found out an effectual method to banish all religion entirely out of the minds of men. And, to say the truth, in no age have there been wanting brutish souls, too much enslaved to their corporeal senses, that would wish these opinions to be true; yet, after all, there are very few of them who are able to persuade themselves of the truth

* Ερριζωμενες και βεβαιωμενες εν τη πισει. Coloss. ii. 7.

† Εν γαρ και μονον εν ανθρωποις αγαθον η ευσεβεια. Trismegist.

‡ Πασαι γαρ αρεται πισεως θυγατρες.

of these vicious principles, which, with great impudence and importunity, they commonly inculcate upon others: they belch out, with full mouth, their foolish dreams, often in direct opposition to conscience and knowledge; and, what they unhappily would wish to be true, they can scarcely, if at all, believe themselves. You are acquainted with Horace's Recantation, wherein he tells us, "that he had been long bigoted to the mad tenets of the Epicurean philosophy; but found himself at last obliged to alter his sentiments, and deny all he had asserted before."*

Some souls lose the whole exercise of their reason, because they inform bodies that labour under the defect of temperament or of proper organs; yet you continue to give the old definition of man, and call him *a rational creature*; and should any one think proper to call him *a religious creature*, he would, to be sure, have as much reason on his side, and need not fear his opinion would be rejected, because of a few madmen who laugh at religion. Nor is it improbable, as some of the ancients have asserted, that those few among the Greeks, who were called Atheists, had not that epithet because they absolutely denied the being of God, but only because they rejected, and justly laughed at the fictitious and ridiculous deities of the nations.

Of all the institutions and customs received

* *Parcus Deorum cultor, et infrequens
Insanientis dum sapientiæ
Consultus erro, &c.*

Od. xxxiv. lib. 1.

among men, we meet with nothing more solemn and general than that of religion, and sacred rites performed to the honour of some deity; which is a very strong argument, that that persuasion, in preference to any other, is written, nay, rather engraven, in strong and indelible characters upon the mind of man. This is, as it were, the name of the great Creator stamped upon the noblest of all his visible works, that thus man may acknowledge himself to be his; and (concluding, from the inscription he finds impressed upon his mind, that what belongs to God, ought, in strict justice, to be restored to him) be wholly reunited to his first principle, that immense ocean of goodness whence he took his rise.* The distemper that has invaded mankind is, indeed, grievous and epidemical; it consists in a mean and degenerate love to the body and corporeal things; and, in consequence of this, a stupid and brutish forgetfulness of God, though he can never be entirely blotted out of the mind. This forgetfulness a few, and but very few, alarmed and awakened by the Divine rod, early shake off; and even in the most stupid, and such as are buried in the deepest sleep, the original impression sometimes discovers itself, when they are under the pressure of some grievous calamity, or, on the approach of danger, and especially upon a near prospect of death: then the thoughts of God, that had lain hid, and been long suppressed, forced out by the weight of pain, and the impressions of fear,

* Τα τῆς Θεῆς τῷ Θεῷ.

come to be remembered, and the whole soul being, as it were, roused out of its long and deep sleep, men begin to look about them, inquire what the matter is, and seriously reflect whence they came, and whither they are going. Then the truth comes naturally from their hearts. The stormy sea alarmed even profane sailors so much, that they awaked the sleeping Prophet; "Awake," say they, "thou sleeper, and call upon thy God."

But however weak and imperfect this original, or innate knowledge of God may be, it discovers itself every where so far, at least, that you can meet with no man, or society of men, that, by some form of worship or ceremonies, do not acknowledge a Deity, and, according to their capacity, and the custom of their country, pay him homage. It is true, some late travellers have reported, that, in that part of the new world called Brazil, there are some tribes of the natives, among whom you can discover no symptoms that they have the least sense of a Deity: but, besides that the truth of this report is very far from being well ascertained, and that the observation might have been too precipitately made by new comers, who had not made sufficient inquiry—even supposing it to be true, it is not of such consequence, when opposed to all the rest of the world, and the universal agreement of all nations and ages upon this subject, that the least regard should be paid to it. Nor must we imagine that it, at all, lessens the weight of this great argument, which has been generally, and

most justly, urged, both by ancients and moderns, to establish the first and common foundations of religion.

Now, whoever accurately considers this universal sense of religion of which we have been speaking, will find that it comprehends in it these particulars: 1, That there is a God. 2, That he is to be worshipped. 3, Which is a consequence of the former, that he regards the affairs of men. 4, That he has given them a law, enforced by rewards and punishments; and, that the distribution of these, is, in a very great measure, reserved to a life different from that we live in this earth, is the firm belief, if not of all, at least, of the generality of mankind. And though our present purpose does not require that we should confirm the truth of all these points with those strong arguments that might be urged in their favour; but rather, that we should take them for granted, as being sufficiently established by the common consent of mankind; we shall, however, subjoin a few thoughts on each of them, separately, with as great brevity and perspicuity as we can.

1. THAT THERE IS A GOD. And here I cannot help fearing, that when we endeavour to confirm this leading truth, with regard to the first, and uncreated Being, by a long and laboured series of arguments, we may seem, instead of a service, to do a kind of injury to God and man both. For why should we use the pitiful light of a candle to discover the sun, and eagerly go about to prove the

being of Him who gave being to every thing else; who alone exists necessarily, nay, we may boldly say, who alone exists; seeing all other things were by him extracted out of nothing, and, when compared with him, they are nothing, and even less than nothing, and vanity? And would not any man think himself insulted, should it be suspected, that he doubted of the being of Him without whom he could neither doubt nor think, nor be at all? This persuasion, without doubt, is innate, and strongly impressed upon the mind of man, if any thing at all can be said to be so.* Nor does Jamblicus scruple to say, “That to know God is our very being:”† and in another place, “That it is the very being of the soul to know God, on whom it depends.”‡ Nor would he think amiss, who, in this, should espouse the opinion of Plato; for to know this is nothing more than to call to remembrance what was formerly impressed upon the mind; and when one forgets it, which, alas! is too much the case of us all, he has as many remembrancers, so to speak, within him, as he has members; and as many without him as the individuals of the vast variety of creatures to be seen around him. Let, therefore, the indolent soul that has almost forgot God, be roused up, and every now and then say to itself, “Behold this beautiful starry heaven,” &c.

* Primum visibile lux, et primum intelligibile Deus.

† Esse nostrum est Deum cognoscere.

‡ Esse animæ, est quoddam intelligere, scilicet Deum, unde dependet.

But because we have too many of that sort of fools that say in their heart, "There is no God," and if we are "not to answer a fool, so as to be like unto him;" yet we are, by all means, to "answer him according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit;" again, because a criminal forgetfulness of this leading truth is the sole source of all the wickedness in the world; and, finally, because it may not be quite unprofitable nor unpleasant, even to the best of men, sometimes to recollect their thoughts on this subject; but, on the contrary, a very pleasant exercise to every well-disposed mind, to reflect on what a solid and unshaken foundation the whole fabric of religion is built, and to think and speak of the eternal Fountain of Goodness, and of all other beings, and consequently of his necessary existence; we reckon it will not be amiss to give a few thoughts upon it. Therefore, not to insist upon several arguments, which are urged with great advantage on this subject, we shall only produce one or two, and shall reason thus:

It is by all means necessary that there should be some eternal Being, otherwise nothing could ever have been; since it must be a most shocking contradiction to say, that any thing could have produced itself out of nothing. But if we say, that any thing existed from eternity, it is most agreeable to reason that that should be an eternal Mind, or thinking Being, that so the noblest property may be ascribed to the most exalted Being. Nay, that eternal Being must, of absolute necessity, excel in

wisdom and power, and, indeed, in every other perfection; since it must itself be uncreated, and the cause and origin of all the creatures, otherwise some difficulty will remain concerning their production. And thus all the parts of the universe, taken singly, suggest arguments in favour of their Creator.

The beautiful order of the universe, and the mutual relation that subsists between all its parts, present us with another strong and convincing argument. This order is itself an effect, and, indeed, a wonderful one; and it is also evidently distinct from the things themselves, taken singly; therefore it must proceed from some cause, and a cause endowed with superior wisdom; for it would be the greatest folly, as well as impudence, to say it could be owing to mere chance. Now, it could not proceed from man, nor could it be owing to any concert or mutual agreement between the things themselves, separately considered; seeing the greatest part of them are evidently incapable of consultation and concert: it must therefore proceed from one superior Being, and that being is *God*, “who commanded the stars to move by stated laws, the fruits of the earth to be produced at different seasons, the changeable moon to shine with borrowed light, and the sun with his own.”*

* ——— Qui lege moveri

Sidera, qui fruges diverso tempore nasci,
Qui variam Phœben alieno jusserit igne
Compleri, solemque suo.

He is the monarch of the universe, and the most absolute monarch in nature: for who else assigned to every rank of creatures its particular form and uses, so that the stars, subjected to no human authority or laws, should be placed on high, and serve to bring about to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, the regular returns of day and night, and distinguish the seasons of the year? Let us take, in particular, any one species of sublunary things, for instance man, the noblest of all, and see how he came by the form wherewith he is vested, that frame or constitution of body, that vigour of mind, and that precise rank in the nature of things, which he now obtains, and no other. He must, certainly, either have made choice of these things for himself, or must have had them assigned him by another; whom we must consider as the principal actor and sole architect of the whole fabric. That he made choice of them for himself, nobody will imagine; for, either he made this choice before he had any existence of his own, or after he began to be: but it is not easy to say which of these suppositions is most absurd. It remains, therefore, that he must be indebted for all he enjoys, to the mere good pleasure of his great and all-wise Creator, who framed his earthly body in such a wonderful and surprising manner, animated him with his own breath, and thus introduced him into this great palace of his, which we now behold; *where his manifold wisdom*, most properly so called, displays

itself so gloriously in the whole machine, and in every one of its *wonderfully variegated parts*.

The first argument, taken from the very being of things, may be farther illustrated by the same instance of man : for unless the first man was created, we must suppose an infinite series of generations from eternity, and so the human race must be supposed independent, and to owe its being to itself ; but, by this hypothesis, mankind came into the world by generation, therefore every individual of the race owes its being to another ; consequently the whole race is from itself, and at the same time from another, which is absurd. Therefore the hypothesis implies a plain and evident contradiction. “ O ! immense wisdom, that produced the world ! Let us for ever admire the riches and skill of thy right-hand ;” * often viewing with attention thy wonders, and, while we view them, frequently crying out with the divine Psalmist, “ O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches !” † “ From everlasting to everlasting thou art God, and besides thee, there is no other.” ‡ And with Hermes : “ The Father of all, being himself understanding, life, and brightness, created man like himself, and cherished him as his own son. . . Thou Creator of universal nature, who hast extended the earth, who

* O ! immensa, opifex rerum, sapientia ! dextræ

Divitias artemque tuæ miremur in ævum.

† Psalm civ. 24.

‡ Psalm xc. 2.

poisest the heavens, and commandest the waters to flow from all the parts of the sea, we praise thee, who art the one exalted God, for by thy will all things are perfected."* The same author asserts, that *God was prior to humid nature.*

In vain would any one endeavour to evade the force of our argument, by substituting nature in the place of God, as the principle and cause of this beautiful order: for either, by nature, he understands the particular frame and composition of every single thing, which would be saying nothing at all to the purpose in hand, because it is evident, that this manifold nature, which in most instances is quite void of reason, could never be the cause of that beautiful order and harmony which is every where conspicuous throughout the whole system; or he means an universal and intelligent nature, disposing and ordering every thing to advantage. But this is only another name for God; of whom it may be said, in a sacred sense, that he, as an infinite Nature and Mind, pervades and fills all his works. Not as an informing form, according to the expression of the schools, and as the part of a compounded whole, which is the idlest fiction that can be imagined; for, at this rate, he must not only be a part of the vilest insects, but also of stocks and stones, and clods of earth; but a pure, unmixed

* Ὁ παντων Πατηρ, ὁ νους ὡν ζωη και φως, απεκυησε ανθρωπων ε ηρασθη ὡς ιδιω τοκω. Πασης φυσεως Κτιστης, ὁ πηξας την γην και θρανον κρεμασας και επιλαξας το γλυκυ ὕδωρ εξ αυτω τω ωκεανω ὑπαρχειν, ὕμνωμεν σε, το παν, και το ἐν, σου γαρ βουλομενου παντα τελειται.

nature, which orders and governs all things with the greatest freedom and wisdom, and supports them with unwearied and almighty power. In this acceptation, when you name Nature, you mean God. Seneca's words are very apposite to this purpose: "Whithersoever you turn yourself, you see God meeting you; nothing excludes his presence; he fills all his works: therefore it is in vain for thee, most ungrateful of all men, to say, thou art not indebted to God, but to Nature, because they are, in fact, the same. If thou hadst received any thing from Seneca, and should say, thou owedst it to Annæus or Lucius, thou wouldst not thereby change thy creditor, but only his name; because, whether thou mentionest his name or surname, his person is still the same."*

An evident and most natural consequence of this universal and necessary idea of a God, is his unity. All that mention the term God, intend to convey by it the idea of the first, most exalted, necessarily existent, and infinitely perfect Being: and it is plain, there can be but one Being endued with all these perfections. Nay, even the Polytheism that prevailed among the Heathen nations, was not carried

* Quocunque te flexeris, ibi Deum vides occurrentem tibi, nihil ab illo vacat; opus suum ipse implet: ergo nihil agis, ingrattissime mortalium, qui te negas Deo debere, sed Naturæ, quia eidem est utrumque officium. Si quid à Seneca accepisses, et Annæo te diceres debere vël Lucio, non creditorem mutares, sed nomen, quoniam sive nomen ejus dicas, sive prænomen, sive cognomen, idem tamen ipse est. SENECA, 4, De Benef.

so far, but that they acknowledged one God, by way of eminence, as supreme, and absolutely above all the rest, whom they styled the greatest and best of Beings, and the Father of gods and men. From him all the rest had their being and all that they were, and from him also they had the title of gods, but still in a limited and subordinate sense. In confirmation of this, we meet with very many of the clearest testimonies, with regard to the unity of God, in the works of all the Heathen authors. That of Sophocles is very remarkable: "There is indeed," says he, "one God, and but one, who has made the heavens, and the wide-extended earth, the blue surges of the sea, and the strength of the winds."*

As to the mystery of the sacred Trinity, which has a near and necessary connexion with the present subject, I always thought it was to be received and adored with the most humble faith, but by no means to be curiously searched into, or perplexed with the absurd questions of the schoolmen. We fell by an arrogant ambition after knowledge; by mere faith we rise again, and are reinstated; and this mystery, indeed, rather than any other, seems to be a tree of knowledge, prohibited to us while we sojourn in these mortal bodies. This most profound mystery, though obscurely represented by the shadows of the Old Testament, rather than clearly revealed, was not unknown to the most an-

* Εἰς ταις ἀληθειαισιν, εἰς ἐστὶν Θεός,
Ὅς θρανὸν τ' εἴεξε καὶ γαίαν μακρὰν,
Πόντε τε χαροπὸν οὐδμα κἀνεμῶν βίης.

cient and celebrated doctors among the Jews, nor altogether unattested, however obstinately later authors may maintain the contrary. Nay, learned men have observed, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are expressly acknowledged in the books of the Cabalists, and they produce surprising things to this purpose out of the book Zohar, which is ascribed to R. Simeon, Ben Joch, and some other Cabalistical writers. Nay the book just now mentioned, after saying a great deal concerning the Three-in-one essence, adds, "That this secret will not be revealed to all till the coming of the Messias."* I insist not upon what is said of the name consisting of twelve letters, and another larger one of forty-two, as containing a fuller explication of that most sacred name, which they called "Ham-mephorash."†

Nor is it improbable, that some dawn, at least, of this mystery had reached even the Heathen philosophers. There are some who think they can prove, by arguments of no inconsiderable weight, that Anaxagoras, by his *νοῦς* or mind, meant nothing but the Son, or Wisdom that made the world. But the testimonies are clearer, which you find frequently among the Platonic philosophers, concerning the *Three subsisting from one*; ‡ moreover, they all call the *self-existent Being*, the *creating word*, or the *mind*

* Hoc arcanum non revelabitur unicuique, quosque venerit Messias.

† Maim. Mor. Nev. par. i. c. 16.

‡ Περὶ τριῶν ἐξ ἑνὸς ὑποστάτων.

and *the soul of the world*.* But the words of the Egyptian Hermes are very surprising: “The mind, which is God, together with his word, produced another creating-mind; nor do they differ from one another, for their union is life.”†

But what we now insist upon is, the plain and evident necessity of one Supreme, and therefore of one only Principle of all things, and the harmonious agreement of mankind in the belief of the absolute necessity of this same Principle.

This is the God whom we admire, whom we worship, whom we entirely love, or, at least, whom we desire to love above all things, whom we can neither express in words, nor conceive in our thoughts; and the less we are capable of these things, so much the more necessary it is to adore him with the profoundest humility, and love him with the greatest intentness and fervour.

LECTURE VIII.

*Of the WORSHIP of GOD, PROVIDENCE, and the
LAW given to MAN.*

THOUGH I thought it by no means proper to proceed without taking notice of the arguments that

* Το αυτο, ου τον δημιουργον λογον, σευ γεν, και την τε κοσμου ψυχην.

† ‘Ο υος Θεος απεκυησε λογω ετερον γεν δημιουργον, αλλ’ η διεσανται απ’ αλληλων, ενωσις γαρ τελων εστιν η ζωη.

served to confirm the first and leading truth of religion, and the general consent of mankind with regard to it; yet the end I chiefly proposed to myself, was to examine this consent, and point out its force, and the use to which it ought to be applied; to call off your minds from the numberless disputes about religion, to the contemplation of this universal agreement, as into a more quiet and peaceable country; and to shew you, what I wish I could effectually convince you of, that there is more weight and force in this universal harmony and consent of mankind in a few of the great and universal principles, to confirm our minds in the sum and substance of religion, than the innumerable disputes that still subsist with regard to the other points, ought to have to discourage us in the exercise of true piety, or in the least to weaken our faith.

In consequence of this, it will be proper to lay before you the other propositions contained in this general consent of mankind, with regard to religion. Now, the first of these being, "That there is one, and but one Eternal Principle of all things;" from this it will most naturally follow, "that this Principle or Deity is to be honoured with some worship;" and from these two taken together, it must be, with the same necessity, concluded, "that there is a providence, or, that God doth not despise or neglect the world which he has created, and mankind, by whom he ought to be, and actually is worshipped, but governs them with the most watchful and perfect wisdom."

All mankind acknowledge, that some kind of worship is due to God, and to perform it is by all means worthy of man: and upon the minds of all is strongly impressed that sentiment which Lactantius expressed, with great perspicuity and brevity, in these words, "To know God is wisdom, and to worship him, justice."*

In this worship some things are natural, and therefore of more general use among all nations, such as vows and prayers, hymns and praises; as also some bodily gestures, especially such as seem most proper to express reverence and respect. All the rest, for the most part, actually consist of ceremonies, either of divine institution or human invention. Of this sort are sacrifices, the use whereof, in old times, very much prevailed in all nations, and still continues in the greater part of the world.

A Majesty so exalted, no doubt, deserves the highest honour and the sublimest praises on his own account; but still if men were not persuaded that the testimonies of homage and respect they offer to God, were known to him, and accepted of him, even on this account all human piety would cool, and presently disappear. And, indeed, prayers and vows, whereby we implore the Divine assistance, and solicit blessings from above, offered to a God who neither hears nor in the least regards them, would be an instance of the greatest folly; nor is it to be imagined, that all nations would ever

* Deum nosse, sapientia; colere, justitia.

have agreed in the extravagant custom of addressing themselves to gods that did not hear.

Supposing, therefore, any religion or divine worship, it immediately follows therefrom, that there is also a providence. This was acknowledged of old, and is still acknowledged by the generality of all nations, throughout the world, and the most famous philosophers. There were, indeed, particular men, and some whole sects, that denied it: others, who acknowledged a kind of providence, confined it to the heavens, among whom was Aristotle, as appears from his book *De Mundo*; which notion is justly slighted by Nazianzen, who calls it a mere limited providence.* Others allowed it some place in things of this world, but only extended it to generals, in opposition to individuals; but others, with the greatest justice, acknowledged that all things, even the most minute and inconsiderable, were the objects of it. "He fills his own work, nor is he only over it, but also in it."† Moreover, if we ascribe to God the origin of this fabric, and all things in it, it will be most absurd and inconsistent to deny him the preservation and government of it; for if he does not preserve and govern his creatures, it must be either because he cannot, or because he will not; but his infinite power and wisdom make it impossible to doubt of the former, and his infinite goodness of the latter. The words of Epictetus

* Μικρολογον προνοιαν.

† Opus suum ipse implet, nec solum præest, sed inest.

are admirable: "There were five great men," said he, "of which number were Ulysses and Socrates, who said that they could not so much as move without the knowledge of God;"* and in another place, "If I was a nightingale, I would act the part of a nightingale; if a swan, that of a swan; now that I am a reasonable creature, it is my duty to praise God."†

It would be needless to shew, that so great a fabric could not stand without some being properly qualified to watch over it; that the unerring course of the stars is not the effect of blind fortune; that what chance sets on foot is often put out of order, and soon falls to pieces; that, therefore, this unerring and regular velocity is owing to the influence of a fixed, eternal law. It is, to be sure, a very great miracle, merely to know so great a multitude, and such a vast variety of things, not only particular towns, but also provinces and kingdoms, even the whole earth, all the myriads of creatures that crawl upon the earth, and all their thoughts; in a word, at the same instant to hear and see all that happens‡ on both hemispheres of this globe: how much more wonderful must it be, to rule and govern all these at once, and, as it were, with one glance of the eye! When we consider this, may we not

* Περπλοὶ δὲ ὤνην καὶ Ὀδυσσεύς, καὶ Σωκράτης, οἱ λείοντες, οἷ ἐδὲ σε ληθῶ κινθμενος. Arrian. lib. 1. cap. 12. Περὶ Εὐαρεστεσεως, &c.

† Εὶ γοῦν ἀηδῶν ἦμεν, ἐποιεὺν τὰ τῆς ἀηδονος, εὶ κυκνος τὰ τῆς κυκνῶς νυν δὲ λογικὸς εἶμι, ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν Θεόν. Ibid. cap. 16.

‡ Παντ' ἐφορᾶν, καὶ παντ' ἐπακθεῖν.

cry out with the poet, “O thou great Creator of heaven and earth, who governest the world with constant and unerring sway, who biddest time to flow throughout ages, and, continuing unmoved thyself, givest motion to every thing else, &c.”?*

It is also a great comfort to have the faith of this providence constantly impressed upon the mind, so as to have recourse to it in the midst of all confusions, whether public or private, and all calamities from without or from within; to be able to say, The great King, who is also my Father, is the supreme ruler of all these things, and with him all my interests are secure; to stand firm, with Moses, when no relief appears, and to look for the salvation of God† from on high; and, finally, in every distress, when all hope of human assistance is swallowed up in despair, to have the remarkable saying of the Father of the faithful stamped upon the mind, and to silence all fears with these comfortable words, “God will provide.” In a word, there is nothing that can so effectually conform the heart of man, and his inmost thoughts, and consequently the whole tenor of his life, to the most perfect rule of religion and piety, than a firm belief and frequent meditation on this Divine Providence, that superintends and governs the world. He

* O! qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas
Terrarum cœlique Sator, qui tempus ab ævo,
Ire jubes; stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri, &c.
Boeth. de Con. Philosoph. lib. iii. metr. 9.

† Vere Θεον απο μηχανης.

who is firmly persuaded, that an exalted God of infinite wisdom and purity is constantly present with him, and sees all that he thinks or acts, will, to be sure, have no occasion to overawe his mind with the imaginary presence of a Lælius or a Cato. Josephus assigns this as the source or root of Abel's purity: "In all his actions," says he, "he considered that God was present with him, and therefore made virtue his constant study."*

Moreover, the Heathen nations acknowledge this superintendence of Divine Providence over human affairs in this very respect, and that it is exercised in observing the morals of mankind, and distributing rewards and punishments. But this supposes some law or rule, either revealed from heaven, or stamped upon the hearts of men, to be the measure and test of moral good and evil, that is, virtue and vice. Man, therefore, is not a lawless creature, † but capable of a law, and actually born under one, which he himself is also ready to own. "We are born in a kingdom," says the Rabbinical philosopher, "and to obey God is liberty." ‡ But this doctrine, however perspicuous and clear in itself, seems to be a little obscured by one cloud, that is, the extraordinary success which bad men often meet with, and the misfortunes and calamities to which virtue is frequently exposed.

* Πασιν τοις ὑπ' αὐτῆς πραττομένοις παρῆναι τὸν Θεὸν νομιζῶν, ἀρετῆς προενοεῖτο. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 3.

† Ζῶν ἀνόμον.

‡ In regno nati sumus, Deo parere, libertas.

The saying of Brutus, "O! wretched virtue; thou art regarded as nothing," &c.* is well known; as are also those elegant verses of the poet, containing a lively picture of the perplexity of a mind wavering, and at a loss upon this subject: "My mind," says he, "has often been perplexed with difficulties and doubts, whether the gods regard the affairs of this earth, or whether there was no providence at all, &c.—For when I considered the order and disposition of the world, and the boundaries set to the sea—I thence concluded, that all things were secured by the providence of God, &c.—But when I saw the affairs of men involved in so much darkness and confusion, &c."†

But not to insist upon a great many other considerations, which even the philosophy of the Heathens suggested, in vindication of the doctrine of a providence; there is one consideration of great weight to be set in opposition to the whole of this prejudice, viz. that it is an evidence of a rash and forward mind, to pass sentence upon things that are not yet perfect and brought to a final conclusion,

* *Ὁ τλημων αρετη, ως εδεν, &c.*

† *Sepe mihi dubiam traxit sententia mentem*

Curarent superi terras, &c.

Nam cū dispositi quæsissem foedera mundi

Præscriptosque maris fines—

————— *hinc omnia rebar*

Consilia firmata Dei, &c.

Sed cū res hominum tanta caligine volvi

Aspicerem, &c.

Claudian in Rufinum, lib. 1.

which even the Roman Stoic, and the philosopher of Chæronea insist upon, at large, on this subject. If we will judge from events, let us put off the cause, and delay sentence, till the whole series of these events come before us; and let us not pass sentence upon a successful tyrant, while he is triumphant before our eyes, and while we are quite ignorant of the fate that may be awaiting himself or his son, or at least his more remote posterity. The ways of Divine justice are wonderful. "Punishment stalks silently, and with a slow pace: it will, however, at last overtake the wicked."* But, after all, if we expect another scene of things to be exhibited, not here, but in the world to come, the whole dispute, concerning the events of this short and precarious life, immediately disappears, and comes to nothing. And, to conclude, the consent of wise men, states, and nations on this subject, though it is not quite unanimous and universal, is very great, and ought to have the greatest weight.

But all these maxims we have mentioned, are more clearly taught and more firmly believed in the Christian religion, which is of undoubted truth; it has also some doctrines peculiar to itself,† annexed to the former, and most closely connected with them, in which the whole Christian world, though by far too much divided with regard to other disputed articles, are unanimously agreed, and firmly united together; but of this hereafter.

* Σιγα και βραδει ποδι σειχυστα μαρφει τες ηακως οταν τυχη.

† Κυριας δοξας.

LECTURE IX.

Of the Pleasure and Utility of RELIGION.

THOUGH the Author of the following passage was a great proficient in the mad philosophy of Epicurus, yet he had truth strongly on his side, when he said, "That nothing was more pleasant than to be stationed on the lofty temples, well defended and secured by the pure and peaceable doctrines of the wise philosophers."*

Now, can any doctrine be imagined more wise, more pure and peaceable, and more sacred, than that which flowed from the most perfect Fountain of wisdom and purity, which was sent down from heaven to earth, that it might guide all its followers to that happy place whence it took its rise? It is, to be sure, the wisdom of mankind to know God, and their indispensable duty to worship him: without this, men of the brightest parts and greatest learning, seem to be born with excellent talents, only to make themselves miserable; and, according to the expression of the wisest of kings, "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow."† We must, therefore, first of all, consider this as a sure and settled point, that religion is the sole

* — Bene quam munita tenere

Edita doctrinâ sapientum templa serena. LUCRET.

† Qui scientiam, auget cruciatum. Eccles. i. 18.

foundation of human peace and felicity. This even the profane scoffers at religion are, in some sort, obliged to own, though much against their will, even while they are pointing their wit against it; for nothing is more common to be heard from them, than that the whole doctrine of religion was invented by some wise men, to encourage the practice of justice and virtue through the world. Surely then, religion, whatever else may be said of it, must be a matter of the highest value, since it is found necessary to secure advantages of so very great importance. But, in the mean time, how unhappy is the case of integrity and virtue, if what they want to support them is merely fictitious, and they cannot keep their ground but by means of a monstrous forgery! But far be it from us to entertain such an absurdity! For the first rule of righteousness cannot be otherwise than right, nor is there any thing more nearly allied, nor more friendly to virtue, than truth.

But religion is not only highly conducive to all the great advantages of human life, but is also, at the same time, most pleasant and delightful. Nay, if it is so useful, and absolutely necessary to the interests of virtue, it must, for this very reason, be also pleasant, unless one will call in question a maxim universally approved by all wise men, "That life cannot be agreeable without virtue:"* a maxim of such irrefragable and undoubted truth, that it was adopted even by Epicurus himself.

* ΟΥΚ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΗΔΕΩΣ ΖΗΝ ΑΝΕΥ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΕΤΗΣ.

How great, therefore, must have been the madness of that noted Grecian philosopher, who, while he openly maintained the dignity and pleasantness of virtue, at the same time employed the whole force of his understanding, to ruin and sap its foundations ! For, that this was his fixed purpose, Lucretius not only owns, but also boasts of it, and loads him with ill-advised praises, for endeavouring, through the whole course of his philosophy, to free the minds of men from all the bonds and ties of religion ; as if there were no possible way to make them happy and free, without involving them in the guilt of sacrilege and atheism ; as if to eradicate all sense of a Deity out of the mind, were the only way to free it from the heaviest chains and fetters ; though, in reality, this would be effectually robbing man of all his valuable jewels, of his golden crown and chain, all the riches, ornaments, and pleasures of his life : which is inculcated at large, and with great eloquence, by a greater and more divine master of wisdom, the royal author of the Proverbs, who, speaking of the precepts of religion, says, “ They shall be an ornament of grace unto thine head, and chains about thy neck : ” * and of religion, under the name of wisdom, “ If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasure.” † “ Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof

* Prov. i. 9.

† Prov. ii. 4.

than find gold.”* “Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom : and with all thy getting, get understanding.”† And it is, indeed, very plain, that if it were possible entirely to dissolve all the bonds and ties of religion ; yet, that it should be so, would, certainly, be the interest of none but the worst and most abandoned part of mankind. All the good and wise, if the matter were freely left to their choice, would rather have the world governed by the supreme and most perfect Being, mankind subjected to his just and righteous laws, and all the affairs of men superintended by his watchful providence, than that it should be otherwise. Nor do they believe the doctrines of religion with aversion, or any sort of reluctance, but embrace them with pleasure, and are excessively glad to find them true. So that, if it was possible to abolish them entirely, and any person, out of mere good-will to them, should attempt to do it, they would look upon the favour as highly prejudicial to their interest, and think his good-will more hurtful than the keenest hatred. Nor would any one, in his wits, choose to live in the world at large, and without any sort of government, more than he would think it eligible to be put on board a ship without a helm or pilot, and, in this condition, to be tossed amidst rocks and quicksands. On the other hand, can any thing give greater consolation, or more substantial joy,‡ than to be firmly persuaded, not only that there is

* Prov. xiii. 14.

† Ibid. iv. 7.

‡ ΦΕΥ ΤΙ ΤΩΤΩΝ ΧΑΡΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝ ΑΝ ΛΑΒΟΙΣ.

an infinitely good and wise Being, but also that this Being preserves and continually governs the universe, which himself has framed, and holds the reins of all things in his powerful hand; that he is our Father; that we and all our interests are his constant concern; and that, after we have sojourned a short while here below, we shall be again taken into his immediate presence? Or can this wretched life be attended with any sort of satisfaction, if it is divested of this divine faith, and bereaved of such a blessed hope?

Moreover, every one that thinks a generous fortitude and purity of mind preferable to the charms and muddy pleasures of the flesh, finds all the precepts of religion not only not grievous, but exceeding pleasant, and extremely delightful. So that, upon the whole, the saying of Hermes is very consistent with the nature of things: "There is one, and but one good thing among men, and that is religion."* Even the vulgar could not bear the degenerate expression of the player, who called out upon the stage, "Money is the chief good among mankind."† But should any one say, "Religion is the principal good of mankind," no objection could be made against it;‡ for, without doubt, it is the only object, the beauties whereof engage the love both of God and man.

But the principal things in religion, as I have fre-

* 'Εν και μονον, εν ανθρωποις αγαθον, η ευσεβεια.

† Pecunia magnum generis humani bonum.

‡ Ουκ ες' αυτην ηδεν.

quently observed, are "just conceptions of God." Now, concerning this infinite Being, some things are known by the light of nature and reason, others only by the revelation which he hath been pleased to make of himself from heaven. That there is a God, is the distinct voice of every man, and of every thing without him: how much more, then, shall we be confirmed in the belief of this truth, if we attentively view the whole creation, and the wonderful order and harmony that subsist between all the parts of the whole system! It is quite unnecessary to shew, that so great a fabric could never have been brought into being without an all-wise and powerful Creator; nor could it now subsist without the same almighty Being to support and preserve it. "Let men, therefore, make this their constant study," says Lactantius, "even to know their common Parent and Lord, whose power can never be perfectly known, whose greatness cannot be fathomed, nor his eternity comprehended."* When the mind of man, with its faculties, comes to be once intensely fixed upon him, all other objects disappearing, and being, as it were, removed quite out of sight, it is entirely at a stand and overpowered, nor can it possibly proceed further. But concerning the doctrine of this vast volume of the works of God, and that still brighter light which shines forth in the Scriptures, we shall speak more fully hereafter.

* Ut Parentem suum Dominumque cognoscant, cujus nec virtus aestimari potest, nec magnitudo perspicitur, nec æternitas comprehendi.

LECTURE X.

Of the DECREES of GOD.

As the glory and brightness of the Divine Majesty is so great, that the strongest human eye cannot bear the direct rays of it, he has exhibited himself to be viewed in the glass of those works which he created at first, and, by his unwearied hand, continually supports and governs; nor are we allowed to view his eternal counsels and purposes through any other medium but this. So that, in our catechisms, especially the shorter one, designed for the instruction of the ignorant, it might, perhaps, have been full as proper to have passed over the awful speculation concerning the Divine decrees, and to have proceeded, directly, to the consideration of the works of God; but the thoughts you find in it, on this subject, are few, sober, clear, and certain: and, in explaining them, I think it most reasonable and most safe to confine ourselves within these limits, in any audience whatever, but especially in this congregation, consisting of youths, not to say, in a great measure, of boys. Seeing, therefore, the decrees of God are mentioned in our Catechism, and it would not be proper to pass over in silence a matter of so great moment, I shall accordingly lay before you some few thoughts upon this arduous subject.

And here, if any where, we ought, according to the common saying, to reason but in few words. I should, indeed, think it very improper to do otherwise; for such theories ought to be cautiously touched rather than be spun out to a great length. One thing we may confidently assert, that all those things which the great Creator produces in different periods of time, were perfectly known to him, and, as it were, present with him from eternity; and every thing that happens throughout the several ages of the world, proceeds in the same order, and the same precise manner, as the Eternal Mind at first intended it should; that none of his counsels can be disappointed or rendered ineffectual, or in the least changed or altered by any event whatsoever. "Known to God are all his works,"* says the apostle in the council of Jerusalem; and the son of Sirach, "God sees from everlasting to everlasting, and nothing is wonderful in his sight."† Nothing is new or unexpected to him; nothing can come to pass that he has not foreseen; and his first thoughts are so wise, that they admit no second ones that can be supposed wiser. And "this stability and immutability of the Divine decrees,"‡ is asserted even by the Roman philosopher: "It is necessary," says he, "that the same things be

* Nota sunt Deo ab initio omnia sua opera. Acts xv. 18.

† A seculo in seculum respicit Deus, et nihil est mirabile in conspectu ejus.

‡ Το αμεταβλητον και ακινητον παρ θεων βουλευματων.

always pleasing to Him who can never be pleased but with what is best.”*

Every artist, to be sure, as you also well know, works according to some pattern, which is the immediate object of his mind; and this pattern, in the all-wise Creator, must necessarily be entirely perfect, and every way complete. And if this is what Plato intended by his ideas, which not a few, and those by no means unlearned, think very likely; his own scholar, the great Stagirite, and your favourite philosopher, had, surely, no reason, so often and so bitterly, to inveigh against them. Be this as it may, all that acknowledge God to be the author of this wonderful fabric, and all those things in it which succeed one another in their turns, cannot possibly doubt, that he has brought and continues to bring them all about, according to that most perfect pattern subsisting in his eternal councils; and those things that we call casual, are all unalterably fixed and determined to him. For, according to that of the philosopher, “Where there is most wisdom, there is least chance,”* and therefore, surely, where there is infinite wisdom there is nothing left to chance at all.

This maxim, concerning the eternal councils of the Supreme Sovereign of the world, besides that it every where shines clearly in the books of the sacred

* *Necesse est Illi eadem semper placere, cui nisi optima placere non possunt.*

† *Ubi plus est sapientiæ, ibi minus est casus.*

Scriptures, is also, in itself, so evident and consistent with reason, that we meet with it in almost all the works of the philosophers, and often, also, in those of the poets. Nor does it appear, that they mean any thing else, at least, for the most part, by the term *fate*: though you may meet with some things in their works, which, I own, sound a little harsh, and can scarcely be sufficiently softened by any, even the most favourable interpretation.

But whatever else may seem to be comprehended under the term *fate*, whether taken in the mathematical or physical sense, as some are pleased to distinguish it, must, at last, of necessity be resolved into the appointment and good pleasure of the Supreme Governor of the world. If even the blundering astrologers and fortune-tellers acknowledge that the wise man has dominion over the stars; how much more evident is it, that all these things, and all their power and influence, are subject and subservient to the decrees of the All-wise God! Whence the saying of the Hebrews, “There is no planet to Israel.”*

And according as all these things in the heavens above and the earth beneath, are daily regulated and directed by the Eternal King; in the same precise manner were they all from eternity ordered and disposed by him, “who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will,”† who is

* Non esse planetam Israeli.

† Qui cuncta exequitur secundum consilium voluntatis suæ.
Eph. i. 11.

more ancient than the sea and the mountains, or even the heavens themselves.

These things we are warranted and safe to believe; but what perverseness, or rather madness, is it to endeavour to break into the sacred repositories of heaven, and pretend to accommodate those secrets of the Divine kingdom to the measures and methods of our weak capacities! To say the truth, I acknowledge that I am astonished, and greatly at a loss, when I hear learned men, and professors of theology, talking presumptuously about the order of the Divine decrees, and when I read such things in their works. Paul, considering this awful subject “as an immense sea, was astonished at it, and viewing the vast abyss, started back, and cried out with a loud voice, O the depth!” * &c. Nor is there much more sobriety or moderation in the many notions that are entertained, and the disputes that are commonly raised about reconciling these divine decrees with the liberty and free-will of man.

It is, indeed, true, that neither religion nor right reason will suffer the actions and designs of men, and consequently, even the very motions of the will, to be exempted from the empire of the counsel and good pleasure of God. Even the books of the Heathens are filled with most express testimonies of the most absolute sovereignty of God, even with regard to these. The sentiments of Homer are

* Ὁ Παυλος ὡς περὶ πρὸς πέλαγος ἀπειρον, ἰλιγγιασας και βαθυς ἰδων ἀχανες, ἀνεπηθήσεν εὐθέως, και μεγάλα ἀνεβήσεν, ἐπων, Ω βαθος, &c. Chrys.

well known ;* and with him agrees the tragic poet Euripides. “O Jupiter,” says he, “why are we, wretched mortals, called wise? For we depend entirely upon thee, and we do whatever thou intendest we should.”†

And it would be easy to bring together a vast collection of such sayings, but these are sufficient for our present purpose.

They always seemed to me to act a very ridiculous part, ‡ who contend, that the effect of the Divine decree is absolutely irreconcilable with human liberty ; because the natural and necessary liberty of a rational creature is to act or choose from a rational motive, or spontaneously, and of purpose. § But who sees not, that, on the supposition of the most absolute decree, this liberty is not taken away, but rather established and confirmed? For the decree is, that such an one shall make choice of, or do some particular thing freely. And whoever pretends to deny, that whatever is done or chosen, whether good or indifferent, is so done or chosen, or, at least, may be so, espouses an absurdity. But, in a word, the great difficulty in all this dispute is that with regard to the *origin of evil*. Some distinguish, and justly, the substance of the action, as

* Τοιος γαρ νοῦς εἰναι, &c.

† Ὁ Ζεὺς τι δὴ τὰ τέσσαρα ταλαιπώρους,

φρονεῖν λεγόμεθα ; Σὺ γὰρ ἐξήγησά με δαίμων.

Δρωμεν τε τοιαύτ' ἂν σὺ τυγχάνῃς θεῶν. ΙΚΤΗ. 1. 734.

‡ Ἀνοήτως pugnae.

§ Το ἐκείνιον βουλευτικόν.

you call it, or that which is physical in the action, from the morality of it. This is of some weight, but whether it takes away the whole difficulty, I will not pretend to say. Believe me, young gentlemen, it is an abyss, it is an abyss never to be perfectly sounded by any plummet of human understanding. Should any one say, "I am not to be blamed, but Jove and Fate,"* he will not get off so, but may be nonplussed by turning his own wit against him. The servant of Zeno, the Stoic philosopher, being caught in an act of theft, either with a design to ridicule his master's doctrine, or to avail himself of it, in order to evade punishment, said, "It was my fate to be a thief:" "and to be punished for it," said Zeno,† Wherefore, if you will take my advice, withdraw your minds from a curious search into this mystery, and turn them directly to the study of piety, and a due reverence to the awful majesty of God. Think and speak of God and his secrets with fear and trembling, but dispute very little about them; and, if you would not undo yourselves, beware of disputing with him. If you transgress in any thing, blame yourselves; if you do any good, or repent of evil, offer thanksgiving to God. This is what I earnestly recommend to you; in this I acquiesce myself; and to this, when much tossed and distressed with doubt and difficulties, I had recourse, as to a safe harbour. If any of you think proper, he may apply

* Οὐκ ἐγὼ αἰτίος εἰμι, ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς καὶ Μοῖρα.

† In fatis mihi, inquit, fuit furari. Et cædi, inquit Zeno.

to men of greater learning; but let him take care he meet not with such as have more frowardness and presumption.

LECTURE XI.

Of the CREATION of the WORLD.

WHOEVER looks upon this great system of the universe, of which he himself is but a very small part, with a little more than ordinary attention, unless his mind is become quite brutish within him, it will, of necessity, put him upon considering whence this beautiful frame of things proceeded, and what was its first original; or, in the words of the poet, "From what principles all the elements were formed, and how the various parts of the world at first came together."*

Now, as we have already observed in our dissertation concerning God, that the mind rises directly from the consideration of this visible world, to that of its invisible Creator; so from the contemplation of the first and infinite Mind, it descends to this visible fabric; and, again, the contemplation of this latter determines it to return

* ~~Quibusque exordia primis~~ Quibusque exordia primis

Omnia, et ipsa tener mundi concreverit orbis.

VIRG. Ecl. vi.

with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to that eternal Fountain of Goodness and of every thing that exists. Nor is this a vicious and faulty circle, but the constant course of a pious soul travelling, as it were, backwards and forwards from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth; a notion quite similar to that of the angels ascending and descending upon the ladder which Jacob saw in his vision. But this contemplation, by all means, requires a pure and divine temper of mind, according to the maxim of the philosopher: "He that would see God and goodness, must first be himself good, and like the Deity."* And those who have the eyes of their minds pure and bright, will sooner be able to read in those objects that are exposed to the outward eye, the great and evident characters of his eternal power and godhead.

We shall therefore now advance some thoughts upon the creation, which was the first and most stupendous of all the Divine works; and the rather, that some of the philosophers, who were, to be sure, positive in asserting the being of a God, did not acknowledge him to be the author or creator of the world. As for us, according to that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "by faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God."† Of this we have a distinct history in the first book of Moses, and of the Sacred Scriptures, which we

* Γενεσθω δε πρωτον θεοειδης πας και καλος ει μελλει θεασασθαι θεον τε και καλον. Plot.

† Πιστει νοημεν καθηρησθαι τους αιωνας ρηματι Θεου. Cap. xi. 3.

receive as divine. And this same doctrine the prophets and apostles, and, together with them, all the sacred writers, frequently repeat in their sermons and writings, as the great foundation of faith, and of all true religion; for which reason, it ought to be diligently inculcated upon the minds of all, even those of the most ignorant, as far as they are able to conceive and believe it; though, to be sure, it contains in it so many mysteries, that they are sufficient not only to exercise the most acute and learned understandings, but even far exceed their capacities, and quite overpower them; which the Jewish doctors seem to have been so sensible, or, if I may use the expression, so oversensible of, that they admitted not their disciples to look into the three first chapters of Genesis, till they arrived at the age required, in order to enter upon the priestly office.

Although the faith of this doctrine immediately depends upon the authority and testimony of the Supreme God of truth, for, as St. Ambrose expresses it, "To whom should I give greater credit concerning God, than to God himself?"* it is however so agreeable to reason, that if any one choose to enter into the dispute, he will find the strongest arguments presenting themselves in confirmation of the faith of it; but those on the opposite side, if any such there be that deserve the name, quite frivolous, and of no manner of force.

* Cui enim magis de Deo, quam Deo credam ?

Tatian declared, that no argument more effectually determined him to believe the Scriptures, and embrace the Christian faith, "than the consistent, intelligible account they give of the creation of the universe."*

Let any one that pleases, choose what other opinion he will adopt upon this subject, or, as it is a matter of doubt and obscurity, any of the other hypotheses he thinks most feasible. Is he for the atoms of Epicurus, dancing at random in an empty space, and, after innumerable trials, throwing themselves at last into the beautiful fabric which we behold, and that merely by a kind of lucky hit, or fortunate throw of the dice, without any Amphion with his harp, to charm them by his music, and lead them into the building? To say the truth, the Greek philosopher had dreamed these things very prettily, or, according to more probable accounts, borrowed them from two other blundering philosophers, Democritus and Leucippus, though he used all possible art to conceal it, that he might have to himself the whole glory of this noble invention. But whoever first invented or published this hypothesis, how, I pray, will he persuade us, that things are actually so? By what convincing arguments will he prove them? Or what credible witnesses will he produce to attest his facts? For it would neither be modest nor decent for him nor his followers to expect implicit faith in a matter purely

* Το ευκαλαληπτον της τε παντος ποιησεως. Tatian.

philosophical and physical, and at the same time, of so great importance; especially as it is their common method smartly to ridicule and superciliously to despise the rest of mankind, as being, according to their opinion, too credulous in matters of religion. But what we have now said is more than enough upon an hypothesis so silly, monstrous, and inconsistent.

After leaving the Epicureans, there is no other noted shift, that I know of, remaining for one that rejects the doctrine of the creation, but only that fiction of the Peripatetic school, concerning the eternity of the world. This, Aristotle is said to have borrowed from a Pythagorean philosopher, named Ocellus Lucanus, who, in that instance, seems to have deserted not only the doctrine of his master Pythagoras, but also that of all the more ancient philosophers. It is true, two or three others are named—Parmenio, Melissus, &c., who are suspected to have been of the same sentiments with Ocellus; but this is a matter of uncertainty, and therefore to be left undetermined. And indeed, both Aristotle and Ocellus seem to have done this at random, or without proof, as they have advanced no arguments in favour of their new doctrine, that can be thought very favourable, much less cogent and convincing.

It is surely impossible to demonstrate the truth of their opinion *à priori*, nor did these authors attempt it. They only endeavoured to muster up some difficulties against the production of the

world in time, the great weakness whereof any one, who is but tolerably acquainted with the Christian religion, will easily perceive. Aristotle's arguments rather make against some notions espoused by the old philosophers, or rather forged by himself, than against the doctrine of the creation. Nay, he himself sometimes speaks with great diffidence of his own opinion on this subject, particularly in his topics, where, among other logical problems, he proposes this as one, viz., "Whether the world existed from eternity or not."*

On the contrary, that the world has evident marks of novelty, is acknowledged by Lucretius in a remarkable passage of his poems, which is very well known. "Besides," says he, "if the earth and the heavens were not originally created, but existed from eternity, why did not earlier poets describe the remarkable actions of their times long before the Theban war and the destruction of Troy? But, in my opinion, the universe is not of old standing, the world is but a late establishment, and it is not long since it had its beginning;"† and more to that purpose.

If we duly consider the matter, and acknowledge

* Πόλερον ὁ κόσμος αἰδῖος, ἡ β.

† Præterea si nulla fuit genitalis origo

Terræ et Cœli, semperque æterna fuere,

Cur supra bellum Thebanum et funera Trojæ,

Non alias alii quoque res cecinere Poetæ?

Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa, recensque

Natura est mundi, neque pridem exordia cepit.

the course of the stars, not only to be owing to a first mover, but also that the whole fabric, with all the creatures therein, derive their existence from some Supreme Mind, who is the only fountain of being; we must certainly conclude, that that self-existent principle, or source of all beings, is by all means eternal; but there is no necessity at all that we should suppose all other things to be coeval with it; nay, if it is not absolutely necessary, it is at least highly reasonable and consistent to believe the contrary.

For, that this world, compounded of so many and such heterogeneous parts, should proceed, by way of natural and necessary emanation, from that one first, purest, and most simple Nature, nobody, I imagine, could believe, or in the least suspect. Can it possibly be thought, that mortality should proceed from the Immortal, corruption from the Incorruptible, and, what ought never to be so much as mentioned, even worms, the vilest animalcules, and most abject insects, from the best, most exalted, and most blessed Majesty? But if he produced all these things freely, merely out of his good pleasure, and with the facility that constantly attends almighty power; how much more consistent is it to believe, that this was done in time, than to imagine it was from eternity!

It is a very difficult matter to argue at all about that, the nature whereof our most enlarged thoughts can never comprehend. And though, among philosophers and divines, it is disputed, whether such

a production from eternity is possible or not ; there is probably something concealed in the nature of the thing, though unknown to us, that might suggest a demonstration of the impossibility of this conceit ; for what is finite in bulk, power, and every other respect, seems scarcely capable of this infinity of duration ; and divines generally place eternity among the incommunicable attributes of God, as they are called. It seems, to be sure, most agreeable to reason, and, for aught we know, it is absolutely necessary, that in all external productions, by a free agent, the cause should be, even in time, prior to the effect, that is, that there must have been some point of time wherein the being producing did, but the thing produced did not exist. As to the eternal generation, which we believe, it is within God himself, nor does it constitute any thing without him, or different from his nature and essence. Moreover, the external production of a created being of a nature vastly different from the agent that is supposed to produce it, and to act freely in that production, implies, in its formal conception, as the schools express it, a translation from nonentity into being ; whence it seems necessarily to follow, that there must have been some point of time, wherein that created being did not exist.

The notions of the Platonists concerning pre-existent matter, do not concern the present subject ; but, to be sure, they are as idle and empty as the imaginary eternity of the world in its present form.

As angels were not produced out of matter, it is surely surprising that those who assert their creation by God, should find difficulty in acknowledging the production of other things without pre-existent matter, or even of matter itself. The celebrated maxim of the philosophers, "That out of nothing, nothing is produced," we receive, but in a different and sounder sense, namely, that nothing can be produced but either from pre-existent matter, or by a productive power, in which it was virtually contained. And, in this sense, this famous maxim affords an invincible demonstration *à posteriori*, for the subject is not capable of any other, to prove that there must be some Being that existed before any creature, and the Unity and Eternity of that Being.

The great Creator of the world, having all things virtually in himself, needed neither matter nor instruments in order to produce them: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."* These were his levers and tools, the word of the Lord, or that effectual act of his will, which gave being to all things.† "The mighty Lord of all called directly to his holy, intelligent, and creating word, Let there be a sun, and a sun immediately appeared," &c.‡ Here he spoke, and it was done, "the word and the effect shewed themselves to-

* Psalm xxxiii. 6.

† Πανταρχης.

‡ Ὁ δε παντων Κυριος ευθεως εφωνησε τω εαυτου αγνω και νοητω και δημιουργικω λογω Εστω ηλιος, και αμα τω φαναι, &c. Trismeg.

gether.”* If you ask what moved Infinite Goodness to perform this great work? I answer, that very goodness you mention: for if, as they say, it is the nature of goodness to be always communicative; that goodness, to be sure, must be the most diffusive which is in itself greatest, richest, and so very immense, that it cannot be in the least diminished, much less exhausted, by the greatest munificence. Here there is no danger that that should happen which Cicero prudently cautions against, in the case of human goodness, namely, “That liberality should undo itself.”† For that liberality must be immortal and endless, the treasures whereof are infinite.

Nor is it to be doubted, but from this very goodness, together with the immense power and wisdom which shine forth so brightly in the creation and all the creatures, an immense weight of glory is reflected upon the Creator himself, and the source of all these perfections; nor must it be denied, that the manifold wisdom of God proposed this end likewise. And there is nothing more certain than that, from all these taken together, his works, his benevolent and diffusive goodness, his power and wisdom illustrated in the creation, and the glory that continually results therefrom, from his wise counsels, and his own most perfect nature, whence all these things flow; nothing is more certain, I say, than that, from all these taken together, the

* Ἄμα εἶπος, ἄμα ἐργον.

† No liberalitate pereat liberalitas.

Divine Majesty enjoys an eternal and inexpressible delight and satisfaction: and thus all things return to that vast and immense ocean, from whence they at first took their rise, according to the expression in the Proverbs, "He hath made all things for himself:"* and the words of the song in the Revelation are most express to this purpose: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created."† Nor could it indeed be otherwise than that he who is the beginning of all things, should also be the end of all; a wonderful beginning without a beginning, and an end without an end. So that, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reasons concerning the oath of God, "As he could swear by no greater, he swore by Himself;" in like manner we may argue here, as he could propose no greater end or design, he proposed Himself. It was the saying of Epicurus, "That the wise man does every thing for his own sake:"‡ we, who are otherwise taught, should rather say, that the wise man does nothing for his own sake, but all for that of God. But the most exalted, to be sure, and the wisest of all beings, because he is so, must of necessity do all things for himself; yet, at the same time, all his dispensations towards his creatures are most bountiful and benevolent.

That the world was made directly and imme-

* Prov. xvi. 4.

† Rev. iv. 11.

‡ Sapientem omnia facere sui causâ.

diately for man, is the doctrine not only of the Stoics, but also of the master of the Peripatetic school: "We are," says he, "in some respect, the end of all things." * And in another place, "Nature has made all things for the sake of man." † Cicero speaks to the same purpose; ‡ and Lactantius more fully than either. § But Moses gives the greatest light on this subject, not only in his history of the creation, but also in Deuteronomy, wherein he warns the Israelites against worshipping of angels, for this reason; because, says he, "they were created for the service of man:" and the sun, in Hebrew, is called Shemesh, which signifies a servant.

But O! whither do our hearts stray? Ought we not to dwell upon this pleasant contemplation, and even die in it? I should choose to be quite lost in it, and to be rendered altogether insensible, and, as it were, dead to those earthly trifles that make a noise around us. O sweet reciprocation of mutual delights! "The Lord shall rejoice in his works," || says the Psalmist: and presently after, "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." ¶¶ Let us look sometimes to the

* Sumus enim et nos quodammodo omnium finis. 2 Phys. tit. 23.

† Natura hominum gratiâ omnia fecit.

‡ *De Legibus.*

§ Sol irrequietis cursibus et spatiis inequalibus orbis conficit, &c. ad finem capituli *De Ira Dei.* Pp. 13, 14.

|| Psalm civ. 31.

¶¶ Ibid. ver. 34.

heavens, sometimes to the sea, and the earth, with the animals and plants that are therein, and very often to ourselves; and in all these, and in every thing else, but in ourselves particularly, let us contemplate God, the common Father of all, and our most exalted Creator, and let our contemplation excite our love.

They who have sent the ignorant and unlearned to pictures and images, as books proper for their instruction, have not acted very wisely, nor has that expedient turned out happily or luckily for the advantage of that part of mankind; but surely this great volume, or system, which is always open, and exposed to the view of all, is admirably adapted to the instruction both of the vulgar and the wise; so that Chrysostom had good reason to call it “The great book for the learned and unlearned.”* And the saying of St. Basil is very much to the purpose: “From the beauty of those things which are obvious to the eyes of all, we acknowledge that his inexpressible beauty excels that of all the creatures; and from the magnitude of those sensible bodies that surround us, we conclude the infinite and immense goodness of their Creator, whose plenitude of power exceeds all thought, as well as expression.”†

* Βιβλίον μεγιστον και ιδιωταις και σοφοις.

† Εκ του καλλους των ὁρωμενων τον ὑπερκαλον εννοωμεθα και εκ του μεγεθους των αισθητων τῶν και περιγραφῶν σωματων αναλογιζομεθα απειρον και ὑπερμεγεθη και πασαν διανοιαν εν τῷ πληθει της ἑαυτου δυναμειως ὑπερβαινοντα. Alex. Hom. i.

For this very end it evidently appears, all things were made, and we are the only visible beings that are capable of this contemplation: “The world, says St. Basil, is a school, or seminary, very proper for the instruction of rational souls in the knowledge of God.” * We have also the angels, those ministers of fire, to be spectators with us on this theatre. But will any of us venture to conjecture what they felt, and what admiration seized them, when they beheld those new kinds of creatures rising into being, and those unexpected scenes, that were successively added to the preceding ones, on each of the six days of that first remarkable week, “When he laid the foundations of the earth, and placed the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy”? †

But O the stupidity of mankind! All those stupendous objects are daily around us; but because they are constantly exposed to our view, they never affect our minds: so natural is it for us to admire new, rather than grand objects. Therefore the vast multitude of stars which diversify the beauty of this immense body, does not call the people together; but when any change happens therein, the eyes of all are fixed upon the heavens. “Nobody looks at the sun, but when he is obscured; nobody observes the moon, but when she is eclipsed; then

* *Ὁ κόσμος ψυχῶν λογικῶν διδασκαλεῖον καὶ τῆς θεογνωσίας παιδεύηριον.*
Alex. Hom. i.

† Job xxxviii. 6, 7.

nature seems to be in danger, then vain superstition is alarmed, and every one is afraid for himself.* “But surely,” says St. Bernard, concerning the sun and moon, “these are great miracles, very great to be sure: but the first production or creation of all things, is a vast miracle, and makes it easy to believe all the rest; so that, after it, nothing ought to excite our wonder.”†

LECTURE XII.

Of the Creation of MAN.

THIS great theatre being built, besides those spectators which had been but lately placed in the higher seats, it pleased the Supreme Creator and Lord to have another company below, as it were in the area. These he called forth into being by creation, and man was introduced into this area, “to be a spectator of him and of his works; yet not a spectator only, but also to be the interpreter of

* Sol spectatorem, nisi cum deficit, non habet; nemo observat lunam nisi laborantem; tunc orbis conclamant, tunc pro se quisque, superstitione vana, trepidat. SEN.

† Magna sunt hæc miracula, magna nimis ita est; miraculum autem immensum est ipsa prima omnium productio, seu creatio, quæ miraculorum omnium adeo facilem fidem facit, ut post eam nihil sit mirum.

them.”* Nor yet was man placed therein merely to be a spectator and an interpreter ; but also, in a great measure, to be possessor and lord thereof ; or, as it were, the Creator’s “substitute,”† in a spacious and convenient house ready built, and stored with all sorts of useful furniture.

Now, that man himself is a grand and noble piece of workmanship, appears even from this circumstance, that the most wise operator, when he was going to create him, thought fit to preface his design with these words, “Let us make man. So that he was created, not merely by a word of command like the rest of the creatures, but by a consultation of the blessed Trinity.”‡

And, indeed, man is a wonderful composition, the conjunction of heaven and earth ; “The breath of God, and the dust of the ground ;” the bond of union between the visible and invisible world, and truly a “world in miniature, a kind of mixed world, nearly related to the other two.”§ Nor is he only a lively epitome and representation of the greater world, but also dignified with the image of his great Creator. He made the heavens and the earth, the sea and the stars, and then all sorts of living crea-

* Ὡς θεατὴν τε αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν αὐτῆς ἐργῶν, καὶ ἃ μόνον θεατὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξηγητὴν. Arrian.

† Ὑποκαταστατον.

‡ Faciamus hominem. Ut non solo jubentis sermone sicut reliqua, sed consilio sanctæ Trinitatis conditus sit. Arnob.

§ Μικροκοσμος, μικτος τις κοσμος, συγγενης των δυο κοσμων. Greg. Nyss.

tures; but, in the words of the poet, “a more divine creature, and more capable of elevated sentiments, was yet wanting, and one that could rule over the rest; therefore man was born, &c.”*

The rest of the creatures, according to the observation of the schoolmen, which is not amiss, had the impression of the Divine foot stamped upon them, but not the image of the Deity. These he created, and, reviewing them, found them to be good, yet he did not rest in them; but, upon the creation of man, the sabbath immediately followed. He made man, and then rested, having a creature capable of knowing that he was his Creator, one that could worship him, and celebrate his sabbath; whose sins, if he should commit any, he might forgive, and send, clothed with human nature, his only-begotten Son, “in whom he is absolutely well pleased,” and over whom, as the person that fulfilled his good pleasure, he rejoices for ever, to redeem his favourite creature. By the production of man, the supreme Creator exhibited himself in the most admirable light, and, at the same time, had a creature capable of admiring and loving him; and as St. Ambrose observes, “one that was under obligation to love his Creator the more ardently, the more wonderfully he perceived himself to be made.”† “And man,” says the same author, “was

* Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ,
Deerat ad huc, et quod dominari in cætera posset,
Natus homo est. Ovid. 1 Met.

† Et quidem tanto ardentius amaret Conditorem, quanto mirabilius se ab eo conditum intelligeret.

made a two-footed animal, that he might be, as it were, one of the inhabitants of the air, that he might aspire at high things, and fly with the wings of sublime thoughts.”*

And, indeed, the structure of man is an instance of wonderful art and ingenuity, whether you consider the symmetry of his whole fabric taken together, or all his parts and members separately. Gregory Nyssen speaks very much to the purpose, when he says, “The frame of man is awful, and hard to be explained, and contains in it a lively representation of many of the hidden mysteries of God.”† How wonderful is even the structure of his body, which, after all, is but the earthen case of his soul! Accordingly it is in the Chaldaic language called *Nidne*, which signifies a sheath. How far does the workmanship exceed the materials! And how justly may we say, “What a glorious creature, out of the meanest elements!”‡ The Psalmist’s mind seems to have dwelt upon this meditation, till he was quite lost in it: “How fearfully,” says he, “and wonderfully am I made!” And that celebrated physician who studied nature with such unwearied application, in his book upon the structure of the human body, in which, after all, there

* Et factus est homo bipes, ut sit unus quasi de volatilibus, qui alta visu petat, et quodam remigio volitet sublimum cogitationum.

† Ἡ τε ἀνθρωπῆ κατασκευὴ φοβερὰ τις καὶ δυσερμηνεύτος καὶ πολλὰ καὶ ἀποκρυφὰ ἐν αὐτῇ μυστήρια Θεοῦ ἐξεικωνίζουσα.

‡ Οἶος ἐξ οἰς.

is nothing divine, often expresses his admiration in these words: "Who is worthy to praise the wisdom and power of the Creator?"* and many other such exclamations. The Christian writers, however, are most full upon this subject, particularly St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and others, who carry their observations so far as the nails, and hair, especially that on the eye-lids. And Nyssen, on the words, "Let us make man," has the following observation: "Man is a grand and noble creature—How can man be said to be any great matter, seeing he is a mortal creature, subject to a great many passions; from the time of birth, to that of his old age, exposed to a vast many evils and distresses, and of whom it is written, 'Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest be mindful of him?' &c. The history we have of the production of man, delivered me from this difficulty; for we are told, that God took some of the dust of the earth, and out of it formed man; from these words I understood, that man was at once nothing, and yet something very grand."† He intended to say, that the materials out of which man was made, were low, and, as it were, nothing; but, if you consider the wonderful workmanship, how great was the

* Τις ικανος εστι την Δημιουργου σοφιαν τε και δυναμιν επαινειν;

† Μεγα ο ανθρωπος και τιμιον. Αλλα πως μεγα ο ανθρωπος; Το επικηρον ζων, το μυριοις παθεσιν υποκειμενον, το εκ γεννησεως εις γηρας μυριων κακων εσμον εξανθην. Περι ε ειπεται· Κυριε, τις εστιν ο ανθρωπος, οτι μιμησκη αυτη; &c. Αλλα μοι την τοιαυτην διαπορησιν ελυσεν ισορια της γεννησεως τε ανθρωπου αναγνωσθεισα, &c. Orat. ii.

honour conferred upon him! The "earth did not spontaneously produce man as it did grasshoppers; God did not commit the production of this or that particular creature to his ministering powers; no, the gracious Creator took the earth in his own hand,"* But besides the noble frame of his body, though it was made of the dust of the earth, that divine breath, and, by means of it, the infusion of a precious soul, mixes heaven and earth together; not, indeed, in the common acceptation of that term, as if things so vastly different, were promiscuously jumbled together, and the order of nature subverted; but only implying, that the two parts of the human constitution are compounded with inexpressible art, and joined in a close union. As to the misery of the human race, and the contemptible figure in which the life of man appears, it is to be ascribed to another source very different from the earthly materials, out of which his body was made. That he was created happy, beautiful, and honourable, he owed to his great and good Creator; but he himself is the author of his own misery. And hence it is, that though, with regard to his original and pure nature, we ought, for the strongest reasons, to speak more honourably of him, than of any other part of the visible world; yet, if we view him, "in his present circumstances,"† no part of the creation,

* Ουχ ἡ γῆ αυτοματως ὡσπερ τῆς τετίνυγας ἐξεβρασε, ἀλλ' ἐκ εἰπε τοδε και τοδε ποιησαι λειτουργικαις δυναμεσιν, ἀλλ' ἰδια χειρι φιλοτεχνει γην ελαβεν.

† 'Οιῶς νυν βροτος ἐστίν'

to be sure, deserves to be lamented in more mournful strains.

But what words can express, what thought can comprehend, the dignity and powers of that heavenly soul that inhabits this earthly body, and the divine image that is stamped upon it? The philosophers of all ages and nations have been inquiring into the nature of it, and have not yet found it out.

A great many have also amused themselves with too whimsical conjectures and fancies, and endeavoured to discover, by very different methods, a figure of the blessed Trinity in the faculties of the soul. Nor was Methodius satisfied with finding a representation of this mystery in the soul of every particular man, but also imagined he had discovered it in the three first persons of the human race, namely, Adam, Eve, and their first-born son, because in them he found *unbegotten*, *begotten*, and *proceeding*, as also *unity* of nature, and the *origination* of all mankind. But not to insist upon these, it is certain, the rational, or intellectual, and immortal soul, so long as it retained its original purity, was adorned with the lively and refulgent image of the Father of spirits, its eternal Creator; but afterwards, when it became polluted and stained with sin, this image, though not immediately quite ruined, was, however, miserably obscured and defaced. It is true, the beautiful and erect frame of the human body which gives it an advantage over all other creatures, and some other external graces that man possesses, may possibly be some reflected rays of the

Divine excellence; but I should hardly call them the image of God: as St. Ambrose well observes, "How can flesh, which is but earth, be said to be made after the image of God, in whom there is no earth at all? And shall we be said to be like God, because we are of a higher rank than sheep and dogs?"*

The dominion over the rest of the creatures which man enjoys, is a kind of faint shadow of the absolute and unlimited sway of the supreme Majesty of heaven and earth. I dare not, however, venture to say, it is that image of which we are speaking; but, as those who draw the picture of a king, after laying down the lineaments of the face and body, use to add the purple robe, and other ensigns of royalty, this dominion may certainly supply the place of these, with regard to this image of God on man. But the lively colours in which the image itself is drawn, are "Purity," says Nyssen, "absence of evil, understanding, and speech."† For even the eternal Son, and the wisdom of the Father, seems to be intended by the philosophers under the term of the *creating mind*;‡ and by the divine apostle John, he is called the *Word*: to these we have very good ground to add charity, as nothing can be named that renders man

* Caro terra est: quæ dicatur ad imaginem Dei facta, cum in Deo terra non sit? Et an eo Dei similes dicemur, quia damulis atque ovibus celsiores sumus?

† Καθαροτης, κακη αλλοτριωσις, νοησι και λογος.

‡ Δημιουργη.

liker to God ;* for “ God is love, and the fountain of it.”† It is true, charity is a valuable disposition of the mind, but it also discovers itself in the frame of the human body ; for man was made quite defenceless, having neither horns, claws, nor sting, but naked and harmless, and, as it were, entirely formed for meekness, peace, and charity.

The same author, speaking of the image of God on man, expresses himself as follows : “ Wherefore that you may be like God, exercise liberality and beneficence, study to be innocent, avoid every crime, subdue all the motions of sin—conquer all the beasts that are within you. What, you will say, have I beasts within me ? Yes, you have beasts, and a vast number of them. And, that you may not think I intend to insult you, is anger an inconsiderable beast when it barks in your heart ? What is deceit, when it lies hid in a cunning mind ; is it not a fox ? Is not the man who is furiously bent upon calumny, a scorpion ? Is not the person who is eagerly set on resentment and revenge, a most venomous viper ? What do you say of a covetous man ; is he not a ravenous wolf ? And is not the luxurious man, as the prophet expresses it, a neighing horse ? Nay, there is no wild beast but is found within us ; and do you consider yourself as Lord and Prince of the wild beasts, because you command those that are without, though you never think of subduing, or setting bounds to those that are within

* Θεοειδές ερον.

† Αγαπή ὁ Θεός, καὶ ἀγαπῆς πηγή.

you? What advantage have you by your reason, which enables you to overcome lions, if, after all, you yourself are overcome by anger? To what purpose do you rule over the birds, and catch them with gins, if you yourself, with the inconstancy of a bird, are hurried hither and thither, and, sometimes flying high, are ensnared by pride, sometimes brought down, and caught by pleasure? But as it is shameful for him who rules over nations, to be a slave at home, and for the man who sits at the helm of the state, to be meanly subjected to the beck of a contemptible harlot, or even of an imperious wife; will it not be, in like manner, disgraceful for you who exercise dominion over the beasts that are without you, to be subject to a great many, and those of the worst sort, that roar and domineer in your distempered mind?''*

I shall, last of all, here subjoin, what some of the ancients have observed, namely, that the nature of the human soul, as it lies hid out of sight, and to us quite unknown, bears an evident resemblance to that of God, who is himself unsearchable and past finding out.†

But when we have well considered all these things, and the many other thoughts of this kind,

* Θεω ἢ ὁμοίος εἶσι δια τῆς χρηστότητος, δια τῆς ανεξικακίας, δια κοινωνίας, μισοπονητος ὢν και κατακρατων των παθων των ενδον—αρχε Δηριων. Τι οὖν ερεῖς, ἐγὼ Δηρια εχω ἐν ἐμαυτῷ; Και μυρια πολυ οχλον ἐν σοι Δηριων εχεις, και μη ὑβριν νομισαι εἶναι το λεγομενον. Ποσον Δηριον εἰσι ὁ θυμος ὕταν ὑλακτη τη καρδια, &c.

† Κατ' εἰκονα τυπικην τοι ανωνυμο, και αγνωριστε Θεε.

that may occur; may we not cry out, how surprising and shocking is the madness and folly of mankind; the far greater part whereof, as if they had quite forgot their original and native dignity, disparage themselves so far as to pursue the meanest objects, and shamefully plunge themselves in mud!

The words of Epictetus are divine, and have a wonderful savour of piety: “You go to the city of *Olympia*,” says he, “to see some of the works of Phidias; but you have no ambition to convene, in order to understand and look at those works which may be seen without travelling at all. Will you never understand what you are, nor why you were brought into the world; nor, finally, what that is which you have now an opportunity to view and contemplate?”* And in another place, “For if we were wise, what have we else to do, both in public and in private, but to praise and celebrate the Deity, and to return our thanks to him? Ought we not, while we are digging, ploughing, and eating, to sing to God this hymn—Great is the Lord, who has provided us with these necessaries of life?” &c.

As for you, young gentlemen, I would have you to be sensible of the honour and dignity of your original state, and to be deeply impressed with the indignity and disgrace of your nature, now fallen and vitiated, and dwell particularly upon the con-

* Εἰς Ὀλυμπίαν μὲν ἀποδημεῖτε, ἵν' εἰδῆτε τὰ ἔργα τῶν Φειδίου—ὅπερ δὲ εἴθ' ἀποδημησάτωι χρεία ἐστίν, ταῦτα δὲ θεασασθῆναι καὶ κατανόησαι ἕκ ἐπιθυμησέτωι, ἕκ αἰσθησέτωι τοιούτων ὅτε τινες ἐστὲ, ὅτε ἐπὶ τι γέλονατε, ὅτ' ἐπὶ τι τῶτο ἐστὶν ἐφ' ὃ τὴν θεῶν παρειληφάτε; Arr. lib. i. cap. 6.

templation of it. Suffer not the great honour and dignity of the human race, which is to know the eternal and invisible God, to acknowledge him, love him, and worship him, to decay and die away within you : this alas ! is the way of the far greater part of the world ; but do you live in continual remembrance of your original, and assert your claim to heaven, as being originally from it, and soon to return to it again.

LECTURE XIII.

Of Providence.

THE doctrines, we have been handling, are the great supports of faith, piety, and the whole of religion ; wherefore it is most just, that the zeal and care of the scholars should concur with that of their teachers, to have them well secured in the mind and affections : “ For a weak foundation,” as the lawyers observe, “ is the ruin of the work.”* There are two principal pillars, and, as it were, the Jachin and Boaz of the living temples of God, which the apostle to the Hebrews lays down in these words : “ He that cometh to God,” (under which expression is comprehended every devout affection, and every act of religious worship,) “ must

* *Debile enim fundamentum fallit opus.*

believe that **GOD** is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

"That *God* is," not only implies that he is eternal and self-existent; but also, that he is, to all other beings, the spring and fountain of what they are, and what they have, and, consequently, that he is the wise and powerful Creator of angels and men, and even of the whole universe; this is the first particular, "that *God* is." The second, "That he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," ascertains the *providence and government of God*, exemplified in its most eminent effect, with regard to mankind. For providence extends further than this, and comprehends in it a constant preservation and support of all things visible and invisible, whether in heaven or earth, and the sovereign government and disposal of them. Mechanics, when they have completed houses, ships, and other works they have been engaged in, leave them to take their fate in the world, and, for the most part, give themselves no further trouble about the accidents that may befall them. But the Supreme Architect and wise Creator, never forsakes the work of his hands, but keeps his arms continually about it, to preserve it; sits at the helm to rule and govern it; is himself in every part of it, and fills the whole with his presence. So great a fabric could not possibly stand, without some guardian and ruler; nor can this be any other than the Creator himself: for who can pay a greater regard to it, support it more effectually, or govern it with greater

wisdom, than he who made it? “Nothing can be more perfect than God, therefore it is necessary the world should be governed by him,”* says Cicero. And, “they who take away Providence, though they acknowledge God in words, in fact deny him.”†

If we believe that all things were produced out of nothing; the consequence is, that by the same powerful hand that created them, they must be preserved and supported, to keep them from falling back into their primitive nothing. It must be also owned, that, by the same powerful hand, the regular motions of the stars, the contexture of the elementary world, the various kinds of creatures, and the uninterrupted succession of their generations, are continued and preserved. Nor is Divine Providence to be confined within the heavens, or in the lower world restrained to the care of generals, in opposition to individuals; although the Peripatetic school inclined too much to this opinion, and, even the master of that school, *Aristotle* himself, in his often quoted book, if it really be his, *De Mundo*. For, that Providence extends to all things in this lower globe, from the highest to the lowest, and comprehends within its sphere particular, as well as general things, the least as well as the greatest, is confirmed not only by the doctrine of the Sacred

* Nihil Deo præstantius, ab eo igitur regi necesse est.

† Qui Providentiam negant, verbis licet Deum ponunt, reipsa tollunt.

Scripture, but also by the testimony of all sound philosophy.

Therefore, in maintaining the doctrine of Providence, we affirm, 1st, That the Eternal Mind has an absolute and perfect knowledge of all things in general, and every single one in particular ; nor does he see only those that are actually present, as they appear in their order upon the stage of the world ; but at one view comprehends “all that are past, as well as to come, as if they were all actually present before him.”* This the ancient philosopher Thales is said to have asserted expressly, even with regard to the hidden motions and most secret thoughts of the human mind ; for being asked, “If any one that does evil, can conceal it from God,”—he answered, “No, not even his evil thoughts.”† “Nothing is left unprovided for,” says St. Basil, “nothing is overlooked by God ; his watchful eye sees all things ; he is present every where, to give salvation to all.”‡ Epictetus has also some very divine thoughts upon this subject.§

And here, was any one to reflect seriously on the vast number of affairs that are constantly in agitation in one province, or even in one city, the many political schemes and projects, the multiplicity of law matters, the still greater number of family

* Τα τ' εοντα, τα ῥ' εσσομενα, προ τ' εοντα.

† Ει Θεον τις λαθαι κακον τι πρασσω ; Αλλ' εδε διανοσμενος.

‡ Ουδεν απρονοητον, εδεν ημελημενον παρα Θεοῦ παντα σκοπευει ο ακοιμητος οφθαλμος, πασι παρεςι, σκορπιζων εκασω την σωτηριαν.

§ Arr. lib. i cap. xii.

affairs, and all the particulars comprehended under so many general heads, he would be amazed and over-powered with the thoughts of a knowledge so incomprehensively extensive. This was the very thought which excited the divine Psalmist's admiration, and made him cry out with wonder and astonishment, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it!" *

2dly, He not only knows all things, and takes notice of them, but he also rules and governs them: "He hath done whatever he pleased in the heavens and the earth," says the Psalmist: and, "He worketh all things," says the apostle, "according to the counsel of his own will:" he does all things according to his pleasure, but that pleasure is influenced by his reason; all things absolutely, but yet all things with the greatest justice, sanctity, and prudence.

He views and governs the actions of man in a particular manner; he hath given him a law; he hath proposed rewards, and annexed punishments to enforce it, and engage man's obedience. And having discovered, as it were, an extraordinary concern about him, when he made him, as we have observed upon the words, "Let us make man;" in like manner, he still continues to maintain an uncommon good-will towards him; and, so to speak, an anxious concern about him: so that one of the ancients most justly called man, "God's favourite creature." And he spoke much to the purpose,

* Psalm cxxxix. 6.

who said, "God is neither a lover of horses, nor of birds, but of mankind."* With regard to the justice of the supreme government of Providence, we meet with a great deal, even in the ancient poets.

"O father Jove," says *Æschylus*, "thou reignest in heaven, thou takest notice of the rash and wicked actions of gods and men. Thy care even extends to the wild beasts; thou observest the wrongs done them, and securest their privileges." †

"Though justice," says *Euripides*, "comes late, it is still justice; it lies hid, as it were, in ambush, till it finds an opportunity to inflict due punishment upon the wicked man." ‡

"Dost thou think," says *Æschylus*, "to get the better of the Divine knowledge, and that justice stands at a distance from the human race? She is near at hand, and sees without being seen; she knows who ought to be punished; but when she will suddenly fall upon the wicked, that thou knowest not." §

* Ὁ Θεὸς ἢ φιλοῖππος, ἢδε φιλοῖουσι, ἀλλὰ φιλοῖανθρωπος.

† Ὁ Ζεὺ πατέρ, Ζεῦ, σὸν μὲν ἕρανα κράτος,
Σὺ δ' ἐργ' ἐπεραίων καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὄρας
Λεωργα κῆθεμισα. Σοὶ καὶ θηρίων
ἄβρις τε καὶ δίκη μέλει.

‡ Δικα τοὶ δικά χρονίος.
Ἀλλ' ὁμως ὑποπέσθω
Ἐλαθεν, ὅταν ἐχη
Τιν' ἀσεβῆ βροτῶν.

§ Δοκεῖς τὰ θεῶν ξυνητὰ νικῆσαι ποτε
Καὶ τὴν δίκην πῶ μακρ' ἀποικεῖσθαι βροτῶν;
Ἡ δ' ἐγγυς ἐστίν· ἔχ' ὀρωμένη δ' ὄρα

“ The weight of justice,” says the same author, in another place, “ falls upon some quickly in the day-time ; it lies in wait for some sins till the twilight ; the longer it is delayed, the severer the punishment ; accordingly, some are consigned to eternal night.” *

There are two difficulties, however, on this head, which are not easily solved : 1st, The success that commonly attends the wicked in this world, and the evil to which the good are exposed. On this subject, even the philosophers, pleading the cause of God, which, if we take their word, they thought a matter of no great difficulty, advanced a great many things. Seneca tells us, “ There is a settled friendship, nay, a near relation and similitude between God and good men ; he is even their father ; but, in their education, he inures them to hardships : when therefore you see them struggling with difficulties, sweating, and employed in up-hill work, while the wicked, on the other hand, are in high spirits, and swim in pleasures ; consider, that we are pleased with modesty in our children, and forwardness in our slaves : the former we keep under by severe discipline, while we encourage

‘Ον χρη κολαζειν τ’ οιδεν. Αλλ’ εκ οισθα συ
 ‘Οποταν αφνω μολωσα διολεση κακως.

* ‘Ροπη δ’ επισκοπει δικας
 Ταχεια τες μεν εν φαι,
 Τα δ’ εν μειαιχημιφ σκατα
 Μενει, χρονιζοντ’ αχη βρυει,
 Τες δ’ ακραντος εχει νυξ.

impudence in the latter. Be persuaded that God takes the same method; he does not pamper the good man with delicious fare, but tries him; he accustoms him to hardships, and," which is a wonderful expression in a Heathen, "PREPARES HIM FOR HIMSELF."* And in another place, "Those luxurious persons, whom he seems to indulge and to spare, he reserves for evils to come. For you are mistaken, if you think any one excepted; the man, who has been long spared, will at last have his portion of misery; and he that seems to have been dismissed, is only delayed for a time,"† and a vast deal more to this purpose. The same sort of sentiments we meet with in Plutarch: "God takes the same method," says he, "with good men, that teachers do with their scholars, when they exact more than ordinary of those children of whom they have the greatest hopes."‡ And it is a noble

* *Inter bonos viros ac DEUM est amicitia, imo necessitudo, et similitudo; imo ille eorum pater, sed durius eos educat: cum itaque, eos videris laborare, sudare, et arduum ascendere, malos autem lascivire, et voluptatibus fluere; cogita, filiorum nos modestiâ delectari, vernularum licentiâ: illos disciplina tristiori contineri, horum ali audaciam. Idem tibi de DEO liqueat, bonum virum deliciis non innutrit, experitur, indurat, et SIBI ILLUM PRÆPARAT.*

† *Eos autem quibus indulgere videtur, quibus parcere, molles venturis malis servat. Erratis enim si quem judicatis exceptum, veniet ad illum diu felicem sua portio. Et qui videtur dimissus esse, delatus est. SEN. de Gubern. Mundi.*

‡ *Hanc rationem DEUS sequitur in bonis viris, quam in discipulis suis præceptores, qui plus laboris ab iis exigunt, in quibus certior spes est. Plut. Περὶ τῶν βραδῶς τιμωραμένων.*

thought which we meet with in the same author: “If he who transgresses in the morning,” says he, “is punished in the evening, you will not say that in this case, justice is slow; but to God one, or even several ages, are but as one day.”* How near is this to St. Peter’s saying on the same subject! †

2dly, The other point upon this subject which perplexes men fond of controversy, and is perplexed by them, is how to reconcile human liberty with Divine Providence, which we have taken notice of before. But to both these difficulties, and to all others that may occur upon the subject, I would oppose the saying of St. Augustine: “Let us grant that he can do some things which we cannot understand.” ‡

What a melancholy thing would it be to live in a world where anarchy reigned! It would certainly be a woeful situation to all; but more, especially, to the best and most inoffensive part of mankind. It would have been no great privilege to have been born into a world without God, and without Providence; for if there was no Supreme Ruler of the world, then undoubtedly the wickedness of men would reign without any curb or impediment, and the great and powerful would unavoidably devour the weak and helpless, “as the

* *Si qui mane peccavit, vespere puniatur, tardum hoc non dices, at Deo seculum, vel etiam plura secula, pro die uno.*

† *2^o Pet. iii. 8.*

‡ *Demus illum aliquod facere, et nos non posse intelligere.*

great fishes often eat up the small, and the hawk makes havock among the weaker birds.”*

It may be objected, that this frequently happens even in the present world, as appears from the prophecies of Habakkuk ; † but the prophet, immediately after, asserts, that there is a Supreme Power which holds the reins in the midst of these irregularities ; and though they are sometimes permitted, yet there is a determinate time appointed for setting all things to rights again, which the just man expects, and, till it comes, lives by faith. ‡ Some passages of Ariston’s Iambics are admirable to this purpose.

“ *A.* Be patient ; for God uses to support worthy men, such as you are, in a remarkable manner : and unless those who act in a becoming manner, are to receive some great reward, to what purpose is it, pray, to cultivate piety any longer ? *B.* I wish that it may be the case : but I too often see those who conform themselves to the rules of piety and virtue, oppressed by calamity ; while those who mind nothing but what they are prompted to by private interest and profit, thrive and flourish much better than we. *A.* For the present it is so, indeed ; but it becomes us to look a great way forward, and wait till the world has completed its full revolution ; for it is by no means true, that this

* ——— Pisces ut sæpe minutos

Magna comest, et aves enecat accipiter.

† Hab. ch. i.

‡ Ibid. ch. ii.

life is entirely under the dominion of blind chance, or fortune, though many entertain this wicked notion ; and the corrupt part of mankind, from this consideration, encourage themselves in immorality ; but the virtues of the good will meet with a proper reward, and the wicked will be punished for their crimes ; for nothing happens without the will of Heaven.”*

What the poets sometimes advance concerning a Supreme Fate which governs all things, they often ascribe to God ; though now and then they forget themselves, and subject even the Supreme Being to their Fate, as the Stoic philosophers did also : but possibly they both had a sound meaning, though it was couched under words that sound a little harsh ; and this meaning now and then breaks forth, particularly when they celebrate God, for disposing all things, by an eternal law, according to his own good pleasure, and thereby make him the Supreme and Universal Governor, subject to no other, but, in some respects, to himself, or to his decrees ; which, if you understand them in a sound sense, is all that they can mean by their *σοφωτατον*, and their *το αμεταβλητον*. The same judgment is to be passed with regard to what we find said about Fortune ; for either that word signifies nothing at all, or you must understand by it the Supreme Mind, freely disposing of all things ; and this is very

* Α. Θαρσει· Βοηθειν πασι τοισιν αξιοις
Ειωθεν ο Θεος, &c.

clearly attested by the following excellent verses of Menander :

“ Cease to improve your minds, for the mind of man is nothing at all. The government of all things is solely in the hands of fortune ; whether this fortune be a mind, or the spirit of God, or whatever else it is, it carries all before it ; human prudence is but a vapour, a mere trifle,” &c.*

We have also a great many proofs, that, in the opinion of the old poets, fate and fortune were precisely the same ; one instance whereof we meet with in the following passage : “ Fortune and Fate, Pericles, are the givers of all that man enjoys.” †

And, instead of the terms fate and fortune, they sometimes used the word Necessity. But all these were but other names, though ill-chosen, for Providence. Euripides, having said a great deal concerning fate or necessity, at last resolves the whole into this : “ Jupiter executes, with thee, all he had decreed before.” ‡

And Homer’s words are very remarkable : “ Jupiter,” says he, “ increases or diminishes the

* Πausασθε νεν εχονίεσ, υδεν γαρ πλεον
Ανδρωπινοσ νεσ εσιν, αλλ’ ο της τυχησ,
Ειτ’ εσι τετο πνευμα δειον, ειτε νεσ,
Τετ’ εσι παντα και κυβερνων, και σρεφον
Και σωζον’ η προνοια δ’ η δνητη, καπνοσ,
Και φληναφοσ, &c.

† Παντα τυχη και μοιρα, Περικλεεσ, ανδρι διδωσα.

‡ Και γαρ Ζευσ ο, τι νευση,
Συν σοι τετο τελευτα.

Eurip. in Alceſtide.

valour of men, as he thinks proper; for he is the most powerful of all.”*

And in another place, “Jove, from Olympus, distributes happiness to good and bad men in general, and every one in particular, as he himself thinks proper.”†

Let us, therefore, look upon God as our father, and venture to trust him with our all; let us ask and beg of him what we want, and look for supplies from no other quarter. This the indulgent father in Terence desired, and much more our heavenly Father. And surely every thing is better conducted by a dutiful love and confidence, than by an ignoble and servile fear; and we are very injurious both to him and ourselves, when we think not, that all things, on his part, are managed with the greatest goodness and bounty. It is a true test of religion and obedience, when, with honourable thoughts, and a firm confidence in our Father, we absolutely depend upon him, and serve him from a principle of love. “Be not,” says Augustine, “a froward boy, in the house of the best of fathers; loving him when he is fond of thee, and hating him when he gives thee chastisement; as if, in both cases, he did not intend to provide an inheritance for

* Ζεὺς δ' ἀρετὴν ἀνδρεσσὶν οὐφείλει τε μινυθεὶ τε

Ὅπως κεν εἰθελῆσιν, ὁ γὰρ καρτερός ἀπάντων. Hom. II. xx.

† Ζεὺς δ' αὐτὸς νεμεῖ ὀλβον Ὀλυμπίος ἀνθρώποισιν

Ἐσθλοῖς ἡδε κακοῖσιν, ὅπως εἰθελῆσεν ἕκαστος. Hom. Odyss. vi.

thee.”* If we suppose this Providence to be the wisest and the best, it is necessary that, in every instance, our wills should be perfectly submissive to its designs; otherwise we prefer our own pleasure to the will of heaven, which appears very unnatural. St. Augustine, on the expression *upright in heart*, which we frequently meet with in the Psalms, makes an excellent observation: “If you cheerfully embrace,” says he, “the Divine will in some things, but in others would rather prefer your own, you are crooked in heart, and would not have your crooked inclinations conformed to his upright intentions, but, on the contrary, would bend his upright will to yours.” †

LECTURE XIV.

Of CHRIST the SAVIOUR.

IT is acknowledged that the publication of the gospel is exceedingly agreeable, and perfectly answers its original name, which signifies Good Tidings.

* Ne sis puer insulsus in domo optimi patris, amans patrem, si tibi blanditur, et odio habens, quando te flagellat, quasi non et blandiens et flagellans hæreditatem paret.

† Si voluntatem divinam in quibusdam amplecteris, in aliis tuam malle, curvus es corde, et non vis curvam tuam voluntatem ad illius rectam dirigere, sed illius rectam vis ad tuam curvam incurvare.

How much sweeter is this joyful news, than the most ravishing and delightful concerts of music! Nay, these are the best tidings that were ever heard in any age of the world! Oh, happy shepherds, to whom this news was sent down from heaven! Ye, to be sure, though watching in the fields, exposed to the severe cold of the night, were in this more happy than kings that slept at their ease in gilded beds, that the wonderful nativity of the Supreme King, begotten from eternity, that nativity which brought salvation to the whole world, was first communicated to you, and just at the time it happened. "Behold," says the angel, "I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day a Saviour."* And immediately a great company of the heavenly host joined the angel, and in your hearing sung, "Glory to God in the highest."† And, indeed, in the strictest truth, "A most extraordinary child was sent down from the lofty heavens," &c.‡

Whence also his name was sent down along with him: "His name shall be called Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins. O sweet name of Jesus," says St. Bernard, "honey in the mouth, melody in the ears, and healing to the heart." This is the Saviour, who, though we were so miserable, and so justly miserable, yet would not suffer us to perish quite. Nor did he only put on our nature, but also

* Luke ii. 10, 11.

† Ibid. 14.

‡ Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto, &c. VIRG. Ecl.

our sins ; that is, in a legal sense, our guilt being transferred to him ; whence we not only read, “ that the word was made flesh ;” * but also, “ that He was made sin for us, who knew no sin ;” † and even, as we have it in the epistle to the Galatians, that he was made *a curse*, ‡ that from him an eternal blessing and felicity might be derived to us. The spotless Lamb of God bore our sins, that were devolved upon him ; by thus bearing them, he destroyed them ; and by dying for them, gained a complete victory over death. And how wonderful is the gradation of the blessings he procured for us ! He not only delivered us from a prison and death, but presents us with a kingdom ; according to that of the Psalmist : “ Who redeemeth thee from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.” §

I believe there is none so stupid or insensible, as to deny that these tidings are very agreeable and pleasing to the ear. But we may, not without some reason, suspect of the greatest part of nominal Christians, who commonly receive these truths with great applause, that it may be said to them, without any injustice, “ What is all this to you ?” These privileges are truly great and manifold, and indifferently directed to all to whom they are preached, unless they reject them, and shut the door against happiness offering to come in : and this is not only the case of a great part of mankind, but they also

* John i. 14.

† 2 Cor. v. 12.

|| Gal. iii. 13.

§ Psalm ciii. 4.

impose upon themselves by false hopes, as if it were enough to hear of these great blessings, and dream themselves happy, because these sounds had reached their ears. But O unhappy men! What will all these immense riches signify to you, I must indeed say, if you are not allowed to use them, but rather, if you know not how to avail yourselves of them?

I therefore earnestly wish that these words of the gospel were well fixed in your minds: "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came into his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."*

In him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, and without him there is nothing but emptiness; "because in him all fulness doth dwell." But what advantage can it be to us to hear these riches of our Jesus spoken of at great length, and to excellent purpose, or even to speak of them ourselves, if, all the while, we talk of them as a good foreign to us, and in which we have no concern, because our hearts are not yet open to receive him? What, pray, would the most accurate description of the Fortunate Islands, as they are called, or all the wealth of the Indies, and the new world, with its golden mines, signify to a poor man half naked, struggling with all the rigours of cold and hunger? Should one, in these circumstances, I say, hear or read of these immense treasures; or should any

* John i. 10—12.

one describe them to him in the most striking manner, either by word of mouth, or with the advantage of an accurate pen; can it be doubted, but this empty display of riches, this phantom of wealth and affluence, would make his sense of want and misery the more intolerable; unless it be supposed, that despair had already reduced him to a state of insensibility? What further enhances the misery of those who hear of this treasure, and think of it to no purpose, is this, that there is none of them who is not miserable by choice, "and a beggar in the midst of the greatest wealth;" and not only miserable by choice, but obstinately so, from an invincible and distracted fondness for the immediate causes of his misery: "For who but a downright madman would reject such golden offers?"*

To give a brief and plain state of the case: To those that sincerely and with all their hearts receive him, *Christ is all things*; to those that receive him not, *nothing*. For, how can any good, however suitable or extensive, be actually enjoyed; or, indeed, any such enjoyment conceived, without some kind of union between that good and the person supposed to stand in need of it? "Behold," says the Psalmist, "all those that are far from thee, shall perish." To *be united to God*, is the great and the only good of mankind; and the only means of this union is Jesus, in whatever sense you take it: he ought truly to be called the *union of unions*; who, that he might with the greater consistency

* Quis enim nisi mentis inops oblatum hoc respuat aurum?

and the more closely unite our souls to God, did not disdain to unite himself to a human body.

The great business of our life, therefore, young gentlemen, is this acceptance of Christ, and this inseparable union with him, which we are now recommending. Thrice happy, and more than thrice happy, are they who are joined with him in this undivided union, which no complaints, nor even the day of death, can dissolve; nay, the last day is happy above all other days, for this very reason, that it fully and finally completes this union, and is so far from dissolving it, that it renders it absolutely perfect and everlasting.

But that it may be coeval with eternity, and last for ever, it is absolutely necessary that this union should have its beginning in this short and fleeting life. And, pray, what hinders those of us that have not entered into this union before, to enter into it without delay—seeing the bountiful Jesus not only rejects none that come unto him, but also offers himself to all that do not wilfully reject him, and standing at the door, earnestly begs to be admitted? O! “why do not these everlasting doors open, that the king of glory may enter,”* and reign within us? Nay, though he were to be sought in a far country, and with great labour, why should we delay, and what unhappy chains detain us? Why do we not, after shaking them all off, and even ourselves, go as it were out of ourselves, and seek him incessantly till we find him? Then rejoicing over

* Psalm xxiv.

him, say with the heavenly spouse, "I held him, and would not let him go;" and further add, with the same spouse, that blessed expression, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." And, indeed, this propriety is alway reciprocal. No man truly receives Jesus, that does not, at the same time, deliver up himself wholly to him. Among all the advantages we pursue, there is nothing comparable to this exchange. Our gain is immense from both, not only from the acceptance of him, but also from surrendering ourselves to him: so long as this is delayed, we are the most abject slaves: when one has delivered himself up to Christ, then and then only he is truly free, and becomes master of himself. Why should we wander about to no purpose? To him let us turn our eyes, on him fix our thoughts, that he, who is ours by the donation of the Father, and his own free gift, may be ours by a cheerful and joyous acceptance. As St. Bernard says on these words of the prophet, "'To us a child is born, to us a son is given: Let us, therefore, make use of what is ours," saith he, "for our own advantage."* So then, let him be ours by *possession* and *use*,† and let us be his for ever, never forgetting how dearly he has bought us.

* Puer natus est nobis, filius nobis datus est: Utamur, inquit, nostro in utilitatem nostram.

† Κτησει και χρησει.



LECTURE XV.

Of REGENERATION.

THE Platonists divide the world into two, the sensible and intellectual world ; they imagine the one to be the type of the other, and that sensible and spiritual things are stamped, as it were, with the same stamp or seal. These sentiments are not unlike the notions which the masters of the cabalistical doctrine among the Jews held concerning God's *sephiroth* and seal, wherewith, according to them, all the worlds, and every thing in them, are stamped or sealed ; and these are probably near akin to what Lord Bacon of Verulam calls his *parallela signacula*, and *symbolizantes schematismi*. According to this hypothesis, these parables and metaphors, which are often taken from natural things to illustrate such as are divine, will not be similitudes taken entirely at pleasure ; but are often, in a great measure, founded in nature and the things themselves. Be this as it may, that great change which happens in the souls of men by a real and effectual conversion to God, is illustrated in the Holy Scriptures by several remarkable changes both natural and civil, particularly by *a deliverance from chains, prison, and slavery ; by a transition from one kingdom to another, and from darkness into light ; by a*

restoration from death to life ; by a new creation ; by a marriage ; and by adoption and regeneration. Concerning this great change, as it is represented under the last of these figures, we propose, with Divine assistance, to offer a few thoughts from these words of St. John's Gospel, which we have already mentioned : " To as many as received him, to them gave he power, or the privilege to become the sons of God."* Together with these words of our Saviour in another place of the same Gospel, " Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."†

If, indeed, we consider the nature and the original of man, it is not without reason that he is called the son of *God*, according to that passage which the apostle, in his short, but most weighty Sermon to the Athenians, quotes from the poet Aratus, and at the same time approves of, " for we are all his offspring."‡ Our first parent, in St. Luke's Gospel, is also expressly called *the son of God*,§ not only because he was created immediately by *God*, without any earthly father, but also on account of the Divine image that was originally impressed upon the human nature.

And this glorious title, which distinguishes him from all other corporeal beings, he has in common with the angels, who are also so called in several

* John i. 12.

† Ibid. iii. 3.

‡ Τῆ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν.

§ Luke iii. 38.

places in the book of Job.* It is indeed true, to use the words of St. Basil, “That every piece of workmanship bears some mark or character of the workman who made it:”† for I should rather choose, in this case, to use the word *mark* or *character* than *likeness*: but of man alone it is said, “Let us make him after our own image.” And this distinction is not improperly expressed by the schoolmen, who say, as we have already observed, that all the other works of *God* are stamped with the print of his foot; but only man, of all the visible creation, honoured with the image or likeness of his face. And, indeed, on account of this image or resemblance it is, that he is in dignity very nearly equal to the angels, though made inferior to them. Here it is to be observed, that this inferiority is but little—“Who was made,” saith the Apostle, “a little lower than the angels:”‡ so that, with regard to his body, he is nearly related to the brute creatures, and only a little superior to them with regard to temperament, and the beautiful elegance of his frame, but made out of the very same materials, the same moist and soft clay, taken from the bosom of their great and common mother; whereas, to use the words of the poet, “The soul is the breath of *God*, which takes its rise from heaven, and is closely

* Job i. 6, and xxxviii. 7.

† Πάν το εργαζόμενον εχειν τινα τῆ τεκτονος τυπον.

‡ Heb. ii. 9.

united to his earthly body, like a light shut up in a dark cavern.”*

That divine part of the human composition derives its original from the Father of Spirits, in the same manner with those ministers of fire who are not confined to corporeal vehicles; concerning whom the oracle, having acknowledged one Supreme and Divine Majesty, immediately subjoins; “and we angels are but a small part of *God*.”†

And with regard to this principle which excels in man, which actually constitutes the man, and on account of which he most truly deserves that name, he is a noble and divine animal; and whatever some fanciful and proud men may boast concerning their families, “if we consider our original, and that God was the author of the human kind, none of Adam’s race can be called ignoble.”‡

But if, on the other hand, we regard our woeful fall, which was the consequence of sin, we are all degenerate; we have all fallen from the highest honour into the greatest disgrace, and the deepest gulph of all sorts of misery; we have given away our liberty and greatest dignity, in exchange for the most shameful and most deplorable bondage;

* Ψυχη δ' εστιν αημα Θεου, και μιξιν ανετλη
Ουρανη χθονιοιο, φαις σπηλυγγι καλυθεν. Naz. de Anima.

† Μικρη δε Θεου μερις αγγελου ημεις.

‡ Si primordia nostra,
Auctoremque Deum spectes,
Nullus degener extat.

Boeth. de Cons. Phil. lib. iii. met. 6.

instead of the sons of *God*, we are become the slaves of Satan: and if we now want to know to what family we belong; the Apostle will tell us, “That we are children of wrath, and sons of disobedience.”*

But, as the overflowing Fountain of goodness and bounty did not choose that so noble a monument of his wisdom should be entirely ruined by this dismal fall; could any one be more proper to raise it up again, or better qualified to restore men to the dignity of the sons of God, than his own eternal Son, who is the most perfect and express image of the Father? Nor does this glorious person decline the severe service: though he was the son of his Father’s love, the heir and lord of the whole universe; though he might be called the delight of his most exalted Father and of all blessed spirits, and now, with the greatest justice, the darling of the human kind; yet he left his Father’s bosom, and, O wonderful condescension! became the son of man, that men might, anew, become the sons of God: whence he is also called the second Adam, because he recovered all that was lost by the first.

That all who sincerely receive him, might be again admitted into the embraces of the Father, and no more be called the children of wrath, he himself submitted to the punishment due to our disobedience; and, by bearing it, removed our guilt, and pacified justice. He also went into the

* Ὑιοὶ ἀπειθείας καὶ τέκνα ὀργῆς. Eph. ii. 2, 3.

flames of divine wrath to deliver us from them; and by a plentiful stream of his most precious blood, quite extinguished them. He likewise took effectual care that those who were now no longer to be called *children of wrath*, should also cease to be *children of disobedience*, by pouring out upon them a plentiful effusion of his sanctifying spirit; that their hearts being thereby purged from all impure affections, and the love of earthly things, they might, under the influence of the same good spirit, cheerfully lead a life of sincere and universal obedience. Now, it cannot be doubted that those who are so actuated and conducted by the Divine Spirit, are truly the *sons of God*. Whence that spirit whereby they call *God their Father*, and with confidence apply to him as such, is called *the spirit of adoption*.

Moreover, this wonderful restoration is often called adoption, not only to distinguish it from the natural and incomparable dignity which belongs to the only-begotten Son; but also because we by no means derive this privilege from nature, but absolutely from the free donation of the Father, through the mediation of his only Son. We must not, however, conclude from this, that this privilege has nothing more in it than an honourable title, or, as they call it, an external relation; for it is not only inseparably connected with a real and internal change, but with a remarkable *renovation*, and, as it were, a *transformation* of all the faculties of the soul, nay, even of the whole man. You will

accordingly find these words applied to this purpose by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans:* And, to conclude, it is with a view to convince us, that, together with the title of sons, the Spirit of God is given to believers, and they are inwardly renewed thereby, that we so often in scripture meet with this *regeneration* which is the subject of our present discourse.

If we consider the lives of men, we shall be apt to imagine, that the generality of mankind who live in the world under the name of Christians, think it sufficient for them to be called by this name, and dream of nothing further. The common sort of mankind hear with pleasure and delight of free remission of sins, imputed righteousness, of the dignity of the sons of God, and the eternal inheritance annexed to that dignity; but when they are told, that repentance, a new heart, and a new life, contempt of the world and the pleasures of the flesh, fasting and prayer, are absolutely necessary for a Christian, “These are hard sayings; who can bear them?” Though, at the same time, it must be said, that they who do not regard these necessary duties will have no share in the reward annexed to them.

There are many things which distinguish this divine adoption from that which obtains among men. 1st, The former is not an expedient to supply the want of children, which is commonly the case among men; for God has his only-begotten Son,

* Romans xii. 2.

who is incomparably preferable to all the rest taken together, who is immortal as his Father; and though, from a principle of wonderful humility, he condescended to become mortal, and even to die, yet he rose again from the dead, and liveth for ever. From him is derived all that felicity which our heavenly Father is pleased to confer upon us, out of his mere grace and bounty, through the merits and mediation of his dear Son. And is there any one, on whom this felicity is bestowed, who will not freely acknowledge himself to be quite unworthy of so great an honour?*

Yet such honour has the eternal and incomprehensible love of God condescended to bestow on us, who are quite unworthy and undeserving; and in this also, the divine adoption differs from that which is customary among men, who generally choose the most deserving they can meet with. But all those whom God maketh choice of, are unworthy, and some even are remarkably so. 2dly, Men generally adopt but one a-piece, or at most a few; but divine adoption admits into the heavenly family a most numerous host, extending even unto myriads, that Jesus, who is the head of the family, "may be the first-born among many brethren." And, 3dly, They are all heirs; whence it is said, in another place, "That he might bring many sons into glory." Nor is the inheritance of any individual in the least diminished in consequence of so

* *Haud equidem tali me dignor honore. Virg. Æneid. i.*

vast a multitude of heirs ; for it is an *inheritance in light*, and every one has the whole of it. Nor do the children come into the possession of this inheritance by the death of the Father, but every one, when he dies himself ; for the Father is immortal, and, according to the apostle, the “ only one that has immortality ;” that is, in an absolute, primary, and independent sense. Nay, he himself is the eternal inheritance of his sons, and death alone brings them into his presence, and admits them into the full enjoyment of him. 4thly, Which I would have particularly observed, this divine adoption is not a matter of mere external honour, nor simply the bestowing of riches and an inheritance ; but always attended with a real internal change of the man himself, to a being quite different from what he was before ; which is also recorded in Sacred Scripture, concerning Saul, when he was anointed king : but this human adoption can by no means perform. This last, in the choice of a proper object, justly pays regard to merit ; for though the richest, and even the best of men, may clothe richly the person whom he has thought proper to adopt, and get him instructed in the best principles and rules of conduct ; yet he cannot effectually divest him of his innate dispositions, or those manners that have become natural by custom : he cannot form his mind to noble actions, nor plant within him the principles of fortitude and virtue. But he that formed the heart of man, can reform it at his

pleasure: and this he actually does. Whenever he admits a person into his royal family, he, at the same time, endows him with royal and divine dispositions: and, therefore, if he honours any person with his love, that person, thereby, becomes deserving; because, if he was not so before, he makes him so; he stamps his own image upon him, in true and lively colours; and as he is holy himself, he makes him holy likewise. Hence it is, that this heavenly adoption is no less properly, truly, or frequently, in the Sacred Scriptures, called *regeneration*.*

And though a Jew, and a celebrated doctor of the Jewish law, excepted against this doctrine, when it was proposed to him under this name; yet neither all of that nation, nor even the Gentile philosophers, were quite unacquainted with it. Rabbi Israel calls the proselytes, new-born Jews. And those passages which we frequently meet with concerning the seed of Abraham, and, in the prophets, concerning the numerous converts that were to be made to the church, are by their Rabbins, and the Chaldee paraphrasts, applied to this spiritual generation, which they believed would remarkably take place in the days of the Messiah; particularly these two passages in the Psalms, in one whereof the spiritual sons of the church are compared to the drops of the *morning dew*,† not only on account of its celestial purity, but also with

* Παλιγγενεσία.

† Psalm xlv. 16; cx. iij.

regard to the vast multitude of them. Some of these doctors also observe, that the number of proselytes would be so great in the days of the Messiah, that the church, omitting the ceremony of a circumcision, would receive them into its bosom, and initiate them by ablution or baptism. Concerning this renovation of the mind, Philo Judæus says expressly, “God, who is unbegotten himself, and begets all things, sows this seed, as it were, with his own hand,” &c.* Hierocles, and other Pythagorean philosophers, treat also of this moral or mystical regeneration; and under this very name Plutarch also makes mention of it, and defines it to be “the mortification of irrational and irregular appetites;” and Seneca’s words relative to this subject are, “The families of the arts and sciences are the most noble; choose into which of them you will be adopted; for by this means we may be born according to our own choice; nor will you be adopted into the name only, but also into the goods of the family.”†

Is not also the common custom that prevailed among the ancients, of honouring their heroes, and those men who were remarkable for exalted virtue, with the title of *sons of God*, a plain allusion to this adoption we have under our consideration? And

* Αγεννητος ὁ Θεος, καὶ τὰ συμπάντα γεννῶν, σπείρει μὲν τὸ γέννημα τὸ ἴδιον, &c.

† Nobilissimæ sunt ingeniorum familiæ, elige in quam adscisci velis, hac enim ratione, nobis ad arbitrium nostrum nasci licet, nec in nomen tantum adoptaberis, sed et in ipsa bona.

what we have observed on the philosophers, who acknowledged this moral or metaphorical regeneration, is so very true, that it gave a handle to the fictions of those ancient heretics, who evaded the whole doctrine and faith of the last resurrection, by putting this figurative sense upon it. As to what the Roman philosopher observes, that we may be born in this manner at our own pleasure or discretion, though, to be sure, it is not without our consent, yet it does not altogether, nor principally, depend upon us; our sacred and apostolic doctrine presents us with much more just and pure notions on this subject, when it teaches us, that “of his own will he begat us by the word of truth.”* This is also represented in express terms in those words of the gospel which immediately follow the passage we mentioned at the beginning of this discourse, “which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God.”† And, with great propriety, there is immediately added another *generation* still more wonderful and mysterious, which is the principal and source of this renovation of ours, “the word was made flesh,” For to this end, God was pleased to clothe himself with our flesh, that he might put his Spirit within us, whereby we, though carnal in consequence of the corruption of our nature, might be born again into a new, spiritual, and divine life. The Holy Ghost, by overshadowing the Blessed Virgin, was, in a very particular manner, the author of the human nature

* James i. 18.

† John i. 13.

of the Son of God, and to the virtue and divine power of the same Spirit all the adopted children of the Deity owe their new birth. And as creation goes sometimes under the name of generation, for instance, in the words of Moses, “of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee;”* that book also of the Bible, which, from the first word of it, is called *Bereshith*, is by the Greeks named *Genesis*, and in the oldest copy of the Septuagint, *the Generation of the World*. And, in the beginning of it, Moses speaking of the creation of the world, says, “These are the generations of the heaven and the earth.”† So, on the other hand, this spiritual generation is called creation, and with an additional epithet, *the new creation*; it has also, for its author, the same powerful Spirit of God who of old sat upon the face of the waters as a bird upon its young, or, as St. Basil renders it, hatched; so also in conversion the same Spirit rests upon our unformed minds, that are lifeless, unprepared, and nothing at all but emptiness and obscurity, and out of this darkness brings forth light, which was the first and most beautiful ornament of the universe; to which the apostle also alludes in his second epistle to the Corinthians.‡ The resurrection of the dead is also the peculiar work of this enlivening spirit of God; and to him the apostle Peter expressly ascribes the resurrection of Christ; “for Christ also,” says he, “hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust,

* Deut. xxxii. 18.

† Gen. ii. 4.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.* And here, again, there is a mutual exchange of names; for, in the gospel according to Matthew, the resurrection of the dead is called the regeneration: "Verily I say unto you," says our Lord, "that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones."† Here, *in the regeneration* must be connected with the following words, and by no means with those that go before. And that this was a common method of speaking among the Jews, appears from Josephus: "To those," says he, "whose fate it is to die for observing the law, God has given the privileges of being born again, and enjoying a more happy life, so that they are gainers by the exchange."‡ In like manner Philo saith, "We shall hasten to the regeneration after death," &c.§ On the other hand, it is very well known, that this spiritual regeneration we are speaking of, is often in scripture called the resurrection.

Of this resurrection the word of the gospel is, as it were, the trumpet; and, at the same time, the immortal seed of this new birth, and therefore of immortality itself. Thus it is represented by the

* 1 Peter iii. 18.

† Matt. xix. 28.

‡ Τοις ὑπὲρ νόμων διαφυλαχθέντων ἀποθανῆσι ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς γίνεσθαι τε παλιν καὶ βίον ἀμείνω λαβεῖν ἐκ περιτροπῆς. Lib. i. cont. App.

§ Εἰς παλιγγενεσίαν ὀρμησόμεν μετὰ τὸν θάνατον, &c.

apostle Peter,* and by the apostle James, who expressly tells us, “that he hath begot us with the word of truth.”† Now the enlivening virtue and plastic power of this word is derived from the Holy Ghost, who is the true spring and fountain of this new life. Nor are the most extended powers of the human mind, or the strength of its understanding, any more able to restore this life within it, even upon hearing the glad-tidings of the gospel, than it was capable of producing itself at first, or of being the author of its own being, or after death of restoring itself to life.

To this exalted dignity are admitted the humble, the poor, the obscure, the ignorant, barbarians, slaves, sinners, whom the world look upon as nothing, and hold in the greatest contempt: of these nothing is required but true and sincere faith; no learning, nor noble extract, nor any submission to the Mosaic law; but upon every man, of whatever rank or condition, who believes this word, he in return bestows this dignity, “that they should become the sons of God;” that is, that what Christ was by nature, they should become by grace. Now, what is more sublime and exalted than this honour, that those who were formerly *children of Satan*, and *heirs of hell*, should by faith alone be made “the sons of God, brethren of Christ, and joint heirs of the heavenly kingdom”? If the sacred fire of the Romans happened at any time to be extinguished,

* 1 Peter i. 23.

† James i. 18.

it could only be lighted again at the rays of the sun. The life of souls, to be sure, is a sacred flame of divine love ; this flame, as we are now born into the froward race of fallen mankind, is, alas ! but too truly and unhappily extinguished, and by no means to be kindled again, but by the enlivening light and heat of the *Sun of Righteousness*, who is most auspiciously arisen upon us.

LECTURE XVI.

Of REGENERATION.

THE great corruption of mankind, and their innate disposition to every sort of wickedness, even the doctors of the Heathen nations, that is, their philosophers and theologers, and their poets also, were sensible of, and acknowledged ; though they were quite ignorant of the source from which this calamity was derived. They all own, “ That it is natural to man to sin ;” * even your favourite philosopher, who prevails in the schools, declares, that we are *strongly inclined* to vice ; † and, speaking of the charms and allurements of forbidden pleasures, he observes, that mankind by nature “ is easily caught in these snares.” ‡ The Roman philoso-

* Συμφυτον ειναι τοις ανθρωποις το αμαρτανειν.

† Ευκαταφορος. Arist. Eth. ii.

‡ Ευθηρατον ειναι υπη των τοιςτων.

pher takes notice, “ That the way to vice is not only a descent, but a downright precipice.”*

And the comic poet, “ That mankind has always been, in every respect, a deceitful, subtle creature.”†

The satirist likewise observes, “ That we are all easily prevailed on to imitate things that are, in their nature, wicked and disgraceful.”‡

And the Lyric poet, “ That the human race, bold to attempt the greatest dangers, rushes with impetuosity upon forbidden crimes.”§

All the wise men among the Heathens exerted their utmost to remedy this evil by precepts and institutions of philosophy, but to very little purpose. They could not, by all their arts and all their precepts, make others better; nay, with regard to most of them, we may say, nor even themselves. But, “ when there was no wisdom in the earth,” says Lactantius, “ that blessed doctor was sent down from heaven, who is the way, the truth, and the life,” || and, by an almighty power, effected what all others had attempted in vain.

* Ad vitia, non tantum pronum iter, sed et præcepta.

† Δολερος μὲν αἰεὶ κατὰ πάντα δὴ τροπὸν

Πεφυκεν ἄνθρωπος.

‡ ——— Dociles imitandis

Turpibus et pravis omnes sumus. JUV. Sat. xiv.

§ ——— Audax omnia perpeti,

Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas. HOR. Od. lib. i.

|| Sed cum nulla esset sapientia in terris, missus est à cælo doctor ille, via, veritas, et vita.

It is not at all to be doubted, but the end proposed by philosophy, was to renew and to reform mankind, and to reduce the course of their lives to a conformity with the precepts of wisdom and virtue. Whence the common definition given of philosophy is, "That it is the rule of life, and the art or science of living uprightly." To this purpose Seneca says, "Philosophy is the law of living honestly and uprightly." True religion, to be sure, has the same tendency: but it promotes its end with much greater force and better success; because its principles are much more exalted, its precepts and instructions are of greater purity, and it is, besides, attended with a divine power, whereby it makes its way into the hearts of men, and purifies them with the greatest force and efficacy; and yet, at the same time, with the most wonderful pleasure and delight. And this is the regeneration of which we are speaking, and whereof we have already observed, that philosophy acknowledged it, even under the same name; but that it effected it, we absolutely deny. Now, it is evident from the very name, that we are to understand by it an inward change, and that a very remarkable one. And since God is called the author and source of this change, whatever the philosophers may have disputed, *pro* and *con*, concerning the origin of moral virtue, we are by no means to doubt, but this sacred and divine change upon the heart of man is produced by an influence truly divine: and this was even Plato's opinion concerning virtue: nor do I imagine you are unacquainted

with it. The same philosopher, and several others besides him, expressly asserted, that virtue was a kind of image or likeness of God, nay, that it was the effect of inspiration, and partook, in some respect, of a kind of divine nature. “No mind can be rightly disposed without divine influence,” says Seneca:* and it was the saying of the Pythagorean philosophers, “That the end of man is to be made like to God.”† “This mind,” says Trismegistus, “is God in man, and therefore some of the number of men are gods.”‡ And a little further on, “In whatever souls the Mind presides, it illustrates them with its own brightness, opposing their immoralities and mad inclinations: just as a learned physician inflicts pain upon the body of his patient, by burning and cutting it, in order to recover it to health; in the same manner, the mind afflicts a voluptuous soul, that it may pull up pleasure by the very roots; for all diseases of the soul proceed from it: impiety is the severest distemper of the soul.”§

What wonder is it then, if these very thoughts are expressed in the more divine oracles of the Sacred Scriptures, more fully, and with greater clearness? And this conformation of the human mind to the Divine nature, is commonly repre-

* Nulla sine Deo bona mens est.

† Τελος ανθρωπων ομοιωσις Θεου.

‡ Ουτος ο νους εν μεν ανθρωποις Θεος εστιν, διο και τινες των ανθρωπων Θεοι εισι. Trism. περι τε κοινη προς τατ.

§ Όσαις αν νυν ψυχαις, &c.

sented therein as the great business and the end of all religion.

What was more often inculcated upon the ancient church of the Jews, than these words, "Be ye holy, because I am holy"? And that the same ambition is recommended to Christians, appears from the first sermon we meet with in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, who came down to this earth, that he might restore the Divine image upon men. "Be merciful," says he, "as your Father, who is in heaven, is merciful." And, according to Luke, "Be perfect, as your Father is perfect." And again, "Blessed are the pure in heart." And, indeed, this is the true beauty of the heart, and its true nobility; but vice introduces degeneracy, and deformity also.

Now, the more the mind disengages and withdraws itself from *matter that pollutes it*,* that is, from the body it inhabits, the purer and more divine it constantly becomes; because it attains to a greater resemblance with the Father of spirits; and, as the apostle Peter expresses it, "partakes more fully of the Divine nature." Hence it is, that the apostle Paul warns us at so great length, and in such strong terms, against *living after the flesh*, as the very death of the soul, and directly opposite to the renewed nature of a Christian. He that is born of God, is endued with a greatness of soul, that makes him easily despise, and consider as nothing, those things

* Απο της ύλης βερβρωσας.

which he prized at a very high rate before: he considers heaven as his country; even while he lives as a stranger on this earth, he aspires at the highest objects, and, flying up towards heaven, with soaring wings, looks down with contempt upon the earth.”*

And yet, with all this sublimity of mind, he joins the deepest humility. But all the allurements of sin, “though they continue to have the same appearance they had before,”† and possibly throw themselves in his way, as the very same that were formerly dear to him, he will reject with indignation, and give them the same answer that St. Ambrose tells us was given by a young convert to his mistress, with whom he had formerly lived in great familiarity; “though you may be the same, I am not the same I was before.”‡

Lactantius elegantly sets forth the wonderful power of religion in this aspect: “Give me,” says he, “a man that is passionate, a slanderer, one that is headstrong and unmanageable, with a very few of the words of God, I will make him as quiet as a lamb. Give me a covetous, avaricious or close-handed person, I will presently make him liberal, and oblige him to give away his money in large quantities with his own hands. Give me one that

* ————— udam

Spernit humum fugiente penna.

† Etsi illis facies, quæ fuit ante, manet.

‡ At ego certe non sum ego.

is afraid of pain, or of death, he shall, in a very little time, despise crosses, flames, and even Phalaris's bull. Shew me a lustful person, an adulterer, a complete debauchee, you shall presently see him sober, chaste, and temperate."* So great is the power of divine wisdom, that, as soon as it is infused into the human breast, it presently expels folly, which is the source and fountain of sin, and so changes the whole man, so refines, and, as it were, renews him, that you would not know him to be the same. It is prophesied of the days of the Messiah, "That the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together, and the leopard feed with the kid." The gospel has a wonderful effect in softening even the roughest dispositions, and "there is none so wild, but he may be tamed, if he will but patiently give attention to this wholesome doctrine."†

Now, whether you call this renovation or change of the mind repentance, or divine love, it makes no difference; for all these, and indeed all the Christian graces in general, are at bottom one and

* *Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effrænatus, paucissimis Dei verbis tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem, jam tibi eum liberalem dabo, et pecuniam suam propriis plenisque manibus largientum. Da timidum doloris ac mortis; jam cruces, et ignes, et Phalaridis taurum contemnet. Da libidinosum, adulterum, Ganeonem; jam sobrium, castum, continentem videbis.*

† *Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit,
Huic modo doctrinæ patientem commodet aurem.*

the same; and, taken together, *constitute what we may call the health and vigour of the mind*, the term under which Aristo of Chios comprehended all the moral virtues. The apostle Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, describes these adopted children of God by their repentance; * in the epistle to the Romans, they are characterised by their love; † and in the passage of St. John's gospel, we have mentioned already, by their faith; ‡ but whatever name it is conveyed by, "the change itself is effected by the right-hand of the Most High." As to the manner of this divine operation, to raise many disputes about it, and make many curious disquisitions with regard to it, would be not only quite needless, but even absurd. Solomon, in his Ecclesiastes, gives some grave admonitions with regard to the secret processes of nature in forming the foetus in the womb, § to convince us of our blindness with respect to the other works of God: how much more hidden and intricate, and even past our finding out, is this regeneration, which is purely spiritual! This is what our Saviour also teaches us, when he compares this new birth to the unconfined and unknown turnings and revolutions of the wind; a similitude which Solomon had lightly touched before, in that passage of the Ecclesiastes to which we just now alluded. O! that we felt within ourselves this blessed change, though we should remain ignorant with regard to

* 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

† Rom. viii. 28.

‡ John i. 12.

§ Eccles. xi. 5.

the manner of it; since we are sufficiently apprized of one thing, which it is greatly our interest frequently and seriously to reflect upon: "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This spiritual progeny is also compared to the dew, the generation whereof is hidden and undiscovered. "Hath the rain a father, and who hath begotten the drops of the dew?"* Good men are also called *children of light*,† and *light in the Lord*.‡ But it is from *the Father of lights* himself, and from his only-begotten Son, that these stars (for this title of the angels may, without injustice, be applied to them) derive all the light they enjoy. Now the nature of light is very intricate, and the emanation and the manner of its production is yet a secret even to the most sharp-sighted of those who have made nature their study, and no satisfactory theory of it has yet appeared. But whatever it is, it was produced by that first and powerful word of eternal, uncreated light, "Let there be light." By the same powerful word of the Almighty Father, there immediately springs up in the mind, which was formerly quite involved in the darkness of ignorance and error, a divine and immortal light, which is the life of men, and, in effect, the true regeneration. And because this is the most effectual means of purifying the soul, it is ascribed to the water, and to the spirit. For this illumination of the Holy Ghost is, indeed, the inward baptism of the spirit; but in the primitive times of

* Job xxxiii. 28.

† 1 Thess. v. 5.

‡ Eph. v. 8.

Christianity, the baptism of water, on account of the supposed concurrence of the Spirit, was commonly called the *illumination*, and the solemn seasons appointed for the celebration of this mystery, the days of *illumination* or *light*. And in the very same manner, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is by John the Baptist called the *baptism of fire*, on account of the wonderful influence it has in illuminating and purifying the soul. It is, to be sure, a celestial fire quite invisible to our eyes, and of such a nature, that the secret communications of it to our souls cannot be investigated; but the sum of all is what follows.

It seemed good to infinite Goodness and Wisdom, to form a noble piece of coin out of clay, and to stamp his own image upon it, with this inscription, "The earthly son of God:" this is what we call man. But, alas! how soon did this piece of coin fall back to clay again, and thereby lost that true image, and had the inscription shamefully blotted out! From that time, man, who was formerly a divine creature, and an angel clothed with flesh, became entirely fleshly, and in reality a brute: the soul, that noble and celestial inhabitant of his earthly body, became now quite immersed in matter, and, as it were, entirely converted into flesh, as if it had drunk of the river Lethe; or, like the son of an illustrious family, carried away in infancy to a far country, it is quite ignorant of its present misery, or the liberty and felicity it has lost, becomes an abject slave, degraded to the vilest em-

ployments, which it naturally and with pleasure performs ; because having lost all sense of its native excellency and dignity, and forgotten its heavenly original, it now relishes nothing but earthly things, and, catching at present advantages, disregards eternal enjoyments, as altogether unknown, or removed quite out of sight. But if in any particular soul, either from some spark of its native excellency still remaining alive, or any indistinct report that reaches it, some desires or emotions towards the recovery of its native liberty should arise ; yet, as it has no sufficient strength of its own, nor finds any way open that can lead to so great a blessing, these ineffectual wishes come to nothing, and the unhappy soul, having lost its hopes, languishes in its chains, and is at last quite stupified.

Philosophy, as we have already observed, perceiving that man was born to higher views than this world affords, attempted to raise him from his present dejection, secure his claim to heaven, and restore him to a conformity and likeness to God ; but in vain. To redeem the sons of man, and restore them to what they had lost, it was necessary that the eternal Son of God should come down from heaven. Our fall was easily brought about, but our restoration was a work of the greatest difficulty, and only to be performed by the powerful hand of God ; there are but few whom the exalted Father of spirits has loved, and Christ has raised up to heaven. He is the source whence the spirit of God flows down to us ; he is the fountain of that

new life and sanctified nature, by which we mount towards God, whereby we overcome the world, and in consequence thereof, are admitted into heaven. And happy, to be sure, are those truly noble souls, whose fate it is to be thus born again, to be admitted into the choirs of the holy angels, and to be clothed with those glorious robes that are whiter than snow; they will follow the lamb wherever he goes, and he will lead them to the crystal streams, and even to the fountain of life itself.

But all those, that are to be the attendants of the lamb, in those blessed pastures which are to be met with in his heavenly country, must of necessity, even while they live in this lower world, be followers of him in his humble innocence and purity.

This *spotless, holy, and pure lamb of God*, is the guide and shepherd of a pure and holy flock, a flock dear to God, and of *distinguished beauty; but the shepherd is still more beautiful than they.** But the impure goats and uncleanly hogs he beholds at a distance, and leaves them to unclean spirits, to be possessed by them at pleasure, and afterwards to be precipitated into the depth of misery; unless it be determined to deliver some of them from that shocking form, by a wonderful and divine change, and to convert them into lambs, which is effected in proper time, by the influence of the Holy Ghost. Whence they are called the holy, pure, and divine sons of God; and all love to earthly things, all carnal, impure affections, are banished out of those

* *Formosi pecoris custos formosior.*

hearts which are, as it were, temples consecrated henceforth to God: "for the dwelling place of the Holy One must be holy also."*

LECTURE XVII.

Of TRUE FELICITY and ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

O HOW insipid and unsatisfactory are all the pleasures of this earthly life, which we now live, in respect of that incomparable and altogether heavenly delight, which attends the meditation and contemplation of divine things! When mortals are thus employed, they eat the bread of angels; and if there are any who do not relish the sweetness of this food, it is because the divine part of their composition is become brutish, and, forgetting its original, lies buried in earth and mud. But though the soul is reduced to these woful circumstances, it is not yet so entirely divested of itself, but it still retains some faint remains of its heavenly original and more exalted nature; insomuch, that it cannot acquiesce in, or be at all satisfied with those fading enjoyments wherewith it is surrounded, nor think itself happy or easy in the greatest abundance of earthly comforts. And though, possibly, it may not be fully sensible of what it wants; yet

* Ἅγιος γὰρ ἅγιον ἐστὶν οἰκητήριον.

it perceives, not without some pain and uneasiness, that something is still wanting to make it happy. The truth is, besides that great and unknown good, even those whom, by an abuse of that term, we call most happy, are in want of a great many things: for if we look narrowly into the condition of those who are arrived at the highest pitch of earthly splendour, we shall certainly find some defect and imperfection in it, and be obliged to conclude with the poet, "That since the earth began to be inhabited by men, a full cup of good things, without any mixture of evil, never fell to the share of one man; a graceful body is often dishonoured by bad morals, and a mind of uncommon beauty is sometimes joined to a deformed body," &c.*

But what we call the chief and supreme good must, of necessity, be complete, and entirely free from every defect; and therefore, what is not in every respect perfect, properly speaking, is not perfect at all. The happiness of rich and great men, which the poor admire and respect, is only a gaudy and splendid species of misery. What St. Bernard says of the rash and ill-founded opinion which the generality of mankind form of the lives of the saints, from the imperfect knowledge they have of them, "They see our crosses, but they see not our

* ——— Etenim mortalibus ex quo
 Tellus cœpta coli, nunquam sincera bonorum
 Sors ulli concessa viro; quem corpus honestat
 Dedecorant mores; animus quem pulchrior ornat
 Corpus destituit, &c.

comforts,"* may be here inverted: we see the advantages of those men that are puffed up with riches and honours, but we see not their troubles and vexations. "I wish, I wish," says one, "that those who desire riches, would consult with rich men; they would then be sure to be of another opinion."†

I will spend no more time in describing or lamenting the wretched state of mankind on this earth, because it would answer no end. For, suppose a more complete assemblage of sublunary enjoyments, and a more perfect system of earthly felicity than ever the sun beheld, the mind of man would instantly devour it, and, as if it was still empty and unsatisfied, would require something more. And indeed, by this insatiable thirst, the mind of man discovers its natural excellence and dignity; for thus it proves, that all things here below are insufficient to satisfy, or make it happy; and its capacity is so great and extensive, that it cannot be filled by the whole of this visible frame of things. For, as St. Augustine observes, "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they return to thee."‡ The mind that makes God its refuge, after it has been much tossed to and fro, and distressed in the world, enjoys

* *Cruces nostra vident, unctioes non vident.*

† *Utinam, utinam qui divitias appetunt, cum divitiis delibarent; certe vota mutarent.*

‡ *Fecisti nos, Domine, propter te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec in te redeat.*

perfect peace and absolute security ; and it is the fate of those, and those only, who put into this safe harbour, to have, what the same St. Augustine calls a very great matter, "The frailty of man, together with the security of God."*

Therefore, it is not without reason that the royal Psalmist boasts not of his victories, nor the splendour of his royal crown, but of this one advantage ; "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup thou maintainest the lot:" and on the justest grounds he immediately adds, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage."† And it is quite agreeable to reason, that what improves and completes any thing else, must be itself more complete and perfect : so that the mind of man can neither be made happy by earthly enjoyments, which are all far inferior to it in dignity, nor be so in itself. Nay, neither can the angels, though of a more perfect and sublime nature, confer felicity either upon men or themselves ; but both they and we have our happiness lodged in that Eternal Mind which alone is its own felicity : nor is it possible for us to find it any where else, but in our union with that original Wisdom and Goodness from which we at first took our rise. Away then with all the fictitious schemes of felicity proposed by the philosophers, even those of them that were most artfully contrived ; for even Aristotle's perfection of virtue, as well as what the Stoics

* Habere fragilitatem hominis et securitatem Dei.

† Psalm xvi. 5, 6.

fancied concerning their wise man, are mere fictions. They are nothing but dreams and fancies, that ought to be banished to Utopia; for what they describe is no where to be found among men; and, if it were, it would not constitute complete felicity. So far indeed they are to be commended, that they call in the mind from external enjoyments to itself; but in this they are defective, that when the mind is returned to itself, they carry it no further, nor direct it to ascend, as it were, above itself. They sometimes, it is true, drop such expressions as these: "That there can be no good disposition of the mind without God;"* and that, in order to be happy, the soul must be raised up to divine things: they also tell us, "That the wise man loves God most of all, and for this reason is the most happy man."† But these expressions they drop only at random, and by the by. O! how much fuller and clearer are the instructions of the teacher sent down from heaven—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"!‡

But because the purest minds of the saints, while they sojourn in this earth, still retain some mixture of earthly dross, and arise not to perfect purity; therefore, they cannot yet enjoy the full vision of God, nor, consequently, that perfect happiness which is inseparably connected with it. "For

* Nullam posse esse sine Deo bonam mentem.

† *Αρα ὁ σοφὸς Θεοφιλεστάτος, καὶ διὰ τὸ εὐδαιμονεστάτος.*

‡ Matthew v. 3.

they see only darkly, and through a glass ;”* but with the advantage even of this obscure light, they direct their steps, and go on cheerful and unwearyed : the long-wished-for day will at length come, when they will be admitted into the fullest light. That day, which the unhappy men of this world dread as their last, the sons of light wish for, as their nativity into an endless life, and embrace it with the greatest joy when it comes. And this, indeed, seems to me to be the strongest argument for another life, and an immortality to come. For since no complete, or absolutely perfect happiness is to be found in this life, it must certainly follow, that either there is no such thing to be had any where, or we must live again somewhere, after our period here is out. And, O ! what fools are we, and slow of heart to believe, that think so rarely, and with such coolness, of that blessed country ; and that in this parched and thirsty land, where even those few who are so happy, have only some fore-tastes of that supreme happiness ; but when they remove hence, “ They shall be abundantly satisfied, (or, as the word ought to be translated, intoxicated, †) O Lord, with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures :” ‡ thus the divine Psalmist expresses it ; and, to be sure, it is very surprising, that the great and ancient philosopher Pythagoras, in communicating his thoughts upon the same subject, should happen to fall upon the very same figure : for he

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12. † Inebriabuntur. ‡ Psalm xxxvi. 9.

used to promise those of his disciples that conducted themselves right in this life, that they should be continually drunk* in that which is to come.

But what we have said formerly of the felicity of the life to come, and all that we could say, were we to treat of the same subject over again, is but mere trifling. And yet it is not disagreeable to hear children speak, even with stammering, about the dignity of their father, and of the riches and magnificence of his inheritance. It is pleasant and decent to speak of our native country, even while we are sojourning in a foreign land: but, for the present, I shall insist no longer on this subject, but, turning the tables, lay before you that dreadful punishment which stands in opposition to this happiness, by presenting you only with a transient view of the future misery of the wicked; and though this is indeed a most unpleasant task, yet nothing but our own carelessness and inattention can render it useless.

Here, first of all, it is to be observed, that as, in this life, there is no perfect felicity; so neither here is there any complete misery. Those whom we look upon as the most wretched in this world, have their sufferings chequered with many intervals of ease; but the misery to come admits of no abatement; it is all of a piece, without admitting of any mixture of relief. They are surely mad with their notions who here talk of the advantages of being or existence, and contend that it is more desirable

* Μεθύει αετναον.

“to be miserable, than not to be at all.”* For my part, I am fully satisfied, they can never persuade any man of the truth of their assertion; nor even believe it themselves, when they think seriously on the subject. But not to insist on this, it is certain, that all kinds of delight are for ever banished from that eternal and frightful prison. There is there no light, no day, nor sleep, which is the blessing of the night: and, indeed, nothing at all but places full of darkness, precipices, nakedness, and all kinds of horror; no entertainments, merry meetings, nor any sensible pleasure; and to be for ever separated from all such, must be no small misery, especially to those who used to pass their time amidst such scenes of mirth and jollity, and imagined themselves in some measure happy therein; and that the remembrance of this may distress them the more, they will be continually haunted with a thought that will cleave to them like a worm devouring their bowels, and constantly keep them in mind, that out of a distracted fondness for these fleeting pleasures, which have now flown away, without hope of returning, they have lost those joys that are heavenly and eternal, whereof they will have some knowledge; but what kind of knowledge that will be, and how far extended to enhance their torments, is not ours to determine. But who will attempt to express the excess of their misery, or describe those streams of brimstone, and eternal

* Miserum esse quam non esse.

flames of Divine wrath? Or rather, who will not tremble, I say, not in describing them, but even in thinking of them, and be quite overpowered with an idea so shocking?

That I may no further attempt “to speak things unutterable,* and to derogate from a grand subject by inadequate expressions;” † behold now, my dear youths, if you believe these things, behold, I say, you have now life and death laid before you; choose for yourselves. And that you may not put off a matter of such importance, consider these things, pray seriously, and say to yourselves, concerning the vanishing shadows of external things, How long will these enjoyments last? O! how soon will they pass! Even while I am speaking these words, while I am thinking of them, they fly past me. Is any one oppressed with calamities? Let him say cheerfully, with a remarkably good man, “Lord, while I am here, kill me, burn me, only spare me there.” ‡ Is there any among you of weak capacity, unhappy in expressing himself, of an unfavourable aspect, or deformed in body? Let him say with himself, It is a matter of small consequence: I shall soon leave this habitation; and, if I am but good myself, be soon removed to the mansions of the blessed. Let these thoughts prevent his being dejected in mind, or overcome with too much sorrow. If any one is distinguished by

* Τα αλαλητα λαλεισθαι.

† Magna modis tenuare parvis.

‡ Domine, hic ure, cæde, modo ibi parcas.

a good understanding, or outward beauty, or riches, let him reflect, and seriously consider, how soon all excellencies of this kind will pass away, that he may not be vain, or lifted up by the advantages of fortune. Let it be the chief care and study of you all, to avoid the works of darkness, that so you may escape utter and eternal darkness; embrace with open and cheerful hearts that divine light which hath shone from heaven; that, when you are divested of these bodies, you may be received into the glorious mansions of that blessed and perfect light.

LECTURE XVIII.

Of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, and that it is the true Way to Happiness.

I CONFESS, young gentlemen, that whenever I think on the subject, I cannot help wondering at the indolence and madness of mankind; for though we boast that, to order our affairs with prudence and discretion, and conduct our lives according to the principles of reason, is the great privilege and ornament of our nature that distinguishes us from the brute creatures; how few are there, that, in this respect, act like men that propose to themselves an end, and direct all their actions to the attainment of it! It is very certain, that the

greatest part of mankind, with a folly something more than childish, go in quest of painted butterflies, or commonly pursue the birds with stones and clods; and even those who spin out their lives to the utmost extent of old age, for the most part gain little by it, but only this, that they may be called very aged children,* being as ignorant as infants why they came into the world, and what will become of them when they leave it. Of all questions, therefore, none can be more properly proposed to you, who are just upon the verge of manhood, I mean entering upon a rational life, than this, Whither are you going? What good have you in view? To what end do you propose to live? For hence, possibly, your minds may be excited within you to an earnest desire after that perfect and supreme good, and you may not content yourselves with cool speculations upon this subject, as if it were a logical or philosophical problem, that falls in your way of course; but with that application that is proper in a question concerning a matter of the greatest moment, where it highly concerns us to be well informed, and where the highest rewards and greatest dangers are proposed to our view. And, in this hope, I have often addressed myself to you upon the subject of happiness, or the supreme good, at different periods of time, entertaining you in the intervals with essays and suitable exhortations upon other subjects; yet so as to observe a kind of method, and keep up a connexion

* Παιδες πολυχρονοι.

throughout the whole. I have taken notice of the name and general notion of happiness, the universal desires and wishes whereby men are excited to the pursuit of it, the no less universal, because natural, ignorance of mankind, and their errors and mistakes in the search of it. Whence it happens, that, as they all run in the wrong road, the faster they advance, the further they depart from it; and, like those who ply the oars in a boat, they look one way and move another. And though it seemed almost unnecessary, as facts sufficiently demonstrate the truth of our assertion, yet by a brief recapitulation, wherein we took notice only of the principal heads and classes of things, we proved that happiness is by no means to be found in this earth, nor in any earthly enjoyments whatsoever. And this is no more than all, even fools as well as wise men, are willing to own: they not only pronounce one another unhappy, but, with regard to this life, all of them in general, and every one for himself in particular, acknowledge that they are so; and, in this respect, experience fully justifies their belief: so that, if there were no further prospect, I am apt to believe all mankind would agree in that common saying, "That if mankind were apprized before-hand of the nature of this life, and it were left to their own option, none would accept of it."* As the immortality of the soul has a near connexion with this subject, and is a natural con-

* Vitam hanc, si scientibus daretur, neminem accepturum.—
SENECA.

sequence from it, we, therefore, in the next place, bestowed some time in illustrating that doctrine. In the last place, we advanced some thoughts upon future happiness and misery, so far as is consistent with the weakness of our capacities to comprehend things so little known, and to express such as are, in a great measure, ineffable.

Having treated of these things according to our measure, it remains that we now inquire about the way which directly leads into that happy city, or to that happiness which is reserved in the heavens. This is a great and important article, comprehending the end and design of our life, as well as the hopes and comforts of it; and is very proper to be first treated of in a catechetical, or, indeed, any methodical system of theology, as appears from reason and precedents: for by this discussion we are immediately introduced into the whole doctrine of true religion. Accordingly, the first question in the generally-received Catechism, which you have in your hands, is, "What is your only consolation in life and in death?"* And the first question of another Catechism, which not long ago was used, particularly in this University, is, "What is the only way to true felicity?"† For the salvation and happiness of mankind, in subordination to the glory of God, which is, to be sure, the supreme end of all, is the peculiar and genuine scope of theology; and from it the definition of this science seems to be

* *Quæ est unica tua consolatio in vita et in morte?*

† *Quæ est unica ad veram felicitatem via?*

most properly drawn: nor do I imagine that any one is so weak as from hence to conclude that it ought to be called anthropology, rather than theology: for though it not only treats of the happiness of mankind, but also has this happiness, as has been observed, for its chief end and design; yet, with good reason, and on many accounts, it has obtained this more sublime title. It has God for its author, whom the wisest of men would in vain attempt to find out, but from the revelation he has made of himself; every such attempt being as vain as it would be to look for the sun in the night-time, by the light of a candle; for the former, like the latter, can only be seen by his own light. God cannot be known but so far as he reveals himself: which Sophocles has also admirably well expressed: "You will never," says he, "understand those divine things which the gods have thought proper to conceal, even though you should ransack all nature."*

Nor has this sacred science God for its author only, but also for its subject and its ultimate end, because the knowledge of him, and his worship, comprehends the whole of religion; the beatific vision of him includes in it the whole of our happiness, and that happiness is at last resolved into the divine grace and bounty.

I should therefore choose to give this brief and clear definition of theology, namely, "That it is a divine doctrine, directing man to real felicity, as his

* Αλλ' ἂν γὰρ αὐτὰ θεῖα, κρυπτοντοῦ Θεοῦ,
Μαθοῖς αὐ, εὐδ' εἰ παντ' ἐπέξελθοῖς σκοπῶν.

chief end, and conducting him to it by the way of true religion." I call it a *doctrine*, because it is not considered here as a habit in the mind, but as a summary of celestial truth. I call it a *divine doctrine*, for all the reasons already mentioned; because, for instance, it is from God; he is the subject of it, and it all terminates in him at last. I call it a *doctrine directing man*, for I confine my notion of it to that doctrine only which was sent down from heaven for that purpose. What signify then those distinctions, which are indeed sounding, but quite tedious and foreign to the purpose, that divide theology into *archetypal* and *ectypal*, and again into the theology of the church militant, and that of the church triumphant? What they call archetypal theology is very improperly so named; for it is that perfect knowledge which God has of himself:* and the theology of the church triumphant, ought rather to be called the beatific vision of God.† The theology in question, "is that day spring from on high, which hath visited us, to give light to them which sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace."‡ That peace is true happiness, and the way of peace is true religion: concerning which I shall offer a few thoughts, and very briefly. First of all, you are to observe, that man is not a lawless creature, but capable of a law, and actually subject to one. This expression conveys no harsh nor dishonourable idea; nay, this subjection is so far from being a

* Αυτοσοφια.

† Θεοψια.

‡ Luke i. 78, 79.

burden, that it is the greatest honour. To be capable of a law, is the mark and ornament of an intelligent, rational soul, and that which distinguishes it from the brutes ; it evidently supposes a resemblance to God, and an intercourse with heaven ; and to live actually under the direction of religion and the law, is the great honour and ornament of human life, and what distinguishes it from the irregular conduct of the brute creation. For, as the poet expresses it, “ One beast devours another, fishes prey upon fishes, and birds upon birds, because they are subject to no law ; but mankind live under a just law, which makes their condition far preferable.” *

The brute creatures devour one another without blame, because they have no law ; but, as Juvenal observes, “ Men alone, of all other earthly creatures, as they derive their reason from the highest heaven, are venerable for their understanding, which renders them capable of inquiring into divine things, and qualifies them for learning arts, and reducing them to practice.” †

And hence it appears, that we were born subjects to religion and an eternal law of nature. For since

* *Ιχθυοισι μεν και θηρσι, και οιωνοισ πετεηνοις
Εσθειν αλληλως, επει θ δικη εστιν επ' αυτοις,
Ανθρωποισι δ' εδωκε δικην, η πολλον αριστη
Γινετα'*

† ————— *Venerabile soli
Sortiti ingenium divinorumque capaces,
Atque exercendis, capiendisq̄ue artibus apte
Sensum à cœlesti demissum traximus arce. Juv. Sat. xv.*

our blessed Creator has thought proper to endue us with a mind and understanding, and powers sufficient for that purpose, to be sure we are bound by an indispensable law, to acknowledge the primary and eternal Fountain of our own being, and of all created things, to love him above all other objects, and obey his commands without reserve or exception. So that in this very law of nature is founded a strong obligation upon us to give due obedience to every divine positive institution, which he shall think proper to add for securing the purposes of religion and equity. Wherefore, when our first parents, by eating the forbidden fruit, transgressed the symbolical command, intended as a proof of their obedience, by that very act they most basely broke the primary and great law of nature, which is the foundation of religion, and of every other law whatever.

It is not my intention to speak here of our redemption by the Messias, the only-begotten Son of God the Creator; it is sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that our great Redeemer has indeed delivered us from the chains of sin and death, but has, by no means, dissolved the bonds of religion, and the everlasting law of nature: nay, these are, in many respects, strengthened and confirmed by this redemption; and a cheerful submission to them by virtue of his spirit, which is poured out upon us, is a great part of that royal liberty of the sons of God, which is secured to us by his

means, as, by imitating his example, we arrive at the full possession of it, which is reserved for us in the heavenly kingdom. The way, therefore, to happiness, which we are in search of, is true religion, and such, in a very remarkable manner, is that of the Christians.

On the truth and excellence of this religion you have a great many learned writers, both ancient and modern. And, indeed, it is exceeding plain, from its own internal evidence, that, of all the forms of religion* that ever the world saw, there is none more excellent than that of Christianity which we profess, wherein we glory, and in which we think ourselves happy, amidst all the troubles of the world: there is none that is more certain and infallible with regard to its history, more sublime with regard to its mysteries, more pure and perfect in its precepts, or more venerable for the grave simplicity of its rites and worship; nay, it appears evident, that this religion alone is, in every respect, incomparably preferable to every other. It remains, young Gentlemen—What do you think I am going to say? It remains, that we *become true Christians*. I repeat it again, if we will be happy, *Let us be Christians*. You will say, Your wish is easily satisfied, you have your desire, *we are all Christians already*. I wish it may be so! I will not, however, object to any particular person upon this head; but every one of you, by a short trial, wherein he will

* ὁμοκειας.

be both witness and judge, may settle this important point within himself. *We are all Christians.* Be it so. But are we poor in spirit? Are we humble, meek, and pure in heart? Do we pray without ceasing? Have we nailed all our carnal appetites and desires to our Saviour's cross, "living no longer to ourselves, but to him that died for us"? This is the true description of a Christian, by the testimony of that gospel which we acknowledge to be Christ's. And those who are entire strangers to these dispositions of mind, know not, to be sure, *the way of peace.* These I earnestly entreat and beseech to rouse themselves, and shake off their indolence and sloth, lest, by indulging the vile desires of the flesh, they lose their souls for ever. But if there are any among you, and, indeed, I believe there are some, who with all their hearts aspire to these Christian virtues, and, by their means, to that kingdom which can never beshaken;* "Be strong in the Lord, have your loins girt about with truth, and be sober, and hope to the end." You will never repent of this holy warfare, where the battle is so short, the victory so certain, and your triumphal crown, and the peace procured by this conflict, will last for ever.

* Ασαλευτον.



LECTURE XIX.

That Holiness is the only Happiness on this Earth.

THE journey we are engaged in is indeed great, and the way up-hill ; but the glorious prize which is set before us, is also great, and our great and valiant Captain, who has long ago ascended up on high, supplies us with strength. If our courage at any time fails us, let us fix our eyes upon him, and, according to the advice of the Apostle, in his divine Epistle to the Hebrews, " Look unto Jesus," removing our eyes from all inferior objects, that, being carried up aloft, they may be fixed upon him, which the original words seem to import ;* then, being supported by the spirit of Christ, we shall overcome all those obstacles in our way that seem most difficult to our indolent and effeminate flesh. And though the way from the earth towards heaven is by no means easy, yet even the very difficulty will give us pleasure, when our hearts are thus eagerly engaged and powerfully supported. Even difficulties and hardships are attended with particular pleasure, when they fall in the way of a courageous mind ; and, as the poet expresses it, " Serpents, thirst, and burning sands, are pleasing to virtue. Patience delights in hardships ; and honour, when

* Εἰς Ἰησοῦν ἀφοραμεν. Heb. xii. 2.

it is dearly purchased, is possessed with the greater satisfaction.”*

If what we are told concerning that glorious city obtain credit with us, we shall cheerfully travel towards it, nor shall we be at all deterred by the difficulties that may be in the way. But, however, as it is true, and more suitable to the weakness of our minds, that are rather apt to be affected with things present and near, than such as are at a great distance, we ought not to pass over in silence, that the way to the happiness reserved in heaven, which leads through this earth, is not only agreeable, because of the blessed prospect it opens and the glorious end to which it conducts, but also for its own sake, and on account of the innate pleasure to be found in it, far preferable to any other way of life that can be made choice of, or, indeed, imagined. Nay, that we may not, by low expressions, † derogate from a matter so grand and so conspicuous, that holiness and true religion which leads directly to the highest felicity, is itself the only happiness, as far as it can be enjoyed on this earth. Whatever naturally tends to the attainment of any other advantage, participates, in some measure, of the nature of that advantage. Now, this way to perfect felicity, if any thing can be so, is a means that, in

* ———Serpens, sitis, ardor arenæ

Dulcia virtuti. Gaudet patientia duris :

Lætius est quoties magno sibi constat honestum.

LUCAN, lib. ix. 9.

† Μικρολογία.

a very great measure, participates of the nature of its end;* nay, it is the beginning of that happiness, it is also to be considered as a part of it, and differs from it, in its completest state, not so much in kind as in degree: so that in Scripture it has the same names: as, for instance, in that passage of the Evangelist, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God;"† that is, not only the way to eternal life, but also the beginning and first rudiments of it, seeing the same knowledge, when completed, or the full beatific vision of God, is eternal life in its fulness and perfection. Nor does the divine apostle make any distinction between these two: "Now," says he, "we see darkly through a glass, but then we shall see openly," or, as he expresses it, "face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know, as I also am known."‡ That celestial life is called an *inheritance in light*,§ and the heirs of it, even while they are sojourning in this earth, *children of the light*,|| and, expressly, *light in the Lord*. "You were," says the apostle, "sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."¶ They will be there perfectly holy, and without spot; and even here they are called holy, and, in some respect, they are so. Hence it is, that those who are really and truly good and pious, are in Scripture often called blessed, though they are not fully and perfectly so: "Blessed is the man

* Συμμεσαστον.

† John xvii. 3.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

§ Col. 1. 12.

|| 1 Thess. v. 5.

¶ Eph. v. 8.

that feareth the Lord ;* and, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way.”†

Even the philosophers give their testimony to this truth, and their sentiments on the subject are not altogether to be rejected : for they, almost unanimously, are agreed, that felicity, so far as it can be enjoyed in this life, consists solely, or at least principally, in virtue: but as to their assertion, that this virtue is perfect in a perfect life, it is rather expressing what were to be wished than describing things as they are. They might have said, with more truth and justice, that it is imperfect in an imperfect life ; which, no doubt, would have satisfied them, if they had known that it was to be made perfect in another place and another life that truly deserves the name, and will be complete and perfect. In this, however, we heartily agree with them, that virtue, or, as we rather choose to express it, piety, which is absolutely the sum and substance of all virtues and all wisdom, is the only happiness of this life, so far as it is capable thereof.

And if we seriously consider this subject but a little, we shall find the saying of the wise king Solomon, concerning this wisdom, to be unexceptionably true. “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

Doth religion require any thing of us more than that we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world? Now what, pray, can be more pleasant or peaceable than these? Temperance is always

* Psalm cxii. 1.

† Psalm cxix. 1.

at leisure, luxury always in a hurry : the latter weakens the body and pollutes the soul ; the former is the sanctity, purity, and sound state of both. It is one of Epicurus' fixed maxims, "That life can never be pleasant without virtue."* Vices seize upon men with the violence and rage of furies ; but the Christian virtues replenish the breast which they inhabit, with a heavenly peace and abundant joy, and thereby render it like that of an angel. The slaves of pleasure and carnal affections have within them, even now, an earnest of future torments ; so that in this present life, we may truly apply to them that expression in the Revelation, "They that worship the beast have no rest day nor night." "There is perpetual peace with the humble," says the most devout à Kempis ; "but the proud and the covetous are never at rest."†

If we speak of charity, which is the root and spring of justice, what a lasting pleasure does it diffuse through the soul ! "Envy," as the saying is, "has no days of festivity :"<‡ it enjoys not even its own advantages, while it is tormented with those it sees in the possession of others ; but charity is happy not only in its own enjoyments, but also in those of others, even as if they were its own : nay, it is then most happy in the enjoyment of its own good things, when, by liberality, it makes them the pro-

* *Ανευ αρετης ουκ ειναι ηδως ζην.*

† *Jugis pax cum humili, superbus autem et avarus nunquam quiescunt.*

‡ *Invidia festos dies non agit.*

perty of others: in short, it is a godlike virtue.* There is nothing more divine in man, "than to wish well to men, and to do good to as many as one possibly can;† but piety, which worships God with constant prayer, and celebrates him with the highest praises, raises man above himself, and gives him rank among the angels. And contemplation, which is, indeed, the most genuine and purest pleasure of the human soul, and the very summit of felicity, is no where so sublime and enriched as it will be found to be in true religion, where it may expatiate in a system of divine truths most extensive, clear, and infallibly certain; mysteries that are most profound, and hopes that are the most exalted: and he that can render these subjects familiar to his mind, even on this earth, enjoys a life replete with heavenly pleasure.

I might enlarge greatly on this subject, and add a great many other considerations to those I have already offered; but I shall only further observe, that that sweet virtue of contentment, so effectual for quieting the mind, which philosophy sought for in vain, religion alone has found; and also discovered, that it takes its rise from a firm confidence in the almighty power of Divine Providence. For what is there that can possibly give uneasiness to him who commits himself entirely to that Paternal Goodness and Wisdom which he knows to be in-

* *Αρετή Θεοεικελος.*

† *Omnibus bene velle, et quam plurimis possit benefacere.*

finite, and securely devolves the care of all his concerns upon it?

If any of you object, (what has been observed before,) that we often see good men meet with severe treatment, and also read, that “many are the afflictions of the just:” * I answer, Do you not also read what immediately follows, “But the Lord delivereth him out of them all”? † And it would be madness to deny that this more than compensates the other. But neither are the wicked quite exempted from the misfortunes and calamities of life; and when they fall upon them, they have nothing to support them under such pressures, none to extricate or deliver them.

But a true Christian, encouraged by a good conscience, and depending upon the Divine favour, bears with patience all these evils, by the efforts of generous love and unshaken faith: they all seem light to him; he despises what he suffers, while he waits with patience for the object of his hope; and, indeed, what, either in life or in death, can he be afraid of, “whose life is hid with Christ in God;” and of whom it may be justly said, without exaggeration, “If the world should be crushed, and broken to pieces, he would be undaunted, even while the ruins fell upon his head”? ‡

* Psalm cxxxiv. 19.

† Ibid.

‡ Si fractus illabatur orbis

Impavidum ferient ruinae. HOR.

LECTURE XX.

Of our HAPPINESS, particularly that it lies in GOD, who alone can direct us to the true Way of attaining to it; that this Way he has discovered in the Sacred Scriptures, the divine Authority whereof is asserted and illustrated.

THESE two expressions, "That there is a beginning, and that there is also an end,"* convey matters great in themselves, and which ought to be considered as of vast importance to us. It is absolutely necessary, that there should be some one principal of all things; and by an equal degree of necessity, this principal must be, of all others, the greatest and the best. It is also necessary that he who gave being to all things, must have proposed to himself some end to be attained by the production and disposal of them: but, as the end of the best of all agents must itself also be the highest and the best, this end can be no other than himself. And the reasoning of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, concerning the oath of God, may also be applied to this case: "As he had no greater to swear by," says the apostle, "he swore by himself." In like manner, as he had no greater or better end to propose, he proposed himself. "He hath made all things

* Εστιν αρα τις αρχη, και εστιν αρα τι τελος.

for himself, says "the author of the book of Proverbs, "even the wicked for the day of evil."* And the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, gives us a lively description of that incomparable circle, the most complete of all figures: "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen."†

Now man, the ornament and master-piece of all the visible creation, by extraordinary art, and in a method peculiar to himself, returns to his first original, and has his Creator not only for the principal of his being, and of his well-being, but also for his end. Thus, by a wonderful instance of wisdom and goodness, God has so connected his own glory with our happiness, that we cannot properly intend or desire the one, but the other must follow of course, and our felicity is at last resolved into his eternal glory. The other works of God serve to promote his honour; but man, by rational knowledge and will, offers himself and all that he has as a sacrifice to his Creator. From his knowledge of him, he is induced to love him; and in consequence of his love, he attains at last to the enjoyment of him. And it is the wisdom as well as the happiness of man, to propose to himself, as the scope and ultimate end of his life, that very thing which his exalted Creator had proposed before.

But, that we may proceed gradually in our spe-

* Prov. xvi. 4.

† Rom. xi. 36.

culations upon this subject, we must first conclude, that there is a proper end intended for man; that this end is suited to his nature, and perfectly accommodated to all his wants and desires, that so the principal part of this wonderful fabric may not be quite irregular, and labour under a manifest imperfection.

Nor can there be a more important speculation, nor one more worthy of man, than that which concerns his own end, and that good which is fully and perfectly suited to his circumstances. Chance or fortune must, of necessity, have a great influence in our life, when we live at random; we must, therefore, if we be wise, or rather, that we may be wise, propose to ourselves an end, to which all our actions ought to have a reference, and by which as a certain fixed star, we are to direct our course. But it is surprising to observe, how much all the wisest men among the Heathens were perplexed in their inquiries after this end, and into how many different opinions they were divided about it. Of this, however, we have spoken at great length in another place.

Now, to be brief, it is necessary that this good or end should be "perfect, suitable, not easily taken away, nay, such as we can by no means be deprived of; and, finally, it must consist of such things as have a particular relation to the soul, and not of external enjoyments."* Whence "slavish

* Τελειον, και αυταρκες, και δυσαφαιρετον, ιμο αναφαιρετον, και των περι ψυχης, και β των εκτος.

and brutal pleasures,"* vain and perishing honours and riches, which only serve to support and promote the former, are, in this inquiry, justly, and without the least hesitation, hissed off the stage by all sound philosophers; who, with great unanimity acknowledge, that our felicity consists solely, or at least principally, in virtue. But your favourite philosopher Aristotle, and the Peripatetics, who are his followers, seem to doubt whether virtue alone be sufficient for this purpose, and not to be very consistent with themselves. The Stoics, who proceeded with greater courage, and acted more like men, affirmed, that virtue was fully sufficient for this purpose, without the helps and supplements required by the former. And that, while they bestowed such high praises on virtue, they might not seem to have quite forgotten God, they not only said, that virtue was *something divine*, in which they were joined by Aristotle, but also concluded, that their wise man did all things, "with a direct reference to God."† It was also a general maxim with the followers of Plato, "That the end of man is to be, as far as possible, made like unto God."‡ And Plato himself, in his second book of laws, and in his Phædo, asserts, that man's chief good is the *knowledge of the truth*: yet, as this knowledge is not perfect in the present life, he is of opinion, that it can scarcely be said of any man, that he is happy

* Ανδραποδωδεις και Ξηριωδεις ηδοναι.

† Μετ' αναφορας εις τον Θεον.

‡ Τελος ανθρωπου ομοιωσις Θεου καλα το δυναλον.

here below ; but there is hope to be entertained concerning the dead, provided they are purified before they leave the world. But there are two things particularly with regard to this question, which our religion and most precious faith teaches with incomparably greater fulness and evidence than all the schools and books of the philosophers.

1. That our felicity is not to terminate in ourselves, but in God. “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord:”* and, “The pure in heart shall see God.”† “To seek God,” says St. Augustine, “is to desire happiness, and to find him is that happiness.”‡

2. That our happiness is not confined within the limits of this short life, nor does it end with it: on the contrary, it is scarce begun in this world ; but when the present life comes to a period, then this happiness is completed, and becomes eternal. Our life on this earth, therefore, is only so far happy, as it has a resemblance to that we shall enjoy in heaven, and becomes, as it were, an earnest of it: that is, when it is employed in pure and sincere piety, in obedience to the will of God, and an ambition to promote his glory, till we arrive at that happy state, where our hunger and thirst shall be abundantly satisfied, and yet our appetites never cloyed.

For it is evident, that man, in this life, becomes so much the more perfect and happy, in proportion as he has his mind and affections more thoroughly

* Psalm cxii. 1.

† Matt. v. 8.

‡ *Secutio Dei appetitus beatitatis, consecutio beatitas.*

conformed to the pattern of that most blessed and perfect life; and this is, indeed, the great ambition of a true Christian; this is his study, which he ceases not to pursue with ardour day and night; nor does he let so much as one day pass, without copying some lines of that perfect pattern; and the more he advances in purity of mind, the greater progress he makes in the knowledge and contemplation of divine things.

But who will instruct us with regard to the means of reaching this blessed mark? Who will shew us how we may attain this conformity to God, and most effectually promote his honour and glory, so that at last we may come to the enjoyment of him in that endless life, and be for ever satisfied with the beatific vision of him? What faithful guide shall we find to direct us in this way? Surely he himself must be our leader; there is no other besides him, that can answer our purpose. It is he alone that acquaints us with his own nature, as far as it is necessary for us to know it; and he alone that directs us to the way wherein he chooses to be worshipped. "God cannot be known but by his own revelation of himself."* When he is pleased to wrap himself up in a cloud, neither man in his original integrity, nay, nor even the angels, can know or investigate his nature or his intentions. We are, indeed, acquainted in the sacred records, "That the heavens declare the glory of God:"† and this, to be sure,

* Non potest Deus, nisi de Deo, intelligi.

† Psalm xix. 1.

is very true in certain respects, but they do by no means declare the hidden mysteries of the Creator, nor his intentions, and the manner of that worship and service he requires from his reasonable creatures. And therefore the Psalmist having begun the Psalm with the voice and declaration of the heavens, immediately after mentions another light much clearer than the sun himself, and a volume or book more perfect than the language of all the spheres. Nothing is more certain, than that the doctrine which leads us to God, must take its rise from him; for by no art whatever can the waters be made to rise higher than their fountain. It was therefore absolutely necessary, for the purpose I have mentioned, that some revelation concerning God should be made to mankind by himself; and, accordingly, he did reveal himself to them from the beginning; and these revelations the father of lies mimicked by those delusions of his that were published by the Heathen oracles. The Divine Wisdom, in revealing himself to mankind, has thought proper, at different periods of time, to make use of different methods and ways, or, according to that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “at sundry times, and in divers manners;”* but at last it seemed good to him, that this sacred doctrine should be committed to writing, that with the greater certainty and purity it might be handed down to succeeding ages, If we consider his absolute power, it would certainly have been as easy for him to have

* Πολυμερως και πολυτροπως.

preserved this doctrine pure and entire, without committing it to writing; but, for the most part, he has been pleased to make use of means naturally suited and adapted to his purposes, and disposes all things so as effectually to secure his ends, yet in an easy, natural manner, suited to our capacities and conceptions of things.

If any one would prove, that these books which we receive as such, are in fact the repositories of this sacred and celestial doctrine, the most proper method he could take would be, first, to shew, that the sacred history and doctrines contained in them, are true; and then, from their own testimony, conclude them divine.

For, the truth of our religion being once well established, it is, to be sure, a most just postulation, and such as ought not to be denied to any sect of men, that, in this instance, the testimony of the Christian church should be believed, when it points out the books wherein the sum and substance of that religion are originally and authentically deposited.*

The truth of the sacred history being once granted, the divinity of the doctrine will naturally follow of course; as the history mentions so many and so great miracles that were wrought in confirmation of the doctrine; those particularly that were performed in proof of the Old Testament, by Moses the servant of God, by whose ministry the law was given to the Jews; and those that were

* *Αυθεντικως.*

wrought in confirmation of the New by Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, and author of the evangelic law ; as also those that were wrought by his servants the Apostles, and other Christians : and absolutely to deny the force of all these, would be an instance of impudence and obstinacy so great, that the keenest enemies of the Christian name of old did not venture upon it. But the Scriptures have two great evidences of their divinity—their own internal character, and that external testimony. There are two things which principally prove their internal character.

1. The incomparable sublimity and purity of the doctrine they contain : for in vain will you look for such profound mysteries, and such pure and holy precepts, any where else.

2. The inimitable and evidently divine majesty of the style, attended, at the same time, with a surprising and wonderful simplicity. Their voice is not the voice of man ; but the whole of them, notwithstanding their great extent, sounds something more grand than can be expected from the mouths of mortal men. Nor ought we to pass over that divine efficacy which the Scriptures have, not only to move the minds of men, but also, by a divine operation,* to change them into something quite different from what they were before ; according to that of Lactantius, “ Give me a fierce, cruel, and passionate man, with a few of the words of God

* Θεργον μεταμορφωσει.

I will make him as meek as a lamb," &c.* And the external testimony already mentioned has, to be sure, as much weight as any thing of that kind can possibly have. Who would deny to the regular succession of the Catholic church, the credit of a witness? Who, on the other hand, would claim the authority of a judge and arbitrator? It would be quite silly to ascribe to the church a decisive power, as if, when a book were first presented to it, or brought out of any place, where it had been long concealed, it could immediately pronounce whether that book was a divine authority or not. The church is only a witness with regard to those books we acknowledge, and its testimony extends no farther than that they were received, in the first ages of Christianity, as sacred and divinely inspired, and as such handed down from age to age, to the church that now is; and he that would venture to discredit this testimony, must have a heart of lead, and a face of brass.

There is no occasion to dispute so fiercely about the inward testimony of the Holy Ghost: for I am persuaded that those who talk about it, understand nothing more by it, than that the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts of men that faith whereby they cheerfully and sincerely receive these books, and the doctrine contained in them, as divine; because such a faith either includes, in the very notion of it, or at least is necessarily connected with, a religi-

* *Da mihi ferum, &c., ut supra.*

ous frame of the mind, and a sincere disposition to universal obedience. "And he that believeth," as the apostle John expresses it, "has this testimony in himself," though he cannot convey or transfer it to others. Now, to assert the necessity of such an internal testimony, is nothing more than to say, that whatever evidence the Scripture may have in itself or from other considerations, yet the divine faith of this truth must be from above. And he that would deny this, would thereby plainly discover, that he was an entire stranger to that faith himself. "The Scripture," says Thomas à Kempis, "must surely be believed and understood by means of the same Spirit by whom it was at first delivered."† And, as St. Augustine expresses it, "the only effectual teacher is he who has his chair in heaven, and yet instructs the hearts of men on this earth."‡ The same Divine Spirit plants faith in the mind, together with the proper intelligence of divine things, and daily augments and improves these dispositions. This great gift of the spirit is, therefore, to be sought by fervent and constant prayer; and the Son of God, who is truth itself, has assured us, that his most bountiful Father will give it to those that ask him. Aristotle has told us, "That divine inspiration is to be sought by sacrifices."§

* 1 John v. 10.

† Eodem certe spiritu et credenda, et intelligenda sacra scriptura, quo tradita est.

‡ Qui cathedram habet in cœlo, corda docet in terris.

§ Το θεοπνευστον ταις θυσιαις ζητητεον.

And it is no less true, “ that the faith and understanding of things revealed by divine inspiration are to be sought by prayer.”* Varro tells us, that he wrote first of human, and then of divine institutions, because societies of men existed first, and the latter were instituted by them. True religion, on the contrary, instead of being instituted by any city or society on earth, hath instituted a city altogether heavenly and divine, and is itself inspired by God, who is the giver of eternal life to all that worship him in sincerity.†

It is truly surprising to observe, how differently this religion was of old received among men, and what different entertainment it meets with even to this day, though the doctrine has been always the same, though it is still enforced by the same arguments, and has the same difficulties and prejudices to struggle with. When the divine apostle preached in the Areopagus at Athens, a great many mocked and ridiculed him ; others said, “ We will hear thee again of this matter ; but certain men cleave unto him and believed.”† And that we may not think that this faith in those who believed was owing to their uncommon penetration or sagacity, on the one hand, or their weakness and simplicity, on the other, of the two mentioned in Scripture that believed on this occasion, the one was a philosopher,

* Την των θεοπνευστων πισιν και συνεσιον ευχαις ζητητεον.

† St. Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. vi. c. iii.

‡ Acts xvii. 32, 34.

and the other a woman. Now, though, without doubt, human liberty is to be allowed its due weight in this matter ; yet we cannot help acknowledging, that *a certain influence or energy** seems to discover itself here.

The basis of religion is faith ; just apprehensions or *right notions*† of God, according to Epictetus. St. Ignatius says, “ Faith is the beginning of life, and love the end of it:”‡ and the words of the Apostle are, “ He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him ;” so that the giving of a law to man, and the enforcing it with the motives of rewards and punishments, is not inconsistent with the filial, disinterested obedience of a rational creature, even in a state of innocence.

All true and lively faith begets love ; and thus that heavenly light is the vehicle of heat : and as, by this means, true faith has a tendency to the practice of obedience, so all true obedience depends upon faith, and flows from it ; but it also proceeds from love, because faith first produces love, and then works by it. All knowledge of mysteries is vain, and of no value ; unless it have an influence upon the affections, and thereby on the whole conduct of life. The luminaries of heaven are placed on high ; but they are so placed, that they may shine and perform their periods for the benefit of this earth.§

* Θεαν τινα μοιραν ηει ενεργειαν.

† Αρχη ζωης πισις, τελος δε αγαπη.

‡ Ορθαι υποληψεις.

§ Gen. i. 17.

1. We must believe that God is: this truth is written in capital letters on every page of the sacred books of Scripture: for all things that are therein delivered by God, and concerning him, confirm this, and take it for a primary and undoubted principle. But these Sacred books acknowledge another more universal evidence of this leading truth, and an evidence quite distinct from theirs, to which they refer all, even the most obstinate unbelievers, and those that are entirely ignorant of this celestial doctrine, for full conviction.*

As it is quite plain, that the testimony of the written word will have little or no influence upon men who have not received the least tincture of divine faith; should any person, disputing with them, reason after this manner, there is a God, because this is asserted in the Sacred Scriptures, and their testimony must, by all means, be believed, because they are the word of God; an argument of this kind, to be sure, would have no other effect, but to expose the person that urged it to the ridicule of Atheists and Unbelievers; because it evidently begs the question, and runs into a vicious circle. He, therefore, that would bring over such persons to the faith, must reason after a quite different manner. But let him, on the other hand, who once accepts these books with the submission due to their real dignity and divine authenticity, receive light and edification from them on every article of faith, and with regard to the whole system of religion in gene-

* Rom. i. 20

ral: let him also, in congratulation to their exalted Author, cry out, "With thee, O Lord, is the fountain of life: and in thy light we shall see light."* And let him that desires to be not only a nominal proficient in theology, but a real lover of God, and also to be taught of him,† resolve within himself, above all things, to make this Sacred Volume his constant study, mixing his reading with frequent and fervent prayer; for if these are omitted, his labour will be altogether in vain, supposing him to be ever so well versed, not only in these books, but also to have all the advantages that can be had from the knowledge of languages, and the assistance of commentators and interpreters. Different men have different views in reading this book; as in the same field the ox looks for grass, the hound for a hare, and the stork for a lizard. Some, fond of critical remarks, pick up nothing but little stones and shells. Others run in pursuit of sublime mysteries, giving themselves but very little trouble about the precepts and instructions that are clear and evident; and these plunge themselves into a pit that has no bottom. But the genuine disciples of this true wisdom are those who make it their daily employment to purify their hearts by the water of these fountains, and reduce their whole lives to a conformity with this heavenly doctrine. They desire not to know these things only, that they may have the reputation of knowledge, or to be distinguished in the world: but that their souls

* Psalm xxvi. 9.

† Φιλοθεος και θεοδιδακτος.

may be healed, and their steps directed, so that they may be led, through the paths of righteousness, to the glorious felicity which is set before them.

The sum of all is, that our felicity lies solely and entirely in that blessed God who is also the fountain and source of our being; that the only means of our union with him is true religion; and this again consists in our entertaining just notions of God, worshipping him acceptably, and endeavouring after a constant and unwearied obedience to all his commands, according to that most pure and perfect rule laid down in these divine books, which we profess to receive as such. Let us, therefore, have constantly fixed in our minds these words of the Psalmist, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the way of the Lord. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O! that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes."*

LECTURE XXI.

Of the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

OF all the maxims that are naturally written on the heart of man, there is none more certain or more universally known, than THAT GOD IS; concerning

* Psalm cxix. 1, 4, 5.

which I gave a dissertation some time ago. But of all the secrets and hidden things of nature, which have been the subject of human study and inquiry, there is nothing, by a prodigious odds, so difficult or unsearchable, as to know **WHAT HE IS**. The saying of St. Augustine, concerning time, is well known in the schools; with how much greater truth might it be said of Him who is more ancient than time, “and who bid time flow from the beginning”! * That he hath “made darkness his hiding-place, and amidst that darkness dwells in light inaccessible,” † which, to our eyes, is to be sure more dark than darkness itself. “O the divine darkness!” ‡ says a great man; and another most acutely, “If you divide or cut asunder this darkness, who will shine forth?” § When, therefore, we are to speak of him, let us always call to remembrance the admonition which bids us “speak with reverence and fear.” || For what can we say that is worthy of him, since man, when he speaks of God, is but a blind person describing light? Yet, blind as we are, there is one thing we may, with great truth, say of that glorious light, and let us frequently repeat it: O when will that blessed day shine forth, which shall deliver the soul from those thick integuments of flesh, that, like scales on the eye, obstruct its

* — Qui tempus ab ævo

Ire jubet. ΒΟΕΤΗ. de Cons. Phil. lib. iii. met. 9.

† Psalm xviii. 11.

‡ Ω το θειον σκοτος.

§ Αν το σκοτος τεμνη, τις ανασραπτεται; || Λαλει μεν εν φοβφ.

sight, and shall introduce it into a more full and open view of that primitive, eternal light? Perhaps the properest answer we could give to the question, What is God? would be to observe a most profound silence: or, if we should think proper to answer any thing, it ought to be something next to this absolute silence; namely, GOD IS; which gives us a higher and better idea of him, than any thing we can either express or conceive.

Theological writers mention three methods, whereby men come to some kind of knowledge of God themselves, and communicate that knowledge to others, namely, the way of *negation*, the way of *causation*, and the way of *eminence*: yet the very terms that are used to express these ways, shew what a faint knowledge of the invisible Being is to be attained by them; so that the two last may be justly reduced to the first, and all our knowledge of this kind called negative. For, to pretend to give any explanation of the Divine essence, as distinct from what we call his attributes, would be a refinement so absurd, that, under the appearance of more accurate knowledge, it would betray our ignorance the more: and so unaccountable would it be to attempt any such thing with regard to the unsearchable majesty of God, that, possibly, the most towering and exalted genius on earth ought frankly to acknowledge, that we know neither our own essence, nor that of any other creature, even the meanest and most contemptible. Though in the schools they distinguish the Divine attributes

or excellencies, and that by no means improperly, into communicable and incommunicable; yet we ought so to guard this distinction, as always to remember, that those which are called communicable, when applied to God, are not only to be understood, in a manner, incommunicable, and quite peculiar to himself, but also, that in him they are, in reality, infinitely different from those virtues; or rather, in a matter where the disparity of the subjects is so very great, those shadows of virtues, that go under the same names, either in men or angels; for it is not only true, that all things, in the infinite and eternal Being, are infinite and eternal, but they are also, though in a manner quite inexpressible, himself. He is good without quality, great without quantity, &c. He is good in such a sense as to be called by the Evangelist the only good Being.* He is also the only wise Being; "To the only wise God," saith the Apostle. And the same Apostle tells us, in another place, "That he only hath immortality," that is, "from his own nature, and not from the will or disposition of another."† "If we are considered as joined to, or united with God," says an ancient writer of great note, "we have a being, we live, and in some sort are wise: but if we are compared with God, we have no wisdom at all, nor do we live, or so much

* Matthew xix. 17.

† Εξ οικειας φυσικως, εκ εξ ετερον βελησεως.

as have any existence.”* All other things were by Him brought out of nothing, in consequence of a free act of his will, by means of his infinite power ; so that they may be justly called mere contingencies, and he is the only necessarily existent Being. Nay, he is the only *really existent Being*. Το οντως ον ; or, as Plotinus expresses it, το ὑπεροντως ον. Thus also the Septuagint speaks of him, as the only existent Being,† and so also does the Heathen poet.‡ This is likewise implied in the exalted name Jehovah, which expresses his being, and that he has it from himself ; but what that being is, or wherein its essence, so to speak, consists, it does not say ; nor, if it did, could we at all conceive it. Nay, so far is that name from discovering what his being is, that it plainly insinuates, that his existence is hid, and covered with a veil. *I am who I am* ; or, *I am what I am*.§ As if he had said, I myself know what I am, but you neither know nor can know it ; and if I should declare wherein my being consists, you could not conceive it. He has, however, manifested in his works and in his word what it is our interest to know, “ That he is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness and truth.”

* Deo si conjungimur, sumus, vivimus, sapimus : Deo si comparatur, nec sapimus omnino, nec vivimus, imo nec sumus. Greg. Mag. Mor.

† Ὁ ων.

‡ Ουδε τις εσθ' ἑτερος χωρις μεγαλη βασιλης.

§ Exodus iii. 14.

We call him a most pure spirit, and mean to say, that he is of a nature entirely incorporeal ; yet this word, in the Greek, Hebrew, and all other languages, according to its primitive and natural signification, conveys no other idea, than that of a *gentle gale*, or wind, which every one knows to be a body, though rarified to a very great degree ; so that when we speak of that infinite purity, all words fail us ; and even when we think of it, all the refinements of the acutest understanding are quite at a stand, and become entirely useless. It is, in every respect, as necessary to acknowledge his eternity, as his being ; provided that when we mention the term God, we mean by it the first being, supposing that expression to include also his self-existence. This idea of a first and eternal Being is again inseparably connected with an infinite degree of all possible perfection, together with immutability, and absolute perseverance therein. But all these are treated of, at great length, in theological books, whereof you have a very large collection.

In like manner, if we suppose God to be the first of all beings, we must, unavoidably, therefrom conclude his unity : as to the ineffable Trinity subsisting in this Unity, a mystery discovered only by the Sacred Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, where it is more clearly revealed than in the Old, let others boldly pry into it, if they please ; while we receive it with an humble faith, and think it sufficient for us to admire and adore.

The other attributes, that used to be mentioned

on this subject, may be supposed to be perfectly comprehended under the following three, viz. *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness*: for *holiness*, *justice*, *mercy*, *infinite bounty*, &c. may be, with great propriety, ranked under the general term of *goodness*.

But rather than insist upon metaphysical speculations, let us, while we walk daily in these pleasant fields, be constantly culling fresh and never-fading flowers. "When the Psalmist cries out, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and of his greatness there is no end;'^{*} he wanted to shew," saith St. Augustine, "how great he is; but how can this be done? Though he repeated, great, great, the whole day, it would have been to little purpose, for he must have ended at last, because the day would have ended; but his greatness was before the beginning of days, and will reach beyond the end of time."[†] The poet expresses himself admirably well: "I will praise thee, O blessed God, with my voice, I will praise thee, also, with silence. For thou, O inexpressible Father, who canst never be known, understandest the silence of the mind, as well as any words or expressions."[‡]

^{*} Psalm cxlv. 3.

[†] Volebat dicere quam magnus sit, sed hoc qui fieri potest? Etsi tota die magnum diceret, parum esset, finiret enim aliquando, quia finiretur dies, magnitudo autem illius ante dies, et ultra dies.

[‡] Ἦμῶ σε μακαρ,

Και δια φωνας.

Ἦμῶ σε μακαρ,

Και δια σιγας.

Ὅσα γὰρ φωνας

Τοσα και σιγας

Δεις νοερας.

Πατερ αβυσσε,

Πατερ αρρητε.

Syn. Hymno. 4to.

LECTURE XXII.

*How to regulate Life according to the Rules of
RELIGION.*

I HAVE now, at different times, addressed myself to you upon several subjects of great importance, and of the utmost necessity; though what I have hitherto said was only designed as a preface, or introduction, to what I further proposed. But to attempt to prosecute this design at the very end of the year, would be quite improper, and to little or no purpose; I shall, therefore, altogether forbear entering upon it, and, for this time, lay before you a few advices which may be useful, not only in order to employ to greater advantage the months of vacation that are now at hand, but also the better to regulate your whole lives.

And my first advice shall be, to avoid too much sleep, which wastes the morning hours, that are most proper for study, as well as for the exercises of religion; and stupifies and enervates the strength of body and mind. I remember, that the famous abbot of Clairevaux,* when he found the friars sleeping immoderately, used to say, "That they slept like the secular clergy."† And though we do

* St. Bernard:

† Seculariter dormire.

not admit of the severe rules to which the monks subjected themselves, we must at least allow, that the measure and degree of sleep, and other bodily refreshments, suitable for a young man devoted to study and devotion, is very far different from that excess in which the common sort of mankind indulge themselves.

Another advice, which is akin to and nearly connected with the former, shall be, to observe *temperance* in eating and drinking: for moderation in sleeping generally follows sobriety in eating, and other sensual gratifications; but that thick cloud of vapours, that arises from a full stomach, must of necessity overwhelm all the animal spirits, and keep them long locked up in an indolent, inactive state. Therefore the Greeks, not without reason, express these two duties, *to be sober, and to be watchful*, indifferently by the same term. And the apostle Peter, that he might make his connexion more evident, uses, indeed, two words for this purpose; but exhorts to these duties, as closely connected together, or rather as if they were in some respect but one,—*Be sober, be vigilant*.* And, in the same epistle, having substituted another word for sobriety, he expresses watchfulness by the same word he had put for sobriety in the other place,—*Be sober, and watch*.† Both these dispositions are so applied to the mind, as to include a sober and watchful

* Νηψατε, γρηγορησατε.

† Σωφρονησατε, και νηψατε. 1 Pet. iv. 7.

state of the body and senses ; as this is exceeding useful, nay, quite necessary, in order to a correspondent frame of the mind ; and that disposition, both of body and mind, not only subservient, but also necessary, to piety and constancy in prayer : “ Be sober, and watch unto prayer.”*

When the body is reduced to its lightest and most active state, still, as it is corruptible, it is, to be sure, a burden to the mind ; how much more must it be so, when it is depressed with an immoderate load of meat and drink ; and, in consequence of this, of sleep ! Nor can the mind rouse itself, or use the wings of contemplation and prayer with freedom, when it is overpowered with so heavy a load : nay, neither can it make any remarkable progress in the study of human literature, but will move slowly, and embarrassed, be at a stand, like a wheel-carriage in deep clay. The Greeks very justly expressed the virtue we are now recommending, by the term *σωφροσυνη*, it being, as your favourite philosopher † observes in his Ethics, the great preservative of the mind. He is certainly a very great enemy to his own understanding that lives high, and indulges himself in luxury. “ A fat belly is seldom accompanied with an acute understanding.” ‡ Nor is it my intention in this only to warn you against drunkenness and luxury :

* Εἰς τὰς προσευχάς.

† Aristotle.

‡ Παχὴ γαστήρ λεπτὸν ἔτικτει νοῦν.

I would willingly hope, that such an advice would be superfluous to you : but, in this conflict, I would willingly carry you to such a pitch of victory, that, at your ordinary and least delicious meals, that you would always stop some degrees within the bounds to which your appetite would carry you. Consider that, as Cato said, “ the belly has no ears,”* but it has a mouth, into which a bridle must be put, and, therefore, I address not myself to it, but to the directing mind that is set over it, which, for that reason, ought to govern the body, with all its senses, and curb them at its pleasure. St. Bernard’s words are admirable to this purpose : “ A prudent mind, devoted to God, ought so to act in its body, as the master of a family in his own house. He ought not to suffer his flesh to be, as Solomon expresses it, like a brawling woman, nor any carnal appetite to act like a rebellious servant ; but to inure them to obedience and patience. He must not have his senses for his guides, but bring them into subjection and subserviency to reason and religion. He must, by all means, have his house and family so ordered and well disciplined, that he can say to one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and, to his servant the body, Do this, and it doeth what it is bid, without murmuring. The body must also be treated with a little hardship, that it may not be disobedient to the mind.”† “ For he,” saith

* Ventrem non habere aures.

† Sic prudens et Deo dicatus animus habere se debet in cor-

Solomon, “that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become a *rebellious* son at last.”* This is what I would have you aspire to, a conquest over your flesh, and all its lusts; for they carry on a deadly war against your souls; and their desires are then most to be resisted when they flatter most. What an unhappy and dishonourable inversion of nature it is, when the flesh commands, and the mind is in subjection;—when the flesh, which is vile, gross, earthly, and soon to be the food of worms, governs “the soul, that is the breath of God!” &c.†

Another thing I would have you beware of, is *immoderate speech*. The evils of the tongue are many; but the shortest way to find a remedy for them all, is to study silence, and avoid, as the poet expresses it, “excessive prating, and a vast desire of speaking.”‡

“He is a perfect man,” as the apostle James ex-

pore suo, sicut pater familias in domo sua. Non habeat, sicut Solomon dicit, mulierem litigiosam carnem suam, nec ullum appetitum carnis ut servum rebellem, sed ad obedientiam et patientiam assuefactum. Habeat sensus suos non duces, sed rationi et religioni servientes et sequaces; habeat omnem omnino domum vel familiam suam sic ordinatam, et disciplinæ subditam, ut dicat huic Vade, et vadat; et alii, Veni, et veniat; et servo corpori, Facito hoc, et sine murmure fiat quod jubetur; et paulo certe durius tractandum est corpus, ne animo male pareat.

* Prov. xxix. 21.

† Ψυχή δ' ἐστὶν ἀήμα Θεοῦ, &c.

‡ Improba garrulitas, studiumque immane loquendi.

presses it, "who offends not in word ;"* and therefore, doubtless, he that speaks least, offends in this respect more rarely. "But in the multitude of words," as the wise man observes, "there wants not sin."† To speak much, and also to the purpose, seldom falls to the share of one man.‡ Now, that we may avoid loquacity, we must love solitude, and render it familiar ; that so every one may have an opportunity to speak much to himself, and little to other people. "We must, to be sure," says *à Kempis*, "be in charity with all men ; but it is not expedient to be familiar with every one."§ General and indiscriminate conversation with every one we meet, is a mean and silly thing. Even when we promise ourselves comfort and satisfaction from free conversation, we often return from such interviews with uneasiness ; or at least, have spoken and heard such things as, upon serious reflection, may justly give us concern. But if we would secure our tongues and senses, or keep safe our hearts and all the issues of life, we must be frequent at prayer, in the morning, at noon, and at night, or oftener throughout the day, and continually walk as in the presence of God ; always remembering, that he observes not only our words and actions, but also takes notice of our most secret thoughts. This is the sum and substance of true piety : for

* James iii. 2.

† Prov. x. 19.

‡ Χωρίς το τ' ειπειν πολλα και τα καιρια.

§ Charitas certe habenda est erga omnes, sed familiaritas non expedit.

he who is always sensible that that pure and all-seeing Eye is continually upon him, will never venture to sin, with set purpose, or full consent of mind. This sense of the Divine presence would certainly make our life on this earth like that of the angels; for, according to our Lord's expression, it is their peculiar advantage, "continually to behold the face of our Father, who is in heaven." By this means Joseph escaped the snares laid for him by his imperious mistress; and, as if he had thrown water upon it, extinguished that fiery dart with this seasonable reflection, "Shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* He might have escaped the eyes of men, but he stood in awe of that Invisible Eye, from which nothing can be hid. We read of a good man of old, who got the better of a temptation of the same kind, by the same serious consideration; for, being carried from one chamber to another, by the woman that tempted him, he still demanded a place of greater secrecy, till having brought him to the most retired place of the whole house, Here, said she, no person will find us out, no eye can see us. To this he answered, Will no eye see? Will not that of God perceive us? By which saying, he himself escaped the snare, and, by the influence of divine grace, brought the sinful woman to repentance. But now,

Let us pray.

PRAISE waits for thee, O Lord, in Zion; and to

* Gen. xxxix. 9.

be employed in paying thee that tribute, is a becoming and pleasant exercise: it is due to thee from all the works of thy hands, but particularly proper from thy saints and celestial spirits. Elevate, O Lord, our minds, that they may not grovel on the earth, and plunge themselves in the mire; but, being carried upwards, may taste the pleasures of thy house, that exalted house of thine, the inhabitants whereof are continually singing thy praises. Their praises add nothing to thee, but they themselves are perfectly happy therein. While they behold thy boundless goodness, without any veil, admire thy uncreated beauty, and celebrate the praises thereof throughout all ages; grant us, that we may walk in the paths of holiness, and, according to our measure, exalt thy name, even on this earth, until we also be translated into the glorious assembly of those who serve thee in thy higher house.

Remember thy goodness and thy covenant to thy church militant upon this earth, and exposed to dangers amidst so many enemies: yet we believe, that, notwithstanding all these dangers, it will be safe at last: it may be distressed, and plunged in the waters, but it cannot be quite overwhelmed, or finally perish. Pour out thy blessing upon this our nation, our city, and university. We depend upon thee, O Father, without whose hand we should not have been, and without whose favour we can never be happy. Inspire our hearts with gladness, thou, who alone art the fountain of solid,

pure, and permanent joy, and lead us, by the paths of righteousness and grace, to the rest and light of glory, for the sake of thy Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

LECTURE XXIII.

Of PURITY of LIFE.

IN every act of religious worship, what a great advantage would it be to remember that saying of our great Master, which nobody is altogether ignorant of, and yet scarce any know as they ought, “That God, whom *we worship*, is a spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and in truth”!* He is a spirit, a most pure spirit, and the Father of spirits: he is truth, primitive truth, and the most pure Fountain of all truth: “But we all have erred in heart.”† We are indeed spirits, but spirits immersed in flesh; nay, as it were, converted into flesh, and, the light of truth being extinguished within us, quite involved in the darkness of error: and, what still sets us in greater opposition to the truth, every thing about us is false and delusive; “There is no soundness.” How improper, there-

* John iv. 24.

† Ἡμεῖς δὲ πολλοὶ καρδίᾳ πλανώμενοι.

‡ Οὐδὲν ἔγχεσ.

fore, are we, who are *deceitful* and *carnal*,* to worship that Spirit of supreme truth! Though we pray and fast often, yet all our sacrifices, as they are polluted by the impure hands wherewith we offer them, must be offensive and unacceptable to God; and the more they are multiplied, the more the pure and spotless Deity must complain of them, as the grievance is thereby enhanced. Thus, by his prophet, he complained of his people of old: "Your new moons," saith he, "and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them. Therefore, when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, and, as it were, turn my back upon you with disdain. But, if you will wash you, and make you clean, then come, and let us reason together."† As if he had said, then let us converse together, and if there be any difference between us, let us talk over the matter and settle it in a friendly manner, that our complaints may be turned into mutual embraces, and all your sins being freely and fully forgiven, you may be restored to perfect innocence: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be redder than crimson, they shall be whiter than wool: wash yourselves, and I will also wash you, and most completely wipe away all your stains."

But, that we may be the better provided for this useful and altogether necessary exercise of cleansing

* Σαρκικοί και ψευδαι.

† Isaiah i. 14—16, 18.

our hearts and ways, and apply to it with the greater vigour, let us dwell a little upon that sacred expression in the Psalms, "Wherewith shall a young man purify his way?" The answer is, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word."* In this question, several things offer themselves to our observation.

1. That, *without controversy*,† purity of life, or conversation, is a most beautiful and desirable attainment, and that it must, by all means, begin at the very fountain, that is, the heart; whence, as Solomon observes, "proceed the issues of life." In the beginning of the Psalm, they are pronounced blessed, "Who are pure, or undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." And, in another place, "Truly God is good to Israel," says the Psalmist, "even to such as are of a clean heart."‡ And the words of our Saviour to this purpose are, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."§ Nor is the true and genuine beauty of the soul any thing distinct from this purity and sanctity; this is the true image of its great Creator; that golden crown, which most unhappily dropt off the head of man, when he fell: so that, with the greatest justice, we may lament and say, "Woe unto us that we have sinned." And it is the general design and intention of all religion, all its mysteries, and all its precepts, that this crown may be again restored, at least, to some part of the

* Psalm cxix. 9.

‡ Psalm lxxiii. 1.

† Ὁμολογημενος.

§ Matthew v. 8.

human race, and this image again stamped upon them; which image, when fully completed, and for ever confirmed, will certainly constitute a great part of that happiness we now hope for, and aspire after. Then, we trust, we shall attain to a more full conformity and resemblance to our beloved Head. And, even in this way-faring state, the more deeply and thoroughly our souls are tinctured with the divine flame of charity, joined with this beautiful purity, the more we resemble Him "who is white and ruddy, and fairer than the sons of men." The Father of mercies has made choice of us, that we may be holy; the Son of God, blessed for ever, has once for all shed his blood upon earth, in order to purify us, and daily pours out his spirit from heaven upon us, for the same purpose.

But to consider the matter as it is in itself, where is the person that does not, even by the force of natural instinct, disdain filth and nastiness, or at least prefer to it purity and neatness of body? Now, as the soul greatly excels the body, so much the more desirable is it, that it should be found in a state of beauty and purity. In like manner, were we to travel a journey, who would not prefer the plain and clean way to one that was rough and dirty? But the way of life, which is not the case in other matters, will be altogether such as you would have it, or choose to make it. With God's assistance, and the influence of his grace, a good man is at pains to purify his own way; but men of an im-

pure and beastly disposition, who delight to wallow in the mire, may always easily obtain their sordid wish. But I hope that you, disdaining such a brutish indignity, will, in preference to every thing else, give your most serious attention to this inquiry, by what means even young men and boys may purify their way, and, avoiding the dirty paths of the common sort of mankind, walk in such as are more pleasant and agreeable.

2. Observe, that purity is not such an easy matter, that it may fall by chance in the way of those that are not in quest of it, but a work of great art and industry. Hence you may also learn, that the way, even of young men or boys, * stand very much in need of this careful attention. It is indeed true, that, in some respect, the reformation of youth is easier, and sooner accomplished, in that they are not accustomed to shameful and wicked ways, nor confirmed in sinful habits; but there are other regards, wherein it is more difficult to reduce that period of life to purity, particularly as it is more strongly impressed with the outward objects that surround it, and easily disposed to imbibe the very worst: the examples and incitements to vice beset youth in greater abundance, and those of that age are more apt to fall in with them.

But, whatever may be said of the easiness or difficulty of reforming youth and childhood, it is evident from this question, which, without doubt, is proposed with wisdom and seriousness, that this

* The Hebrew word used in the text, properly signifies a boy.

matter is within the verge of possibility, and of the number of such as are fit to be attempted. Youth is not so headstrong, nor childhood so foolish, but by proper means they can be bent and formed to virtue and piety. Notwithstanding the *irregular desires* and *frowardness** of youth, and that madness, whereby they are hurried to forbidden enjoyments, there are words and expressions that can soothe this impetuosity, even such, that by them youth can tame and compose itself, “By attending to itself and its ways, according to thy word;” that matchless word, which contains all those particular words and expressions, not only that are proper to purify and quiet all the motions and affections of the soul, but also, by a certain divine power, are wonderfully efficacious for that purpose. And what was said of old, concerning Sparta and its discipline, may be, with much greater truth, asserted of the divine law and true religion, viz. that it had a surprising power to *tame and subdue mankind*.† And this leads us directly to the answer of the question in the text; “By attending thereto, according to thy word.”

This is not, therefore, to be done according to our philosophy, but according to thy word, O Eternal Light, Truth, and Purity! The philosophy of the Heathens, it is true, contains some moral instructions and precepts, that are by no means despicable; but this is only so far as they are agreeable to the word of God and the divine law, though the

* Αχαλινος, αδαμασος.

† Δαμασιμβροτον.

philosophers themselves knew nothing of it; but the only perfect system of moral philosophy that ought to be universally received, is the doctrine of Christianity. This the ancient fathers of the primitive church have asserted, and fully proved, to the honour of our religion. But those who spend their lives in the study of philosophy, can neither reform themselves nor others, if nature be but a little obstinate; and their wisdom, when it does its utmost, rather conceals vices than eradicates them; but the divine precepts make so great a change upon the man, and, subduing his old habits, so reform him, that you would not know him to be the same. If any of you, then, aspire to this purity of mind and way, you must, with all possible care, conform yourself, and every thing about you, to the instructions and precepts of this divine word. Nor think this a hard saying; for the study of purity has nothing in it that is unpleasant or disagreeable, unless you think it a grievance to become like unto God.

Consider now, young men, nay you who, without offence, will suffer yourselves to be called boys; consider, I say, wherein consists that true wisdom, which deserves to be pursued with the most earnest study and application, and whereby, if you will, you may far exceed those that are your superiors in years; be ambitious to attain the advantage mentioned in the text, and consequently the condition upon which it depends, for they are inseparably connected together; reconcile your minds to

a strict attention to your ways, according to the divine word, and by this means, (which is a very rare attainment,) you will reconcile youth, and even childhood, to the purity here recommended: account the divine word and precepts preferable to your daily food; yea, let them be dearer to you than your eyes, and even than life itself.

LECTURE XXIV.

Before the COMMUNION.

IT is the advice of the wise man, “Dwell at home, or with yourself;” and though there are very few that do this, yet it is surprising, that the greatest part of mankind cannot be prevailed upon, at least, to visit themselves sometimes; but, according to the saying of the wise Solomon, “The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth.” It is the peculiar property of the human mind, and its signal privilege, to reflect upon itself; yet we, foolishly neglecting this most valuable gift, conferred upon us by our Creator, and the great ornament of our nature, spend our lives in a brutish thoughtlessness. Were a man not only to turn in upon himself, carefully to search and examine his own heart, and daily endeavour to improve it more and more in purity, but also to excite others, with whom he conversed, to this lau-

dable practice, by seasonable advice and affecting exhortations, he would certainly think himself very happy in these exercises. Now, though this expedient is never unseasonable, yet it will be particularly proper, on such an occasion as this, to try it upon yourselves, as you are not ignorant, that it is the great apostolical rule, with respect to all that are called to celebrate the divine mysteries, “that every man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”*

I do not here intend a full explication of this mystery, but only to put you in mind, that, in order to a saving use and participation thereof, a twofold judgment must, of necessity, be formed; the first, with respect to our own souls; and the other, to that of the Lord’s body. These the apostle considers as closely connected together, and therefore expresses both by the same word. The trial we are to make of ourselves, is indeed expressed by the word *δοκιμαζειν*, which signifies to prove, or to try; but immediately after he expresses it by judging ourselves, “for if we would judge ourselves, &c. ;” † whereas, in the preceding verses, he had mentioned the other judgment to be formed, and expressed it by the same word *διακρινειν*, which signifies to judge or discern: “Not discerning the Lord’s body.” ‡ And this is that which renders a vast many unworthy of so great an honour; they

* 1 Cor. xi. 28.

† *Ει γαρ αυτες διεκρινομεν.*

‡ *Μη διακρινων το σωμα τε Κυριε.*

approach this heavenly feast, without forming a right judgment, either of themselves or of it ; but, that we form a judgment of ourselves, it is necessary that we first bring ourselves to an impartial trial : and, to be sure, I should much rather advise you to this inward self-examination, and heartily wish I could persuade you to it, than that you should content yourselves with a lifeless trial of your memory, by repeating compositions on this subject.

Consider with yourselves, pray, and think seriously, what madness, what unaccountable folly it is, to trifle with the majesty of the Most High God, and to offer to Infinite Wisdom the sacrifices of distraction and folly ! Shall we, who are but insignificant worms, “ thus provoke the *Almighty King* to jealousy,”* as if we were stronger than he, and, of purpose, run our heads, as it were, against that power, the slightest touch whereof would crush us to dust ? Do we not know, that the same God who is an enlivening and saving light to all that worship with humble piety, is, nevertheless, a consuming fire to all the impious and profane, who pollute his sacrifices with impure hearts and unclean hands ; and that those especially who have been employed in his church, and in the divine offices, yet have not experienced his influence as a pure and shining light, will unavoidably feel him as a flaming fire ? Let his saints rejoice and exult before God, for this he not only allows, but even commands ; yet let even those of them who have made the greatest

* Παραζήλουν.

advances in holiness, remember, that this holy and spiritual joy is to be joined with holy fear and trembling: nay, the greater progress they have made in holiness, the more deeply will they feel this impressed upon their minds, so that they can by no means forget it. “The great eye is over us, let us be afraid.”* Great is our God, and holy; even the angels worship him. Let his saints approach him, but with humility and fear; but, as for the slothful, and those that are immersed in guilt, that securely and with pleasure indulge themselves in impure affections, let them not dare to come near. Yet, if there are any, let their guilt and pollution be ever so great, who find arising within them a hearty aversion to their own impurity, and an earnest desire after holiness; behold there is opened for you a living and pure fountain, most effectual for cleansing and washing away all sort of stains, as well as for refreshing languishing and thirsty souls. And he that is the living and never-failing Fountain of purity and grace, encourages, calls, and exhorts you to come to him: “Come unto me, all ye that are athirst,” &c. And again, “All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will, by no means, reject or cast out.”†

Ask yourselves, therefore, what you would be at, and with what dispositions you come to this most sacred table. Say, whither art thou going, and what seekest thou, O my soul? For it would

* Ομμα μεγα, τρομωμεν.

† John vi. 37.

be an instance of the most extravagant sloth and folly to set about a matter of so great importance, and so serious, without any end, without the prospect of any advantage, and therefore without any serious turn of mind, or as one doing nothing; yet this is the case of vast numbers that meet together in divine assemblies, and at this holy sacrament. Is it any wonder, that those should find nothing, who absolutely have nothing in view; and that he who is bound for no harbour, should meet with no favourable wind? They give themselves up to the torrent of custom, and steer not their course to any particular port, but fluctuate and know not whither they are carried; or, if they are alarmed with any sting of conscience, it is only a kind of inconsiderate and irregular motion, and reaches no further than the exterior surface of sacred institutions. But, as for you, who, according to the expression of the angels, "Seek Jesus, fear not;" you will certainly find him, and in him all things: "for it hath pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell;"* so that in him there is no vacuity, and without him nothing else but emptiness and vanity. Let us embrace him, therefore, with our whole hearts, and on him alone let us depend and rely.

Let his death, which we commemorate by this mystery, extinguish in us all worldly affections: may we feel his divine power working us into a conformity to his sacred image; and having our strength, as it were, renewed by his means, let us

* Col. i. 19.

travel towards our heavenly country, constantly following him with a resolute and accelerated pace.

The concern of purifying the heart in good earnest, taking proper measures for conforming the life to the rules of the gospel, is equally incumbent upon all. For this is the great and true design of all divine worship, and of all religious institutions; though the greater part of mankind satisfy themselves with the outward surface of them, and therefore catch nothing but shadows in religion itself, as well as in the other concerns of life. We have public prayers, and solemn sacraments; yet if, amidst all these, one should look for the true and lively characters of Christian faith, or, in the vast numbers that attend these institutions, he should search for those that, in the course of their lives, approve themselves the true followers of their great Master, he would find reason to compare them to “a few persons, swimming at a great distance from one another, in a vast ocean.”*

It has been observed long ago by one, “that in Rome itself he had found nothing of Rome;” † which, with too great truth, might be applied to religion, about which we make so great a bustle at present: there is scarcely any thing at all of religion in it; unless we imagine that religion consists of words, as a grove does of trees. For, if we suppose it lies in the mortification of sin, unfeigned humility, brotherly charity, and a noble contempt of the world

* Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.

† Se in Roma, Romæ nihil invenisse.

and the flesh, "whither has it gone and left us?"* As for you, young gentlemen, if you would apply to this matter in good earnest, you must of necessity bestow some time and pains upon it, and not fondly dream, that such great advantages can be met with by chance, or in consequence of a negligent and superficial inquiry. If we are to alter the course of our life for the time to come, we must look narrowly into our conduct during the preceding part of it; for the measures to be taken for the future are, in a great degree, suggested by what is past. He acts wisely, and is a happy man, who frequently, nay daily reviews his words and actions; because he will, doubtless, perform the same duty with greater ease and to better purpose, when he is called to it with more than ordinary solemnity. And, therefore, they who have experienced how pleasant this work is, and what a mixture of utility is joined with this pleasure, will apply to it with a cheerful mind, whenever opportunity requires it. As to others, they must of necessity set about it some time or other: I say of necessity, if I am allowed to say it is necessary to avoid the wrath to come, and to obtain peace and salvation. Repentance may possibly appear a laborious and unpleasant work to our indolence, and *to repent*, may seem a harsh expression; to perish, however, is still more harsh; but a sinful man has no other choice. Our Lord, who is truth itself, being acquainted with the cruel execution performed by Herod upon the Ga-

* Πῶς ποτε ἡμῶς κατέλιπεν;

lileans, takes this opportunity to declare to his hearers, that, “unless they repented, they should all likewise perish.”* The Saviour of the world, it is true, came for this very purpose, that he might save those that were miserable and lost, from the fatal necessity of being utterly undone; but he never intended to take away the happy and pleasant necessity of repentance: nay, he strengthened the obligation to it, and imposed it as a duty inseparably connected with grace and happiness; and this connexion he not only preached in expressions to the same purpose with his forerunner John the Baptist, but even in the very same words; “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”† And in another place, having told us that he came, “not to call the righteous, but sinners,”‡ he immediately adds, to what he called those sinners; not to a liberty of indulging themselves in sin, but from sin to repentance. His blood, which was shed on the cross, is indeed a balsam more precious than all the balm of Gilead and Arabia, and all the ointments of the whole world; but it is solely intended for curing the contrite in heart.

But, alas! that gross ignorance of God that overclouds our mind, is the great and the unhappy cause of all the guilt we have contracted, and of that impenitence which engages us to continue in it. Had men but the least knowledge how disagreeable and hateful all sinful pollution renders us to his eternal and infinite purity; and, on the other hand, what

* Luke xiii. 3.

† Matt. iv. 7.

‡ Matt. ix. 13.

a likeness to him we attain by holiness, and how amiable we are thereby rendered in his sight, they would look upon this as the only valuable attainment; they would pursue it with the most vigorous efforts of their minds, and would make it their constant study day and night, that, according to the divine advice of the Apostle, "being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, they might perfect holiness in the fear of God."*



An Exhortation to the Students, upon their return to the University after the Vacation.

WE are at last returned, and some, for the first time, brought hither by that Supreme Hand which holds the reins of this vast universe, which rules the stormy winds and swelling sea, and distributes peace and war to nations, according to its pleasure. The great Lord of the universe, and Father of mankind, while he rules the world with absolute sway, does not despise this little flock, provided we look up unto him, and humbly pray, that we may feel the favourable effects of his presence and bounty; nay, he will not disdain to dwell within us, and in our hearts, unless we, through folly, and

* 2 Cor. vii. 1.

ignorance of our true happiness, shut the door against him, when he offers to come in. He is the Most High, yet has chosen the humble heart for the most agreeable place of his residence on this earth : but the proud and haughty, who look with disdain on their inferiors, he, on his part, despises, and beholds, as it were, afar off. He is most holy, and dwells in no hearts but such as are purged from the dross of earthly affections ; and that these may be holy, and really capable of receiving his sacred Majesty, they must of necessity be purified. “ Know ye not,” says the divine Apostle, “ that you, even your bodies, are the temples of the Holy Ghost,”* and therefore are to be preserved pure and holy ? But the mind that dwells within them, must be still more holy, as being the priest that, with constant and unwearied piety, offers up the sacrifices and sweet incense of pious affections, cheerful obedience, ardent prayers, and divine praises, to the Deity of that temple.

Of your studies and exotic learning, I intend not to say much. The knowledge, I own, that men of letters, who are the most indefatigable in study, and have the advantage of the greatest abilities, can possibly attain to, is at best but very small. But since the knowledge of languages and sciences, however inconsiderable it may be, is the business of this society of ours, and of that period of years you are to pass here, let us do, I pray, as the Hebrews express it, “ the work of the

* 1 Cor. vi. 19.

day while the day lasts ;” * “ for time slips silently away, and every succeeding hour is attended with greater disadvantages than that which went before it.” †

Study to acquire such a philosophy as is not barren and babbling, but solid and true ; not such an one as floats upon the surface of endless verbal controversies, but one that enters into the nature of things ; for he spoke good sense, that said, “ The philosophy of the Greeks, was a mere jargon and noise of words.” ‡

You, who are engaged in philosophical inquiries, ought to remember in the mean time, that you are not so strictly confined to that study, but you may, at the same time, become proficient in elocution ; and, indeed, it is proper you should. I would, therefore, have you to apply to both these studies with equal attention, that you may not only attain some knowledge of nature, but also be in a condition to communicate your sentiments with ease upon those subjects you understand, and clothe your thoughts with words and expressions ; without which, all your knowledge will differ but very little from buried ignorance.

In joining these two studies together, you have not only reason for your guide, but also Aristotle

* *Opus diei in die suo.*

† *Tempus nam tacitum subruit, horaque
Semper præterita deterior subit.*

‡ *Φιλισοφια Ἑλλήνων, λόγων ψοφος.*

himself for your example ; for we are told, that it was his custom to walk up and down in the school in the morning, teaching philosophy, particularly those speculative and more obscure points which in that age were called *rationes acroamaticæ*, and thus he was employed, till the hour appointed for anointing and going to exercise :* but after dinner, he applied to the more entertaining arts of persuasion, and made his scholars declaim upon such subjects as he appointed them.

But to return to my own province ; for, to say the truth, I reckon all other things foreign to my purpose : whatever you do, with regard to other studies, give always the preference to sacred Christian philosophy ; which is, indeed, the chief philosophy, and has the pre-eminence over every other science, because it holds Christ *to be the head*, † “in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid.” This the apostle tells us, was not the case of those false Christians in his time, whose philosophy regarded only some idle superstitions and vain observations. Cultivate therefore, I say, this Sacred Wisdom sent down from heaven, “ Let this be your main study ; ‡ for its mysteries are the most profound, its precepts the most pure, and, at the same time, the most pleasant. In this study, a weak understanding will be no disadvantage, if you have but a willing mind, and ardent desires. Here, if any where, the observation holds, “ That

* Μεχρι της αλειματος. † Ὡς κεφαλην κρατει. ‡ Εν ταυτη εστι.

if you love learning, you cannot fail to make great progress therein."* For some, that have applied with great industry to human philosophy, have found it to be like a disdainful mistress, and lost their labour; but divine philosophy invites and encourages even those of the meanest parts.

And, indeed, it may be no small comfort and relief to young men of slow capacities, who make but little progress in human sciences, even when they apply to them with the most excessive labour and diligence, that this heavenly doctrine, though it be the most exalted in its own nature, is not only accessible to those of the lowest and meanest parts, but they are cheerfully admitted to it, graciously received, preferred to those that are proud of their learning, and very often advanced to higher degrees of knowledge therein; according to that of the Psalmist, "The law of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the entrance of his word giveth light, it giveth also understanding unto the simple."† You therefore, whom some very forward‡ youths leave far behind in other studies, take courage; and to wipe off this stain, if it be one, and compensate this discouragement, make this your refuge; you cannot possibly arrive at an equal pitch of eloquence or philosophy with some others; but what hinders you, pray, from being as pious, as modest, as meek and humble, as holy and pure in heart, as any other person what-

* *Εαν ης φιλομαθης, εση πολυμαθης.* Isoc. ad Dem.

† Psalm cxix. 130.

‡ *Αελλοποδες.*

ever? And, by this means, in a very short time, you will be completely happy in the enjoyment of God, and live for ever in the blessed society of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect.

But if you want to make a happy progress in this wisdom, you must, to be sure, declare war against all the lusts of the world and the flesh, which enervate your minds, weaken your strength, and deprive you of all disposition and fitness for imbibing this pure and immaculate doctrine. How stupid is it to catch so greedily at advantages so vanishing and fleeting in their nature, if, indeed, they can be called advantages at all: “Advantages that are carried hither and thither, hurried from place to place by the uncertainty of their nature, and often fly away before they can be possessed”!* An author, remarkable for his attainments in religion, justly cries out, “O! what peace and tranquillity might he possess, who could be prevailed upon to cut off all vain anxiety, and only think of those things that are of a divine and saving nature!” † Peace and tranquillity is, without doubt, what we all seek after, yet there are very few that know the way to it, though it be quite plain and open. It is indeed no wonder, that the blind, who wander about without a guide, should mistake the plainest and most open path; but we have an in-

* Τα ανω και κατω φερομενα, και περιτρεπομενα, και πριν ληφθηναι απιοντα.

† O qui omnem vanam sollicitudinem amputaret, et salutaria duntaxat ac divina cogitaret, quantam quietem et pacem possideret!

fallible guide, and a most valiant leader, let us follow him alone ; for he that treadeth in his steps, can never walk in darkness.

Let us pray.

O ! INVISIBLE God, who seest all things ; eternal light, before whom all darkness is light, and in comparison with whom every other light is but darkness. The weak eyes of our understanding cannot bear the open and full rays of thy inaccessible light ; and yet, without some glimpses of that light from heaven, we can never direct our steps, nor proceed towards that country which is the habitation of light. May it therefore please thee, O Father of lights, to send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may lead us directly to thy holy mountain. Thou art good, and the Fountain of goodness ; give us understanding, that we may keep thy precepts. That part of our past lives, which we have lost in pursuing shadows, is enough, and indeed too much ; bring back our souls into the paths of life, and let the wonderful sweetness thereof, which far exceeds all the pleasures of this earth, powerfully, yet pleasantly, preserve us from being drawn aside therefrom by any temptation from sin or the world. Purify, we pray thee, our souls from all impure imaginations, that thy most beautiful and holy image may be again renewed within us, and by contemplating thy glorious perfections, we may feel daily improved within us that divine similitude, the perfection whereof, we hope, will at last make us for

ever happy in that full and beatific vision we aspire after. Till this most blessed day break, and the shadows fly away, let thy Spirit be continually with us, and may we feel the powerful effects of His divine grace constantly directing and supporting our steps, that all our endeavours, not only in this society, but throughout the whole remaining part of our lives, may serve to promote the honour of thy blessed name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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EXHORTATIONS

TO THE

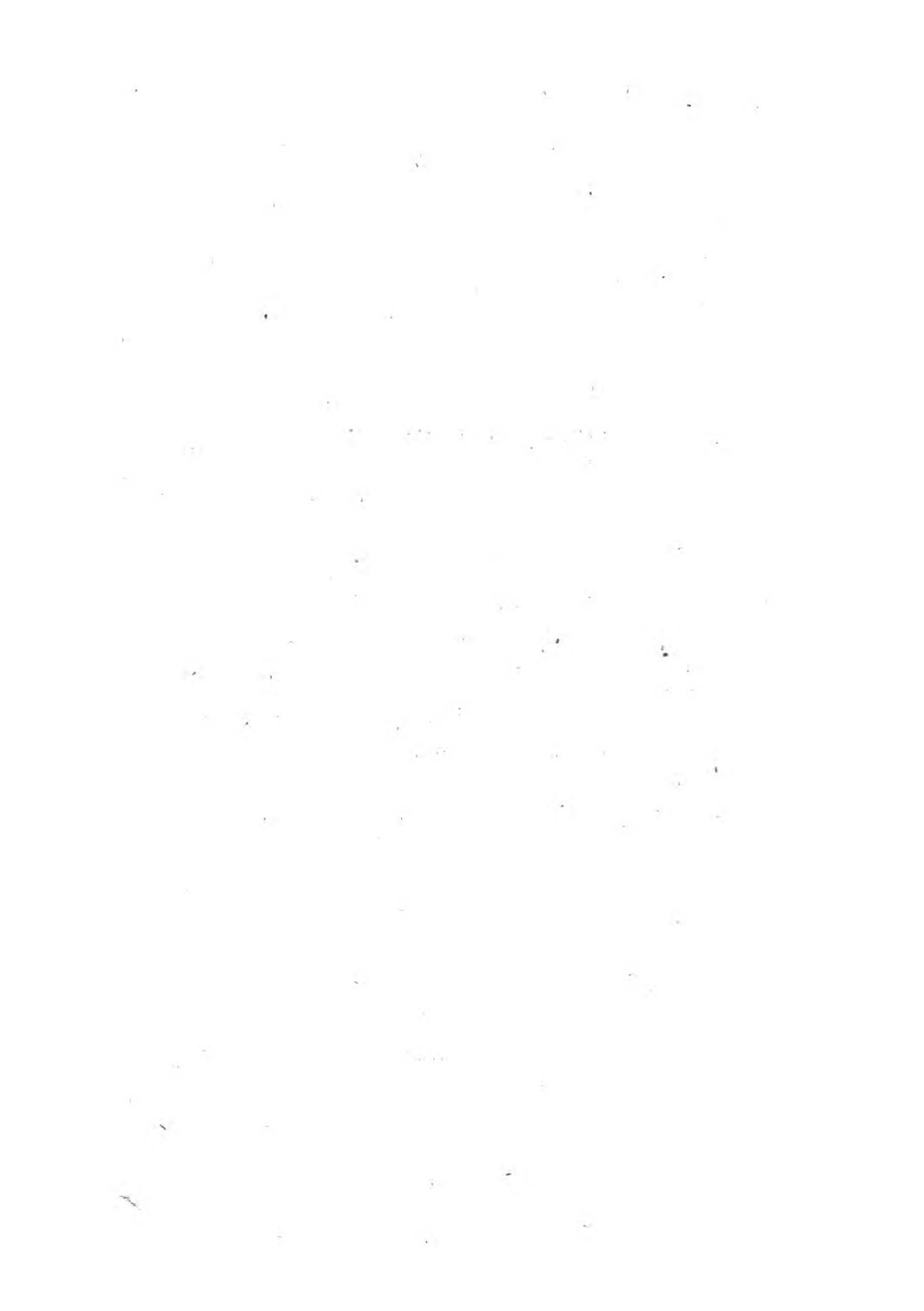
Candidates

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.



EXHORTATIONS, &c.

EXHORTATION I.

WERE I allowed to speak freely what I sincerely think of most of the affairs of human life, even those that are accounted of the highest importance, and transacted with the greatest eagerness and bustle, I should be apt to say, “that a great noise is made about the merest trifles:”* but if you should take this amiss, as a little unseasonable upon the present occasion, and an insult upon your solemnity, I hope you will the more easily forgive me, that I place in the same rank with this philosophical convention of yours, the most famous councils and general assemblies of princes and great men ; and say of their golden crowns, as well as your crowns of laurel, “that they are things of no value, and not worth the purchasing.”† Even the triumphal, inaugural, or nuptial processions of the greatest kings and generals of armies, with whatever pomp and magnificence, as well as art, they may be set off, they are, after all, so far true representations of

* *Magno conatu magnas nugas.*

† *Κατὰ σίας ἐκ αὐτοῦ προσημν.*

their false, painted, and tinsel happiness, that, while we look at them, they fly away; and, in a very short time, they are followed by their funeral processions, which are the triumphs of death over those who have themselves triumphed during their lives. The scenes are shifted, the actors also disappear; and, in the same manner, the greatest shows of this vain world likewise pass away. Let us, that we may lop off the luxuriant branches of our vines, take a nearer view of this object, and remember, that what we now call a laurel crown, will soon be followed by cypress wreaths: it will be also proper to consider how many, who, in their time, were employed, as we are now, have long ago acted their parts, and are now consigned to a long oblivion; as also, what vast numbers of the rising generation are following us at the heels, and, as it were, pushing us forward to the same land of forgetfulness; who, while they are hurrying us away, are at the same time hastening thither themselves. All that we see, all that we do, and all that we are, are but mere dreams; and if we are not sensible of this truth, it is because we are still asleep: none but minds that are awake can discern it; they, and they only, can perceive and despise these *illusions** of the night. In the mean time, nothing hinders us from submitting to these, and other such customary formalities, provided our doing it interfere not with matters of much greater importance, and prospects of a different and more exalted nature.

* Εμπαιγματα.

What is it, pray, to which, with the most ardent wishes, you have been aspiring, throughout the whole course of these four last years? Here you have a cap and a title, and nothing at all more. But, perhaps, taking this amiss, you secretly blame me in your hearts, and wish me to congratulate you upon the honour you have obtained. I cheerfully comply with your desire, and am willing to explain myself. These small presents are not the principal reward of your labours, nor the chief end of your studies; but honorary marks and badges of that erudition and knowledge wherewith your minds have been stored by the uninterrupted labours of four whole years. But whatever attainments in learning you have reached, I would have you seriously to reflect, how inconsiderable they are, and how little they differ from nothing; nay, if what we know, is compared with what we know not, it will be found even vastly less than nothing: at least, it is an argument of little knowledge, and the sign of a vain and weak mind, to be puffed up with an overbearing opinion of our own knowledge: while, on the contrary, it is an evidence of great proficiency in knowledge, to be sensible of our ignorance and inability. "He is the wisest man," says Plato, "who knows himself to be very ill qualified for the attainment of wisdom."* Whatever be in this, we often find the sciences and arts which you cultivate, to be useless, and entirely barren,

* Ουτος σοφωτατος οστις εγνωκεν οτι εδενος αξιος εστι προς σοφιαν. Philo. apol. Socr.

with regard to the advantages of life ; and, generally speaking, those other professions that are illiterate and illiberal, nay even unlawful, meet with better treatment, and a greater encouragement, than what we call the liberal arts. “ He that ventures upon the sea, is enriched by his voyages : he that engages in war, glitters with gold : the mean parasite lies drunk on a rich bed ; and even he, who endeavours to corrupt married women, is rewarded for his villany. Learning alone starves in tattered rags, and invokes the abandoned arts in vain.”*

But as sometimes the learned meet with a better fate, you, young gentlemen, I imagine, entertain better hopes with regard to your fortune ; nor would I discourage them, yet I would gladly moderate them a little by this wholesome advice ; lean not upon a broken reed, neither let any one who values his peace, his real dignity, and his satisfaction, give himself up to hopes that are uncertain, frail, and deceitful. The human race are, perhaps, the only creatures that by this means become a torment to themselves ; for, as we always grasp at futurity, we vainly promise ourselves many and great things, in which, as commonly happens, being for the most part disappointed, we must, of necessity, pay for

* Qui pelago credit, magno se fœnore tollit :
 Qui pugnas et castra petit, præcingitur auro :
 Vilis adulator picto jacet ebrius ostro ;
 Et qui sollicitat nuptas, ad præmia peccat.
 Sola pruinosis horret facundia pannis,
 Atque inopi lingua desertas invocat artes.

our foolish pleasure with a proportionate degree of pain. Thus, the greatest part of mankind find the whole of this wretched life chequered with delusive joys and real torments, ill-grounded hopes, and fears equally imaginary : amidst these, we live in continual suspense, and die so too.

But a few, alas ! a few only, yet some who think more justly, having set their hearts upon heavenly enjoyments, take pleasure in despising, with a proper greatness of mind, and trampling upon the fading enjoyments of this world. These make it their only study, and exert their utmost efforts, that, having the more divine part of their composition weaned from the world and the flesh, they may be brought to a resemblance and union with the holy and supreme God, the Father of spirits, by purity, piety, and an habitual contemplation of divine objects : and this, to be sure, is the principal thing, with a noble ambition whereof I would have your minds inflamed ; and whatever profession, or manner of life you devote yourselves to, it is my earnest exhortation and request, that you would make this your constant and principal study. Fly, if you have any regard to my advice, fly far from that controversial, contentious school-divinity, which, in fact, consists in fruitless disputes about words, and rather deserves the name of vain and foolish talking.

Almost all mankind are constantly catching at something more than they possess, and torment themselves in vain ; nor is our rest to be found among these enjoyments of the world, where all

things are covered with a deluge of vanity, as with a flood of fluctuating, restless waters ; and the soul flying about, looking in vain for a place on which it may set its foot, most unhappily loses its time, its labour, and itself at last, like “ the birds in the days of the flood, which having long sought for land, till their strength was quite exhausted, fell down at last, and perished in the waters.”*

O ! how greatly preferable to these bushes, and briars, and thorns, are the delightful fields of the gospel, wherein pleasure and profit are agreeably mixed together, whence you may learn the way to everlasting peace, that poverty of spirit, which is the only true riches, that purity of heart, which is our greatest beauty, and that inexpressible satisfaction, which attends the exercise of charity, humility, and meekness ! When your minds are stored and adorned with these graces, they will enjoy the most pleasant tranquillity, even amidst the noise and tumults of this present life ; and you will be, to use the words of Tertullian, *candidates for eternity* ; a title infinitely more glorious and sublime, than what has been this day conferred upon you. And that great and last day, which is so much dreaded by the slaves of this present world, will be the most happy and auspicious to you ; as it will deliver you from a dark, dismal prison, and place you in the regions of the most full and marvellous light.

* Quæsitisque diu terris ubi sistere detur,
In mare lassatis volucris vaga decedit alis.

Let us pray.

MOST exalted God, who hast alone created, and dost govern this whole frame, and all the inhabitants thereof, visible and invisible, whose name is alone wonderful, and to be celebrated with the highest praise, as it is indeed above all praise and admiration. Let the heavens, the earth, and all the elements, praise thee; let darkness, light, and all the returns of days and years, and all the varieties and vicissitudes of things, praise thee; let the angels praise thee, the arch-angels, and all the blessed court of heaven, whose very happiness it is, that they are constantly employed in celebrating thy praises. We confess, O Lord, that we are of all creatures the most unworthy to praise thee; yet, of all others, we are under the greatest obligations to do it; nay, the more unworthy we are, our obligation is so much the greater. From this duty, however unqualified we may be, we can by no means abstain, nor indeed ought we. Let our souls bless thee, and all that is within us praise thy holy name, who forgivest all our sins, and healest all our diseases, who deliverest our souls from destruction, and crownest them with bounty and tender mercies. Thou searchest the heart, O Lord, and perfectly knowest the most intimate recesses of it: reject not those prayers which thou perceivest to be the voice and the wishes of the heart: now it is the great request of our hearts, unless they always deceive

us, that they may be weaned from all earthly and perishing enjoyments; and if there is any thing to which they cleave with more than ordinary force, may they be pulled away from it by thy Almighty hand, that they may be joined to thee for ever in an inseparable marriage-covenant; and, in our own behalf, we have nothing more to ask. We only add, in behalf of thy church, that it may be protected under the shadow of thy wings, and every where, throughout the world, watered by thy heavenly dew, that the spirit and heat of worldly hatred against it may be cooled, and its intestine divisions, whereby it is much more grievously scorched, extinguished. Bless this nation, this city, and this university, in which we beg, thou wouldest be pleased to reside, as in a garden dedicated to thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION II.

WOULD you have me to speak the truth with freedom and brevity? The whole world is a kind of stage, and its inhabitants mere actors. As to this little farce of yours, it is now very near a conclusion, and you are upon the point of applying to the spectators for their applause. Should any superciliously decline paying this small *tribute*,* you

* Ερανον.

surely may, with great ease, retort their contempt upon themselves, merely by saying, "Let your severity fall heavy on those who admire their own performances; as to this affair of ours, we know it is nothing at all:" for I will not allow myself to doubt but you are very sensible, that there is indeed nothing in it.

It would, to be sure, be very improper, especially as the evening approaches, to detain you and my other hearers with a long and tedious discourse, when you are already more than enough fatigued, and almost quite tired out, with hearing. I shall therefore only put you in mind of one thing, and that in a few words. Let not this solemn *toy*,* however agreeable to youthful minds, so far impose upon you, as to set you a dreaming of great advantages and pleasures to be met with in this new period of life you are entering upon. Look round you, if you please, and take a near and exact survey of all the different stations of life that are set before you. If you enter upon any of the stations of active life, what is this but jumping into a bush of thorns, where you can have no hope of enjoying quiet, and yet cannot easily get out again? But if you rather choose to enter upon some new branch of science, alas! what a small measure of knowledge is to be thus obtained, with what vast labour is even that little to be purchased, and how often, after immense toil and difficulty, will it be found, that

* *Εμπαιγμα.*

truth is still at a distance, and not yet extracted out of the well! * We indeed believe that the soul breathed into man when he was first made, was pure, full of light, and every way worthy of its divine original: but ah! Father of mankind, how soon, and how much was he changed from what he was at first! He foolishly gave ear to the fatal seducer, and that very moment was seized upon by death, whereby he at once lost his purity, his light or truth, and, together with himself, ruined us also.

Now, since that period, what do you commonly meet with among men of wisdom and learning, as they would wish to be accounted, but fighting and bickering in the dark? And while they dispute, with the greatest heat, but at random, concerning the truth, that truth escapes out of their hands, and instead of it, both parties put up with vain shadows or phantoms of it, and, according to the proverb, embrace a cloud instead of Juno.

But, since we are forced to own, that even the most contemptible and minutest things in nature, often put all our philosophical subtlety to a nonplus, what ignorance and foolish *presumption* † is it for us to aim at ransacking the most hidden recesses of divine things, and boldly attempt to scan the divine decrees, and the other most profound mysteries of religion, by the imperfect and scanty measures of our understandings! Whither would the presumption of man hurry him, while it prompts him to pry

* Εκ τῆ βυθῆ ἢ ἀληθεία.

† Ἀυθαδείας.

into every secret and hidden thing, and leave nothing at all unattempted ?

As for you, young gentlemen, especially those of you that intend to devote yourselves to theological studies, it is my earnest advice and request to you, that you fly far from that infectious curiosity which would lead you into the depths of that controversial, contentious theology, which, if any doctrine at all deserves the name, may be truly termed, "science falsely so called."* And that you may not, in this respect, be imposed upon by the common reputation of acuteness and learning, I confidently affirm, that, to understand and be master of those trifling disputes that prevail in the schools, is an evidence of a very mean understanding ; while, on the contrary, it is an argument of a genius truly great, entirely to slight and despise them, and to walk in the light of pure and peaceable truth, which is far above the dark and cloudy region of controversial disputes. But, you will say, it is necessary, in order to the defence of truth, to oppose errors, and blunt the weapons of sophists. *Be it so ;* but our disputes ought to be managed with few words, for naked truth is most effectual for its own defence, and when it is once well understood, its natural light dispels all the darkness of error: "for all things that are reprov'd, are made manifest by the light,"† saith the apostle. Your favourite philosopher has also told us, "That

* Ψευδωνυμος γνωσις.

† Eph. v. 13.

what is straight discovers both rectitude and obliquity." And Clemens Alexandrinus has very justly observed, "That the ancient philosophers were not greatly disposed to disputes or doubting; but the latter philosophers among the Greeks, out of a vain desire to enhance their reputation, engaged so far in wrangling and contention, that their works became quite useless and trifling."*

There is but one useful controversy and dispute, one sort of war, most noble in its nature, or most worthy of a Christian, and this not to be carried on against enemies at a great distance, but such as are bred within our own breasts; against those it is most reasonable to wage an endless war, and them it is our duty to persecute to death. Let us all, children, young men and old, exert ourselves vigorously in this warfare; let our vices die before us, that death may not find us indolent, defiled, and wallowing in the mire; for then it will be most truly, and to our great misery, death to us: whereas, to those sanctified souls, who are conformed to Christ, and conquerors by his means, it rather is to be called life, as it delivers them from their wanderings and vices, from all kinds of evils, and from that death which is final and eternal.

* 'Οτι οἱ παλαιότατοι τῶν φιλοσοφῶν εἶδε ἐπὶ τὸ ἀμειβητεῖν καὶ ἀπορεῖν ἐφεροντο, ἀλλ' οἱ τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσι νεώτεροι, ὑπὸ φιλοτιμίας κενῆς καὶ ἀτέλεως, ἐλεγκτικῶς ἀμὰ καὶ ἐριστικῶς, εἰς τὴν ἀχρηστον ἐξαγονται φλυαρίαν.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL GOD, who art constantly adored by thrones and powers, by seraphim and cherubim, we confess, that thou art most worthy to be praised; but we, of all others, are the most unworthy to be employed in shewing forth thy praise. How can polluted bodies and impure souls, which, taken together, are nothing but mere sinks of sin, praise thee, the pure and holy Majesty of heaven? Yet, how can these bodies which thou hast wonderfully formed, and those souls which thou hast inspired, which owe entirely to thine unmerited favour all that they are, all that they possess, and all they hope for, forbear praising thee, their wise and bountiful Creator and Father? Let our souls, therefore, and all that is within us, bless thy holy name; yea, let all our bones say, O Lord, who is like unto thee; who is like unto thee? Far be it, most gracious Father, from our hearts, to harbour any thing that is displeasing to thee: let them be, as it were, temples dedicated to thy service, thoroughly purged from every idol and image, from every object of impure love and earthly affection. Let our most gracious King and Redeemer dwell and reign within us; may he take full possession of us by his spirit, and govern all our actions. May he extend his peaceable and saving kingdom throughout the whole habitable world, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.

Let the nations acknowledge their King, and the

isles be glad in him, and particularly that which we inhabit, with those in its neighbourhood ; and, that they may be truly blessed in him, may they daily submit, more perfectly and dutifully, to his golden sceptre, and the holy laws of his gospel. Bless this nation and city, and this our university ; may it be continually watered with the dew of thy spirit, and plentifully produce fruit acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION III.

THIS day, which has been the object of your earnest wishes, throughout the course of four whole years, is now almost over, and hastening to a close. What has it produced for your advantage ? Can he that has reaped most successfully of you all, say he has filled his arms with sheaves ? Though possibly you would excuse me to express myself with great freedom on this occasion, yet I will not take the liberty to depreciate too much your past studies, the specimens you have given to-day of your abilities, and the degree that has been conferred upon you. This at least, I imagine, I may say without offence, the most of those things we greedily catch at, and labour most earnestly to obtain, and consequently even your philosophy, is a real and demonstrative truth of that great paradox, *that there is a vacuity in*

the nature of things. And, in truth, how great is this vacuity, seeing even the human race is no inconsiderable part of it! Though this day is marked with more than ordinary solemnity, it is, after all, but the conclusion and period of a number of days that have been idly spent, and is itself elapsing to little or no purpose, as well as the rest. But O! how glorious must that blessed day be, which all purified souls, and such as are dear to God, earnestly long for throughout the whole of this perishing life, and constantly wait, with a kind of impatience, until it dawn, and the shadows fly away!

I am, indeed, of opinion, that those of you who think most justly, will readily own, your attainments, hitherto, are of no great moment. But, possibly, henceforth you intend to begin life, as it were, anew; you aspire to greater matters, and entertain views worthy of human nature; you already begin to live, and to be wise; you form desires, and conceive hopes of rising to arts, riches, and honours: all this is very well. Yet there is one consideration I would have you to admit among these ingenious projects and designs. What if death should come upon you, and looking, with an envious eye, upon this towering prospect, put a stop to a project that extends itself so far into futurity, and, like a spider's web, entirely destroy it with a gentle breath of wind? Nor would this be any prodigy, or indeed an extraordinary event, but the common fate of almost all mankind. "We are always resolving to live, and yet never set about life in good

earnest.”* Archimedes was not singular in his fate; but a great part of mankind die unexpectedly, while they are poring upon the figures they have described in the sand. O wretched mortals! who having condemned themselves, as it were, to the mines, seem to make it their chief study to prevent their ever regaining their liberty. Hence new employments are assumed in the place of old ones; and, as the Roman philosopher truly expresses it, “one hope succeeds another, one instance of ambition makes way for another; and we never desire an end of our misery, but only that it may change its outward form.”† When we cease to be candidates, and to fatigue ourselves in soliciting interest, we begin to give our votes and interest to those who solicit us in their turn: when we are wearied of the trouble of prosecuting crimes at the bar, we commence judges ourselves; and he who is grown old in the management of other men’s affairs for money, is at last employed in improving his own wealth. “At the age of fifty,” says one, “I will retire and take my ease; or the sixtieth year of my life shall entirely disengage me from public offices and business.” Fool! art thou not ashamed to reserve to thyself the last remains and dregs of life? Who will stand surety, that thou shalt live so long? And what immense folly is it, so far to forget mortality,

* *Victuros agimus semper, nec vivimus unquam.*

† *Spes spem excipit, ambitionem ambitio, et miseriarum non quæritur finis, sed schema tantum mutatur.*

as to think of beginning to live at that period of years to which a few only attain !

As for you, young gentlemen, I heartily wish you may think more justly ; let your souls, as it were, retire into themselves, and dwell at home ; and having shaken off the trifles that make a bustle and noise around you, consider seriously, that the remaining part of your life is long only in one respect, (and in this indeed its length may be justly complained of,) that it is fraught with every sort of misery and affliction, and has nothing agreeable in it, but the study of heavenly wisdom alone ; “ for every thing else is vanity.” * Look about you and see, whether there is any thing worthy of your affection, and whether every thing you see does not rather excite your indignation and aversion. At home are contentions and disputes ; abroad, in the fields, robbers ; clamour and noise at the bar ; wickedness in the camp ; hypocrisy in the church ; and vexation or lamentable mistakes every where. Among the rich and great there are false and inconstant friendships, bitter enmities, envy, fraud, and falsehood ; and cares, in great numbers, flutter round the most stately and sumptuous palaces.

What a considerable part of mankind are struggling with open and sharp afflictions ! To whatever side you turn yourself, what do you commonly hear but lamentation and mourning ? How many complaints of the poor, that are distressed for want of daily bread, or drag a most wretched life under the

* Τα δε αλλα τυφος.

grievous oppression of powerful tyrants ! How frequent are the groans of the sick and languishing ! How great the multitude of those that lament their friends and relations, carried off by death, and will themselves, in a short time, and for the same reason, be lamented by others ! And, to conclude, how innumerable are the miseries and afflictions, of various kinds, that seem alternately to re-echo to one another ! Can it be any wonder then, that a life of this kind should sometimes force, even from a wise man, such expressions of sorrow and concern, as the following : “ O mother, why didst thou bring me forth, to be oppressed with afflictions and sorrows ? Why didst thou introduce me into a life full of briars and thorns ? ” *

But you are now philosophers, and amidst these dismal calamities, you comfort yourselves with the inward and hidden riches of wisdom, and the sciences you have acquired. The sciences ! Tell us in what part of the earth they are to be found. Let us know, pray, where they dwell, that we may flock thither in great numbers. I know, indeed, where there is abundance of noise, with vain and idle words, and a jarring of opinions, between contending disputants ; I know where ignorance, under the disguise of a gown and a beard, has obtained the title of science : but, where true knowledge is to be found, I know not. We grope in the dark, and though it is truth only we are in quest of, we

* Μητηρ, εμη τι μ' ετικτες, επει πολυμοχθου ετικτες,
Τιπτε με τωδε βιω θωκας ακανθοφορω ;

fall into innumerable errors. But, whatever may be our case with respect to the knowledge of nature, as to that of heavenly and divine things, let us cheerfully embrace that rich present which Infinite Goodness has made us, and be thankful, that the day-spring from on high hath visited us. "Because there was no wisdom on this earth," says Lactantius, "he sent a teacher from heaven."* Him let us follow as our guide; for he that follows his direction, shall not walk in darkness.

Let us pray.

INFINITE, eternal Creator, and King of heaven and earth, bodies and spirits, who, being unmoved thyself, movest all things, and changest them at thy pleasure, while thou remainest thyself altogether unchangeable; who supportest all things by thy powerful hand, and governest them by thy nod, the greatest as well as the least; so that the greatest are no burden to thee, nor dost thou contemn the least. Behold! the nations before thee are as the drop of the bucket, and like the small dust of the balance; and these isles of ours, with all the rest in the world, are, in thy sight, but a very little thing. Yet thou deignest to be present in our assemblies, and take notice of our affairs, which are very inconsiderable. Let our souls adore thee, and fall down, with the greatest humility, at the footstool of thy throne, continually intreating thy grace, and constantly offering thee glory. Our praises

* Cùm nulla in terris esset sapientia, è cœlo misit doctorem.

add nothing to thee ; but they exalt ourselves, enhance our happiness, and unite us with the society of angels ; yet thou receivest them with a gracious hand, as most acceptable sacrifices, and incense of a sweet-smelling savour. Let us celebrate thee, O Lord, who art great, and greatly to be praised. Let all nations praise thee, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. Set our hearts on fire with the flames of thy divine love, that they may wholly ascend to thee as burnt-offerings, and nothing of ours may remain with us. O ! blessed transmigration, where the blind confidence of the flesh is transformed into a lively and pure faith, that has no dependence but upon thee alone ; where self-love, and the love of the world, is exchanged for the love of thy infinite beauty ; when our will shall centre in thine, and be altogether absorbed by it. Let this change, O bountiful Father, be brought about, for it is a change only to be effected by the power of thy hand ; and as soon as our souls are made sensible of it, thy praise shall be for ever sounded within us, as in temples devoted to thy service.

Let thy whole church, O Lord, flourish and rejoice in the light of thy favour. Be favourable to this our university, city, and nation. Dispel, we pray thee, the thick clouds, and quiet the winds and storms ; for when they rage most, and make the greatest noise, they know thy voice, and obey it. Thou art the only God of peace, who createst it with a word, and makest righteousness and peace

mutually to kiss one another. We depend upon thee only; and to thee alone we render praise and glory, as far as we can, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

EXHORTATION IV.

OUR life is but a point, and even less than a point; but as it is not a mathematical point, as they call it, nor quite indivisible, when we divide it into minute parts, it appears something considerable, and assumes the imaginary appearance of a large space of time; nay, according to Aristotle's notion, it appears divisible *in infinitum*. Besides those common and idle divisions of human life, into the four stages of childhood, youth, manhood and old age, and into periods of ten years, which suppose the yet smaller divisions of years and months; men have many various ways of distributing the periods of their life, according to the different occupations and studies they have been engaged in, the remarkable events that have happened to them, and the several alterations and revolutions in the course of their lives. And I doubt not but you, young gentlemen, look upon this present instant of time as the beginning of a new period of your life; you have my leave to do so, provided you seriously consider, at the same time, that the whole of the life

we live in this world, is of a frail and fleeting nature, and, in some respect, nothing at all. And into whatever parts or periods we divide it, if we consider the miseries and lamentable calamities with which it is fraught, the life, even of a child, may seem too long ; but, if we consider the time only, we must conclude the life of the oldest man to be exceeding short and fleeting.

A great part of mankind no sooner look upon themselves to be capable of worldly affairs, and think on entering upon some profession suitable to a state of manhood, but they are cut off, in the very beginning of their course, by an unforeseen and untimely death ; and, to be sure, this is the great distemper of young, and even of old men, that, by their desires and designs, they launch out a great way into futurity, and form a series of projects for many years to come ; while, in the mean time, they rarely, or at least very superficially, consider, how foolish and precarious it is to depend upon to-morrow, and how soon this present form of ours may disappear ; how soon we may return to our original dust : “ And that very day,” as the royal prophet warns us, “ our thoughts, even the wisest and best-concerted thoughts of the greatest men, and most exalted princes, perish.” And this I take particular notice of, that no such illusion may get possession of your minds : for it is not the common sort of mankind only that impose upon themselves in this respect, but the generality of those who desire to be accounted not only men of learning, but also

adepts in wisdom, and actually pass for such. Not that I would prohibit your making an early and prudent choice, under the divine direction, of the employment and profession of life you intend to pursue ; nay, I would use every argument to persuade you to make use of such a choice, and when you have made it, to prosecute the intention of it with the greatest diligence and activity. I only put you upon your guard, not to entertain many and towering hopes in this world, nor form a long series of connected projects ; because you will find them all more vain and fleeting than illusions of the night : some necessary means will fail, some favourable opportunity be missed ; after all your industry, the expected event may not happen, or the thread of your life may be cut, and thereby all your projects rendered abortive. And, though your life should be drawn out to ever so great a length, and success constantly answer your expectations, yet you know, and I wish you would remember it, the fatal day will come at last, perhaps when it is least expected ; and that fatal and final day, I say, will at last come, when we must leave all our enjoyments, and all our schemes, those we are now carrying on, and those we have brought to perfection, as well as those that are only begun, and those that subsist only in hopes and ideas.

And these very arguments, that have been used to confine your minds from indulging themselves in too remote prospects, will also serve to persuade you, in another sense, to look much farther ; not

with regard to worldly enjoyments, for such prospects, strictly speaking, cannot be called long, but to look far beyond all earthly and perishing things, to those that are heavenly and eternal: and those that will not raise their eyes to such objects, as the apostle Peter expresses it, "are blind, and cannot see afar off."

But of you, my dear youths, I expect better things; I need not, I imagine, use many words to persuade you to industry, and a continual progress in human studies, and philosophical learning. If the violence and infelicity of the time has deprived you of any part of that period of years usually employed in these studies at this university, you will surely repair that loss, as soon as possible, by your subsequent reading and application. But, if no such misfortune had happened, you are not, I believe, ignorant, that our schools are only intended for laying the foundations of those studies, upon which years and indefatigable industry are to raise the superstructure of more complete erudition; which, by the accession of the Divine Spirit, may be consecrated into a temple for God. And this is what I would recommend to your esteem, and your earnest desires, beyond any other study whatever, "That you may be holy, because our God is holy;" that, when you leave this university, those with whom you converse, may not find you puffed up with pride, on account of a little superficial learning, nor bigoted, talkative, or fond of entering into unseasonable disputes; but con-

sider you all as patterns and examples of piety, purity, temperance, modesty, and all Christian virtues; particularly that humility that shone so brightly in Christ himself, and which he earnestly exhorts all his disciples to learn from him. I will not suspect, that any one of you will turn out to be an immodest person, a glutton or drunkard, or, in any shape, impious and profane; but I earnestly exhort and beseech you, my dear young men, to make it, above all other things, your principal study, to have your hearts purged from all impure and ignoble love of the world and the flesh, that, in this earth, you may live to God only; and then, to be sure, when you remove out of it, you will live with him for ever in heaven.

May the honorary title you have this day received, be happy and auspicious; but I earnestly pray the Father of lights, that he would deign to bestow upon you a title more solid and exalted than is in the power of man to give, that you may be called the Sons of God, and that your conversation may be suitable to so great a name, and so glorious a Father.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL King, thy throne is established and immovable from everlasting, and will continue so throughout all the ages of eternity: before the mountains were brought forth, before thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. All things

that exist, whether visible or invisible, derive from thee their being, and all that they possess, and they all, from the least to the greatest, are subservient to thy purposes, who art their supreme King and Father ; many of them, indeed, act without knowledge, or design, yet serve thee with a constant and unerring obedience ; others pay their homage from principles of reason and inclination, and all the rest are forced to promote thy intentions, though by constraint, and against their wills. Thou art great, O Lord, thou art great, and greatly to be praised, and of thy greatness there is no end. The heavens are far raised above the earth, but thy majesty is much farther exalted above all our thoughts and conceptions. Impress, we pray thee, on our hearts, most bountiful Father, a profound sense of our meanness and insignificance ; and make us acceptable to thee, through thy grace, in thy beloved Jesus, blotting out all our sins by the blood of his cross, and purifying our hearts by the effusion of thy Spirit from on high. Illuminate, most gracious God, this assembly of ours by the light of thy divine favour, and let thy effectual blessing, we pray thee, attend the work we are now employed about, (by thy approbation, and the gracious disposition of thy providence,) and may the result of all be to the glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION V.

THE complaint, with regard to the variety of all perishing and transitory enjoyments, which has been long general among mankind, is indeed just and well-founded ; but it is no less true, that the vanity which resides in the heart of man himself, exceeds every thing of that kind we observe in the other parts of the visible creation : For, among all the creatures that we see around us, we can find nothing so fleeting and inconstant ; it flutters hither and thither, and, forsaking that only perfect good which is truly suited to its nature and circumstances, grasps at phantoms and shadows of happiness, which it pursues with a folly more than childish.

Man wanders about on this earth ; he hopes, he wishes, he seeks, he gropes and feels about him ; he desires ; he is hot, he is cold, he is blind, and complains that evil abounds every where ; yet he is, himself, the cause of those evils which rage in the world, but most of all in his own breast ; and therefore being tossed between the waves thereof, that roll continually within and without him, he leads a restless and disordered life, until he be at last swallowed up in the unavoidable gulf of death. It is, moreover, *the shame and folly* * of the human race, that the greatest part of them do not

* Αβέλτερια.

resolve upon any fixed and settled method of life, but, like the brute creatures, live and die without design, and without proposing any reasonable end. For how few are there, that seriously and frequently consider with themselves, whence they came, whither they are going, and what is the purpose of their life ; who are daily reviewing the state of their own minds, and often descend into themselves, that they may as frequently ascend, by their thoughts and meditations, to their exalted Father, and their heavenly country ; who take their station upon temporal things, and view those that are eternal ! Yet these are the only men that can be truly said to live, and they only can be accounted wise.

And to this it is, my dear youths, that I would willingly engage your souls ; nay, I heartily wish they were carried thither by the fiery chariots of celestial wisdom. Let the common sort of mankind admire mean things ; let them place their hopes on riches, honours, and arts, and spend their lives in the pursuit of them ; but let your souls be inflamed with a far higher ambition. Yet I would not altogether prohibit you these pursuits ; I only desire you to be moderate in them. These enjoyments are neither great in themselves, nor permanent ; but it is surprising, how much vanity is inflated by them. What a conceited, vain nothing is the creature we call man ! For, because few are capable of discerning true blessings, which are solid and intrinsically beautiful, therefore the superficial

ones, and such as are of no value at all, are caught at; and those who, in any measure, attain to the possession of them, are puffed up and elated thereby.

If we consider things as they are, it is an evidence of a very wrong turn of mind to boast of titles and fame, as they are no part of ourselves, nor can we depend upon them. But he that is elevated with a fond conceit of his own knowledge, is a stranger to the nature of things, and particularly to himself; since he knows not that the highest pitch of human knowledge ought, in reality, rather to be called ignorance. How small and inconsiderable is the extent of our knowledge! Even the most contemptible things in nature are sufficient to expose the greatness of our ignorance. And, with respect to divine things, who dares to deny, “that the knowledge mankind have of them, is next to nothing”?* Because the weak eyes of our understanding, confined, as they are, within such narrow houses of clay, cannot bear the piercing light of divine things; therefore the Fountain of all wisdom hath thought proper to communicate such imperfect discoveries of himself, as are barely sufficient to direct our steps to the superior regions † of perfect light. And whoever believes this truth, will, doubtless, make it his chief care and principal study, constantly to follow this lamp of divine light, that shines in darkness, and not to deviate from it, either to the right hand or the left. It is, indeed, my opinion, that no man of ingenuity ought to de-

* 'Ως εδεν ανθρωποισι των θεων σαφες.

† 'Υπερτερα δωματα.

spise the study of philosophy, or the knowledge of languages, or grammar itself; though, to be sure, a more expeditious and successful method of teaching them were much to be wished: but what I would recommend with the greatest earnestness, and persuade you to, if possible, is, that you would inseparably unite with such measures of learning and improvements of your minds as you can attain, purity of religion, divine love, moderation of soul, and an agreeable, inoffensive behaviour. For you are not ignorant, what a low and empty figure the highest attainments in human sciences must make, if they be compared with the dignity and duration of the soul of man; for however considerable they may be in themselves, yet, with regard to their use, and their whole design, they are confined within the short space of this perishing life. But the soul, which reasons, which is employed in learning and teaching, in a few days will for ever bid farewell to all these things, and remove to another country. O how inconsiderable are all arts and sciences, all eloquence and philosophy, when compared with a cautious concern that our last exit out of this world may be happy and auspicious, and that we may depart out of this life candidates of immortality, at which we can never arrive but by the beautiful way of holiness.

Let us pray.

INFINITE and eternal God, who inhabitest thick darkness, and light inaccessible, whom no mortal

hath seen, nor can see ; yet all thy works evidently declare and proclaim thy wisdom, thy power, and thy infinite goodness. And, when we contemplate these thy perfections, what is it our souls can desire, but that they may love thee, worship thee, serve thee, for ever proclaim thy praises, and celebrate thy exalted name, which is above all praise, and all admiration ? Thy throne is constantly surrounded with thousands and ten thousands of glorified spirits, who continually adore thee, and cry out, without ceasing, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*, who was, who is, and who is to come. Let others seek what they will, and find and embrace what they can ; may we have always this one fixed and settled purpose, that it is good for us to draw near to God. Let the seas roar, the earth be shaken, and all things go to ruin and confusion ; yet the soul that adheres to God, will remain safe and quiet, and shall not be moved for ever. O blessed soul ! that has thee for its rest, and all its salvation ; it shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, it shall not fear when heat cometh, nor shall it be uneasy in a year of drought. It is our earnest petition and prayer, O Father, that thy hands may loosen all our chains, and effectually deliver our souls from all the snares and allurements of the world and the flesh, and that, by that same bountiful and most powerful hand of thine, they may be for ever united to thee, through thy only-begotten Son, who is our union and our peace. Be favourably present, most gracious God, with this

assembly of ours, that whatever we undertake, in obedience to thy will, may be carried to perfection by the aid of thy grace, and tend to the glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION VI.

I AM not ignorant, that it is one of the common arts of life to set off our own things with all the pomp we can; and if there is any worth in them, by no means to depreciate it, but rather to endeavour, with all our might, to enhance their value as much as possible; nay, those of them which are quite vain and worthless, we use to magnify with pompous expressions, and daub with false colours, and to do otherwise is reckoned a kind of rustic simplicity. But you, young gentlemen, who are acquainted with my manner, will, I imagine, easily forgive this indifference of mine; and therefore I say, if there are any that despise these performances of ours, we leave them at full liberty, for we ourselves held them in contempt before; but, to speak freely, together with them, we undervalued all worldly things: "They are all made of the same mean materials."* O life, short with regard to duration, long in consideration of thy miseries, involved in darkness, beset with snares, still fluctuating between false

* Παντα μια κονις.

joys and real torments, groundless hopes and fears equally imaginary, yet foolishly, and even to distraction, loved by most. We will not die, and yet we know not how to live. Our present possessions are loathsome as food to a man in a fever, and we greedily catch at future enjoyments, which, when they come to be present, will be received with the same indifference: for, among the advantages of this fleeting life, nothing is equally agreeable to those who have it in possession, and those who have it only in desire and hope.

We are all in general of such a nature, that we are weary of ourselves, and, what we lately preferred to every thing else, upon experience we reject. This inconstancy is undoubtedly a sign of a mind distempered, forcibly drawn away from its centre, and separated from its only durable rest. Nor need you go far, young gentlemen, to look for an instance of this distemper; let any of you descend into himself, (which very few do, and even they but rarely,) he will find it within him: upon a very slight inquiry, he will surely be sensible of it; for, passing other considerations, with what fervent wishes have you, in your hearts, longed for this day! Yet I forewarn you, that all your pleasure will either die with the day itself, which is now fast drawing to a close, or but for a very short time survive it. And, as commonly happens, it will be succeeded by the anxious cares of beginning life, as it were, anew, or, which is much more grievous and unhappy, and from which, I earnestly pray,

you may be all effectually preserved, by those temptations and allurements of vice which tend to debauch and ruin you ; for these allurements, after the manner of some robbers, attack the unwary and unexperienced with blandishments and caresses, that thereby they may have an opportunity to undo them. If therefore, as soon as ye enter upon a life of freedom, those deceitful and deadly pleasures of sense tempt you with their delusive smiles, I would put you in mind, how unworthy it is of a free and generous mind, especially that of a Christian, to become an abject slave, and submit to the most shameful bondage ; how disgraceful and wretched a choice it is, to become the *slave of a mad, distracted master* ;* and how much more generous and exalted is the pleasure of despising them all, and trampling them under foot, when they come in competition with the pure and permanent delights of divine love !

As to exalted degrees of honour, and heaps of riches, the idols of all ranks of mankind, which they worship with the rage of enthusiasm and madness, we may not only apply to them what was observed of old concerning Hercules' statue, and say, "they have nothing divine in them ;" † but also, that they are entirely void of real goodness. Even those who have the greatest experience of them, are at last obliged to own this : the force of truth extorts the confession, though they make it with

* Διλον γενεσθαι παραφρονεντος δεσποτη.

† Ὡς εδεν εισι θειον.

regret and against their will. All the beauty and brightness of these idols resemble the decorations of a stage, that dazzle the eyes of the vulgar, and the enjoyment of them is, in reality, but a splendid kind of slavery, and gilded misery. It is a pathetic expression of St. Bernard, "O! ambition, the torture of the ambitious, how happens it, that though thou tormentest all, thou yet makest thyself agreeable to all?"* O how easily does even the least glimpse of eternal and infinite beauty raze out of the mind all the impressions made upon it by the objects we daily converse with on this earth, and turn its admiration of them into contempt and disdain!

But if any one, having thoroughly examined and despised these shadows, resolves solely to pursue a more complete knowledge of things and follow the streams of learning, we cannot deny, that he judges more justly; yet, after all, must know, if he is wise, or at least he ought to know, that he may be wise, "what vanity and superfluity is to be met with even here;"† for often, when one has applied himself to his books and studies, with the greatest assiduity, and almost spent his life upon them, all his pains evaporate into smoke, and the labour of years is entirely lost. And, what is most of all to be lamented, this is sometimes the case with respect to theology, which is the chief of all arts and sciences, as so large a portion of that vineyard is still pos-

* O! ambitio, ambientium crux, quomodo omnes torquens omnibus places?

† Πολλα εστι κεναι και περιεργια.

sessed with briars and thorns. How many are the disputes and controversies, how many the trifling arguments and cavils, which possibly may have something of the sharpness of thorns, but undoubtedly a great deal of their barrenness and their hurtful quality! A philosopher of old severely reproves the sophisters of his time in these words: "What was formerly the love of wisdom, is now become the love of words."* We, to be sure, may substitute, in place of this, a complaint still more bitter, that what was theology before, is now become foolish talking; and that many of our divines, though they serve one God, and *that* the God of peace, "yet split into parties upon the lightest occasions, and with great impiety divide the whole world into factions."† And I am much afraid, this evil, in a great measure, derives its original from the education of youth in schools and colleges. For the most part of men manage this business, as if disputing was the end of learning, as fighting is the design of going to war: hence the youth, when they enter the school, begin disputing, which never ends but with their life. Death imposes silence, and so, at last, "these fierce passions of their minds, and these inveterate contentions, are composed to rest by the weight of a little dust thrown upon them."‡

* Quæ philosophia fuit, facta philologia est.

† Σχιζονται, και κοσμον όλον τεμνουσιν αθεσμως.

‡ Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.

VIRG. Georg. iv.

As for you, young gentlemen, if my earnest wishes and sincere advice can have any weight with you, you will early extricate yourselves out of these flames of contention, that your minds, being lighted up by the pure and celestial fire of the Divine Spirit, may shine forth in holiness, and burn with the most fervent charity.

Let us pray.

HONOUR and praise are due to thee, O infinite God. This is the universal voice of all the blessed spirits on high, and all the saints on earth: Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, because thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are. We, here before thee, with united hearts and affections, offer thee, as we can, the sacrifice of gratitude, love, and praise. How much are we indebted to thee for ourselves, and for all that we possess! for in thee we live, move, and have our being. Thou hast redeemed us from our sins, having given the Son of thy love, as a sacrifice and ransom for our souls; the chastisement of our peace fell upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. On this consideration, we acknowledge, we are no longer at our own disposal, since we are bought with a price, and so very great a price, that we may glorify thee, O Father, and thy Son, in our souls and our bodies, which are so justly thine. May we devote ourselves to thee, through the whole remaining part of our life, and disdain the impure and ignoble slavery of sin, the world,

and the flesh, that, in all things, we may demean ourselves as becomes the sons of God, and the heirs of thy celestial kingdom, and make, daily, greater progress in our journey towards the happy possession thereof.

Bless thy church, and our nation, and this our university: may it be thine, we pray thee. We entreat, thou wouldest become our father, our protector, and our supreme teacher, who hast thy chair in heaven, and teachest the hearts of men on this earth. May the youth flourish under thy instruction, that they may be not only learned, but especially upright, pious, and true Christians, entirely devoted to the honour of thy name, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



EXHORTATION VII.

THESE academical exercises of ours are, to be sure, no great matter, nor do we make any high account of them; yet, after all, we set no higher, perhaps even a less value upon the bustling affairs of mankind, which make a much greater noise, and the farces that are acted upon the more exalted theatres of the world, which, to speak my sentiments in a few words, are for the most part outwardly more pompous than these of ours, but inwardly equally vain, and more insignificant than the

busy amusements of children playing on the sands, and eagerly building little houses, which, with giddy levity, they instantly pull down again.* Or if you choose to be more severe upon the fruitless labours of mankind, and their busy and irregular motions backward and forward, and from one place to another, you may, with a great man, that knew all these things by experience, compare them to the *fluttering of frightened flies, the toilsome hurrry of the ants, and the motions of puppets.*† But he that, amidst all the confusions and commotions which happen in human affairs here below, has recourse to divine contemplation, and the hopes of eternity, as the lofty, impregnable tower of true wisdom, “is the only person that enjoys uninterrupted ease and tranquillity, like the heavenly bodies, which constantly move on in their orbits, and are never, by any violence, diverted from their course.”‡

And, indeed, what wonder is it, that he can easily view all the dreadful appearances of this wretched life, with a resolute and steady countenance, who, by frequent interviews and daily conversation with death itself, which we call the *king*

* Ὡς ὅτε τις ψαμαθὸν συναγῆ πρὸς ἀρχὴν θαλάσσης,

Ὡς ἐπεὶ ἐν ποιήσῃ αὐθιγὰτα, νηπιετοῖσιν

Ἀψ αὐθις συνεχέουσε ποσὶν καὶ χερσὶν αὐθιγῶν.

† Μυϊδίων ἐπτοημένων διαδρομαῖς, μυρμηκῶν ταλαιπωρίας καὶ ἀχθοφορίας, καὶ σιγίλλαρια νευροσπασθμένα.

‡ Otia solus agit, sicut coelestia semper

Inconcussa suo volvuntur sidera lapsu. Luc. lib. ii.

*of terrors,** has rendered it familiar to him, and thereby not only divested it of its terrors, but also placed it in a beautiful, pleasant, and quite amiable light. By this means, he dies daily, and, doubtless, before he suffers a natural death, he dies in a more exalted sense of the word, by withdrawing, as far as is possible, his mind from the incumbrance of earthly things, and, even while it lodges in the body, weaning it from all the worldly objects that are placed about him. And, in this very sense, philosophy of old was most properly called the *meditation of death*,† which the Roman orator has, in my opinion, explained with great propriety, and the precision of a philosopher. “What is it we do,” says he, “when we withdraw the mind from pleasure, that is, the body, from our means and substance that is the servant of the body, that provides for its wants, from the commonwealth, and every kind of business; what is it we then do, I say, but recall it to itself, and oblige it to stay at home? Now, to withdraw the mind from the body, is nothing else but to learn to die.”‡ Let us, therefore, reason thus, if you will take my advice, and separate ourselves from our bodies, that is, let us accustom

* Φρικώδες αὐτῆν εἰκόνα.

† Μελέτη θανάτου.

‡ Quid aliud agimus, cum a voluptate, id est a corpore, cum a re familiari quæ ministra est et famula corporis, cum a republica, cum a negotio omni severamus animum, quid tum agimus (inquam) nisi illum ad seipsum advocamus, et secum esse cogimus? Secernere autem a corpore animum, necquicquam aliud est quam emori discere.

ourselves to die: this, even while we sojourn on this earth, will be to the soul a life like to that which it will enjoy in heaven, and, being delivered from these fetters, we shall move at a better rate, the course of our souls will be less retarded in our journey to that happy place, at which, when we arrive, we can then, and then only, be truly said to live; for this life is but a kind of death, the miseries whereof I could paint, if it were seasonable; but, to be sure, it was most justly called *a life of the greatest misery** by Dionysius the Areopagite, or whoever was the author of that book that goes under his name.

And, indeed, young gentlemen, I am of opinion, that such a view and meditation of death will not be unsuitable, or improper, even for you, though you are in the prime of life, and your minds in their full vigour; nay, I would gladly hope, you yourselves will not imagine it would, nor be at all offended at me, as if, by mentioning that inauspicious word unseasonably, I disturbed your present joy, drew a kind of black cloud over this bright day of festivity, or seemed to mix among your laurels, a branch of the hated cypress. For a wise man would not willingly owe his joy to madness, nor think it a pleasure, foolishly to forget the situation of his affairs.

The wise man alone feels true joy, and real wisdom is the attainment of a Christian only, who bears with life, but hopes for death; and passes

* Πολυπαθεσάτην ζωην.

through all the storms and tempests of the former with an undaunted mind, but with the most fervent wishes looks for the latter, as the secure port, and the *fair havens** in the highest sense of the expression; whose mind is humble, and, at the same time, exalted, neither depending upon foreign, that is, external advantages, nor puffed up with his own; and neither elevated nor depressed by any turns or vicissitudes of fortune.

He is the wise man who relishes things as they really are; who is not, with the common sort of mankind, that are always children, terrified by bugbears, nor pleased with painted rattles; who has a greatness of soul, vastly superior to all fading and perishing things; who judges of his improvements by his life, and thinks he knows every thing he does not covet, and every thing he does not fear. The only thing he desires, is the favour and countenance of the Supreme King; the only thing he fears, is his displeasure; and, without doubt, a mind of this cast must, of necessity, be the habitation of constant serenity, exalted joy, and gladness springing from on high. And this is the man that is truly possessed of that *tranquillity and happy disposition of mind*,† which the *Philosophers boast of, the Divines recommend, but few attain*. And though he will neither willingly suffer himself to be called a philosopher, nor a philologer, yet he is, in reality, *well versed in the things of God*,‡ and, by a *kind of*

* Καλῆς λιμενας.

† Ευθυμια καὶ γαληνην.

‡ Θεοσοφος.

*divine influence and instruction,** has attained to the light of pure and peaceable truth ; where he passes his days in the greatest quietness and serenity, far above the cloudy and stormy regions of controversy and disputation.

If any of you has been thus instructed, he has certainly attained the highest of all arts, and has entered upon the most glorious liberty, even before he hath received any University degree. But the rest, though they are presently to have the title of Master of Arts, still continue a silly, servile set of men, under a heavy yoke of bondage, whereby even their minds will be cramped with oppressive laws, far more intolerable than any discipline, however severe. None of you, I imagine, is so excessively blinded with *self-conceit*,† so ignorant of the nature of things, and unacquainted with himself, as to dream that he is already a philosopher, or be puffed up with an extravagant opinion of his own knowledge, because he has gone through the ordinary exercises at the University ; though, to speak the truth, the philosophy which prevails in the schools, is of a vain, airy nature, and more apt to inspire the mind with pride, than to improve it. As it is my earnest prayer, so it is also the object of my hope, that you will retire from the Seminary, with your minds excited to a keen and wholesome thirst after true erudition, rather than blown up with the wild-fire of science, falsely so called : and, what of all other attainments is of greatest consequence, that

* Θεία τινι μοιρα και διδαχη.

† Αυθαδεια.

you will leave us, deeply affected with the most ardent love of heavenly wisdom. Whatever may be your fate, with respect to other things, it is my earnest request, that it be your highest ambition and your principal study, to be true Christians; that is, to be humble, meek, pure, holy, and followers of your most auspicious Captain, the Lamb, wherever he goeth; for he that followeth him shall not walk in darkness, but be conducted, through the morning light of Divine grace, to the meridian and never-ending brightness of glory.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL Father of mercies and of lights, the only rest of the immortal souls which thou hast created, and their never-failing consolation, into what by-paths of error do our souls divert, and to what dangers are they exposed on every hand, when they stray away from thee! But while they keep within thy hiding-place, O Most High, they are safe under the shadow of thy wings. O how happy are they, and how well do they live, who pass their whole lives in that secret abode, where they may continually refresh themselves with the delicious fruits of thy love, and shew forth thy praise; where they may taste and see, that thou art good, O Lord, and be thoroughly persuaded of the immense riches of thy bounty, which all our miseries cannot exceed, nor our poverty exhaust; nay, which the constant effusion of them upon the whole universe, and all its parts, cannot in the least diminish! As

for us, who are before thee, the most unworthy of all thy creatures, yet, at the same time, the most excessively loaded with all the instances of thy goodness, can we avoid crying out with the united voices of our hearts, Let praise be ascribed to the Lord, because he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever? Who shall declare the great and wonderful works of God, who shall shew forth his praise; who ruleth by his power for ever, and his eyes observe the nations; that the rebellious may not exalt themselves; who restores our souls to life, and suffers not our feet to be moved? But, on the other hand, alas! how justly may our songs be interrupted with bitter lamentations, that, under such strong and constant rays of his bounty, our hearts are so cold towards him! O how faint and languid is our love to him! How very little, or near to nothing, is the whole of that flame which we feel within us; and, as that love fails within us, we misplace our affections upon the things around us; and as we follow vanity, we become vain and miserable at the same time. But may thy Spirit, O Lord, whom we humbly and earnestly beg of thee, descending into our hearts, inspire us thoroughly with life, vigour, and celestial purity.

Please to enlighten thy church throughout the whole habitable world, and particularly in these islands, with the continued light of thy countenance: if thou apply thy healing hand, we shall presently be whole; nor need we look to any quarter for other remedies than those we have always

found to be more powerful than our most obstinate distempers. Bless this city, and this celebrated university. Grant, most gracious Father, that the numbers of youth we send out from it this day, and every year, may be, by thy effectual grace, consecrated and devoted to thy service. Forbid, we pray thee, that they should either be the means of spreading pollution among thy people, or suffer themselves to be tainted with the infection of a wicked world; but let this fountain of learning be continually enriched with thy heavenly influences, that it may constantly supply pure and limpid streams, for the welfare and improvement of thy church and people, to the glory of thy exalted name, through our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, be honour, praise, and glory, world without end. Amen.

EXHORTATION VIII.

AMIDST these amusements, we are unhappily losing a day. Yet some part of the weight of this complaint is removed, when we consider, that, while the greatest part of mankind are bustling in crowds, and places of traffic, or, as they would have us believe, in affairs of great importance, we are trifling our time more innocently than they. But

what should hinder us from closing this last scene in a serious manner, that is, from turning our eyes to more divine objects, whereby, though we are fatigued with other matters, we may terminate the work of this day, and the day itself, agreeably; as the beams of the sun use to give more than ordinary delight, when he is near his setting?

You are now initiated into the philosophy, such as it is, that prevails in the schools, and, I imagine, intend, with all possible dispatch, to apply to higher studies. But O! how pitiful and scanty are all those things which beset us before, behind, and on every side! The bustling we observe, is nothing but the hurrying of ants eagerly engaged in their little labours. The mind must surely have degenerated, and forgotten its original as effectually as if it had drunk of the river Lethe, if, extricating itself out of all these mean concerns and designs, as so many snares laid for it, and rising above the whole of this visible world, it does not return to its Father's bosom, where it may contemplate his eternal beauty, where contemplation will inflame love, and love be crowned with the possession of the beloved object. But, in the contemplation of this glorious object, how great caution and moderation of mind is necessary, that, by prying presumptuously into his secret councils, or his nature, and rashly breaking into the *sanctuary of light*, * we be not quite involved in darkness! And, with regard to what the infinite, *independent, and necessarily ex-*

* Εἰς τὰ τὴ φῶτος ἀδυτὰ.

istent Being, * has thought proper to communicate to us concerning himself, and we are concerned to know, even that is by no means to be obscured by curious, impertinent questions, nor perplexed with the arrogance of disputation; because, by such means, instead of enlarging our knowledge, we are in the fair way to know nothing at all; but readily to be received by humble faith, and entertained with meek and pious affections. And if in these notices of him, that are communicated to us, we meet with any thing obscure, and hard to be understood, such difficulties will be happily got over, not by perplexed controversies, but by constant and fervent prayer. “He will come to understand,” says, admirably well, the famous bishop of Hippo, † “who knocks by prayer, not he who, by quarrelling, makes a noise at the gate of truth.” ‡ But what can we, who are mortal creatures, understand, with regard to the inexpressible Being we now speak of, especially while we sojourn in these dark prisons of clay, but only this, that we can by no means comprehend him? For though, in thinking of him, we remove from our idea all sort of imperfection, and collect together every perceivable perfection, and adorn the whole with the highest titles, we must, after all, acknowledge, that we have said nothing, and that our conceptions are nothing to the purpose. Let us, therefore, in general acknowledge

* Τῷ οὕτως οὐτι.

† St. Augustine.

‡ Intelliget qui orando pulsat, non qui rixando obstrepit ad ostium veritatis.

him to be the immovable Being, that moveth every thing; the immutable God, that changeth all things at his pleasure; the infinite and eternal fountain of all good, and of all existence, and the Lord and sole ruler of the world.

If you, then, my dear youths, aspire to genuine Christianity, that is, the knowledge of God and divine things,* I would have you consider, that the mind must first be recalled, and engaged to turn in upon itself, before it can be raised up towards God, according to that expression of St. Bernard, "May I return from external things to those that are within myself, and from these again rise to those that are of a more exalted nature." † But the greatest part of men live abroad, and are, truly, strangers at home; you may sooner find them any where, than with themselves. Now, is not this real madness, and the highest degree of insensibility? Yet, after all, they seem to have some reason in their madness, when they thus stray away from themselves, since they can see nothing within them that, by its promising aspect, can give them pleasure or delight. Every thing there is ugly, frightful, and full of nastiness, which they would rather be ignorant of, than be at the pains to purge away; and therefore prefer a slothful forgetfulness of their misery, to the trouble and labour of regaining happiness. But how preposterous is the most diligent

* Θεωσοφίαν.

† Ab exterioribus ad interiora redeam, ab interioribus ad superiora ascendam.

study and the highest knowledge, when we neglect that of ourselves ! The Roman philosopher, ridiculing the grammarians of his time, observes, “that they inquired narrowly into the misfortunes of Ulysses, but were quite ignorant of their own.”* The sentiments of a wise and pious man are quite different, and I wish you may adopt them. It is his principal care to be thoroughly acquainted with himself, he watches over his own ways, he improves and cultivates his heart as a garden, nay, a garden consecrated to the King of kings, who takes particular delight in it ; he carefully nurses the heavenly plants and flowers, and roots up all the wild and noxious weeds, that he may be able to say, with the greater confidence, “Let my beloved come into his own garden, and be pleased to eat of his fruits.” And when, upon this invitation, the great King, in the fulness of his goodness, descends into the mind, the soul may then easily ascend with him, as it were, in a chariot of fire, and look down upon the earth, and all earthly things, with contempt and disdain : “Then rising above the rainy regions, it sees the storms falling beneath its feet, and tramples upon the hidden thunder.” †

Let us pray.

WHATEVER satisfaction we look for without thee,
O heavenly Father, is mere delusion and vanity ;

* Ulyssis mala explorant, ignorant sua.

† Celsior exurgens pluviis, nimbosque cadentes

Sub pedibus cernens, et cœca tonitrua calcans.

yet, though we have so often experienced this, we have not, to this day, learned to renounce this vain and fruitless labour, that we may depend upon thee, who alone canst give full and complete satisfaction to the souls of men. We pray, therefore, that by thy Almighty hand; thou wouldest so effectually join and unite our hearts to thee, that they may never be separated any more. How unhappy are they who forsake thee, and whose hearts depart from thy ways! They shall be like shrubs in the desert, they shall not see when good cometh, but dwell in a parched and barren land. Blessed, on the contrary, is he who hath placed his confidence in thee; he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, he shall not be afraid when heat cometh, nor be uneasy in the time of drought. Take from us, O Lord, whatever earthly enjoyments thou shalt think proper; there is one thing will abundantly make up all our losses, let Christ dwell in our hearts by faith, and the rays of thy favour continually refresh us in the face of thine Anointed; in this event, we have nothing more to ask, but, with grateful minds, shall for ever celebrate thy bounty, and all our bones shall say, Who is like unto thee, O Lord, who is like unto thee?

Let thy church be glad in thee, and all in this nation, and every where throughout the world, that regard and love thy name; by the power and efficacy of the gospel, may their number be daily augmented, and let the gifts of thy grace be also increased in them all. Bless this university; let

it be like a garden watered by thy heavenly hand, that thy tender shoots may grow, and in due time produce abundant fruit, to the eternal honour of thy most glorious name, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VALEDICTORY ORATION.

THOUGH this, I imagine, is the last address I shall ever have occasion to make to you, I will not detain you long from your studies, nor encroach on the time allowed you for recreation. This is, to be sure, the first time that some of you have heard me; but I have a great many others to bear witness of the constant design of all my dissertations in this place. They will testify, that the intention of all my discourses was, “that the form of sound words,”* that is, the Christian doctrine, and consequently the fear and love of God, might not only be impressed, but also engraven upon your hearts in lasting and indelible characters; and that you might not only admit as a truth, but also pay the highest regard to this indisputable maxim, “that piety and religion is the only real good among men.”† Moreover, that your minds might be the less encumbered in their application to this grand

* Ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων τυπος.

† Ὅτι ἐν και μόνον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθὸν ἢ εὐσεβεία.

study of religion, and the more expeditious in their progress therein, I constantly endeavoured, with all possible warmth, to divert you from those barren and thorny questions and disputes, that have infected the whole of theology: and this at a time, when the greatest part of divines and professors, and those of no small reputation, engaging furiously in such controversies, “have split into parties, and unhappily divided the whole world.”* It was my constant practice to establish those great and uncontroverted articles of our holy religion, which are but few and clear; some part whereof are confirmed by the common consent of nations, and of all the human race; and all the rest by the unanimous voice of the whole Christian world. Of the first sort are those we have often advanced in treating of the being and perfections of the One supreme and eternal Principle, and the production of all things by him; the continual preservation and government of the world by his providence; the law of God given to mankind, and the rewards and punishments annexed to it. The other class of the grand articles of religion are indeed peculiar to Christian Philosophy, but believed in common by all the professors of that religion. These are the great foundations of our faith, and of all our hope and joy, with regard to the incarnation of the Son of God, his death and resurrection for the destruction of sin, and consequently of death; his

* Σχιζονται, και κοσμον ολον τεμνεσιν αθεσμως.

ascension into the highest heavens, with that same flesh of ours, in which he died, and his exaltation there above all ranks of angels, dominions, and thrones, &c. ; whence we expect he will return in great glory, in that day, when he will be glorious in all his saints, and admired in those that believe. As many, therefore, as desire to receive him in this his last manifestation, with joy and exultation, must of necessity be holy, and, in conformity to their most perfect and glorious Head, sober, pious, upright, and live in full contempt of this perishing, transitory world, their own mortal flesh, and the sordid pleasures of both : in a word, all the enjoyments which the mean and servile admire, they must trample under foot and despise. For whoever will strive for this victory, and strive so as at last to obtain it, the Lord will own him for his servant, and the great Master will acknowledge him for his disciple. He will attain a likeness to God in this earth, and, after a short conflict, will triumph in the Divine presence for ever. These are the doctrines which it is our interest to know, and in the observation of which our happiness will be secured. To these you will turn your thoughts, young gentlemen, if you are wise ; nay, to these you ought to give due attention, that you may be wise : those phantoms we catch at, fly away ; this shadow of a life we now live, is likewise on the wing. Those things that are without the verge of sense, and above its reach, are the only solid and lasting en-

joyments. "Why are ye fond of these earthly things," says St. Bernard, "which are neither true riches, nor are they yours? If they are yours," continues he, "take them with you."* And Lactantius admirably well observes, that, "whoever prefers the life of the soul, must, of necessity, despise that of the body; nor can he aspire to the highest good, unless he despise advantages of an inferior kind. For the all-wise God did not choose that we should attain to immortality in a soft, indolent way, but that we should gain that inexpressible reward of eternal life with the highest difficulty and severest labour."† And, that you may not be discouraged, remember the great Redeemer of souls, your exalted Captain, hath gone before you, and we have to do with an enemy already conquered. Let us only follow him with courage and activity, and we have no ground to doubt of victory. And indeed it is a victory truly worthy of a Christian, to subdue the barbarous train of our appetites, and subject them to the empire of reason and religion; while, on the other hand, it is the most shameful bondage to have the more divine part of our composition meanly subjected to an ignoble, earthly

* *Quid terrena hæc amplectimini, quæ nec veræ divitiæ sunt, nec vestræ? Si vestræ sunt, tollite vobiscum.*

† *Quisquis animæ vitam maluerit, corporis vitam contemnat necesse est, nec aliter aspirare ad summum poterit bonum, nisi quæ sunt ima despexerit. Noluit enim sapientissimus Deus, nos immortalitatem delicate ac molliter assequi, sed ad illud vitæ eternæ inenarrabile præmium summâ cum difficultate, et magnis laboribus pervenire.*

body. Now, this victory can only be secured by steadfast believing, vigorous opposition to our spiritual enemies, unwearied watching, and incessant prayer. Let prayer be not only the key that opens the day, and the lock that shuts out the night ; but let it be also, from morning to night, our staff and stay in all our labours, and to enable us to go cheerfully up into the mount of God. Prayer brings consolation to the languishing soul, drives away the devil, and is the great medium, whereby all grace and peace is communicated to us. With regard to your reading, let it be your particular care to be familiarly acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures above all other books whatever ; for from thence you will truly derive light for your direction, and sacred provisions for your support on your journey. In subordination to these you may also use the writings of pious men that are agreeable to them ; for these also you may improve to your advantage, and particularly that little book of *à Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ*,* “ since the sum and substance of religion consists in imitating the Being that is the object of your worship.”†

May our dear Redeemer Jesus impress upon your minds a lively representation of his own meek and immaculate heart, that, in that great and last day, he may, by this mark, know you to be his, and, together with all the rest of his sealed and redeemed

* De Imitatione Christi.

† Summa religionis est imitari quem colis.

ones, admit you into the mansions of eternal bliss.
Amen.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL Creator, and supreme Governor of the world, songs of praise are due to thee in Zion; nay, as thou art infinitely superior to all our songs and hymns, even silence in Zion redounds to thy praise. Let the societies of angels be rather employed in singing thy praises; but let us, with silence and astonishment, fall down at the footstool of thy throne, while they are taken up in the repetition of their celebrated doxology, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts*, who fillest heaven and earth with thy glory! But O that we had within us proper powers for exalting that most sacred name! that name, which, according to their measure, is celebrated by all the parts of this visible world which surround us, the heaven, the stars, the winds, the rivers, the earth, the ocean, and all the creatures therein. Thou surely didst at first implant in us souls and powers for this purpose, superior to the rest of the visible creation; as we were then not only qualified to offer thee praises founded on the rational conviction of our minds, and animated by the affections of our hearts; but also capable of pronouncing more articulately even the praises that result from all the rest of thy visible works. But, alas! these heavenly souls, these principles proceeding from a divine original, we have most deeply immersed in mire and dirt, nor

is any hand able to extricate them out of this mud, or cleanse them from their pollution, but thine. O most exalted and bountiful Father, if thou wilt graciously please to grant us this grace and favour, we shall then offer thee new songs of praise as incense, and ourselves, thus renewed, as a burnt-offering: and all the rest of our time in this world we shall live not to ourselves, but wholly to him who died for us.

May thy church, throughout the whole earth, and especially in these islands, be supported by thy most powerful hand, and continually be made to rejoice in the light of thy gracious countenance. Let our king be joyful in thee, and, as he depends upon thy bounty, let him never be moved; let his throne be established in piety and righteousness, and let peace, and the gospel of peace, be the constant blessings of his kingdoms, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, be praise, honour, and glory, now, and for evermore. Amen.

A MODEST DEFENCE
OF
Moderate Episcopacy,

As established in Scotland at the Restoration of King Charles II.

I. EPISCOPAL government, managed in conjunction with presbyters, presbyteries, and synods, is not contrary to the rule of Scripture, or the example of the primitive church, but most agreeable to both.

II. Yea, it is not contrary to that new covenant which is pretended by so many as the main, if not the only, reason of their scrupling; and for their sakes it is necessary to add this: for, notwithstanding the many irregularities both in the matter and form of that covenant, and in the illegal and violent ways of pressing and prosecuting of it; yet to them who still remain under the conscience of its full force and obligation, and in that some are inconvincedly persuaded, it is certainly most pertinent, if it be true, to declare the consistence of the present government, even with that obligation.

And as both of these assertions, I believe, upon the exactest (if impartial and impassionate) inquiry, will be found to be in themselves true, so they are owned by the generality of the Presbyterians in England, as themselves have published their opinions in print, with this title, *Two Papers of Proposals, humbly presented to his Majesty, by the Reverend Ministers of the Presbyterian Persuasion,* printed at London, anno 1661.

Besides other passages in those papers to the same purpose, in pp. 11 and 12 are these words: "And as these are our general ends and motives, so we are induced to insist upon the form of a synodical government, conjunct with a fixed presidency or episcopacy; for these reasons:

" 1. We have reason to believe, that no other terms will be so generally agreed on, &c.

" 2. It being agreeable to the Scripture and the primitive government, is likeliest to be the way of a more universal concord, if ever the churches on earth arrive at such a blessing: however, it will be most acceptable to God and well-informed consciences.

" 3. It will promote the practice of discipline and godliness without discord, and promote order without hindering discipline and godliness.

" 4. And it is not to be silenced (though in some respects we are loath to mention it), that it will save the nations from the violation of the solemn vow and covenant, without wronging the church at all, or breaking any other oath," &c.

And a little after, they add, "That the prelacy disclaimed in that covenant, was the engrossing the sole power of ordination and jurisdiction; and exercising of the whole discipline absolutely by bishops themselves, and their delegates, chancellors, surrogates, and officials, &c., excluding wholly the pastors of particular churches from all share in it."

And there is one of prime note amongst them, who, in a large treatise of church-government, does

clearly evidence, that this was the mind both of the parliament of England, and of the assembly of divines at Westminster, as they themselves did expressly declare it in the admitting of the covenant, That they understood it not to be against all Episcopacy; but only against that particular frame, as it is worded in the article itself.* As for our present model in Scotland, and the way of managing it, whatsoever is amiss, (and it can be no wrong to make that supposition, concerning any church on earth,) the brethren that are dissatisfied had possibly better acquitted their duty, by free admonitions and significations of their own sense in all things, than by leaving their stations, which is the only thing that has made the breach,—I fear very hard to cure, and in human appearance near to incurable. But there is much charity due to those following their own consciences; and they owe, and I hope they pay, the same back again to those that do the same in another way. And whatsoever may be the readiest and happiest way of reuniting those that are naturally so minded, the Lord reveal it to them in due time.

This one word I shall add: That this difference should arise to a great height, may seem somewhat strange to any man that calmly considers, that there is in this church no change at all, neither in

* Baxter of Church Government, Pt. iii. Ch. i. tit. p. 274. "An Episcopacy desirable for the reformation, preservation, and peace of the churches, a fixed president, *durante vita*." See pp. 297 and 330, *ibid*.

the doctrine nor worship ; no, nor in the substance of the discipline itself ; but when it falls on matter easily inflammable, a little sparkle, how great a fire will it kindle !

Oh ! who would not long for the shadows of the evening, from all those poor, childish contests ?

But some will say that we are engaged against prelacy by covenant, and therefore cannot yield to so much as you do, without perjury.

Ans. That this is wholly untrue, I thus demonstrate. When that covenant was presented to the assembly with the bare name of prelacy joined to popery, many contrair and reverend divines desired that the word prelacy might be explained, because it was not all Episcopacy they were against ; and thereupon the following clause, in the parenthesis, was given by way of explication, in these words : (That the church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, and commissaries, deans and chapters, arch-deacons, and all the other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy:) by which it appears, that it was only the English hierarchy or frame that was covenanted against ; and that which was then existent, that was taken down.

II. When the House of Lords took the covenant, Mr. Thomas Coleman, who gave it to them, did so explain it, and profess that it was not their intent to covenant against all Episcopacy ; and upon this explication it was taken ; and certainly the parliament was most capable of giving the due sense of it, seeing it was they that did impose it.

III. And it could not be all Episcopacy that was excluded, because a parochial Episcopacy was at that same time used and approved commonly in England.

IV. And in Scotland they had used the help of visiters, for the reformation of their churches, committing the care of a country or circuit to some one man, which was as high a sort of Episcopacy at least as any I am pleading for; besides that, they had moderators in all their synods, which were temporary bishops.

V. Also the chief divines of the late assembly at Westminstér, that recommended that covenant to the nations, have professed their own judgment for such a moderate Episcopacy as I am here defending, and therefore they never intended the exclusion of this by covenant.

After the same author saith, "As we have prelacy to be aware of, so we have the contrary extreme to avoid, and the church's peace, if it may be so procured; and as we must not take down the ministry, lest it prepare men for Episcopacy, so neither must we be against any profitable use and exercise of the ministry, or desirable order amongst them, for fear of introducing prelacy," &c.

There is another that has wrote a treatise on purpose, and that zealous enough, concerning the obligation of the league and covenant, under the name of Theophilus Timercus, and yet therein it is expressly asserted, that however at first view it might appear, that the parliament had renounced

all Episcopacy, yet, upon exacter inquiry, it was evident to the author, that that very scruple was made by some members in parliament, and resolved, with the consent of their brethren in Scotland, that the covenant was only intended against prelacy, as it was then in being in England, leaving a latitude for Episcopacy, &c.

It should be noted, that when that covenant was framed, there was no Episcopacy at all in being in Scotland, but in England only ; so that the extirpation of that frame only could then be merely intended.

Likewise it should be considered of, though there are in Scotland at present the names of dean and chapter and commissaries ; yet that none of these do exercise at all any part of the discipline under that name, neither any other, as chancellor or surrogate, &c., by delegation from bishops, with total exclusion of the community of Presbyters from all power and share in it, which is the greatest point of difference between that model and this with us, and imports so much as to the main of discipline.

I do not deny that the generality of the people, even of ministers in Scotland, when they took the covenant, did understand that article, as against all Episcopacy whatsoever, even the most moderate ; especially if it should be restored under the express name of bishops and archbishops ; never considering how different the nature and model, and the way of exercising it, might be thought on under these names ; and that the due regulating of the thing

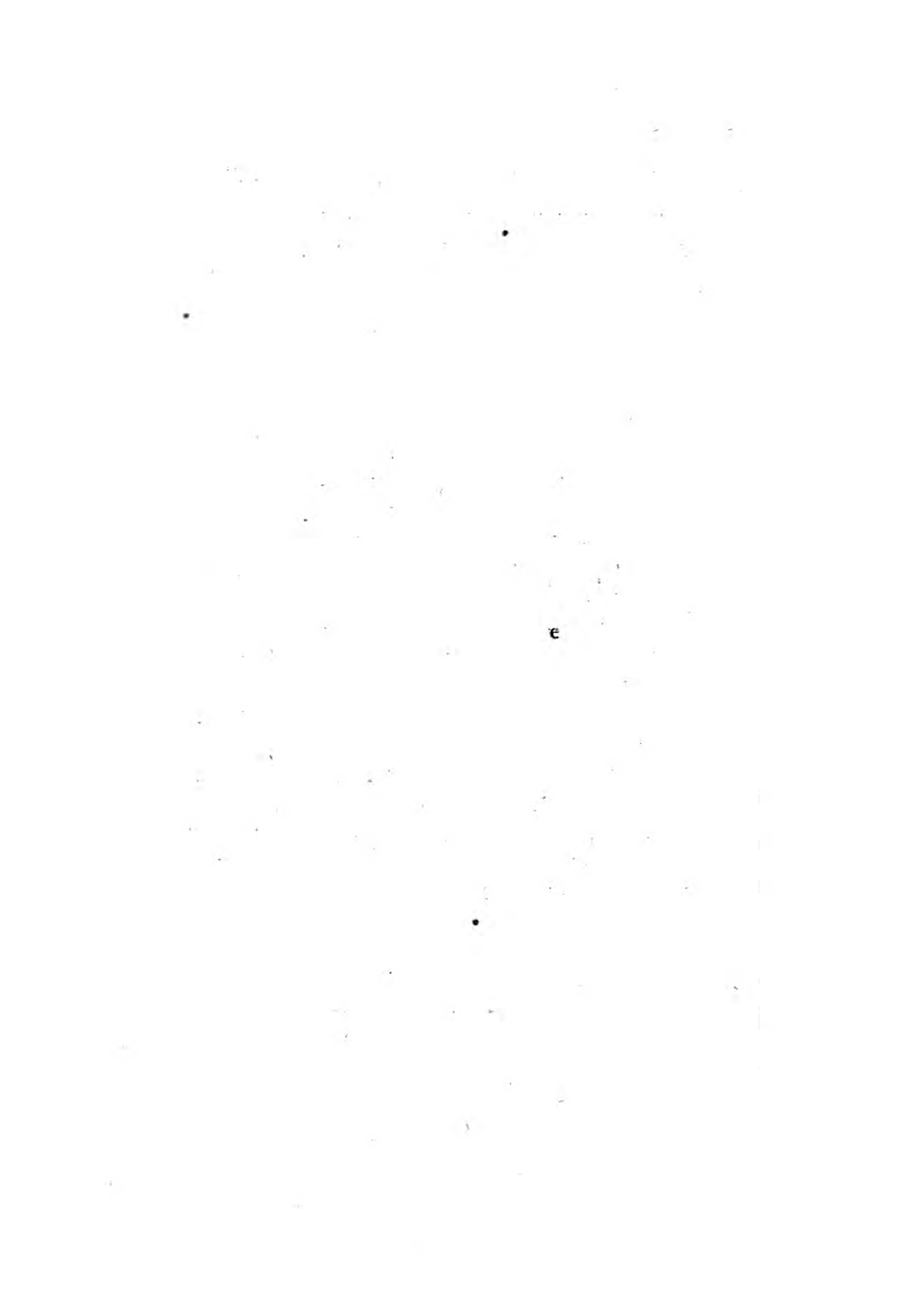
is much more to be regarded, than either the returning or altering the name. But though they did not then consider any such thing, yet certainly it concerns them now to consider it, when it is represented to them, that not only the words of the oath itself do very genuinely consist with such a qualified and distinctive sense ; but that the very composers and imposers of it, or a considerable part of them, did so understand and intend it ; and unless they can make it appear, that the Episcopacy now in question with us in Scotland, is either contrary to the word of God, or to that mitigated sense of their own oath, it would seem more suitable to Christian charity and moderation, rather to yield to it, as tolerable at least, than to continue so inflexibly to their first mistakes, and excessive zeal for love of it, as to divide from the church, and break the bond of peace.

It may likewise be granted, that some learned men in England, who have refused to take the covenant, did possibly except against that article of it, as signifying the total renunciation and abolition of Episcopacy ; and seeing that was the real event and consequence of it, and they having many other strong and weighty reasons for refusing it, it is no wonder that they were little curious to inquire what passed amongst the contrivers of it, and what distinction or different senses, either the words of that article might admit, or those contrivers might intend by them.

And the truth is, that, besides many other evils,

the iniquity and unhappiness of such oaths and covenants lie much in this, that being commonly framed by persons that even amongst themselves are not fully of one mind, but have their different opinions and interests to serve, (and it was so even in this,) they commonly patched up so many several articles and clauses, and those too of so versatile and ambiguous terms, that they prove most wretched snares and thickets of briars and thorns to the consciences of those who are engaged in them, and matter of endless contentions and disputes amongst them, about the true sense and intendment, and the ties and obligations of those doubtful clauses: especially in such alterations and revolutions of affairs as always may, and often do even within few years, follow after them; for the models and productions of such devices are not usually long-lived. And whatsoever may be said for their excuse in whole or in part, who (in yielding to the power that pressed it, and the general opinion of this church at that time) did take that covenant in the most moderate and least schismatical sense that the terms can admit; yet I know not what can be said to clear them of a very great sin, that not only framed such an engine, but violently imposed it upon all ranks of men; not ministers and other public persons only, but the whole body and community of the people, thereby engaging such droves of poor ignorant persons to they knew not what, and (to speak freely) to such a hodge-podge of things of various concernments, religious and civil,

as church discipline and government, the privileges of parliaments and liberties of subjects, and condign punishment of malignants; things hard enough for the wisest and most learned to draw the just lines of, and to give plain definitions and decisions of them, and therefore certainly, as far off from the reach of poor country people's understanding, as from the true interest of their souls—and yet to tie them by a religious oath, either to know all, or to contend for them blindfold, without knowing of them. Where will there be instanced a greater oppression and tyranny over consciences than this? Certainly, they that now govern in this church cannot be charged with any thing near, or like unto it; for whatsoever they require of entrants to the ministry, they require neither subscriptions nor oaths of ministers already entered, and far less of the whole body of the people. And it were ingeniously done to take some notice of any point of moderation, or whatsoever else is really commendable, even in those we account our greatest enemies, and not to take any party in the world for the absolute standard and unfailing rule of truth and righteousness in all things.



Meditations,

CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL,

ON

PSALMS iv. xxxii. AND cxxx.

Now first translated from the Latin.

MEDITATIONS,
CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL,

ON PSALM iv.

Title, *To the chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David.*

MANY of the calamities of good men look like miseries, which yet on the whole appear to have conduced greatly to their happiness; witness the many prayers which they poured out in those calamities; the many seasonable and shining deliverances which succeeded them, and the many hymns of praise they sung to God their deliverer: so that they seem to have been cast into the fire on purpose that the odour of their graces might diffuse itself all abroad.

The seventy Greek interpreters seem to have read the word which we render to the Chief Musician, something different from the reading of our present Hebrew copy, that is, *Lemenetz*, instead of *Lemenetzoth*; and therefore they render it, *εις τελος*, as the Latin does *in finem*, to the end. From whence the Greek and Latin fathers imagined that all the Psalms which bear this inscription, refer to the Messiah, the great end and the accomplish-

ment of all things; a sentiment which was rather pious than judicious, and led them often to wrest several passages in the Psalms by violent and unnatural glosses. Yet I would not morosely reject all interpretations of that kind, seeing the Apostles themselves apply to Christ many passages out of the Psalms and other books of the Old Testament, which if we had not been assured of it by their authority, we should hardly have imagined to have had any reference to him. Nor is it probable that they enumerated all the predictions of the Messiah, which are to be found in the prophetic writings, but only a very small part of them, while they often assure us that all the sacred writers principally centre in him; and it is certain the passage out of this Psalm, which Austin and some others suppose to refer to Christ, may be applied to him without any force upon the expression, *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?* * And what follows they explain with the same reference: *Know that the Lord has in a wonderful manner separated his Holy One unto himself.* Others however render the title in a different manner (victori) to the conqueror. Moderns translate it *præcentori*, or *præfecto musicæ*, to the chief musician, or him who presided over the band of musicians, which, after all, seems the most natural interpretation. The word *Neginoth*, which is sometimes rendered stringed instruments, did, no doubt, signify

* They read it *gravi corde*, as expressive of the stupidity of heart which the rejecting of Christ and his gospel manifests.

instruments of music which were struck to give their sound, as *Nehiloth*, in the title of Psalm v., seems, though not without some little irregularity in the etymology, to signify instruments of wind music. The Psalm was written by David, as a summary of the prayer he had poured out before God, when some exceeding great affliction seemed to besiege him on every side, whether it were the persecution of Saul, or the conspiracy of Absalom his son.

Ver. 1: *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*

HEAR me.] Behold the sanctuary to which this good man betook himself in all the afflictions of his life; a sanctuary which, therefore, he sets off, by accumulating a variety of expressive titles all to the same purpose. Psalm xviii. 1: *My rock, my fortress, my strength, my deliverer, my buckler, &c.* He is indeed a *place of refuge to his children*; and therefore, as Solomon expresses it, Prov. xiv. 26, *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence.* There seems something of an *enigma* in that expression, confidence in fear, yet the thing itself is most true. And again, Prov. xviii. 10, *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.* And they who know not this refuge, are miserable; and when any danger arises, they run hither and thither, as Antonius beautifully ex-

presses it, *μυίων πετομένων διαδρομαίς*, "They fly and flutter they know not whither." The life of man upon earth is a warfare; and it is much better, in the midst of enemies and dangers, to be acquainted with one fortress than with many inns. He that knows how to pray may be pressed, but cannot be overwhelmed. *

Hear me, O Lord, hear my prayer.] He did not think it enough to have said this once, but he redoubled it. He who prays indeed, is seriously engaged in the matter, and not only seriously but vehemently too, and urges the address, because he himself is urged by his necessities and difficulties, and the ardent motion of his own desire and affection; and let it be observed, that these are the only prayers that mount on high, and offer a kind of grateful violence to heaven. Nor does the Divine goodness grant any thing with greater readiness and delight, than the blessings which seem, if I may be allowed the expression, to be forced out and extorted by the most fervent prayer. So that Tertullian used to say, "That when we pray eagerly, we do as it were combine in a resolute band, and lay siege to God himself." † These are the perpetual sacrifices in the temple of God (*θυσίαι λογικαί*) —rational victims, prayers and intermingled vows, flowing from an upright and pure heart. But he who presents his petitions coldly, seems to bespeak a denial: for is it to be wondered at,

* *Premi potest, non potest opprimi.*

† *Precantes veluti stipato agmine Deum obsidere.*

that we do not prevail on God to hear our prayers, when we hardly hear them ourselves while we offer them? How can we suppose that such devotions should penetrate heaven, or ascend up to it? How should they ascend, when they do not so much as go forth from our own bosoms, but, like wretched abortives, die in the very birth? But why do I say that they do not go out from the inward recesses of our bosoms? Alas! they are only formed on the surface of our lips, and they expire there; quite different from what Homer ascribes to his wise and eloquent Ulysses, when he says,

Ὅσα τε μεγάλην ἐκ στήθεος ἦει.

Forth from his breast he poured a mighty cry.

Thou God of my righteousness.] “O God, who art righteous thyself, and art the patron of my righteousness, of my righteous cause, and of my righteous life;”—for it is necessary that both should concur, if we desire to address our prayers to God with any confidence: not that, depending upon this righteousness, we should seek the Divine aid and favour as a matter of just debt; for then, as the apostle argues, *it were no more of grace*, Rom. xi. 6. Our prophet is certainly very far from boasting of his merits; for here he so mentions his righteousness, as at the same time to cast himself upon the Divine mercy: *Have mercy upon me*, exercise thy propitious clemency towards me; and this is indeed the genuine temper of one who truly prays with sincerity and humility; for *polluted hands are*

an abomination to the Lord, and he hates the heart that is puffed up; he beholds the proud afar off, as the celebrated parable of the Pharisee and Publican, (Luke xviii.,) is, you know intended to teach us. Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. But the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance beholds the upright. Whereas the words of the wicked, when he prays, are but as a fan, or as bellows, to blow up the Divine displeasure into a flame: for how can he appease God, who does not at all please him? Or how can he please, who is indeed himself displeased with God, and who utterly disregards his pure laws, and that holiness which is so dear to him?

Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.]
 “I have often experienced both the riches of thy bounty, and the power of thy hand; and I derive confidence from thence, because thou art immutable, and canst never be wearied, by rescuing thy servants from the dangers that surround them.”
 The examples we have heard of divine aid granted to others in their distress should animate us; as David recollected, Psalm xxii. 4, *Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them.* But our own personal experiences are later and nearer, and he who treasures them up in his memory, not only thereby expresses his gratitude to God, but wisely consults his own interest; for he enjoys all those benefits of the Divine favour

twice, or rather as often as he needs, and pleases to renew the enjoyment of them: and he not only supports his faith in new dangers, by surveying God's former interpositions, but by laying them open before God in humble prayer, he more earnestly implores and more effectually obtains new ones. By a secret kind of magnetism, he draws one benefit by another; he calls out, and as it were allures the Divine favour by itself.

Thou hast enlarged me.] The redeemed of the Lord may especially say so, in reference to that grand and principal deliverance, by which they are snatched from the borders of hell, from the jaws of eternal death. The remembrance of so great salvation may well excite songs of perpetual praise to be ascribed (*Deo liberatori*) to God the deliverer; and by this deliverance, so much more illustrious than any of the rest, they may be encouraged, in the confidence of faith, to urge and hope for the aids of his saving arm in every other exigency.

One thing more may be observed here, but it is so very obvious, that I shall only just mention it, as what needs not to be much inculcated; that he who has not been accustomed to prayer when the pleasant gales of prosperity have been breathing upon him, will have little skill and confidence in applying himself to it, when the storms of adversity arise; as Xenophon well observed in the person of Cyrus. *

* Παρα των Θεων πρακτικωτερος αν ειη ωσπερ και παρ' ανθρωπων, οςις μη οποτε εν αποροις ειη, τοτε κολακευοι, αλλ' οτε αριζα πραττοι, τοτε μαλιζα των Θεων μεμνηται.

Ver. 2 : *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.*

JUSTLY may we admire the force and the speed with which prayer flies up to heaven, and brings down answers from thence; *ἀμα επος, ἀμα εργον*—*no sooner said than done.* If not as to the accomplishment of the thing itself, which perhaps may be more opportune in some future hour, yet at least in clear, firm hope, and strong confidence, sent from above into a praying soul. Prayers soar above the violence and impiety of men, and with a swift wing commits itself to heaven, with happy omen, if I may allude to what the learned tell us of the augury of the ancients, which I shall not minutely discuss. Fervent prayers stretch forth a strong, wide-extended wing; and while the birds of night hover beneath, they mount aloft, and point out as it were the proper seats to which we should aspire. For certainly there is nothing that cuts the air so swiftly, nothing that takes so sublime, so happy, and so auspicious a flight, as prayer, which bears the soul upon its pinions, and leaves far behind all the dangers, and even the delights of this low world of ours. Behold this holy man, that just before was crying to God in the midst of distress, and with urgent importunity intreating that he might be heard, now as if he were already possessed of all he had asked, taking upon him boldly to rebuke

his enemies, how highly soever they were exalted, and how potent soever they might be even in the royal palace!

O ye sons of men.] The Hebrew phrase here used, *bene Isch*, properly speaking, signifies noble men, great men, as persons of Plebeian rank are called *bene Adam*.* “Whoever you are, and however illustrious by birth, or inflated with pride, or perhaps formidable on both accounts, your greatness is false, and when it is most blown up, is most likely to burst: that is a sound and stable degree of honour to which God has destined his servants, whom you insult and deride. The height of your honour and vanishing glory, from the exaltation of which you look down upon me, will, if you desire I should courageously speak the truth, only render your future fall more grievous and fatal, which he whose destruction you seek with such insatiable rage, sees indeed, but does not wish; nay, he rather wishes that this misery may be averted from you, and that, by a return to the exercise of your right mind, it may be totally prevented; and therefore he gives you this admonition, lest, while you are deriding him, unexpected destruction should come upon you, and your laughter should prove of the Sardonian kind, which nothing can quiet till it end in death. You have indeed great strength and deep counsel, but these things are only the blandishments of your ruin, and the splendid prelude of that mi-

* Accordingly, the Latin renders it, not *filii hominum*, but *filii virorum*.

sery which is hovering over you. You have spent time enough, (and, alas! how much more than enough!) in giving chace to such vanities; at last regard the man who in the most disinterested manner admonishes you of the most important truths."

How long will ye turn my glory into shame?] The Septuagint appears to have read these words something different from our copies, but the sense is, nevertheless, much the same;* and though the Psalmist, in the affair which he had in view, speaks only of a few, the words themselves have such an expressive dignity, and are in truth so unhappily extensive, that without doing any the least violence to them, they may be considered as an admonition to all mankind—*O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity and lies?* For, indeed, what are all these things which we foolish mortals pursue, with such contention and ardour of spirit, but, as an ancient expresses it, "Trifles that are but like the shadow of smoke?"† But we are to speak of this hereafter. In the mean time let us attend to the words before us, *How long will ye turn my glory into shame?* The things which are the brightest ornaments of human nature, and which alone constitute its very glory, are holiness, piety, and faith; and these are treated as if they were the most despicable and ignominious things in the whole world. Among Christians, or

* They render it, "How long are ye slow of heart?" Ἔως ποτε βαρυκαρδιοι; and the Latins, *Usquequo gravi corde?* Instead of *Kebudi lekelesseh*, they read *Kebudi leklessi*.

† Φλεθονες ἀπαντα και καπνη οικαι.

those who are called by the name, it is the greatest of all scandals to be a Christian indeed. We have long since lost the true names of things; candid simplicity of manners is despised as rusticity; lively religion is called the delirious dream of superstitious notions; and gentleness, dullness and stupidity: while pride has usurped the name of magnanimity, and craft that of wisdom. Thus we turn true glory into shame, and shame into glory; and because few are able to discern what tends to their eternal happiness, they squander away the whole day of this short life in pursuing and catching at the false and fictitious forms of it; yea, they seek a lie, lying vanity. And they who heap up riches, seem to be wise both to themselves and others; but oh! how far from it, and with how base a lie do they impose upon themselves! For these riches are spent upon gratifying their palate, and ministering in other respects to their luxury. Into how foul a gulf do they throw what they have laboured so eagerly to gain! Or, if they hoard up their wealth, how soon do they pass over the property to their heirs! Men hunt after fame and vain-glory; and when they seem to have caught it, feed upon air, and become the slaves of all, even the meanest, for a thing of nought. And as for pleasure, who is so senseless as not to know how deceitful a lie it proves at last? It drives men into a weak frenzy, to run after the most trifling objects of pursuit, which fly from them like bees, who, if they are taken, yield but a drop of honey, and repay the spoil of it with a painful

sting ; a sting which, alas, reaches the very heart. Religion is a high, sublime thing, royal, unconquerable, unwearied ; but pleasure is low, servile, weak and withering. Religion is neither attended with sickly disgust in the enjoyment, nor bitter repentance in the reflection ; but what the world calls pleasure is attended with both. “ Hear, my young friends, hear the divine voice of celestial wisdom calling you with fervent affection, and a loud cry from the trackless ways of error and precipices of misery. *How long*, does she say, *how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing ?* He that seeks me shall not be wearied in running hither and thither, but shall find me, sitting at his door and waiting admittance ; and he who finds me need seek nothing else, unless he be one whom a life of real happiness cannot satisfy.” Oh ! that the indefatigable labour and industry with which men pursue flattering and uncertain enjoyments, may stir up your minds to exert at least an equal diligence in this sublime and most blessed pursuit ! For if, as St. Chrysostom speaks, it may seem indecent for me to press you farther to such an attachment to these objects as they require, it will be a lovely thing to give it without farther solicitation. But to proceed : *How long will you love vanity, and seek after leasing ?*] Can any one deny that this is the character of almost every thing that is to be found in human life ? Should a man proclaim that in every company with a loud voice, he would soon pass for a lunatic ; but certainly he might reproach them with the ge-

neral madness which reigns among mankind, not only among the vulgar that he meets with in the streets, but the philosophers disputing in the school, the counsellors pleading in our courts of judicature, yea the senators and nobles that sit in the most august assembly. And oh! how happy are they, of whatever order, whom the hand of God draws out of the crowd, and turns their minds from these various, lying, and transitory vanities, to the pursuit of true and lasting good! Happy they whom he, by a wonderful interposition of grace in their favour, sets apart as dear to himself. Which leads to the 3d verse.

Ver. 3: But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear me when I call unto him.

THE Prophet had this great support both of his faith and of his kingdom, the immutable and unshaken decree of the Supreme and Universal King; and it is the firm establishment of David's infinitely greater Son, in his throne and kingdom: *I will declare the decree, Psalm ii. 7.* In this verse, and there, we may most properly understand it of both; more immediately of David as the type, but chiefly and in its consummate sense, as referring to Christ the Lord, and having its full end and accomplishment in his endless and eternal kingdom. He is, by way of eminence, *God's holy One, holy and*

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, Heb. vii. 26. And whoever they are who endeavour to oppose themselves to the Divine purposes, betray the most desperate madness, and on whatever strength or counsel they depend in the enterprise, like waves dashed against the solid rock, they shall be broken in pieces, by what they vainly attempt to break. And on this basis does the whole safety of the whole church rest, and that of all God's saints, of all those whom he sets apart for himself; and, as the form of the original here has been thought to imply, wonderfully separates as his peculiar people and treasure, the sacred charge of Christ, the great shepherd and bishop of souls, which all the powers of earth, and gates of hell, shall in vain attempt to wrest from him. And this is the confidence on which believers should repose themselves. They never trust to themselves, or their own strength or virtues, but they often redouble that cry, *Thou, Lord, art my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer. And blessed, O Lord, is the man who trusteth in thee*; Psal. xviii. 2, xxxiv. 8; who must previously and necessarily despair first of himself, as considered in himself alone, as the great apostle says, *When I am weak, then am I strongest of all*, 2 Cor. xii. 10. According to that lively and just expression, "Faith which is endangered in security, is secure in danger."*

The Psalmist adds, *the Lord will hear me when I call.*] From the Divine decree and favour, he pro-

* Fides quæ in securitate periclitatur, in periculis secunda est.

mises not to himself an entire freedom from all and every attempt of his enemies, but assures himself that God will be present in the midst of his calamities; present and propitious, not to the indolent and drowsy soul, but to that which solicits his assistance by prayer; and this is the determination of every godly man, whom the Lord has set apart for himself, that he will call upon God without ceasing; and, that if any unusual difficulty arise, he will call upon him more fervently. Thence it appears, how entirely all our safety depends upon prayer: yet all our prayers, and those of the whole church, are sustained by those prayers of our great King and Priest, as Augustine says in reference to that known story in the Evangelists, *Because the waves rise, the ship may be tossed, but because Christ prays, it cannot be sunk.**

Ver. 4: *Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart on your bed, and be still. Selah.*

OH most friendly counsel! which is here offered to enemies. This is indeed overcoming hatred and injury with the very best of favours—by far the most noble kind of victory. A sublime and heavenly mind, like the upper region of the world, is not only itself always calm and serene, as being inaccessible to every breath of injury and turbulent impression, but it also continually sheds

* Quia insurgunt fluctus, potest turbari navicula, sed quia Christus orat, non potest mergi.

down its benign influences without distinction on all below it, *on the evil and the good, the just and the unjust.* *Stand in awe*—the Hebrew and Greek, *be ye moved*; and as this emotion may arise, either from anger, fear, or any other affection of the mind, the Septuagint renders it, *be ye angry, and sin not*, a maxim which Paul finding to his purpose, inserts in his epistle to the Ephesians, iv. 26. Nevertheless, the author of this Psalm here seems more apparently to demand their fear rather than their anger, and accordingly the Targum explains it, *fear him*, that is, *God, and sin not*; Kimchi, *fear the Lord who hath chosen me king*; and Abenezra, *fear God and despise not my glory; for that great King will require the derision at the hand of the deriders.*

The passions are the inmost wheels of this machine which we call man, whose motions all the rest of life follows, and all the errors of this career of ours proceed from their irregularity. Of so great importance is it that every one rightly determine what he should desire, and hope, and fear. And from the time that man lost the ingenuity of his disposition, and became like a wild ass's colt, the use of fear is become very great. It is true that they who are born again, and who really are the sons of God, are especially led by the sweet and noble energy of this divine principle, and therefore it is the saying of the beloved Apostle, *that perfect love, or charity, casteth out fear*, 1 John iv. 18. But as the generality of mankind are either entirely destitute of this divine love, or possess it only in a very

low and imperfect degree, so it is certain, that with regard to him, whose heart is most entirely fired with this celestial flame, we may understand the words as signifying, that in such an one this great and fervent love does indeed cast out all despairings, and diffident fears, but not that of a pious and reverential awe. Alas! most of us, under pretence of avoiding a servile terror, perversely shake off the bonds of holy and ingenuous fear, and become obstinate and self-willed; whereas when we look into the word of God, we shall find the holiest men there tremble in the Divine presence, and sometimes acknowledge even great horror of mind. Ps. cxix. 120: *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.* Job xxxi. 23: *Destruction from God was a terror to me, and because of his excellency I could not endure.* In this sense, as David declares, Ps. xix. 9, *The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever,* endures in the most happy agreement with perfect love. Nor is it only to remain in spirits that inhabit flesh, but in all the angelic choirs, pure and happy as they are. Nay the profound reverence of that eternal and tremendous Majesty flourishes and reigns most of all there; for in proportion to the degree in which the knowledge is clearer and vision more distinct, is the veneration and the fear more deep and humble. How reasonable then must it be, that mortal men, beset with sore temptations and dangers, should, as Hezekiah expresseth it, *walk softly and tremble* before that infinite Majesty, at *whose voice the earth is shaken,*

and at whose *rebuke the pillars of heaven are moved*. With great propriety did one of the ancients say, “Fear is the first swaddling band of new born wisdom,”* or as the Scripture expresses it, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. It is observed that the original word there made use of, signifies both the beginning and the top, and in both senses it is most true: the author just mentioned admirably says, “Do they call such an one unlearned? It is the only wisdom I know to fear God; it is the beginning of wisdom and end of all discourse, as Solomon describes it; it is indeed the *το παν*, the whole matter, the whole concern of man, and it is all in all; fear God.”† And elsewhere he adds, “This fear is most salutary to men, but at the same time most rare, superlatively so.”‡ And once more, “It is,” says he, “the greatest of all good things to fear God, and the ungodly in falling from it shall not be permitted long to continue the abuse of his own folly.”§ Well therefore is it here added, *sin not*. This fear is the water of the sanctuary, to quench all the flames of concupiscence; this (says Bernard) *is the arrow that strikes through all the desires of the flesh*. Hence arose Abraham’s

* Ὁ φόβος πρῶτον τῆς σοφίας σπαργανον. Greg. Naz.

† Απαιδευτον ονομασθαι; Μιαν σοφίαν οἶδα, το φοβεῖσθαι Θεον· ἀρχὴ τε γὰρ σοφίας, φόβος Κυρίου, καὶ τέλος λογῶν· το παν ἀκβε, εφη Σολομομων, τον Θεον φοβει. Greg. Naz. Or. xxviii.

‡ Φόβος δε Θεου, ἀνθρωπων σωτηριος, σπανιος δε, σπανιωταλος.

§ Αγαθον γε μεν μεγαλιν ευλαβεισθαι Θεον· ἐπερ ἀσεβης ἐκπεσων, & πολυν χρονον τῆ ἑαυτε μωρια καταχρησεται.

fear and apprehension among strangers, *Surely*, says he, *the fear of God is not in this place*. Gen. xx. 11.

But in order to produce this fear, it is necessary that we should have right conceptions of God—that nothing impure can please him, because he is holiness itself; that nothing secret can be concealed from him, because he is light; nor can any sinner surely be mad enough to hope he shall escape the long hand of his righteous Judge and supreme King, whose power is immense, and who cannot be a respecter of persons. What evil then can escape with impunity? *Thou, O Lord, thou only art to be feared; and who can stand before thee when once thou art angry?* Psalm lxxvi. 7.

Commune with your own heart.] Or, as some render it, *examine yourselves*. Oh! how few do this! Men live abroad and are indeed strangers at home, the great mark of human madness—to delight in speaking and hearing of what concerns others, while no single person will attempt to descend into himself.* Yet this faculty which we call reflection, is the peculiar privilege of human nature, and to be borne on wholly by external objects, is indeed brutal. And oh! what heaps of disorder, what odious filthiness, must there necessarily be in a breast which is never looked into, and cleansed out? Dear youths, if amidst all your other studies, you do not learn to commune with you own selves, whatever you know, or rather,

* Ut nemo in sese tentat descendere, nemo.

whatever you imagine you know, I would not purchase it at the expense of a straw.

On your Bed.] Or, as some would render it, *in your secret chambers*, when free from the noise of the world, and hurries of their daily business. An ancient said, “The reflections of the night are deepest.”* And it has been observed, that David in the 19th Psalm, ascribes speech to the day, and wisdom to the silent night. It is an excellent advice of Pythagoras, and the verses that contain it, do indeed deserve to be called *golden*, “That we should not allow ourselves to go to sleep, till we have seriously revolved the actions of the day, and asked ourselves, What have I done amiss? What good have I done, or neglected to do? that so we may reprove ourselves for what has been wrong, and take the comfort of what has been as it ought.”†

* Βαθυτεραι γαρ νυκτος φρενες.

† The original, with Mr. Rowe’s translation and paraphrase is as follows :

Μη δ’ ὕπνον μαλακοισιν ἐπ’ ὀμμοσιν προσδεξασθαι,
 Πριν των ἡμερινων εργαων τρις ἑκασον ἐκελθειν.
 Πη παρεβην; τι δ’ ερεξα; τι μοι δεον εκ ετελεσσα;
 Αρξαμενος δ’ απο πρωτη επεξειδι και μετεπειτα,
 Δεινα μεν εκπρηξας επιπλησσειο, χρησα δε, τερπη.

Let not the stealing god of sleep surprise,
 Nor creep in slumbers on thy weary eyes,
 E’er every action of the former day
 Strictly thou dost and righteously survey.
 With reverence at thy own tribunal stand,
 And answer justly to thy own demand,

And be still.] This refers not so much to the tongue as to the mind, for what does an external silence signify, if the inward affections be turbulent? A sedate and composed mind, is necessary in order to know ourselves, and know God. As it is hinted in Psalm xlvi., *Be still, and know that I am God.* Such wisdom both deserves and demands a vacant soul; it will not, as it were, thrust itself into a corner, nor inhabit a polluted or unquiet breast. God was not *in the whirlwind, nor the fire, but in the small still voice,* 1 Kings xix. 12. The holy Spirit is peaceful and pacific, but wicked men are turbulent and stormy, driven like the sea, whose waves are tossed about, and throw up continually mire and dirt. Impurity is the inseparable attendant of this inquietude, *but the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, ἀγνή, επειτα ειρηνική, pacific,* James iii. 17; and in that blessed country to which it teaches us to aspire, there is the most perfect and everlasting cohabitation of purity and peace.

Where have I been? In what have I transgress'd?

What good, or ill, has this day's life express'd?

Where have I fail'd in what I ought to do?

In what to God, to man, or to myself I owe?

Inquire severe, whate'er from first to last,

From morning's dawn till ev'ning's gloom has past.

If evil were thy deeds, repenting mourn,

And let thy soul with strong remorse be torn.

If good, the good with peace of mind repay,

And to thy secret self with pleasure say,

“ Rejoice, my heart, for all went well to-day.” }
}

Ver. 5. *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.*

THE mind of man is earthly, I say, *ὁσος νυν βροτοι εἰσι*, as mortals now are, entangled in the folds of flesh and sense ; it knows not how to rise to things celestial and divine : and when it is stimulated with some sense of the eternal Deity, and the worship due to him, it generally slides into some lighter offices and external rites, how carelessly soever performed, and there it rests. *But God is a Spirit*, and requires to be *worshipped in spirit and in truth* ; and the solemn visible sacrifices, when instituted by the command of Him the great Invisible, are to be presented by every pious person with all humble and obedient regard ; yet the chief labour is to be employed on the pure, sublime worship and obedience of the mind. The heathen Philosophers objected to the primitive Christians, that they did not sacrifice ; to which some of the early Apologists reply thus : “ The Former and Parent of the whole universe has no need of incense and of blood. The greatest sacrifice we can present to him, is to know who has *stretched out the heavens*, who has *laid the foundations of the earth*, who has *gathered together the waters into the hollow of the sea*, and divided the light from the darkness, formed the whole animal world, and the human species, and who governs them all by his nod ; and that, acknowledging him such an immense and omnipotent Being, we should

lift up pure and holy hands to him.”* And the truth of this sentiment has generally prevailed throughout all ages, and even in the Jewish church, while the obligation to sacrifice did yet continue, with all the laborious institution of external worship; holiness and righteousness, and integrity of heart and life, were acknowledged to be the most essential part of religion; though, alas! while all confessed it in words, there were very few that set themselves seriously to perform it. Hence arose the necessity of inculcating this lesson so frequently, Ps. l., Isa. i., xxix., &c., and what is there taught at large, is here hinted in this short clause. Since the temple has been demolished, and the priests with their sacrifices have ceased, the Jews themselves have instituted in the place, of this the offering of the lip, with the commemoration only of ancient sacrifice, persuaded that this would be equally effectual, and have appointed three daily lessons, calling him, who diligently recites them, a son of eternal life.

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness.] It is no improbable conjecture of some commentators, that David here refers to the confidence and boast of some of Saul's courtiers, in those sacrifices and that solemn worship from which their envy had perhaps banished him. It is certainly much easier to sacrifice a ram, or a bullock, than to slay anger or ambition, easier indeed to heap up whole hecatombs of animals, than to resign one brutal affection or

* Athenagoras.

concupiscence, yea, easier to present all our goods than ourselves as living sacrifices, though that is undoubtedly our reasonable service. The Mosaic sacrifices, though instituted by God, borrowed all their value from that evening victim which was to be slain in the end of the world, who was himself the sacrifice and the altar, and the one only *High Priest after the order of Melchizedeck*; who yet instituted a perpetual succession of those who should *be a royal priesthood*, the whole series of which priests in their succeeding generations are daily offering to God the Father of Spirits, the pure and spiritual sacrifice of righteousness, most acceptable to him, as passing through the hand of the great High Priest, who incessantly ministers in that high and holy sanctuary; as Bernard excellently speaks,* “Nothing, Lord, that is thine can suffice me without thyself, nor can any thing that is mine without myself be pleasing to thee.” And Augustine,† “Let thy fire entirely consume me, so that nothing of me may remain to myself.” And this one Holocaust comprehends all the sacrifices of righteousness; the understanding, the love, all the affections and faculties of the soul, and organs of our bodies; all our words, actions and thoughts, prayers and vows, hymns and thanksgivings, piety, modesty, charity, and the whole choir of virtues, exercised in a diligent and harmonious observation of all his precepts. These are

* Nec mihi tua sufficiunt sine te, nec tibi placent mea sine me.

† Totum me consumat ignis tuus, nihil mei remaneat mihi.

victims and perfumes of incense worthy so pure a Deity, *who eats not the flesh of bulls, nor drinks the blood of goats; who if he were hungry would not ask us, since all the beasts of the forest are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Offer unto God thanksgivings, and pay thy vows unto the Most High. For he that offereth praise glorifies him, and to him that orders his conversation aright, will he shew the salvation of God.*

Even the Heathen philosophers and poets saw and taught, that these sacrifices of a pious mind were most fit for a rational worshipper, and must be most fit for God, to whom they are addressed. "Strange indeed would it be," says Socrates, "if the gods should look to the gift and sacrifice, and not to the soul." And passages of Horace* and Persus† to this purpose are so well known, that they need not be repeated. The language of the son of Sirach is also agreeable to it. Eccl. xxxv. 1, 3: *He that keepeth the law bringeth offerings enough; he that taketh heed to the commandment offereth a peace offering. He that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour, and he that gives alms sacrificeth praise. To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the*

* Immunis aram si tetigit manus,
Non sumptuosa blandior hostia
Mollibit aversos Penateis,
Farre pio, et saliente mica.

† Compositum jus fasque animi, sanctosque recessus
Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto.
Hæc cedo ut admoveam templis, et farre litabo.

Lord, and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation.

And put your trust in the Lord.] This very trust with which the mind reposes itself upon God, is both the great consolation of a good man, and the great sacrifice of piety and righteousness. The faith of Abraham was a sacrifice much dearer to God, not only than the ram which he actually offered, but even than his dearest son whom he had brought to the altar. *He was strong in faith, says the apostle, and so he gave glory to God.* And again, only they who offer to God the sacrifice of righteousness, can rely upon him with a true and solid confidence. Not that these sacrifices, though the choicest and best of all, can pretend to any merit, but because they are the most genuine signs and most certain seals of a soul in covenant with God: so that there is indeed a mutual signing; God offering the dearest pledges of his favour to us, and we in like manner, as is most fit, rendering all that we have, and all that we are, to him, with the most humble and grateful heart; and certainly this union and perpetual, undivided friendship, is the true *εὐθυμία* of the holy soul, that temperature which alone can give it solid tranquillity and felicity, as it follows presently after in this Psalm.

Ver. 6. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us.*

THE Psalmist now returns to himself and his own affairs, and having sufficiently admonished his enemies concerning the true and only good, enforces his exhortation by his example, that if they thought fit they might follow it; for this is the most efficacious manner of teaching. But if they would not, that he might at least enjoy the benefit of his own counsel, and wrapping himself up in his own happiness, might from that eminence, look down upon all the vain and wretched pursuits of the mad vulgar. Like drunken men, they reel and stagger from place to place; they often fall down upon their face, and strike and dash themselves against what they desired to embrace. Through all their life, with an unstable pace, they catch at flying forms of good; and after all their falls and their bruises, they cry out again and again, *Who will shew us any good?* And when they behold any new species or shadow of it, they immediately run to it. Nay perhaps so light and various are they in their pursuit, they return again to that in which they had been frequently deceived, and which they had as often abandoned. Rabbi Solomon paraphrases the words thus: "When Israel saw the nations prosperous," he said, "Who will shew us like

prosperity ? But David says, Envy them not, we have a sublimer prosperity in the light of the Divine countenance." "That is good," says the great Philosopher of the schools, "which all pursue." The various affections and desires of the mind, are as the pulse and natural respiration ; but certain internal principles, which not inwrought by nature, are afterwards received and deeply engraved upon the heart, are the springs of that motion ; our different opinions of different things do nevertheless all meet in this, "That we would see good." But they who select from the various objects that present themselves, a suitable, complete and substantial good, and, neglecting every thing else, bend all their pursuits to that, are the only wise and happy men.

This the Psalmist professes he did, and freely invites all that pleased to join and take part with him in these desires and pursuits, well knowing that the happiness was abundantly sufficient for many, for all that would apply themselves to it, and such as could not at all be diminished by being imparted ; for it was indeed the *αυταρκες καλον*, the self-sufficient, and all-sufficient good, which was one of the titles that some of the wiser Heathens gave their Jupiter : but he of whom we speak is the living and the true God ; nor is there any other good whatsoever adequate to the human mind ; and what we say of his infinite sufficiency, is most aptly signified by this adumbration which the Psalmist uses, I say, by the adumbration of light ; nor do I think fit to

correct it as an incongruous expression, for light is indeed as it were the shadow of God, and that fulness of supreme good which is in him, is in some degree shadowed out by light, which entirely illustrates with the full stream of its rays all who behold it, and is not broke into little fragments, to be sparingly distributed to each. Many seek many things; they pursue any good with uncertain and ignorant desires, but we have fixed upon the one petition we should insist upon, for in this one is all; *Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Oh! rich, grand and incomparable desire! without this, all the proudest palaces of monarchs are gloomy caverns, dark as hell, and all the riches of all the earth mere indigence. This is the proper light of the intellectual world, and it puts gladness into the heart, as it follows.

Ver. 7. Thou hast put gladness into my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

GLADNESS into my heart.] to which the gross delights of earthly things cannot reach; they stick as it were before the threshold. Corn and wine are only the refreshment of these mean, frail, earthly bodies, and the support of this corporeal and terrene life, but have nothing *συγγενης*, congenial, with and a-kin to the heaven-born Spirit. It, is said, indeed, that *bread strengthens man's heart, and wine makes it glad*; but the heart there spoken of is that

which is the spring of animal life and natural spirit ; whereas, to that heart which holds the preference in human nature, which may therefore be called the *ἡγεμονικη*, *the governing part*, there is nothing which gives light and gladness, beneath the eternal Father of lights and of spirits. He cherishes the languishing soul with the rays of his love, and satisfies it with the consolations of his spirit, as with a kind of heavenly *nectar* or *nepenthe*, that while it confides in his safety, lays all its cares and fears asleep, and lulls it into deep peace, and calm sweet repose, without which, if the mind be a little agitated, no gentle breeze of harmony, no melody of birds or harp can bring on the pleasing slumber, during which nevertheless the heart awakes. Oh happy man who betakes his whole soul to God, and does not only choose him above all, but in the place of all, waiting only on him ! Happy man who, having been chosen by him with preventing love and unmerited benignity, embraces his ample all-sufficient Creator for his inheritance, and his wealth ; often repeating with sacred transport, *Deus meus et omnia !* my God and my all ! This is the man that has enough ; and therefore, to allude to the words of the poet, “ He is not disquieted by the raging of the sea, nor any severity of the seasons, whatever stars may rise and set.*

*

——— Neque

Tumultuosum sollicitat mare,

Nec sævus Arcturi cadentis

Impetus, aut orientis Hædi. HOR. lib. iii. od. i.

God fixes his gracious dwelling in the pure and holy soul, which has learned to despise the vanity of riches, and makes it calm in the midst of hurries and secure in the deepest solitudes. And not merely to find, but even to seek after God, is better to such a soul, inexpressibly better than to possess the richest treasure, the most extensive empire, or to have all the variety of sensual pleasures waiting upon its beck.

I remember to have read of some military officers, who crossing the Nile, in the same boat, with the two Macarii of Egypt, said to them, in allusion to their name, "You are indeed happy who laugh at the world." "Yes," said they, "It is evident that we are happy, not merely in name but in reality; but you are unhappy whom the world derides, as poor creatures whom it sees entangled in its snares."

St. Augustine also quotes from Politian a similar example of a Pretorian soldier, who, walking out with his comrade, found in a cottage into which he accidentally came, a book containing the life of the hermit Anthony, and when he had read a little in it, looking upon his friend, said, "To what are we taking so much pains to arrive? What do we seek? For what do we go through the fatigues of a military life? The highest of our hopes at court must be, to share some extraordinary degree of the emperor's favour; and how frail and dangerous a situation is that! And through how many other previous dangers must we pass to it; and how soon will all the advantages we can hope from it be over!

But I may this moment, if I please, become the friend and favourite of God." And he had no sooner uttered these words, than they both resolved upon quitting the world, that they might give up all the remainder of their days to religion.

Holy men in former ages did wonders in conquering the world and themselves ; but we, unhappy, degenerate, drowsy creatures as we are, blush to hear that they did what we cannot or will not do. We are indeed inclined to disbelieve the facts, and rather choose to deny their virtues, than to confess our own indolence and cowardice.

MEDITATIONS

ON PSALM xxxii.

Ver. 1. *Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.*

OH! the pure, the overflowing, the incomparably sweet fountain of Scripture!

“Hence light we draw, and fill the Sacred cup;”*

Whereas the springs of philosophy in human affairs, are not very clear, and in divine, they are quite turbid and muddy; which one of the greatest orators and philosophers among them all freely confesses. “I think,” says he, “we are not only blind to true wisdom, but are very dull and slow of apprehension even in those things which seem to be discerned and understood.”† Nor is this to be wondered at; for there would be little difference between things human and divine, if the dim eye of our reason were sufficient to discover their secrets. One of the ancients excellently says, “If you examine

* Hinc lucem haurire est et pocula sacra.

† Mihi non modo ad sapientiam cæci videmur, sed ad ea ipsa, quæ aliqua ex parte cerni videantur, hebetes et obtusi. Sen.

things ever so accurately, you will never be able to discover them if God keeps them veiled.”*

It would be a vain and ridiculous labour to light up a great number of lanthorns and torches, and go out and look for the sun in the night ; but when the appointed hour of morning comes, he rises, as of his own accord, and freely manifests himself by his own lustre, to every beholder. The wisest of the Heathens undertook to find out the Supreme Being, and the Supreme Good ; but wandering through the devious ways of multiplied errors, they could attain to neither. Nor was it the least of their errors, that they sought them as two different things, when it is most certain that both are united in One. For it is the only and ultimate happiness of man to be united to that first and supreme Being and Good, from which he drew his original. But since there has so sad a distance and disagreement arisen between God and man, by our deplorable apostacy from him, there could not be the least hope of attaining that union, did not infinite goodness and mercy propose the full and free pardon of our offences. So that the true determination of this grand question about happiness, is evidently this—*Blessed and happy is that man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.* Innocence was the first means of obtaining happiness ; which being once violated, the only plank that can save us after our shipwreck,

* Αλλ' ε γαρ αν τα θεια κρυπτοντος Θεου

Μαθοις αν, εθ' ει πικντ' υπεξελθοις σκοπων. Soph.

is repentance and remission; which two things the whole scripture assures us, that the Divine wisdom has connected, as with an adamantine band. And this Psalm which is now before us, is a signal declaration of it, which since it inculcates so grand a topic of religion, κυριαν δοξαν, may well be styled as it is *Maschil*, a lesson of instruction: for as St. Augustine well observes, “That is instruction indeed, which teaches us that man is not saved by the merit of his works, but by the grace of God.”*

Blessed.] Or O! blessed man! or O! the felicity of that man! and to denote the most entire, supreme and perfect blessedness.† He only has attained to complete felicity, whose numerous debts are all remitted; though far from being able to pay them, he could not so much as reckon them up; and blessed is he that knows it, as the proverb is, “No man is happy but he who thinks himself so.”‡

The man whose iniquity is forgiven.] As the word is *nesevi*, it might be rendered, *Blessed is the man who is eased of the heavy burden of his sin.* A burden indeed too heavy for the strongest man upon earth; a burden so dreadfully great, that God’s angels are not able to stand under it; for many of the chief of them were pressed down to hell by it;

* Quâ intelligitur non meritis operum, sed Dei gratiâ hominem liberari.

† As the elephant, to denote its vast bulk, is spoken of in the plural number, *Behemoth*.

‡ Non est beatus qui se non putat.

and can rise no more. But though no giant on earth or in heaven could bear it, a lamb subjected himself to it: but it was a *lamb without blemish and without spot*, burdened with no load of his own sin, nor stained with the least spot of pollution. *The Lamb of God, the Son of God*, who is himself God, is he ὁ αἰῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, who takes away all the sins of the world, as one sin; taking the burden upon himself, he bears it and carries it away.

Covered.] That sinners may more clearly apprehend, and more easily and firmly believe a thing which seems so difficult to admit, as the free and full remission of sin, it is painted out by various beautiful expressions and figures in the sacred Scriptures—*washing, cleansing, blotting out, scattering like a cloud, entirely forgetting, casting into the bottom of the sea*, and here by that of *taking away and covering*, and by that phrase which explains both, of *not imputing* them; and this expression of *covering* them, is with great propriety added to the former phrase of *lightening* the sinner of the burden of them: and, that there may be no fear of their returning again, or coming into sight, when God has not only taken the heavy load from our shoulders, but for ever hidden it from his own eyes, and the veil of mercy has taken it away; that great covering of divine love, which is large enough to overspread so many and so great offences. Thus it does as it were turn away the penetrating eye of his justice, which the most

secret iniquity could not elude, did not he himself in pity voluntarily avert it.

But you will know what is our propitiatory, what the covering of the mercy-seat, even Jesus who was typified by that *Caporeth* in the temple, which the Septuagint renders *ιλασηριον επιθημα*, a *propitiatory covering*; by which title our great Redeemer is marked out, Rom. iii. 25, as the same Hebrew word *Capfar* signifies both to *cover* and to *expiate*.* But that the thing may be more evident and certain, the thought is repeated again in the second verse.

Ver. 2. *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

ABEN-EZRA paraphrases it, *of whose sins God does not think*, does not regard them, so as to bring them into judgment; reckoning them as if they were not, *ε μη λογιζεται*, *does not count or calculate them, or charge them to account*; does not require for them the debt of punishment. To us the remission is entirely free, our Sponsor having taken upon him the whole business of paying the ransom. His suf-

* It is to be observed, the Hebrew words *Eschol haccopher*, which some render *a cluster of camphire*, Cant. i. 14, may with a little variation in the reading, i. e. reading it, *Ish col haccopher*, be rendered, *a man of all kinds of redemption, or of all expiation*: so the Targum interprets it by *expiation*, and, by the way, some assert that this Psalm used to be sung on the day of expiation.

fering is our impunity, his bond our freedom, and his chastisement our peace ; and therefore the Prophet says, *The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.* Distracted creatures that we are, to indulge those sins which brought death upon our dear Redeemer, and to be so cold in our affections to that Redeemer who died for these sins !

This weighty sentence, of itself so admirable, Paul renders yet more illustrious, by inserting it into his reasonings on the topic of justification, as a celebrated testimony of that great article of our faith. David, says he, thus describeth the blessedness of that man, saying, *Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven.* So that this is David's opinion concerning true happiness ; he says not, blessed are those that reign over kingdoms ; blessed are those generals who are renowned for their martial bravery and success, though he himself had both these titles to boast of. It is not the encomiums of the greatest multitudes, nor the breath of popular applause, nor any other degree of human honour, which entitles a man to this character. It is not said, blessed is he who ploughs many thousand acres of land, or who has heaped together mountains of gold and silver ; not he who has married a beautiful and rich woman, or, which in his age, or even now in those eastern countries might be the case, he who was possessed of many such ; nor, blessed is he who understands the secrets of nature, or even the mysteries of religion : but, *Oh! happy man*

whose sins are pardoned, and to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile; whose breast is full, not of feigned repentance, but of a fervent love of holiness, and hatred of sin. This makes life happy, nay absolutely blessed: but alas! when we inculcate these things, we sing to the deaf. The ignorance and folly of mankind will not cease to pronounce the proud and the covetous happy, and those who triumph in successful wickedness, and who, in chase of these lying shadows of happiness, destroy their days and their years, and their souls.

“Alas,” says the wise Roman, “how little do some who thirst most impatiently after glory, know what it is, or where to be sought!”* which is equally applicable to that true calm and serenity of mind which all pursue, but few are able to attain. But as for us who enjoy the celestial instruction of this sacred volume, if we are ignorant of it, our ignorance is quite inexcusable, obstinate and affected, since we are wilfully blind in the clearest and most refulgent light. This points out that good which can completely fill all the most extended capacities of the human soul, and which we generally seek for in vain on all sides, catching at it where it is not to be found, but ever neglecting it where alone it is. But is it then possible at once to be solidly and completely happy? You have not merely the

* Quam ignorant homines gloriæ cupidi, quæ ea sit aut quemadmodum petenda! SEN.

ideas of it, but the thing itself, not only clearly pointed out, but most freely offered, with divine munificence; so that if you do not obstinately reject the offer, it must be your own; and this happiness consists in returning to the favour and friendship of God, who most mercifully grants us the free pardon of all our sins, if we do with unfeigned repentance, and a heart free of all guile, not only humbly confess and lament them, but entirely forsake, and with implacable hatred, for ever renounce them. Ω μακαρ, ευδαιμων τε και ολβιος—all the names, all the variety of felicities, bliss and happiness are accumulated on that man who has known this *change of the right hand of the Most High*,* on whom this bright day of expiation and pardon has beamed. He easily looks down from on high on all the empty titles and false images of earthly happiness; and when he is bereaved of them all, yea, and beset on every side with what the world calls misfortunes and afflictions, ceases not to be happy. In sorrow he is joyful, in poverty rich, and in chains free; when he seems buried deep, so that not one ray of the sun can reach him, he is surrounded with radiant lustre; when overwhelmed with ignominy, he glories; and in death itself he lives, he conquers, he triumphs. What can be heavy to that man, who is eased of the intolerable burden of sin? How animated was that saying of Luther, “Smite, Lord,

* Alluding to Ps. lxxvii. 10, where the vulgate renders *Scuih change, mutatio dextræ Excelsi*, and several other versions nearly agree with it.

smite; for thou hast absolved me from my sins!"*
 Whose anger should he fear who knows that God is propitious to him, that supreme King, *whose wrath is indeed the messenger of death, but the light of his countenance is life*; who joys all by the rays of his favour, and by one smile disperses the darkest cloud, and calms the most turbulent tempest?

But we must now observe the complication of a two-fold good, in constituting this felicity; for we have two things here connected, as conspiring to make the person spoken of blessed: The free remission of sin, and the inward purification of the heart. This simplicity, *αφελότης*, is a most excellent part of purity, opposed to all wickedness and arts of deceit: and, in common speech, that which is simple, and has no foreign mixture, is called pure. Pardon presents us as just and innocent before our Judge; and that sanctity is not to be regarded as constituting any part of our justifying righteousness before God, nor as only the condition or sign of our felicity, but truly and properly a part of it. Purity is the accomplishment of our felicity, begun on earth, and to be consummated in heaven: that purity, I say, which is begun here, and shall there be consummated. But if any one think he can divide these two things, which the hand of God has joined by so inseparable a bond, it a vain dream. Nay, by attempting to separate these two parts of happiness, he will, in fact only exclude himself from the whole. Jesus, our victorious Saviour, has

* *Feri, Domine, feri; nam a peccatis absolvisti me.*

snatched us from the jaws of eternal death ; but to be delivered from the cruel tyranny and bonds of sin, and to be brought into the blessed liberty of the sons of God, was another essential part of our redemption ; and if any one does not embrace this with equal alacrity and delight as the other benefit, he is a wretched slave of the most mean and ignoble spirit ; and being equally unworthy of both parts of this stupendous deliverance, he will justly forfeit and lose both. And this is the epidemical Antinomianism of the Christian world, because they who labour under it have nothing but the name of Christians ; they gladly hear of the pardon of their sins and the salvation of their souls, while they are averse to the doctrine of holiness and repentance. It is a disagreeable message, *a hard saying, and who can bear it ?* But oh ! the incomparable charms of holiness ! to be desired not only for the sake of other benefits, which come in its train, but especially for itself : so that he who is not transported with a most ardent love to it, is blind, and deserves to be thrust into the mill, to tread that uncomfortable round, and to grind there ; deserves to be a slave for ever—since he knows not how to use liberty when offered to him. Shall the Stoic say, “ The servant of philosophy is truly free ; ”* and shall we scruple to assert the same concerning pure religion and evangelical holiness ? Now this freedom from guile, that fair simplicity, of which the Psalmist speaks, is deservedly reckoned among the

* Qui philosophiæ inservit, est verè liber.

chief endowments of a pure soul, and is here named instead of all the rest, as nothing is more like to that God who inspects the very heart; in nothing do we so much resemble him; and therefore it is most agreeable to him, because most like him. He is the most simple of all beings, and is indeed *truth itself*, and therefore he *desires truth in the inward parts*, and hates *a heart and a heart*, as the Hebrew phrase is to express those that are double-hearted. And how much our blessed Redeemer esteems this simplicity, we may learn from the earnestness with which he inculcates it upon his disciples, that they should be *simple as doves*, Matth. x. 16. We may also learn it from the honourable testimony he bears to this character in Nathanael, when he pronounces him, John i. 47, *an Israelite indeed; in whom there is no guile*; and especially from his own perfect example, as it is said of him, 1 Pet. ii. 22, *He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*. Perhaps the Psalmist might the more willingly mention this virtue, as he reflected with penitential distress on his crafty and cruel attempt of covering that adultery which he had committed with the veil of murder. But, however that was, it is certain, that this guileless sincerity of heart, holds the first rank in the graces that attend true repentance. It may be sometimes our duty to open our sins to men, by an ingenuous confession; but it is always our duty to do it to God: who promises to cover them only on this condition, that we do sincerely uncover them ourselves. But if we affect that which is his

part, he will, to our unspeakable damage, do that which he had assigned to us. If we hide them, he will bring them into open light, and will discuss and examine each with the greater severity. "He," says Ambrose, "who burdens himself, makes his error so much the lighter."* "In proportion to the degree," says Tertullian, "in which you are unwilling to spare yourself, God will spare you."† But what madness is it to attempt to conceal any action from him, from whom, as Thales wisely declares, "you cannot so much as conceal a thought!"‡ But, not now to insist upon the impossibility of a concealment, a wise man would not wish to cover his wounds and his disease from that physician, from whose skilful hand he might otherwise receive healing; and this is what the Psalmist presently after, for our instruction, confesses.

Ver. 3: When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long.

WHILE he suppressed the ingenuous voice of confession, the continually increasing weight of his calamity, extorted from him a voice of roaring; "while I would not speak as it became a guilty man, I was compelled even to bellow like a beast."§

* *Allevat errores ille qui se onerat.*

† *Quantum tibi non peperceris, tantum tibi parcat Deus.*

‡ *Ὅν οὐ λαμβάνεις εἶδε διανοημένος.*

§ *Dum nolui loqui, ut hominem reum decet, mugire coactus sum ut brutum.*

Nevertheless, this wild roaring did not move the Divine compassion, nor atone his displeasure.

Ver 4: For day and night thine hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.

HITHERTO that voice was wanting, to which the bowels of the father always echo back, the voice of a son full of reverence, and ready to confess his errors; without which, cries and lamentations in misery, are no more regarded in the sight of God, than the howling of dogs; according to that expression of Hosea vii. 14: *They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds.* A dog howls when he is hungry, or when he is lashed: but from a son, when he is chastened, acknowledgments of his fault, and deprecations of his father's displeasure, are expected; and when the son thus acknowledges his offence, and intreats for pardon, it is the part of a compassionate father to forgive, and to spare. Nor do we indeed confess our offences to our father, as if he were not perfectly acquainted with them, but we fly to him who requires we should repent, that he may not shew us by punishment, those things which we avoid shewing to him by confession. "I confessed unto the Lord," says Augustine, "to whom all the abyss of my sin and misery lay open: so that if I did not

confess whatever was hidden in my heart, I should not hide myself from him, but him from me.”*

Thy hand was heavy upon me.] That hand, which when pressing is so heavy, when raising, is so sweet and powerful, (Psalm xxxvii. 24,) and when scattering its blessings, so full and so ample, Psalm civ. 28, cxlv. 16. He would not at first be humbled by the confession of his iniquity, and therefore he is humbled by the weight of the hand of God. Oh powerful hand! beyond all comparison, more grievous than any other hand to press down, and more powerful to raise up. He who suppresses his sins without confessing them,

Vulnus alit venis et cæco carpitur igne,

“ Conceals an inward wound, and burns with secret fire.”

Under the appearance of sparing he is indeed cruel to himself; and when he has drunk down iniquity, and keeps it within, and it is not covered by the Divine forgiveness, it is like a poison, which consumes the marrow in the midst of his bones; and dries up the vital moisture. It may, perhaps, occasion more present pain to draw out the point of the weapon which sticks in the flesh; but to neglect it, will occasion greater danger, and more future torment: nor will the dart fall out by his running hither and thither, but, on the contrary, as

* Et tibi, Domine, cujus oculis nuda abyssus, quid occultum esset in me si non confiterer, non me tibi absconderem, sed te mihi.

the poet expresses it with respect to the wounded deer, it fixes deeper and deeper.*

But the only healing herb that the sinner can find is true repentance and humble confession, not that which acknowledges sin in a few slight words, when it has hardly looked upon it and known it; but that which proceeds from a previous, true and vivid compunction of soul, and is inseparably attended with renovation and purity of heart and life, so as comprehending this, it is sometimes put for the whole of repentance. 1 John i. 9: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* And so in the psalm before us.

Ver. 5. I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, "I will confess my transgression unto the Lord," and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

TRUE and genuine repentance hath eyes as it were on both sides, *πρῶσῳ καὶ ὀπίσῳ βλέπει*; it looks back on sins already committed, to lament them; it looks forward, and humbly resolves no more to commit what it has lamented; and each of these is expressed by each of the words by which repentance is signified, *μεταμελεια* and *μετανοια*, which words are therefore used promiscuously, both by

*—*Illa fuga sylvas saltusque peragrat.
Dyctæos, hæret lateri lethalis arundo.*

the sacred writers and by others. So that the received difference between them seems to me to have little foundation ; for Phavorinus interprets the word *μετανοια*, an anguish of soul, under a consciousness of having acted a foolish and absurd part, and the Latin has the same signification, if we will admit the judgment of Gellius, who seems to have been a very accurate critic in affairs of that nature. He observes, “ We are said to repent of things, whether our own actions, or those of others, which have been performed by our advice or instigation, which do afterwards displease us ; so that we change our judgment concerning them.”* But we will wave all further concern about words ; the thing itself demands our greatest attention. I entirely agree with him who said, “ I had rather feel the inward working of repentance, than know the most accurate description and definition of it.”† Yet how averse sinners are to this free though useful and salutary confession of sin, abundantly appears from this example of so great a man as the Psalmist, when taken in this unhappy snare ; for he confesses that he lay long as senseless and stupid in that quagmire into which he was fallen, and that it was with difficulty that he was

* *Pœnitere tum dicere solemus, cum quæ ipsi fecimus, aut quæ de nostra voluntate nostroque consilio facta sunt, ea nobis post incipiunt displicere, sententiamque in iis nostram demutamus.*

† *Malo sentire compunctionem, quam scire ejus definitionem.*
Thom. à Kempis, L. i. C. i.

as it were racked into a confession, by such exquisite tortures both of body and mind. On the other hand, the gracious readiness of the Father of mercies to grant pardon, is so much the more evident, as on the first word of confession that he uttered, or rather the first purpose that he formed in his mind, immediately the pardon, the full and free pardon, came down signed, as in the court of heaven—*I said, I will confess, and thou forgavest.* O admirable clemency ! It requires nothing but that the offender should plead guilty, and this not that it may more freely punish, but more liberally forgive. He requires that we should condemn ourselves, that so he may absolve us.

Ver. 6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found : Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

THIS is the joyful message, this is the great doctrine of the gospel, which opens the first door of hope to sinners ; that God is capable of being appeased, yea that he is actually appeased ; that he freely offers peace and favour to those who have deserted him, when they return to his obedience ; that he runs forth to meet them, and to receive them with a most affectionate embrace ; and having so importunately intreated our return, will not despise those who are treading back with prayers

and tears the fatal path which their folly had chosen. This is what we so frequently read in scripture, that *the Lord is gracious and very merciful, slow to anger and ready to pardon*. If he were not such who could dare to approach him? But seeing he is such a God, who should refuse or delay his return? Surely every rational and pious mind will without delay invoke so gentle and mild a Lord; *will pray to him while he is exorable*, or as the Hebrew expresses it, *in a time of finding*; for he who promises pardon, does not promise to-morrow. There are the *tempora fandi*, certain times in which he may be spoken with, and a certain appointed day of pardon and grace, which, if a man, by stupid perverseness despise, or by sloth neglect, surely he is justly overwhelmed with eternal night and misery, and must necessarily perish by the deluge of divine wrath—since he has contemned and derided that ark of salvation which was prepared, and in which, whoever enters into it, shall be safe, while the world is perishing. Though all be one unbounded sea—a sea without shore; yet, as it is here said, the greatest inundation, *the floods of deep waters shall not come nigh unto him*. This the Psalmist exhorts those that have experienced it to teach, and determines himself so to retain it with deep attention, and firm faith in his own mind, as in the following verse.

Verse 7: *Thou art my hiding-place, thou hast been, and wilt ever be so. Thou hast surrounded,*

and thou wilt surround *me with songs of deliverance*, even me who was so surrounded with clamours of sin. Where he further intimates, that songs of praise are perpetually to be offered to God our deliverer. And, that these faithful admonitions and counsels may meet with greater attention and regard, he offers himself to us as a most benevolent teacher and leader.

Vers. 8—11: *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go, &c.*] See to it, only that thou be tractable, and do not with a brutal obstinacy and fierceness repel this friendly and wise counsel, as only capable of being governed by violence, like a mule or unbroken horse, which must be held in by bit and bridle. Such indeed are the greatest part of men, whom the philosophers, with great severity indeed, but with too much justice, called, *βεγενη ανδροπερα*, “wild bulls with human faces.”

But it is added, as the sum of all admonition, and the great axiom most worthy of regard, that *many sorrows shall be to the wicked*; the Septuagint renders it, *many are the scourges of the sinner*;* but *Mercy shall embrace those that hope in the Lord*. And the Psalm concludes with this as the burden of it—*Rejoice in the Lord ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart*. Truly, my

* Παλλαι μαστιγες αμαρτων.

dear friends,* I have nothing farther to wish for myself or you, than that we may heartily believe these things, for then it will be impossible that we should not with open arms embrace true religion, and clasp it to our hearts; since nature teaches every one to desire happiness, and to fly from misery. So that Epicurus himself would teach us to lay hold on joy and pleasure, as the *το πρῶτον οικειον*, or first and proper good. This, therefore, let us law down as a certain principle, and ever adhere to it, that we may not, like brute beasts, remain in subjection to the flesh—that safety and joy and all happiness is the property of him who is possessed of virtue, and that all virtue is comprehended in true piety; and let us remember what the Prophet adds, (according to the Greek translators,†) as the necessary consequence of this principle, that *to the wicked there can be no joy.*

* The word *Juvenes*, or my dear youths, occurs here and in several other places, as these lectures were delivered to a society of young theological students; but it did not seem necessary to make the translation so exactly literal.

† Ουκ ἐστὶ χαίρειν τοῖς ἀσεβεσι.

MEDITATIONS

ON PSALM cxxx.

Ver 1: *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee,
O Lord.*

It is undoubtedly both an useful and pleasant employment, to observe the emotions of great and heroic minds, in great and arduous affairs, but that mind only is truly great, and superior to the whole world, which does in the most placid manner subject itself to God, securely casting all its burdens and cares upon him; in all the uncertain alterations of human affairs, looking at his hand, and fixing its regard upon that alone. Such the royal prophet David declares himself every where to have been, and no where more evidently than in this Psalm, which seems to have been composed by him. He lifts up his head amidst surrounding waves, and, directing his face and his voice to heaven, he says, *Out of the depths, O Lord, do I cry unto thee.* For so I would render it, as he does not seem to express a past fact, but as the Hebrew idiom imports, a prayer which he was now actually presenting.

Out of the depths.] Being as it were immersed

and overwhelmed in an abyss of misery and calamities. It is indeed the native lot of man, to be *be born to trouble, as the spark* (the children of the coal, as the original expression signifies) *to fly upward*. Life and grief are congenial;* but men who are born again, seem, as in a redoubled proportion, to be *twice born to trouble*; with so many and so great evils are they as it were laden, beyond all other men, and that to such a degree, that they may seem as it were, sometimes to be oppressed with them. And if any think this is strange, surely as the Apostle expresses it, *he cannot see afar off*, *μυωπαζει*, at best, he only looks at the surfaces of things, and cannot penetrate far into those depths. For even the philosophers themselves, untaught by divine revelation, investigated admirable reasons for such dispensations of providence, and undertook in this respect boldly to plead the cause of God. “God (says the Roman sage) loves his own people truly, but he loves them severely; as the manner in which fathers express their love to their children, is generally very different from that of mothers; they order them to be called up early to their studies, and suffer them not to be idle in those days when their usual business is interrupted; but sometimes put them on labouring till the sweat flows down, and sometimes by their discipline excite their tears; while the mother fondles them in her bosom, keeps them in the shade, and knows not how to consent that they should weep or grieve or la-

* Ὡς ἀρα συγγενής ἐστὶ λυπηὴ καὶ βίος.

bour. God bears the heart of a Father to good men, and there is strength rather than tenderness in his love; they are therefore exercised with labours, sorrows, and losses, that they may grow robust: whereas, were they to be fattened by luxurious fare, and indulged in indolence, they would not only sink under fatigues, but be burdened with their own unwieldy bulk.* Pesently after he quotes a remarkable saying of Demetrius the Cynic,† to this purpose: “He seems to be the unhappiest of mankind, who has never been exercised with adversity, as he cannot have had an opportunity of trying the strength of his own mind.” To wish to pass life without it, is to be ignorant of one part of nature, so that I may pronounce thee to be miserable, if thou hast never been miserable. If thou hast passed through life without ever struggling with an enemy, no one, not even thou thyself, canst know whether thou art able to make any resistance; whereas, in afflictions, we experience,

* Vere suos amat et severe Deus. Multo aliter patres, aliter matres indulgent; illi liberos ad studia obeunda mature excitari jubent, feriatis quoque diebus non patiuntur otiosos, et sæpe sudorem illis, et interdum lachrymas excutiunt: at matres fovere in sinu, in umbra continere volunt; nunquam flere, nunquam tristari, nunquam laborare. Patrium habet Deus adversus bonos viros animum, et illos fortius amat: et operibus, doloribus, ac damnis exagitantur, ut verum colligant robur. Languent per inertiam saginati? nec labore tantam, sed et mole, et ipse sui onere deficiunt. SEN.

† Nihil mihi videtur infelicus eo, cui nihil unquam evenerit adversi; non licuit illi se experiri.

not so much what our own strength is, as what is the strength of God in us ; and what the aid of divine grace is, which often bears us up under them to a surprising degree, and makes us joyful by a happy exit ; so that we shall be able to say, *My God, my strength, and my deliverer*. Thus the church becomes conspicuous in the midst of the flames, like the burning bush, *through the good will of him that dwelt in it*, and when it seems to be overwhelmed with waters, God brings it out of them, cleansed and beautified ; *mergas profundo, pulchrior exilit*—he plunges it in the deep, and it rises fairer than before.

We will not here maintain that paradox of the Stoics, *That evils which happen to good men, are not to be called evils at all* ; which however is capable of a very good sense, since religion teaches us, that the greatest evils are changed, and *work together for good* ; which comes almost to the same thing, and perhaps was the true meaning of the Stoics. Banishment and poverty are indeed evils in one sense, i. e. they have something hard and grievous in them ; but when they fall on a good and brave man, they seem to lay aside the malignity of their nature, and become tame and gentle. The very sharpness of them excites and exercises virtue : by exciting, they increase it, so that the root of faith shoots the stronger, and fixes the deeper, and thereby adds new strength to fortitude and patience ; and as we see in this example before us, affliction does, by a happy kind of necessity, drive

the soul to confess its sin, to fly as it were to seek its refuge under the wing of the Divine goodness, and to fix its hope upon God; and this is certainly one great advantage which the pious soul gains by adversity, that it calls away the affections from earth and earthly things, or rather tears them away, when obstinately adhering to them. It is necessary that they suffer such hardships as these, as one expresses it,* lest they should love this inconvenient stable, in which they are now obliged to lodge, as if it were their own house. It is necessary that they should perceive *that they are strangers and foreigners upon earth*, that they may more frequently, and with more ardent desire, groan after that better country, and often repeat it, *οικος φιλος, οικος αριστος*—*dear home! most desirable home!* The children and heirs of the kingdom, must be weaned by worm-wood, lest they should be so enchanted by the allurements of the flesh, and the poisonous sweetness of secular enjoyments, as to barter away the true and pure joy of their blessed hope, for this false, polluted, and deadly joy; and lest, dissolved in pleasure, the heaven-born soul should be broke under the yoke of this pernicious flesh, the root of so many passions.† Lastly, we see how much vigour and vehemence affliction adds to prayer; for the divine Psalmist, the deeper he sinks, cries to

* Expedit omnino ut hic dura experiantur, ne stabulum ament pro domo sua.

† Σαρξ ολη, παθειν ριζα πολυσχιδων.

God in so much the louder accents, *out of the deeps have I cried.*

This prayer contains those precious virtues, which, in a grateful temperature, render every prayer acceptable to God—faith, fervour, and humility. Faith, in that he prays out of *the deeps*: fervour, in that *he cries*; and both again expressed in the next word, faith, as in the midst of surrounding calamities he does not despair of redress, fervour, as he urges it with repeated importunity, and the same word uttered again and again. And, to complete all, humility expresses itself in what follows, where he speaks as one that felt himself sinking, as one who was plunged in a sea of iniquities, as well as calamities, and acknowledges he was so overwhelmed with them, as to be unable to stand, unless supported by pure mercy and grace. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who shall stand?* Thus here again, faith manifests itself more clearly, together with its kindred affections of hope and charity, which, like three graces, join their hands, and by an inseparable union support each other. You have faith in the 4th verse, *there is forgiveness with thee*; hope in the 5th, *I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in thy word do I hope*; charity in the 7th and 8th, where he does in a most benevolent manner invite all Israel to a communion of the same faith and hope; and in order to confirm them more abundantly, does in a most animated manner proclaim the riches of the Divine benignity. Such is the composition of this excellent prayer,

which, thus compounded, like a pillar of aromatic smoke from myrrh, frankincense, and every other most fragrant perfume, ascends grateful to the throne of God. And this you may take instead of the analysis of the remaining verses, which to handle by a more minute dissection of words, and to clothe in the trite phrases of the schools, to speak freely, would be as barren and useless as it is easy and puerile. And, indeed, I cannot but form the same judgment of the common way of catching at a multitude of observations from any scripture, and of pressing it with violence, as if remarks were to be estimated by number rather than weight, propriety, and use. But here let every one follow his own genius and taste; for we are willing to give the liberty we take, *Veniam damus petimusque vicissim.*

Out of the depths.] O! the immortal power of divine faith, which lives and breathes in the midst of the waves, in which it may be plunged, but cannot be sunk under any of the hugest billows; but raises itself, and the soul in which it resides, and emerges and swims above all, *φελλος ὡς αβαπτιστος*, (like cork which will still be above water,) having this in common with that divine love, of which Solomon speaks in his Song, that *many waters cannot quench it.* Whatever great things the Stoics may speak of their wise men, and whatever all philosophy may say of fortitude, it is divine faith that truly and heartily performs all, by which the good man, though stript of every help and comfort, wraps

himself up as it were, not in his own virtue and strength, but in that of God; and hence it is that he cannot be conquered by any tyranny, by any threatenings, by any calamities of life, by any fear of death; for he leans upon Omnipotence. *The Lord, says he, is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?* Let war arise, let the enemy measure out his tents against me, I, says faith, am secure *under the shadow of the Most High*, and, embracing him, I will fear nothing.

You have here the Psalmist crying with confidence out of the deeps. Behold also the prophet Jonah indeed, and, as we say, literally, *in the depths*, and in a circumstance which might have greater efficacy to shake his faith, than the sea itself, than the bowels of the fish, or any other depth into which he might be cast, as he was not entirely free from blame, but with the intermingling guilt of his own perverseness; yet among all these discouragements, his faith is not swallowed up: *I have cried unto thee in my distress, and from the very belly of hell. Thou hast cast me into the deep, and all thy waves were going over me.* So that I might truly say, *I am cast out from thy sight*, yet at the same time I said, *I will look again toward the temple of thy holiness.* I went down to the root and cavern of the mountains; the abyss surrounded me; yet when my soul was thus *overwhelmed within me*, *I remembered the Lord.* You have, among others, an excellent example of faith in David, 1 Sam. xxx.,

when the invading enemy had burnt Ziklag, had carried the women captive, and the people, in the madness of their rage and grief, spake of stoning David himself; yet, besieged with all these miseries, he *strengthens himself in the Lord his God*. Nor can any thing have greater depth and strength than that expression of Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*; not only when fainting and dying, but while expiring, as it were, of the wound which I had received from the hand of God himself, yet will I hope for life and salvation, from that very hand which has given me death; and in the jaws of death, would send out this last word, with the last breath, and with my departing soul, "Destroy not, O Lord, one that trusteth in thee."

Nor is this confidence of a pious soul, an opinion fluctuating among the waves, or a light conjecture that it shall raise its head above them; but a certain, firm, and infallible assurance. That is a vulgar and weak word of comfort, "To-morrow may be better than to-day."* But the language of divine faith is stronger and firmer, even when *deep calls unto deep*, and most certainly determines that it will not be in vain: and, therefore, in the 42nd Psalm, not dubious and trembling, but with a steady voice, he silences all the noisy tumults of an agitated mind, and says, *Repose thyself on God, for I shall still praise him*; or, as it may be rendered, *I am going to praise him*; q. d. "Amidst all those tempests which rage about me, I am thinking of that hymn

* Ταχ' αὐριον εἰσατε' αἰμεινον.

of praise which I shall pay to him for my deliverance, and for the happy exit out of all my sorrows." Though at present we have nothing in sight but darkness, and whirlwinds, and rocks, and the raging, foaming sea, let the skill and power of the great Pilot be opposed to all these. And what the Psalmist says elsewhere of sailors, may evidently be applied to those who go down into this sea ; they gain this by their dangers, that they see the works of this great Pilot in the abyss, and contemplate these wonders in the deep. And he who gives himself up to His care, and fixes his eye and hope wholly on him, though he be, or rather seem to be, shipwrecked, and lose all his goods, yet if he does not *make shipwreck of faith*, he loses nothing that is properly his own. Nay, when he is swallowed up in the abyss of death, he does not perish, but swims through it, to the farther shore of eternity, where he finds a banquet, a palace *prepared for him, and a kingdom that cannot be moved*, but remains to endless ages.

I cried.] Prayer is the natural and genuine voice of the children of God ; and as the Latin word *oratio* properly signifies articulate speech, as it distinguishes man from other animals, so in this other signification it expresses that by which the godly are distinguished from the rest of mankind. It is the proper idiom of the citizens of heaven : others may recite some words of prayer, but they do not pray. As parrots and other birds, by the industry of their teacher, may learn to imitate human voices,

yet they do not speak ; there is something wanting in all their most skilful chattering, which is the very thing that is also wanting in the language of most that are said to pray, and that is *mind* and *meaning*, affections correspondent to the words, or rather to which the words may conform, as to their original cause, and of which they may be the true index and sign. The spirit of this world knows not how to pray, nor does a spirit of adoption and liberty know how to forbear praying ; the *spirit of adoption*, says the apostle, *by which we cry, Abba, Father* ; nor can they who are newly born by that spirit, live without frequent prayer. Prayer is to them as the natural and necessary respiration of that new and divine life, as, Lam. iii. 56, *turn not away from my breathing*: the Hebrew word there made use of, *leruhethi*, properly signifies the *vital respiration* of animals. Yet notwithstanding all this, what we said above, is true, and evidently appears from the passage before us, that affliction often adds vigour to prayers, how lively and assiduous soever they may have been before. Let it be so, that prayer is the natural language of believing souls, by which they daily address their heavenly Father ; yet when they are pressed with any uncommon pain or danger, it is no less natural that this voice should be louder than ordinary, and should be raised into a cry ; it is, indeed, the breath of faith and heavenly affections, and when they are vehemently pressed by any burden, and almost expiring under it, they

breathe quicker than before, and with greater effort. Thus they who have been used to the greatest heights of daily devotion, yet in surrounding calamities pray more fervently and more frequently than ordinary, and this is to be numbered among the chief benefits attending afflictions; and it would surely be well worth our while to experience all the hardest pressures of them, if we may gain this; that the languor, and sloth, and stupidity, into which our minds and our souls are ready insensibly to sink, while all is calm and serene about us, may be happily shaken off by something which the world may call an unhappy event; that some more violent gust of wind may fan the sacred flame, that seems almost extinguished, and blow it up into greater ardour. It will be happy for us, that, with the Psalmist, we should sometimes *sink in deep waters*, that so we, who in prosperity do but whisper or mutter out our prayers, may from *the depths cry aloud unto him*. O how frequently and how ardently did David pray in the deserts and the caves! And it is he who here cries out of the deep, and perhaps these deep recesses are those from which he was now crying; but when secure amidst the ease and delights of the court, and walking at leisure on his house-top, was tempted by his own wandering eyes, and having intermitted the fervour of prayer, burnt with impure fires. Our vows are cruel to ourselves, if they demand nothing but gentle zephyrs and flowery fields, and calm repose.

as the lot of our life ; for these pleasant things often prove the most dangerous enemies to our nobler and dearer life.

Oh ! how true is that saying, “ that faith is safe when in danger, and in danger when secure ; and prayer fervent in straits, but in joyful and prosperous circumstances, if not quite cold and dead, at least lukewarm ! ” Oh ! happy straits, if they hinder the mind from flowing forth upon earthly objects, and mingling itself with the mire ; if they favour our correspondence with heaven, and quicken our love to celestial objects, without which, what we call life may more properly deserve the name of death.

Ver. 2 : Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

WE see that he was not only in earnest, which comparatively few that pray are, but that his desires were vehement, and kindled into a flame, which is the case of yet fewer. The smoke of the incense will not rise to heaven, unless it be kindled on the altar ; and hence it is that a great part of our prayers vanish like an empty sound, and are dissipated in the air. Nor is it wonderful, as we have elsewhere observed, that those petitions do not ascend which hardly go out, that go not forth from the depth of the breast, and therefore they rise not on high, but are born and die upon the lips. And how should they live when they have no principle of life, neither the constancy of faith nor

the love of zeal? And if he who asks timorously, so much more he that asks with cold indifference, may seem to bespeak a denial.

It is not the much speaking and the vain repetition condemned in the gospel, to redouble the same words again and again, provided it be not from want of care and affection, but if, on the contrary, it proceed from the vehemence and exuberance of it. The great Apostle tells us, *that he besought the Lord thrice; and the Lord of the Apostle, and our Lord, prayed in the garden again and again, speaking the same words.* He that pours out his words, inattentive to what he is about, seems to me to pray long, if he utters but two sentences; though his words be ever so few and well chosen, yet is he himself foolish and verbose. For what can be more foolish than the empty noise even of the best words, when they express nothing of the mind? But he who continues long in prayer, and urges the same petitions again and again, bursting out from the fervour of an inflamed breast, he, truly, prays in a vivid and solid manner, and in a manner most acceptable to God; and what *Fabius* says of his orator, may, with great propriety, be applied to him: *Pectus est, quod disertum facit, et vis mentis*—It is the heart, and the energy of the mind, that makes a man truly eloquent.”

Hear me.] The great Author of nature and of all things, does nothing in vain; he instituted not this law, and, if I may so express it, art of praying, as a vain and insignificant thing, but endows it

with a wonderful efficacy, for producing the greatest and happiest consequences. He would have it to be the key by which all the treasures of heaven should be opened; he has constructed it as a powerful machine, by which we may with easy and pleasant labour, remove from us the most dire and unhappy machinations of our enemy, and may with equal ease draw to ourselves what is most propitious and advantageous. Heaven and earth and all the elements obey and minister to the hands which are often lifted up to heaven in earnest prayer. Yea, all the works, and, which is yet more and greater, all the words of God obey it. Well known in the sacred Scriptures are the examples of Moses and Joshua; and which James (v. 17) particularly mentions of Elijah, whom he expressly calls *ὁμοιοπαθης*, *a man subject to like infirmities* with ourselves, that he might illustrate the admirable force of prayer, by the common and human weakness of the person by whom it was offered. And that Christian legion under Antoninus is well known and justly celebrated, which, for the singular ardour and efficacy of its prayers, obtained the name of *κεραυνοβολος*, *the thundering legion*.

It is true indeed, that our desires and hearts are open to God, when our tongues are entirely silent, and that he has a paternal regard to all our concerns; nor do we utter our petitions to him, as if he were ignorant or negligent of our necessities and desires, for we well know that he sees and hears every thing—*παντ' εφορα και παντ' επακθει*. It is also

true that his counsels are all fixed and immovable ; but it can by no means be inferred from these premises, that the business of prayer is vain and needless ; and if any one would represent these things as superseding prayer, surely he deceives himself, and by all his reasonings would make out nothing, unless it were to convict himself of a vast ingratitude to the Divine munificence, and a most shameful unworthiness of so excellent a gift.

Ought not this intercourse of men with God by prayer to be most reverently and gratefully received and cultivated by all, and numbered among the chief favours of the divine, and dignities of the human nature ? And truly, this, as much as any thing that can be imagined, is a lamentable argument of the stupidity of man, in this fallen state, that such an honour is so little regarded. Opportunities of conversing with nobles or princes of the earth, are rare and short ; and if a man of inferior station be admitted to such a favour, he glories in it, as if he were raised to heaven ; though they are but images made of the same clay with himself, and only set upon a basis a little higher than the rest : but the liberty of daily and free converse with the King of heaven is neglected for every trifle, and indeed is counted as nothing, though his very aspect alone fills so many myriads of blessed spirits above with full and perpetual felicity.

Again, is it not most reasonable to acknowledge, by this spiritual sacrifice of prayer, his infinite power and goodness, and that most providential

care by which he governs all human affairs? And when our very being and life depend upon him, and all the comfort and happiness of life, how congruous is it to exhibit this sign and token of his holding us by the hand, and of our being borne up by him! Again, what sweeter lenitive of all those miseries with which mortal life so continually abounds, can be invented, than this, to pour out all our care and trouble into his bosom, as that of a most faithful friend and affectionate father? Then does the good man lay himself down to sleep with sweet composure, in the midst of waves and storms, when he has lulled all the care and sorrows of his heart to sleep, by pouring out his prayer to God. And, once more, how pleasant is it, that these benefits, which are of so great a value both on their own account, and that of the Divine benignity from whence they come, should be delivered into our hands, marked as it were with this grateful inscription, *That they have been obtained by prayer!*

Hear, O Lord.] It is certain that the greater part of men, as they babble out vain, languid and inefficacious prayers, most unworthy the ear of the blessed God; so they seem in some degree to set a just estimate upon them, neither hoping for any success from them, nor indeed seeming to be at all solicitous about it, but committing them to the wind, as vain words, which in truth they are. But far be it from a wise and pious man, that he should so foolishly and coldly trifle in so serious an affair; his prayer has a certain tendency and scope, at

which he aims with assiduous and repeated desires, and doth not only pray that he may pray, but that he may obtain an answer: and as he firmly believes that it may be obtained, so he firmly, and constantly, and eagerly, urges his petition, that he may not flatter himself with an empty hope; for it cannot be, that any pious and reasonable desire should be directed toward the throne of God in vain, since he has been pleased to assume it among his titles, that he is *a God hearing prayer*. And certainly, though the good man does not always obtain the very thing that he asks, yet pure and right petitions never ascend in vain; but he who presents them, either obtains the thing he asks, or receives, instead of what is pleasing, what is truly profitable, and, instead of the things that he wishes for, those that are upon the whole the fittest and best, and that in the fittest and best time: therefore the vehemence of prayer is to be attempered with patience and long-suffering expectation. We often put ourselves as it were out of breath with the eagerness of speaking, and are presently weary, if we do not immediately obtain our request. Our prayers are often like those of the damsel who danced before Herod, *I will that thou presently give me this or that*; whereas he that prays fervently, urges this, that God would make haste to help him; but, in the mean time, as he believes, will not make haste, nor will he suffer, if the delay be ever so long, that a speech like that of the impious king of Israel should escape him—*This evil is of the Lord, and*

why should I wait for the Lord any longer? 2 Kings vi. 33.

But O! how necessary is it, that souls worshipping so pure a God, should be purged from all the earthly dregs of impure affections! Most true is that oracle of the Psalmist, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.* The hands must be washed in innocence before they can be lifted up to him with acceptance. *Draw near to God,* says the apostle James, *and he will draw near to you;* but in order to this, he subjoins, *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye hypocrites, or ye double-minded,* who are the impurest of all. These things we only briefly suggest; but I beseech you, my dear charge, that ye embrace this divine study, that you labour to obtain this sacred art, which is the best and only way of being enriched with all the most valuable blessings, even those of a celestial origin and tendency. O think! it is nothing unpleasant, nothing low and contemptible, to which you are now invited; on the contrary, that there is nothing more delightful, nothing more sublime, than to meditate upon heavenly objects, to converse with God, and from thence to imbibe a contempt of this low and transitory world; to be raised above all perishing enjoyments, and to taste the prelibations of that celestial life itself.

But how accurately soever the precepts of this divine oratory may be delivered, none will effectually receive them, unless they are taught the skill by God himself. We must pray that we may be

able to pray, and draw as it were from that superior academy, that faculty of pure and pious speech which flies as with a swift, ready and natural motion to heaven from whence it came, and brings down with it the most precious gifts into the bosom of the person that utters it; and, by the way, it is a most certain truth, that the greatest blessings are much more easily obtained from the great God, who is so munificent in his gifts, than others of a meaner nature; so that it were an argument of a low and abject mind, not to ask something noble and excellent: covet earnestly the best gifts, in this sense. If we ask only things of a low and trifling nature, unworthy such a giver, he may answer, as a prince did, "These are not royal gifts," *ο βασιλικον το δαρον*: but if we ask those things that are most precious and valuable—grace and glory, there will be no room to fear that denial, *εκ ανθρωπινου το λημμα*, it is not fit for a man to receive it. *If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your heavenly Father!* Surely he is goodness itself, and he only gives what is good; and the better those things are that we ask, the more freely and cheerfully does he bestow them: and you know, Luke, repeating the same speech, expresses it, by saying, *He shall give the holy Spirit to them that ask it*; than which nothing more noble can be either desired or bestowed.

Verse 3: *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ?*

AMONG all the virtues which are necessary to offer up our prayers with acceptance, none ascend with greater velocity, and rise higher, than that very humility which causes them, as it were, to descend the deepest of all: nor is there any more indubitable argument of humility, than a conscience which groans under the burden of its own sin and guilt, among all the abyss of calamities, crying especially from this depth. And thus we see the Psalmist, while he involves all other evils, how great soever they might be, under one common title, fixed upon this to expatiate upon it at large, *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, &c.* Thus, if any one desire to mount more readily and more favourably from the depth of calamity, let him cry from this depth of profound humility, and plead a penitent sense of sin: for though of all imaginable depths, that of sin be the most remote from the most high and most holy God, yet the depth of the humble soul, depressed under the weight of sin, is nearest of all to the deep bowels of Divine mercy; so that the words of the Psalmist may not improperly be accommodated to this, though in a sense something different from that which in their connexion they bear, *deep calls unto deep*; and, by an harmonious kind of *antiphony*, if I may be allowed

the expression, they do most musically answer to each other.

One might have been ready perhaps to imagine, from the vehemence with which he begins his address, and from his groanings, as it were, so thick and so short, that he was something of a bold petitioner, and that he had some confidence in himself; that he presumed to knock as it were so often and so loud at the door of Divine mercy. But what he here adds plainly shews, that this was far from being the case—“*Hear me, O Lord, hear me;* and I urge the request, because necessity presses urgently upon me. Not that I am, or judge myself to be, one who can merit thine assistance; but that I stand in such need of it, that if it be not granted me, I must perish. So far am I from being, or appearing to myself worthy of thy help, that, behold I am overwhelmed with sin more than with sorrows. It is free mercy that I invoke, and I beseech thee, that in order to thy hearing the voice of my prayer, thou wouldest not hearken to the cry of my sins. Wash away the one, that thou mayest graciously smile upon the other; for, *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, who could stand?*” Intimating, that if he were drawn out of the other depths, yet if his sins continued unremitted, he could find no place on which to stand; yea, if it were possible for him in that case to fly away, and hide himself, yet he would rather plunge himself into these depths again, and would rather be, as it were, buried and lost in floods of the greatest calamities, than meet the

more dreadful flame of the Divine anger and indignation.

But this humble acknowledgment of his own unworthiness and pollution, is so far from being inconsistent with the pious confidence of prayer, that it is not only congruous, but even as it were congenial to it, and inseparable, so as to be most agreeable to that great King whom it addresses. Humility and contrition of heart is often thought by men to be the mark of a low and abject mind, and, as such, is often despised by them; but nothing is more honourable in the sight of God. "He," says Augustine, "will bow down his ear, if thou dost not lift up thy neck."* There is certainly no more efficacious method of supplicating and obtaining grace, than to do it, if I may so speak, *sub forma pauperis*, confessing and pleading our poverty. He finds the most easy access into the court of heaven who meets the most frequent repulses on earth. Nay, if I may so express myself, the heavenly court sits and resides in him. The two chief temples and palaces of the great King are that *τρισαγιον*, thrice holy place, in the third heaven, and the humble and contrite heart upon earth. The best manner of praying, therefore, is that which is made up of faith, fear, and humility. By the equal libration of these wings, the soul mounts on high, while that of fear does not sink too low, nor that of confidence rise too high.† By these we are daily and hourly to soar

* *Inclinat aurem Deus, si tu non erigis cervicem.*

† *Oratio timida coelum non attingit, temeraria resilit, et vi sua frangitur.* BERNARD.

to God ; and care must be taken that these wings of the soul be not dragged down by excess, nor scorched by lust, nor clogged and glued together, as it were, by covetousness, or any other terrene and viscid affection. But let us now a little more particularly see what this confession of the Prophet was.

If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who could stand ?] An uninstructed and uncautious reader might perhaps imagine, that the Psalmist was here seeking for refuge in a crowd, and desirous of sheltering himself under the common lot of human nature ; at least, that he would endeavour to find some low excuse for himself, in the mention of its universal degeneracy. But the design of the sacred writer is far different from this. He confesses that whatever he, or any other person, on a transient and inattentive glance, may imagine of his innocence, yet when the eye of the mind is directed inward in a serious and fixed manner, then he sees the sum and bulk of his sins to be so immensely great, that he is even struck into astonishment by it ; so that he finds himself beset as it were on every side with armed troops, which cut off all possibility of escape, otherwise than by flying to Divine mercy, and to the freedom of pardoning grace. He perceives himself unable to bear the examination of an awakened conscience, exercising itself in impartial self-reflection ; and arguing from thence how much less he would be able to endure the penetrating eye and strict scrutiny of the Divine justice, he cries out, as it were, in horror and

trembling, under an apprehension of it, *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, &c.* He sees himself overwhelmed with crimes, held at bay, as it were, by his sins on every side, which roar around him like so many savage creatures just ready to devour him. And he that does not see this to be his own case, is either almost blind, or lives abroad, and never descends into his own breast. Gross offences alone strike the eye of our fellow-creatures; but when we seriously consider that we have to do with an all-seeing Judge, who looks at once through every covering, and sees the most secret recesses of our hearts; who considers not only what may be concealed from men, but even from ourselves, so as most clearly to discover every the least stain and speck of our inmost soul, and whose infinite holiness must also abhor it,—is it possible that any one should be so infatuated as, in such a view, still to retain a false and foolish conceit of his own innocence? It cannot be doubted, that they who daily and accurately survey themselves and their own hearts, though they may indeed escape many of those evils which the generality of mankind, who live as it were by chance, fall into; yet, in consequence of that very care and study, see so much the more clearly their own impurity, and contract a greater abhorrence of themselves, and a more reverend dread of the Divine judgments. And it is certain that the holier any one is, the viler will he be in his own eyes; and I may also add, the viler he is in his own eyes, the more dear, precious,

and honourable will he be in the sight of God. But where is the heart, yea, I may say, where is the forehead of the generality of mankind, who boast of it as if it were some great matter to be free from the infamy of the most atrocious crimes? Have they not continually the reward of this their egregious virtue? "I have not committed murder and robbery. You are not gibbeted for the food of crows and ravens."* But they who bring the whole of their conduct, their deeds and their words, the glances of their eye, and all the inward workings of their affections, and examine them by the pure and strait rule of the Divine law, so as to perceive how many and how great errors attend every most cautious day; and they who feel how wavering and weak their faith is, how luke-warm, at least, if not how cold, their piety and charity, how ardent their love of this world still continues, how untamed the flesh, how unguarded the senses, how unbridled the affections, how attentive their hearts to trifles, while in prayer, so light and so wandering; they, I say, who perceive and reflect on this, with what poignant grief, with what overwhelming shame must they be seized, and how earnestly and how justly will they cry out, *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, who could stand?*

If thou shouldest mark.] If thou shouldest inquire and scrutinize, and then shouldest retain and impute; for the Hebrew word imports both. If thou shouldest inquire, thou wouldest find something of iniquity

* Furtum non feci. Non pascis in cruce corvos.

in the most righteous of mankind, and when thou hast found it, if thou shouldest retain it, and call him to an account for it, he could by no means free himself of the charge, or expiate the crime. Inquiring, thou wouldest easily find iniquity ; but he by the most diligent inquiry, would be able to discover no ransom, and therefore will be unable to stand, will have no place on which to set his foot, but will fall by the irresistible judgments of thy law, and sentence of thy justice.

There have been great disputes one way and another about the merit of good works ; but I truly think they who have laboriously engaged in them, have been very idly, though very eagerly, employed about nothing ; since the more sober of the schoolmen themselves acknowledge there can be no such thing as meriting from the blessed God, in the human, or, to speak more accurately, in any created nature whatsoever ; nay, so far from any possibility of merit, there can be no room for reward any otherwise than of the sovereign pleasure, and gracious kindness of God. And the more ancient writers when they use the word merit, mean nothing by it, but a certain correlate to that reward, which God both promises and bestows, of mere grace and benignity ; otherwise, in order to constitute what is properly called merit, many things must concur which no man in his senses will presume to attribute to human works, though ever so excellent, particularly that the thing done must not previously be matter of debt, and must

be entire, or our own act, unassisted by foreign aid; it must also be perfectly good, and bear an adequate proportion to the reward claimed in consequence of it: if all these things do not concur, the act cannot possibly arise to merit. Whereas, I think, no one will venture to assert that any one of these can take place in any human action whatever. But why should I enlarge here, when one single circumstance overthrows all those titles? The most righteous of mankind would not be able to stand, if his works were weighed in the balance of strict justice; how much less then could they deserve that immense glory which is now in question! Nor is this only to be denied concerning the unbeliever and sinner, but concerning the righteous and pious believer, who is not only free from all the guilt of his former impenitence and rebellion, but endowed with the gift of the Spirit. The interrogation here expresses the most vehement negation, and signifies that no mortal, in whatever degree he is placed, if he be called to the strict examination of Divine justice, without daily and repeated forgiveness, could be able to keep his standing, and much less could he arise to that glorious height. "That merit," says Bernard, "on which my hope relies, consists in these three things—the love of adoption, the truth of the promise, and the power of its performance."* This is the threefold cord which cannot be broken.

* Meritum, cui innititur spes mea, tribus hisce constat—charitate adoptionis, veritate promissionis, et potestate redditionis.

Ver. 4: *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*

THIS is the genuine method of divine grace ; it first demands a mind void of all confidence in itself, that so it may be filled with a pure and entire trust in God ; for though that blind self-confidence, which is so natural to us, be flatulent and empty, yet while it possesses the mind, it is, as it were, blown up by it, and that swelling shakes off every thing more solid, and prevents its access even when it seems to surround us on every side. Yea, it seems that the riches and magnificence of divine grace cannot with so much decency communicate itself, when it is as it were straightened by the receiver ; for since it is so great as to be able to fill every thing, it requires a free and ample space, in which to dilate itself. He who in the first original of the new-born world, brought all things out of nothing, acts like himself in the regeneration and restoration of mankind to holiness. The Holy Spirit finds nothing but *Tohu va Bohu*, nothing but what is *without form and void* ; and whoever of mankind perceives and acknowledges this to be his case, may be assured that the Spirit of God already begins to move upon him, to impregnate the face of the abyss ; and then it is said concerning them, *Let there be light, and there is light*, even that light by which they see themselves unformed and dark,

and destitute of every thing that is good. It is a great sign of a soul beginning to emerge from its misery, to give up every hope of emerging from it, except that one which arises from free mercy alone, and in this sense, it may truly be said, as it is by the Poet.

Una salus miseris nullam sperare salutem;

“The wretched find no safety but despair:”

i. e. in themselves, in their own righteousness or innocence, their own industry in fulfilling the law, or any expiation they can make for the breach of it. And what the Apostle says of his own danger, may properly enough be applied to a confession of the soul, pressed under the burden of its own guilt: *We had received the sentence of death in ourselves, that we might not trust in ourselves, but in God that raises the dead.* For the exclamation before us bears a remarkable resemblance to that expression, *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* He that from justice found not any ground upon which he might stand, finds in mercy a place from which he may rise again; and this is the remedy of all our grief and distress, and in this sense we must be sick that we may recover, and must die that we may live. Grace exerts its power, where nature and art and all the excellency and strength of human nature fail; nor does any soul celebrate the Divine benignity more signally than those who are snatched as it were out of the flames, when they are beginning

to seize them, and being rescued from the very jaws of hell, return to life again and breathe in the land of the living.

That trite distinction of sin, into mortal and venial, which is so common among the schoolmen, is not only vain and destitute of all support from the word of God, but is indeed very faulty, and, far from being itself venial, well deserves to be exploded as mortal, for that malignant influence which it has upon the morals of men. If the most open danger of the Divine displeasure, and of eternal death, cannot hinder the bold race of men from rushing on headlong to every crime,* and breaking all the barriers of duty which God has prescribed them, will it not add great licentiousness to all the crowd and tumult of headstrong desires, when some sins are said to be by their own nature, and in the whole kind of them, free from the condemning sentence of the Divine law? But what I here oppose is this: give me the holiest man upon earth, the man who of all others stands at the remotest distance, both in the affections of his mind and conduct of his life, from those sins which they acknowledge as mortal, will he not deeply feel his need of daily forgiveness, from the multiplied pollutions of his daily infirmities? He truly accounts no sin little, which is committed against the great and ever-blessed God, nor any pardon little, which he knows to proceed from his infinite grace. Nor

* *Audax omnia perpeti
Gens humana, ruit, per vetitum nefas.* HOR.

will he promise himself the pardon of the least fault which he indulges ; nor will he despair of obtaining a pardon of the greatest, for which he is truly penitent. And this is the law of grace. The Poet said with a great deal of justice, "That no sinner is absolved by himself,"* because he is as it were turned informer against himself: yet in another sense the sinner is absolved by that very self-accusation ; and, sorrowing for his sins, is freed from the guilt of them ; for it is not by any means to be conceived, that any one can return into favour with God, unless he return to God ; nor that any one can return to God, unless he renounce every sin, which if he does, they are all entirely forgiven, and those which he eagerly desires to cast behind his back, shall never rise up to condemn him to his face, before the tribunal of the Divine justice. This sentiment runs through all the evangelical discourses of the Prophets, by which, as so many heralds, they call a rebellious people to return to the allegiance of God their supreme King: *Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.* Yea, the very Fountain of Grace, the Lord of the prophets, who is himself the great Author and Sum of the gospel doctrine, as soon as ever he came forth to publish this grace, said, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Nor can any mind that is not fallen into utter madness and complete distraction, dream of a pardon,

* *Se indice nemo nocens absolvitur.*

how ample and glorious soever, to be imparted to a sinner that will not repent or return : nor indeed can it so much as be wished. For, how unworthy would it be of the Divine Majesty and Wisdom, to throw away such precious graces on those who so obstinately despise them ! *But there is forgiveness with him,—apud illum ;* which is added with the utmost propriety. With him there is a treasure of mercy laid up, to be imparted most freely and richly to every humble sinner that applies to him for it. Nor is the dispensing grace in this way at all inconsistent with the riches and freedom of it; since the greatest sins and most aggravated crimes are absolutely forgiven, without any penalty or fine whatsoever imposed upon the offender; yet on this most reasonable and happy condition, that they who are thus received into the Divine favour, should express their grateful acknowledgments for it, by love, obedience, and sanctity of life. Neither is this forgiveness the less free and gracious, because Jesus Christ as our Surety and Redeemer has paid the price of it, having been appointed for and destined to this great and arduous work by the Father. For, what does that great Father of mercies herein, but, in order to our complete discharge, by one certain and ever-to-be-admired way, satisfy himself of his own, by fastening his only-begotten Son to the cross ? The repository of this treasure is opened, the whole price is poured out at once, that great price of redemption, more precious than all the treasures, than all the mines of gold in the

world, or even the whole world itself. But they who anxiously debate the point, whether God could simply and absolutely pardon sin without any price, do but trifle ; for, whatever may be supposed concerning that, who is there that will deny that this way of the salvation of men which God has chosen, is so full of stupendous mystery, and so illustrious, if I may so speak, for that trine, and to us most benign aspect of wisdom, justice, and mercy, that nothing can be thought of more worthy the Divine Majesty, not hingsweeter, nothing more munificent with respect to unworthy man ? So that it will appear Athanasius speaks very prudently when he says, “ We ought not in this matter so much to consider the absolute power of God, as what is most advantageous to man, and what most worthy the Divine Being.”*

It was fit that our wise Creator should give us a law, and that law was both useful and pleasant to those who would carefully observe it ; but when once violated, there would necessarily arise a fatal enmity between the law and transgressors, an enmity which would continually become progressive, and gather new strength in the progress ; but as for our obstinacy, what is it more than *προς κεντρα λακτιζειν*, to *kick against the pricks* ? The law is inviolably sa feim its own sanctity, dignity, and immortality ; but we by striving against it, what do

* Ουχ ετως δει εν τωτω τω πραγματι το απλως τω Θεω δυνατον λογισθαι, ως το τοις ανθρωποις λυσιτελεσερον, [και πανυ γε ομως θεοπροεσερον.]

we gain but iniquity, disgrace, and death ? So that if there were no umpire to interpose, there would be no hope, but that the whole human kind should perish. But that blessed and efficacious Intercessor came from on high ; and certainly he was himself a Divine Person who could compose such a controversy, and who, joining by an indissoluble union, his infinitely better, with our miserable and mortal nature, did so, by a most wonderful method, render to the law all its accuracy of obedience, and to us, though guilty, impunity. And having thus made peace, that concord might afterwards continue and prevail, he animates all that partake of this blessed peace, by his own new, pure, and divine Spirit, that they might not only be engaged sincerely to endeavour diligently to observe the sacred precepts of the law, but might love them, and cordially embrace them ; and, on the other hand, he hath tempered the severity of the law towards all those that are received into favour, that their diligent, pious, and affectionate observance of the law, though not entirely complete, should by our indulgent Father be most graciously accepted, even as if it were perfect ; and so the honour of the Divine Legislator is secure among men, and his peace descends upon them ; and this is what our text observes, *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*

It is well known that the fear of God is commonly used in scripture to signify, not only the whole of his worship, but all pious affections what-

soever ; and, consequently, the whole of true religion. And some translate the expression here, *that thou mayest be reverently worshipped* : and it is thus used with the greatest propriety. I speak of that fear which is so far from denoting that servile, hostile dread and terror which some might think of, that, on the contrary, it entirely excludes it, being properly a reverence tempered with love. Yet I do not think that we are to exclude all dread of punishment and vindictive justice, under the name of a servile and disingenuous fear ; nay, I apprehend such a fear to be very necessary, even to those who most ardently love, so long as they live in the flesh, in order to tame and rein in the petulance of it ; yea, love itself places fear as a kind of bit and bridle to the flesh. Psalm cxix, 128 : *My flesh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.* Heb. xii. 28, 29 : *Let us serve God with reverence and godly fear ; for our God is a consuming fire.* This is the fear which is called the *beginning of wisdom*, and marked with other very high titles of honour in the sacred scripture ; without which, we can neither conceive the beginning of divine worship and true piety, nor pursue the improvement of it.

As this holy and pure fear is the compend and summary of religion, so this pardon and free remission of sins, is the great foundation and support of that fear and religion. As the whole human race is defiled with sin, the despair of pardon would entirely drive us away from God, and, precluding all

ways of returning, would plunge the offender headlong into eternal banishment and eternal hatred.

With thee is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared; that men may not dread thee, and flee thee, as an inexorable judge and enemy; but may reverence, love, and serve thee, as a mild and gracious Lord, as a most merciful and loving Father. And this is that joyful message of the gospel, to which sinners run, as soon as they hear and understand it, prostrating themselves with all humility at the feet of so mild a Lord, and so gracious a King. "For no one," as Ambrose says, "will think of repenting, but he who hopes for indulgence."* This merciful God calls back to his favour, those that are as it were flying from it, saying, *Return, ye apostates and rebels, and I will pardon and heal your backslidings*. And they, as if their bowels sounded to the unison note of mercy, with reciprocal penitence and love, answer, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art Jehovah our God*. And this is that which the great Messenger and Author of our salvation preached and set forth; *Repent*, says he, *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. You are not now pursued by wrath and vengeance, threatening utterly to extirpate you, and cut you off, but the kingdom of heaven, the dispensation of love, mercy, and grace, opens its bosom to embrace you, and freely offers you the full pardon of all your former obstinacy and rebellion. Behold the compassionate father

* *Nemo meditabitur pœnitentiam, nisi qui speraverit indulgentiam.*

meeting that prodigal son which has so basely run from him, while yet afar off, on his return; and instead of chiding and upbraiding him, burying as it were not only all his sins, but even his very confession, as in a deluge of love, amidst the tenderest embraces, kisses, and tears. *Make me to hear, says David, the voice of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* By that lamentable fall, he had as it were dashed himself against the rock of divine justice, so that *all his bones were broken*; but what *a voice of joy and gladness* is that which should restore full soundness and strength to bones which had as it were been crushed and shattered to pieces! Surely it is no other voice than that so often used by our Saviour in the gospel, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* That was the grace, softer than oil, sweeter than roses, *which flowed from his lips* into the sinner's wounds, and being poured into the contrite heart, not only heals but blesses it, yea, and marks it out for eternal blessedness. But, alas! the greater part of sinners sleep in their misery, and though their distempers are mortal, feel them not. It is therefore no great wonder that this grace, this precious, this invaluable remedy, is despised by them. But O! how sweet is the voice of pardon to a soul groaning under the burden of sin!

———*Quale per æstum*

Dulcis aquæ saliente sitim restinguere rivo.

“Sweet as the living stream to summer thirst.”

But, as one well expresses it, “ He that has never known discomfort, knows not what consolation means. Men of this world, entangled in the cares of life, and in its crimes, insensible of misery, attend not to mercy.”* But if any who imagine themselves partakers of this forgiveness do not at the same time feel their hearts struck with a pious fear of the Divine Majesty, let them know that their joys are self-invented dreams, since it is for this very end that *there is forgiveness with God, even that he may be feared.*

In the remainder of this Psalm the author asserts his confidence in God, and labours to confirm and establish that of all true believers.

Ver. 5. *I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.*

6. *My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning ; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*

7. *Let Israel hope in the Lord ; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*

8. *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

I WAIT for the Lord.] With thee is mercy.

* Quisquis autem desolationem non novit, nec consolationem agnoscere potest. Homines seculi negotiis et flagitiis implicati, dum miseriam non sentiunt, misericordiam non attendunt.
BERN.

They who heartily believe this, are drawn by that sweet and amiable force and desire to be partakers of it. And certainly there is no true faith in the doctrine of salvation, unless it be attended with this magnetic force by which it draws the soul to God. One would think it would be impossible, where this effect is not produced, that there should be so much as an historical faith ; and, surely, it is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the rational nature, to see so desirable and excellent a good laid down as it were before us, and freely offered, without running most freely to embrace it, with open arms and an ardent impetuosity of soul.

The faith, therefore, of vulgar and merely nominal Christians is quite dead, and deserves not the name of faith at all. I mean that which is not sufficient to excite them earnestly to desire and expect that divine grace which they say they believe. True and lively faith is the eye of the inner man, which beholds an infinitely amiable God, the lucid and perpetual fountain of grace, and by the view is immediately kindled into most fervent love. That divine light which is sent from heaven into the soul, is the vehicle of heat too, and by its ardent rays, presently sets the heart on fire ; the flame rises sublime, and bears all the affections of the mind with it, to that consummate beauty which it renders visible.

When a philosopher was asked, why that which is fair attracts our love ? he answered, " It is the question of a blind man," *τυφλε ερωτημα*. Well then

might the Psalmist, when he has been contemplating the Divine goodness, represent himself as quite transported with its charms, *q. d.* "It is nothing earthly, nothing mortal, that is the object of my wish ; my soul hangs on the Lord alone ; *it thirsts for thee*, and till it arrives at the enjoyment of thee, it will still be waiting. Hasten, Lord, to support and comfort me, *for I am sick with love ; nor is there any thing [in heaven or earth besides thee, O Lord,* which can satiate or delight this soul of mine, pierced through as it were with this sacred passion. And though I am, and feel myself to be, most unworthy of loving thee, or of hoping ever to enjoy thee, yet my meanness and vileness, even when compared with thine immense majesty and sublimity, do not deter me so much as thy boundless clemency and goodness, added to thy truth, while I have thy word of promise before mine eyes for my support, sustains me, and animates my courage ; therefore, while my love and desire are most ardent, I will, nevertheless, expect and wait with inward patience and perseverance. And though a heart which loves like mine, must find a delay grievous, yet unshaken hope shall alleviate that sickness of the soul. *Just as they that watch for the morning*, however they may be afflicted with the darkness and coldness of the night, are constantly supported with the assured hope that the dawn will come, and the day arise in all its glory."

Nor does the Psalmist envy others their share in those felicities which arise from love and hope ; on

the contrary, with a cheerful and liberal mind, he invites all to this immense ocean of riches, not shut up, but free to all; *Let Israel hope in the Lord.* And, lest the confluence of such vast numbers should suggest any fears of straitness and want, he confidently declares that there is wealth enough, and more than enough, to supply all their necessities; *for with the Lord, says he, there is mercy, and with him plenteous redemption;* grace rich and copious enough to support all sinners, and to forgive all sins, and all that apply to it shall infallibly find that he redeems Israel from all his iniquities. The eye of faith is by no means evil, but bright and sparkling with unbounded charity; it wishes all good to all, and, above all, wishes them a beatific union with the Supreme and Infinite Good. As in that kingdom of glory there is no malignity, no envy, because there can be no straitness, but according to that emphatical saying of our blessed Saviour, *There are many mansions,* there is boundless space, and the seats of pious souls are not marked out in any narrow boundaries, but in an ample court; so even in the previous kingdom and banquet of grace, our heavenly Father's house is magnificent, both on account of its amplitude, and the rich provision which it contains.

Let me beseech you, therefore, strictly to examine your own souls, inquire what it is that they chiefly wish, hope, and desire; whether they give chase as it were to every painted fly; whether, *forsaking the fountain of living waters,* they are digging for

themselves cisterns of clay, and these leaky too, with great and unprofitable labour. O! wretched deceitfulness of every earthly hope, which mocks and deludes us so much the more in proportion to the extravagance of its promises. Blessed are they, and only they, who fix their eyes and their souls above, and say, with the Psalmist, *Lord, I wait on thee, my soul does wait, and in thy word do I trust*: and as elsewhere, *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee*. Happy they who have quitted all those low desires and pursuits, which are unworthy of a generous and immortal spirit, and have fixed their love on one; whose heart and hopes are set upon that one, in whom all things excellent meet and centre. A cheerful joy always shines on their face; nor do their cheeks glow with the shame of repulse and disappointment. While we are wandering hither and thither, in the vicious and perplexed pursuit of flattering objects, what frequent lamentation, what fond complaint of delusive fortune, and that tragical outcry, *ω, ω, τραυμάτων επωδυνων*, of grievous and painful wounds; what crowds of fears and cares divide the mind, and hurry it now one way, and now another! But when we fix our hope and our heart on the only support, on the only true and all-sufficient good, all is safe, and the soul treads firm as it were, while the whole globe trembles. Let external things be borne this way or that, there is peace within; nor when all

methods have been examined, can any other be found for the establishment of the mind, than that it should lay all its stress upon the one immovable and immutable Rock.

Sermon,

PREACHED

TO THE CLERGY.

Advertisement.

WHEN the following Sermon was put into my hand in manuscript, as Archbishop LEIGHTON'S, I began to read it with a mixture of *pleasure* and *jealousy*.—As I proceeded, that feeling of heart which is excited by the fear of imposition, subsided; and I am now satisfied, that it is the composition of that venerable Prelate whose name it bears.

In thus publicly declaring my thoughts concerning it, I have no motive but the hope of its being useful. If any should be induced to read it on my recommendation, I am persuaded they will not repent. And I hope none will reject what is LEIGHTON'S because recommended by

HENRY FOSTER.

A SERMON, &c.

2 COR. V. 20 :

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

“ IT is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that to come to judgment,” saith the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Two sad necessities to sinful man. This last, nature's light discovers not ; but the other, though it be seldom deep in our thoughts, is almost always before our eyes : and though few seriously remember it, yet none can be ignorant of it. Against this known and universal evil, the chief of the heathen moralists, the Stoics, have much endeavoured to arm themselves ; and others have bent the strength of their wits to master the fear of death, and have made themselves and some of their hearers conquerors in imagination : but when the king of terrors really appeared, he dashed their stout resolutions, and turned all their big words and looks into appalment. **And the truth is, there are no reasonings in the world able to argue a man into a willingness to part**

with a present being, without some hopes at least of one more happy; nor will any contentedly dislodge, though they dwell never so meanly, except upon terms of changing for the better. The Christian then (not nominal, but really so) is the only man that can look death immediately in the face; for he knows assuredly that he shall remove to "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

This discourse beginning this chapter, occasioned by the end of the former, continues to the 12th verse, where the apostle subjoins an apology for his high and confident manner of speaking; which apology serves likewise for a very pertinent re-entry to the main discourse of the former chapter, concerning the worth and work of the ministry. But because of the apostle's frequent, yet seasonable digressions, proleptic and exegetic, divers may model the analysis after divers manners.

To take then the discourse as it lies here together, abstract from precedent and consequent, I think (with submission) it may be divided into these two heads: first, The apostle's resolution for death; secondly, His course and manner of life: each supported with their proper grounds, or reasons: the former to ver. 9, the other to the end of the chapter.

The resolution is so strong, that he expresses it by the words of earnest desiring and groaning; and this resolution for death, springs from his assurance of life after death. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, not made with hands, eter-

nal in the heavens." He speaks in his own and his colleagues' names: and the whole matter of both is set forth by an elegant, continued metaphor. Both the desire and the assurance causing it are illustrated by their chief cause, ver. 5: "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." Both in his gracious purpose for this, hath he made us, and in a pledge of performance he hath given us earnest, even his Spirit. Then by their subordinate cause, faith; ver. 7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight." His course and purpose; for he both signifieth what he doth, and how he intends to continue to do.

His course and purpose of life are, in general, to walk acceptably in this absence from the Lord: ver. 9: "Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." And in particular, walking diligently and faithfully in the ministry: vers. 11—18: "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences," &c. One reason of this course and purpose is implied in that illative (Δ IO) which knits this part with the former. And, indeed, a good frame of life hath a most necessary connexion with a strong resolution for death and assurance of life eternal; and they mutually cause one another. That a pious life gives strength against death, and hope of eternal life, none will deny: nor is it less true, that that assurance ani-

mates and stirs up to obedience ; so far is it from causing sloth, that it is the only spur to acceptable walking : “ We are confident,” saith he, ver. 8 ; “ wherefore we labour to be accepted,” ver. 9.

This purpose is further backed with a double reason, viz. of two pious affections : the one of fear, ver. 11 : “ Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,” &c. ; the other of love, ver. 14 : “ For the love of Christ constraineth us,” &c. That of fear, arising from the consideration of the judgment-seat of Christ ; that of love, from the thoughts of his death ; ver. 14 : “ For that love of God constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.” These are the reasons that stir up this eminent apostle to a study of acceptable walking in all things, especially in his special calling, the ministry of reconciliation : approving himself therein to his God, and as much as may be to the consciences of the people ; saying and doing all things with intention of his glory and their good ; free from vain-glory ; not speaking for himself, nor living to himself ; but to Him that died for him, and rose again. Not possessed with carnal respects touching himself or others ; no, nor entertaining carnal considerations of Christ himself, as being ascended, and therefore to be considered and conversed with after a new manner (spiritually) by all those that are new creatures in him, and reconciled

to God by him, through the ministry of the word of reconciliation; which reconciliation God himself hath thus effected: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Who knew no sin practically, knew none; altogether free from sin, not only from commission and consent, but from the very first and least motions of sin. And, indeed, none was thus fit to be made sin, but one who knew none, an immaculate Lamb. "Made him to be sin;" not by constraint, not beside his knowledge and consent. The Heathens observed, that their sacrifices were successless and unhappy, when the beasts came unwillingly to the altar. We need not fear in this point; our blessed Sacrifice, who was also priest and altar, offered up himself cheerfully. "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will," Heb. x. 7. "And I lay down my life," saith the good Shepherd, John x. 11. "To be sin;" not only to take the similitude of sinful flesh, becoming man for man's sake, and to be "numbered with transgressors," as the prophet speaks, Isaiah liii. 12, "and to bear the sin of many," but the imputed guilt and inflicted punishment of sin; and these sins of many made him imputatively an exceedingly great sinner, and therefore said to have been "made sin," by reason of this imputation; whereupon followed his suffering as a sacrifice. And I conceive, that the reason why the word that in the first language signifies sin, is sometimes taken for the sacrifice, is, because the

confessed sins were, as it were, transferred and laid upon the heads of the legal sacrifices : and so saith the prophet, " The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isaiah liii. 6. He was then made sin, primarily by imputation of, and consequently by suffering for, our sins, as our expiatory sacrifice. " He made him sin for us," in our stead, and for our good ; to wit, our redemption, as follows : " that we might be made," or *become*, *γνωμενοι* ; but be it *made*, *γνωμεθα*, it is no otherwise than Christ was made sin imputatively : and if this inference need help, each word that follows will confirm it. Righteousness, not righteous ; to shew the perfection of it, not to urge its unity. Righteousness, not righteousnesses ; as intimating that it is but one righteousness, whereby we are all justified of God ; not our own ; in him, not in ourselves. All which makes it clear, as it were written with the sunbeams, that by the most gracious exchange, as he took our sins, he hath given us his righteousness. It is true, this is always accompanied with holiness inherent, but imperfect. By that imputed righteousness, the spouse of Christ is clear as the sun, all luminous ; but in regard of infused righteousness, she is only fair as the moon ; but the one half light, and that appearing unequally too, waxing and waning, and having spots at its fulness here below. She is holy in this regard, but righteousness in the other righteousness of God ; his by appointing, his by gift and application, and his by acceptance of God in him ; that is, its being in him who is called

“the Lord our righteousness;” in him, in whom the Father acquiesceth, and is well pleased: “Blessed are they that trust in him.”

But to the former, ver. 20: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God.” Here we have all the parties requisite in the treaty of reconciliation; God, though offended, seeking peace with men, his creatures, and by sin become rebels (“as though God beseeched you”); Christ, the only procurer, and likewise the chief ambassador of this peace; and then, lastly, have we the sub-delegated messengers of this peace, “We, as ambassadors for Christ.” We, the apostles and all the ministers of the gospel: for as in their singularities and extraordinaries they had no successors, for that is repugnant; so in these things wherein they have successors, all true ministers of the word are such. The apostle himself calls this embassy “the ministry of reconciliation;” ver. 18: “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and given to us the word of reconciliation.” Ambassadors for Christ, that is, in his stead. In this verse we have the office of the ministry under the name of ambassadors; and their message, the delivery whereof is the execution of their office, entreaty of men to be reconciled to God. Both the office and message backed with due authority or warrant: the office’s warrant is, we are ambassadors for Christ, or in his stead, that is, subordinate to him by his own ordi-

nation ; the warrant of the message is God's own will that sent them, for it is his mind to beseech you by us. But to resume the first division, whereof each of its two parts will afford a suitable proposition ; and upon these two propositions I shall insist in what remains to be said.

The first proposition is this, from the office ; ministers of the gospel are true ambassadors under Christ from God to man. As soon as man had divested himself of God's image, his shameful nakedness made him run into the thickets ; nor could he ever since then look his Maker directly in the face, nor endure to hear his immediate voice : therefore when God himself would come and dwell among men, he veiled his deity with human flesh ; there he stood behind the wall, and shewed himself through the trellises. " Let us not hear again the voice, nor let us see this great fire any more, that we die not," said the people at Horeb ; and the Lord, that knew their mould, said, " they have said well : I will arise them up a prophet," said God, " from among their brethren, like unto thee ;" and he did so. As he came for man's good, so for the same end went he away again : " It is expedient for you," saith Jesus, " that I go away," John xvi. 7. And since that time he hath continued to send unto men, men yet liker themselves than he was ; men subject to like infirmities, sin not excepted. " Even as my Father sent me, so send I you," saith he, John xx. 21. But the loss in this change were intolerable, did he not allay it somewhat by sending his Spirit

upon those men whom he sends to men ; “ If I depart, I will send him unto you,” saith he, John xvi. 7. He is gone indeed, as was necessary ; but being ascended, he caused gifts to descend upon men : “ Some he gave to be apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers ; all for the work of the ministry, and that for the perfecting the saints, and the edifying of his body.” Eph. iv. 11, 12.

Thus then God treats with man in a human way, draws not his own to him by immediate revelations, nor rejects He the rest by express words from heaven ; but while he sends his ambassadors indifferently to both, works differently in them. And the admirable variety of effects of the same message, after the same manner, and at the same time delivered, do not a little set forth and commend that same πολυποικιλος σοφια τῆ Θεου, “ manifold wisdom of God :” that his word should melt the hearts of some, and more violently break the hearts of others ; harden and blind some, mollify and enlighten others ; convince those whom yet it converts not, and by its majesty, (though in the mouths of simple men,) it should bridle and restrain many of all ranks whom it renews not ; moulding and framing them to an external conformity and square carriage, whereby the world, and the church of God in it especially, is much advantaged.

And the lustre of all these effects is exceedingly set off by the quality of the messengers, being but to the world’s eye contemptible men. But had it

not been more congruous to the grandeur of this great King, to have sent angels, his ministering spirits, to be the ministers of the word? Had he not better have used those precious vessels for his chief treasure, than to have concredited it to vessels of earth, not to say to discredit it by so doing? No, his thoughts are not as ours; yea, they are farthest above ours when they seem to be farthest below them. And if we look again, we shall find it more glorious to have conquered so many kingdoms, and brought them to our King, the Lord Jesus, by the preaching of a few fishermen, and such like, than if he had done it by those active spirits. The meanness of the means, raises exceedingly the glory of the Sovereign's cause. Thus we see how the sending of men in this embassy was requisite for the frailty of man, and how well it suits with the glory of God.

APPLICATION.

HENCE may be deduced some necessary things for all in general, something in particular for these ambassadors, and something for those to whom they are sent.

1. First, it may persuade all to entertain more respectful thoughts of this function than most men do. Some speak out their disrespect; others, though not expressing it in words, have it lurking in their breasts, and appearing in their practices. To instance in one error or two that many labour

under, springing evidently from a low esteem of this calling : Are there not divers pretenders to it, who being (and possibly finding themselves) insufficient for all other employments, have recourse to this, making no doubt of their sufficiency for it ? Yea, such there are too many ; their worldly friends being guilty either of begetting in them, or of fomenting this presumption. On the other side, are there not others, who, having some advantage of outward rank, or inward endowments, would think themselves, and be thought by those that have interest in them, to be exceedingly disparaged if this calling were mentioned to them ; and would count it a great abasing, yea, a losing of themselves to embrace it ?

Against these two gross mistakes, may very appositely be opposed this ; “ We are ambassadors for Christ ; ” from which expression it is most evident, that the ministry both requires the best and ablest, and deserves them ; that the refuse and abjects of men cannot be worthy of it, nor it unworthy of the choicest. It requires able men, because they are to be ambassadors ; and this will follow of itself. Again, consider *whose* ambassadors, and in what business. The ambassadors of the King of kings, in the weighty matter of treating peace betwixt him and mankind. Shall it be said of his ambassadors, as Cato said to those who were sent by the Romans to Bithynia, counting three wants that were amongst them, viz. that they had neither feet, nor head, nor heart ?

It is true, God may (and sometimes, especially in extraordinary times) make use of unlettered and low-qualified men ; but then he inlays their defects by singular supply ; therefore that is no rule for us in the ordinary vocation. It is a piece of God's prerogative to use unlikely means without disadvantage : any thing is a fit instrument in his hands ; but we are to choose the fittest, and best means, both in our own affairs, and in his service ; and if in any, this eminent service of embassy requires a special choice. If bodily integrity was requisite in the servers at the altar under the law, shall we think that the mentally blind and lame are good enough for the ministration under the gospel, which exceeds in worth and glory ? Who is sufficient for these things ? saith the great doctor of the Gentiles. Our practice seems to answer, Any body. And it is observable, that carelessness in this kind is usually the companion of false worship, and too much care of decking, trimming, and making gay the externals of it. It is said of Jeroboam, that he made high places, but priests of the lowest of the people. As he said of "golden cups and wooden priests," we may say of that church which values them so much, They are well looked to, neatly adorned, but their priests highly ignorant. This function requires able men, being a weighty charge ; and is worthy of them, being highly honourable ; and, doubtless, there is egregious profaneness in the contrary thoughts. The Heathen can style those stones more happy than common ones, that are

chosen for the building of temples ; and among those, the altar-stones are happiest. And shall not we account truly happy, those living stones that are hewn out for God's building, and chiefly (so to speak) the altar-stones, the messengers of peace ? What can be more honourable than to serve the highest Lord in the chiefest functions of his house ? How ought we to account of an ambassador's place, when king David esteemed so highly of a door-keeper's office in this King's court ?

2. *We are ambassadors.* This may correct another error in the world, though accounted by those that entertain it, a choice piece of policy for God. It is this : the ministry being so mean a thing in the world's eye, and so obnoxious to contempt, it is expedient it be raised and brought into credit by annexed excessive dignities, high titles of honour, and suitable revenues. It is true, that penury and want of competencies in temporals, in those that bring an eternal treasure, argues base ingratitude, and is most unworthy of well-constituted churches ; but where the remedy exceeds too far, it becomes worse than the disease, being compounded of carnal prudence and ambition, both of which are enmity to God. And this I take to have been one of Germany's provoking sins, and Rome's predominant sin. For these incongruous honours, to speak it in a word, raising some from contempt, teach them to contemn and insult over their brethren ; to say nothing of their affronting of higher quality,

yea, of princes and kings themselves, while they pretend to be the only supporters of their crowns. And if this their insolency in advancement devolve them back again into contempt, and their honour become their shame, they may thank themselves for it. Their Master taught them another method of attaining due esteem : he hath given honour enough to those whom he hath made his ambassadors ; and if men contemn this, he takes the indignity as done to himself, and he is able enough to vindicate his own honour. Let men esteem of us as the ministers of Christ ; here is all the esteem that St. Paul requires, and they are unworthy of this that are not content with it. Their best way is, whom God employs, to study his glory, and he will not fail to honour those that honour him.

And this leads me fitly in from the conviction of these common errors, to a word of *particular exhortation* to these ambassadors, from the nature of their calling so expressed. And it binds upon them chiefly these four duties : 1, piety ; 2, prudence ; 3, fidelity ; 4, magnanimity. First, piety in two steps or degrees : first, to see that they be friends with God : secondly, to labour to be inward with him. First, to see that they be friends with God ; for it no way suits that they be ambassadors for reconciliation, who are not themselves reconciled : it is certain such will move both coldly and successlessly in the work. What He can do extraordinarily, who doth always what he wills in heaven and earth, we ques-

tion not. He can convey grace by them to whom he gives none ; he can cause them to carry this treasure, and have no share in it ; carry the letter, and not know what is in it ; and make them, so to speak, equivocal causes of conversion.

But usually he converts those whom he makes the happy strengtheners of their brethren. We think, that they who savingly know not Christ, should not be fit to make other men acquainted with him. He that can tell men what God hath done for his soul, is the likeliest to bring their souls to God : hardly can he speak to the heart, that speaks not from it. *Si vis me flere, &c.* Before the cock crows to others, he claps his wings, and rouses up himself. How can a frozen-hearted preacher warm his hearers' hearts, and enkindle them with the love of God ? But he whom the love of Christ constrains, his lively recommendations of Christ, and speeches of love, shall sweetly constrain others to love him. Above all loves, it is most true of this, that none can speak sensibly of it but those that have felt it. Our most exquisite pulpit-orators, yea, speak they with the tongues of men and of angels, without the experience of this love, are no fit ambassadors for Christ ; for his embassy is a love-treaty. Such men are but sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals ; the sublimest and best contrived of their discourses, glow-worm like, or as those foolish fires, may have some light with them ; heat they have none. When a man speaks of reconciliation and happiness, as if he had some inte-

rest therein himself; when his words are animated with affection; as he is likely to beget some affection where there is none, so a pious hearer that is already gained to Christ, finds the embassy drawing him effectually nearer heaven; blowing that divine fire that is within him, and causing it to mount upwards. "As in water, face answereth to face; so doth the heart of man to man," saith the wise man, Proverbs xxvii. 19.

There is a certain peculiar sympathy and sweet correspondence betwixt souls that lodge the same spirit; those that are united to the same head, Christ, by reconciliation, find their hearts agreed, and they relish the discourses one of another. Thus important is it every way, both for begetting and strengthening of grace, that the ambassador thereof be a reconciled person. As he must see that he be friends with God, so he must also labour to be inward with God; for though the embassy be the same in great part, in the mouths of all God's ambassadors, yet there is a world of mysterious particulars contained in it, and they meet with many intricate pieces in their particular treaties with men's consciences; and in these know they the will of the King their Master, more or less clearly, according as they are more or less intimate with him. How knew divine Moses so much of the Lord's will, but by much converse with him? These ambassadors, to the end that they may do so, must labour for integrity. His secret is with the righteous. For humility—he is familiar indeed with the

lowly ; he takes up house with them : “ With such a one will I dwell, saith the Lord.” God’s choice acquaintance are humble men. For the spirit of meekness ; he we named was eminent in this, and so in familiarity with his God. Christ singularly loves the meek and lowly, they are so like himself. One thing they must mainly take heed of, if they aspire to a holy familiarity with God—earthly-mindedness. If no servant of the god of mammon can serve this God in point of common service, how much less can he be fit for such an eminent employment as an embassy, and enjoy intimacy requisite for that employment? These messengers should come near the life of angels, always beholding the face of the Father of Lights ; but if their affections be engaged to the world, their faces will still be that way. Fly high they may, sometimes in some speculations of their own ; but, like the eagle, for all their soaring, their eye will still be upon some prey, some carrion here below. Upright, meek, humble, and heavenly minds, then, must the ambassadors of this great King have, and so obtain his intimacy : mounting upon those wings of prayer and meditation, and having the eye of faith upwards. Thus shall they learn more of his choicest mysteries in one hour, than by many days poring upon casuists, and schoolmen, and such like. This ought to be done, I confess ; but, above all, the other must not be omitted. Their chief study should be that of their commission, the holy Scriptures. The way to speak skilfully from God, is often to hear him

speak. "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned," saith the evangelic prophet; (chiefly intending Christ,) "to speak a word in due season to the weary." (Aye, that is the learnedest tongue when all is done.) But how?—"He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned," Isaiah l. 4. Thus we see how these ambassadors have need to be friends, and intimate friends with their Lord. For if they be much with God in the mount, their returns to men will be with bightness in their faces, and the law both in their hands and in their lives, and their doctrine shall be heavenly.

2. The second requisite of these ambassadors, is prudence, or dexterity to manage their Master's business. Wise princes and states, in choosing their ambassadors, above all other kinds of learning have respect to practical abilities; and they that can best read the several geniuses and dispositions of several nations and particular men, and accordingly know how to treat with every one according to their temper, to speak to them in their own language, are judged the fittest men for that employment.

Great is the diversity of humours among men: some are timorous, some rash, some avaricious, some ambitious, some slow and leaden, others precipitant and mercurial, and many other varieties. Now to know how to deal with each of these in their own kind, for the advancement of his master's business, is a special discretion in an ambassador.

And these ambassadors we speak of, have as much need of it as any: they have men of all, both outward and inward differences, to deal with; and the same men so different from themselves at divers times, that they are hardly the same: some ignorant, others learned; some weak, others strong; some secure with false presumptions, others tormented with false fears: and much prudent consideration of these differences, and accommodating themselves thereunto in the matter and manner of their discourses, is very expedient in their treaties. "Of some have compassion, plucking them out of the fire, making a difference." What else is St. Paul's "becoming all things to all men, that he might win some"? And this policy is far different from temporizing, and compliance with evil, which in no case can be tolerated in these ambassadors, for that is disadvantageous to their business: it may be the way of their own promotion, but it is not the way to advance their Master's kingdom, which end should be the square of all their contrivances; and with it nothing will suit but what is upright. A kind of guile they may use, but it must carry their King's impress; it must be a holy guile; and such the ministers of the gospel not only may, but ought to study. Fishers of men they are, and why may they not use certain baits, and a diversity of them? But as their catching is not destructive, but saving, so must all their baits be. They must quarter dove-like simplicity and serpentine wisdom to-

gether ; as He commanded them that sent them on this embassy.

3. Their third duty is fidelity ; and that both in the matter of their embassy, and in the manner of delivering it. In the matter, they must look to their commission, and declare the whole counsel of God, not adding nor abating any thing. We know how heinously kings take the presumption of their ambassadors in this kind ; though reason be pretended, and perhaps justly, yet even then they account obedience better than sacrifice ; yea, some of them have been so precise and tender of their prerogative, that they preferred a damageable affront to their commands, before a profitable breach of them. And above all kings, this King who is above them all, hath good reason to be punctual in this : for princes' instructions may be imperfect, and, as things may fall out, prejudicial to their purpose ; but his are most complete, and always so suitable to his end, that they cannot be bettered. The matter, then, of the embassy is unalterable, in that these ambassadors must be faithful. Faithful also in the manner of delivering it, with singleness and diligence : with *single-ness*, free from by-respects, not seeking their own honour or advantage, but their Master's ; abasing themselves where need is, that he may be magnified ; never hazarding the least part of his rights for the greatest benefit that could accrue to themselves. The treachery of an ambassador is, of all,

most intolerable—to deceive under trust. If any that bear the name of God's legates, think to deceive him, they deceive themselves; he cannot be mocked. They must all appear before his judgment-seat, and be unveiled before men and angels. Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, let them go about his work with candour and singleness of heart, and with diligence. "He that is diligent in his work shall stand before princes," saith the wise prince, Prov. xxii. 29.

The great Prince of Peace shall admit those to stand eminently before him, that are diligent in his embassy of peace. Such are they who make it their meat and drink, as Christ himself did—that accept all occasions to treat with men for God. That oracle-like preaching of one sermon or two in a year, is far from this sedulity and instancy in treating, which are requisite in God's ambassadors. The prince of darkness hath more industrious agents than such; they compass sea and land to make a proselyte; they hold to it, and are content to lose many a labour, that some one may prosper. And this may meet with the discontent that some ministers take at their great pains and little success. We see Satan's ministers can comport with this. Since it is no just exception against God's work, still be in thy business, and refer the issue to thy Master. "Wait on God, and do good," saith the royal Psalmist, xxxvii. 3. "Sow thy seed in the morning, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which will prosper," saith the

wise son, Eccles. xi. 6. As the moralist speak of benefits, a man must lose many words among the people, that some one may not be lost: "I am all things to all," saith our Apostle, "that I may gain some." 1 Cor. ix. 20. And though in continuing diligent, thy diligence should continue fruitless to others, to thee it shall not be so. Thy God is a discreet Lord: as he hath not put events into thy hand, he will not exact them at thy hands; thou art to be accountable for planting and watering, but not for the increase. Be not wanting in thy task, and thou shalt not want thy recompence. Shouldest thou be forced to say with the prophet, "I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought," (Isaiah xlix. 4,) in regard of success, yet if thou hast laboured—so laboured as to spend thy strength in that service, thou mayest add with him, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

4. The last duty recommendable to these ambassadors, is *magnanimity*, which is no less needful than the preceding. Many a difficulty and discouragement is to be encountered in this service, and, which is worse, some temptations of prosperity and advancement. If you persist to plead freely for your Master, you shall be the very mark of the world's enmity. What mischief is there that Christ hath not foretold his disciples to expect at their hands? For Christ circumvents no man into his service; he tells them what they shall meet with: "They shall prosecute you through their courts,

ecclesiastical and civil ; deliver you up to councils, and scourge you in synagogues, and accuse you before governors and kings ; yea, they shall think they do God good service when they kill you," his own ambassadors. Many mountains are to be climbed in going this embassy, and the rage of many a tempest to be endured. *His animis opus est, et pectore firmo.* Courage, then, ambassadors of the Most High ; see if you can rise above the world, and tread upon her frownings with one foot, and her deceitful smilings with the other ; slight her proffers, and contemn likewise her contempts. There is honour enough in the employment, to cause you to answer all oppositions with disdain. Let it be as impossible to turn you aside from your integrity, as the sun from its course ; for that message which you carry shall be glorious in the end—it shall conquer all opposite powers. When you seem exposed in your voyage to the fury of winds and waves, remember what you carry ; *Cæsarem vehis, et fortunam ejus*, as he said ; it cannot suffer shipwreck. Let no sufferings dismay you ; for a generous ambassador will always account it far more honourable to suffer the worst things for doing the best service he can to his master, than to enjoy the world's best rewards for the least point of disloyalty. And if ever Master was worthy the suffering for, yours is. Happy are you when they persecute you for his sake, as himself hath told. There are honourable examples to look back to—“ So did they to the prophets ;” and a precious

recompence to look forward to—"Great is your reward in heaven." Matthew v. 12. Our blessed Redeemer refused no hardships for the working this peace, which is your embassy; he knew what entertainment did abide him in the world, what contempts would be put upon him by mankind, which he came to redeem; he knew of the full cup of his Father's wrath, that he was to drink for them; yet resolution arising from love, climbed over all these mountains, and, happily conquering all these difficulties, attained the desired end. Worthy ambassadors, follow this generous Leader, in promulgating the peace he hath purchased; tread in his steps who "endured the cross and despised the shame;" and your journey's end shall be suitable to his who "is set down at the right hand of the Father." Well did St. Paul study this copy, when he said, "I know that bonds abide me every where; but I care for none of these things, so that I may finish my course with joy." Acts xx. 22, 25. The looking over that great end, is the great means of surmounting the hardest things that intervene. The eyeing of that much, will make an undaunted ambassador: and that this lesson of courage is very pertinent for them, will appear by Christ's own urging it upon the first legates he sent out, when he dwelt here below: "Fear not," saith he, them that can kill the body," &c. Matt. x. 28; where methinks he propounds, as the chief incentive of courage to these ambassadors, the joint consideration of those to whom they are sent, and

of him that sends them : for, seriously considered, it must needs be found most incongruous, that ambassadors of God should be afraid to speak to men. Fear not them ; the utmost they can do reacheth no farther than the tabernacles of clay ; nor can they touch that without permission ; not a hair of their head falls without the notice of their Master. But suppose the highest, let them kill the body ; thither goes their rage, and no further. “ But fear him that can kill both body and soul ; ” fear not, but fear. As this fear hath better cause, so it is the only expelling cause of the other fear. Nothing begets such generous and undaunted spirits as the fear of God ; no other fear, none of those base ones that torment wordly men, dare claim room where that fear lodgeth. The only cause of these legates’ fears, is the inconsideration of their Master ; would they remember him, it would enoble their spirits to encounter the hardest evils of life, and death itself, courageously, in his service. Their reward is preserved for them, and they for it ; yea, it alone puts them into full possession ; for their Master, beyond all kings, hath this privilege ; he can not only restore life lost in his service, but for a life subject to death, yea, a dying life, immortality ; and for their sufferings, light and momentary, an eternal weight of glory. Let them be impoverished in his service, it is the best bargain in the world to lose all for him. Let them be scourged and stigmatized for the ignominy of these

sufferings, the spirit of glory shall rest upon them. If that Persian prince could so prize his Zopyrus, who was mangled in his service, how much more will this Lord esteem those that suffer so for him! He is the tenderest King over his servants in the world; they that touch them, touch the apple of his eye. Let his messengers, then, despise the worst the world can do against them; yea, let them say of death as he said of it to his adversaries, Anytus and Melitus, "Kill me they may, but they cannot hurt me."

The lessons to those to whom these ambassadors are sent, are, first, of not indignifying them. Remember David and the king of Ammon. No king resents this so much as God: "He that despiseth you, despiseth me."

2. Secondly, slight not their message; know whence it comes. This not discerning of holy things is the pest of Christians: the Apostle specieth it in the Lord's body; it is so in the Lord's word; he condescends, in using earthly creatures, to explain the choicest of heavenly mysteries; and earthen vessels, to convey these treasures. And if that which he intended for their advantage, the wretched sons of men make it a stumbling-block; and if they contemn the grace, for the meanness of the persons that are made conveyors and instruments of it, what may they expect?

3. Thirdly, respect even the ambassadors for His sake whom they represent, "counting them worthy

of double honour ;” for this is the will of your Lord and their Lord, your King and their King. And to this King immortal, be all honour, and glory, and praise, by all the churches, world without end !
Amen.

1944

1. The first part of the report is devoted to a general survey of the situation in the country. It is followed by a detailed analysis of the economic and social conditions. The report concludes with a series of recommendations for the government and the people.

2. The second part of the report is devoted to a detailed analysis of the economic and social conditions. It is followed by a series of recommendations for the government and the people.

LETTERS

OF

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON,

Printed from the Originals,

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LETTERS, &c.

No. I.

SIR,

I SEE there is no place, city nor country, valley nor mountain, free from that sentence so early passed upon the earth for man's cause, "thorns and briars shalt thou bring forth;" but he that is well shod walks on the safelier till he comes where there are none: but seeing that is not here, we are to use the greater coolness and deliberation in our removes. If your present company be some way irksome, a greater solitude may prove more so; only if God both sensibly fits you for it, and points clearly out the way to it, follow him; otherwise my advice should be not to hasten too much, and particularly at no hand so to hasten as to run in debt for it; for I speak it on experience, he that sets up any where in debt, it will keep him possibly wrestling and at under many years; but if you let your incomes do their own business, *pian piano*, as they come to your hand, you will find it much easier to do, and sweeter when it is done: meanwhile I know you can digest all a little longer, as hitherto you have done. To your other point

touching baptism, freely my thought is, it is a weak notion taken up on trust almost generally, to consider so much, or at all, the qualifications of the parents. Either it is a benefit to infants, or it is not. If none, why then administered at all? But if it be, then why should the poor innocents be prejudged of it for the parents' cause, if he profess but so much of a Christian as to offer his child to that ordinance? For that it is the parent's faith gives the child a right to it, is neither clear from Scripture, nor any sound reason; yet in that I heartily approve your thoughts that you would make it, as it most fitly may be, an active inducement to the parents to know Him and His doctrine, and live conformed to it, unto whose name they desire their children to be baptized. But in this, and the other business, and in all things, I am confident that good Hand, to which I know you have given up yourself, will graciously guide you they miscarry that desire to h will but his, Oh let it still entirely be so with you and your resigned Friend

R. L.

'Tis well our great journey is going on, and will quickly set us where we would be. The business you write of is to you one signal step of it, marked out by that Sovereign Hand which, I doubt not, will lead you in it, and all along through what remains, to whom I know you are constantly——

No. II.

SIR,

SOME days ago I received some lines from you, and they were very welcome ; for I know no better news can come from any corner of the earth, than of a soul attempting to overcome the world and its own self, and in any degree prevailing and resolving still onwards ; all the projects and conquests of the world are not to be named to it. Oh ! what a weariness is it to live amongst men, and find so few men ; and amongst Christians, and so few Christians ; so much talk and so little action ; religion turned almost to a tune and air of words : and, amidst all our pretty discourses, pusillanimous and base, and so easily dragged into the mire, self and flesh, and pride and passion domineering while we speak of being in Christ, and clothed with him, and believe it because we speak it so often and so confidently ! Well, I know you are not willing to be thus gulled, and having some glances of the beauty of Holiness, aim no lower than perfection, which in end we hope to attain ; and in the meanwhile, the smallest advances towards it are worth more than crowns and sceptres. I believe that you often think on those words of the blessed champion *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 24, &c. There is a noble guest within us. Oh ! let all our business be to entertain him honourably, and to live in celestial love within, that will make all things without be very

contemptible in our eyes.—I should rove on did not I stop myself, it falling out well too for that, to be hard upon the post hours, ere I thought of writing. Therefore Good night, is all I add; for whatsoever hour it comes to your hand, I believe you are as sensible as I that it is still night, but the comfort is, it draws nigh towards that bright morning that shall make amends.

Your weary Fellow-pilgrim,

R. L.

It may be Mr. Ogle did not think me in earnest when I desired him to spy out a hermitage for me; but if one remote enough were offered, I know not how it might tempt me. Meanwhile it is well; but if you say any thing of this, then it will cost you withal the remembering my service to him and the rest.—If you write again, I pray you load not the back of your letters with any more than this, To Mr. *Robert Leighton*, at *Edinburgh*; for by that it will not fail to find me out, and that answers the end, and you see I give you example.

No. III.

SIR,

THOUGH I desired you to forbear for a while the pains of sending me the book you spoke of, I know

it was your kindness pressed you to send it, and I thank you. I cannot say I have read it through, but divers passages of it I have; and though I approve the design of it and all such writings so far as I understand, and what I understand not, adventure not to judge of, but rather *implicitè* think the best of it, yet I must confess, their lowest rules that are laid as the foundation of their structure, I find of most use; and, could I duly follow them, either I should insensibly be raised to those greater sublimities they speak of, if the great Lover of souls saw any such thing good for me, or I should humbly and contentedly live without them, which possibly would do as well till the day come of fullest and purest intuitive life, which I live in the hopes of as not far off. Meanwhile I think I have at a venture given up with the contemptible desires and designs of this present world, and must have either something beyond them all, or nothing at all; and though this *βορβορωπος ὕλη*, this base clod of earth I carry still depresses me, I am glad that even because it does so, I loathe and despise it; and would say, *major sum et ad majora genitus, quam ut mancipium sim istis corpusculis*. I have sent you two little pieces of history, wherein it may be, you will find small relish, but the hazard is small; and, however, I pray you do not send them back to me at all, for I have enough of that kind. The one is of a good pen, and an acquaintance and friend of yours, *Paulus Noloneas*, and his Life of Martin of Tours, I think you will relish, and I believe is not

in your *Vitæ Patrum*. The other, *Valerius Maximus*, I conceived, would cloy you the less, because it is of so much variety of selected examples, and the stages are so short you may begin and leave off where you will, without wearying. But when all is done, there is one only blessed story wherein our souls must dwell and take up their rest; for amongst all the rest we shall not read, *Venite ad me, omnes lassæ et laborantes, et ego vobis requiem prestabo*; and never any yet that tried him, but found him as good as his word: to whose sweet embraces I recommend you, and desire to meet you there.

Yours,

R. L.

OCT. 24, 1659.

No. IV.

SIR,

THE answer I intended your letter was a visit, and that not *en passant*. Though I spoke and once had thoughts of *Newcastle* for some days, my last purpose was no further than *Ingram*, unless it had been with you to *Wittingham*, to see your honest neighbour Mr. *Hume*; which if you think of it when you meet, it may be you will tell him. Nor was this a mere thought, for I was on my way towards you as far as *Ginglekirk*, whence I returned

back to my lodge, finding myself not well, by reason, I think, of not scarce having been on horse-back twice these many months. I am yet in a little distemper; of which, though I apprehend no great height nor long continuance, yet I am doubtful whether I shall again, this vacation, attempt any further than *Pentland Hills*. But it is no matter; blessed be He in whom souls may meet and centre in constant rest, and, in renewed thoughts and desires intervisit, every day, in despite of large lumps of earth. And, in much greater matters, how little imports the defeat of our purposes as to any thing without us, if it please him to shine on and advance our great business within! Oh! what is all the world to it, to that bright purity we aspire to, and the blessed eternity we hope for! And how great reason have we to say, *non magna relinquo, magna sequor!* I thank you for the notice of your capuchin; but I almost knew that he was not here before I looked. It is true the variety of his book refreshes us, and by the happy wording, the same things not only please, but sometimes profit us; but they tell us no new thing, except it may be some such thing as, I confess, I understand not, of essential unions and sleeps of the soul; which because I understand them not, would rather disorder and hinder than advance me; and therefore I begin to be unwilling to look over these and such like, unless I could pick out here and there such things as I am capable of, and not meet with those steep ascents which I dare not venture on. But

dear à *Kempis* is a way to it, and oh! that I could
 daily study more, and attain more sublime, humble
 devotion there drawn to the life.....
 most soaring treatises I have yet met with, find any
 th..... certain and solid use that is there
 not plainly and Di.....proque est
 paucis opus et.....paucis libris ad bona
 me.....could we once thoroughly de-
 spise our own base flesh, and the vain opinion of
 the world, and live in the Divine will, as dead to all
 things beside, and gladly take the lowest room, he
 can, if he please, call for us to sit up higher. Oh,
 but the misery to have still lust, and pride, and
 self-will, and self-love, and desire of esteem amongst
 men, not only living, but, alas, lively and strong;
 and yet however it be, let us not faint in our minds,
 for in the name of the Lord we shall destroy them.
 And in the meantime, blessed—ever blessed be his
 name, who hath called us to fight under his royal
 standard, and given us to resolve to live and die
 there. Amen.

Your Fellow-soldier,

R. L.

No. V.

DEAR BROTHER,

I WROTE to you lately, and troubled you with the
 story of my present and daily growing unhealthi-

ness, which cannot add much, but something it does, to my wonted longings for the evening, not without hopes that it shall likewise prove a bright and sweet morning. Meanwhile it is no great matter where I pass the few hours that remain, yet I told you I had some thoughts of spending them nearer you, but have not yet resolved; but that and all shall be disposed of as is best. Mr. *Aird*, who gives you this, I believe, you have heard me speak of, as one acquainted with my free thoughts, and that hath himself a free, unprejudiced soul, and loves truth and devotion wheresoever he finds it, even in the greatest crowd of error or superstition about it. He hath a cell and a provision amongst the hills in the border of *England*, but is threatened with a removal, upon the title of an old incumbent, who is at London or near it. If you be acquainted with Dr. *Cozens*, bishop of *Durham*, or can recommend him to him by any that is, if he himself desire it; or in any other way can assist him, I intreat it of you. Mrs. *Abernethy* tells me her son is in the King's Life-Guards; if you meet with him, and by recommending him to my Lord *Gerrard's* favour, who commands it, or in any thing else you can do him good, you will oblige both me and the honest widow. She makes often mention of you. *Cher Frère*, Adieu.

R. L.

MARCH 5.

For Sir Ellis Leighton,
at St. James's.

No. VI.

DEAR FRIEND,

I WISH, after your resolution taken, and I think *συν Θεῷ*, you had barred the door on all suggestions from without and within, that might have changed or in the least disturbed it. Sure I am the reason that convinced you is still the same, that what you may do, you may also promise if it be required; and I believe the design was so like to make you serviceable to God, and to souls that he hath bought, that you would never have had just reason to repent it. The like I dare not say of you now recoiling; and if I might again prevail with you, I intreat you to re-advise the thing betwixt God and your own heart, and that cleared, as much as you can, from all mist, both of the fancy of others and your own melancholy. If you would meet me at *Culross* or *Lithgow* any time the next week, and send me word what day or hour you choose, I would endeavour not to fail, or if coming to Edinburgh to speak with you (though at this time well I cannot) might be likely to do any help towards dispelling the cloud that hath overcast your mind, I would not grudge the pains. All I can do at this distance is to look up to Him who alone powerfully can do it, and in his blessed hand I leave it, and you, and myself, and all that concerns us and all the world; and whatsoever you do, never doubt the unalterable affection of

Your Friend,

R. L.

No. VII.

SIR,

WHAT the opportunity is that may engage you where you are, seeing you express it not, I cannot particularly know : but whatsoever it is, I shall be glad if it suit your mind, and if I could do you any real furtherance in any such thing, I think I need not tell you how ready the occasion would find me. Here I see nothing at present worth the thinking on for you, unless you have a mind to try a course of tilting for a Regency in Philosophy, as they call it, which is likely to be vacant here very shortly, Mr. *Wiseman* being upon the point of leaving it and going to sleep. If you find a stomach to it, all I can promise is, endeavour to see fair play ; and if you make one you would be sure to win, if it depended on the wishes of

Sir,

Your Friend and Servant.

No. VIII.

SIR,

I SHOULD please myself very much in doing any thing towards your repose ; but there is nothing such as I wish within my reach, no, nor within my

view. The Humanity-place will either not be vacant, or if it be, I think we shall break it for some reason. Of the other I wrote to you, you can only judge whether it suits your genius and inclination ; neither (if it did) have I power to promise any thing but heavy endeavours if I see it feasible, having no assurance of prevailing. But one thing I am sure of, and so are you, and it is enough, that to them that fear the Lord and trust in him, no good thing shall be wanting. The choosing of some dubious steps of our way may now and then be a little troublesome, but the comfort is, the journey will be quickly done, and then we hope to be where there are no desires nor deliberations of change of quarters. I am,

Yours.

I suppose you have heard of Mr. *Andrew Gray's* death. He has got the start of us, but not for long. I am likely to preach to-morrow (God willing) in our own Hall, where for the present meets one of the Town Congregations.

No. IX.

SIR,

I THINK you know the reason of my forbearing to write ; for you cannot but know that letters sent

by the post are broken open very frequently, if not constantly of late ; and other way I know none. I often entreated that favour of my *John* to inquire at your sister's how you were, if she did hear, and if she knew any safe convey of letters to you ; but he did as he uses to do in divers of the few letter-services I have for him, and I am beholden to his neglects. Meanwhile my not forgetting you, you may be assured of, while I shall continue to remember myself. When I think how little or nothing it is my letters speak other than some short word, dropped as it comes, reflecting to you some of your own thoughts, I am pained with your reckoning them any thing at all. Your imparting the particulars relating to yourself, though in extrinsic things, I do very heartily thank you for ; for such communications are a redoubling the pleasure in them : and seeing our great Father's love descends to the ordering of the low concernments of our life, we were very unwise and ungrateful not to observe them, who hath made flies with so much art, and is truly *magnus in minimis*. Courage, it shall be well ; we follow a conquering general ; yea, who hath conquered already ; *et qui semel vicit pro nobis, semper vincet in nobis*. For myself at present, I am, (as we use to say,) that is, this little contemptible lodge of mine is, not very well ; but that will pass some way or other, as it is best ; and even while the indisposition lasts, oh ! how much doth it heighten the sweet relish of peace within, of which I cannot speak highly ; for to you I speak just as

it is. But methinks I find a growing contempt of all this world, and consequently some further degrees of that quiet which is only subject to disturbance by our inordinate fancies and desires, and receding from the blessed centre of our rest: *for hurries of the world you know the way*, Isa. xxvi. 20; and in these retiring rooms we may meet and be safe and quiet. That you speak of the shock seeming to threaten your Order, I am not afraid of at all, neither for you nor myself, nor the generality of the rest; but you may be assured, that, in that case, the lot of those in my posture will be the same with yours. *Sed Jehovah regnat, circuitor Gentis et cum reliquis etiam insulæ.* Farewell dear Brother.

Yours.

No. X.

DEAR FRIEND,

WHETHER you know the particular purport of the inclosed you sent me, I know not; but it is to quit Ten Pounds *sterling* supposed due to me from the party that pleads inability; and doubtless your recommendation, together with the charity of the thing, (if it shall appear to be so,) would easily give law to me for a greater sum than that. But the truth is, there is a main mistake in the business, for it is not payable to me, and therefore no way

in my power, for my Lord *Bargeny* hath a lease of all my little dues in these parts for nineteen years, upon very easy terms as they inform me ; yet whether he will consider that so as to make such an abatement of what is now his due and not mine, I cannot tell ; neither have I any power to carve upon what is his without paying it back, or some way compensing it to him myself ; and yet even that I shall not decline, if, after you and I both know the more particular state of the business and the person, you shall judge it reasonable. This is all I can say to that at present ; and I will not enter upon any other discourse by this ; for the truth is, there is little to be said and much to be done. You and I are, I trust, upon a design that will reflect a very low estimate upon all below it, and it shall certainly succeed if we be careful to stick to our Leader, and follow him.

Pray for

Your poor Friend and Servant,

R. L.

MARCH, 1670.

To the Rev. Mr. AIRD, }
Minister at Tory. }

No. XI.

DEAR FRIEND,
I AM very sorry for the indisposition you are under, but I assure you I do not value myself, nor any

thing I say or do either upon this or any other occasion, worth your pains of writing, far less on a journey hither; yet I should gladly enjoy your mistake in thinking otherwise, if I was in a posture capable of the pleasure others have of your abode under my roof for some longer time. The persons you mention in order to that affair, &c.—I have not seen nor heard any thing from any of them since my last, nor expect that I shall till the beginning of *June*, at *Edinburgh*, where I intend (God willing) to be, and desire, if it may be, to see you there. I have thoughts of going thither somewhat before that time, and therefore, if I did not signify such to you, I fear you might miss me if you came hither.

As for the business, it is very safe, with all our other interests of Time and Eternity in our Blessed Father's hand, of all Fathers the wisest and the best. He, I am sure, can mould either your heart or theirs you have to do withal, as he thinks fit, and it shall be as it is best to be; therefore if we were together, I should not very eagerly dispute the matter with you, far less will I by scribbling. Let your heart keep near to him, and be daily purging out all that may interpose and obstruct our closest union, and we have nothing else to care for. This moment is posting away, and that blessed day is hastening forward that shall complete that union.

Pray for your lame Fellow-traveller

R. L.

I should chide you if I could do it sharply enough, for entertaining the least thought of any such jealousy, as I think very incongruous with the strength and mutual confidence of solid friendship.

Received at Carmarthen, 14th May, 1668.

No. XII.

SIR,

WAVING all other discourse till meeting, though you are possibly enamoured with your vacancy, yet if you find any return of appetite to employment in the ministry, I am once again to offer you an invitation, for there is a place or two now vacant at my disposal. It is true it is by the removal of the former Incumbents against their will, but you are not guilty of that by succeeding them, nor I by giving a call to any that will; for you may be sure they are not within the bounds I have charge of, but in other dioceses. There is one place indeed in my precincts now vacant, and yet undisposed of, by the voluntary remove of a young man that was in it to a better benefice, and this is likewise in my hand; but it is so wretchedly mean a provision, that I am ashamed to name it, little I think above five hundred marks a-year. If the many instances of that kind you have read have

made you in love with voluntary poverty, there you may have it ; but wheresoever you are or shall be for the rest of your time, I hope you are advancing in that blessed poverty of spirit that is the only true height and greatness of spirit in all the world entitling to a crown, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Oh! what are the scraps that the great ones of this world are assembling for compared with that pretension! I pray you, as you find an opportunity, though possibly little or no inclination to it, yet bestow one line or two upon

Your poor Friend and Servant,

R. L.

Edinburgh, JULY 5, 1662.

To Mr JAMES AIRD.

No. XIII.

SIR,

I LONG to hear how you dispose of yourself if it be determined. If still in suspense, I still wish you the favourable impression of that hand to which I know you have deliver'd up yourself; if you be resolved upon a removal, and incline to the like charge here upon a fair call, I desire to know it, by the first opportunity, for I hear there is somewhat of that kind in the West likely to be at my disposal; I would not have this unsettle your propension to

stay where you are, if you find any thing within you, for thorns grow every where, and from all things below ; and to a soul transplanted out of itself into the root of Jesse, peace grows every where too, from him who is called our Peace, and whom we still find the more to be so, the more entirely we live to him, being dead to this world, and self, and all things besides him. Oh ! when shall it be ? Well, let all the world go as it will, let this be our only pursuit and ambition, and to all other things *fiat voluntas tua, Domine*—that both is painful in some instance is the dubiousness.

No. XIV.

DEAR FRIEND,

BEING at present not well, I shall say no more but that I take these communications as a singular act of the truest kindness and friendship, and heartily thank you for them, and am glad to find that there are some souls in this world truly sick of it all, that being, in my opinion, a very happy symptom and prognostic of a prevailing health—such a degree of it at least as may be had in the diseased, defiled cottages wherein we dwell, and may be to us a certain pledge of real beginning of that full health we look for at our removal, and therefore have so much reason to long and wish earnestly and sigh

and groan for that day, and yet have no less reason
to wait patiently for it. Pray for

Your poor Friend,

R. L.

21st MARCH, 1669.

No. XV.

DEAR FRIEND,

I WAS refreshed by the account of your feast in
your former, of which I trust I was participant as to
the blessing of it, for though absent, I was heartily
with you in desire. The accident your letter ac-
quaints me with, I think concerns you little or no-
thing; for if there was any offence in the printing
it, it rests upon him that procured it, and the print-
er; but for instructing your own flock in what way
you judge most accommodated to them, who can
blame you? However, when I meet with the arch-
bishop, I shall (God willing) represent the business
to him as it is, if I find it needful; but if you think
it hath come to his knowledge, and that with some
misreport and disguise, I believe it might not be
amiss for you to give him the true and ingenuous
account yourself by a letter, for, it may be, some
weeks may pass before I see him.

But Oh! how quickly will all these things be
gone, and even at present a look beyond them
makes them disappear! Let us manage our ways

as prudently and profitably to our main end as we can, and let the world descant as they will. Blessed are the upright in heart, for their great Judge and Master sees into the heart, and cannot mistake them. Pray for

Your poor Friend,

R. L.

No. XVI.

DEAR FRIEND,

I DO very much commend the activeness of your charity in the journey you have taken ; for the success, though I had much desire and some little hopes of better, yet I suspected how it might prove, unless this one consideration, the extreme necessity of this church at this time, did prevail with our friend to do violence to himself. I hope you both pardon me for the very reason that I moved it, and that I am but to be angry or impatient at it I could not pardon myself. I look to Him who makes every thing beautiful in its season, and remember that saying of his, "Your time is always ready, but my time is not yet." As we are to forbear forbidden fruits at all times, so not to pull the best fruit in his garden till he allows us, and some way signifies he thinks them duly ripe for use.

I do heartily thank you for the kindness of communicating the inclosed letters ; for next to what is

with me, the painful reflection I have on this world is, that there is so small a part of mankind in whose breasts such thoughts are stirring, and am somewhat relieved, when I meet with any thing of that kind, and long to meet with more, or be gone where no such wishes are needful. Oh! this dark night is very long; but blessed hope of that bright morning without cloud that is hastening forward. Well, no more, but pray for

Your poor Friend and Servant,

R. L.

I beseech you pain me not again with so excessively canonical a superscription of your letters, for there is no need of it though they were to pass through twenty hands. Since I wrote this I received another of yours for Mr. *Blair*. The truth is, for this next year I am already engaged to one that both needs and deserves a little help, and am bespoke for another to succeed the year after, but have not absolutely promised, and I therefore am at a little more liberty to consider it against that time, if it please God to continue me here so long; for the youth you name you may be assured, if it can fall on that side, his relation to our brother and your recommendation will have very much weight to make it so, and that is all I can say of it at present.

For my Rev. Brother Mr. AIRD, }
Minister at Torriburn. }

No. XVII.

SIR,

I WISH I could punctually resolve you concerning that freedom of commencing to that excellent work which you desire; but the truth is, though I believe they are not there so strait-laced by far as here, yet you having never exercised at all in public, I am not sure they would not at all inquire concerning that, but it is likely nothing would be required, which (if you be not superstitious on the other hand) would trouble you. If you thought fit in the mean time to spend some weeks in that place you speak of, and to use the liberty of it in exercising, it might possibly pass for what you would avoid in the other. And if a fair invitation shall come, He to whom you have resigned yourself will direct you.

Sir,

Your very affectionate Friend.

To my own motions or stay, as I am in a most quiet indifferency myself, you, I am sure, may much more easily be so. We are at sea, and cannot expect still to sail within speech, no nor within sight, but we hope to arrive at the same "fair havens."

No. XVIII.

SIR,

THERE is one here come from *Ireland* to inquire after able young men for the Ministry, whom they may invite thither, sending them transport-money, and assuring them of a liberal and certain provision there. He they sent hath been with me, and was desirous to know if I could recommend any. It came into my thoughts to give you notice, that if you find any inclination that way, I may know. I will not advise you, much less press you in it, but leave you wholly to the freedom of your own thoughts and choice, and to the best hand to determine them. I believe they expect of those that go, an engaging to a pastoral charge; but whether for some time they may not give a little liberty to some or to one at least in a freer posture to preach, or whether their pastoral engagement be so indissolubly fast as here, I know not. You will think on that, and if you judge it worth so much, let me hear from you how you relish it. However, I wish you as to myself much happy success and advancement in your great design.

Your Friend to serve you.

No. XIX.

THE Lords of the Council having appointed some Ministers from other parts, to preach in such churches within the diocese of Glasgow as do most need their help, I desire the Reverend Mr. *James Aird*, Minister of Torry, to bestow his pains in that circuit that lies eastward from *Hamilton* or thereabouts, and particularly in the Kirk of *Carluke*; not doubting that the Minister thereof, and others in the like case, will very gladly receive and earnestly intreat what help he can do towards the bringing of their people to frequent the public ordinances, and the removing of their prejudices and calming of their passions, that they may with one heart worship that one Lord whose name we all profess to love and honour.

R. LEIGHTON.

GLASGOW, Sept. 17, 1676.

This is to recommend to the kind reception and assistance of the Gentlemen and Ministers, to whose parishes he shall resort, for preaching of the Gospel, within the diocese of Glasgow, our Reverend Brother Mr. *Lawrence Charteris*, Minister at *Bar*, being nominated and appointed by the Lords of Council, with some others from other parts for that effect.

GLASGOW, Sept. 20, 1670.

To Mr. *L. Charteris* are recommended within
the Presbytery of *Paisly* these Kirks,
Neelson, Kilbarchan,—vacant.

Likewise, if his health permit,
Killelen, and Kilmacome,—though not vacant.

R. LEIGHTON.

OCT. 19, 1670.

FINIS.





