SERMONS

" On the DUTIES of the GREAT."

BY

M. MASSILLON,

Bishop of CLERMONT.

SERMONS

"On the DUTIES of the GREAT,"

Tranſlated from the FRENCH of

M. MASSILLON, Biſhop of CLERMONT:

Preached before LOUIS the XVth,

During his Minority;

AND

Inſcribed to his ROYAL HIGHNESS

GEORGE, PRINCE of WALES,

BY

WILLIAM DODD, LL. D.

Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

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M DCC LXXVI.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCE of WALES.

SIR,

PERE MASSILLON was the moſt celebrated Orator of his times: He preached the Sermons, which I am permitted to addreſs to Your Royal Highneſs, during the minority of Louis the Fifteenth, before that Monarch and his Court. They have been univerſally and juſtly eſteemed; for they inculcate the nobleſt maxims, to form the great Prince, and the real Hero. And I confeſs that upon reading them, my

my heart longed to lay them before Your Royal Highneſs, not only as an humble teſtimony of my zeal for Your auguſt and illuſtrious Houſe; but, principally, on account of the importance of the Subjects whereof they treat.

Indeed, I am well aware that any ſollicitude of this kind is ſuperfluous, when I reflect on the Character of that truly-excellent Princeſs, Your Royal Mother; under whoſe guardian care and protection Your Royal Highneſs's tender years have hitherto paſſed: whoſe good Inſtructions, will render Treatiſes of this ſort the leſs neceſſary, while they facilitate that plan of future Education, which the wiſdom and attention of HIS MAJESTY will form and direct.

Happy,

DEDICATION.

Happy, SIR, in Parents no leſs exalted in Rank, than they are dignified by their Goodneſs, May You live to improve by their precepts and example; and to reward their affectionate Care, by an ample increaſe in every laudable and Royal Acquirement!

I have the Honour to be, with an earneſt wiſh for the frequent and happy return of this auſpicious Day,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's

moſt dutiful,

moſt devoted,

and moſt humble Servant,

Southampton-Row,
Auguſt 12, 1759.

WILLIAM DODD.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE first ten discourses in the present collection, were not only preached before the present King of France, as most of the other volumes of MASSILLON's Sermons had been before Lewis XIV; but they were preached only for the King and his Court, in the Chapel of the Castle of the Thuilleries, and afterwards presented in manuscript to his Majesty. They constitute, as it were, a body of morality for Princes and great men, in which the duties of their station are set forth by a detail equally noble and interesting. We have placed at the end, an eleventh discourse "on the Virtues and Vices of the Great," on account of the resemblance and affinity it bears to the general subject.

The following licence for the original publication, is subjoined; as it sets forth, in few but strong words, the high opinion entertained of the work in question.

"By order of the Lord Chancellor, I have read over a manuscript, intitled, "Sermons preached by M. MASSILLON, Bishop of Clermont, before the King, during his Minority." The applauses which the Court gave them, when they were pronounced, answer for those which they will receive from the Publick. The celebrated Orator there sets before the august Monarch, the duties of a christian

chriſtian King, in all their extent; the holy doctrine, in all its purity; and the vows of France, the tender ſentiments of the people for his ſacred perſon, in all their force. In fine, M. MASSILLON appears to exerciſe with equal dignity, in theſe eloquent diſcourſes, the glorious miniſtry of an accompliſhed Preacher of the Goſpel, and of a faithful Interpreter to the whole Nation. What is there, that can more powerfully conciliate to them univerſal acceptation!

Signed

MILLET, D. D.

Of the Faculty at Paris, and Cenſor Royal."

Paris, 19 Sept.
1744.

☞ It may be proper juſt to obſerve, that the Tranſlator hath adhered with great fidelity to his Original; and hath not preſumed to make any alteration in the matter or manner of theſe Diſcourſes, as he conceived the ſpirit of them would thereby have been loſt. He hath however found it neceſſary to leave out two or three paſſages, which ſavoured ſtrongly of the Popiſh Religion; and now and then to remind his Reader, that it is a French Preacher ſpeaking to a French King and Court.

THE

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THE PREFACE.

(From the FRENCH.)

P. MASSILLON preached at Paris, or in the court, for twenty years together, with a conſtant and equal ſucceſs; a circumſtance the moſt clear and deciſive in favour of his works. Moderate abilities are ſometimes in vogue, and, till they are effaced by ſuperior talents, may engage and preſerve for a ſeaſon the eſteem and applauſe of the public; but, to ſecure a general approbation, and fix the continual voice of a free and independant multitude, ever ready to withdraw, when once you ceaſe to attract and pleaſe them, is rarely given but to geniuſes of the firſt claſs.

We might therefore well be excuſed from any attempt to celebrate the ſermons of P. MASSILLON. Indeed, what can be added to the conſtant, the unanimous approbation of all FRANCE? Beſides, the public muſt quickly perceive that the Sermons here offered are in

the true taſte of the chair they filled: P. MASSILLON ſpeaks to the heart; all his pathos and intereſt are centered there: and whoever hath gained the ſecret of going to the heart,—whether read or heard,—is ſure to pleaſe, and to pleaſe continually.

The Pathetic, which conſtitutes the chief power of eloquence, and the peculiar character of our Orator, had almoſt entirely left the pulpit, when he firſt entered on the miniſtry: Very fortunately, all thoſe heavy loads of miſplaced erudition, that fantaſtical mixture of ſacred and profane, ſuited to impoſe on the ignorant vulgar, and much more to diſguſt men of ſenſe, had been already laid aſide: The generality of preachers, however, were ſtill ignorant of the art of intereſting the Paſſions, though ſo much of the ſucceſs of ſpeaking depends upon it; nor was this by any means the only defect under which they laboured. So that when P. MASSILLON firſt came to town, the Rev. P. De la Tour, principal of the Oratory, aſking him what he thought of their moſt popular preachers; he replied: "I think they have a good ſhare of underſtanding and abilities; but if I preach, I will not preach like them." And he kept his word: he did preach, and he ſtruck out a path entirely new.

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Let it not however be ſuſpected, that we confound P. Bourdaloue with the other Orators of his time: it were impoſſible to withhold applauſe from this great man, of whom it may truly be ſaid, as Quintilian ſaid of Cicero, "That we are to judge of the progreſs a man has made in Eloquence, by the taſte he has for the reading of His works." Too great a connoiſſeur to overlook him, no ſooner did our author hear P. Bourdaloue, than he admired him; and if he did not take him in every thing for his pattern, it is becauſe his talent urged him to another kind of eloquence. P. MASSILLON was ſtrongly perſuaded, that to ſucceed in what kind ſoever, a man muſt ſtudy his own talent, and follow it; or, in a word, he muſt work from genius: That to fix oneſelf to a ſervile copying the manner of another, how perfect ſoever that manner might be, unleſs found ſuited to thoſe diſpoſitions which nature hath implanted in us, is to hazard the never doing any thing with that certain fire, and that original turn, which conſtitute the merit of all good performances.

As to moſt of the other Preachers, beſides that want of devotion and ſentiment which P. MASSILLON objected to in their Sermons,

he reproved ſeveral for entering too minutely into particular conditions, and external manners;—an infallible way to tire out three-fourths of the audience, who are always compoſed of perſons quite different in age, ſtate and condition from each other. While you inſtruct the magiſtrate in the duties of his charge, can you flatter yourſelf with gaining the attention of thoſe, who have nothing to do with the functions of magiſtracy? And ſo, they who are not engaged in commerce,—what curioſity will they have to hear ſuch truths, as attack only the frauds and avarice of dealers? Certainly none. It is that Intereſt alone, which we have in what is ſaid, that can make us attentive to it. This being ſo, all thoſe truths which the preacher may deliver, and which we cannot apply perſonally to ourſelves, as they by no means intereſt us, are heard only with fatigue and diſguſt; and we wiſh for the end of a diſcourſe, which is no way addreſſed to ourſelves.

The Preacher, then, ought to be ſober and reſerved, in the painting of external manners and conditions, if he deſires to be heard with attention. Does he deſire to engage his whole audience? Let him touch the paſſions, which in all men are the ſame, ſpite of the diverſity

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of objects to which they are directed: while he paints from nature the motions, the ſhifts, and the pliancy of the paſſions, nothing that is ſaid can appear foreign to any of his hearers.

In ſhort, P. MASSILLON did not approve of dwelling long on truths, of which none are ignorant; and on general maxims, in which all the world agree: He wiſhed the principal application might be made to the diſcovery of thoſe unhappy pretences, which a too-ingenious ſelf-love never fails to ſuggeſt, in order to ſhake off the yoke of the law; and that, after having diſcovered theſe, the whole deluſion of them might be enforced and brought home in the ſtrongeſt manner.

Accordingly, he ſtruck out a method of compoſing, which he owed to himſelf entirely; and without any other guide than his own genius, and that original talent which he had received from nature, he knew how to guard againſt thoſe defects which he apprehended he had remarked in others. With him nothing is to be found uſeleſs, nothing ſuperfluous. After the firſt ſentence, laying down his principles, or eſtabliſhing them in two words, he looks out for the reaſons, upon which each in particular is founded, in the diviſion of his

ſubject, without conteſting the exiſtence of the law, or the neceſſity to obey it. He ſeeks for theſe reaſons in the hearts of thoſe who hear him; in the propenſity to thoſe paſſions, whoſe intereſts are unfortunately dearer to us than our Salvation; paſſions, which we would be very glad not to renounce, could we but avoid being conſidered as breakers of the law. There it is he diſcovers the inexhauſtible ſpring of all thoſe frivolous pretexts, and of all thoſe modifications invented by man, in order to bring God and the world, Chriſt and Belial into alliance. We are tempted to grant our paſſions whatever they deſire; but we would at the ſame time ſkreen ourſelves from that remorſe, which would embitter all our pleaſures: For let there remain ever ſo little ſenſe of religion in a ſoul, remorſe is inſeparable from vice; and to quiet the alarms of a conſcience not yet hardened, we muſt perſuade it that it is not guilty. What do we then? We have recourſe to a thouſand ſubtilties and ſubterfuges, exceptions and modifications, which, leaving the precept itſelf in force, totally annihilate every ones peculiar obligation to fulfil it. Thus the conſcience is again held up againſt the terrors of the law; and learns no longer to fear its

menaces.

menaces. What indeed ſhould it fear? the law puniſhes only the prevaricators: but, where the law ceaſes to oblige, there is no prevarication.

Now how does P. MASSILLON proceed? In order to diſpel theſe dark clouds, which are not the leſs thick, becauſe they are voluntary, he "ſets your own heart before your eyes," as the prophet expreſſes it: he forces you to ſee yourſelves in it ſuch as you are, and quite other than you think yourſelves to be; that is to ſay, the ſad ſport of a thouſand paſſions, which darken the light of your mind, and corrupt the rectitude of your heart: He forces you to acknowledge that the reaſons by which you pretend to be diſpenſed from the law, are drawn, not from that natural fund of light and rectitude, which God hath placed within you, and much leſs from the lights of the goſpel; that the language which you hold is the language of the paſſions, and that they alone inſpire you. Ceaſe therefore to be vicious, and you will very ſoon ceaſe to alledge theſe pretences as poſitive reaſons.

Here then, eſpecially, the eloquence of P. MASSILLON triumphs. When, after having unmaſk'd the ſhifts and artifices of ſelf-love, he ſets forth in all their colours the miſery and falſhood

of them; with what force and vehemence doth he combat and oppoſe them!—'Tis an impetuous torrent, that overthrows all it meets; 'tis, if I may ſo ſpeak, a deluge of reaſons, all convincing, all intereſting, which, one holding up the other, follow ſtroke after ſtroke, to confound and overwhelm the ſinner. Mean time the ſinner, overwhelmed and confounded, having nothing to reply, beholds with aſtoniſhment that the Preacher, ſo far from being exhauſted, has ſtill a thouſand ſhafts, ready to launce at him. And, what forms the diſtinguiſhing character of P. MASSILLON's eloquence, is, that all his ſhafts tend directly to the heart; 'tis on that ſide, he always levels his ſtrokes: What is merely Reaſon and Proof in others, in His mouth borrows the tincture of Sentiment: He not only convinces, but he affects, he moves, he melts down the hearer. He is not content with proving to you that the part of virtue is the moſt rational, and the moſt worthy of man; in his diſcourſes virtue appears to you ſupremely amiable: you find nothing in it but comforts and conſolations; you wiſh already to be in poſſeſſion of a Good, without which you have no longer any idea of happineſs. He does not confine himſelf to the making you feel the injuſtice and unrea-

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ſonableneſs of vice; he makes it ſtand forth deformed, hateful: You can no longer bear to continue under the empire of this cruel tyrant; You no longer behold it, but as the ſworn enemy of your felicity: Entering therefore into an holy indignation againſt yourſelf, you find yourſelf ſo blind, ſo unjuſt, ſo miſerable, that you ſee no other reſource left, but to throw yourſelf into the arms of Virtue.

Sermons compoſed in this taſte, could not fail to be heard with an extraordinary attention. Every one knew himſelf, in theſe lively and natural pictures; where the preacher paints out the human heart, and ſhews the ſprings which put it in motion, every one imagines it is himſelf to whom the diſcourſe is addreſſed; that the orator aims only at Him: —Hence the prodigious effect of his inſtructions. After having heard him, the people did not ſtop by the way, to extol or to criticiſe the Sermon; the hearer retired from him in awful ſolemn ſilence, with penſive air, with eyes caſt down, with recollection ſtamped on the countenance, bearing away the ſting left by the Chriſtian Orator in his heart! Theſe mute ſuffrages far exceed the greateſt applauſes. Theſe flatter the miniſter, and tell him he knows how to pleaſe the ear; but Thoſe con-

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ſole him, and aſſure him that he has touched and affected the heart. Thus, when P. MASSILLON had preached his firſt Advent at Verſailles, Lewis the XIVth addreſſed him in theſe remarkable words. "My Father, I have heard many great Orators in my chapel, and have been very well ſatisfied with Them: but as to You, every time that I have heard you, I have been very much diſſatisfied with Myſelf!" A perfect eulogium; which does equal honour to the taſte and piety of the Monarch, and to the abilities of the Preacher.

P. MASSILLON's Stile, tho' noble, and worthy the majeſty of the pulpit, is not on that account the leſs ſimple, and within reach of the people. The vivacity of his imagination lends nothing to his expreſſions, but that agreeableneſs, which is neceſſary to gratify the man of ſenſe, without reducing the multitude to admire, what it does not underſtand.

An enemy to every thing in ſtile that ſavours of affectation, he was ſtill more ſo to ſuch thoughts, as have no other merit than the Brilliant; which ſerve only to amuſe the mind, and divert it from the attention it owes to the important truths delivered. P. MASSILLON every where offers none but grand and ſublime ideas, which elevate the ſoul;

ſoul; which exhibit Religion under that noble and majeſtic character which is proper to it; and which ſometimes it appears to loſe, from having been intruſted to hands, that, inſtead of embelliſhing, are able only to diſfigure it.

It will doubtleſs be thought, that diſcourſes thus eloquent,—in which there is ſo much the more art, as there appears nothing but what is natural,—were the fruit of long and tedious labour, and that this fine and noble ſimplicity, often denied to the efforts even of the greateſt men, did not preſent itſelf to him, till after a long-continued ſearch: this however was by no means the caſe. Theſe Sermons were compoſed with a facility that borders upon prodigy; not one which coſt him more than ten or twelve days. How many of the ſame profeſſion, would hardly have found that time ſufficient to form their plan, and digeſt it properly!

In 1704, he appeared at court for the ſecond time. Lewis XIV, after having teſtified to him, in the moſt gracious terms, his extreme ſatisfaction, added; "And I could wiſh, my Father, to hear you for the time to come, every two years." Immediately P. MASSILLON formed his reſolution, not to return to Verſailles without new Sermons: And

And 'tis pity that ſuch a plan had not taken effect; ſince, to judge only from that abundance, that richneſs, that variety which reigns in every thing that dropped from his pen, it is evident how perfectly he was able to have carried it into execution.

In 1718, having been nominated to the Biſhoprick of Clermont, he was appointed to preach the Lent Sermons before the young King, who was then entering upon that age, in which Reaſon begins to unfold itſelf. On this occaſion he conceived that he ought to preach for the Prince himſelf, and to inſtruct him in the duties of royalty. But for this, very different Sermons were requiſite from thoſe he had yet preached, which, both for ſubject matter and manner, could not well ſuit a young Prince but NINE years old. He invented therefore, as it were, a new kind of Eloquence; the ſtile, the inſtruction, all, was proportioned to the young Monarch's age. In the Stile, he diffuſed more vivacity, more of the agreeable and florid, and ſometimes even of the academick. The Inſtructions, diveſted of the dryneſs of reaſoning, were Maxims on the duties of Princes, expreſſed in few words, but preſented in ſuch a manner, as to make a lively impreſſion on the underſtanding

ing and the heart. This ſtile and mode of inſtructing, was ſomething entirely new to P. MASSILLON: and yet ſix weeks ſufficed him to compoſe the ten firſt Sermons in this Volume, ſo admired and applauded; which contain, in brief, all that can form the mind of a Prince dear to God and to Man, and which were often interrupted, either by the acclamations, or by the tears of his auguſt audience.

With regard to Action, that eſſential conſtituent of an Orator,—it was not by This that he at firſt gained himſelf admiration. The taſte of the times was not his own. He could not bear, that inſtead of that natural air which always carries conviction with it, men ſhould aſſume a certain borrowed manner and declamatory tone, which, while it makes the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt look like perſons who mount the chair only to play a character, takes away almoſt all force and credit from their diſcourſes. It was natural therefore to ſuppoſe that his audience, ſpoiled by that taſte for declamation almoſt univerſally received, would revolt at firſt againſt P. MASSILLON's manner of ſpeaking, in which none of the rules hitherto adopted appeared to be at all obſerved; but as, notwithſtanding, he made

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an extraordinary impreſſion upon the minds of men, they ſoon yielded to experience: They were no longer embarraſſed with thoſe pretended rules, which the Orator ſeemed to neglect; and the public, riſing ſuperior to its prejudices, concluded rationally that without doubt his method of ſpeaking, muſt neceſſarily be good, nay that it even was the beſt, ſince no other preacher, made by any means ſo lively an impreſſion.

For the reſt, it would be very difficult to give thoſe who have not heard him an idea, what his Action was. It was ſo peculiar to himſelf, that we can aſſure the reader, as he had no pattern to follow, ſo he has formed no Diſciple that has imitated him.

You ſaw him get into the pulpit, as a man coming to meditate upon a ſubject profoundly: from the moment he appears, his collected and penetrating air already announces the grandeur and importance of the truths he is about to unfold before you. He has not yet opened his mouth, and yet the audience is ſeized with awe: At length he ſpeaks; but it is not like an Orator, who comes artfully to vent a diſcourſe with which he has been loading his memory: Every thing flows from the fountain-head. " He ſpeaks out of the abundance

dance of the heart," unable to contain within it the truths wherewith it is filled. An inward fire inflames him; he cannot help giving it free iſſue, and ſuffering it to blaze on every ſide: Thus every thing in him is animated; all ſpeaks, all perſuades, all moves, all ſoftens and melts, all carries conviction and ſentiment to the ſoul.—Nor was this by any means an effect of art in P. MASSILLON: It was a natural talent, which made him expreſs and ſay things with force and vivacity, becauſe he felt them in the ſame manner.

Accordingly, he made all the merit of Action properly conſiſt in appearing himſelf fully penetrated with thoſe truths of which he would convince his hearers; and never did any man carry this talent further than P. MASSILLON: This is the teſtimony borne him by the public; the eulogium paſſed upon him by every perſon of taſte. We will take the liberty here to relate a fact, remarkable for its ſingularity, and not unworthy mention on this ſubject. The moſt perfect Actor that the French Theatre ever had, was determined to hear our Author; he was ſtruck with the juſtneſs he found in his manner of pronouncing, and ſaid to another Actor who had accompanied him, "Well, my friend, this is

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an Orator; as for Us, we are only Comedians." * * * * * *

In ſhort, the ſame taſte reigns thro' all his different pieces: There is always the ſame elevation, the ſame noble ſpirit, both in ſtile and thought; always that pathetic which tranſports; always thoſe pictures ſo true and ſo intereſting, of the human heart. The Court ſtill remembers the applauſe which it conferred on the preſent Diſcourſes delivered in Lent; and the high reputation which his Sermons in general acquired him, he preſerved and maintained conſtantly to the end. What remains then, but to wiſh, that every heart may be opened to thoſe ſacred truths ſo nobly eſtabliſhed in the Diſcourſes before us; and that they may produce, in thoſe who read them, the ſame effects of grace and converſion, which were ſo often felt by thoſe who heard them?

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SERMON I.

On the EXAMPLES of the GREAT.

Preached on the Day of the Purification of the Bleſſed Virgin.

Luke II. 34.

BEHOLD, THIS CHILD IS SET FOR THE FALL AND RISING AGAIN OF MANY IN ISRAEL.

SUCH is the deſtiny of the Kings and Princes of the earth;---to be SET either for the ruin, or for the ſalvation of the reſt of mankind. And when heaven gives them to the world, it may be ſaid, that they are public bleſſings, or public chaſtiſements, prepared for the people, by its mercy, or its juſtice.

Yes, illuſtrious Prince, on that happy day when YOU was given to the world, and when, brought into the holy temple, the Pontiff marked you with the ſacred ſign of faith, it might truly be ſaid of you, "This child is born for "the fall, as well as for the ſalvation of many."

Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, taking poſſeſſion in the temple, of his new royalty, as on the preſent feſtival, was not exempted from this Law: it is true,

his example, his miracles, and his doctrine, which unite to procure the ſalvation of ſo many ſheep of Iſrael, will become an occaſion of falling and of offence to the reſt of the Jews, only thro' that incredulity which will render them the more inexcuſable; and thus the ſame goſpel which ſhall be the ſalvation and redemption of ſome, will be the ruin and condemnation of others.

Happy for Princes, and for the Great, if their holineſs alone was an occaſion of cenſure and offence to men of corrupt minds! if their examples, like thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt, became the rock and condemnation of vice, only by rendering it the more inexcuſable, and by becoming the ſupport and the pattern of virtue.

Thus You, my brethren, whom providence hath exalted above other men; and YOU, eſpecially, oh Prince, You, whom the hand of God, the protector of this monarchy, hath, as it were, ſnatched from the midſt of the ruins and fragments of the Royal Houſe, to place you over our heads; You, whom he hath lighted up as a precious ſpark, in the very boſom of the ſhadow of death, where he had juſt extinguiſhed all your auguſt race, and You yourſelf was on the point of being alſo extinguiſhed: Yes, Sir, I repeat it, this is the deſtiny which heaven prepares for you; You are ſet for the ruin or for the ſalvation of many: "ſet for the fall and riſing again of many in "Iſrael."

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The examples of Princes and great men vibrate upon this inevitable alternative; they can neither be loſt nor be ſaved wholly alone.—An eſſential truth, which ſhall be the ſubject of the following diſcourſe.

PART I.

As the firſt propenſity of the people is to imitate Kings, the firſt duty of Kings is to give holy examples to the people. Common men ſeem to be born only for themſelves; their virtues or their vices are as obſcure as their condition: Confounded in the multitude, whether they fall, or whether they ſtand firm, they are equally unnoticed by the public; their ruin or their ſalvation is limited to their own perſon; or, at leaſt, their example, tho' it may indeed ſometimes ſeduce and turn aſide from virtue, cannot give ſanction or authority to vice.

On the contrary, Princes and great men ſeem to be born only for others. The ſame rank which ſets them up to view, holds them forth for models: their manners ſpeedily form the public manners; thoſe, who merit our homage, are ſuppoſed not to be unworthy of our imitation. The multitude find a ſtrong law in the examples of their ſuperiors: their life is reproduced, as it were, in the public; and if their vices meet with cenſors, it is commonly amongſt thoſe who imitate them.

Thus the ſame greatneſs which favours the paſſions, conſtrains and repreſſes them; and as one of the ancients obſerves, "The more exal-"tation ſeems to give us of licence by authority, "the more doth it take it away by its decorums." *

But from whence come thoſe unavoidable conſequences, which the examples of the great always produce among the people? It is from hence: on the part of the people, it is vanity and a deſire to pleaſe; on the part of the great, it is extent, and perpetuity.

I. I ſaid VANITY on the part of the people. Yes, my brethren, this ever-unaccountable world, hath in all times equally been devoted, out of ſhame, both to the vices and to virtue. It ridicules the juſt man; it pierces with a thouſand ſhafts the diſſolute man: Vicious paſſions and holy works, furniſh the ſame matter for its deriſion and its cenſure; and from a fantaſticalneſs, which its caprice alone can juſtify, it has found out the ſecret of rendering, at the ſame time, vice contemptible and virtue ridiculous. Now examples of diſſoluteneſs in the great, while they authoriſe vice, ennoble the ſhame and ignominy of it, and remove from it whatever is contemptible in the eyes of the people. Their paſſions immediately become new titles of honour in the others, and they become imitators of them through mere vanity.

* Ita in maxima fortuna minima licentia eſt.
SALLUST.

Our

Our nation especially, the vainest or most trifling, as some tell you; or, to speak more justly, and do it greater honour, the most devoted to its masters, and the most respectful towards its grandees; thinks it a glory to copy their manners, as well as a duty to love their persons: we flatter ourselves with a resemblance, which, by bringing us nearer their conduct, seems to bring us nearer their rank. After great patterns, all becomes honourable; and ostentation alone frequently urges us to excesses, at which inclination reverts. The city would think itself degenerating, were it not to copy the manners of the court: the obscure citizen, by imitating the licentiousness of the great, fancies he is stamping his passions with the seal of grandeur and nobility; and vanity alone perpetuates that irregularity, of which all relish itself is soon lost.

But, on the other hand, every thing resumes its place in a state, where the great men, and especially the Prince, worship the Lord. Piety is in honour, when once it has great examples to support it. The just no longer fear that ridicule which the world casts upon virtue, and which is the rock of so many weak minds. God is feared, without fear of men. Virtue is no longer foreign to the court; irregularity no longer stalks there with a haughty brow; but is forced to hide itself, or to take cover under the appearances of wisdom. Licentiousness no longer appears in-

vested with public authority; and if vice loses nothing thereby, the scandal at least diminishes. In a word, the duties of religion enter into the public order; they become a decorum which the world itself imposes upon us. Divine worship may indeed still be despised in secret, by the impious, but it is at least vindicated by majesty and public decency. The holy temple may still see at the foot of its altars sinners and infidels; but it no longer sees profaners.

Now, tho' the example of the great should serve only to countenance virtue, and render it respectable upon earth; only to divest it of that impious and stupid ridicule which the world throws upon it; only to shelter the just from temptation, derision and censure; only to establish the fact, That it is not scandalous for a man to serve the God who created and who preserves him; that the worship paid him is a duty, the most glorious and honourable to the creature; and that the title of "Servant of the Most High," is a thousand times more grand and real, than all the vain and pompous titles which encircle the diadems of Sovereigns;---though the example of the great should have only this advantage; what an honour were this for religion? what an abundance of blessings are these for an empire?

Happy the people who find their patterns in their masters! who can imitate those whom they are obliged to respect! who learn from their examples to obey their laws; and who are not constrained

ſtrained to avert their regards from thoſe, to whom they owe their homage!

II. But though the examples of the great ſhould not find in the VANITY of the people only, a continual imitation, yet intereſt and a DESIRE OF PLEASING them would procure them as many imitators of their actions, as their authority creates pretenders to their favours.

The young King Rehoboam forgets the counſels of a father, the wiſeſt of Kings; inconſiderate young men are preſently called to the firſt places, and ſhare his favours, while they imitate his irregularities.

The Great wiſh to be applauded; and as of all applauſes Imitation is the moſt flattering, You are ſure to pleaſe them, the moment you ſtudy to reſemble them: they are delighted to find in their imitators, an apology for their vices; and ſeek with complacency, in all around them, ſomething wherewith to fortify them againſt themſelves.

Thus Ambition, whoſe ways are always long and toilſome, is charmed with ſtriking out for itſelf a path more ſhort and agreeable. Pleaſure, commonly irreconcileable with fortune, becomes its artiſan and miniſter: the paſſions already ſo favoured by our inclinations, find alſo in the hope of reward a new and animating bait. Every motive unites againſt virtue: And if it be ſo difficult to ſtand againſt the vice which pleaſes,

how difficult muſt it be not to yield to it, when it is accompanied with honour?

Such, SIR, is the misfortune of the great, urged on by unjuſt paſſions. Their example corrupts all who are under their authority; they diffuſe their manners by diſtributing their favours; all who depend upon them will live as they do. Eſteem, oh Prince, in men, only the love of duty, and then your favours will fall only on merit: Condemn in others what you cannot juſtify in yourſelf: The imitators of the paſſions of the great, inſult their vices by imitating them. What a misfortune is it, when the Sovereign, not content with giving himſelf up to irregularity, as it were conſecrates that irregularity, by the favours wherewith he honours it in thoſe, who are either its imitators, or its ſhameful miniſters! what an opprobrium to an empire! what an indecency to the majeſty of government! what a diſcouragement to a nation, and to judicious and virtuous ſubjects, who are robbed by vice of the favours deſtined to their talents and ſervices! what a diſgrace and abaſement to the Prince in the opinion of foreign courts! and hence what a deluge of evils flows in upon the people! Poſts occupied by corrupt men; paſſions, always puniſhed by contempt, become the way to honours and to glory! authority, eſtabliſhed to maintain the order and purity of the laws, merited by exceſſes which violate them: manners corrupted in their ſource! ſtars, which ſhould point out our way, changed into meteors

to

to miſlead us! even the public decencies, whereof vice is ever jealous, referred, as ſuperannuated cuſtoms, to the antique gravity of our forefathers: irregularity ſet looſe from the yoke even of common decorum; and moderation in vice become almoſt as ridiculous as virtue.

But, if juſtice and piety in the great take place of paſſion and licentiouſneſs, what a ſource of bleſſings for the people! Virtue diſtributes favours; virtue receives them: Honours * go in ſearch of the wiſe man, who merits and who flies them; and fly the man who, ſold to iniquity, runs after them. Public offices are intruſted to them only, who devote themſelves to the public good. Intereſt and intrigue ſtand in no ſtead: Merit and ſervices have need only of themſelves. Nay, even the taſte of the Sovereign does not determine his largeſſes; nothing appears to him worthy of reward in his ſubjects, but talents uſeful to his country: Favours always declare merit, or follow cloſe beſide it; and there are no male-contents in the ſtate, but lazy and uſeleſs men. Talents are expanded by the rewards which attend them: every one ſtu-

* High worth is elevated place: 'tis more;
It makes the poſt ſtand candidate for thee;
Makes more than monarchs, makes an honeſt man:
Tho' no *exchequer* it commands, 'tis wealth,
And tho' it wears no *ribbond*, 'tis renown;
Renown, that would not quit thee, tho' diſgrac'd,
Nor leave thee pendant on a maſter's ſmile.

YOUNG. Night 6.

dies

dies to render himſelf uſeful to the public; and all the ſkill of ambition is how to make itſelf worthy of the places to which it aſpires. In a word, the people are comforted, the weak ſupported, the vicious left on the dunghill, the juſt honoured, God glorified in the great, who are his repreſentatives here below *; and though a deſire to pleaſe them may make hypocrites—not to ſay that the maſk drops off ſooner or later, and that hypocriſy always, in ſome ſhape, betrays itſelf;---yet the very aſſuming of her appearance is an honour, which vice pays to virtue.

Theſe are the conſequences on the part of the People, which flow from their VANITY and DESIRE OF IMITATING THE EXAMPLES OF THE GREAT. On the part of the Great, the EXTENT and PERPETUITY of their examples, render them the ſignal either of vice or of virtue amongſt men.

PART II.

I. 1. I ſaid, EXTENT: and firſt, an "EXTENT OF AUTHORITY." How many miniſters of their paſſions do they not involve in their condemnation and deſtiny!

If an extravagant love of glory intoxicates them, every thing ſuggeſts deſolation and war; and then, what nations are ſacrificed to the idol of their pride! what bloodſhed cries for vengeance on their heads! what public calamities proclaim them the ſole authors! what plaintive ſounds riſe to

* Pſalm xxix. 1, 2.

heaven

heaven, againſt men born for the miſery of others! what crimes ſpring from one ſingle crime!---And can their tears ever waſh the fields ſtained with the blood of ſo many innocents! and can their repentance alone diſarm the wrath of heaven, while it ſtill leaves behind ſuch vaſt diſorders and miſeries upon earth!

O Prince! ever conſider war as the moſt grievous ſcourge which God can inflict upon an empire: ſtudy to diſarm your enemies, rather than to conquer them. God has entruſted to you the ſword only for the ſecurity of your people, not for the miſery of your neighbours. The empire which heaven deſtines for you, is ſufficiently large: be more jealous to alleviate its evils, than to extend its bounds: place your glory rather in repairing the misfortunes of paſt wars, than in attempting new ones; render your reign immortal by the felicity of your people, rather than by the number of your conqueſts: do not meaſure by your power the juſtice of your enterprizes; and never forget, that in the moſt juſt wars, victories ever draw after them as many calamities to a ſtate, as the moſt bloody defeats.

But, if the love of pleaſure prevails over glory in Sovereigns, every thing becomes ſubſervient to their paſſions; every thing preſſes forward to be their miniſters; every thing facilitates their ſucceſs; every thing awakens their deſires; every thing lends arms to voluptuouſneſs. Worthleſs ſubjects countenance it; flatterers give it honour-

able

able titles; profane authors embellish it with song; the arts are exhausted to diversify its pleasures; all the talents destined by the author of nature to preserve the order and ornament of society, now tend only to the support of vice. O how truly dangerous and deplorable is grandeur! The passions, which wear out by time, there perpetuate themselves by fresh resources. The disgusts always inseparable from irregularity, are awakened there by the diversity of pleasures. The very tumult and agitation which encircle thrones, banish all reflection, and never for a moment leave the Sovereign to himself! even the Nathans, the prophets of the Lord, become silent, and are disheartened in their approaches to him. Every thing is incessantly obtruding his glory before him; every thing tells him of his power, and no one dares to give him a distant view of his weaknesses.

2. To the extent of authority, we may add, "an extent of splendor." It is not to their own nation only, that the impression and contagious effect of their examples is confined; the great are, as it were, a spectacle for the whole universe. Their actions pass from mouth to mouth, from province to province, from nation to nation: nothing in their life is private; every thing belongs to the public. The stranger, in the most distant courts, has his eyes upon them, as well as the citizen: they instantly create imitators, even in places where their power makes them enemies: the whole

whole world feels their virtues or their vices: they are, if I may ſo ſpeak, Citizens of the univerſe. Events fall out in all nations, which derive their ſource from their examples; they are charged before God with the righteouſneſs or the iniquity of nations; and their vices or their virtues have boundaries ſtill more extenſive than thoſe of their empire.

France, eſpecially, which hath long ſince fixed the attention of Europe, is more held up to view than any other nation. Foreigners croud hither to ſtudy our manners, and then carry them into the moſt remote countries: we ſee even the children of Sovereigns, wave the pleaſures and the magnificence of their own court, come hither as private men; ſubſtitute, inſtead of the language and manners of their own nation, the politeneſs of ours; and, as the throne hath always the firſt regards, form themſelves by the wiſdom and moderation, or by the pride and extravagance of the Prince who fills it.

Shew them, oh Prince, a Sovereign whom they may imitate: let your virtues, and the wiſdom of your government, ſtrike them yet more than your power: let them be ſtill more ſurprized at the juſtice of your reign, than at the magnificence of your court. Do not, like the King of Judah, ſhew your riches to ſtrangers come from Babylon; ſhew them your love for your ſubjects, and their love for you, which is the true treaſure of ſovereigns. Be you the pattern of good kings, and

by

by rendering yourſelf the admiration of foreigners, you will conſtitute the happineſs of your people. *

II. But not only to men of their own age, are Princes and great men anſwerable; their examples have a character of PERPETUITY, which intereſts every age to come.

The vices or virtues of common men uſually die with them: their memory periſhes with their perſon: the great day of manifeſtation alone, ſhall reveal their actions to the eyes of the univerſe; but till then, their works are buried, and repoſe under the obſcurity of the ſame tomb with their aſhes.

But Princes and great men are of all ages: their lives, connected with the public events, keep pace with them from century to century; their paſſions, either preſerved in the public monuments, or immortalized in hiſtory, or chanted by laſcivious poeſy, ſhall ſtill deſcend to lay ſnares for the lateſt poſterity. The world is already full of pernicious writings, which have tranſmitted down to us, the diſorders of former courts. The diſſolute manners of the great never die; their examples ſtill preach vice or virtue to our remoteſt deſcendants; and the hiſtory of their manners laſts as long as that of the age in which they lived.

* The reader will obſerve with ſingular pleaſure, that what this excellent preacher here ſpeaks of France, is at preſent peculiarly applicable to our own nation.

But

But, on the other hand, under what happy engagements to piety and juſtice, are kings and great men held by their very ſtate! if they find many powerful incitements in it to vice, do they not alſo find more powerful motives to virtue? what noble reſerve ought to accompany actions, which ſhall be written in indelible characters, in the book of poſterity! what glory better placed, than not to yield up to vices and to paſſions, the memory whereof will fully the hiſtory of all times, and mankind of all ages? what emulation more laudable, than to leave examples, which ſhall become the moſt invaluable titles of monarchy, and the public monuments of juſtice and virtue? In ſhort, what more grand than to be born for the happineſs even of ages to come! to think, that our examples alone ſhall form a ſucceſſion of virtue, and of the fear of the Lord amongſt mankind; and that from our very aſhes there ſhall ſpring up, from age to age, Princes like ourſelves!

Such is the deſtiny of good Kings; and ſuch was your auguſt great grandfather, * that great King, whom we will ever propoſe to you as your pattern. Alas! he will ever be ſuch to all future Kings. O never forget thoſe laſt moments, in which that heroical old man, as Simeon on the day we are now celebrating, holding YOU in his arms, bathing you with his paternal tears, and offering up to the God of his fathers this precious

* Louis XIV.

remnant

remnant of his royal race, quitted life with joy, becauſe his eyes ſaw the miraculous infant, whom God ſtill reſerved to be the ſalvation of his kingdom, and the glory of Iſrael.

SIRE! never loſe ſight of that grand ſpectacle; that father of Kings, dying, and ſeeing in you alone the hopes of all his extinguiſhed poſterity revive; recommending your infancy to that tender and reſpectable depoſitary * of your firſt education, who, while ſhe formed your firſt inclinations, and as it were your firſt words, was even on the point of receiving your laſt ſighs: entruſting the ſacred charge of your perſon, to that pious Prince †, who inſpires you with ſentiments worthy of your blood: to that illuſtrious marſhal ‡, who hath received, as an hereditary virtue, the ſcience of educating Kings; and who, now become one of the firſt ſubjects in the ſtate, will teach you to become the greateſt King of your time: to that faithful prelate ||, who, after having wiſely governed the church, will form in you its moſt zealous protector; in ſhort, to all the nation, of which you are at the ſame time both a precious pupil, and a father!

* The Ducheſs of Vantadour.
† The Duke of Maine.
‡ Marſhal Villeroy.
|| The old Biſhop of Frejus.

May

May you, SIR, never efface from your remembrance the maxims of wisdom * which that great Prince left you in those last moments, as an inheritance more precious than his crown.

He exhorted You to comfort your people;---"Be their father, and you will be doubly their master."

He inspired You with an horror of war, and exhorted You, in this instance, never to follow his example: "Be a pacific Prince: the most glorious conquests are those which gain us hearts."

* M. de S—— H——, in his Memoirs of the most material Events in France, informs us, "That a little before the King (Lewis the XIVth) died, he ordered the young Dauphin, then about five years of age, to be brought to him; and having embraced him with great tenderness, addressed him in this manner. "My dear, you are going to be a great King; but all your happiness will depend on your obedience to God, and the care you take to relieve your people. In order to this, you must avoid engaging in war as much as possible. Do not follow the bad example I have set you in this respect. I have often made war upon too slight grounds, and have carried it on from a principle of vain glory. Do not imitate me in this part of my character, but be a lover of peace, and let it be your chief study to relieve your people." Our author very justly observes, that the concern which the King expressed in this advice to the young Dauphin, and the frank confession he made of his own faults, do him more honour, than all the panegyricks of his flatterers.

He warned You to fear the Lord: "Walk before him in innocency; you will reign happily only ſo far as You reign holily."

O SIR! may the laſt words of this great King, of this Patriarch of Your Royal Family, be, like thoſe of the dying Patriarch Jacob, the predictions of what is one day to happen to his race; and may his laſt inſtructions become the prophecy of your reign! *Amen.*

SER-

SERMON II.

On the TEMPTATIONS of the GREAT.

For the Firſt Sunday in Lent.

Matthew IV. 1.

THEN WAS JESUS LED UP OF THE SPIRIT INTO THE WILDERNESS, TO BE TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

THE ſtriking ſigns, which accompanied the birth and the beginning of the life of Jeſus Chriſt, permitted not the devil to be ignorant that the moſt High had deſigned him for great things.

The more clearly he diſcerned the firſt glimpſes of his future grandeur, the more did he haſten to lay ſnares in his way. His deſcent from the Kings of Judah; his right to the crown of his anceſtors; the prophecies which announced that in the latter times God would raiſe up of the ſeed of David, the Prince of peace, and the deliverer of his people; theſe, and whatever other particulars proclaimed the greatneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, armed at the ſame time the malice of the tempter againſt his innocence.

The GREAT, are the firſt objects of his fury: more expoſed than other men to his ſeductions and ſnares, he begins early to prepare thoſe ſnares for them; and as their fall anſwers his purpoſe for that of almoſt all thoſe who depend upon them, he collects all his ſhafts for their deſtruction.

I. CHANGE THESE STONES INTO BREAD, ſays he to Jeſus Chriſt. He firſt attacks him with PLEASURE; and this is the firſt ſnare he lays for the innocence of the Great.

II. SINCE YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD, he adds, HE WILL SEND HIS ANGELS TO KEEP YOU: He proceeds by ADULATION; and this is an arrow ſtill more envenomed, wherewith he poiſons their ſoul.

III. And laſtly, I WILL GIVE YOU ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD, AND THE GLORY OF THEM. He ends with AMBITION; and this is the laſt and the ſureſt reſource he employs, to triumph over their weakneſs.

Thus Pleaſure begins to corrupt their heart; Adulation confirms it in error, and cloſes upon it all the ways of truth: and Ambition conſummates its blindneſs, and finiſhes the work by digging a precipice for its ruin. Proceed we to unfold theſe important truths.

I. The firſt rock of our innocence is PLEASURE. The other more tardy paſſions do not expand, and as it were ripen, but with the reaſon: This precedes it; and we find ourſelves corrupted, almoſt before we could know what we are. This unhappy

happy propenſity, which ſullies the whole courſe of human life, ever derives its ſource from the earlieſt manners: this is the firſt poiſoned ſhaft which wounds the ſoul; this it is which effaces its firſt beauty; and from this afterwards flow all its other vices.

But this firſt rock of human life becomes, as it were, the privileged rock of the life of the Great. In other men this deplorable paſſion never exerciſes above half its empire; obſtacles thwart it; the fear of public cenſure gives it a check, and the love of wealth divides it.

In Princes and great men, either no obſtacles are to be found, or obſtacles themſelves, eaſily avoided, irritate and inflame it. Alas! what obſtacles can oppoſe their will, who hold in their hands the public fortune? occaſions almoſt prevent their deſires; their looks, if I may venture to ſay ſo, every where find crimes attendant upon them; the indecency of the times, and the debaſement of courts, do even honour with public encomiums the traps uſed to ſeduce them; worthleſs homage is paid to the moſt ſhameful effrontery; ſo ſcandalous a happineſs is regarded with envy, inſtead of execration; and public adulation ſcreens the infamy of public miſconduct. Princes, the moment they yield themſelves up to vice, no longer know any other rein than their own will, and their paſſions find no more reſiſtance than their commands.

DAVID determined to enjoy his crime: the chosen man of his army is immediately sacrificed, and by that means the only witness of his incontinence who could give him uneasiness, perishes. Nothing is too much for, nothing opposes the passions of the Great: accordingly, the facility of the passions becomes a new bait to them; all the paths of iniquity grow smooth before them, and whatever is pleasing, is presently possible.

Fear of the public is another check to the licentiousness of common men. How corrupted soever our manners may be, vice has not yet lost all its shamefulness amongst us; there still remains a sort of public modesty, which forces us to conceal it; and the world itself, which seems to reverence it, nevertheless annexes to it a kind of infamy and opprobrium: it favours the passions; and yet it imposes upon it decorums which cramp them: it gives public lessons of vice and voluptuousness, and yet it requires secrecy, and a sort of prudent management from those who yield up to them.

But Princes and the Great have shaken off this yoke: their regard of men is not so great as to fear their censures: the public homage which is paid them makes up for the secret contempt which is entertained against them: they do not stand in awe of a public, which fears and respects them; and, to the scandal of our age, they are flattered, and with reason, to find the same regards paid to their passions as to their persons. The distance

diſtance betwixt them and the people, repreſents them in a point of view ſo remote, that they conſider the latter as if they had no exiſtence: they deſpiſe ſhafts ſhot thus from afar; and, while become almoſt continually the only objects of public cenſure, they are the only perſons ignorant of it.

Thus, oh Prince, the greater one is, the more is he accountable to the public. That elevation which primarily hurts the pride of thoſe who are ſubject to us, renders them ſtill more ſevere and ſhrewd cenſors of our vices: They ſeem deſirous of regaining by cenſure what they loſe by ſubmiſſion; and avenge themſelves for their dependance, by the freedom of their converſation. Yes, SIR, the Great fancy themſelves to be allowed every thing; and the Great are pardoned nothing: They live as if they had no ſpectators; and yet they alone, are, as it were, an eternal ſpectacle to the reſt of the world.

In the laſt place, Ambition and the love of fortune, ſhare in other men with the love of pleaſure. The cares which it demands, are ſo many moments wreſted from voluptuouſneſs. The deſire of attainment at leaſt ſuſpends the paſſions, which have continually been an obſtacle to it. There is no allying the wiſe and deliberate motions of ambition, with the leiſure, the idleneſs, and the almoſt perpetual diſorder and extravagances of vice. In a word, debauchery has always been the unavoidable rock of elevated

ſtation: and to this day, pleaſures have very often checked the hopes of fortune, and very rarely advanced it.

But Princes and great men, who have nothing to deſire with regard to fortune, do not meet with any thing to thwart their pleaſures. Birth has given them every thing: they have nothing more to do, as it were, than to enjoy themſelves. Their anceſtors have taken pains for them: pleaſure becomes the only care that engroſſes them; they truſt to their elevation for titles; all the reſt is for their paſſions.

Thus, commonly, the children of illuſtrious men are ſucceſſors to the rank and honours of their fathers, and not to their glory and their virtues. That elevation, of which birth put them in poſſeſſion, entirely hinders them from rendering themſelves worthy of it. Heirs only of a great name, it ſeems uſeleſs to them to make one for themſelves: they taſte the fruits of a glory, whereof they have not taſted the bitterneſs: the blood and labours of their anceſtors become their title to ſoftneſs and indolence; nature has done all for them; ſhe leaves merit nothing more to do: and frequently, the glorious epocha of the elevation of one family, a moment after, under a worthleſs heir, becomes the ſignal of its downfall and infamy. All nations and all times furniſh us with examples in this particular.

Solomon had carried the glory of his name to the ends of the earth: the ſplendor and magnificence

cence of his reign had ſurpaſſed that of all the Kings of the eaſt :---A fooliſh ſon becomes the laughing-ſtock of his own ſubjects, and ſees the ten tribes chooſe themſelves a new maſter. The children of glory and magnificence are rarely the children of wiſdom and virtue; and it is an almoſt ſtill rarer thing to ſupport the glory and honours to which one ſucceeds, than to acquire them oneſelf.

II. PLEASURE then is the firſt rock of the Great, and by means of that the tempter begins to ſeduce them: He next proceeds by ADULATION. Pleaſure corrupts the heart by vice; Adulation ſhuts it cloſely up from virtue. The baits which ſurround a throne, every way ſuggeſt voluptuouſneſs: Adulation juſtifies it. Irregularity ever leaves a gnawing at the bottom of the ſoul: but the flatterer treats all remorſe as weakneſs, turns into boldneſs the fear of guilt, and takes from the ſoul the only reſource which could bring it back to the modeſty of order and reaſon.

O PRINCE, what a ſcourge to the Great are theſe men, born to applaud their paſſions, or to lay ſnares for their innocence! What a miſery for the people, when the Princes and the mighty yield themſelves up to theſe enemies of their glory, becauſe enemies of wiſdom and of truth! The ſcourges of Wars, and of Dearth, are ſlight afflictions; happier times ſoon bring back peace and abundance: The people are afflicted by them; but the

the wiſdom of government gives them hopes of relief. The ſcourge of Flattery leaves no room for hope of alleviation; it is a ſtate calamity, which is forever pregnant with new ones: the oppreſſion of the people, diſguiſed from the ſovereign only, announces to them charges ſtill more burdenſome: the moſt affecting groans, uttered by the public miſery, ſoon paſs for murmurs; the moſt juſt and reſpectful remonſtrances, are traveſtied by flattery into a puniſhable temerity; and an impoſſibility to obey, has no other name but rebellion, and the refuſal of ill-will. "May the Lord,—as a holy King heretofore prayed,—confound thoſe deceitful lips, and thoſe falſe tongues, who ſeek to deſtroy us, becauſe they ſtudy only to pleaſe us." *

Oh PRINCE, diſtruſt thoſe, who to countenance the immenſe profuſion of Kings, are inceſſantly ſwelling before them the opulence of their people. You ſucceed to a flouriſhing monarchy, it is true, but loaded with paſt loſſes. The zeal of Your ſubjects is inexhauſtible; but do not meaſure by that the rights you have over them: their ſtrength will not long anſwer to their zeal. The neceſſities of the ſtate have exhauſted them: leave them to take breath from their heavy burdens; you will augment your reſources, by augmenting their tenderneſs. Liſten to the counſels of the wiſe and ancient, to whom your infancy is intruſted, and who preſided in the councils of your auguſt grandfather; and call to your remembrance that

* Pſalm xii.

young

young King of Judah, whoſe example I have already quoted: Preferring the advices of the inconſiderate youth, to the wiſdom and maturity of thoſe, to whoſe counſels his father Solomon owed the glory and proſperity of his reign, and who counſelled him to ſtrengthen the beginnings of his own, by the conſolation of his people,---He ſaw a new kingdom riſe upon the ruins of that of Judah: and for having aimed at exacting from his ſubjects beyond what they owed him, He loſt their love and fidelity, which were his due. Agreeable counſels are ſeldom uſeful counſels; that which flatters ſovereigns, commonly conſtitutes the miſery of ſubjects.

By Adulation, the vices of the Great are confirmed; and their very virtues corrupted. THEIR VICES ARE CONFIRMED; and what reſource can there remain againſt paſſions, which meet with nothing but praiſes on every ſide? How alas, ſhould we be able to hate ourſelves, and to correct ſuch of our faults as are applauded, when even thoſe which are cenſured, often find within us, not only propenſities, but even reaſons to defend them? We ourſelves make our own apology for our vices; how then can the illuſion be diſpelled, when all about us repreſents them only as ſo many virtues?

THEIR VERY VIRTUES ARE CORRUPTED; "This is the experience of all ages, ſaid Ahaſuerus. * The flattering ſuggeſtions of the wicked have always prevented the laudable inclinations of the beſt Princes. The oldeſt hiſtories furniſh us

* See Eſther xvi. 6, 7.

with

with many examples of this kind." It was an infidel King who made this public confeſſion to his ſubjects: the ſpecious and iniquitous counſels of a flatterer had gone nigh to ſully all the glory of his empire: the fidelity of Mordecai alone arreſted the arm which was ready to fall upon the innocent. One faithful ſervant alone often decides the felicity of a kingdom, and the glory of a ſovereign; and thus too, one ſingle flatterer is ſufficient to eclipſe the whole glory of the Prince, and involve a whole empire in miſery.

Indeed, Adulation brings forth pride, and pride is ever a rock fatal to all the virtues. The flatterer, by lending to the Great thoſe laudable qualities which they have not, cauſes them even to loſe thoſe which nature had given them. He changes into ſources of vice thoſe propenſities in them which were the hopes of virtue. Courage degenerates into preſumption; Majeſty, which birth inſpires, which ſits ſo well upon ſovereigns, is no more than a vain boldneſs, which debaſes and degrades them: the love of glory, which flows in them with the blood of the Kings their anceſtors, becomes a ſtupid vanity which would ſee the whole univerſe at their feet; which ſeeks fighting, only to have the frivolous honour of conquering; and which, far from taming their enemies, makes them new ones, and arms their neighbours and allies againſt them. Humanity,---ſo amiable in elevation, and which is, as it were, the firſt ſentiment that moves from infancy in the ſoul of Kings,

Kings,---confining itſelf to extravagant largeſſes and an unreſerved familiarity for a ſmall number of favorites, no longer leaves them aught but a hardened inſenſibility to the public miſeries. The very duties of religion, whereof they are the firſt protectors, and which conſtituted the moſt ſerious occupation of their early years, ſoon appear no more to them than the puerile amuſements of infancy. Princes are commonly born virtuous, and with inclinations worthy of their blood: birth gives them to us ſuch as they ought to be, Adulation alone makes them what they are.

Spoiled by praiſes, none dares ſpeak to them any longer the language of truth. They alone, in their whole ſtate, are ignorant of what they alone ought to know. They ſend miniſters to be informed of the moſt ſecret tranſactions in courts and kingdoms the moſt remote; and no one would dare to inform them of what paſſes in their own kingdom: flattering ſpeeches beſiege their throne, ſtop up every avenue, and leave them no acceſs to truth. Thus is the ſovereign the only ſtranger in the midſt of his people. He fancies that he touches the moſt ſecret ſprings of empire, and he is ignorant of the moſt public events: its ruin is hidden from him; its advantages augmented to him; the public miſeries diminiſhed,---and they play upon him out of pretended reſpect. He ſees nothing as it is; and every thing appears to him as he wiſhes.

Such are the melancholy conſequences of flattery: and yet, SIR, this is the moſt common vice of

of courts, and a rock to the beſt of Princes. No ſooner had the young King Joaſh loſt the faithful high-prieſt Jehoiada, that wiſe tutor of his infancy, and the only man thro' whoſe means truth ſtill went to the foot of his throne,---than, ſeduced by the flatteries of the courtiers, ſays the ſcripture, he yielded to their evil counſels, and his own weakneſs. "The Princes of Judah made "obeiſance to the King, and the King hearkened "unto them." *

It is Adulation which makes of a good Prince a Prince born for the miſery of his people: It turns the ſceptre into a galling yoke, and by praiſing the weakneſſes of Kings, renders even their virtues contemptible.

Whoever flatters his maſters, betrays them: the perfidy which deceives them, is as criminal as that which dethrones them: truth is the firſt homage which is due to them. There is no great diſtance between the diſingenuity of the flatterer, and that of the rebel; a man is no longer bound by honour or duty, the moment he gets looſe from truth, which alone dignifies man, and is the baſis of all the duties. The ſame infamy which puniſhes perfidy and revolt, ought to be aſſigned to adulation: the public ſecurity ought to ſupply thoſe laws, which have omitted to reckon it amongſt the great crimes for which puniſhments are decreed: For it is as criminal to make an attempt upon the good faith of Princes, as upon their ſacred perſon; to fail in point of truth with re-

* 2 Chron. xxiv. 17.

gard

gard to them, as to fail in fidelity; ſince the enemy who wiſhes to deſtroy us, is ſtill leſs to be feared, than the flatterer who only ſeeks to pleaſe us.

But the moſt dangerous flattery lurks in the mouth of thoſe, who, by the ſanctity of their character are appointed the miniſters of truth. "Go, ſaid the Lord, to the ſpirit of falſhood; enter into the mouth of the prophets of King Ahab; you ſhall ſucceed; you ſhall deceive him; his ſeduction is unavoidable. --- Thou ſhalt perſuade, and alſo prevail." * Alas! if adulation has ſo many charms, even when the vices and diſſoluteneſs of the flatterer weaken its authority, and render it ſuſpicious; what ſeduction muſt there not take place, when it is conſecrated by the appearances of virtue herſelf? What a debaſement is it to us, if we convert even the miniſtry of truth into a miniſtry of adulation and falſehood! if in thoſe very pulpits deſtined to inſtruct and correct the Great, we beſtow upon them falſe praiſes, merely to compleat their ſeduction! if the only channel by which truth may ſtill reach them, adminiſters to them only a deluſive glimmer, to aſſiſt them in ſelf-ignorance! if we borrow the flattering, groveling language of courts, when we are come to announce the generous and ſublime word of the Lord! and if, inſtead of being here the maſters and the teachers of Kings, we are only the vile ſlaves of vanity and fortune!---But what a misfortune is it for the Great, to find worthleſs apolo-

* 1 Kings, xxii. 22.

gifts

gifts for their vices among those who ought to have been the censors of them! to hear round their thrones the ministers and interpreters of religion speak like the courtier, and to find FLATTERERS, where they ought to have found AMBROSES!

O PRINCE! You whom God hath appointed to command men, love in men nothing but truth: she alone can render them amiable. Shut your ear to flattering discourses; the flatterer hates your person, and loves only your favours. Hear those praises which lend You false virtues, as so many public reproaches of your real vices. Remember, that the love of the people is the most undoubted eulogy of the sovereign. Good and bad Princes have been equally praised in their life-time; and methinks base flatteries have been even more lavished upon the latter. The public hatred commonly hides itself under adulation. Render yourself, Sir, worthy to be praised, and You will despise praises.

III. Thus then we see that ADULATION shuts the heart to truth; but AMBITION is very soon the melancholy fruit of that blindness, into which adulation plunges, precipitating from the brink of ruin. This is the last snare which the devil, as on this day, laid for Jesus Christ: "All the "kingdoms of the world will I give you, and "the whole glory of them." *

Yes, it is Adulation, which forever leads the Great, to the senseless and mistaken glory of Ambition; and whither doth not this stupid desire

* Matt. iv. 8, 9.

of

of glory lead on the heart, which yields up to it?

This unfortunate paſſion inſtantly renders unhappy the ambitious whom it poſſeſſes :---next it debaſes and degrades him ;---laſtly, it leads him to a falſe glory, by unjuſt means, which make him loſe the true glory: ſuch are the ſhameful characters of Ambition; of that vice, for which the world honours its heroes, and for which they ſo greatly honour themſelves.

Not that I pretend to authoriſe in the Great, any more than in the reſt of mankind, ſoft, obſcure, low and timid ſentiments; and under a colour of blaming ambition, to conſecrate lazineſs and indolence.

I know there is a noble emulation, which leads to glory by duty: Birth inſpires us with it, and religion authorizes it; it is this which gives to empires illuſtrious citizens, wiſe and laborious miniſters, valiant generals, celebrated authors, and Princes worthy the praiſes of poſterity. True piety is not a profeſſion of puſillanimity and ſloth; religion does not depreſs and enfeeble the heart, but ennoble and elevate it. This alone knows how to form great men; he is always little, who is great only thro' vanity. Thus ſoftneſs and idleneſs equally infringe the rules of piety, and the duties of civil life; and the uſeleſs citizen is no leſs proſcribed by the Goſpel, than by ſociety.

But ambition; but that insatiable desire of setting oneself up, and even upon the ruin of others; that worm, which stings the heart, and never leaves it at rest; that passion, which is the grand spring of intrigues, and of all the agitations of courts; which forms the revolutions of states, and is daily presenting the universe with new sights; this passion, which dares every thing, and thinks nothing too dear, is a vice still more pernicious to empire than even sloth itself.

It immediately RENDERS ITS POSSESSOR UNHAPPY: the ambitious enjoys nothing; Not his glory;—he finds that obscure: nor his places; he would mount still higher: nor his prosperity; he withers and pines away in the midst of his abundance: nor the homage that is paid him; for it is poisoned by that which he is himself obliged to pay; nor the favour he meets with, which becomes bitter, since he must share it with his competitors; nor his repose, for he is unhappy in proportion as he is obliged to be more tranquil: He is an Haman, often the object of public desires and public envy; and yet, the refusal of a single honour to his excessive authority, renders him insupportable to himself.

Ambition therefore, renders him unhappy: But again, it also DEBASES AND DEGRADES HIM. What meannesses doth he use to arrive at his object! he must appear, not such as he is, but such as he is wished to be. The meanness of adulation; people incense, and adore the very idol which they

they despise. The meanness of cowardice; he must know how to undergo disgusts, to swallow rebuffs, and to receive them almost as if they were favours. The meanness of dissimulation: he has no sentiments of his own; and is to think only after others. The meanness of irregularity; we must become the accomplices, and perhaps the ministers of their passions, on whom we depend, and enter into irregularities, in order to participate more certainly in their favours; in short, The meanness even of hypocrisy; to borrow sometimes the appearances of piety; to play the honest man, in order to get preferred; and to make that religion itself which condemns it, subservient to ambition. This is no imaginary painting: these are the manners of courts, and the history of most of those who live in them.

After this, let who will tell us, that it is the vice of great souls: It is the character of a mean and groveling heart: it is the most notorious token of a vile soul. Duty alone can lead us on to glory: that which is owing to the meannesses and the intrigues of ambition, always carries with it a character of shame, which dishonours us; it promises the kingdoms of the world, and all their glory, only to those who fall prostrate to iniquity, and who scandalously degrade themselves. "If thou wilt fall down and worship me, are the terms:"* Your elevation is always reproached with your meannesses; your places continually recall to mind the debasements which merited them; and the titles

* Matt. iv. 9.

of your honours and dignities, become themſelves the public tokens of your ignominy. But in the mind of the ambitious, the ſucceſs covers the ſhame of means. He would make his fortune, and whatever leads him thither is the ſole glory which he ſeeks: he regards thoſe Roman virtues, which will owe nothing but to probity, honour and ſervices, as virtues of romance, and of the theatre; and tho' he fancies that elevation of ſentiment might formerly make the heroes of glory: yet that now-a-days, baſeneſs and ſervility conſtitute the heroes of fortune.

Thus is the INJUSTICE of this paſſion a laſt circumſtance, ſtill more odious than its inquietudes and ſhamefulneſs.

Yes, my brethren, an ambitious man knows no law, but that which favours him. The crime which elevates him, is to him an ennobling virtue. He is a faithleſs friend; for friendſhip is no longer any thing to him, from the moment that it intereſts his fortune. He is a bad citizen: for truth appears to him eſtimable only ſo far as it is uſeful to him: the merit which rivals him, is an enemy never to be pardoned: public intereſt ever gives way to his own intereſt: he removes to a diſtance capable ſubjects, and ſubſtitutes himſelf in their ſtead: he ſacrifices to his jealouſies the ſafety of the ſtate; and would have leſs regret in ſeeing the public affairs periſhing in his ownhands, than ſaved by the cares and counſels of another.

Such

Such in moſt men is ambition; RESTLESS, SHAMELESS, UNJUST. But if this poiſon gains upon and infects the heart of the PRINCE; if the Sovereign, forgetting that he is the protector of the public tranquility, prefers his own glory to the love and ſafety of his people; if he prefers the conqueſt of provinces, to the empire of hearts; If it appears more glorious to him to be the deſtroyer of his neighbours, than the father of his people; if the mourning and deſolation of his ſubjects, is the only ſong of joy that accompanies his victories; if he makes that power ſubſervient to himſelf alone, which is given to him, only to render thoſe whom he governs happy; in a word, if he is a King only to be the miſery of mankind; and if, like that King of Babylon, he will raiſe his impious ſtatue, the idol of his grandeur, only upon the tears and ruin of people and nations: Great God! what a ſcourge to the earth! what a preſent doſt thou make to mankind, in thine anger, by giving them ſuch a maſter!

His glory will ever be defiled with blood. Whatever idle flatterer may chance to ſing aloud his victories, yet provinces, cities, counties will bewail them: the world will ſet him up ſuperb monuments to immortalize his conqueſts; but the ſtill-ſmoking aſhes of ſo many formerly flouriſhing towns; but the deſolation of ſo many countries, now deſpoiled of their ancient beauty; but the ruins of ſo many walls, under which peaceable citizens have been buried; but all thoſe calamities,

ties, which after he is gone ſhall ſtill ſubſiſt; These, all theſe will be mournful monuments, immortalizing his vanity and his madneſs. He will have ruſhed down like a torrent, to ravage the earth; and not like a majeſtic river, to diffuſe through it joy and abundance: his name will be written in the annals of poſterity amongſt the conquerors; but it ſhall not be ſo amongſt the good Kings; while the hiſtory of his reign ſhall be recalled to mind, only to recall the remembrance of the evils which he hath brought upon mankind. Thus, ſaith the ſpirit of God, his pride ſhall be lifted up to heaven, and his head touch the clouds; his ſucceſſes ſhall have equalled his deſires;--- and yet, all this load of glory ſhall be at laſt but a lump of clay, which ſhall leave nothing behind it but infection and reproach. "Tho' his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; yet ſhall he periſh forever like dung."*

Thou, great God! who art the protector of the infancy of Kings, and eſpecially of orphan Kings; remove all theſe ſnares from the precious Infant, whom thou has left us in thy mercy! he can ſay to thee, as did heretofore the King after thine own heart; "My father and my mother have forſaken me!---Scarcely had I opened my eyes upon the light, when a premature death, at the ſame time cloſed thoſe of Adelaide, who had carried me in her boſom, and whoſe amiable and majeſtic features are ſtill painted on my counte-

* Job xx. 6. 7.

nance;

nance; and thoſe alſo of that pious Prince, from whom I derive my exiſtence, and whoſe religious ſentiments ſhall forever be engraven on my heart. "My father and my mother have forſaken me;" but thou, Lord, who art the father of Kings, and the God of my fathers; thou haſt taken me under thy protection, and ſheltered me under the ſhadow of thy wings, and of thy paternal love: "The Lord hath taken me up."

Guard then, his innocency, O great God! as a treaſure ſtill more ineſtimable than his crown: make it to grow with his age: take his heart into thy hands, and ſuffer not the impure fire of voluptuouſneſs ever to profane a ſanctuary, which thou for ſo many ages haſt reſerved for thyſelf: O KEEP HIS INNOCENCY.

Behold thoſe ſeeds of rectitude and truth, which thou haſt thrown into his ſoul; that ſpirit of juſtice and equity, which day by day unfolds itſelf, and appears to be born with him; that growing averſion to the artifices and the falſe praiſes of the flatterer: and never do thou permit adulation to corrupt thoſe happy preſages of our future felicity. "Let him take heed to the "thing that is juſt."

May he reign for our happineſs, and he will reign for his own glory. May it be his only ambition to render his ſubjects happy; may his dereſt title be that of a beneficent, and pacific King: he will be great only ſo far as he ſhall be dear to his people. May he be the pattern of all good

Kings! and may this pacific Prince be enabled to leave behind him Princes resembling him.

Receive, O God, these our prayers, and may they be pledges to us of the tranquility of the present, and the hope of the future life. AMEN!

SER-

SERMON III.

On the Respect which the Great owe to Religion.

For the Second Sunday in Lent.

Matt. XVII. 3.

And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with Jesus.

THE two men who now come upon the holy mountain to pay homage to the glory and greatneſs of Chriſt, are the greateſt that ever yet appeared upon earth.

Moſes, that "God to Pharaoh" the law-giver of nations, the conqueror of Kings, the maſter of nature, and greater ſtill by the title of Servant, faithful over the houſe of the Lord.

Elijah, that miraculous man; the terror of impious princes; who could cauſe fire to deſcend from heaven, or riſe thither himſelf on a car of light and glory; and more celebrated ſtill by that holy zeal which conſumed him, than by all the wonders which accompanied his life.

And

And yet had not either of them been great, but becauſe they were the images of Jeſus Chriſt. They come therefore to adore him, whom they had prefigured, and to aſcribe to this divine Original the power and the glory which belong to him alone; and of which themſelves had been but as it were, the fore-runners and depoſitaries.

Such is the deſtiny of Princes and great men upon earth; they are great only becauſe they are the images of the Lord's glory, and the depoſitaries of his power. They ought then to maintain the intereſts of God, whoſe Majeſty they repreſent, and to reſpect that religion which alone renders themſelves reſpectable.

I ſay "to reſpect:" It requires from them a Reſpect of fidelity, figured out by Moſes, which obliges them to obſerve its maxims; and a Reſpect of zeal, repreſented by Elijah, which renders them protectors of its doctrine, and its truth.

FAITHFUL in the Obſervance of its maxims; ZEALOUS in the defence of its doctrine, and of its truth.

PART I.

To be born great, and to live as a chriſtian, have nothing incompatible, either in the functions of authority, or in the duties of religion. It would be to degrade the Goſpel, and to adopt the ancient blaſphemies of its enemies, to con-

consider it as the religion of the populace, and a sect of obscure people.

It is true, the Cesars and the powerful, according to this world's estimation, did not at first believe in Jesus Christ, but this was not because his doctrine reproached their condition; it reproved only their vices: nay, it was necessary to shew the world that the power of God had no need of that of men; that the credit and authority of the age were useless to a doctrine which came down from heaven; that it was of itself sufficient to establish itself in the universe; that all the powers of the age, by declaring against it, and persecuting it, must confirm it; and that if it had not at first had the Great for its enemies, it had wanted the principal character which afterwards rendered them its disciples.

The law of the Gospel then is the law of all states; nay, the more birth lifts us above other men, the more motives of fidelity doth religion furnish us with towards God; I mean, motives of gratitude and of justice.

Yes, my brethren, it is not chance which made you be born great and powerful. God, from the beginning of time, destined you to this temporal glory, marked you with the seal of His greatness, and separated you from the croud by the splendor of titles, and human distinctions. What had you done, to be thus preferred to the rest of mankind, and particularly to those numerous unfortunates, who are fed solely with the bread

bread of tears and bitterneſs? Are not they as well as yourſelves the work of His hands, and redeemed with the ſame price? Did not you ſpring from the ſame clay? Are you not poſſibly loaded with the ſame crimes? Doth not the blood from which you ſprung, though moſt illuſtrious in the eyes of men, flow from the ſame envenomed ſource which hath infected all the human race? You have received from nature a more glorious name; but have you received from her a ſoul of another kind, and deſtined to another eternal kingdom, than that of the moſt vulgar Men? What have you above them, in His preſence, who knoweth no titles and diſtinctions in his creatures, but the gifts of his grace? Yet God, their father as well as yours, gives them up to labor, to pain, to miſery and affliction, and reſerves for You only joy, repoſe, ſplendor, and opulence. They are born to ſuffer, to bear the burden of the day and of the heat, in order to ſupply by their toil and ſweat your pleaſures, and your profuſions; to drag, if I may ſo ſpeak, like vile animals, the car of your grandeur and inſolence. And has this enormous diſtance which God leaves between them and you, ever been ſolely the object of your reflexions, without being that of your gratitude alſo?---You, on being born, found yourſelves in poſſeſſion of all theſe advantages; and without going up to the ſupreme diſpoſer of human affairs, you have thought that they were due to you, becauſe you have always enjoyed them. Alas! you require of YOUR creatures a grati-

gratitude ſo lively, ſo ſtrict, ſo perpetual, and a ſubjection ſo expreſs from thoſe who owe you a few favours, that they cannot without a crime forget what they owe you for a moment: your benefits give you a right over them, which ſubjects them to you forever! Meaſure by this rule what you owe the Lord, the benefactor of your forefathers, and of all your race. What! do your favours create you ſlaves,---and ſhall the beneficence of God create him nothing but ingrates and rebels!

Thus, my brethren, the more you have received from Him, the more He expects from you. But, alas! this law of gratitude which every object around you announces, and which ought to be as it were written upon the gates and walls of your palaces, upon your eſtates, and upon your titles, upon the ſplendor of your dignities and your veſtments; this law, is not even written in your hearts. God, my brethren, will reſume his own gifts, ſince, ſo far from rendering him, on their account, that glory which is his due, you turn them againſt himſelf. They ſhall not paſs to your poſterity; he ſhall tranſmit this glory to a more faithful race; your deſcendants poſſibly ſhall expiate in pain and in calamity the crime of your ingratitude; and the ruins of your exaltation ſhall be as an eternal monument, whereon the finger of God ſhall write down forever the unjuſt uſe which you have made of it.

What am I ſaying? He will poſſibly multiply his gifts; he will load you with new benefits; He

He will elevate you ſtill higher than your anceſtors;---but, he will favour you in his anger; His benefits will be chaſtiſements; your proſperity will conſummate your blindneſs and pride; this new ſplendor will only be a freſh bait for your paſſions; and the encreaſe of your fortune will ſee your diſſoluteneſs, irreligion, and impenitence grow up in the ſame degree!

It is an error therefore, my brethren, to conſider birth and rank as a privilege, in your caſe, that diminiſhes and relaxes your duties towards God, and the ſevere rules of the goſpel. On the contrary, he will require more of You to whom he hath given more: His benefits will become the meaſure of your duties; and as he has diſtinguiſhed you from other men by more abundant largeſſes, he expects that you ſhould diſtinguiſh yourſelf alſo by a greater fidelity. But, beſide the gratitude which engages you to this, the more every thing in your condition enkindles the paſſions, the more need have you of vigilance to defend you. It is requiſite that the great ſhould have great virtues. Proſperity is, as it were, a continual perſecution againſt the faith; and if you have not all the ſtrength and courage of ſaints, you will ſoon have more vices and weakneſſes than the reſt of mankind.

But to proceed: Why do you pretend that God ought to relax in your favour, and exact leſs of you than of the generality of believers? Have you fewer pleaſures to expiate? Is your innocence a title

a title that gives you a right to his indulgence? Are you leſs given to the deſires of the fleſh, ſo as to think yourſelves more diſpenſed from the violences which mortify and puniſh it? Your exaltation hath multiplied your crimes; and ſhould it ſoften your penance? Your exceſſes diſtinguiſh you from the people ſtill more than your rank, and would you on this account pretend to take ſuch exceptions to religion as might be favourable to yourſelves?

What idea, my brethren, do we entertain of the Deity? What God of fleſh and blood do we form to ourſelves? What! in that terrible day when God alone ſhall be great; when the king and the ſlave ſhall be confounded together; and when works alone ſhall be weighed, ſhall God exerciſe none but favourable judgements only, towards thoſe men whom we call GREAT? thoſe men whom he had loaded with wealth, who had been the happy of the earth, who had formed to themſelves an unrighteous felicity here below, and forgetting almoſt unanimouſly the author of their proſperity, had lived only for themſelves? Shall he arm then all his ſeverity againſt the poor, whom he had ever afflicted? Shall he reſerve all the rigour of his judgments for unfortunates, who had paſſed upon earth none but days of mourning, and nights of labour; and who often had bleſſed him even in their affliction, and called upon him in their wearineſs and bitterneſs?

---Righteous

---Righteous art thou, O Lord! and thy judgements ſhall be equitable.

But, though theſe motives of juſtice and of gratitude ſhould not engage the Great to that fidelity which they owe on ſo many accounts to God; yet what motives thereto do they not ſtill find even in themſelves!

Is it not indeed wiſdom and the fear of God alone, which can render Princes and Great Men moſt amiable to their People? By this, ſaid a young King formerly, I ſhall become illuſtrious among the nations; and the old ſhall reſpect my youth; the Princes who ſurround my throne, ſhall reſpectfully caſt down their looks before me; the neighbouring Kings, however formidable, ſhall fear me, and I ſhall be loved in peace, and dreaded in war. "By means of her, horrible tyrants ſhall be afraid "when they do but hear of me; I ſhall be found "good among the multitude, and valiant in war. By her, O my God, my reign ſhall be agreeable to thy people; by her I ſhall govern them juſtly, and be worthy of the throne of my forefathers: "I ſhall ſet my people in order, and the nations "ſhall be ſubject unto me."*

It is not, O Prince, the force of your arms, or the extent of Your empire, or the magnificence of Your Court, which will render You dear to Your people; but it will be thoſe Virtues which make good Kings,---juſtice, humanity, and the fear of God. You are a great King by your birth; but you cannot be a King to your peo-

* Wiſd. viii. 14, 15.

ple

ple, but by your virtues: the paſſions which remove us from God, always render us unjuſt and odious to men: The people always ſuffer for the vices of the Sovereign: whatever exaggerates authority, weakens and degrades it. Princes ruled by the paſſions, are always troubleſome and capricious maſters. The government no longer knows any rule, when the governor himſelf knows none. Wiſdom and public intereſt, no longer preſide over the public counſels. The intereſt of the paſſions, caprice, and taſte form thoſe deciſions, which love of order ought to dictate; and pleaſure becomes the grand ſpring of the whole prudence of the empire. The wiſdom and piety of the Sovereign can alone conſtitute the happineſs of the ſubjects: and the King who fears God, is always dear to his people.

But if the Fear of God renders authority in Princes and great men amiable, ſo alſo does it render that authority glorious. "All wealth and "all ſucceſs, ſaid a wiſe King, heretofore came "to me with her; and by her it is that honour "and glory have always accompanied me:"—"All "good things together came to me with her, and "innumerable riches in her hands." * God does not take thoſe under his protection, who do not live under his command.

I know that the impious ſometimes proſpers, that he appears lifted up like the cedar of Lebanon, and that he ſeems to inſult heaven with a proud glory, which he fancies he holds only from himſelf. But wait awhile;—his elevation itſelf is

* Wiſd. vii. 11.

about to prepare a precipice for him. The hand of the Lord ſhall preſently ſnatch him from the face of the earth: the end of the impious is almoſt ever without honour: ſooner or later, the edifice of pride and injuſtice muſt moulder away. Shame and miſery are ready to follow the glory of his ſucceſſes. Perhaps you will ſee him drag on a wretched and diſhonourable old age: but the end of all will be ignominy: God will have his turn, and the glory of the unjuſt man ſhall not deſcend with him to the grave.

Go back now to the centuries which have gone before us, as a Jewiſh Prince once ſaid to his children: CONSIDER YE THROUGHOUT ALL AGES; * and you will ſee, that the Lord hath always blaſted the generations of the proud, and cauſed them to wither at the root; that the proſperity of the ungodly hath rarely paſſed to their deſcendants; that thrones themſelves, and royal ſucceſſions have failed, under indolent and effeminate Princes; and that the Hiſtory of the crimes and exceſſes of the Great, is at the ſame time the Hiſtory of their miſeries and their fall.

In ſhort, Princes and Great Men are leaſt excuſable, when they forſake God, becauſe they are commonly born with inclinations more noble, and more happily calculated for virtue, than the people.

"I was ſtill a child, ſaid King Solomon; but I found in me already the intelligence of an advanced age; and I perceived that I owed to my

* 1 Macc. ii. 61.

birth

birth a good ſoul, and ſentiments more elevated than thoſe of other men. "I was an ingenious "child, and had a good ſpirit." *

Blood, education, and the hiſtory of anceſtors, throw into the hearts of the Great and of Princes, the ſeeds, and as it were a natural tradition of virtue. The populace, delivered from their birth to an uncultivated diſpoſition, find in themſelves, with reſpect to the ſublime duties of faith, nothing but the heavineſs and meanneſs of a nature left to itſelf: the decorums inſeparable from rank, and which are as it were the firſt ſchool of virtue, do not reſtrain their paſſions. Education ſtrengthens the defect of their birth: The mean objects which ſurround them, abaſe the heart and ſentiments; they perceive nothing ſuperior to themſelves; and born in the midſt of ſenſe and of clay, they riſe with difficulty above their level. There is a nobleneſs, and an elevation in the maxims of the Goſpel, to which mean and groveling minds cannot attain. The religion which forms great ſouls, appears to be made only for them: and in order to be great, or to become ſo, there is a neceſſity of being a Chriſtian.

I am not ignorant that grace ſupplies the defect of nature; that fleſh and blood confer no right to the kingdom of God; that the firſt heroes of the faith ſprung from among the populace; that veſſels of clay, in the hands of the ſovereign workmaſter, preſently become veſſels of glory and mag-

* Wiſd. viii. 19.

nificence; and that every Chriſtian is born great, becauſe he is born for heaven.

But an high birth prepares us, as it were, for thoſe noble and heroic ſentiments which faith requires; a blood more pure mounts more eaſily; it coſts thoſe leſs to ſubdue the paſſions, who are born to gain victories; falſhood and duplicity enter with more difficulty into an heart, which truth cannot harm, and which hath nothing either to fear or hope from men. The hopes of a ſplendid fortune, cannot corrupt the probity of thoſe, who ſee no fortune ſuperior to their own, and who hold the public fortune and deſtiny in their hands: Human reſpect does not intimidate and check the virtue of the great, of thoſe whom all the world is proud to imitate, and whoſe manners always become the law of the multitude: The meanneſs of debauchery and diſſoluteneſs finds leſs admiſſion in a ſoul, which is deſtined to great things by birth: Regularity and duties, are leſs foreign to thoſe who are appointed to maintain order and regularity among the people: if they are ſurrounded with more ſnares, they find in themſelves more curbs and more reſources: Nature alone hath encompaſſed their ſoul with a guard of honour and glory; in ſhort, the firſt propenſities in the Great are to virtue; and they degenerate the moment they turn them aſide to vice. They owe to religion therefore a RESPECT OF FIDELITY; but they alſo owe it a RESPECT OF ZEAL, which

which renders them the defenders of its doctrine, and its truth.

PART II.

RELIGION is the end of all the designs of God upon earth: All that he hath done here below, he hath done only for it; every thing must be subservient to the aggrandisement of this kingdom of Jesus Christ. The virtues and vices; the Great Men, and the people; good and ill success; public abundance, or public calamities; the rise and fall of empires; every thing, in short, in the order of the eternal counsels, must co-operate to the formation and increase of this holy Jerusalem. Tyrants have purified it by persecutions; Believers perpetuate it by charity: Infidels and Libertines prove and confirm it by scandal: The just are witnesses of its faith; the pastors depositaries of its doctrine; Great Men and Princes, the protectors of its truth.

It is not enough for them to obey its laws: This is the duty of every believer. The majesty of its worship, the holiness of its maxims, the deposit of its truth, must find a sure protection in their authority, and in their ZEAL.

I said "The majesty of its worship." Nothing does more honour to religion, than to see the Great Men and Princes intermixed without distinction at the foot of the altar, with the rest of believers, in the common and external duties of faith: It is for them to oppose their public and

respectful homage in the holy temple, to the public prophanations and want of reverence; and to come and shew the multitude how indecent it is for subjects to appear without modesty or constraint, at the foot of that sanctuary, before which Princes and Kings themselves become nothing: They owe this example to the people, and this respect to the majesty of the sacred offices.—Alas! they consider it as a decorum belonging to their rank, to countenance by their presence the public Diversions; and yet, they often fancy it a degrading themselves, to appear at the head of songs of joy, and of the holy solemnities of Religion! They make it an interest of state, to give credit by their example to the amusements of the theatre, and the vain shows of the age: and is then the Church less interested, that their examples should give that credit to the sacred and religious representations of the faith?

The public diversions have no need of protection. The corrruption of mankind, is a sufficient voucher for the perpetuity of their credit and duration; and if they are necessary to states, authority has nothing to do but intermix with them. Of all public exigencies, it is this which runs the least risque.

But the duties of religion, which find no advocate in our hearts, require great examples to support them: public worship becomes debased, the moment that Princes and Great Men neglect it. God no longer appears so great (if I may thus

thus ſpeak) when once the people only are numbered amongſt his worſhippers. His word is either no longer heard, or loſes every day its authority, when once it is deſtined only to be the bread of the poor, and of the little. The public duties of piety are abandoned, and every thing ſinks and becomes languid, if the religion of the Prince and of the Nobles does not ſupport and reanimate them. It is here that the intereſt of public worſhip mixes with that of the ſtate; here, that it behoves the ſovereign to maintain both the auguſt externals of religion, and the unity of its doctrine, which are themſelves the ſupport of the throne; and to accuſtom his ſubjects to render to God and the Church that reſpect and ſubmiſſion, which are their due; leſt they ſhould go on to refuſe them to himſelf. The troubles of the church are never far diſtant from thoſe of the ſtate: The yoke of the mighty can have but little reſpect from them, who have gone ſo far as to throw off the yoke of the faith.

* "In vain would hereſy ſeek to waſh itſelf from this opprobrium: it hath every where kindled up the fire of ſedition; it is brought forth in rebellion: by ſhaking the foundations of faith, it hath ſhaken thrones and empires; and wherever it hath formed ſectaries, it hath formed rebels. In vain

* There can be no need to do more, than juſt point out to the reader's attentive obſervation this remarkable paſſage, in a Roman-Catholic Preacher!

respectful homage in the holy temple, to the public prophanations and want of reverence; and to come and shew the multitude how indecent it is for subjects to appear without modesty or constraint, at the foot of that sanctuary, before which Princes and Kings themselves become nothing: They owe this example to the people, and this respect to the majesty of the sacred offices.— Alas! they consider it as a decorum belonging to their rank, to countenance by their presence the public Diversions; and yet, they often fancy it a degrading themselves, to appear at the head of songs of joy, and of the holy solemnities of Religion! They make it an interest of state, to give credit by their example to the amusements of the theatre, and the vain shows of the age: and is then the Church less interested, that their examples should give that credit to the sacred and religious representations of the faith?

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9. [illegible] Princes

would it urge, that the perſecutions of Princes have put into its hands the weapons of an unjuſt defence: the church never oppoſed againſt perſecutions aught but patience and firmneſs: her faith was the only ſword wherewith ſhe ſubdued tyrants: ſhe did not multiply her diſciples by ſhedding the blood of her enemies. The blood of her martyrs only was the ſeed of her believing ſons. Her firſt teachers were not ſent into the world, like lions, to carry every where murder and carnage; but as lambs, to be themſelves devoured: they proved the truth of their miſſion, not by fighting, but by dying for the faith: they were to be dragged before Kings, and there judged as criminals; not to appear there in arms, and force their ſuperiors to ſhew them favour: they reſpected the ſceptre, even when in profane and idolatrous hands; they would have thought it a diſhonouring, a deſtroying the work of God, had they recurred for its eſtabliſhment to human reſources."

Thus then Princes confirm their own authority, by confirming the authority of religion. To them it is that the public worſhip owes its chief magnificence: it was under the greateſt Kings of the race of David, that the temple of the Lord ſaw its glory and majeſty revive: the Cæſars, under the Goſpel, extricated the church from that obſcurity, in which the perſecutions had left it. The greateſt monarchs exalted the ſplendor of their reigns, by exalting that of divine worſhip; and thoſe public monuments of their piety, which time

has

has been unable to deſtroy, and which are ſtill had in reſpect amongſt us, do more honour to their memory, than thoſe ſtatues and inſcriptions, which, by immortaliſing victories and conqueſts, commonly immortaliſe nothing but the vanity of Princes, and the miſery of ſubjects.

But the ſame motives which oblige the Great to ſupport the majeſty and outward decency of the public worſhip, render them at the ſame time "Protectors of the holineſs of its maxims:" they muſt teach the people to reſpect piety, by ſhewing reſpect themſelves to thoſe who practice it. This is a public protection which they owe to virtue.

Yes, great Prince, good men are the only ſource of the happineſs and proſperity of empires. It is for them alone that God grants to the nations abundance and tranquility: had ten righteous been found in Sodom, the fire from heaven had never fallen upon that guilty city. The ſtate would periſh, the throne would be ſubverted, our cities ſunk in ruins, and reduced to aſhes, and we ſhould meet the ſame fate with Sodom and Gomorrah, did not God ſtill behold amongſt us ſome faithful ſervants: did he not ſtill leave us an holy ſeed, for the ſupport of fainting virtue againſt the too general diſſolution of manners prevalent amongſt us. "Except the Lord had left us a "ſeed, we ſhould have been made like Sodom, "and we ſhould have been like unto Gomorrah."*

* Rom. ix. 29.

Princes

Princes therefore are interested to protect virtue; since empires and monarchies, and the whole world, shall subsist so long only as there shall be virtue upon earth.

But it is not by a mere "Respect only," that Princes are bound to honour good men;---it must be by "Confidence" also; those alone will be found faithful friends, who are faithful to their God.---It must be by "Public Employments;" authority is never well and surely placed, but in the hands of those who fear it. It must be by "Preferments;" great talents are sometimes the most dangerous, if the fear of God does not render them useful. It must be by "Access to their "Persons:" familiarity hath nothing to fear from those, who would even respect the reproaches and ill-treatment of their superiors. In short, it must be by "Favours:" our benefits cannot make ingrates of those, who are attached to us solely by duty and conscience.

O what happiness, for an age, for an empire, for the people, when God in his mercy gives them Princes favorable to piety! by them, talents useful to the church thrive, and gain new life; by them are formed and protected faithful workmen, destined to diffuse the knowledge of salvation; to free from offences the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to reanimate the faith by works full of the spirit which dictated them. By them, holy foundations, and pious institutions rear up their heads amongst us, where innocence is preserved,

or

or vice, ſaved from ſhipwreck, finds an happy port. In ſhort, by them our poſterity ſhall ſtill find theſe public reſources of ſafety; happy monuments! which perpetuate piety in empires, which aſſure Princes of the gratitude of ages to come, which intereſt poſterity in their welfare, and render them the heroes of all times.

The glory of monuments ſet up by pride or adulation, ſhall either be buried in oblivion by time, or effaced by the more equitable cenſures and judgements of poſterity. Future generations will diſpute with the greater part of ſovereigns, the titles and honours which their own times have given them; but the glory of the public aids granted to piety, and which will ſubſiſt after they are gone, ſhall never be diſputed with them. However great the KING hath been, whom we now deplore, yet of all the monuments ſo juſtly raiſed to immortalize the glory of his reign, the two pious and auguſt edifices,---where valour * on the one hand, and female nobility † on the other, will forever find ſure and public reſources,---are titles, which beſt ſecure to him the eulogies and thanks of poſterity.

Such is the zeal of protection which Princes and great men owe to the holineſs of the maxims of religion. But they owe this ſtill more to the

* In 1693, Lewis the XIVth inſtituted the order of St. Lewis as a reward for the officers of his troops.

† The Royal Hoſpital of St. Cyr was eſtabliſhed by him in 1686, for the reception of 300 noble virgins.

ſacred

ſacred "Depoſit of its doctrine and of its truth;" and our age eſpecially, in which irreligion makes ſo great a progreſs, ought ſtill more to awaken their attention and zeal reſpecting it.

I own that the impious have been of all times; that every age and nation hath ſeen gloomy and haughty minds not only ſecretly aſſerting in their hearts, but daring aloud to blaſpheme, "There "is no God;" and that even from the time of Solomon, when the remembrance of the wonders of the Lord in Egypt, and in the wilderneſs, was ſtill ſo recent, men have urged againſt every worſhip paid to the moſt High, thoſe impious doubts which are become the common language of infidelity.

But if there did formerly appear impious men, the world itſelf conſidered them with horror; and thoſe enemies of God have appeared upon earth, only to be as it were a reproach and a curſe to all mankind.

Alas! now-a-days, impiety is become almoſt an air of diſtinction, and glory; an honourable title, which men often give themſelves, out of horrid oſtentation; tho' conſcience, not daring to throw off her yoke, ſtill refuſes to give it to them. Now-a-days, it is a merit, which gives acceſs to the Great; which lifts up, as it were, baſeneſs of name and birth to notice; which gives to obſcure men a privilege of familiarity with the Princes of the people, at which even our manners, all corrupted as they are, bluſh; and that impiety, which ought to abaſe even the luſtre of birth

birth and glory, decorates and ennobles obſcurity, and a mean extraction. It is the Great who have given ſanction to impiety;---it is for them to degrade and confound it.

O my brethren, what a ſhame to religion! the greateſt men in the Pagan world, ſpoke with reſpect even of thoſe ſuperſtitions of idolatry, with whoſe puerility and extravagance they were well acquainted: They thought with the wiſe men; but they ventured to ſpeak only as ſpoke the people. They would not have dared, with all their fame and knowledge, to inſult aloud ſo ſtupid a worſhip, becauſe the majeſty of the laws of the empire, and its antiquity rendered it venerable: nay, Socrates himſelf,---that honour of Greece, that firſt Philoſopher in the world, ſo valued in all ages, and who ought to have been ſo dear to his own,---loſes his life by a public decree of Athens, for having ſpoken a little too incautiouſly of thoſe fantaſtic Gods, to whom its citizens owed leſs reſpect and honour than to himſelf.

And thus too amongſt us, how highly is the God of Heaven and Earth inſulted, while yet the public zeal is not awakened! even under the empire of the faith, how do vile, ignorant men, make public ſcoff at a doctrine deſcended from heaven,—and yet how is their impiety applauded! nay, and in a kingdom where the title of CHRISTIAN does honour to our Kings, how does infidelity unpuniſhed even become a title of honour in the ſubject! Shall then vain idols have found

found the public miniſtry their avenger againſt the learned and the wiſe; while the only true God has none to avenge him againſt Libertines and Fools ?—

Avenge the honour of religion, you, my brethren, whoſe illuſtrious anceſtors have been its firſt depoſitaries, and who conſequently ought to be its firſt defenders. Remove far from you the impious; and never hold as your friends, the enemies of God. It is a mark of true dignity in the Great, not to ſuffer the faith of their forefathers to be inſulted and debaſed before their eyes. With You, it ought to be conſidered as a failure of reſpect to your rank, for men, in your preſence, to fail of reſpecting the religion you profeſs. Indeed it is an indecent language, which hurts the regard and attention due to you; and mankind then deſpiſe you, when they deſpiſe before your face the God whom You worſhip. Liſten therefore to the diſcourſes of infidelity only with ſuch an indignation, as may ſtop the mouth of the Infidel; for, ſince it is vanity alone which makes men impious, impious men will become rare, the moment they grow into contempt.

Manifeſt yourſelves a noble and venerable reſpect for the truths of religion. True elevation of mind, is that which can feel all the majeſty and ſublimity of the faith: great lights naturally lead us to ſubmiſſion; incredulity is the vice of weak and narrow minds; to wiſh to know every thing, is to be ignorant of every thing. The contradictions

dictions and depths of impiety are ſtill more incomprehenſible than the myſteries of faith; and reaſon has leſs advantage in caſting off every yoke, than in obedience and ſubmiſſion.

Let Your reſpect and zeal for the religion of your forefathers cultivate and nouriſh thoſe of this young PRINCE, to whom your names and your dignities attach you, and whoſe education is, in a manner, entruſted to all who have the honour of being neareſt to him: In YOU may He again find the firſt witneſſes of that faith, which his anceſtors placed upon the throne! May that zeal for the defence of the Goſpel, which flows in him with his blood, be again rouſed and animated by your examples; may errors and profane innovations be the firſt enemies he attempts to engage; and may he be ſtill more jealous to keep untouched the ancient boundaries of the faith, than thoſe of the monarchy.

May the tranquility of his reign, O my God, become that of the church! May the troubles which agitate it be calmed, before he can know them! May concord and union be re-eſtabliſhed amongſt us, prevent the ſeverity of his laws, and leave nothing more for his zeal to do! May his reign be the reign of peace, and of truth; may the lion and the lamb live peaceably together under his empire; and may this wonderful child, as Iſaiah obſerves, ſtill "lead them," and ſee them united in the ſame paſtures! * May the camp of the Infidels and Philiſtines no more rejoice at our

* Iſai. xi. 6.

diſſen-

diſſentions; and if any ſhouts are ſtill heard round about the ark, may they no longer be thoſe which announce its dangers and new misfortunes, but its triumphs and its glory! AMEN!

SER-

SERMON IV.

On the UNHAPPINESS of the GREAT who forſake GOD.

For the Third Sunday in Lent.

Luke XI. 24.

WHEN THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT IS GONE OUT OF A MAN, HE WALKETH THROUGH DRY PLACES, SEEKING REST, AND FINDING NONE.

THIS reſtleſs and unclean ſpirit which goeth forth, and re-enters into the man from whom it departed; which is inceſſantly changing its place; which tries all ſituations, and cannot be pleaſed or fix in any; which is continually running about, in ſearch of pleaſant and delightful paths, and never walks but through barren and dry places; which ſeeketh reſt, and findeth it not;---this ſpirit is an image of the humour and character of the great ones of the earth; who, always more reſtleſs, more agitated, and more unhappy than the common people, have conſtantly abandoned God, from the moment they have

yielded themſelves up to the government of their paſſions.

This is a natural picture of that elevation and proſperous ſtate ſo envied by the world, and ſo unworthy of envy in the ſight of God. Happineſs, oh Prince, is not confined to ſplendor of rank and titles; it is annexed only to innocency of life; that which renders us happy, is not what lifts us above other men,---but what reconciles us with God. You will wear one of the moſt ſplendid crowns in the univerſe; but if piety does not help you to ſupport it, it will ſoon become a burden heavy to be borne. In a word; there can be no happineſs, where there is no repoſe; and there can be no repoſe, where God is not.

Thus we ſee, elevation alone doth not conſtitute the happineſs of the Great, unleſs it be accompanied with virtue, and the fear of God: On the contrary, the greater a man is, the more unhappy he lives, if he does not live with God; this is the important truth, which I propoſe to make the ſubject of the preſent diſcourſe.

Now, if man was made only for the earth, the greater ſpace he occupied in it, the happier would he be.

But man is born for heaven; he bears written in his heart the auguſt and indelible vouchers of his origin; he may debaſe them, but he cannot obliterate them. The whole univerſe might be his poſſeſſion and his inheritance; but he would always feel that he is degraded, and could not be ſatisfied with

with fixing himſelf in it. Every object which attaches him here below, tears him, as it were, from the boſom of God, his original and his eternal reſt; and leaves a wound of remorſe, and diſquietude in his ſoul, which no temporal enjoyment ever more can cloſe: he always feels the ſecret pain of rupture and ſeparation; and whatever affects his union with God, renders him irreconcileable with himſelf.

And yet we are always promiſing ourſelves an unjuſt felicity here below. We all run about upon this earth, like the ſpirit in the goſpel, after a happineſs and reſt which we cannot find; No ſooner are we undeceived, by the poſſeſſion of one object, with reſpect to the happineſs which ſeemed to await us in it, but a new deſire involves us in the ſame deluſion; and thus, continually paſſing from the hope of happineſs to diſguſt, and from diſguſt to hope, whatever makes us feel our error, becomes itſelf the bait to perpetuate it.

At firſt ſight, one would ſuppoſe this error need only be feared for the Common People; the meanneſs of whoſe fortune always leaving an immenſe ſpace above them, it would be leſs aſtoniſhing, that they ſhould figure out to themſelves an imaginary felicity in exalted ſtations, which they never can attain; and ſhould fancy (for ſuch a creature is man!) that whatever he cannot have, is the very happineſs he ſeeks.

But the ſplendor of rank, of titles and of birth, ſoon diſpels this vain deluſion: no ſooner are we

mounted, and borne on the wings of fortune above the reſt, but felicity ſtill and forever ſeems placed higher than ourſelves; the more we are exalted, ſtill the more diſtant does ſhe appear. Nay, chagrin and gloomy cares mount, and place themſelves even with the ſovereign on the throne; the diadem which adorns the auguſt brow of Kings, is but too often armed with rending and ſharp-pointed thorns: and the Great, ſo far from being the moſt happy upon earth, are only melancholy witneſſes, that none can be ſo without virtue.

Nay, it is certain Elevation renders us but the more unhappy, if it does not render us more faithful to God.---The paſſions there are more violent; vexation is more oppreſſive; and caprice is more unavoidable: that is to ſay, the vacuity of every thing which is not God, is more palpable and more frightful.

Iſt. "The paſſions are more violent:" Yes, oh Prince, the paſſions create all our misfortunes; and whatever flatters and irritates them, augments our pain. A voluptuous great man, is more unhappy, and has more room for complaint, than the loweſt and vileſt of the people: every thing helps him to gratify his unjuſt paſſion, and whatever gratifies, awakens it. His deſires grow with his crimes; the more he yields to his inclinations, the more does he become their ſport, and their ſlave. His proſperity continually rekindles the ſhameful fire which conſumes him, and cauſes it to blaze forth again from its own aſhes: the ſenſes, when

when once become maſters, become his tyrants. He grows ſatiated with pleaſures, and his ſatiety itſelf becomes his puniſhment; his pleaſures themſelves produce the worm, that gnaws and devours him. Thus his inquietude ſprings from his abundance; his deſires, always ſatisfied, no longer leaving him any thing to deſire, leave him ſadly to himſelf. The exceſs of his pleaſures daily augments their vacuity, and the more he taſtes them, the more ſad and bitter do they become.

His very rank, his decorums, his duties, ever envenom his criminal paſſion: His "rank"; ſince the more he is exalted, the more difficult he finds it to ſcreen his paſſion from public notice and public cenſure: his "decorums"; ſince the more jealous he is of them, the more cruel are his alarms, leſt ſome indiſcretion ſhould betray his precautions and meaſures: his "duties", becauſe it behoves him ever to eſteem them ſuperior to his pleaſures.

No, SIR, the throne for which Providence deſigns You, hath around it ſtill more bulwarks to defend it againſt voluptuouſneſs, than baits to engage it in that purſuit; if every thing lays ſnares for the youth of Kings, every thing alſo holds forth a hand to help them to avoid thoſe ſnares. Give yourſelf to your people, to whom you owe yourſelf, and the poiſon of voluptuouſneſs will ſcarcely find a moment in which to infect your heart; it dwells, and it is pleaſed only with lazineſs and indolence. Let the cares of royalty be the

dearest of your pleasures: it is not reigning, to live only for one's self. Kings are but the conductors of the people; they have indeed this name and this right by birth; but they merit it by their cares and application alone.

And hence it is, that idle reigns form an obscure void in our annals; they have not deigned even to count the years of the life of indolent Kings: who, having not reigned themselves, seem not to have lived; This is a chaos, which it is difficult now to clear up: so far from decorating our histories, they serve only to obscure and embarrass them; and are more known for the great men who have lived under their reign, than on their own account.

I am not speaking here of all those other passions, which, being more violent in an exalted state, make deeper and more grievous wounds in the heart of the great. Ambition there, is more unbounded. Alas! the obscure citizen lives contented in the moderation of his lot; heir of the fortune of his forefathers, he limits himself to their name and state; he regards without envy, whatever may not be wished for without extravagance; all his desires are circumscribed by his own possessions; and if he sometimes forms projects of elevation, they are such agreeable chimeras, as serve to amuse the leisure of an idle mind, not anxieties that absorb and devour him.

Nothing suffices the great man, because he can pretend to every thing: his desires grow with his fortune;

fortune; whatever is more elevated than himself, makes him appear little in his own eyes; he is less flattered at leaving so many men behind him, than chagrined at having any to precede him: he fancies he has nothing, if he has not all; his soul is forever a-thirst; and he enjoys nothing, unless it be his misfortunes and his disquietudes.

But this is not all. From ambition spring devouring jealousies; and yet this mean and base passion is the vice and the misfortune of the Great. Jealous of the reputation of others, the glory which does not belong to them, is in their esteem a blot, that tarnishes and dishonours them: jealous of the favours which fall beside them, they seem to snatch at those which light upon others. Jealous of favour, you are a worthy object of their hatred and contempt, from the moment you become the object of your common master's friendship and confidence. Nay, jealous even of the successes of the state, the public joy, often proves to them, a subject of secret and domestic chagrin: the victories gained over the enemy by their rivals, are more bitter to them, than to our enemies themselves. Their house, like that of Haman, is an house of mourning and sadness, so long as Mordecai triumphs, and receives public acclamations in the midst of the capital: and not content with being insensible to the glory of events, they seek to console themselves by striving to obscure them with malicious reflections and censures. In a word, this unjust passion turns every thing into bitter-

bitterneſs; and thus men find out the ſecret of being for ever unhappy, either thro' their own misfortunes, or the good fortune which happens to others.

In ſhort, run thro' all the paſſions; and you will find, that they exerciſe the moſt melancholy and tyrannical ſway over the hearts of thoſe great ones, who live in forgetfulneſs of God. Their diſgraces are more oppreſſive; the more exceſſive their pride, the more bitter their humiliation. Their hatreds are more violent; as a falſe glory renders them more vain, ſo contempt finds them more furious and more inexorable: Their fears are more extravagant: Exempted from real evils, they even make to themſelves chimerical ones; and the leaf ſhaken by the wind, is like the mountain falling to cruſh them. Their infirmities are more afflictive; the more men depend upon life, the more are they alarmed by every thing that threatens it. Accuſtomed to all that the ſenſes can afford moſt pleaſant and agreeable, the ſlighteſt pain diſconcerts all their felicity, and becomes inſupportable. They know not how wiſely to avail themſelves either of ſickneſs, or of health; neither of the goods, nor of the evils inſeparable from humanity. Pleaſures ſhorten their days; and the anxieties which conſtantly ſucceed to pleaſures, hurry them thro' the reſidue of their years. Health, already ruined by intemperance ſinks under a multiplicity of remedies: exceſſive punctilious cares, now finiſh what ex-

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ceſſive pleaſures were unable to effect; and if they have forbidden themſelves exceſs, yet ſoftneſs and indolence alone become ſuch a kind of malady and languor, as exhauſts every precaution of art; nay, and even precautions wear out and exhauſt themſelves.

Laſtly, their Subjections are more melancholy than thoſe of other men; brought up to live by humour and caprice, whatever thwarts and conſtrains them, is an oppreſſion: remove them from the court,—they fancy exiſtence a miſerable exile; and yet, when under their maſter's eye, they are inceſſantly complaining of the ſubjection of duties, and the conſtraints of decorum. They cannot bear either the tranquillity of a private condition, or the dignity of a public life. Repoſe is as inſupportable to them, as agitation; or rather, they are every where inſupportable to themſelves. Every thing is a heavy yoke to him, whoever he be, that wiſhes to live without yoke, and without rule.

Yes, my Brethren, A great man, in a ſtate of guilt, is more unhappy than any other ſinner. Proſperity hardens him, as it were, and leaves him no ſenſibility, but for pain. It was thy pleaſure, O my God, that the ſame exaltation which men regard as the Reſource, ſhould itſelf be the Fatigue and the Puniſhment of thoſe great ones, who live in forgetfulneſs of thy commandments.

IId. I ſaid their Fatigue; and this is a ſecond reflection with which the Unhappineſs of thoſe great ones who have forſaken God ſupplies me. Not only

only are their paſſions more violent in this ſtate, —ſo happy in the world's eſteem; but their fatigue becomes more inſupportable.

One would think, my Brethren, that this ſame fatigue which ſhould ſeem to be the peculiar lot of the common people, had taken refuge only amongſt the great; it is, in a manner, the ſhadow which every where follows them. The pleaſures, now almoſt wholly all exhauſted with them, no longer offer any thing but a dull ſameneſs; which either lulls them aſleep, or tires them: 'Tis in vain to diverſify; they do but diverſify their fatigue. In vain do they eſteem it an honour to appear at the head of all the public rejoicings: 'Tis but a mere vivacity of oſtentation, in which the heart now has hardly the leaſt ſhare. A long uſe of pleaſures has rendered them uſe-leſs; they are worn-out reſources, which are failing every day. Like a ſick man, to whom a long-continued languor has rendered all meats inſipid, they try every thing; nothing ſtimulates or arouſes them; and, as Job obſerves, The vain hope of pleaſure, wherewith their ſouls had at firſt flattered themſelves, is inſtantly ſucceeded by dreadful diſguſt. *

Their whole life is but one toilſome look-out againſt fatigue, and their whole life is itſelf but one continued toilſome fatigue; which they even advance by their haſte to multiply their pleaſures: Every thing is already worn out with them, at the very entrance upon life; and their firſt years al-

* Job xi. 20.

ready

ready experience that diſguſt and inſipidity, which laſſitude, and the long uſe of every thing ſeems to faſten upon old age.

The Good Man has leſs need of pleaſures; his days are more happy, and more compoſed: every thing is a relaxation to the innocent heart; the mild and allowed pleaſures which nature offers, though grown inſipid and tedious to the diſſolute man, preſerve all their reliſh for the man of virtue. Nay, they are innocent pleaſures alone which can leave a pure joy in the ſoul; whatever pollutes it, grieves and blackens it. The feſtivals of hoſpitality made the moſt pleaſing feaſts of the firſt patriarchs, and the fatteſt ſheep was ſufficient for the delicacies of thoſe innocent Tables. That man has far leſs need of external joy, who carries it already in his heart: from thence it diffuſes itſelf to the moſt indifferent objects. But if you carry not within you the ſource of true joy,—that is to ſay, peace of conſcience and innocence of heart, in vain do you look for it without: get all the amuſements of life, together around you; yet will there continually iſſue forth from the bottom of your inmoſt ſoul, a bitterneſs that ſhall poiſon them all. Refine upon all the pleaſures as you may; ſubtilize and decant them as you pleaſe; nothing but fatigue will ever ſpring from all theſe transformations.

O mighty God! that very thing which ſeparates us from thee, is what ought to call us to thee. The more proſperity multiplies our pleaſures, the more doth it undeceive us reſpecting them; and

leſs

leſs excuſable, and more wretched, are thoſe great ones, who devote not themſelves to thee, as having a better and a more interrupted diſcernment of the vanity of every thing that is not Thee!

IIId. Nor are the Great more wretched only thro' the Fatigue which every where purſues them, but alſo thro' that fund of Humour and Caprice which is inſeparable from them. "In the fulneſs of his ſufficiency, ſaith Job, he ſhall be in ſtraits": when he ſhall be ſatiated with enjoyments, his mind will appear ſad and diſturbed; the unevenneſs of his temper will imitate the inconſtancy of the waves of the ſea, and the darkeſt and gloomieſt ideas will ruſh in upon his ſoul. *

Such is the deſtiny of Princes and great men, who live in a forgetfulneſs of God, and make uſe of their proſperity merely for the gratification of their ſenſes. Soon weary of every thing, every thing is a burden to them, and they are a burden to themſelves: their projects mutually deſtroy each other; and the whole reſult is never any thing but an univerſal uncertainty formed by caprice, and which caprice alone can fix. Their orders are never the certain interpreters of their will one moment after: you diſpleaſe them, even while you obey them; you muſt gueſs out their meaning, and yet they are an inexplicable riddle to themſelves. All their proceedings (as the holy ſpirit declares,) are vague, doubtful

* Job xx. 22.

and

and incomprehenſible : "their ways are moveable, that thou canſt not know them." * In vain may you ſtrive to follow them ; you loſe ſight of them every moment ; they change their route, and you wander about with them, and ſtill are left behind ; they grow weary of the homage that is paid them, and are piqued at that which is refuſed them; their faithfuleſt ſervants become importunate by their ſincerity, and ſucceed no better to pleaſe by their complaiſance. Whimſical and troubleſome maſters ! every thing about them feels the weight of their capricious temper,—and they cannot bear it themſelves : in ſhort, they ſeem born only for their own miſery, and the miſery of thoſe who ſerve them.

Look at Saul, in the midſt of his proſperities and glory ! What man ought to have paſſed his days more pleaſingly and more happily ? From an obſcure and private fortune he ſaw himſelf elevated to the throne: his reign began with victory ; a ſon worthy of ſucceeding him, ſeemed to ſecure the crown to his race : all the ſubject-tribes contributed to his magnificence and pleaſures, and obeyed him as one man : What could he want to render him happy ? — Alas ! can any one be ſo without God ?

He loſes the fear of the Lord ; and with it he loſes his repoſe, and all the happineſs of his life. Given up to a wicked ſpirit, and to the gloomy and capricious vapours which agitate his mind,

Prov. v. 6.

you

you no longer know him; and he no longer knows himſelf. The harp of a ſhepherd, far from amuſing his melancholy, redoubles its fury. His praiſes and his victories ſung by the daughters of Judah, are to him as ſo many cenſures and opprobriums: he draws himſelf away from the public homage, but he cannot get away from himſelf. David diſpleaſes him, by appearing at the foot of his throne; and yet, by retiring from thence, he is ſtill more ſure to diſpleaſe. Touched by his fidelity, he gives him his applauſe, and acknowledges himſelf to be leſs juſt and leſs innocent than he: —and the day after, lays ſnares for him, in order to make ſure work, and rob him of his life! The tenderneſs of his own ſon chagrins him, and becomes ſuſpicious: all his courtiers ſeek and ſtudy whatever might ſoften his gloomy and capricious temper. Uſeleſs cares! He himſelf knows not the grand ſpecifick. He neglected Samuel while that prophet lived, and then takes it into his head to recall him from the grave, and conſult him after his death. He no longer believes in God; yet is he credulous enough to go and interrogate demons. He is impious, and he is ſuperſtitious;—a fate, by the way, pretty common to infidels. They treat the Samuels, the prophets heretofore ſent by God, as impoſtors: they conſider it as high ſpirit to deſpiſe thoſe venerable interpreters of the eternal counſels; and they laugh at predictions which the events have fully juſtified. They refuſe to the Moſt

High

High the knowledge of futurity, and the power of giving ſanction to his faithful ſervants; and they have the popular weakneſs to go and conſult a Pythoneſs.

Yes, my Brethren, the unhappy ſtate of the great in a courſe of ſin, is a ſtriking proof that there is a God who preſideth over human affairs. If men who were the enemies of God could be happy, they might at leaſt be ſo, upon the throne: "But whoſoever, ſaith a King himſelf, whoſoever, tho' he were maſter of the univerſe, withdraws himſelf from the rule of wiſdom, he withdraws himſelf from the only happineſs to which man can aſpire upon earth. — Whoſo deſpiſeth wiſdom and nurture, he is miſerable." *

Nay, the more exalted you are, the more miſerable; as nothing reſtrains you, ſo nothing fixes you: the leſs you depend upon others, the more you are given up to yourſelves; your capricioufneſs ſprings from your independance: You return back upon your own authority; your paſſions having tried every thing, and worn out every thing, nothing remains for you, but to devour yourſelf. Your fancies become the only reſource from your fatigue and ſatiety: being no longer able to vary the pleaſures already quite exhauſted, you can no longer find variety, but in the perpetual unevenneſs of your temper; and by that means you are inceſſantly removing from you that

* Wiſd. iii. 11.

vacuity,

vacuity, which every thing about you leaves within.

This is not one of thoſe vain images embelliſhed by diſcourſe, where whatever is wanting in reſemblance, is made up in ornaments. Approach the great; look with your own eyes upon one of thoſe perſons, who have grown old in the indulgence of the paſſions, and whom the long uſe of pleaſures hath rendered equally aukward both in vice and in virtue. What an eternal cloud upon his temper! What a fund of chagrin and caprice! Nothing pleaſes, becauſe he can no longer be pleaſed with himſelf: men revenge themſelves upon all about them, for thoſe ſecret anxieties which diſtract their own minds. It ſhould ſeem as if they conſidered as criminal that incapacity in which the reſt of mankind are placed, of being as criminal as themſelves. They reproach themſelves in ſecret with every object which they can no longer permit themſelves to enjoy; and Humour with them ſtands in the place of pleaſures.

My Brethren, turn yourſelves round on all ſides;—The great, ſeparated from God, are nothing but the melancholy laughing-ſtock of their own paſſions, of their own caprices, of accidental events, and of all human things. They alone feel the miſery of a Soul left to itſelf; in which all the reſources of the ſenſes and of pleaſure, leave only a fearful void; and to which the whole world, with all this heap of glory and ſmoke which ſurrounds it, becomes uſeleſs, if God is not with it. They are illuſtrious

illuſtrious witneſſes of the inſufficiency of the creatures, and of the neceſſity of a God and a religion upon earth. They alone prove to the reſt of mankind, that we are to expect happineſs here below only in virtue and innocence: that whatever augments our paſſions, multiplies our pains; that the happy ones of the world, are but, as it were, its firſt martyrs; and that God alone can ſuffice to an heart, which is made for Him alone.

"God of my fathers", ſaid a young King formerly, who from his infancy was mounted on a throne, "God of my fathers, thou haſt eſtabliſhed me prince over thy people, and judge over the children of Iſrael: from the very moment almoſt of my quitting the cradle, thou haſt placed me on a throne; and at an age in which man is ſtill ignorant of the art of ſelf-conduct. Thou haſt choſen me to be the conductor of a great nation; * Thou haſt encircled me with glory, with proſperity and abundance; but the magnificence of thy gifts will itſelf be the ſource of my miſeries and pains, if thou addeſt not thereto the love of thy commandments, and wiſdom. O ſend her unto me out of thy holy heavens, where ſhe ſitteth forever by thy ſide; it is ſhe who preſideth over all good counſels, and who will give to my youth, all the prudence of the aged, and all the majeſty of the Kings my anceſtors. She alone ſhall ſoften

* Wiſd. ix. 1, 7.

for me the cares of authority, and alleviate the weight of my crown: ſhe alone ſhall make me to paſs happy days, and ſuſtain me, amidſt the fatigues and unquiet thoughts which royalty brings with her. "She will be a counſellor of good things, and a comfort in cares and grief *". Without her, I ſhall find no repoſe even in the midſt of the magnificence of my palaces, and amongſt the homage that is there paid me. "After I am come into mine houſe, I will repoſe myſelf with her". Pleaſures end in bitterneſs; the throne itſelf, if thou, O great God, art not ſeated there with the ſovereign, is the ſeat of gloomy cares. But thy fear, and wiſdom, leave no regret behind them: the poſſeſſion of them never fatigues, and joy and peace are never to be found but with them. "Her converſation hath no bitterneſs; and to live with her hath no ſorrow, but mirth and joy."

Happy, therefore, that Prince, O my God, who never thinks he begins to reign, till he hath begun to fear Thee; who propoſes to himſelf the attainment of glory only in the way of virtue; and who eſteems it as a misfortune to command others, while he himſelf is not ſubject to Thee!

Give then, great God, give thy "wiſdom and judgment to the King," and thy "righteouſneſs to this child of many kings!"

Thou, who art the ſuccour of the orphan, re-

* Wiſd. viii. 9.

† Ibid viii. 16.

ſtore

ſtore to him by the abundance of thy bleſſings, whatever thou haſt taken from him by depriving him of the examples of a pious father, and the inſtructions of an auguſt grandfather: build again his ruins by the increaſe of thy favours, and beneficence: do thou alone, great God, ſupply to him the place of all he wants: regard with thy paternal eyes this illuſtrious child, whom thou haſt, as it were, left alone upon the earth, and to whom therefore thou art a chief tutor, and a father!

May his infancy, which now renders him ſo dear to this nation, awaken the bowels of thy mercy and tenderneſs: encircle his youth with the ſingular aids of thy protection: the weakneſs of his age, and thoſe graces which already ſhine forth in his earlieſt years, draw from us daily tears of apprehenſion and tenderneſs; re-animate thou our fearful hearts, by removing from him every peril which can threaten his life; and recompenſe our tenderneſs, by rendering him tender and humane to his people: Make him happy, by preſerving him in thy fear, which alone conſtitutes the happineſs of nations and of kings; confirm the felicity of his reign, by the goodneſs of his heart, and the innocency of his life; may thy holy law be written on his inmoſt ſoul, and around his diadem, to ſoften and alleviate to him its burden: may he feel the cares of royalty only in his ſenſibility of the public miſeries; and may his piety, ſtill more than his power and victories, create all his happineſs, as well as our own! AMEN!

SERMON V.

On the HUMANITY of the GREAT towards the PEOPLE.

For the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

John VI. 5.

WHEN JESUS THEN LIFTED UP HIS EYES, HE SAW A GREAT COMPANY COMING UNTO HIM.

SIR,

IT is not the omnipotence of Jesus Christ, and the miracle of the loaves multiplied by his bare word, that ought this day to affect and surprise us. He, by whom all things were made, could doubtless perform any thing with regard to the creatures of his workmanship: that therefore which most strikes the senses in this prodigy, is not what I now chuse to fix upon, for our consolation and instruction.

But it is his HUMANITY TOWARDS THE PEOPLE. He sees a multitude wandering, and hungry, at the foot of the mountain, and his bowels are moved; his pity is excited, and he cannot refuse

fuſe to the neceſſities of theſe unfortunates,—not his aſſiſtance only, but alſo his tenderneſs and compaſſion: "He ſaw a great multitude, and "was moved with compaſſion towards them. * He every where diſcovers the ſpontaneous marks of his humanity for the people; at the ſight of the misfortunes which threaten Jeruſalem, he ſolaces the dolour by his pity and his tears.

When two diſciples would cauſe fire to deſcend from heaven, upon a city of Samaria, his humanity intereſts itſelf for the people, in oppoſition to their zeal; and he reproaches them with being ignorant of that ſpirit of gentleneſs and charity, of which they were ſoon after to become the miniſters.

If the Apoſtles ſend away harſhly a number of children, who eagerly preſs round about him, his kindneſs is offended, that they ſhould wiſh to hinder him from being acceſſible; and the more a miſtaken reſpect attempts to remove from him the weak, and the little ones, the nearer does his clemency and affability bring them to him.

It is a great leſſon of "humanity towards the "people," which Jeſus Chriſt this day propoſes to princes and great men. They are great only for other men; and, properly ſpeaking, they enjoy their greatneſs only ſo far as they render it uſeful to other men.

I mean, that Humanity towards the people is the

* Matt. xiv. 14.

first duty of the Great, and at the same time the most delightful exercise of greatness.

I. All power comes from God, and whatever comes from God, is appointed only for the utility of men. The Great would be useless upon earth, were there none poor, and none unhappy. They owe their elevation only to the public necessities; and tho' the people are made for them, they themselves are whatever they are, solely for the people.

What a fearful providence, if the whole multitude of mankind were placed upon earth, only to subserve the pleasures of a small number of happy ones, who inhabit it; and who often do not know the God who heaps all their blessings upon them!

If then God exalts some few, it is in order that they may be the support and refuge of others. He disburthens himself, thro' them, from the care of the feeble and the poor; and thus they are initiated into the order of the counsels of eternal wisdom. All that is real in their greatness, is the use they ought to make of it towards those who suffer: this is the alone mark of distinction which God hath affixed upon them; they are only the ministers of his bounty and providence; and they lose that right and title which makes them Great, the moment they chuse to be so only for themselves.

"Humanity, therefore, towards the people," is the first duty of the Great; and this humanity includes AFFABILITY, PROTECTION, and LIBERALITY.

I. I

1. I ſaid AFFABILITY. Yes, oh Prince, I may be bold to ſay, that that haughtineſs which is commonly the vice of the Great, ought to be, the vile reſource only of low birth and obſcurity. It would appear much more pardonable in thoſe, who ſpring, as it were, from the duſt, to ſwell, and ſtrut, and ſtrive by the ſecret inflations of pride to ſet themſelves upon a level with thoſe, who by their birth are placed ſo infinitely above them. Nothing thwarts men of obſcure and vulgar birth more than the enormous diſtance, which chance hath put betwixt them and the Great. They can always flatter themſelves with the vain perſuaſion, that nature has been unjuſt in making them ſpring up in obſcurity, while ſhe hath reſerved the ſplendor of blood and titles for ſo many others, whoſe name is their whole merit: the lower they find themſelves, the leſs do they fancy themſelves in their right place. Thus inſolence and haughtineſs often become the lot of the vileſt of the populace; and it is not once only, that the ancient reigns of our monarchy have ſeen ſuch ſtart up;—determined to ſhake off the yoke of the Nobles, and the Great, and to plot their extinction and utter ruin.

The Great, on the contrary, placed ſo high by nature, can no longer expect to find glory, but in the abaſing themſelves. They have no more diſtinction to aſſume, with regard to Rank and Birth; they can only acquire it, therefore, by AFFABILITY; and if there is ſtill a pride

which can be allowed them, it is that of rendering themſelves humane and acceſſible.

Indeed, AFFABILITY is, as it were, the inſeparable characteriſtic, and the ſureſt mark of greatneſs. The deſcendants of thoſe illuſtrious and ancient families with whom none can diſpute ſuperiority of name and antiquity of origin, do not wear upon their foreheads the pride of their birth; they would leave you ignorant of it, could it be unknown: the public monuments ſpeak ſufficiently for them, without their ſpeaking of themſelves. You perceive their elevation only by a noble ſimplicity: they render themſelves ſtill more reſpectable, by only ſuffering with pain, as it were, the reſpect due to them; and among the many titles whieh diſtinguiſh them, politeneſs and affability are the only diſtinction they affect. They, on the contrary, who boaſt themſelves of a doubtful antiquity, and the ſplendor and pre-eminence of whoſe anceſtors are ever the ſubject of private popular diſpute, are always afraid you ſhould be ignorant of the greatneſs of their extraction; they have it continually in their mouths; fancy they can confirm the truth of it by an affectation of pride and haughtineſs; put ſtatelineſs in the place of titles; and by requiring more than they can juſtly claim, make people conteſt with them even what might otherwiſe be allowed them.

In fact, a man born to be great is always leaſt affected by his elevation. Whoever is dazzled with the eminence in which birth and fortune have

have placed him, only declares by it, that he was not formed to mount ſo high; the higheſt places are always below great ſouls. Nothing puffs up or dazzles them, becauſe there is nothing higher than themſelves.

Haughtineſs, therefore, derives its ſource from mediocrity, or elſe it is only a piece of cunning to conceal it: it is a certain proof, that a loſs muſt be the conſequence of being ſhewn too near. Men cover with haughtineſs thoſe defects and weakneſſes, which haughtineſs itſelf betrays and expoſes: they make pride the ſupplement, if I may ſo ſpeak, of merit; not conſidering that there is nothing ſo little like merit, as pride.

And hence it is, that the greateſt men, and the greateſt Kings, have ever been the moſt affable. A ſimple woman of Tekoah, came to lay ſimply before David her domeſtic anxieties: and if the ſplendor of the throne was tempered by the Affability of the ſovereign, the Affability of the ſovereign exalted the ſplendor and majeſty of the throne.

Kings, Sir, can loſe nothing by making themſelves acceſſible; the love of the people makes up to them for the reſpect which is their due. The throne is eſtabliſhed only to be the aſylum of thoſe, who will naturally come to implore your juſtice or your clemency: the more eaſy you are of acceſs to your ſubjects, the more will you augment its ſplendor and majeſty. And is it not juſt, that the nation which of all the world beſt loves its maſ-

ters,

ters, ſhould alſo have moſt right to approach them? Oh Prince, ſhew to your people all thoſe amiable gifts and talents, wherewith heaven hath endowed you; let them have a near view of that happineſs which they expect from your reign. The charms and majeſty of your perſon, the goodneſs and rectitude of your heart, will always better ſecure to you the homage due to your rank, than your authority and your power can do.

Thoſe inviſible and effeminate Princes; thoſe Ahaſueruſes, before whom it was a crime worthy of death for Eſther herſelf to venture to appear, without being ordered; and whoſe preſence alone froze the very blood in the veins of their ſuppliants;—when once ſeen near, were nothing but female idols, without ſoul, or life, or courage, or virtue;—in the very heart of their palaces delivered up to vile ſlaves: ſeparated from all commerce, as if they had not been worthy of ſhewing themſelves to mankind; or as if men, made like themſelves, had not been worthy to ſee them:—men, in ſhort, whoſe obſcurity and ſolitude conſtituted all their majeſty.

There is a ſort of ſelf-confidence in Affability, which ſits well upon the Great; which makes them never afraid of debaſing themſelves by their humility, and is in ſome meaſure a ſpecies of valour and pacific courage. To be inacceſſible and haughty, is to be weak and timid.

Again; the moſt inexcuſable circumſtance attending thoſe princes and great men, who never offer

fer to their people any thing but a diſdainful and ſevere countenance, is, that it coſts them ſo little to conciliate their hearts to them. For this purpoſe, there needs neither labour nor ſtudy;—a ſingle word, a gracious ſmile, a look only, is ſufficient. The people reckon them as every thing: their rank gives value to every thing: "The ſeverity of the King's countenance alone, ſaith the ſcripture, is the life and felicity of the people; and his gentle and humane demeanour, is to the hearts of his ſubjects, as the dew of the evening to dry and thirſty lands.—In the light of the King's countenance is life, and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.*"

And can any man ſuffer thoſe hearts to be alienated from him, which may be gained at ſo low a price? Is it not debaſing oneſelf, thus to undervalue all humanity? Does he deſerve the name of Great, who knows not even how to diſcern the value of men?

Hath not nature already impoſed a penalty heavy enough upon the people, and upon the unfortunate, in having made them be born in dependance, and, as it were, in ſlavery? Is it not enough that the meanneſs or unhappineſs of their condition, makes it a duty, a kind of law with them, to crouch, and to pay homage? Muſt their yoke be ſtill aggravated by contempt, and by a haughtineſs which is itſelf ſo worthy of that

* Prov. xvi. 15.

contempt?

contempt? Is it not enough that their dependance is a pain? muſt they ſtill be made to bluſh at it as a crime? and if any one is to be aſhamed of his condition, who ſhould it be—the poor man who ſuffers it, or the great man who abuſes it?

Indeed, very often, humour alone, rather than pride, effaces from the countenances of the Great that ſerenity, which renders them acceſſible and affable: it is an unevenneſs proceeding from caprice, rather than haughtineſs. Engroſſed by their pleaſures, and fatigued with the homage paid them, they no longer receive them but with diſguſt: it ſeems as if affability would become a tireſome duty, and put them to trouble. In conſequence of being honoured, they are fatigued with the honours beſtowed upon them; and they often withdraw themſelves from the public homage, in order to ſcreen themſelves from the fatigue of appearing ſenſible of it. But with how little tender feeling muſt He be born, who fancies it painful to appear humane! Is it not barbarity, to receive, not only without being touched, but even with diſguſt, thoſe marks of love and reſpect, which are preſented to us by our humble inferiors? Is it not declaring aloud, that He merits not the affection of the people, who thwarts the tendereſt evidences of it? Shall thoſe moments of humour and chagrin, which the cares of grandeur and authority draw after them, be pleaded in this caſe?—But is humour then ſuch a privilege of the Great, that it may be urged in excuſe of their vices?

Alas!

Alas! If any might be allowed to be gloomy, capricious, and melancholy,—a burthen to others and to themſelves, it ſhould ſurely be thoſe unfortunates, who are ſurrounded by hunger and miſery, by domeſtic wants and calamities, and all the blackeſt cares of human exiſtence!—they would be much more worthy of excuſe, if frequently bearing grief, bitterneſs, and deſpair in their hearts, they ſhould let ſome ſymptoms of it eſcape them. But that the Great,—that the happy ones of the world, with whom every thing ſmiles, whom joy and pleaſure every where accompany; that theſe ſhould pretend to derive a privilege from their felicity itſelf, to excuſe their fantaſtical ill-humours and caprice! that theſe ſhould be permitted to be angry, uneaſy, and forbidding, becauſe truly they are more happy!—that theſe ſhould regard it as a right acquired by their proſperity, to load ſtill more heavily with their tempers, the unhappy, who already groan under the yoke of their authority and power!—Great God! what ſhall we call this?—the privilege of the Great, or a puniſhment of the ill uſe they make of their greatneſs?—For certain it is, that caprice, gloomineſs and care, ſeem to be the peculiar lot of the Great, and the innocency of joy and ſerenity only that of the people.

But Affability, which takes its ſource in humility, is not one of thoſe ſuperficial virtues which dwell only upon the countenance: it is a ſenſation which ſprings from the tenderneſs and good-

neſs

neſs of the heart. Affability would be but an inſult and a deriſion to the unhappy, if while it ſhewed them a ſmooth and open countenance, it ſhut up our bowels againſt them; and rendered us more acceſſible to their complaints, only to render us more inſenſible of their pains.

2. The wretched and the oppreſſed have a right to approach them, merely that they may find from them that PROTECTION which they want. Yes, my brethren, the laws which have provided for the defence of the weak, are not ſufficient to ſhelter them from injuſtice and oppreſſion. Miſery ſeldom dares to call upon the eſtabliſhed laws to protect it; and a great name often impoſes ſilence upon them.

It is for the Great, therefore, to place the people under the protection of the laws: the widow, the orphan, and all who are trodden upon and oppreſſed, have an acquired right to their credit and power: it is given them only for theſe. It is theirs to carry the complaints and groans of the oppreſſed to the foot of the throne; they are the channel of communication; the tie, as it were, between the people and the ſovereign; the ſovereign himſelf being only the father and ſhepherd of his people. Thus, "it is the people alone, who give to the Great the right they have of approaching the throne; and it is for the people alone, that the throne itſelf is ſet up. In a word, both the great men and the prince, are but, as it were, the men of the people."

But

But if, ſo far from being the protectors of their weakneſs, the great men, and miniſters of kings themſelves, become their oppreſſors; they are no more than ſo many barbarous tutors, who themſelves ſpoil their pupils. O mighty God! the clamour of the poor and of the oppreſſed, will come up before thee; thou wilt curſe theſe cruel generations; thou wilt launch thy thunders at theſe mighty ones of the earth; thou wilt utterly overthrow this edifice of pride, and injuſtice, and proſperity, which hath been raiſed upon the ruins of ſo many unfortunates; and this their proſperity itſelf ſhall be buried in the great deſtruction!

Accordingly we find, that the proſperity of thoſe great men, and miniſters of ſovereigns, who have been the oppreſſors of the people, hath never failed to bring ſhame, ignominy, and a curſe upon their deſcendants. We have ſeen ſcandalous ſhoots ſpring from this ſtock of iniquity, who have been the opprobrium of their name and age. The Lord hath blown upon the heap of their ill-gotten riches, and diſperſed them like duſt: and if he ſtill leaves any unfortunate remains of their race upon earth, it is to make them ſerve as laſting monuments of his vengeance; — to perpetuate the puniſhment of a crime, which almoſt ever perpetuates with it the public affliction and miſery of empires.

3. The Protection of the weak, therefore, is the only lawful uſe of reputation and authority: But

But the Assistance and LIBERALITY which they ought to find in our abundance, form the last character of Humanity.

Yes, my brethren, if it is God alone who made you be born what you are, what could be his design in shedding upon you the good things of earth with such profusion? Did he wish to facilitate that luxury, those passions, and pleasures, which he condemns? Are these Presents which he hath made you in his anger?—If so, it is for yourselves alone, that he caused you to be born in prosperity and opulence: enjoy them then while you may: make to yourselves, if you can, an unrighteous felicity upon earth: live as if all was made for you: multiply your pleasures: make speed to enjoy them: the time is but short: and you can expect nothing beyond it but death and judgment: you "have received your reward" here below.

But if, agreeable to the designs of God, your possessions ought to be the resources and aids of your salvation; then he leaves the poor and the wretched upon earth only for you: You hold, for them, the place of God himself; you are, as it were, their visible providence; they have a right to call upon you, to lay their wants before you: your good things are their good things; and your Liberalities the only patrimony which God hath assigned them upon earth.

II. And what is there in your condition more worthy of envy, than the power of making happy?

happy? If humanity towards the people is the firſt duty of the Great, is it not alſo the moſt delicious uſe of Greatneſs?

Though all religion ſhould not of itſelf be an univerſal motive of charity towards our brethren, and tho' our humanity, in this reſpect, ſhould be repaid only by the pleaſure of conferring happineſs, and of comforting thoſe who ſuffer; what more than this would be neceſſary to a good heart? Whoever is not ſenſible of a pleaſure ſo true, ſo affecting, ſo worthy of the heart,—he is not born Great; he does not even deſerve to be a man. * "How juſtly contemptible," ſays St. Ambroſe, "is that man, who, having the power to commu-"nicate happineſs wants the will to beſtow it!"

It ſeems as if there was a malediction attached to greatneſs. Perſons born in an obſcure and private ſtation, envy in the Great only the power of conferring favours, and contributing to the felicity of others; people conceive that in Their place, it would but be too much happineſs, to diffuſe joy and gladneſs thro' the hearts of men, by pouring benefits upon them, and by aſſuring to themſelves forever their love and gratitude. If in a moderate condition men ſometimes form theſe chimerical deſires of arriving at great poſts, the firſt uſe they propoſe to themſelves in their new elevation, is that, of being beneficent, and of ſhar-

* Infelix, cujus in poteſtate eſt tantorum animas à morte defendere, & non eſt voluntas. Amb. in Vita Nab. 13

ing it with all around them. This is the firſt leſſon of nature; the firſt ſentiment of which common men are ſuſceptible. It is in the Great alone that it lies extinct. It would ſeem as if greatneſs gave them another heart, harder and more inſenſible than that of the reſt of mankind; as if the more capable they were of comforting the wretched, the leſs were they affected with their miſeries: as if, the more power they had to engage the love and benevolence of mankind, the more lightly they eſteemed it: in ſhort, as if it were enough to be able to do every thing, in order to be unmoved at any thing.

But, oh my Brethren! what ſweeter, what more flattering uſe would you wiſh to make of your elevation and opulence, than thus to attract the homage of your fellow-creatures?—"Yes, but pride itſelf is weary of homage:"—Or, to command men, and give laws to them?—"but no; theſe are the cares of authority, and not the pleaſure of it."—Or, to ſee multiplied around you your ſervants and vaſſals?—"but, theſe are ſo many witneſſes, which embarraſs and trouble you, rather than a pomp that adorns you," Or, to dwell in ſumptuous palaces?—"But, ſays Job, you build to yourſelves ſolitudes, where anxious cares and gloomy ſollicitude ſoon come, and take up their reſidence with you."—Or, to collect there all kinds of pleaſure?—"True; they may fill up your vaſt ſtructures, but they will always leave a void in your own heart."—Or, to find daily in your opulence,

opulence, new resources of caprice?—"But, the whole train of resources will soon be dried up; all is presently exhausted: you must go back once again, and incessantly begin that anew, which wearinesS renders insipid, and yet which indolence has rendered necessary." Employ as much as you will your possessions and your authority, to all the purposes which pride and pleasure can invent; you will be satiated indeed, but you will never be satisfied. They will shew you joy; but they will not leave it in your heart.

O rather employ them in communicating happiness: in rendering life sweeter and more supportable to wretches, reduced, by the excess of their misery, to wish perhaps, a thousand times, with Job, "that the day, which saw them born, had been the eternal night of their grave;"—And then, you will feel the pleasure of being born Great; then you will taste the true comfort of your condition: this is the alone privilege that renders it worthy to be envied. All that vain shew which surrounds you, is for others; this pleasure is for yourselves alone: all the rest has its bitterness; this pleasure alone can sweeten them all. The joy of doing good, is far otherwise sweet and affecting, than the joy of receiving it. Recur to it as often as you will; it is a pleasure that never wears out: the more one tastes it, the more worthy he renders himself to taste it: a man grows accustomed to his own prosperity, and becomes therefore insensible of it; But that joy is continu-

ally felt, which arifes from being the author of prosperity to others. Every benefit carries with it this fweet and fecret tribute to our fouls; long ufe, which hardens the heart to all other pleafures, does but render it every day more fenfible to this.

Nay, Sir, what power hath the Majefty of the Throne itfelf more delicious, than that of conferring favours? what would the power of kings be, if they were condemned to enjoy it in folitude?—in a gloomy retirement?—equally the horror of fubjects, and the punifhment of the fovereign! It is the "ufe of authority", which forms its fweeteft pleafure; and the moft grateful ufe of authority, is that clemency and liberality which render it amiable.

But there is ftill another reafon for this humane conduct in the Great. For,—befides the pleafure of doing good, which makes us amends for the benefit we confer; "fhew fweetnefs and humanity in the ufe of your power, (faith the wife fon of Sirach), and you reap the fureft and moft lafting glory, to which the Great can attain."

No, Sir, it is not rank, or titles, or power, which can render fovereigns amiable: it is not even thofe glorious talents which the world admires. Valour, fuperiority of genius, the art of managing men's minds, and governing nations; thefe are great talents, which render them amiable to their fubjects only fo far as they render them humane and beneficent. You will be Great, only fo far as you are dear to them: the love of the

the people hath ever been the moſt real and unqueſtionable glory of ſovereigns; and the people ſeldom love any virtues in ſovereigns, but thoſe which render their reign happy.

Is there, indeed, a purer or more animating glory for Princes, than that of reigning over hearts? The glory of conqueſt, is always ſullied with blood! Carnage and death lead us to it! And we muſt make men miſerable, in order to aſſure ourſelves of it. The pomp which ſurrounds it, is fatal and mournful; and the conqueror himſelf, if he is humane, is often forced to ſhed tears over his own victories.

But, O Prince! the glory of being dear to one's people, and of making them happy, is ſurrounded only with joy and abundance. To immortalize this glory, there is no need to erect ſuperb ſtatues and pillars: itſelf erects in the heart of every ſubject, a monument more durable than marble or braſs; becauſe "love" whoſe work it is, "is ſtronger than death"; the title of "conqueror", is written only upon marble; the title of "father of his people", is engraven upon hearts.

What felicity to a ſovereign, to regard his whole kingdom as his family! his ſubjects as his children! to account their hearts as a ſtill better poſſeſſion, than their eſtates and their perſons! and to ſee, as it were, ratified daily, that firſt choice of the nation which exalted his anceſtors to the throne! Has the glory of conqueſts and triumphs any thing equal to this pleaſure? Nay, Sir, if the

glory of conquerors touches you,—begin by gaining the hearts of your ſubjects: this conqueſt will make up to you for that of the univerſe. A King dear to a nation valiant as yours is, has nothing to fear, but the exceſs of his proſperity, and his victories.

Only liſten to the multitude whom Jeſus Chriſt fed in the wilderneſs; they determine "to make him their king"* : unable to bring him back to the throne of David, and the kings of Judah his anceſtors, they already ſet him up a throne in their hearts. They recognize his right to royalty only by his humanity. Alas! if mankind were to give themſelves maſters, it would not be the moſt noble, or the moſt valiant they would chooſe; it would be thoſe who are the moſt tender, and the moſt humane; ſuch maſters, as might at the ſame time be their fathers.

Happy that nation, O mighty God! to whom in thy mercy thou appointeſt a ſovereign of this character? Happy preſages ſeem to promiſe us this bleſſing; the clemency and majeſty painted on the countenance of this auguſt young prince, already announce the felicity of our people: His gentle and beneficent diſpoſitions, daily confirm and increaſe our hopes. Cultivate then, O my God, theſe firſt pledges of our felicity. Make him as tender of thy people, as that pious Prince to whom he owes his birth, and whom thou only

* John vi. 15.

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ſhewed'ſt to the world: HE, thou knoweſt, determined to reign only to render us happy: Our miſeries were His miſeries; Our afflictions were His; and His heart made but one heart with Ours. May therefore clemency and mercy increaſe with the increaſing age of this precious child, and flow in him with the blood of a father ſo merciful and humane! May the mildneſs and majeſty of his countenance, be forever an image of that in his ſoul! May his people be as dear to him, as he is himſelf dear to his people; may he from the tenderneſs of the nation for him, take the rule and meaſure of that love which he ought to entertain for the nation! By this, he will be as great as his grandfather; more glorious than all his anceſtors; and as his humanity will be the ſource of our felicity upon earth, ſo will it be of his own felicity in heaven. AMEN!

SERMON VI.

On the CHARACTERS of CHRIST'S GREATNESS.

For the Day of the Incarnation.

Luke I. 32.

HE SHALL BE GREAT.

SIR,

WHEN mankind gueſs of a young Prince that he ſhall be Great, this idea only awakens in them victories and temporal proſperities: they found his future greatneſs only upon public miſeries; and the very ſigns which announce the ſplendor of his glory, are but as it were ſo many ſiniſter preſages, that promiſe nothing but calamities to the reſt of the globe.

It is not by ſuch vain and mournful marks of Greatneſs, that the angel as on this day announces to the virgin that "Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be Great." The language of heaven and of truth, by no means reſembles the error and vanity of human adulation: God doth not ſpeak as man ſpeaketh.

Jeſus

Jesus Christ "shall be Great", 1. Because he shall be the holy one, and the son of God: "This holy thing, says the angel, shall be called the son of God." 2. Because "he shall save his people:" 3. Because his reign shall know no bounds: "of his kingdom there shall be no end. Such then are "the characters of his greatness";—a greatness of holiness; a greatness of mercy; a greatness of perpetuity and duration.

And indeed, such are the characters of all true grandeur. Princes and great men are not to seek for it in the elevation of birth, in the lustre of titles and victories, in the extent of power and authority; they will be great, as Jesus Christ was great, only so far as they shall be holy,—as they shall be useful to the people, and as their life and reign shall become a pattern, perpetuating itself thro' all ages. That is to say, so far as they shall possess, like Jesus Christ, a greatness of holiness, a greatness of mercy, and a greatness of perpetuity and duration.

I. The eternal origin of Jesus Christ, his title of "Son of God," which is the essential title of his Holiness, is that also of his greatness and eminence. He is not called Great, because he reckons up Kings and Patriarchs among his ancestors, and because the most august blood in the world flows in his veins. He is Great, because he is the "holy one", and "the son of the highest": all his greatness derives its source from the bosom of God,

God, whence he is ſprung; and the great myſtery of his everlaſting ways, manifeſted as on this day, is about to draw all its ſplendor from his divine nativity.

We have nothing great, but what comes to us from God. Yes, my brethren, let the Great vaunt themſelves of having, as Chriſt had, Kings and Princes amongſt their anceſtors; if they have no other glory than that of their forefathers; if all their greatneſs is in their name; if their titles are their only virtues; if we muſt call back the ages paſt, in order to find their perſons worthy of our homage;—If this is the caſe, their birth diſhonours and debaſes them, even in the world's eſteem: people will be continually oppoſing their character to their perſon: the remembrance of their forefathers will become their ſhame. The hiſtories, in which the great actions of their anceſtors are written, are nothing more than witneſſes teſtifying againſt them: mankind look for thoſe glorious anceſtors, in their unworthy ſucceſſors: we re-demand from their names, the virtues which formerly did honour to their country; and that weight of glory which they have inherited, is nothing but a load of ſhame, that ſinks them down and overwhelms them.

And yet, moſt men carry upon their brow the pride of their origin. They reckon the degrees of their greatneſs by ages which are no more; by dignities, which they no longer poſſeſs; by actions, which they have not performed; by forefathers,

thers, of whom nothing remains but vile duſt and aſhes; by monuments, which are now effaced by time;—and fancy themſelves ſuperior to other men, becauſe they have ſtill left them more domeſtic ruins of the rapidity of time; becauſe they can produce more titles than other men of the vanity of human things.

Certainly, an high birth is an illuſtrious prerogative; to which, in all times, the conſent of nations hath annexed diſtinctions of honour and reſpect. And yet, this is but a title; it is not a virtue: it is an engagement to glory, but it is not the giver of it: It is a domeſtic leſſon, and an honourable motive to greatneſs; but it is not what makes us Great: it is a ſucceſſion of honour and merit; but then it ſinks and dies in us the moment we inherit the name, without inheriting the virtues which have rendered it illuſtrious: from that moment we begin, as it were, a new race; we become new men: Nobility has nothing to do but with our name, and vulgarity with our perſon.

But if, "even in the world's eſtimation," birth without virtue is nothing but a vain title, inceſſantly reproaching us for our indolence and baſeneſs; What is it before God? That God, who ſees nothing within us great or real, but thoſe gifts of his grace and ſpirit, which he himſelf hath placed there.

It is our birth therefore according to the Faith, which forms the moſt glorious of all our titles: we are "Great," only becauſe, like Jeſus Chriſt,

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we are "children of God," and ſupport the nobility and excellence of ſo high an origin. This it is which exalts the Chriſtian above the Kings and Princes of the earth: by this it is, that we this day enter into all the privileges of Chriſt Jeſus; that all things are ours; that the whole univerſe is for us alone; that the Patriarchs, and all the elect of paſt ages, are our anceſtors: By this it is, that we become heirs of an eternal kingdom; that we ſhall judge angels and men; and one day behold at our feet all the nations and powers of the world.

Such, O Prince, is the prerogative of the children of God. Accordingly, our Kings † have placed the title of "Chriſtian" at the head of all the titles which encircle and ennoble their crown; and the moſt holy of your predeceſſors, went not to look for the ſource and origin of his greatneſs, in the number of the cities and provinces ſubjected to his empire; but in that place alone, where he had been placed by baptiſm in the number of God's children.

But it is not enough, SIR, as St. John obſerves, to bear the name of God's children; we muſt likewiſe be ſo in fact. * If the children of Kings, degenerating from their auguſt birth, had only mean and vulgar diſpoſitions: if they propoſed to themſelves the ſtation of a mean artiſan, as the worthieſt object of their heart, and alone capable of fulfilling their grand deſignation: if, loſing

* 1 John iii. 1—3. † That is, the French Kings.

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ſight of the throne, to which they muſt one day be raiſed, they knew nothing greater than to grovel in the duſt, and lay confounded in ſentiments and occupations with the vileſt of the people; what a ſcandal were this to their name, and to the nation which was to expect ſuch maſters!

Such, SIR, and ſtill more culpable, are the children of God, when they ſo far degrade themſelves as to live like the children of this world. The grace of your baptiſm, hath exalted you ſtill higher than the glory of your birth, tho' that be the moſt auguſt in the univerſe. By the latter you are only a temporary king; the former makes you the inheritor of an eternal kingdom; the latter renders you only the child of kings; by the latter you are become the child of God. We ſee daily growing and expanding themſelves in your heart, ſentiments and inclinations worthy of the birth you have derived from the kings your anceſtors; but this would be nothing, if you were not alſo to ſhew thoſe ſentiments, which correſpond to the greatneſs of birth you derive from God, who hath placed you by baptiſm in the number of his children.

Now by what a "royal birth" requires, judge, SIR, what muſt be required by a birth wholly "divine". If the children of kings ought to be above other men; if the leaſt meanneſs diſhonours Them; if the ſlighteſt want of courage is ſuch a blot, as tarniſhes all the luſtre of their deſcent: if even a mere unevenneſs of temper, is made a crime

crime in Them; if it is required of them to be more valiant, more wiſe, more circumſpect, more mild, more affable, more humane, more great than the reſt of mankind;—if the world requires all this from the "children of earth;"—what muſt not GOD demand from the "children of heaven!"—what a ſuperiority to the ſenſes and paſſions!—what a contempt for all which is not eternal!—O how needful is it to be Great, to ſupport the eminence of ſo high an origin! this is "the firſt character of the greatneſs of Chriſt"; namely, a greatneſs of "holineſs".—"He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the higheſt."

II. But, ſecondly, he ſhall be Great, becauſe he ſhall ſave his people: "he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins". This is the ſecond character of his greatneſs;—a greatneſs of Mercy.

He comes down upon earth only to heap benefits upon mankind. We were under ſervitude and malediction; and he comes to break our chains, and ſet us at liberty. We were enemies to God, and ſtrangers to his promiſes; and he comes to reconcile us to him, to make us inheritors with the ſaints, and children of a new covenant. We lived without law, without yoke, without God in this world; and he comes to be our law, our truth, our righteouſneſs, and to ſhed the abundance of his gifts and graces upon the whole univerſe. In a word, he comes to renew all nature; to ſanctify that which was polluted; to fortify that which

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was weak; to ſave that which was loſt; to reunite that which was divided. What greatneſs is this!—Nothing indeed is ſo great, as to be enabled to be uſeful to all mankind.

And ſuch is the Greatneſs to which Princes, and Sovereigns, and whatever bears the name of Great upon earth ought to aſpire. They can be Great only in making themſelves uſeful to the people; and in bringing them, as Jeſus Chriſt brought them, Liberty, Peace, and Abundance.

I ſaid, "Liberty": Not that which favours the paſſions, and a licentious conduct:—ſuch fatal libertiniſm is but a new yoke, and a ſcandalous ſervitude: The regulation of manners, is the firſt principle of felicity and firmneſs in empires. Nor is it that, which either ſets itſelf up againſt lawful authority, or which would divide that with the ſovereign, which reſides in him alone; and under a pretence of moderating, only annihilates and extinguiſhes it. There is no happineſs for the people but in order and ſubmiſſion. Let them deviate ever ſo little from the fixed point of obedience, government has no longer any rule; every one would be his own law: confuſion, troubles, diſſenſions, outrages, and impunity, immediately ariſe from independence; nor can ſovereigns render their ſubjects happy, but by keeping them ſubmiſſive to authority, and at the ſame time rendering their ſubmiſſion mild and amiable.

The Liberty, SIR, which princes owe their people, is the liberty of the laws. You are maſ-

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ter of the lives and fortunes of your ſubjects; but you can only diſpoſe of them according to the laws. * It is true you know no one above you, but God alone; and yet, the laws ought to have greater authority than yourſelf. You do not command ſlaves; you command a free and warlike nation, as jealous of her liberty, as of her fidelity; and whoſe ſubmiſſion is ſo much the more ſure, as it is founded upon the love ſhe bears to her maſters. Her kings may do every thing with her, becauſe her tenderneſs and fidelity ſet no bounds to her obedience: But then, her kings muſt themſelves ſet them to their authority; and the more her love is ignorant of any other law than a blind ſubmiſſion, the more carefully ſhould her kings require nothing from her, but what the laws permit them to require: otherwiſe, they are no longer the fathers and protectors of their people; they are their enemies and oppreſſors: they do not reign over their ſubjects;—they ſubdue them.

The power of your illuſtrious Great Grandfather over the nation ſurpaſſed that of all the kings your anceſtors: a long and glorious reign had confirmed it; his high wiſdom maintained it, and the love of his ſubjects hardly ſet it any other bounds: and yet, he could frequently make that power give way to the laws; could take them for arbitrators between him and his ſubjects, and nobly ſubmit his own intereſts to their deciſions.

* The reader will remember, that this is the language of a Frenchman; and conſequently, make the proper allowances.

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It is not then the Sovereign, it is the Law, SIR, which ſhould reign over the people: You are only the miniſter, and firſt depoſitary of that law. It is the law which muſt regulate the uſe of authority; and thereby it is, that authority is no longer a yoke to the ſubjects, but a rule for their conduct, a ſuccour for their protection; a paternal vigilance, which therefore confirms their ſubmiſſion, becauſe it confirms their tenderneſs. Men believe themſelves free, when they are governed only by the laws: their ſubmiſſion, in this caſe, conſtitutes all their happineſs, becauſe it conſtitutes all their tranquility, and all their confidence. The paſſions, the unjuſt wills, the extravagant and ambitious deſires which princes intermix with the uſe of authority, ſo far from extending, weaken it: they become leſs powerful, the moment they aim at being more ſo than the laws. They loſe, by thinking to gain:—Whatever renders authority unjuſt and odious, enervates and leſſens it. The ſource of their power, is in the heart of their ſubjects; and however abſolute they appear, they may be ſaid to loſe their true power, the moment they loſe the love of thoſe who ſerve them.

I ſaid alſo "Peace and Abundance," which are always the happy fruits of that "liberty" we have juſt been deſcribing:—and theſe are the good things which Jeſus Chriſt comes to bring upon earth. He is Great, only "becauſe he is the benefactor of mankind."

Yes, SIR, to be Great in the opinion of men,

we muſt be uſeful to men: It was gratitude which formerly led them to make to themſelves even Gods of their benefactors: they adored the earth which nourifhed them; the ſun which enlightened them;—Beneficent princes; a Jupiter, King of Crete; an Oſiris, King of Egypt; who had given wiſe laws to their ſubjects, who had been the fathers of their people, and had made them happy during their reign. The love and reſpect inſpired by gratitude was ſo lively, that it even degenerated into worſhip.

We muſt intereſt mankind in our glory, if we would have that glory to be immortal; and we can intereſt them thus only by our beneficence. The great talents and titles which ſet us above them, and yet add nothing to their happineſs, dazzle them, without affecting them; and become rather the object of envy, than of public affection and eſteem. The praiſes which we beſtow upon others, have always, ſome way or other, a reference to ourſelves: Intereſt or vanity are their ſecret ſources; for all men are vain, acting hardly for any but themſelves; and commonly they are not fond of giving, at their own expence, praiſes which humble them, and which are as it were, public acknowledgements of a ſuperiority over them. But gratitude gets the better of vanity; and pride, without any pain, ſuffers our benefactors to be at the ſame time our ſuperiors, and our maſters.

The Prince who has only poſſeſſed military virtues,

tues, is not aſſured of being great to poſterity: he has laboured only for himſelf; he has done nothing for his people: and yet, it is the people who ever eſtabliſh the glory and greatneſs of the ſovereign. He will perhaps paſs for a great conqueror; but he will never be conſidered as a great king: he will have gained battles, but he will not have gained the hearts of his ſubjects. He will have conquered foreign provinc s, but, he will have exhauſted his own: in a word, he will have ſkilfully conducted armies; but he will very badly have governed his own ſubjects.

Whereas, the Prince who has ſought his own glory only in the happineſs of his ſubjects; who hath preferred peace and tranquility, which alone can render them happy, to victories, which would have been ſuch only to himſelf, and have tended only to flatter his vanity; the Prince who hath garded himſelf only as his people's man; who hath believed his moſt precious treaſures to be the hearts of his ſubjects; the Prince who, by the wiſdom of his laws, and by his example hath baniſhed diſorders from his ſtate; who hath corrected the abuſes, and preſerved the decorum of public manners; who hath maintained every one in his place; hath repreſſed luxury and licentiouſneſs,—ever more fatal to empires than wars and the moſt deplorable calamities;—who hath rendered to the worſhip and religion of his forefathers that authority, ſplendor, majeſty, and uniformity, which perpetuate the reſpect due to it

amongſt the people; who hath ſupported the ſacred depoſit of the faith, againſt all the attacks of froward and reſtleſs ſpirits; who hath conſidered his ſubjects as his children, his kingdom as his family, and who hath uſed his power only for the felicity of thoſe, who had entruſted him with it; —A Prince of this character, will always be Great, becauſe he is ſo in the hearts of the people. Fathers will relate to their children the happineſs they enjoyed, in living under ſo good a maſter; theſe will repeat it to their offſpring; and in every family, this remembrance preſerved from age to age, will become as it were a domeſtic monument erected in the boſom of their paternal walls, to perpetuate thro' every period the memorial of ſo good a King!

No, SIR; it is not Statues and Inſcriptions that immortalize princes: they ſooner or later become the ſport of time and the viciſſitude of human things. In vain might Rome and Greece of old multiply without end the images of their Kings and Cæſars, and exhauſt all the ſkill of art to render them more precious to ſucceeding ages: Of all theſe ſuperb monuments ſcarce a ſingle one has reached our time. That which is only written in Marble or on Braſs, is ſpeedily effaced; that which is written in Hearts, remains for ever.

III. And hence, the laſt character of the greatneſs of Jeſus Chriſt is the "Duration and Perpetuity" of his reign:—"And of his kingdom there ſhall be no end." It was, yeſterday; it is, to day; and

and it ſhall be, throughout all ages: his beneficence will perpetuate his royalty, and his power; the men of all times will acknowledge him; will adore him as their head, their deliverer, their immortal high-prieſt, who is continually offering himſelf for Us to his father; nay, he ſhall be the prince of eternity; he ſhall reign over all the elect in heaven; and the church triumphant ſhall be no leſs his kingdom and inheritance, than the church militant on earth. This then is a greatneſs of "Perpetuity and Duration."

Indeed, the glory which muſt end with us, is always falſe. It was given to our titles, rather than to our virtues: it was a falſe ſplendor, which encircled our poſts and places, but which never iſſued from ourſelves: we were continually ſurrounded with admirers, and void within of the qualities which excited admiration: this glory was the fruit of error and adulation, and it is no wonder to ſee it end with them. Such is the glory of moſt princes and great men: we honour their ſtill-ſmoking aſhes with a remnant of eulogy; nay, and we tack this vain decoration to that of their funeral pomp: But, all is eclipſed and vaniſhes the following day; men are aſhamed of the praiſes they have given them: it is a ſuperannuated inſipid language, which no one would venture to ſpeak any longer. One almoſt ſees the public monuments bluſh, where the panegyrics of theſe men are inſcribed, and where they ſeem to ſubſiſt only to recall publicly a remembrance that diſavows

them. Thus adulations never ſurvive their heroes; and mercenary eulogies, ſo far from immortalizing the glory of princes, immortalize only the baſeneſs, venality, and mean ſpiritedneſs of thoſe, who were capable of beſtowing them.

To know the true greatneſs of ſovereigns and great men, we muſt look for it in the ages that ſucceed them. Nay, the farther they remove from us, the more their glory grows and is confirmed, when it has ſprung from the love of the people. There are, who ſtill diſpute with one of your moſt valiant predeceſſors, the magnificent eulogiums which his own times ſo emulouſly poured upon him; and, ſpite of the glory of Marignan, it is doubted whether valour ſhould intitle him to a place amongſt the great kings who have occupied your throne:—And yet, with fewer of thoſe ſhining talents which form heroes, and more of thoſe pacific virtues which form good kings, His predeceſſor will always be great in our hiſtories, becauſe he will ever be dear to the nation, of which he was the father. Men reckon as nothing the eulogies beſtowed on ſovereigns during their reign, unleſs they are repeated in ſucceeding reigns: it is there that poſterity, ever equitable, either degrades them from a glory for which they were indebted only to their power and rank; or elſe, preſerves to them a rank, which they owed much more to their virtue, than to their power. It is abſolutely neceſſary, SIR, that the life of a great man ſhould be held forth, as a rule for his ſucceſſors, and that his

his reign ſhould become the model of all future reigns; for hence it is, that he will be (if I might ſo ſpeak,) eternal, as the reign of Jeſus Chriſt; "—And of his kingdom there ſhall be no end."

The reign of David was always the model of good kings of Judah, and its "Duration" equalled that of the throne of Jeruſalem. It was not his victories alone which rendered him a pattern to his ſucceſſors; Saul had gained theſe, as well as he, over Philiſtines and Amalekites. It was his piety towards God;—his love for his people;—his zeal for the law, and for the religion of his fathers;—his ſubmiſſion to God, under diſgraces;—his moderation in victory and proſperity;—his reſpect for the prophets, who came on the behalf of God to inform him of his duties, and open his eyes reſpecting his weakneſſes;—the public tears of repentance and piety, wherewith he bathed his throne, to expiate the offence of his fall;—the immenſe riches he accumulated for the raiſing a temple to the God of his fathers;—his confidence in the high prieſt, and miniſters of divine worſhip;—the care which he took to inſpire his ſon Solomon with the maxims of virtue and of wiſdom;—and, in ſhort, The good order, and juſtice of the laws which he eſtabliſhed in all Iſrael.

This, SIR, is the greatneſs, which YOU ſhould propoſe to yourſelf. Reign in ſuch a manner, as that your kingdom may be eternal; as that it may not only aſſure to you the immortal royalty of the ſons of God, but alſo that in all ſuc-

ceeding ages, you may be held up to the princes your ſucceſſors, as the pattern for all good Kings.

It is not merely by gaining victories, that you will become a great King: Your love for your people; your fidelity towards God; your zeal for the religion of your fathers; your attention to the rendering your ſubjects happy,—theſe are the things which will make Your reign the moſt glorious circumſtance in our hiſtories, and the pattern of every ſucceeding reign.

O, SIR, love your people; and may theſe ſame words ſo often brought to your ears, ever find a favourable acceſs to your heart. Be tender, humane, affable, touched with their miſeries, compaſſionate to their neceſſities, and you will be a great King, and the "Duration" of your reign will be equal to that of the monarchy. God hath eſtabliſhed You over a nation, which loves its princes, and which, on that account alone, merits to be loved by them. In a kingdom where the people are born, as it were, good ſubjects, the ſovereigns muſt be born good maſters. You ſee already all hearts fly to you: love, SIR, can only be repaid by love; nor would you be worthy the tenderneſs of your ſubjects, were you to refuſe them your own.

There is no other glory than this for Kings: their greatneſs is entirely centred in the love of their people: it is they who perpetuate from age to age the memorial of good princes; and, indeed, what a glory, for a King to reign even after his death,

death, over the hearts of his ſubjects! To be ſure, that in all ages to come, the people will either regret the not having lived under his reign, or felicitate themſelves with having a King who reſembles him!—What glory, SIR, to make it be ſaid of himſelf, throughout all time, as the Queen of Sheba ſaid of Solomon. "Happy they, who ſaw him, and lived under the lenity of his laws and empire! Happy the age which ſhall exhibit to the univerſe ſo good a ruler! Happy the cities and villages, which ſaw the abundance, the peace, the joy, the juſtice, the innocence of the moſt auſpicious ages, all revive under his reign! Happy the nation, whom heaven ſhall hereafter bleſs with a prince like Him!"

Great God! it is Thou alone, who giveſt good kings unto the people; and it is the greateſt gift which thou canſt beſtow upon the earth. Thou holdeſt ſtill in thine hands this auguſt young Prince, whom thou deſtineſt to the monarchy. His age, his innocence too, leave him ſtill the object of that mercy, which thou haſt begun to ſhew towards him. He is not yet removed from under the hand which forms and finiſhes him: There is yet time, great God!—Form him therefore for the felicity of the people, for whom thou haſt reſerved him; and may that prayer, ſo often renewed in this place, never out-weary thy goodneſs, ſince therein is ſo ſtrongly intereſted the ſecurity and happineſs of a nation, which thou haſt always hitherto protected!

* 2 Chron. ix. 7, 8.

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It is under good kings that thy worſhip is confirmed; that the faith triumphs over errors; that horrid infidelity is baniſhed, or obliged to lie concealed; that new and falſe doctrines are proſcribed; that rebellious ſpirits find protection and ſecurity only in obedience and union; that thy miniſters, peacefully exerciſing their functions, and inceſſantly watching for the preſervation of their charge, ſee the authority of the empire join hands with that of the prieſthood; and that all hearts, already united at the foot of the throne, carry the ſame union, and the ſame concord to the foot of thy altars. Accumulate then upon him day by day, O my God, thoſe happy outlines which promiſe good kings to their people: may the work of thy mercies grow and develop itſelf in him gradually with his years. We do not aſk of thee, that he ſhould become, "The Conqueror of Europe;" we intreat of thee that he may be "The Father of his People!" AMEN!

SER-

SERMON VII.

On the Deceitfulness of Human Glory.

For Paſſion-Sunday.

John VIII. 54.

If I honour myself, my honour is nothing.

IF the glory of the world, without the fear of God, had any thing real in it, what man ever yet appeared upon earth, who had more cauſe to honour himſelf than Jeſus Chriſt?

Beſides the glory of deſcending from a royal race, and of reckoning David and Solomon among his anceſtors, with what ſplendor did he make his appearance in the world! Follow him thro' the whole courſe of his life. All nature obeys him; the waters grow firm under his feet; the dead hear his voice: the devils, ſtruck with his power, ſeek to hide themſelves at a diſtance from him. The heavens open over his head, and announce

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to mankind his glory and magnificence: clay, under his hands, restores sight to the blind: all places wherever he goes, are marked out with his miracles; he reads the hearts of men; he sees equally the future and the present; he draws after him cities and people: none before him had ever spoken as he spake; and, charmed with his celestial eloquence, the daughters of Judah pronounced happy the womb which bare him.

What man ever exhibited himself upon earth surrounded with such glory? and yet he informs us, That if he attributes it to himself, and if his glory is only a human glory, his glory is nothing. "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing."

Worldly Probity, great Talents, striking Successes therefore, are no longer any thing, the moment they are merely the virtues of man; nor is there any true glory, without the fear of God. This truth shall employ the ensuing discourse.

I. Mankind, continually vain, have long since made glory their idol: they lose it, for the most part, in seeking after it; and fancy they have found it, when their vanity receives those praises, which are due only to virtue. Spight of the meanness and irregularity of his manners, and inclinations, there is not a prince or great man to whom vain adulations do not promise glory and immortality; and who does not reckon upon the suffrages of that posterity, whither his very name perhaps, will never reach, or where at least he will be known only for his vices. Indeed, the same

ſame world which erected theſe idols of clay, generally overthrows them the next day; and at its pleaſure avenges itſelf in ſucceeding ages by the freedom of its cenſures, for the conſtraint and injuſtice of its former encomiums.

Nay, it does not even wait ſo long. Thoſe public applauſes which are conferred on moſt great men while they live, are almoſt always immediately contradicted by private judgements and diſcourſe. Their praiſes ſerve only to awaken the idea of their defects; and no ſooner are they eſcaped from the mouth of the publiſher, than they go, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, to die in his heart,—which diſavows the whole.

But, if human glory is generally degraded even before the tribunal of the World, can it have any better ſucceſs in the eyes of GOD;—before whom there are none truly great, but thoſe who fear him? "He that feareth the Lord is great at all times." *

To ſet this truth in its full point of view; obſerve, I beſeech you, my brethren, that men have in all times placed glory in honour and probity,—in eminence of ſtation, diſtinguiſhed abilities, and ſtriking proſperities. Now, without the fear of God, all human Probity, is either falſe, or, at leaſt, not ſure;—the greateſt Abilities become dangerous, either to him who glories in them, or to thoſe on whom they are exerciſed;—while the moſt ſtriking Proſperities either take their

* Judith xvi. 16.

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rise in guilt, or are often themselves nothing more than splendid crimes :—"If I honour myself, my honour is nothing."

First, I observe, that "Human Probity, without the fear of God, is almost always false, or at least, it is never sure." I know that the world boasts itself of a phantom of honour and probity, independant of religion. It fancies that a man may be faithful to men, without being faithful to God; may be adorned with all the virtues requisite in society, without having those which the gospel requires; and, in a word, may be a good man, without being a christian.

Now, not to dispute with it a glory as vain and frivolous as itself; we might leave the world this weak consolation, and since it renounces the virtues of saints, at least allow it those of men. It is attacking it in the tenderest part, in its last entrenchment, to wish to take from it that only remaining name of good, which consoles it for the loss of every other; and to dispossess it of an honour and probity which it fancies belongs to itself alone, and hence so often disputes even with the righteous.

Let us not then disturb it in a possession so peaceful, and at the same time so just: let us grant, that amidst the depravity and decay of public manners, the world hath still saved from the ruins some remains of honour and rectitude; that, spite of the vices and passions which rule the species, there still appear under its standards men faithful

faithful to friendſhip, zealous for their country, ſtrict lovers of truth, religious obſervers of their word, avengers of injuſtice, and protectors of weakneſs; in a word, the partiſans of pleaſure, and yet, the followers of virtue.

Theſe are the "righteous of the world," thoſe heroes of honour and probity, of which it ſo highly boaſts; which it even daily oppoſes, with a ſort of inſult and oſtentation, to the really "righteous of the goſpel." Degrading them, to elevate its own idol, it boaſts that honour and real probity dwell with it only: leaves us the obſcurity, the littleneſs, the croſſes, and the whole fallacy of virtue, and arrogates to itſelf the heroiſm and glory of it. But how eaſy were it to vindicate the honour of God, againſt the vain and pompous worſhip which the world pays to this its idol! Only blow upon this edifice of pride and vanity, and you would hardly diſcern the leaſt traces of it remaining.

Thoſe virtuous men, whom the world holds in ſuch high eſtimation, have often, for the moſt part, nothing more than public error on their ſide. "Faithful friends," I grant you; but it is mere taſte, vanity, or intereſt, which binds them; and in their friends they love only themſelves: "Good citizens," certainly;—but, the glory and the honours, which reſult to us from ſerving our country, are the only tie, and the only duty which attaches them: "Lovers of virtue," I allow; but it is not her they ſeek; it is the reputation and the

confidence

confidence which ſhe acquires to them amongſt men. "Obſervers of their word;" but from a pride, which would think it meanneſs and inconſiſtency to contradict themſelves; not from ſuch a virtue, as is produced by a religious regard to promiſes. "Avengers of injuſtice;"—but, by puniſhing it in others, they only mean to proclaim that they are incapable of it themſelves. "Protectors of the weak;"—but ſtill wiſhing to be highly extolled for their generoſity; while the eulogiums of the oppreſſed, are the particulars in their oppreſſion, which affect theſe men moſt. In a word, as the ſcripture obſerves, they are called "merciful;" they have all the virtues for the Public; but, not being faithful to God,—they have not a ſingle one for Themſelves. "Moſt men will proclaim every one his own goodneſs, but a faithful man who can find?" *

But tho' the Probity of the world ſhould not generally prove falſe, yet ſtill it muſt at leaſt be granted, that it is never ſure. Religion alone can ſecure virtue, becauſe its motives are every where the ſame. Shame and reproach might be its reward before men, while it would appear more beautiful and more glorious to the good man: his life might be in danger, yet would he not redeem it at the expence of his virtue: to him ſecreſy and impunity are no incentives to vice; becauſe God is the only witneſs he fears, and the reproach of his conſcience the only evil that can afflict him.

* Prov. xx. 6.

Glory,

Glory and public acclamations might indeed ſolicit him to ambitious and unjuſt attempts; but he would prefer the duty and the rule which condemn him, to the applauſes of an approving univerſe. In ſhort, change the ſituations of a truly juſt man how you pleaſe, the world may vary with reſpect to him; the public voice which lifts him up to day, may degrade and abaſe him to-morrow: his fortune may change:—but his virtue will not change with his fortune.

We are not ſpeaking here of ſuch examples, as have frequently contradicted the moſt amiable piety; not to ſay that the world is full of falſely-righteous people, and that all who bear the name of righteous in the eyes of men, have not the merit of it before God. It has been the injuſtice of the world in all times, to attribute to virtue the weakneſſes of man. The juſt may fall; but virtue only can defend him, or raiſe him when fallen. Virtue alone walks ſecurely, for the principles by which it is ſupported, are always the ſame; accidents give it no authority againſt duty, becauſe accidents never effect a change in rules: Light and the public notice, are to it the ſame as ſolitude and darkneſs; In a word, it makes no account of men, becauſe God alone, who ſees it, is to be its judge.

Find, if you can, the ſame ſecurity in human virtues: bred up for the moſt part in pride, and the love of glory, they find in them next moment their grave. Created by the public notice, they

evaporate on the morrow, like vaporiſh tranſient fires, into ſecreſy and darkneſs; ſupported on circumſtances, accidents, and the judgements of men; they fall inſtantly with their feeble ſupporters: melancholy fruits as they are of ſelf-love, they are continually ſubject to her inconſtant empire. In ſhort, being the frail work of man, like him, they are proof againſt nothing.

Offer now this virtuous one of the world, a ſafe opportunity of diſcrediting an enemy, or of ſupplanting a rival; if he can but preſerve the reputation and glory of moderation, he will be little affected with having the merit of it: if his vengeance does not affect his honour, it will be deemed no blot to his virtue. Place him in a ſituation, where he may reconcile his paſſions with the public eſteem; and he will not concern himſelf about reconciling them with his duty. In ſhort, let him but paſs freely for a good man, and it is the ſame thing to him as the being ſo.

All Iſrael at firſt ſeemed to applaud Abſalom's rebellion. Achitophel, that wiſe and virtuous man in the public eſteem! and whoſe counſels were regarded as the counſels of God! prefers however that part of the crime, in which he finds the public guilt and his hopes of riſing unite, to that of juſtice, which offers him nothing but his duty.

No, my brethren, there is nothing ſure in human virtues, if the virtue of God doth not ſupport and fix them. Be beneficent, juſt, generous, ſincere; and you may be uſeful to to the public, but

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you become uſeleſs to yourſelf: You do works laudable in the ſight of men; but will you never exerciſe a real virtue? All is falſe and hollow in a heart, unfilled by God; for, as the wiſe king himſelf teſtifies, "To know thy righteouſneſs, and thy virtue, O my God, is the only ſtock bearing the fruits of immortality, the only ſource of true glory. Surely vain are all men by nature, who are ignorant of God *." It is in vain therefore to place true glory in worldly honors, and worldly integrity. There is no greatneſs, but the greatneſs of the heart; and the heart which is devoid of God, can boaſt of nothing, but the falſehood and baſeneſs of man.

II. But, poſſibly, the civil virtues alone are too obſcure, and the diſtinction and ſuperiority of "Great Talents" will give us a better right to glory.

Alas! SIR, what are "Great Talents," but great Vices, if, having received them from God, we employ them only for ourſelves? What do they become in our hands?—often the inſtrument of public miſeries, always the ſource of our condemnation and ruin.

What is a ſovereign, born with a fiery valour, which even from infancy flaſhes forth its lightnings on all occaſions, if the fear of God does not conduct and temper it? What, but a new and

* Wiſd. xiii. 1.

malignant planet, that portends nothing but calamities to the inferior world? The more he increaſes in this fatal ſcience, the more will the public miſeries increaſe with him. His boldeſt enterprizes will offer but a feeble barrier againſt the impetuoſity of his career: he will think to efface the temerity or injuſtice of his victories, by the luſtre of them; and the hopes of ſucceſs will be his only ſanction to juſtify the equity of his arms. Whatever ſhall appear to him glorious, will become lawful; he will look upon the moments of a wiſe and majeſtic repoſe, as a ſhameful indolence;—as moments, that rob him of his glory. His neighbours will become his enemies, the moment they may become his conqueſt: his very people, with their tears and their blood will furniſh out the melancholy matter of his triumphs: he will exhauſt and overturn his own territories, to conquer new: he will arm all people and nations againſt him: he will diſturb the peace of the univerſe: he will make himſelf famous by making millions wretched. What a ſcourge to the human race! Surely, if there is a people upon earth capable of beſtowing upon him their eulogiums, nothing remains, but to wiſh them ſuch a maſter!

Run over all the "Great Talents" that render men illuſtrious: if they are given to the impious, it is always for the miſery of their nation, and the age they live in. Vaſt knowledge, poiſoned by pride, has bred up theſe celebrated chiefs and teachers of falſhood, who in all ages have lifted the

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ſtandard of ſchiſm and error, and even in the very heart of chriſtianity formed ſects to mutilate and deſtroy it.

Look at theſe boaſted freethinkers, who by their lucky talents, have advanced their age almoſt to the taſte and politeneſs of the ancients: From the moment their hearts have been corrupted, you find them leaving to the world none but laſcivious and pernicious performances; in which, poiſon worked up by ſkilful hands, daily infects the public morals; and from which ſucceeding ages will be continually imbibing the licentiouſneſs and corruption of our own times.

Turn yourſelf now to another ſide; in what a light have thoſe ſuperior but ambitious, reſtleſs geniuſes appeared, born as it were to ſet in motion the ſprings of ſtates and empires, and to ſhake the whole world?—Both kings and people have become the ſport of their ambition and intrigues; civil diſſentions and domeſtic miſeries have been the mournful theatres of their great and ſhining talents.

One ſingle obſcure man, with theſe eminent natural parts, deſtitute of conſcience and probity, has been able to exalt himſelf in times paſt upon the ruins of his country; to change the whole face of a neighbouring and warlike nation, equally jealous of its laws and liberty; to uſurp to himſelf that homage, which his fellow citizens are ready to diſpute even with their kings; nay, to overturn the throne itſelf, and give the univerſe

the ſight of a ſovereign, whoſe crown could not ſhield his ſacred head from the unheard-of decree, which condemned it to deſtruction.

Theſe are your Great Minds, when reſtleſs and turbulent; capable of enduring all things, but repoſe; inceſſantly whirling about the very pivot which fixes and faſtens them; and who, like Sampſon, without being animated by a like ſpirit, chooſe rather to ſhake the edifice, and be cruſhed under its ruins, than to reſtrain their turbulency, and keep their talents and power unemployed. Miſerable for the age which produces theſe rare and wonderful men! and yet, every nation has received its domeſtic leſſons and examples from men like theſe!

But, in ſhort, if it is not a misfortune for the age they live in, it is at leaſt a misfortune for themſelves; ſince, like a veſſel without pilot, driven by favorable winds in full ſail; the more rapid our courſe, the more unavoidable the wreck: Nothing is ſo dangerous to one's ſelf, as Great Talents, where the uſe of them is not regulated by true chriſtian faith. The vain applauſe attracted by theſe ſhining qualities, corrupts the heart; and the more of theſe great qualities we are born with, the deeper and more deſperate the corruption. God abandons the proud man to himſelf; and hence, it is that perſons of this ſtamp ſo often expiate the unjuſt applauſes of the public by the ſhame of a ſplendid fall: their vices diſgrace their talents; and theſe vaſt geniuſes, born to ſupport

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the ſtate, prove at laſt but feeble reeds, which cannot ſupport themſelves: The moſt brilliant ſtones of the ſanctuary have often been known to render themſelves vile, and roll contemptibly in the duſt; and the greateſt talents are frequently given up to the greateſt weakneſſes. "The Princes," as Job obſerves, "are led away ſpoiled, and the mighty are overthrown!" *

III. Nor again, do "Aſtoniſhing Succeſſes," and the great events which follow them, any more merit praiſe in the enemies of God, or give them any better right to glory, than their "Talents" afford.

I know the world annexes glory to theſe things; and that it is not virtues, but Succeſſes, which make men great in the general eſtimate. Provinces conquered, battles gained, difficult negociations diſpatched, and a tottering throne eſtabliſhed; theſe are the things proclaimed by titles and inſcriptions; and to immortalize the memory of which, the world conſecrates its eulogiums and public monuments.

Nor do I mean to have theſe marks of public acknowledgements abaſed; whatever is uſeful to men, is worthy, in one ſenſe, of the gratitude of men. As emulation gives to empires illuſtrious ſubjects, ſo it is neceſſary that rewards ſhould excite emulation, and that Succeſſes ſhould always ſee rewards marching in their train.

* Job xii. 19.

Political government does not fathom hearts, it only weighs actions; nay, there are certain errors of this ſort neceſſary for the public order: whatever embelliſhes it, ſhould be glorious; and thoſe manners or motives which diſhonour only the perſon, ought not to tarniſh thoſe Succeſſes which have done honour to the country.

But while the world is thus permitted to exalt the glory of its heroes, there is nothing to prohibit truth from ſpeaking like the world: — Alas! the world hath very little glory, which it doth not itſelf degrade. Thoſe whom diſtance of times and places removes from its regard, are alone ſecure from its ſhafts. They who live under its eye, can hardly eſcape its cenſure; and it ceaſes to admire them the moment it has leiſure to know them.—Yet, in this reſpect let us not accuſe it of malice and injuſtice; we muſt believe it, ſince it ſpeaks againſt itſelf.

And indeed, pierce into the motives of the moſt ſplendid actions, and greateſt events; every thing on the outſide is brilliant; you ſee the Hero: Go cloſer ſtill; look for the Man himſelf; there, as the wiſe King obſerves, you will find nothing more than duſt and aſhes. "His heart is aſhes, his hope is more vile than earth, and his life of leſs value than clay.*

Ambition, jealouſy, temerity, hardineſs, and often fear and deſpair, have preſented the world

* Wiſd. xv. 10.

with

with the grandeſt Spectacles, and moſt brilliant events. David, poſſibly, owed the victories and fidelity of Joab, only to his jealouſy againſt Abner. They are often the vileſt ſprings which move us on to glory: and for the moſt part the ſame ways which led us to it, themſelves degrade us.

Only liſten to thoſe who have heretofore approached men of this ſort, rendered famous by the glory of Succeſſes. They have often found them great only in name; the Man diſavowed the Hero: their reputation bluſhed at the baſeneſs of their manners and diſpoſitions: familiarity betrayed the glory of their ſucceſſes: and it became neceſſary to recall to mind the epocha of their great actions, to be perſuaded that it was They who performed them. Thus do theſe magnificent decorations which dazzle us, and embelliſh our hiſtories, frequently conceal the vileſt and loweſt Perſonages.

No, SIR; there is nothing great in men, but what comes from God: Rectitude of heart, truth, innocence, regularity of manners, and an empire over the paſſions,—theſe are the true greatneſs, the only real glory, which none can diſpute with us: whatever men find in themſelves only, is polluted, as it were, with the clay of their compoſition. The wiſe man alone, ſaid a great king, is in poſſeſſion of true glory; that of the ſinner is nothing but reproach and ignominy. "The wiſe ſhall

ſhall inherit glory, but ſhame ſhall be the promotion of fools." *

Religion, piety towards God, fidelity in all the duties he enjoins us, with regard to others and ourſelves; a conſcience pure, and firm againſt every attack; a heart walking uprightly in juſtice and truth; ſuperior to every obſtacle, inſenſible to every charm which might tend to corrupt it; raiſed above every tranſitory object, and ſubject to God alone;—this is true glory, and the baſis of all that conſtitutes Great Men. If you ſtrike away this foundation, the whole edifice ſinks; all the virtues fall; and nothing then remains, becauſe nothing remains but ourſelves.

Your reign, SIR, might be full of wonders; You might carry the glory of your name to the end of the earth; Your days might be marked only by triumphs; You might add new crowns to thoſe of the kings your anceſtors; the whole univerſe might reſound your praiſes:—But, if GOD was not with you; if pride rather than juſtice and piety were the ſoul of your enterprizes, You would not be a great king; your proſperities would be crimes; your triumphs, public miſeries: You would be the terror and the dread of your neighbours; but you would not be "the Father of your People:" your paſſions would be your only Virtues; and, ſpite of the eulogiums which flattery, the never-dying companion of kings, might

* Prov. iii. 35.

confer

confer upon you,—in the ſight of God, nay, and perhaps even of poſterity, they would appear nothing but real Vices.

It is not this human glory, therefore, Great God! which we intreat of thee for this auguſt young Prince: it appears already painted on the majeſty of his countenance; it even flows thro' his veins with the blood of the kings his anceſtors; and thou madeſt him to riſe up great in the eyes of men, from the inſtant thou madeſt him to ſpring from the blood of heroes. This is the glory which cometh from thee. Crown then theſe gifts of Nature wherewith thou haſt ennobled him, by the immortal ſplendor of Piety: to all thoſe amiable qualities which already render him the delight of his People, add all thoſe which may render him pleaſing in Thy ſight. Leave to his birth, and to the valour of the nation, the care of that glory which cometh from the world; we aſk only of thee, Great God, the care of his preſervation and ſalvation. The hiſtory of his anceſtors is a title which aſſures us of the ſplendor and proſperities of his reign; Thou alone can'ſt aſſure us of the innocence and holineſs of his life. The glory of the World, is as it were the inheritance he hath received from his forefathers according to the Fleſh: but do Thou, O God, who art his father according to the Faith; give him Thy Wiſdom, which is the glory and the inheritance of thy children.

May his heart be always in thy hands, and his

his heart will be greater than his ſucceſſes, and his triumphs. May he fear Thee, and his enemies will fear Him; his people will love him; he will become a ſpectacle to the univerſe worthy the admiration of all ages; and as we ſhall have nothing more to fear for his glory, neither ſhall we have any thing more to wiſh for our own happineſs. AMEN!

SER-

SERMON VIII.

On the DANGERS attending the PIETY of the GREAT.

For Palm - Sunday.

Matt. XXI. 5.

BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH UNTO THEE, MEEK.

IN every other circumſtance Jeſus Chriſt ſeems to exerciſe the glorious functions of his miniſtry with a ſort of caution. He ſcreens himſelf from the eager ſollicitations of a people who would raiſe him to the throne. He chooſes the lonely ſummit of a diſtant mountain, to manifeſt his glory to his three diſciples; nay, the devils themſelves who would publiſh it, are forced by his commands to conceal it, and be ſilent. To day he appears as a King; and as a King who comes to take poſſeſſion of his empire: he ſubmits to receive public homage; he orders as a maſ-

ter

ter the innocent apparatus of his triumph :—" Say ye, that the Lord hath need of them." *

He enters the temple, and by inflicting remarkable chaſtiſements, reſtores to that holy place the majeſty, of which it had been diveſted by the indecency of a ſcandalous traffic. It is no longer the man withdrawing himſelf from the public notice; it is the Son of David giving laws, exerciſing ſovereign authority, and determined to have all Jeruſalem for a witneſs of his zeal and power.

Here, then, is a pattern of piety for the Great. Private virtues are not ſufficient for Them; for Them Public virtues are neceſſary: It would be a ſmall matter to have hitherto exhorted them to Piety; the main point is to ſhew them, what is "the piety ſuited to their condition." Tho' the goſpel propoſes the ſame doctrine to all; it does not propoſe to all the ſame rules. The Duties vary with the Condition; the more This is exalted, the more They multiply; the more our poſts increaſe our obligations to the public, the more public virtues do they require; and we become vicious, if we are good only for ourſelves.

Now to the piety of the Great there are three Obſtacles to be feared, which may turn all their virtues into vices;

FIRST, An indolent piety,—ſhut up within itſelf, which removes them from public cares and duties.

* Matt. xii. 4.

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SECONDLY, A weak piety,—timid, ſcrupulous, and indeterminate in every enterprize, and running thro' their whole deportment.

LASTLY, A credulous, narrow piety,—ready to receive the impreſſions of prejudice; and incapable of retreating, when once it hath ſo received them.

Or, in other words, "The Piety of the Great requires public Vigilance, ſtimulating to action; Courage and Elevation exciting to determination and enterprize; in ſhort, either ſuch intelligence as may prevent the being ſurprized, or a noble docility which glories in a retreat, ſo ſoon as it finds it has been ſurprized."

I. True piety is the order of ſociety. It leaves every one in his place; it turns that ſtate wherein God hath placed us, into the only way of our ſalvation; it places no chimerical perfection in works which God doth not demand from us: It quits not the order of its duties, to perform thoſe which are foreign; but looks upon thoſe virtues which do not belong to our ſtation, as ſo many real vices.

Whatever diſturbs the public harmony, is an exceſs of the man, and not a zeal and perfection of virtue. Religion diſavows the moſt holy works which are ſubſtituted inſtead of duties; and a man is no longer any thing in the ſight of God, when he is not what he ought to be.

There is therefore a piety, proper as it were to every condition. The public man, is not virtuous, if he has only the virtues of the private man: the Prince errs and is loſt by the ſame way

that

that might have ſaved the Subject, and the Sovereign may become in it very criminal, while the Man is irreproachable.

Hence the firſt obſtacle to the piety of the great is that which withdraws them from the public concerns, and ſhuts them up in themſelves. As Indolence and the love of eaſe is the common vice of the great, it becomes ſtill more dangerous and more incorrigible, when they cover it with a pretence of virtue. "Glory" may ſometimes awaken the great from the drowſineſs of ſloth: but he whoſe principle is a "miſtaken piety," is guarded againſt Glory itſelf, and has no reſource left. A relick of honour, and reſpect for the public and the place he fills, often breaks the charm of a ſhameful indolence, and reſtores to the publick the ſovereign who owes himſelf to them. But when this unworthy repoſe is occupied by pious exerciſes, it becomes honourable in his own ſight:—A man may bluſh at a vice; but he will glory in what he fancies to be a virtue.

But, SIR, a great man, a Prince, is not born for himſelf alone; he owes himſelf to his ſubjects: The people by exalting him, have entruſted him with the power and authority, and have reſerved to themſelves in exchange, his cares, his time, his vigilance. They meant not to ſet up an Idol to be adored: but an Overſeer, placed at their head, to protect and defend them: not one of thoſe vain deities who have eyes, and ſee not; a tongue, and ſpeak not; hands, and act not.

But

But one of those Gods, "to go before them," as the scriptures observes, to conduct and defend them. It is the people who, by the command of God, have made them all they are; and it is for them to be what they are, only for the people. Yes, SIR, it was the nation's choice which first placed the sceptre in the hands of your ancestors; it was the nation which lifted them on the shield of war, and proclaimed them sovereigns. Then the kingdom became the inheritance of their successors; but they owed it originally to the consent of the subjects: Their birth alone then put them in possession of the throne; but it was the public voice which first annexed that right and prerogative to their birth. In a word, as the first source of their authority comes from us, Kings ought to make use of that authority only for us. Flatterers, SIR, will be continually telling you, "That you are master, and that you are accountable to no one for your actions." It is true, no one has a right to call you to account for them; but you owe it to yourself; and if I may so speak, you owe it to France, who expects it from you, and to all Europe, which is looking upon you. You are the master of your subjects; but you will have nothing but the title, if you have not the virtues: Every thing is allowed to you: but this licence, so far from the privilege, is the peril of authority. You may neglect the cares of the kingdom; but, like those sluggish, contemptible Kings in our histories, you will have nothing more than a vain

name of King, when once you omit to fulfil the auguſt functions of that character.

What a phantom then muſt be that piety, which ſhould make it a virtue in Great Men and Kings, to fear and to avoid the diſſipation of public concerns! to diſcharge only ſome few religious practices, like private men, who have none to anſwer for but themſelves! To ſhut themſelves up amidſt a few confidants in their pious deluſions, and almoſt to fly the ſight of the reſt of mankind! A Prince, SIR, appointed to govern men, ought to know men: The choice of ſubjects is the firſt ſource of public happineſs; and to chooſe them, they muſt be known. Nothing goes right in a ſtate, where the prince doth not judge for himſelf. Merit is neglected, becauſe it is either too modeſt to be importunate, or too noble to owe its exaltation to ſollicitations and meanneſſes;—intrigue ſupplants the greateſt talents;—ſupple, narrow-minded men riſe to the firſt appointments; and the beſt ſubjects are left uſeleſs. Frequently a David, capable alone of ſaving a ſtate, employs his valour in the indolence of the fields, only againſt wild animals; while timid chiefs, terrified at the very ſight of Goliath, are at the head of the Lord's armies.* Frequently a Mordecai, whoſe fidelity is written even in the public records; who by his vigilance, has heretofore diſcovered conſpiracies, fatal to the ſovereign and the empire; and alone capable by his probity and experience of giving

* See 1 Sam. xvii. 11, 15, 34, &c.

good

good counſels, and being called to the firſt appointments,—crouches at the palace gate; while a proud Haman ſtands at the head of every thing, and at once abuſes his own authority, and his maſter's confidence. *

Thus then we ſee, that the functions eſſential to the Great, are not prayer and retirement: theſe ought to prepare them for the public concerns, not to divert them from them. They ought to ſanctify themſelves, by contributing to the ſalvation and happineſs of their people: the graces of their condition are the graces of toil, care, and watchfulneſs; "Whoever promiſes them, ſays the goſpel, that they ſhall find Chriſt in the wilderneſs, or in the ſecret chambers of the palace, is a falſe prophet." † There they will be alone, and left to themſelves: God is not with us in thoſe ſtations which he does not require of us; and the calm in which we fancy ourſelves moſt ſecure, if the hand of the Lord does not lead us into and ſupport us in it, becomes itſelf a gulf, which ſees us periſh without reſource.—A lazy and retired piety, does not ſanctify the ſovereign; it abaſes and degrades him.

What!—While he, whoſe rank and birth eſtabliſh him the depoſitary of public authority, ſhuts himſelf up, amidſt a little circle of pious recluſe duties, ſhall the public concerns be abandoned? the public buſineſs be at a ſtand?—Shall ſubal-

* Eſther ii. 21, &c. iii. 2, &c.

† Matt. xxiv. 26.

terns abuſe their authority? Shall the laws give place to injuſtice and violence? Shall the people be "as ſheep having no ſhepherd," and the whole ſtate in confuſion and diſorder?—And ſhall GOD—the author of public order, ſhall He behold with eyes of complacency an indolent piety, which overthrows that order? Shall the people, expoſed to the mercy of the waves, have no right to tell this ſleepy, faithleſs pilot, with more reaſon than the diſciples at ſea ſaid to Jeſus Chriſt; "Lord, is it then a matter of indifference with you, that we periſh; and does our ruin or our ſalvation no longer intereſt your regard?—Maſter! careſt thou not that we periſh?" * In ſhort, ſhall Religion countenance thoſe abuſes, which even Reaſon itſelf condemns?

But, is not religion itſelf neceſſarily connected with the public order?—It falls, or grows feeble, with it. The public manners always ſuffer for the weakneſs of the laws; the confuſion of government is as fatal to the piety of the people, as to the happineſs of empires: the good order of ſociety is the firſt baſis of chriſtian virtues; the obſervance of the laws of ſtate, ought to prepare the way to that of the goſpel. The church can never conſider itſelf ſecure in an empire, where there is no fixed government. Hence, thoſe ſtates where the multitude governs, and thoſe where it ſhares the power with the ſovereign, being continually expoſed to revolutions, mutually, and as eaſily

* Mark iv. 38.

depart

depart from the laws, as from the worſhip of their forefathers. Inſurrections there, find equal Impunity with errors; and there it is that hereſy hath always met with her chief aſylum: ſhe fortifies herſelf amidſt the confuſion of the laws, and the weakneſs of authority; and always owes her birth or her advancement to the public diſturbances and diſſenſions: Nay, 'tis the ſame with us, as every where elſe; the feebleſt and moſt reſtleſs reigns, have always afforded it the greateſt increaſe and power; for when once the Civil Harmony is infringed, all Religion of courſe neceſſarily totters.

The holieſt Kings of Judah, SIR, acted not ſo: they intermixed the duties of piety with thoſe of royalty. The pious Jehoſhaphat, on leaving the temple, where he had daily been offering his vows and ſacrifices to the God of his Fathers, ſent, as the ſcripture informs us, into all the cities of Judah ſkilful men, and enlightened prieſts, to reeſtabliſh the authority of the laws, and the purity of divine worſhip, which the calamities of former reigns had greatly perverted. *

David himſelf, — notwithſtanding thoſe pious ſongs, which conſtituted his nobleſt and moſt delightful employment, and which will forever be the inſtruction of nations and of kings; — continually appeared at the head of his armies, and the public affairs: his eyes were open to every emergency of the ſtate; and, unable to ſupply them all himſelf, he went to the extremities of Judæa in ſearch of

* See 2 Chron. ch. xvii.

faithful men, whom he might place beside him, and join with him in the superintendance of those cares which encircle the throne. "Mine eyes (saith he) look upon such as are faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me."

The most pious Kings among your predecessors, were always the most devoted to their people. He, particularly, whom the church honours with a public form of worship, even descended into the particulars of his subjects' differences; and as he was their father, did not disdain likewise to be their judge. Jealous of the rights of his crown; he determined to transmit it to his successors with the same splendor, and the same prerogative, as he had received it from his forefathers. He thought that the memory of his life alone, was not enough for the sovereign; that to live as a Saint, he ought to live as a King; and that he could not be the man of God, if he were not also the man of his people.

But, in truth, the piety of the Great runs sometimes to the other extreme, and throws them into a multitude of useless cares, and minute circumstances: They fancy themselves obliged to see every thing with their own eyes, and touch every thing with their own hands; often appearing insensible to the greatest matters, while the most inconsiderable objects excite their zeal and attention: Possessed of all the sollicitudes of the private man,—and destitute of those of the public man: they

* Isaiah x. 6.

may

may have the piety of the Subject; they have not that of the Prince. It is by no means Their part to quit the helm, and discharge obscure functions, of no importance to the public safety; their hands are first destined to manage those main springs of state, which set in motion the whole machine; and every thing ought to be great alike in the Piety of the Great.

II. But if "Inaction" is the first obstacle to this piety; that "Uncertainty" and "Irresolution," which commonly draw after them a timid scrupulous conscience, appear to be no less the objects of our fear.

Not that I would here pretend to countenance that profane wisdom, which always makes the interests of the state to precede those of the gospel; nor that common error, which cannot fancy the exact rules of the gospel compatible with the maxims of government, and the interests of the state.

Is not GOD, who is the author of empires, the author also of those laws which govern them? Hath he set up any powers, that can be supported only by vice? And could Kings be His workmanship, if they were unable to govern, unless Fraud and Injustice were the inseparable companions of their reign? Are not justice and judgment, the support of thrones? Ought not the law of God to be written on the forehead of the sovereign, as the first law of the empire? For if, to maintain the tranquility of human societies, it

were neceſſary to violate that firſt law; ſurely, either the law of God, would be falſe, or human ſocieties could not be the work of God.

What an error, my brethren, to perſuade oneſelf that thoſe who are in place ought not to look ſo cloſely to the rigour of holy rules;—that empires and monarchies, are not conducted by maxims of religion;—that the law of God is the rule of the private man, but that ſtates have a rule ſuperior to the law of God itſelf; that every thing would fall into languor and "Inaction," if the maxims of chriſtianity were to conduct the public affairs, and that it is not poſſible to be at the ſame time the Stateſman, and the man of God!

What! my brethren, would Juſtice then, would Truth, would Integrity be fatal to the government of ſtates and empires? Would a religion which conſtitutes the whole happineſs and ſecurity of the people and of kings,—become itſelf their bane? Could an arm of fleſh ſuſtain kingdoms more ſecurely than the hand of God, which erected them? Could the people owe abundance and tranquility only to the fraud and diſingenuity of thoſe who govern them? And could the miniſters of kings purchaſe the ſalvation of their country only by the loſs of their own ſalvation? What an outrage to religion, and to all thoſe good kings, who have reigned happily only thro' its aid!

I own, SIR, when the ſovereign is ambitious, and meditates unjuſt enterprizes, artifice and chicanery

chicanery then become, as it were, inevitable to his miniſters, either to conceal his ill deſigns, or to colour his injuſtice. But, let the prince be juſt and fear God, and then juſtice and truth will be ſufficient to ſupport a throne which themſelves have ſet up. The ſkilfulneſs of his miniſters, will from thenceforward conſiſt only in their equity and rectitude; they will no longer give to fraud and diſſimulation the pompous names of "Art of reigning," and "Skill in affairs." In a word, Give me Davids, and Pharaohs, friends of the people of God; and they may then expect to have Nathans and Joſephs for their miniſters.

It is a diſhonour therefore to religion,—as St. Auguſtin obſerves,—to think that ſhe muſt not be conſulted in the government of republicks and empires. But it is doing her an equal outrage, to derive from a miſtaken piety motives of "Irreſolution" and "Uncertainty," which are every where prying out appearances of evil,—are perpetually oppoſing a phantom of religion to the juſteſt enterprizes, and the moſt important maxims. *

It is the property of corrupt human wiſdom to be timid and uncertain: Ever involved in falſe appearances, it had need be continually in fear, leſt ſome happier glance ſhould at length pierce thro' and unmaſk it. But "the wiſdom which cometh from above" renders us more ſettled and compoſed: We walk on more ſecurely, when we determine to walk only in the light. The virtuous

* St. Aug. de Civ. Dei.

man

man alone has a right to go with an elevated brow, and to defy the timid and uncertain prudence of the deceitful man. A holy ſtatelineſs ſits well upon virtue.

Hence, it is taking up a falſe idea of piety, to repreſent it as always timid, weak, irreſolute, ſcrupulous, narrow; and making a crime of its duties, and a virtue of its foibles: obliged to act, and yet not daring to attempt; always ſuſpended between the public intereſts and its pious terrors; and making uſe of religion only to diffuſe trouble and confuſion, where it ought to have diffuſed order and regularity. Theſe are the defects which men often mix with piety; but they are not thoſe of piety itſelf: It is the character of a weak narrow mind; but it is not a conſequence of the elevation and wiſdom of religion: In a word, it is the exceſs of virtue;—but, virtue always ends where exceſs begins.

No, SIR, true piety elevates the mind; ennobles the heart; eſtabliſhes the courage: A man is born for great things, when He has power to ſubdue himſelf; the good man is capable of every thing, when once he is able by faith to ſet himſelf above every thing: It is chance which makes heroes; it is a valour of every day which makes the juſt man. The paſſions may ſet us very high; but it is Virtue only that can lift us above ourſelves.

What reign was ever more glorious in Iſrael, than that of Solomon, ſo long as he remained faithful

faithful to the law of his forefathers? What government more wise and more absolute? Have all the refinements of politicks ever carried so far the art of reigning, and conducting nations? What glory and magnificence surrounded his throne! Did piety then degrade majesty?—What prince ever saw his subjects more submissive; his neighbours esteem themselves more happy in his alliance; and sovereigns, at the head of empires larger and more powerful than his own, pay such respect and deference to his person, as they by no means owed to his throne? Did not the wise men of other nations look upon themselves as ideots before him? Did not they come from the remotest countries to admire the order, and harmony, wherewith he governed all his subjects as a single man? Is it not from the divine precepts which he hath left us, that princes still daily learn to reign? And could that piety be the annoyance of government, which alone rendered his wisdom valuable?

Happy, had he never departed from his first paths! had not the error of his old age, tarnished the glory of his reign, and dashed the happiness of his subjects! They did not begin to feel excessive burdens, they did not cease to be happy, till He himself "ceased to be faithful to God;" and, corrupted by strange women, no longer set bounds to his profusions and the oppression of his people; thus preparing for his son that insurrection, which separated ten tribes from the kingdom of David, and gave them a new master.

Alas!

Alas! to excuſe their vices, how zealous men are to decry virtue! It is an inconvenience to the paſſions;—they would therefore gladly perſuade themſelves, that it is fatal to the conduct of ſtates and empires; and oppoſe to it the public intereſt, in order to hide from themſelves that ſelf-intereſt, which is its ſole opponent within us. The fear of the Lord is the alone ſource of true wiſdom; and that which planteth order in man, can alone plant it in ſtates.

III. But thirdly and laſtly, irreſolution and uncertainty often lead on to "Prejudice" and "Surprize;" which is the laſt obſtacle to the piety of the Great.

Yes, my brethren, piety has its errors, as well as vice. The more we love truth, the more eaſily may we be ſeduced by whatever ſhrouds itſelf in its appearances: ſimple and ſincere virtue judges of others by herſelf: It is our own obliquity, for the moſt part, which teacheth us to be ſuſpicious. They who have never made uſe of any other means then rectitude and ſimplicity, are leſs on their guard againſt fraud and avarice; and the righteous are more expoſed to "Surprize," as being ignorant themſelves of the art of ſurprizing.

But it is amongſt the Great eſpecially that piety ſhould fear "Prejudices" and "Surprize:" For beſides that their conſequences are more dangerous, as they are born, (according to the remark of Ahaſuerus) more upright and ſincere; ſo are they the more ſuſceptible of "Prejudices," as they

they are leſs fond of the trouble of examination, and the embarraſſment of diſtraction; and find it a more ſhort and eaſy way to judge of what is ſaid to them, than to ſearch into it, for their own conviction. *

And indeed, of how many ſorts of prejudices may not piety in the Great render them capable? As firſt,—"Prejudices of credulity." It is piety herſelf, often, which opens their ears to the malevolence of calumny; and the more they love virtue, the more eaſily are they made to ſuſpect diſſoluteneſs and vice in thoſe, whom ſome mean jealouſy is anxious to deſtroy.

But all zeal which ſeeks to do injury, ought to be ſuſpected by them. True piety, either does not eaſily believe evil, or, far from publiſhing it, would at leaſt hide and excuſe it. She does not ſeek to render her brother odious to his ſuperiors; ſhe ſeeks only to reconcile him with his God: private accuſations aim rather at overthrowing the fortunes of others, than at the regulation of their manners; and moſt commonly the accuſer diſcovers rather his own vices, than the vices of his brother.

But ſecondly, "The piety of the Great renders them obnoxious to the "Prejudices of confidence:" The hypocrite often takes up in their eſteem the place of the honeſt man: they give to the appearances of piety, that acceſs, thoſe places, and that confidence which were due only to piety

* See Eſther, xvi. 6, 7.

herſelf;

herſelf; and entruſt thoſe with the public concerns, whoſe narrow underſtandings were calculated only to diſcharge functions the moſt obſcure. Regular manners, take place with them of the greateſt talents, and moſt important ſervices; and they decry virtue, by thoſe very favours wherewith they honour it.

Laſtly, "Prejudices of zeal." The moſt pious princes have often found their piety in danger even from their zeal. The Conſtantines, the Theodoſiuſes, have heretofore ſeen their love for the church turned againſt the church itſelf, and countenancing error, out of zeal for the ſupport of truth. Princes, SIR, ought to touch religion, only to protect and defend it. Their zeal is then only of uſe to the church, when it is requeſted by its paſtors. The ſollicitations of the ſtewards of doctrine, are thoſe alone which ought to have credit with them, when doctrine itſelf is the point in queſtion: every other voice than the unanimous voice of the paſtors ought to be ſuſpected by them. Here they ſhould reſerve to themſelves only the honour of protection, and wave that of deciſion and judgment. The biſhops are their ſubjects; but they are their fathers according to the faith: their birth ſubjects them to the authority of the throne; but as concerning myſteries of faith, the authority of the throne glories in ſubmitting itſelf to that of the church. Princes are only its firſtborn, and our kings have always regarded the title of being her eldeſt ſons, as the faireſt title

of

of their crown: they have no other right than to enforce the execution of her decrees, and by first submitting to those decrees themselves, to give an example of submission to other believers. The moment they have aspired to go further, and to usurp that right with regard to doctrine, which is reserved to the priesthood, they have aggravated rather than remedied the evils of the church; their dispositions have given it new wounds, and have teemed with new excesses; all the conciliatory means invented to calm rebellious spirits, and bring them back to unity, have but authorized them in their separation and revolt; and the authority of sovereigns hath always perpetuated errors, when it has attempted solely to interfere for the bringing men nearer the truth. Kings may surround the ark, and guard it, like David; but it is not for them to lay their hands upon it. The throne is set up for the support and Asylum of holy doctrine; but it must never be the rule of that doctrine, nor the tribunal, to issue forth its decisions.

Alas! if human passions and interests did not encircle thrones, there is no doubt but the piety of sovereigns would be the surest resource of the church; but, frequently, people either make religion act contrary to their private interests, or avail themselves of the vain pretence of their own interests, to engage them against religion itself.

Prejudices therefore are almost unavoidable by the piety of the Great; but obstinacy in prejudice renders

renders the evil ſtill more incurable. It is not ſcandalous for them that they were liable to ſurprize; indeed, how ſhould they poſſibly defend themſelves againſt it? almoſt every object round them endeavours to deceive them; and is it extraordinary then that attention ſhould ſometimes relax, and they ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed on? Artifice is more ſkilful and more perſevering than Diſtruſt. It takes all ſhapes, and avails itſelf of every moment; and when almoſt every body who approach find their intereſt in our being deceived; our precautions themſelves often help them to lead us into the ſnare.

But, SIR, tho' it be not ſcandalous for princes to be ſurprized—the unavoidable evil of ſupreme authority—it is glorious for them to own, that they may have been ſo ſurprized. There is nothing more great in the ſovereign, than to wiſh to be undeceived, and to have the fortitude to convince himſelf of his own overſight. Ahaſuerus, did not think he derogated from the majeſty of his empire, where he declared, even by a public edict, that his frankneſs of temper had been impoſed upon by the artifices of Haman. It is a vicious pride to think that one can never do wrong: it is a weakneſs not to dare to draw back, when we perceive ourſelves to have been put upon a wrong courſe. That change of conduct which leads us back to truth, ſtrengthens authority rather than enfeebles it. This is not acting inconſiſtently; it is recovering from a miſtake: It is not

ſhewing

ſhewing the people the inconſtancy of government; it is diſplaying its equity and rectitude. The people often ſee and know ſufficiently that ſovereigns may be deceived; but they rarely find that they know how to be diſabuſed, and to acknowledge their error. There can be no fear that the ſubjects ſhould have leſs regard for that power, which can acknowledge its miſtakes, and become its own accuſer. Their reſpect grows feeble only towards that power, which either does not know its fault, or which juſtifies it if known; and nothing in their opinion diſgraces authority, but that weakneſs which ſuffers itſelf to be ſurprized, and that falſe glory which would fancy itſelf degraded, by owning itſelf capable of error and ſurprize.

Oh, Royal SIR, ſhut your ears againſt the evil counſels, and dangerous inſinuations of flattery: but, ſince they are apt to cover themſelves under the veil of public good, and will ſooner or later find an acceſs to the throne; ſhould inattention ever induce you to follow them, let the true intereſts of your glory alone, when once undeceived, lead you inſtantly to diſcard them. It is far more glorious to own a ſurprize, than not to have been ſurprized: Nothing is more becoming the ſovereign who is dependant on none, than to wiſh ever to be dependant upon truth. Men will be afraid to impoſe upon you, when they find that impoſture and adulation if once unmaſked, have nothing to expect from you but rejection and diſpleaſure. It is only the pride of kings that autho-

rizes and encourages flatteries and evil counſels; and if it be true that bad kings are commonly made ſuch by flatterers, it is ſtill more true, that flatterers are created and multiplied by bad kings.

By avoiding theſe obſtacles, the piety of the Great will become reſpectable; they will render it back the glory and dignity of which the deriſions of the world, or the weakneſſes of falſe virtue have almoſt deprived it: and by this means, we ſhall no longer hear that blaſphemy, ſo injurious to kings, perpetuated amongſt men, "That pious princes are the leaſt proper to govern; and that though piety may make great Saints, it will never make great Kings."

May ſuch licentious diſcourſes, oh royal SIR, never wound the innocency of your ears; but, ſhould adulation hereafter dare to carry them even to the feet of your throne, may lightenings and thunders iſſue from it to confound theſe enemies to religion, and your true glory! Hear all ſuch impious flatteries, as ſo many blaſphemies againſt the majeſty of kings; as outrages offered to your moſt glorious anceſtors,—to the Charlemagnes—the Louis—and particularly to your auguſt great grandfather. It was by a tender and ſincere piety that they became great kings; their zeal for religion, rendered them ſtill more illuſtrious than their conqueſts. The praiſes which the church will forever beſtow on them, will laſt as long as the church itſelf. Their great actions would either have been buried in the revolutions of the times,

or

or have found but a vulgar momentary acclaim, had not piety rendered them immortal.

Be, like them, the defender of God's Glory, and He will never permit Yours to be effaced from the memory of men. Demonſtrate, by propoſing to yourſelf theſe great patterns, that piety is no diſhonour to kings; that the paſſions alone debaſe the throne, and degrade the ſovereign; that no one is worthy of reigning, who does not reign over himſelf; and that to be in future ages as great in the eyes of men, as were your great anceſtors, you muſt, like them, have been faithful to God.

Great God! the more the throne is ſurrounded with ſnares, the greater need have kings that thou ſhou'dſt ſurround them with thy protection, and the ſuccours of thine abundant mercy. But, indeed, the more his tender age, the more his infancy, left to itſelf, and to all the perils of royalty, expoſes this auguſt child; the more he muſt become the object of thy tenderneſs and paternal care.

Do thou early arm the innocence of his heart againſt thoſe deriſions whereby piety is degraded; and againſt every obſtacle to piety itſelf. Give him thoſe virtues which ſanctify the man; and which at the ſame time form the great king: Make him to reſpect thoſe who ſerve Thee; and may he himſelf ſerve the God of his fathers with that majeſty, which alone can render kings reſpectable.

Caſt thine eyes upon him, almighty God, from the heavens above; behold at thy feet, this precious and illuſtrious infant, the happy reſource of our government; the child of Europe; the ſacred pledge of the peace of nations and people. O look upon him, mighty God, with the eyes and the tenderneſs of a whole nation!

Hear the firſt ejaculation of his innocent heart, which now addreſſeth thy majeſty, as heretofore a holy king addreſſed thee.—"O God of my fathers, look thou upon me; be touched with pity at the ſight of thoſe perils which my age and rank are preparing for me; and which are about to encircle me on all ſides, the moment I quit my infancy.—"O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me*!" Be thyſelf the defender of my throne, and of my youth; preſerve the empire to the child of ſo many kings; the child, who knows no title more glorious, than to be the firſt-born of thy children:—O "give thy ſtrength unto thy ſervant!"

"But, let not the preſervation of a terreſtrial crown, O God, be the only One of thy benefits: ſave thou the ſon of Adelaide, of Blanche, of Clotilda, and of all thoſe pious princeſſes, who ſtill bear me before thee in their boſoms,—as the child of their love, and of their deareſt hopes; "Save thou the ſon of thine handmaid!" and

* Pſalm lxxxvi. 16.

ſince

ſince innocence ever draws down upon it thy tendereſt and moſt propitious regards; preſerve it to me, almighty God, as long as thou preſerveſt to me my crown; that ſo, after having reigned by thee happily upon earth, I may reign with thee eternally in heaven." AMEN!

SERMON IX.

On the IMPEDIMENTS to TRUTH in the HEARTS of the GREAT.

For Good - Friday.

Pſalm II. 2.

THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SET THEMSELVES, AND THE RULERS TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER, AGAINST THE LORD, AND AGAINST HIS ANOINTED.

ALL the powers of the earth ſeem to be united this day to condemn Jeſus Chriſt to death; while the death of Chriſt, is only a ſtriking condemnation of the paſſions of the great ones, and the mighty of the earth.

An eternal High Prieſt offers up himſelf for his people, as the only victim capable of expiating their iniquities, and appeaſing the wrath of God. A Miniſter and Envoy from his father bears teſtimony by his blood, to the truth of his miſſion and

and of his miniſtry:—A King enters by his death into the poſſeſſion of the world's empire; and re-unites in his own perſon all the glorious titles boaſted by the pride of men.

And yet, this High-Prieſt, is delivered up by the jealouſy of chief-prieſts: this Miniſter, and Envoy from heaven oppoſes in vain his innocence, to the ambition and cowardice of a miniſter of Cæſar: this King, to whom all nations have been given as his inheritance, becomes a laughing-ſtock to the indifference and vain curioſity of an uſurping king of Judea. It was neceſſary, that whatever bears the name of Great upon earth, the jealouſy of chief prieſts, the cowardice of Pilate, and the indifference of Herod, ſhould illuſtrate by condemning him, the grandeur and power of Jeſus Chriſt. "The kings of the earth ſet themſelves, and the rulers take counſel together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Anointed.

Of all the inſtructions with which the ſpectacle of the croſs now affords us, there is none more ſuitable than this on the preſent occaſion: and ſince we cannot lay before your pious meditation all the circumſtances of it, let us content ourſelves with ſhewing you thoſe "Obſtacles which truth meets with in the hearts of the great ones of the earth;" that is to ſay, Jeſus Chriſt condemned to death by the paſſions of the Great; and the paſſions of the Great condemned by the death of Jeſus Chriſt.

I. Truth, ever odious to the Great, ſtill finds upon earth the ſame enemies, who formerly affixed it with Jeſus Chriſt to the croſs: Jealouſy perſecutes it; mean Self-Intereſt ſacrifices it; Indifference deſpiſes, and even turns it into ridicule.

But, of all the paſſions which mankind ſet againſt the truth, "Jealouſy," is the moſt dangerous, becauſe it is the moſt incurable. It is a vice which leads on to every thing,—becauſe people are always apt to diſguiſe it from themſelves: It is the eternal enemy of merit and virtue; whatever men admire, irritates and inflames it: it pardons nothing, but vice and obſcurity; and to merit its regards and indulgence, a man muſt be unworthy of all public regard.

Had the prodigies of Jeſus Chriſt ſhone leſs brightly in Judea, the chief prieſts, leſs dazzled by his glory, would not have diſputed his innocence; and their jealous zeal would not have found him worthy of death, had he not been found worthy of the public acclamations and applauſe. "What do we?—for this man doth many miracles." *

Such are the impreſſions of hatred and jealouſy, which the great fame of Jeſus Chriſt made upon the hearts of pontiffs and prieſts,—the depoſitaries of the law and religion! Alas, then, and muſt the ſanctuary itſelf become almoſt continually the aſylum of ſo deſpicable a paſſion?—Muſt the glorious gifts of the ſpirit of peace and charity, ſow

* John xi. 47.

bitter-

bitterneſs and diviſions amongſt its miniſters? Muſt the harveſt, ſo plentiful, and ſo deficient of labourers, excite ſentiments of "Jealouſy" among the few of thoſe who labour?—Muſt it be, that the angels deſtined to the miniſtry, ſhould be unable to eradicate offences from the kingdom of Chriſt, without frequently planting there ſome new offence? Muſt theſe melancholy tares, from the very birth of the goſpel, ſlip in amongſt its moſt holy workmen; and the church be often almoſt as much afflicted by the falſe zeal which defends it, as by the error itſelf which attacks it?—Provided Jeſus Chriſt be but announced, is not the glory of it common to all who love him?—Do we not ſhare his triumphs, ſo long as we combat for Him only? And do not all the ſucceſſes which aggrandize his kingdom, become Ours?—It is He alone who giveth the increaſe; and our weak labours, are no longer reckoned for any thing, when once we begin to reckon them any thing ourſelves.

Every circumſtance that is odious ſeems to unite in a heart, where the unjuſt paſſion of envy predominates; and yet, it is the vice, and as it were the univerſal contagion of courts, and often the firſt ſource of the diſſolution of empires. There is no meanneſs which this paſſion does not either conſecrate or juſtify: It even extinguiſhes the noble ſentiments of education and birth; and as ſoon as its poiſon hath gained the heart, we find earth-born ſouls there, where nature had at firſt placed ſouls great and well-derived.

Diſin-

Disingenuity is reckoned as nothing:—These Chief-Priests themselves seek for false witnesses against Jesus Christ. They, who ought to proscribe all such infamous men as make shameful traffick of truth, they themselves associate with them, and favour the crime which favours their passion.

And thus it is, that this vice does not blush at the assistance of shameful and contemptible supporters. Men the most notorious and abandoned are adopted, the moment they are ready to adopt and subserve the secret bitterness which gnaws within us: they become dear to us, the moment they can become the vile instruments of our passion; and that which ought to render them still more hideous in our eyes, instantaneously effaces every blot from their character. The world never knows a want of men like these, sold to iniquity; whose only employ is to blacken with the Great those, who have the unhappiness to displease them, or who please too much to suit their taste. Thus these corrupt men, who ought to be banished from society, never fail to meet with Great Ones, who listen to and protect them; while they elevate into a merit the zeal they vaunt of for our interests; and make a virtue of an infamous ministry, at which they themselves ought to blush. Doeg the Edomite becomes dear to Saul, the moment he becomes the pander of his jealousy and hatred against David. *

* 1 Sam. xxii. 9, &c.

But

But of what is not the human heart capable, when blackened and envenomed by Jealouſy? Impoſture is not only applauded, but the man no longer fears to render himſelf guilty. Theſe high-prieſts, witneſſes of Chriſt's miracles and ſanctity, who cannot be ignorant that he is the ſon of David, and deſcended from the kings of Judah;—tho' they had heard from his own mouth, that it was neceſſary to render to God that which is God's, and to Cæſar that which is Cæſar's;—make him paſs however for a ſeditious perſon, and an enemy to Cæſar; one, who aimed at uſurping from him the ſovereign power; an impious wretch, who wanted to overturn the law and the temple of his forefathers: In ſhort, a man of nothing, ſprung from the dirt, and from the dregs of the populace.

This bitter paſſion is like a frenzy, which changes all objects to the ſight: nothing appears to us any longer under its natural form. In vain did David gain victories over the Philiſtines, and ſecure the crown to his maſter: In the eyes of Saul, he is nothing but an ambitious fellow, who would mount himſelf upon the throne. In vain does Jeremiah juſtify the truth of his predictions by the events, and the ſanctity of his life: the prieſts, jealous of his reputation, proclaim him an impoſtor and a traytor; announcing the miſeries and utter ruin of Jeruſalem more to diſcourage its citizens, and favour the enemy, than to prevent the entire deſtruction of his country.

Every

Every thing becomes poiſoned in the hands of this fatal paſſion: Piety the moſt indiſputable, is nothing but a better-conducted hypocriſy: Valour the moſt illuſtrious,—mere oſtentation, or a good-fortune which takes up the place of merit: The beſt eſtabliſhed reputation,—a public error, into which there enters more of prepoſſeſſion than of truth: Talents the moſt uſeful to a ſtate,—an unbounded Ambition, which only conceals a large fund of moderate parts, and incapacity: Zeal for our country,—an art of making oneſelf ſomebody, and being a neceſſary man: Even ſucceſſes the moſt glorious, are an aſſemblage of lucky circumſtances, which we owe to the whimſicalneſs of chance, rather than to the wiſdom of our meaſures:—And the moſt illuſtrious birth,—only a great name, upon which the poſſeſſor is engrafted, and which was not derived from his anceſtors.

In ſhort, the tongue of "Jealouſy" ſtains every thing it touches; and yet, this ſcandalous language is the common language of courts. It is this which connects ſocieties and forms converſation: every one conceals from himſelf the ſecret wound in his own heart, and every one communicates it to others: men are aſhamed of the Name of the vice; and yet they glory in the Vice itſelf.

Laſtly, it even borrows the appearances of Zeal, and a love of public good. The intereſts of the nation, the preſervation of the temple, and of the law, ſeem to conſecrate the jealouſy of the chief-prieſts againſt Jeſus Chriſt.

Zeal

Zeal for the public good becomes daily, as it were, the decoration and apology of this vice: People ſeem to be in jeopardy only for the State; —and they only envy the Places of thoſe in power. They blame the maſter's choice, as falling upon incapable ſubjects;—but it is not the public intereſt that piques us, it is the jealouſy and chagrin of not having been choſen ourſelves. The places at which we aſpire, are never, according to our own account, beſtowed on merit: the maſter's favour, and the good of the ſtate, never appear to us to go together: we give ourſelves out for lovers of our country; and we love nothing more of it than its honours and pre-eminences. Haman finds the power and religion of the Jews dangerous to the ſtate; but his true aim is not that he may ſave the State;—'tis that Mordecai may be deſtroyed. The courtiers of Darius accuſe Daniel of having violated the law of the Perſians; but it is not becauſe they are jealous for the Majeſty of the Law; it is becauſe they hate the glory and favour which Daniel enjoys.

Every thing in courts is full of theſe "Zeals of jealouſy." A man ſhall ſhow away in the character of a good citizen, and conceal under it that of the jealous fool. "The ſtate" is continually in his mouth, and "jealouſy" is in his heart. He appears grieved, when events turn out unluckily, and do not anſwer the views and meaſures of thoſe in place; but in ſecret he hugs himſelf more for the blame that muſt fall upon Them, than he feels for

for the evils which may refult to his Country from their errors.

This is one of the moft melancholy effects of this unfortunate paffion. The chief-priefts before us, call down the blood of the juft "upon them and upon their children:" the defolation of the temple, and of the holy city,—the ceafing of the facrifices,—the difperfion of Judah,—the deftruction of every thing, appears a nothing in their efteem, provided the innocent does but perifh.

And how often have we feen public men facrifice the ftate to their private jealoufies! caufe enterprizes glorious to their country to mifcarry, for fear the glory of them fhould reflect itfelf upon their rivals! plan and conduct fuch events, as might overthrow the empire, in order to bury thofe rivals in their ruins; and rifk the lofs of every thing, to bring about the deftruction of a fin le man!—The hiftories of courts and empires are full of thefe fhameful inftances, and almoft every age has feen melancholy examples of them.

But true Zeal for the Public Good feeks only to render itfelf ufeful; and to the man who is virtuous, and who loves the ftate, Services ever hold the place of Reward.

II. Such is "Jealoufy," the firft paffion in the chief-priefts, which as on this day delivered up Jefus Chrift; but there is, Secondly, a mean "Self-Intereft" in Pilate, which condemns him.

Yes, my brethren, the paffion, the God of the Great is "Fortune." They wifh to pleafe Cæfar, and

and it is the only duty which occupies them. Whatever favours their elevation, always ſits well upon their conſcience. That Probity which would hurt their fortune, and occaſion the loſs of their maſter's favour, is to them a ſottiſh ſtupid virtue: And when once a man is more afraid of the diſgrace of Cæſar, than of the reproach of his Conſcience; if he has not already ſacrificed honour and probity, it is not the heart and the inclination, it is opportunity which was wanting, for the greateſt crimes.

There ſeem, indeed, at firſt ſight, to be ſome remains of rectitude and probity in the character of Pilate: His conſcience riſes in favour of the Innocent; he himſelf ſeems to plead his cauſe: He dares not to ſet him free;—yet he wiſhes that he might be ſet free. Thus Cowardice is the firſt degree of ambition. We love duty and equity, when it is uſeful or glorious to declare for it; when we may depend upon the public approbation; when our firmneſs may ſet us forth as a ſpectacle to the world, and we may become greater in the eyes of men, by an heroic defence of virtue, than we could have been by diſſimulation and pliability. We ſearch after glory and applauſe in duty; and for the moſt part, it is Vanity which gives us defenders of the truth.

To cowardice ſucceeds Fear. Pilate is threatened with the indignation of Cæſar. "If thou let this man go," ſay the people, "thou art not Cæſar's friend." * The moment this alarm is

* John xix. 12.

given,

given, every right the moſt ſacred vaniſhes, and goes for nothing.—That man is unworthy to ſupport juſtice and truth, who can love any thing more than they. Any proceeding contrary to honour and conſcience, is much more to be feared by a noble ſoul, than the anger of Cæſar. Beſides, SIR, it is eſſentially ſerving the Glory of the prince, not to ſerve his Paſſions. It is noble to dare to expoſe oneſelf to his indignation, rather than fail of the fidelity one has ſworn to him; and if princes, like yourſelf, can reckon upon having a faithful friend, they muſt look for him among thoſe, who have ſo loved them, as to have had the courage to venture ſometimes to diſpleaſe them. The more numerous they are who inceſſantly applaud them, the more reſpectable to them ſhould that Virtuous Man be, who does not chime in with the public adulations. But this heroiſm of Fidelity is rare in courts: there was but a ſingle Daniel to be found in Perſia, amongſt all the Satraps of the empire. Such is the fate of ſovereigns! The ſame power which multiplies Flatterers about them, makes Friends more rare and uncommon.

Thus a Fear to diſpleaſe Cæſar leads Pilate on to the laſt degree of cowardice: he abandons and delivers up Jeſus Chriſt. The clamours of this furious people, can only be calmed by the blood of the "Juſt One." To expoſe himſelf to their violence, would be to kindle the flame of ſedition:—It were better the Innocent ſhould periſh, than that the whole nation ſhould revolt againſt Cæſar:—

The

the public welfare, muſt be purchaſed by a crime.

And ſuch is always the grand pretence for the abuſes which thoſe in place make of their authority: there is no injuſtice, but it is juſtified by the public good. It ſhould ſeem as if the public happineſs and ſecurity could not ſubſiſt without crimes;—as if the order and tranquility of empires were owing only to injuſtice and iniquity; and that, to be devoted to one's country, it was neceſſary to renounce virtue.

No, SIR, I have already obſerved elſewhere—and it cannot be too often repeated, "The law of God, is the whole ſtrength and the whole ſecurity of human laws." Whatever it is that draws down the anger of heaven upon ſtates, cannot make the happineſs of the people. Public order and tranquility cannot be the fruit of guilt: He badly ſerves his country, who ſerves it at the expence of religion and virtue; it is ſapping the foundation of the building, in order to embelliſh and raiſe it higher. It is a weakening its chief ſupporters, to add to it vain ornaments, which accelerate its ruin. Empires cannot be maintained, but by the equity of the ſame laws which formed them; and how eaſily ſoever injuſtice may have dethroned ſovereigns, it has never eſtabliſhed thrones. Thoſe miniſters who have over-ſtretched the power of kings, have always weakened it: they have only exalted their maſter upon the ruins of his dominions; and their zeal has been uſeful to the Cæſars,

only ſo far as it has reſpected the laws of the empire.

Thus then having ſeen that it is "Jealouſy" in the chief-prieſts, which as on this day perſecutes Jeſus Chriſt, and a mean "Self-Intereſt" in Pilate, which delivers him up to the people; we proceed to ſhew in the laſt place, that it is the criminal "Indifference" of Herod, which renders him a ſubject of contempt and deriſion.

Alas! what other fate could the doctrine of the goſpel promiſe itſelf, on making its appearance before a proud and voluptuous court? That holy doctrine offers nothing to mankind, but what combats pride and voluptuouſneſs; and to "Thoſe who dwell in kings houſes," there is nothing Great but pleaſure and glory. If you do not appear there under theſe ſtandards, you are taken either for a cenſor and an enemy, or deſpiſed as a man of another ſpecies, a new comer, importing amongſt them an unheard-of language, and foreign manners!

Nay, we ourſelves, in theſe chriſtian oratories, who alone ſtill ſpeak to them the language of truth; we ourſelves often come hither to enervate this divine language; to reſpect what we ought ſtrenuouſly to oppoſe; to ſoften by human ideas, the ſeverity of holy rules; almoſt to authorize men's prejudices, before we dare to combat their paſſions; and, under a pretence of not ſetting them againſt the truth, almoſt render it difficult to know what truth is.

Herod,

Herod, informed of the wonderful things which were related of Jesus Christ, expects to see him perform miracles: In this expectation he joyfully sees him arrive at his court: It is not truth which interests him; he would satisfy a vain curiosity, and use the blessed Jesus as a spectacle for his leisure and indolence. And thus, in all times, we find most princes and Great Men have made a spectacle of religion: Mysteries the most august, and the most awful, set forth in all the trappings of studied pomp and elegance, have become, as it were, profane rejoicings to amuse them: they seek only for the pleasures of sense, even in the duties of a worship established solely to combat sensual pleasures. Religion, if she would please them, must borrow all the festivities and parade of the age; and a spectacle worthy of angels, has still need of decoration, to be a spectacle worthy of their human regards.

Herod asks of Christ many vain and frivolous questions: "He questioned with him in many words." * Questions, in which pride and irreligion bear a greater part, than the love of truth; proposed, rather to make a boast of his doubts, than out of a sincere desire to clear them up. Questions, which tend to nothing, but to confirm us in unbelief; and have nothing serious about them, but the blindness which gave them birth: Questions, wherein the eternal truths of salvation are talked of, like those doubtful and unin-

* Luke xxiii. 9.

tereſting ſubjects, which God hath given up to the indolence and diſputation of men; wherein that which is to determine happineſs and miſery eternal, is treated as an indifferent problem, where both ſides have their probability, and you have a right to chooſe:—In ſhort, ſuch queſtions, as are rather ſecret mockeries of the faith, than the reſpectful inquiries of a true believer.

And thus, the only uſe which moſt of the Great make of Jeſus Chriſt, is to ſtart endleſs queſtions upon religion. "They queſtion with him, in many words;" making Chriſt and his doctrine the ſubject of idle and frivolous diſcourſe and diſputation, rather than the object of their hope and worſhip; Inquiring into the truth of an hereafter, and of that other country which awaits us beyond the grave, with leſs concern than they would liſten to the relation of an unknown, and perhaps fabulous country upon earth, which no mortal living could ever yet approach: Talking of the miraculous facts which eſtabliſh the certainty and divinity of the religion of their fathers, with the ſame uncertainty, as they would talk of any immaterial point of hiſtory, which has never yet been cleared up; and, by the very unſerious manner in which they ſeek to be inſtructed in the Faith, ſhewing how utterly they have loſt it.

Accordingly, Jeſus Chriſt returns only a profound ſilence to the impertinent queſtions of Herod:—"He anſwered him nothing." We do not merit

merit the anſwers of truth, but when we interrogate Jeſus from a deſire of knowing it. 'Tis commonly obliterated moſt from the hearts of thoſe, who talk and diſpute the moſt about Religion. Yes, my brethren, truth is ſtill found, when it is ſought out of a good heart: we muſt not, in order to find it, dig into depths, nor ſoar above the clouds; we need no more than to liſten to it from within ourſelves. An innocent and docile heart, hears its voice at once: the doubts and inquiries which pride creates, ſo far from bringing it near us, ſhut the eyes againſt its light; it blinds with its myſteries the proudeſt ſages and judges, and communicates itſelf to thoſe only, who glory in being its diſciples. Submiſſion is the ſource of intelligence: the more you are determined to reaſon, the more you run aſtray; the more you doubt, the more God permitteth your doubts to increaſe. Reaſon, once departed from rule, no longer meets with any thing to check it; the more it advances, the deeper are the precipices which lie before it. No, my brethren, Faith is the only point which can fix the human mind; if you go beyond that, you enter into a region dreary, and covered with the ſhadow of death: you have no longer any aſſured path-way; you ſee nothing in it but phantoms, the ſad progeny of darkneſs; and as reaſon is now left without reſtraint, error conſequently has no bounds.

In truth, Herod's queſtions tend only to make Jeſus a ſubject of deriſion;—" Then Herod ſet

him at nought;" * —and his whole court follows his example: "His men of war mocked him." The purest virtue, when once it displeases the Sovereign, soon becomes the worthy object of oblivion, and even contempt to the Courtier. The prince's taste generally determines them, as to truth and merit: all their religion, in a manner, depends upon the countenance of their master: There is their law, and their gospel; and they have nothing in their worship more fixed or permanent, than the caprices and passions of the idol they adore.

Thus, SIR, the most essential attention which Kings owe to the place wherein God hath made them to sit, is, to render religion respectable, by never permitting the slightest derision of it in Themselves, which may hurt its majesty. The earliest years of your illustrious great-grandfather, never saw him straying from this rule: to Him it was the rule of all times, and of all places. His respect for the religion of his fathers always imposed an eternal silence on impiety, where he was present. His language was always the language of a christian king; that is to say, the respectful language of faith. Irreligion was the only crime which he did not pardon: every thing on this article was with him serious and solemn: no joy, no pleasure, ever authorized before him the least derision, which might affect the sacred worship of his ancestors. Religious, even in the midst of the rejoicings of a young and flourishing

* Luke ix. 11.

court,

court, the faith never ſuffered thro' the pleaſures and diſſipations unavoidable by the youth of kings. On this point, SIR, all becomes capital in the mouth of a ſovereign: a ſingle levity certainly tends to authorize licentiouſneſs and impiety, or to make new converts to irreligion. Men think to pleaſe by outdoing their pattern; and the railleries of the Maſter, ſoon become blaſphemies in the mouth of the Courtier.

Having thus delineated thoſe paſſions which the Great ſet up againſt truth, and which condemn Jeſus Chriſt to death; I proceed, in the next place, to ſhew you "The Paſſions of the Great condemned by the death of Jeſus Chriſt."

Alas! is there a ſingle one, which his croſs does not confound? He dies only to bear teſtimony to the truth: he is its firſt martyr:—But the Great are afraid of truth; and very rarely doth it find acceſs to the throne. He is king only to be the victim of his people;—and the people are commonly a victim to the ambition of princes and kings. The marks of His authority, his ſceptre, his crown, are the inſtruments of his ſufferings;—and the uſe which the Great too frequently make of their authority, is to render it ſubſervient to their unjuſt pleaſures. In the midſt of his pains and ſorrows, he is ſolely occupied by our intereſts;—and the Great, in the midſt of their pleaſures, do not even deign to occupy themſelves in the pains and ſufferings of their brethren. He ſuffers in our ſtead;—and the Great think, that all ought to

ſuffer for them. He comes, to make of all nations but one people; to reconcile all nations, to extinguiſh all wars;—but it is the vanity of the Great which kindles and perpetuates them upon earth. But what is all this? He is king, only becauſe he is the Saviour: his benefits form all his titles; his glorious qualities are only the different offices of his love for us: whatever is moſt great in Him, that He is for men only. He exiſts entirely for our advantage;—while the Great reckon the reſt of mankind as nothing, and fancy themſelves born for themſelves alone.

Behold, SIR, the great pattern of kings! From his croſs he inſtructs the Great Men and Princes of the earth: "Behold, (ſaith he), and do after this example. I left my kingdom, and deſcended from my glory, to ſave my ſubjects. You are kings only for Them, and their happineſs ſhould be the only object of every care annexed to your crown." Yes, SIR, this is a king, who giveth his life for His people; and he demands of you only your love for Yours. This is a king, who goes forth to conquer the world, only to gain it to God:—Fight only for Him, and you will ever be ſure of victory. This is a king, who maketh the croſs both his throne, and the place of his ſorrows and ſufferings:—Regard your throne as a place of cares and travail, and not as the ſeat of voluptuouſneſs and effeminacy. This is a king, who wiſheth only to reign over hearts:—The moſt glorious uſe of your authority is that, which ſhall aſſure

to

to you the love of your people. This is a king, who cometh to bring peace, truth, juſtice to mankind; who wiſheth only to render them happy. Reign, SIR, for Our happineſs, and you will reign for Your own.

O my Saviour! 'Twas on this day that Thou thyſelf didſt begin to reign over all nations: Thy laſt ſighs, are as the ſacred firſt fruits of thy government; and 'tis by the Croſs thou goeſt forth to ſubdue the univerſe. Grant, mighty God, that it may eſtabliſh the reign of that endeared young prince, whom here thou ſeeſt at thy feet: May religion conſecrate its firſt fruits, and crown its duration! His glorious anceſtors have placed religion amidſt us on the throne; may it ſupport on the ſame throne this illuſtrious Youth, who yet can offer thee nothing but his innocence, the faith of his forefathers, the calamities which have ſurrounded his royal cradle, and the moſt lively tenderneſs of his ſubjects.

O preſerve the child of ſo many pious protectors of thy holy faith! They heretofore expoſed their lives and crown to recover back thy heritage: do thou preſerve his own heritage to this much-valued prince, that one day he may defend and protect the church, which THE FATHER on this day giveth thee, as the inheritance purchaſed by thy blood! The ſtrokes of thine anger have ſpared him, amidſt the ruins of his auguſt family: Suffer us, great God, to enjoy thy beneficence, which we have bought ſo dear! May this happy

reſidue

residue of so many illustrious heads, as we have seen falling at once, repair our losses, and wipe away our tears. Shower upon Him every blessing, which thou hadst reserved in thy eternal treasures, for the many princes who were to have reigned in his place, and for whom his crown was destined: Unite in him, whatever thou would'st have distributed amongst his royal kindred; and may his reign accumulate all the blessings, and every kind of happiness, which we promised to ourselves separately, under the reign of princes snatched from us by a premature mortality; princes, whom we doubt not thou hast denied an earthly crown, designed them from their birth, only to prepare for them an eternal crown in thy heavenly kingdom. AMEN!

SER-

SERMON X.

On the TRIUMPH of RELIGION.

For Easter - Day.

Col. II. 15.

JESUS CHRIST, HAVING SPOILED PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS, MADE A SHEW OF THEM OPENLY, TRIUMPHING OVER THEM IN IT.

THE vain triumphs of conquerors were only a spectacle of Pride, of Fear, Despair and Death. It was the mournful triumph of human passions; and they left after them nothing but the sad tokens of the ambition of the victors, and servitude of the vanquished.

The triumph of Jesus Christ, as on this day, is, even to those nations which become his conquest, a triumph of Peace, of Liberty, and of Glory. He triumphs over his enemies; but it is to deliver them, and make them the associates of his power. He triumphs over sin; but, by blotting out, and nailing to the cross that fatal hand-writing of our con-

condemnation, he thence pours forth upon us a ſpring of holineſs and grace. He triumphs over death; but it is to aſſure us of immortality.

Such is the glory of religion: At firſt ſight it offers nothing, but the reproaches and ſufferings of the croſs; but its triumph is glorious, and the grandeſt ſpectacle which man can give to the univerſe. There is nothing here below greater than virtue: all other kinds of glory we owe to chance, to adulation, or to public error; this we owe only to God and ourſelves. It is made a ſhame to princes and mighty men; and yet it is by this alone that they can be Great, ſince by this alone they can triumph over their enemies, their paſſions, and death itſelf.

Let us then diſplay theſe truths ſo honourable to the faith; and conſecrate to the glory of religion the inſtruction of this great day, which is the day of the triumphs of Jeſus Chriſt.

I. The glory of Princes and Great Men, hath three obſtacles to fear upon earth;—The malignity of envy, or inconſtancy of fortune, which obſcure it;—the paſſions which diſhonour it;—and laſtly, death itſelf, which buries it, and changes into cenſures the vain adulations which had exalted it.

Religion alone ſhelters them from theſe inevitable obſtacles, which commonly make ſhipwreck of all human glory. It exalts them above events, and above envy: it ſubjects their paſſions to their own command; in ſhort, it ſecures to them after death that glory, which malice poſſibly had denied them

them while they lived. This it is which now conſtitutes the triumph of Jeſus Chriſt; and this is the glorious pattern which we propoſe to the great ones of the earth.

All the glory of his ſanctity and wonderful works could not ſave him from the ſhafts of envy. His innocence ſeemed to bend down under the oppreſſion of the powers of darkneſs; but his reſurrection faſtened to his triumphal car theſe principalities and powers themſelves. His glory ſprings triumphant from amidſt his reproaches; his croſs becomes the ſplendid ſignal of his victory. Judea alone had rejected him; and the whole univerſe adores him.

Yes, my brethren, whatever may be the glory of the Great upon earth; it has always reaſon to fear, firſt, "The malignity of envy, which ſeeks to obſcure it." Alas! this is a truth, which at court eſpecially needs no proof. Where is the moſt ſhining life, in which no ſpots are found? Where are the victories, that have not ſome one aſpect or other inglorious to the victor? Where are the ſucceſſes, which ſome do not abſcribe wholly to change, as others impute them to abilities and addreſs? Where are the heroic actions, which ſome do not degrade, by aſſigning them to certain mean and groveling motives? In a word, where are the Heroes, whom malice, and perhaps truth, doth not bring down to the level of mere Men!

So long as you are determined to have only this glory at which the world aſpires, the world will

diſpute

dispute it with you: add to it the glory of virtue; and the world fears and flies it, but yet the world respects it.

No, SIR, a prince who fears God, and governs his people wisely, has nothing to fear from men: his glory alone might create envy; but his piety will even render his glory respectable. His enterprizes might meet with censors; but his piety will be the apology of his conduct. His posterity might excite the jealousy or distrust of his neighbours; but by his piety he will become their asylum and their judge. His proceedings will never be suspected, because they will always be announced by justice: men will never be upon the watch against his ambition, because his ambition will ever be regulated by his just rights. He will not draw down upon his dominions the scourge of war; because he will always regard the carrying it into foreign states without cause, as a crime. He will reconcile nations and kings,—so far from dividing them, in order to weaken them, and raise his own power upon their divisions and weakness. His moderation will be the surest bulwark of his empire: he will have no need of guards to watch his palace gate: the hearts of his subjects will encircle and shine round his throne, instead of swords to defend him. His authority will be an useless thing to make himself obeyed; the commands most securely fulfilled, are those which love executes; and submission will be without murmuring, because it will be without constraint. All his Power, would hardly

hardly have rendered him maſter of his people: by Virtue he will become even the arbiter of ſovereigns. Such, SIR, was one of your moſt pious predeceſſors, on whom the church beſtows public honours, regarding him as the protector of your monarchy. The kings, his neighbours, ſo far from envying his power, had recourſe to his wiſdom: they referred to him their differences and intereſts; without being their conqueror, he was their umpire and judge: and virtue alone gave him an empire over all Europe, more certain and more glorious than his victories could have given him. Power only creates us ſubjects and ſlaves; Virtue alone makes us the maſters of mankind.

But if it ſets us above envy, it alſo renders us ſuperior to events. Yes, SIR, the greateſt proſperities have always viciſſitudes to fear here below. God, (who willeth not that our hearts ſhould there be fixed, where our treaſure and our happineſs do not unite,) ſometimes makes the higheſt point of our elevation the firſt ſtep to our fall. The glory of men, raiſed to its greateſt ſplendor, draws to itſelf very obſcuring clouds. The hiſtory of ſtates and empires, is itſelf only a hiſtory of the frailty and inconſtancy of human things: good and ill ſucceſſes ſeem to have divided amongſt them the duration of years and ages; and we have ſeen the longeſt and moſt glorious reign of this monarchy cloſe in croſſes and diſgrace.

But upon the ruins of this human glory, your pious and auguſt Great-grandſire knew how to

erect

erect a glory more ſolid and immortal. Every thing about him ſeemed to fall away and be eclipſed; but then it was we openly ſaw Him himſelf; greater by the ſimplicity of his faith, and the conſtancy of his piety, than by the ſplendor of his conqueſts: His proſperities had concealed from us his true glory; we had ſeen only his ſucceſſes,—we then ſaw all his virtues. It was neceſſary his misfortunes ſhould equal his proſperities, and that he ſhould ſee falling around him, all the princes ſupporters of his throne;—that even Your life ſhould be threatened; that life, ſo dear to the nation, and the great pledge of his mercies which the Almighty ſtill leaves to his people. It was neceſſary he ſhould dwell alone with his virtue, to appear all that he really was: His unheard-of ſucceſſes gained him the name of Great; his heroick and chriſtian ſentiments in adverſity, aſſured to him the name and the merit of a Great Man, for all ages to come.

No, my brethren, nothing but Religion can ſet us above all events; all other motives leave us continually in the hands of our own weakneſs. The reaſon of philoſophy promiſed conſtancy to its Wiſe Man, but it did not give that conſtancy. The firmneſs of pride was only the laſt reſource of diſcouragement; and they looked for a vain conſolation, by an affected ſeeming to deſpiſe the evils they were unable to ſubdue. The ſtroke which wounds the heart, can only find its remedy in the heart itſelf. Now Religion alone carries its remedy into the heart: The vain precepts of philoſophy preached

preached up to us a ridiculous insensibility, as if they could have extinguished the sentiments of of nature, without extinguishing nature herself. Faith leaves us sensible; but it renders us submissive, and this sensibility itself constitutes all the merit of our submissions. Our holy philosophy is not insensible to pains; but it is superior to grief. It was taking away from them the glory of firmness in sufferings, to take from them the sense and feeling of sufferings; and pagan wisdom wished to render them insensible, only because she could not render them submissive and patient. She taught pride to conceal, but not to surmount its sensibilities, and weaknesses. She formed heroes of the stage, whose grand sentiments were only for the spectators, and aspired rather to the glory of appearing steadfast, than to the virtue of steadfastness itself.

But faith leaves to us all the merit of firmness, and even wishes not to have the honour of it before men. She sacrifices to God alone the sentiments of nature, and desires, as the witness of her sacrifice, none but him who can be the rewarder of it. She alone gives reality to all the other virtues, because she alone banishes from them that pride, which either corrupts, or makes mere phantoms of them.

Thus, let the elevation and superiority of your understanding be ever so much extolled; let the sublimity of your wisdom, make you regarded as the ornament and prodigy of your age;—if this

glory is only external; if religion, which alone exalts the heart, is not its main foundation; the firſt ſhock of adverſity will overturn this whole edifice of philoſophy and falſe wiſdom. All theſe ſupports of fleſh, will crumble under your hands, and become of no uſe in your misfortunes: your great qualities will be looked for in your diſtreſs, but your glory will then be but as a weight added to your affliction, which will render it the more inſupportable to you. The world boaſts of making men happy; but religion alone can render us Great amidſt our misfortunes themſelves.

II. Such then is the firſt triumph of Jeſus Chriſt; he triumphs over the malignity of Envy, and all the reproaches it had drawn upon him from his enemies. But, further, he triumphs over Sin: he leads captive this firſt author of the captivity of all men; he re-eſtabliſheth us in all the glorious privileges from which we were fallen, and reſtores to us by his grace that ſuperiority over the paſſions, which we had loſt with our innocence.

This is a "ſecond" advantage of religion; it raiſeth us above our paſſions, and this is the highest degree of glory, to which man can attain here below. Yes, my brethren, in vain doth the world daily inſult piety with ſtupid deriſion; in vain, to conceal the ſhame of the paſſions, doth it ſet up againſt the good man a ſhame of virtue; in vain doth it repreſent that virtue, eſpecially to the Great,

Great, as a weakneſs, and an obſtacle to their glory; in vain does it countenance their paſſions by the great examples which have gone before them, and by the hiſtory of ſovereigns, who have brought licentiouſneſs of manners into alliance with a glorious reign, and the ſplendor of victories and conqueſts: Their vices, brought down to us, and recalled from age to age, will ſtand to the laſt, as ſhameful characters, effacing the luſtre of their great actions, and diſhonouring their hiſtory.

Nay, the more they are exalted, the more doth an irregularity of manners degrade them; "As hath been their glory, ſo doth their diſhonour increaſe:" * not to ſay, that their rank, by placing them over our heads, expoſes their vices, as well as their perſons to the public eye. What a ſhame! when thoſe who are appointed to rule the paſſions of the multitude, become themſelves the wretched ſport of their own paſſions; and when the power, the authority, the chaſtity, of the laws, find themſelves entruſted to thoſe, who know no law but the public contempt of all decorum, and their own weakneſs! They ought to regulate the public manners; and they corrupt them: they were given of God to be the protectors of virtue; and they become the ſupporters and patterns of vice.

No human glory can ever efface the opprobrium which their diſorderly conduct, and violence leave behind them: the moſt ſplendid victories do not cover the ſhame of their vices. Men praiſe the

* 1 Maccab. i. 40.

actions, while they despise the person: We have seen in all times the most brilliant reputation miscarry, thro' the manners of the hero, and his laurels blasted by his foibles. The world, tho' it seems to despise virtue, yet esteems and respects nothing beside. It raises superb monuments to the great deeds of conquerors: it makes the whole earth resound with their applause: pompous poesy sings and immortalizes them: eloquence exhausts itself to give them lustre; and the apparatus of eulogy is granted to custom, and to vanity: secret admiration, and real and sincere praises, are given only to virtue and to truth.

Indeed, good luck or temerity have been able to make heroes; but virtue only can form Great Men. It costs much less to gain victories, than to vanquish self. It is much easier to conquer provinces, and tame nations, than to tame a single passion: this is a truth, confessed even by the morality of Pagans.

At least the combats, in which firmness, great courage, and military skill preside, are among those rare actions, which may easily be supposed in the course of a long life; and when we need to be Great only for certain moments, nature collects together all her forces, and pride, for a little while, can supply the place of virtue. But the combats of the faith are combats of every day: we have to do with enemies, who spring up from their own defeat; the instant you grow weary,

you

you perish. Victory itself has its dangers; pride so far from helping you, becomes the most dangerous enemy you have to oppose: every thing about you furnishes weapons against you: your own heart itself lies in ambush against you; and you must incessantly renew the battle. In short, a man may sometimes be stronger and more fortunate than his enemies; but how great is it, to be always stronger than himself!

Such, however, is the glory of Religion. Philosophy discovered the shame of the passions; but she did not teach how to conquer them;—her pompous precepts were rather the eulogium of virtue, than the remedy of vice. It was even necessary for the glory and triumph of religion, that the greatest geniuses, and all the power of human reason should have exhausted themselves, in order to render men virtuous. If the Socrates and the Platos, had not been teachers of the world before Jesus Christ, and had not in vain attempted to regulate manners, and correct men by the sole force of reason, Man might have been able to do honour by his virtue to the superiority of reason, or the beauty of virtue itself: but these preachers of wisdom did not make wise men; and it was necessary that the vain efforts of Philosophy should prepare new triumphs for Grace.

In short, it was Religion, which exhibited to the world the true Wise Man, so long since announced to us, by all the pomp and parade of human reason. She has not limited all her glory, like philosophy,

to the essay of hardly forming one sage in a century amongst men: she hath peopled with them cities, empires, desarts; and the whole universe has been to her another Lycæum, where, in the midst of public places she hath preached wisdom to all mankind. It is not only amongst the most polite nations that she hath chosen her wise men: The Greek and Barbarian, the Roman and Scythian, have been equally called to her divine philosophy: it is not only for the learned that she hath reserved the sublime knowledge of her mysteries; the simple have prophecied as well as the sage; and the ignorant themselves have become her doctors and apostles. It was necessary that the true wisdom should become the wisdom of all men.

But further still: her doctrine was foolishness in appearance; and yet, the philosophers submitted their proud reason to this holy folly: she announced nothing but crosses and sufferings; and yet the Cæsars became her disciples: she alone came to teach mankind that chastity, humility, temperance might be seated on the throne, and that the seat of the passions and of pleasures, might become the seat of virtue and innocence. What a glory was this for religion!

But, SIR, if the piety of the Great is glorious to religion, it is religion alone, which forms the true glory of the Great. Of all their titles the most honourable is Virtue. A prince who is master of his passions; instructing himself how to command

mand others; unwilling to taste any thing of authority, but the cares and toils which duty annexes to it; more touched with his own faults, than with those vain praises, which disguise them to him as virtues; regarding as the only privilege of his rank, the example he is obliged to give to his people; having no other curb, no other rule than his desires, and yet making regularity itself the curb of all his desires; beholding around him all men ready to serve his passions, and yet conceiving himself made only to serve their wants: having the power to abuse every thing, yet refusing to himself even that which he might lawfully have permitted himself to enjoy: in a word, surrounded with all the incitements to vice, yet never displaying before them any thing but virtue:—A prince of this character, is the grandest spectacle that the faith can exhibit upon earth. One of his days alone counts up more glorious actions, than the long career of a conqueror. The one was the hero of a day; the other is a hero for life.

III. Thus it is that Jesus Christ, as on this day, triumphs over Sin: but this is not all: he likewise triumphs over Death: He opens to us, the gates of immortality, which sin had closed upon us; and the womb of his sepulchre, brings forth life eternal for all mankind.

This is the finishing circumstance in the triumph of religion. Impiety gave to man only the same end with the beast; all was to die with his body; and this Being, so noble, and alone ca-

pable of loving and knowing, was nevertheleſs nothing but a vile aſſemblage of clay, thrown together by chance, and by chance again ſoon to be diſſolved forever.

The Pagan ſuperſtition, promiſed him beyond the grave a lazy felicity, in which the vain phantoms of the ſenſes, were to conſtitute all the happineſs of a Man;—of Man, who can be happy only by truth.

Religion opens to us the nobleſt and ſublimeſt hopes: She renders back to man the immortality which the impiety of Philoſophy would willingly have wreſted from him; and inſtead of thoſe fabulous fields, and thoſe puerile ideas of happineſs, which ſuperſtition had imagined, ſubſtitutes the everlaſting poſſeſſion of the Supreme Good.

But, this immortality, which is Faith's ſweeteſt hope, is promiſed only to faith herſelf: its promiſes are the reward of her maxims; and in order never to die, even before men, we muſt have lived agreeably to God.

Yes, my brethren, that immortality even of fame, which vanity promiſes here below in the remembrance of men, can be merited by the Great only in the way of virtue. Death is almoſt ever the rock, and fatal boundary of their glory: the vain acclamations wherewith they had been abuſed thro' life, almoſt immediately ſink with them into the oblivion of the tomb: they do not long ſurvive themſelves; or if there remains any remembrance of them amongſt men, they are more indebted

debted for it to the malignity of cenſure, than to the vanity of applauſe: their praiſes had only the ſame duration with their benefits: they are no longer any thing, when once they can do nothing. Even their flatterers become their cenſors (for flattery ever degenerates into ingratitude); new expectations form a new language; they raiſe the glory of the living upon the ruins of the glory of the dead, and embelliſh with his ſpoils and virtues, him who takes his places. The Great are, properly ſpeaking, the ſport of the paſſions of men: their glory has no certain conſiſtency, but augments or diminiſhes with the intereſts of thoſe who praiſe them.

How many princes, extolled thro' life, have failed of leaving their name to poſterity! and what are the hiſtories of ſtates and empires, but a ſmall remnant of names and actions, eſcaped from that innumerable multitude, who from the beginning of time have been left to oblivion!

Let them live agreeably to God, and their name ſhall never periſh from the memory of men. Religious princes are written with indelible characters in the annals of the univerſe. Victories and conqueſts are of all ages, and of every reign, and as it were, efface each other in our hiſtories; but the more rare great actions of Piety, forever preſerve in thoſe hiſtories all their luſtre. A pious prince, is always diſtinguiſhed from the multitude of other princes in ſucceeding generations: his head and his name riſe ſuperior to them all, as that of Saul roſe

above

above the whole multitude of the Tribes; nay, his glory goes on increaſing, as it is more remote; and the more corrupt the times, the greater ſpectacle does he become by his virtue.

Yes, SIR, we have almoſt forgotten the names of thoſe chief conquerors, who laid in Gaul the firſt foundations of your monarchy; they are more known by fables and romance, than by hiſtories; —it is a diſpute whether we ſhould place them in the number of your auguſt predeceſſors: They have remained as it were buried in the foundation of the empire they exalted; and their valour, which hath perpetuated to their deſcendants the conqueſt of the kingdom, could not perpetuate their memory in the kingdom ſo ſubdued.

But, the firſt prince who made religion to ſit with him on the throne of France, hath immortalized all his titles by that of "Chriſtian." France hath dearly preſerved the memory of the great Clovis. The faith is become as it were the firſt and ſureſt epocha of the hiſtory of the monarchy; and we do not begin to know your anceſtors, till after they have themſelves begun to know Jeſus Chriſt.

The holy kings whoſe names are written in our annals, will always ſtand as the moſt valuable diſtinctions of the monarchy, and the patterns which every age ſhall propoſe to their ſucceſſors.

It is on the life, SIR, of theſe pious princes, your anceſtors, that your firſt regards have already been taught to fix; You have been daily animated to virtue

virtue by theſe great examples. Remember the Charlemagnes, and St. Louis, who added to the luſtre of the crown you bear the immortal ſplendors of juſtice and piety: theſe are they which every day inculcate to your Majeſty wiſe inſtruction: Nay, do not go back ſo far; You border upon examples, ſo much the more intereſting, as they ought to be to you the more dear; and piety flows more nearly in your veins, with the blood of a pious father, and an auguſt great grandfather.

You, SIR, are the ſole inheritor of their throne: may you be ſo of their virtues! May theſe great patterns revive in you by imitation, more than by name! And may you yourſelf become a pattern to the kings your ſucceſſors!

If hitherto our tenderneſs doth not ſeduce us; If an infancy, cultivated by ſo many cares, and by ſuch ſkilful hands,—and in which the excellence of nature ſeems to anticipate daily that of education,—does not change our deſires into vain predictions; there are already opened upon us the ſweeteſt hopes: already we ſee ſhining from afar the firſt glimmerings of our future proſperity; already the majeſty of your anceſtors, painted on your brow, announces to us the great things for which you are born May you therefore, SIR, (and this is a wiſh which includes them all) may you be one day as great, as you are now dear to us!

Yes, Great God! tho' it were only my own vows and prayers,—the laſt, doubtleſs, which my miniſtry, henceforth attached by the ſecret diſpo-

ſition

ſition of thy providence to the care of one of thy churches, will permit me to offer thee in this auguſt place;—tho' it were only my own vows and prayers:—Yet what am I, to hope that they ſhould riſe and reach thy throne?—But no, they are the vows of all thoſe great kings who have governed this monarchy; and who, caſting their crowns before the eternal altar at the feet of the Lamb, aſk, as it were, of thee for this auguſt young prince, that crown of righteouſneſs, after which they themſelves have laboured.

They are the vows of all thoſe who hear me, whether charged with the care of his tender years, or more cloſely attached to his ſacred perſon: Here all pour forth their hearts in thy preſence; that this valued young prince, who is as it were the child of our ſighs and tears, may not only not periſh, but become the ſaviour of his people.

Nay, O my God; they are the vows of a whole nation, offered unto thee this day by my mouth. That nation, which thou haſt protected from the firſt, and which, notwithſtanding its offences, is ſtill a flouriſhing portion of thy church.

Canſt thou, mighty Lord, ſhut the bowels of thy mercy againſt vows ſo numerous and ſincere? Regard us then, we intreat thee, O God of all Power. "O Lord of Hoſts, return, we beſeech thee;" behold from thy ſeat in heaven, and ſee, not

not the public and ſecret diſſolutions, but the miſfortunes of this firſt chriſtian kingdom, this precious vine, which thy hand itſelf hath planted, and which hath been ſprinkled with the blood of ſo many martyrs. "Look down from heaven, behold and viſit this vine, which thy right hand hath planted." Caſt upon it, the eyes of thine ancient mercy; and if our Offences force thee to turn thy face from us, at leaſt may the Innocence of this auguſt youth, whom thou haſt ſet over us, recall and give thee back unto thy people! "Let thy right hand be upon the ſon of man, whom thou haſt made ſo ſtrong for thyſelf."

Enough haſt thou afflicted us, Great God! Dry up at length the tears, which thou haſt cauſed to flow by the many ſcourges thou haſt laid upon us in thy wrath. Grant, that theſe days of mourning, indignation and vengeance may be ſucceeded by thoſe of joy and of mercy: where thy chaſtiſements have abounded, may thy favours alſo abound! and may this endeared young prince, prove to us a gift repairing all our loſſes.

Make him a King, O God, after thine own heart; that is, "The father of his people; the protector of thy church; the pattern of public manners; the peace-maker, rather than the conqueror of nations; the arbiter, rather than the terror of his neighbours;"—and may all Europe more envy our happineſs, and be more touched with his

his virtues, than jealous of his victories and conquests.

Hear, O Lord, vows so tender and so just! And may these temporal favours be unto us a pledge of those which thou art preparing for in eternity. AMEN!

SER-

SERMON XI.

On the VIRTUES and VICES of the GREAT.

Matt. IV. 8, 9.

AGAIN, THE DEVIL TAKETH HIM UP INTO AN EXCEEDING HIGH MOUNTAIN, AND SHEWETH HIM ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD, AND THE GLORY OF THEM: AND SAITH UNTO HIM, ALL THESE THINGS WILL I GIVE THEE, IF THOU WILT FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP ME.

HUMAN prosperities have ever been one of the most dangerous snares, which the Devil hath employed to entrap mankind. He knows that the love of glory and elevation is so natural to us, that nothing is thought too much to attain them; and that the use of them is so seducive, that nothing is more rare than piety, surrounded with greatness and power.

And yet, my Brethren, it is God alone who exalteth the great and the powerful; who placeth you

you above others, that you may be fathers of the people, consolers of the afflicted, asylums to the feeble, pillars of the church, the protectors of virtue, and patterns to all the faithful.

Suffer me then, my Brethren, to enter into the spirit of the Gospel in our text, and to lay before you the dangers and advantages of your condition: And, previous to my setting forth a detail of the duties of a christian life, which might so properly exploy these public seasons, Permit me, almost at my entrance on this subject, to point out to you such obstacles, and such accommodations to the discharge of those duties, as are attendant on the elevated station to which thro' providence you were born.

I allow there are great temptations annexed to your condition; but it is also accompanied with great resources: Men are born in it, as it were with more passions than the rest of mankind; but then, they may practice in it more virtues: The Vices there have more consequence; but then, Piety there becomes more useful. In a word, he is much more culpable than the people, who in that condition forgets God; but, he too has much more merit in that condition, who is faithful to Him.

My present design, therefore, is to represent to you the great advantages, or the great evils, which accompany all your virtues or vices; is to shew you what good or what ill the elevation you are born to may produce; is, in short to render disorder odious to you, by laying open to you the inexpressible

preſſible conſequences which your paſſions draw after them; and piety amiable, for the inconceivable utility which always follows your good examples. It would not be ſufficient to point out to you the dangers of your condition; we muſt alſo diſcover to you its advantages. The chriſtian pulpit is commonly inveighing againſt the greatneſs and glory of the world; but, it would be uſeleſs to talk to you inceſſantly about your evils, if we were not at the ſame time to preſent you with the remedies for them. Theſe then are the two truths, which I propoſe to include in this diſcourſe, by ſetting before you the infinite conſequences of the vices of the Great and Powerful, and the ineſtimable advantages reſulting from their virtues.

I. In the book of Wiſdom, we are informed, that a very ſevere judgment is reſerved for thoſe who are exalted. Mercy will be ſhewn to the poor and the mean; but the Lord will diſplay all the power of his arm to chaſtiſe the Great and the Mighty. "Mercy will ſoon pardon the meaneſt, but mighty men ſhall be mightily tormented. *

Not, my brethren, (as the ſcriptures obſerve) that the Lord rejecteth the great and the mighty, ſince He himſelf is mighty: nor, that rank and elevation are to him titles of odium, ſeparating from his favour, and almoſt alone conſtituting our offence: With him there is no reſpect of perſons: He is Lord of the Cedars of Lebanon, as well as

* Wiſd. vi. 6.

of the Hyſſop, that ſpringeth up from the humbleſt vallies: He cauſeth his ſun to riſe upon the loftieſt mountains, as well as upon places the loweſt and the moſt obſcure: nay, the Great are even the moſt natural images of His greatneſs, and of his glory, the miniſters of his authority, the channels of his liberalities and magnificence: Nor am I come hither, my brethren, to pronounce anathemas againſt human greatneſs, and make a crime of your condition; for your condition cometh from God, nor is it ſo much my purpoſe to exaggerate to you the perils of it, as to ſhew you the infinite means of ſalvation annexed to that elevated rank, to which thro' Providence you are born.

But, my brethren, I ſay that the ſins of the Great and Powerful, have in them two characters of enormity, which render them infinitely more puniſhable before God, than the ſins of the generality of believers. The firſt of theſe, is the Scandal they give to men; the ſecond, the Ingratitude they offer to God.

(1.) With reſpect to the former, there is no crime which the goſpel affords leſs hope of pardon, than to that of being an occaſion of falling to our brethren. "Woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh!" ſaid our bleſſed Lord; "It were better for him that a mill-ſtone were hanged about his neck, and that he were caſt into the depth of the ſea, than that he ſhould offend one of the leaſt of my diſciples." * Firſt, becauſe you deſtroy a

* See Matt. xviii. 6, 7. Luke xvii. 1, 2.

ſoul,

ſoul, which was eternally to have enjoyed God: Secondly, becauſe you occaſion the ruin of your brother, for whom Jeſus Chriſt died: Thirdly, becauſe you become a miniſter of the Devil, in his deſigns for the deſtruction of ſouls: Fourthly, becauſe you are that "Man of Sin," that "Antichriſt," of whom the apoſtle ſpeaks: For Jeſus Chriſt hath ſaved man, and You deſtroy him: Jeſus Chriſt hath formed true worſhippers of his Father, and You take them away from him: Jeſus Chriſt is the phyſician of ſouls, and You are the corrupter of them: He is their way, and You are their ſnare: He is the ſhepherd, who comes to ſeek the ſheep that are loſt, and You are the devouring wolf, who kill and deſtroy the flock which his father had given him. Fifthly, and laſtly, becauſeall other ſins die, as it were, with the ſinner; but the fruits of his ſcandals will be immortal: they will ſurvive his aſhes; they will ſubſiſt after him, nor will his crimes deſcend with him to the ſepulchre of his fathers.

Achan was puniſhed with ſo much rigour, for having taken only a "wedge of gold" from amongſt the ſpoils which the Lord had conſecrated to himſelf. My God! what then ſhall be the puniſhment of him, who wreſteth from Jeſus Chriſt a ſoul, which was his precious ſpoils, purchaſed, not with ſilver and gold, but with all the divine blood of the immortal Lamb! The golden calf was reduced to powder for having cauſed

* Joſhua vii. 21. vi. 19.

Israel to err: * O mighty God! and could all the splendor that encircles the Great and Mighty, shield them from thy indignation, if when once exalted, they are only an occasion of falling and idolatry to thy people! The brazen serpent itself was broken, for having been an occasion of scandal to the tribes; † and shall the sinner, my God! already so odious for his own crimes, shall he be spared, when he becomes a snare and a stumbling-block to his fellow-creatures?

Thus then, my brethren, Scandal or Offence, is the first character which always accompanies Your sins, whom rank and birth elevate above the generality of believers. Vulgar and obscure souls live only for themselves: confounded in the multitude, and concealed from the eyes of men, by the meanness of their lot, God alone is the secret witness of their ways, the unseen spectator of their falls: Whether they stumble, or whether they stand firm, it is to the Lord alone, who sees and judges their conduct: The world, which knows not even their names, is no less privy to their examples: Their life (comparatively speaking) hath no consequence: They may fall frequently, but they fall alone; and if they are not saved, their ruin is at least limited to themselves, and doth not become that of their brethren.

But persons born in exalted life, become a public spectacle, attracting all regards: they are

* Exod. xxxii. 20.

† Numb. xxi. 8, 9. 2 Kings xviii. 4.

houses

houſes erected on the mountain, which cannot be hid, and are diſcovered merely from their ſituation; they are ſhining tapers, which every where draw after them a ſplendor that points out and betrays them. This is the misfortune of greatneſs, and of dignities; You no longer live for yourſelves only: to Your ruin, or to Your ſalvation is attached the ruin or the ſalvation of all thoſe who are about you: your manners form the public manners; your examples are the rule and direction of the multitude; your actions have the ſame diſtinction as your titles: it is no longer permitted you to err without the knowledge of the public; and public ſcandal is always the ſad privilege which your rank adds to your other faults.

I ſay Scandal; and firſt, that of "Imitation." Men always imitate evil with pleaſure, but eſpecially when great examples hold it forth to them: They then find a ſort of vanity in their errors, becauſe thereby they reſemble You. The people look upon it as polite, to walk in your footſteps: The city eſteems it as honourable, to borrow all that is not ſo, from the court. Your manners work up a poiſon, which reaches to the people and provinces, which infects all conditions, changes the public manners, gives to licentiouſneſs an air of nobility and polite taſte; and, inſtead of the ſimplicity of our forefathers, and the innocency of ancient manners, ſubſtitutes the innovation of your pleaſures, your luxury, your profuſions, and profane want of decorum. Thus it is, that from You

paſs on to the people, immodeſt faſhions, vain trappings in dreſs, artifices to diſhonour the countenance, where modeſty ought to be the only paint; a rage for gaming; looſe behaviour; licentious converſation; indulgence of paſſions, and all the corruption of our times.

And from whence, think you, my brethren, from whence proceeds that unbridled licentiouſneſs which reigns amongſt the people? They who live far from you, in the moſt diſtant provinces, ſtill preſerve at leaſt ſome remains of the ancient ſimplicity, and primitive innocence. They live in a happy ignorance of moſt of thoſe abuſes, to which your example hath given the ſanction of a law. But the more nearly the vulgar come up to you, and the more manners change, ſo much the more is innocence perverted, and abuſes become common: The greateſt crime of the people, is the knowledge of your manners and cuſtoms. From the moment that the heads of the Tribes entered the tents of the daughters of Midian, all Judah went aſide, and ſcarcely were any found who preſerved themſelves clean from the common iniquity: * Great God! what a terrible account, ſhall the rich and the powerful have one day to make; ſince, ſetting aſide their various paſſions, they will ſtill be found guilty before thee of public diſorders, the depravity of manners, and corruption of their age; while the ſins of the people, will become their own proper crimes!

But ſecondly, there is a Scandal of "Complai-

* Numb. xxv. 1—9.

ſance."

ſance." People ſeek to pleaſe you by imitating you. Your inferiors, your creatures, your ſlaves, make uſe of a reſemblance with you in manners, as a way to inſinuate themſelves into your favour. They copy your vices, becauſe you give them credit for them as virtues: They enter into your taſte, in order to enter into your confidence: They zealouſly ſtudy either to follow or to ſurpaſs you, becauſe you love in them only what reſembles yourſelves. Alas! my brethren, how many feeble ſouls, born with principles of virtue,—and who, if remote from you, would have found in themſelves ſuch diſpoſitions only as are favorable to ſalvation,—have found their innocence enſnared by the obligation under which their lot laid them, to imitate your example!

There is thirdly, a Scandal of "Impunity." You can no longer reprove in thoſe dependant on you, the abuſes and exceſſes which you permit in yourſelves: You are obliged to allow in them, what you would not interdict to yourſelves. You muſt ſhut your eyes to thoſe diſorders, which you authorize by your own conduct; and, for fear of condemning yourſelves, ſhew favour to thoſe who reſemble you. A worldly-minded woman, wholly occupied in pleaſing, ſpreads over all her domeſtic concerns an air of licence and vanity. Her houſe becomes a rock, whence innocence never retires in ſafety. Every one imitates within, the paſſions which ſhe diſplays abroad; and ſhe is obliged to wink at theſe irregularities, becauſe her own

manners leave her no room to cenſure. You, my brethren, know, and the dignity of this place does not forbid my ſpeaking,—what diſorder runs thro' thoſe houſes deſtined and ſet open to continual gaming, amidſt a multitude of domeſtics, perpetually increaſed by vanity! How dearly do your pleaſures coſt theſe unfortunates, who,—removed from your ſight, having no bridle to reſtrain them, and ſtudious to fill up the idle vacuity in which your amuſements leave them,—think to countenance by your examples, thoſe irregular diſpoſitions, which were derived from the meanneſs of their education, and a low and contemptible parentage! O my God! if He who neglects the care of his own houſehold is in thy ſight worſe than an Infidel; what then is the crime of Him, who lays a ſtumbling-block before them; and cauſes them to find death and condemnation there, where they ought to have found helps to ſalvation, and an aſylum for their innocence!

Fourthly, there is a Scandal "of Office, and of Neceſſity." How many unfortunates periſh, for ſerving your pleaſures and unjuſt paſſions! The dangerous arts ſubſiſt only for you: The theatres are ſet up only to accommodate your criminal indolence: Profane concerts reſound on all ſides, and corrupt ſo many hearts, merely to flatter the corruption of Yours: Works fatal to innocence paſs down to the lateſt poſterity, ſolely under the ſanction of your names, and your protection. It is You, alone, my brethren, who give to the earth

laſcivious

lascivious poets, pernicious authors, profane writers. To please you it is, that these corrupters of public manners improve their talents, and seek their elevation and fortune in that success, whose single aim is the destruction of souls! You alone it is who protect them, who reward them, who bring them into notice; nay, who by honouring them with your familiarity, remove that brand of shame and infamy, which the laws both of church and state had affixed upon them, and which blasted them in the eyes of men.

Thus it is through You, that the people share in these disorders; that this poison infects equally town and country; that these public pleasures become the source of public miseries and licentiousness; that so many hapless victims renounce all decency, to serve your pleasures; and, seeking to sooth the narrowness of their fortune by the employment of talents, rendered useful and commendable merely by your passions,—come upon the scenes of vice, to sing of such passions as may flatter your own; to perish, that you may be pleased; to lose their innocence, by causing those who hear them to lose it too; to become public nuisances and the scandal of religion; nay, to carry woes and dissention into your own family; to punish you, O woman of the world, for the support and credit you give them, by your presence and your applause, by becoming the criminal object of passion, and of the ill-conduct of your children; by dividing perhaps with yourself the heart of your husband,

and

and ruining his condition and fortunes without remedy.

There is, fifthly, a Scandal "of Duration." 'Tis but a little matter, in comparison, my brethren, that the corruption of our times is almost the sole work of the Great and the Powerful; the ages to come will possibly still owe to You a part of their licentiousness and disorders. Those profane Poems, which have seen the light merely thro' your means, will still corrupt men's hearts in all succeeding ages: those dangerous Authors, whom you honour with your protection, will pass into the hands of your descendants; and your crimes will multiply with the dangerous venom they carry with them, and which will be spreading from age to age. Nay, your passions, immortalized in history, after having been a scandal to your own times, will become so still to succeeding times: The reading of your errors, preserved to posterity, will create imitators, when you yourself are dead: They will still run in search of lessons for crimes, to the recital of your adventures; and your irregularities will not die with you: The voluptuousness of Solomon still furnishes the impious with blasphemies and derision, and suggests to libertines motives of security; The passion of Potiphar's wife is preserved even to our days, and her rank hath immortalized her weakness. Such is the fate of the vices and passions of the Great and Powerful! They do not live for their own age alone, they live for ages to come; and the duration of the Scandal

dal they give, hath no other limits than that of their name.

You yourſelves, my brethren, know it to be ſo: Do we not ſtill daily read, with new danger, thoſe ſcandalous memoirs publiſhed in the days of our forefathers, which have preſerved to us the diſorders of preceding courts, and immortalized the paſſions of the chief perſons who compoſed them? The irregularities of an obſcure populace, and the reſt of mankind, who lived at that time, have remained buried in oblivion: their paſſions ended with them; their vices as well as their names have eſcaped hiſtory; and they are, with reſpect to us, as if they had never been: All that remains to us of theſe paſt ages, are the errors of thoſe, whom their rank and birth diſtinguiſhed in their day. It is Their paſſions which daily inſpire new paſſions thro' the ſimplicity of ſtile and licentiouſneſs of thoſe authors, who have preſerved them to us: and the only privilege of their condition is, that the vices of the Little have ended with their lives, whereas thoſe of the Great and Powerful ſpring up afreſh, as it were, from their aſhes, paſs on from age to age, and are engraven in the public monuments, never more to be effaced from the memory of mankind. What crimes, great God! ſtand forth, as the ſtumbling-block of all ages, the rock of offence to all ſtates, and which to the end of time ſhall ſerve as a temptation to vice, a pretext for the ſinner, and a pattern of irregularity and licentiouſneſs!

Laſtly,

Laſtly, there is a Scandal "of Seduction." Your examples, by honouring vice, render virtue deſpicable. The chriſtian life becomes ridiculous, and men are aſhamed of it before you: The external of piety is an aukward air, which they conceal in your preſence, as a kind of diſhonourable ſingularity. How many a ſoul impreſſed by God, reſiſts his grace and ſpirit, merely for fear of loſing that degree of confidence with You, which a long ſociety in pleaſure has given them! How many a ſoul diſguſted with the world, dares not declare itſelf, and turn back to God, that it may not be expoſed to Your thoughtleſs deriſion! Imitating ſtill your manners and your pleaſures, ſpite of the illuminations of heaven; and running a thouſand lengths out of complaiſance, and an unjuſt regard to your rank, how diſtant ſoever from its preſent taſte, and the faith it has newly embraced!

I mention not thoſe "Prejudices againſt virtue," which you perpetuate in the world; thoſe painful expreſſions againſt the pious and the good, which your authority confirms; which deſcend from you to the people, and keep up in all ranks thoſe old prepoſſeſſions againſt piety, thoſe continual ſcoffings at the Juſt, which rob virtue of all her dignity, and confirm the ſinner in the error of his ways.

And hence, my brethren, how are the juſt deluded! how are the feeble impelled, and the wavering held faſt in error and diſorder! What an encouragement to the impious and the profligate!

What

What an obſtacle do you become to the fruit of Our Miniſtry! What numbers of hearts come prepared to oppoſe the force of the truths we utter, merely with thoſe long engagements which have linked them to your manners, and amuſements; and find in themſelves nothing but You, to ſtand as a wall and a buckler againſt the powers of grace. O my God, what a ſcourge to the times, what a misfortune to the people, is that "Great Man, in the world's eſtimation," who fears not, who knows not Thee! who deſpiſes thy laws, and eternal ordinances! This is the preſent which thou makeſt in thine anger to mankind;—the moſt terrible token of thy indignation to cities and kingdoms.

Here then, my brethren; behold what You are, when you are not of God! Behold the firſt character of your faults: It is Scandal and Offence. Your fate commonly determines that of the People: the diſorders among the Little, are ever the conſequence of Your diſorders; and the ſins of Jacob, as the Prophet obſerves, (that is, of the people and tribes) ſpring only from Samaria, the ſeat of the high and mighty. "What is the tranſgreſſion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?" *

(2.) But, tho' the "Scandal" inſeparable from the ſins of the great and powerful ſhould add no new degree of enormity, peculiar to themſelves; yet the "Ingratitude," which forms their ſecond character, would be ſufficient to draw down upon them that dereliction of God, which forever

* Micah i. 5.

ſhutteth

ſhutteth up the bowels of his kindneſs and mercy.

Yes, my beloved, I ſaid "Ingratitude:" for hath not God preferred You to thoſe many wretches who groan in obſcurity and indigence? Hath he not brought you up in the midſt of ſplendor and abundance? Hath he not choſen you, above all the multitude, to heap his benefits upon you? Hath he not ſhowered upon you wealth, honour, titles, diſtinction, and all the advantages that earth can give? Doth not his prudence ſeem to watch, as it were, for You alone; while ſo many unfortunates eat the bread of bitterneſs and tribulation? Doth not the earth ſeem to bring forth, and the ſun to riſe and ſet, peculiarly for You? Are not the reſt of mankind even born for you; and to ſerve your greatneſs, and adminiſter to your wants? Doth not the High Lord of all ſeem occupied eſpecially in Your cauſe, appearing to forget as it were mean time, the many obſcure ſouls, whoſe days are days of pain and miſery; who ſeem, in ſhort, as without a God upon earth?—And yet, how do you turn againſt this God all you have received from him! how is your abundance made ſubſervient to our paſſions! How doth your elevation pave the way for your pleaſures; and His benefits become your crimes!

Alas! my brethren, while the thouſands of miſerable fellow-creatures on whom his hand preſſeth with ſo much rigour; while an obſcure populace, for whom life hath nothing but what is ſad and ſevere;

ſevere; while Theſe invoke him, bleſs him, lift up their hands to him in the ſimplicity of their hearts; regard him as their father, and give him the tokens of an honeſt piety, and ſincere religion; —You, whom he loads with bleſſings, You, for whom the whole world ſeems made; You know Him not: You do not deign to lift up an eye towards him; do not even think whether there be a God above you, who concerns himſelf with the things that are on earth: For thankſgivings you render him indignities; and Religion is only for the people.

Oh, my brethren, you think it baſe and infamous, when thoſe who owe their exaltation to your intereſt, forget you, deſpiſe you, declare againſt you, and employ the credit they derive thro' your means, only to oppoſe and ruin you! And yet, what do they, more than repay you for what you do to God? Is not your elevation His work? Was it not his hand alone, which ſet apart your anceſtors from the multitude, and placed them at the head of the people? Is it not the abſolute diſpoſal of His providence, which gave you a birth from illuſtrious blood? Which in the firſt moment of life, and without any coſt to you, ſet amply before you far more, than even a whole life of care and pains could have authorized you to expect?—What had You, in His ſight, more than thoſe many wretches whom he leaves in miſery? Alas! had he regarded only the natural qualities of the mind—rectitude, decency, innocence,

cence, modeſty; how many obſcure men, born with all theſe virtues, ought to have been preferred before you, and have occupied the place you hold! Had he conſulted only the Uſe you were one day to make of his benefits; how many hapleſs ones, placed in the ſame ſtation which you enjoy, would have been patterns for the people, protectors of virtue; and have glorified that Lord in their abundance, whom even in their indigence they adore and bleſs?—Whereas YOU cauſe him to be blaſphemed, and become, by your example, a ſtumbling-block and a ſnare to his people!

And yet, he chooſeth You, and rejecteth Them: He humbleth Them, and exalteth You: He is to Them as an harſh and auſtere maſter, and to You, a liberal and munificent father. What could he do more, to engage your ſervice, and bind your fidelity to him? What is there more powerful than benefits, to gain hearts, and ſecure homage?—From thee alone, O Lord! (ſaid David in the midſt of His proſperity) is the magnificence which ſurrounds me, the glory of my name, and the power, to which I am exalted: And it is juſt, O my God, to glorify thee in thy gifts; to meaſure what I owe thee, by what thou haſt done for me; and to make my exaltation, and all I am, the inſtrument of thy glory. "Thine, O Lord, is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory—Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy glorious name!" *

* 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 13.

And

And yet, my brethren, the more he hath done for You, the more are you exalted against Him: It is the rich and the powerful who live without any other God in the world than their unhallowed pleasures: It is You alone, who dispute with Him the slightest homage; who think yourselves dispensed from all that is burdensome or severe in his law; who think yourselves born only to enjoy yourselves; to make His blessings the creature of your passions, and leave to the simple populace the care of serving him, of giving him thanks, and of sacredly observing his ordinances and holy law.

Thus, my brethren, the People constantly adore Him, while You affront Him! They appease Him, while You exasperate him! They call upon him, while You forget him! The people serve him with a fervent zeal; and You despise his servants: The people lift up their hands to him daily; and You even doubt his existence:—You, who experience the peculiar effects of his liberality and power: His chastisements create him worshippers; and his blessings yield him nothing but indignity and scorn.

I said, "his Blessings," my brethren; for he has not even limited them all, with regard to You, to the external goods of fortune. He has also given You to be born with dispositions more favourable to virtue than the simple multitude; An heart, more noble and more elevated: Inclinations, more happily turned; sentiments, more worthy the great-

neſs of faith; more light, more eminence, more knowledge, more inſtruction, more taſte for good things. You have received from nature thoſe fortunate inclinations, which run with the blood; paſſions more mild, manners more cultivated, circumſtances nearer akin to virtue; that politeneſs, which ſoftens the temper; that dignity, which checks the ſallies of the conſtitution; that humanity, which renders the heart more ſuſceptible of the impreſſions of grace. What numberleſs bleſſings do you then abuſe, my brethren, when you do not live agreeable to God? What a monſter of ingratitude is a Great Man, is a man loaded with honour and proſperity, who yet never lifts up an eye to heaven, to adore the hand which diſpenſes them to him!

And from whence too, think you, come thoſe public calamities, thoſe ſcourges which afflict whole cities and provinces? 'Tis only to puniſh the unjuſt uſe which You make of abundance, that God ſometimes ſtrikes the fields and countries with barrenneſs: His juſtice, indignant that you employ againſt him his own bleſſings, ſubſtracts them from your paſſions; pours his indignation upon the earth; permits wars and diſſentions; overwhelms your fortunes; cuts off your families; dries up the root of your poſterity; cauſes your titles and poſſeſſions to paſs thro' foreign hands; and renders you ſtriking examples of the inconſtancy of human things, and the anticipated monuments of his anger againſt hearts ungrateful, and

and insensible to the paternal cares of his providence.

Behold, my brethren, the two characters inseparable from your sins, Scandal and Ingratitude: Behold, what you are, when you are not faithful to God; behold, what, possibly, you have never yet attended to. You cannot be moderately culpable, so long as you are culpable at all. The passions are just the same in the populace as in the powerful; but the crime attending them is by no means equal: and frequently one only of your Crimes brings with it more misfortunes, and has more extensive and more terrible consequences in the sight of God, than a whole life of iniquity, in an obscure and vulgar person. But at the same time, my brethren, your Virtues have the same advantage, and the same destiny;—as I shall now endeavour to shew you in the remainder of this discourse.

II. If Scandal and Ingratitude are consequences inseparable from the Vices and Passions of exalted Personages; their Virtues also bear two peculiar characters, which render them infinitely more pleasing to God, than those of the generality of believers: The first of these is "Example;" the second is "Authority." Here then, my brethren, is a truth very consolatory for you, whom Providence hath raised up to an exalted station,—a truth well calculated to animate you in the service of God, and render virtue amiable to you: for it would only be deceiving you to look at the

ſtate in which you are born as an obſtacle to ſalvation, and to the duties which religion impoſes on us: Yet I own that the hazards there are more dangerous than in an obſcurer lot, the temptations more vivid, and more frequent; and while I point out to you the Advantages which you may derive from elevated rank with reſpect to ſalvation, I do not pretend to diſſemble thoſe Perils attending it, which Jeſus Chriſt hath himſelf pointed out to us in the goſpel.

I only wiſh to eſtabliſh this truth; "That you may do more for God, than the common people; that there reſult infinitely more advantages to religion from the piety of a ſingle perſon in ſuperior life, than from that of almoſt a whole populace of believers; and therefore, that you are ſo much the more culpable, when you forget God, as he would derive more glory from your fidelity; and that Your virtues have more extenſive conſequences for the utility of the church, and the edification of believers."

(1.) The firſt, I obſerved, is "Example;" A perſon from among the people, who fears God, glorifies him only in his heart; he is a child of light, walking as it were in darkneſs: He renders the Deity homage, but he attracts none to him. Shut up in the obſcurity of his fortune, he only lives under the ſingle inſpection of God; he wiſhes that the divine name may be glorified, and by his deſires renders him that glory, which he cannot render him by his example. His virtues are

uſeful

uſeful to his own ſalvation, but they are loſt, as it were, for the ſalvation of his brethren: He is here below like that treaſure hidden in the earth, which the field of Chriſt bears without knowing it, and of which no uſe is made.

But for YOU, my brethren, who live expoſed to public notice, and the view of all nations; Your examples of virtue become as ſtriking as your names: you diffuſe the good odour of Jeſus Chriſt, wherever that of your rank and titles is diffuſed: You glorify the name of the Lord, wherever your own name is made known; the ſame elevation which informs all men what you are upon earth, informs them alſo what you do for heaven. The advantages of nature every where diſcover in you the wonders of grace. The nations, cities, provinces, which hear your names inceſſantly repeated, feel awakened within them that idea of virtue, which your examples have annexed to them: You honour piety in the minds of the public; you preach it to thoſe, whom you do not know: You become (ſays the prophet) as an Enſign of virtue, ſet up in the midſt of the people:" A whole kingdom hath its eyes upon you, and talks of your examples; and even in foreign courts your piety becomes an event as well known as your birth. The fame of the Wiſdom of Solomon, we are told in ſcripture, was ſpread thro' all the courts of the eaſt; and that of Ethan the Ezrahite, of Heman, of Chalcol, and of Darda, the chief of the ſons of Mahol, was not leſs known at Jeruſalem, not-

withſtanding the places which fixed their reſidence ſo far from Paleſtine. *

Now amidſt this ſplendor, what an allurement to virtue is offered to the people! In the firſt place, Great Patterns have much the moſt ſenſible effect, and piety becomes as it were a good faſhion for the people, when once it is countenanced by the example of the Great. Secondly, the idea of weakneſs, which ſome men annex to virtue, vaniſhes, the moment it is ennobled by Your names, if I may ſo ſpeak;—the moment that other men can ſhew it honour in purſuance of your examples. Thirdly, modeſty and frugality, have no longer any thing ſhameful about them in the eſteem of men, when once they ſee in You that it is poſſible to be Great and Modeſt at the ſame time; and that the avoidance of luxury and profuſion, not only brings no ſhame upon the vulgar, but even gives a new dignity to birth and elevation. Fourthly, how many feeble minds, who otherwiſe would bluſh at virtue, are encouraged by your example; who have no fear of walking after you; and even think it noble to follow your footſteps! Fifthly; how many, that are ſtill too ſenſible of earthly intereſts, would be afraid leſt piety ſhould prove an obſtacle to their riſing, and in this temptation find the ruin of all their deſires of penitence, were they not taught, by ſeeing you, that "Godlineſs is profitable unto all things;" †

* See 1 Kings, iv. 29—34.

† 1 Tim. iv. 8.

and

and while it draws down the favour of heaven, doth not remove thoſe of the earth! Sixthly, your inferiors, your creatures, your ſlaves, all who are dependant upon you, find virtue much more amiable, when once it is become a ſure means of pleaſing You; when once they ſee, that the ſame progreſs they make in piety, the ſame alſo they make in Your confidence and eſteem.

In ſhort, my brethren, what an honour for religion, when enabled to ſhew, in your perſons, that it ſtill knows how to form juſt men, deſpiſing honours, dignities, riches; who live in the midſt of proſperities, without being dazzled by them; who are exalted to the firſt places, without loſing ſight of the good things eternal; who poſſeſs all things, as if they poſſeſſed nothing; who are greater than the whole world; and regard all the advantages of this earth as clay, whenever they become an obſtacle to thoſe promiſes, which faith points out to them in heaven! What confuſion muſt it be to the impious, to perceive, by ſeeing you tread the paths of ſalvation in the midſt of every human proſperity, that virtue is no barren track; that in vain they endeavour to perſuade themſelves, that men have recourſe to God then only, when the world fails them; ſince tho' loaded with the favours of the world, you ceaſe not to love the ignominy of Jeſus Chriſt!—Nay, what a conſolation to Our Miniſtry, to be able to avail ourſelves of your examples, in theſe chriſtian pulpits, for the confuſion of ſinners in obſcurer ſtations! To be able, by quoting your

virtues, to make them blush at their vices! To be able to put them to shame for all the vain excuses they may urge against us, by setting before them Your fidelity to the law of God; by shewing them, that the dangers which surround them, are not greater than Yours; that the objects of passion amidst which they live, are less seducing; that the world offers them no more charms, no more illusions, than it offers You; that if Grace can create faithful hearts even in the palaces of kings, much more may it create them in the tumult of cities, and under the roof of the citizen and of the magistrate: In a word, that thus salvation is found every where, and that our condition, never becomes a favourable pretext to our passions, but when the corruption of our hearts is the true reason that gives them countenance.

Yes, my brethren, I repeat it, you give, when you serve God, a new force to Our Ministry; you give more weight to the truths we announce to the people; more confidence to our zeal; more dignity to the word of Jesus Christ; more credit to our censures; more consolation to our labours; and on looking upon You, the world finds the decision of those truths, which it had contested with Us. Think then, my beloved, what blessings may redound to the church from your examples! You give credit to piety; you do honour to religion in the estimation of the people; you animate the just, in every condition; you console the servants of God; you spread thro' a whole kingdom

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"a ſavour of life," which confounds Vice, and gives ſanction to Virtue: You maintain the rules of the church againſt the maxims of this world; you are quoted in the remoteſt cities and provinces, with a view to encourage the weak, and to enlarge the kingdom of Chriſt: Fathers teach their children your names, to animate them to virtue; and, without knowing it, you become the pattern of nations, the converſation of common men, the edification of families, the example of all ranks and all orders. No ſooner had the heads of the tribes in the wilderneſs, and the women of firſt diſtinction, brought to Moſes their moſt precious ornaments, for the building of the tabernacle, than all the people, drawn by their example, came in crouds to offer their gifts and preſents; inſomuch, that it even became neceſſary for Moſes to ſet bounds to their pious ardour, and moderate the exuberance of their oblations. *

Oh, my brethren, once more let me obſerve, what bleſſings may Your examples alone produce among the people!—The public amuſements are decried, when once you no longer countenance them by your preſence; indecent faſhions are proſcribed, the inſtant that you neglect them; dangerous cuſtoms grow obſolete ſoon as ever you abandon them; and the ſource of almoſt every moral diſorder is choaked up, from the moment that you live agreeably to God. And hence, what ſouls preſerved! what misfortunes prevented!

* Exod. xxxv. 21—30.

what

what crimes ſuppreſſed! what evils avoided! What a gain to religion is one ſingle Perſon of Diſtinction, who lives ſuitably to the faith! What a preſent doth God make to the earth, to a kingdom, to a people, when he gives it great and powerful men, who live in his fear!—And tho' the ſingle intereſt of your own ſoul, my brethren, ſhould not be ſufficient to render virtue amiable in your eſteem; yet, ought not the intereſt of thoſe many ſouls, to whom you are an occaſion of ſalvation by living agreeably to God; ought not this, to render the fear and love of his law preferable to all the vain pleaſures of this earthly ſcene? Is there a ſweeter pleaſure for the good heart, than to become a ſource of ſalvation and bleſſing to its brethren?

Nay, my beloved, it is another happy circumſtance for You, that you do not live merely for your own times. I have already obſerved, your examples will paſs down to ſucceeding ages: The virtues of common believers are loſt, as it were, with them; but Your virtues will be preſerved in our hiſtories with your names. You will become a pattern of piety to your deſcendants, as you have been to the people who have lived with you; your rank and employments, connecting you with the principal events which happen in our age, will make you paſs down with them to the ages to come. The courts which ſhall ſucceed to ours, will ſtill find the hiſtory of your manners and pious examples mixed with the public hiſtory of

our

our times: You will ſtill give ſanction to piety, in æras unborn. The memorial of your virtues, preſerved in our annals, will there ſerve for the inſtruction of your poſterity who ſhall read them; and it may one day be ſaid of you, as of thoſe celebrated, glorious and excellent men, ſpoken of in ſcripture, That your piety hath not ended with you; that the memorial of your virtues ſhall paſs on from age to age; that the people ſhall forever relate your wiſdom and your examples; that the church ſhall publiſh your praiſes; and that the good things which you have done, and the odour of your life ſhall be forever preſerved amongſt us, with thoſe deſcendants, who ſhall ſpring up from the glory of your blood, and ſucceed to your names and titles. "Their righteouſneſs hath not been forgotten: with their ſeed ſhall continually remain a good inheritance." *

(2.) Nor is this all; "Example" renders your virtues a public good, and this is their firſt character: But "Authority" which is the ſecond, finiſhes and upholds the infinite bleſſings which your examples have commenced: And when I ſay "Authority," what a field, my brethren, is diſcovered, and lies open before me, in all that immenſe idea of the fertile conſequences of piety in the Great and Powerful!

The firſt of theſe is, "The protection of virtue. Timid virtue is often oppreſſed, becauſe ſhe either wants boldneſs to ſhew herſelf, or protection to

* Ecclus xliv. 10, 11.

defend

defend her; obſcure virtue is often deſpiſed, becauſe ſhe has nothing to ſet her off to the eyes of ſenſe, and becauſe the world is charmed at being able to charge as a crime to piety, the obſcurity of thoſe who practice it. But, my brethren, from the moment that You take her part, Virtue no longer needs protection: You become interpreters for all good men to their prince, already himſelf ſo favourable to piety; and are the channels thro' which they every day find acceſs to the throne. You put in place juſt men, who become public examples; You produce ſervants of God, men filled with underſtanding, ſcience, and virtue, who would elſe have dwelt in the duſt; but who now, under the favour of Your name, and thro' Your ſupport, appear in public, ſet at work their talents; ſometimes enrich the church with holy and chriſtian productions; contribute to the edification of the faithful, the inſtruction of the people, and the perfecting of the ſaints; in ſhort, who teach the rules of virtue to thoſe who know them not; will teach them to your deſcendants, and in all ſucceeding ages, cauſe to deſcend with the pious monuments of their zeal, the immortal fruits of that Protection wherewith You have honoured virtue, and of your Love for thoſe who are juſt and good.

What did I ſay, my brethren?—Yes, you maintain the zeal of honeſt men in pious undertakings; your protection animates them, and makes them ſurmount every obſtacle continually thrown by the Devil in the way of ſuch works, as might glorify

glorify God, and contribute to the ſalvation of ſouls. How many uſeful inſtitutions, that are now a ſource of bleſſing in the church, owed their birth heretofore entirely to the ſanction of a ſingle perſon in exalted life, into whoſe heart God had put it to protect a work, from whence He ſhould one day derive ſuch glory! How many pious deſigns, advantageous to the church, have been executed, which had miſcarried if the authority of ſome juſt man in place, and exalted in the church, had not levelled every avenue that ſeemed to render the execution of them impracticable! How many devout miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, maintained in their functions, would have yielded to oppoſition, and by their retreat have deprived the people of their inſtructions and examples, if their virtue had not found a protection in the piety of the Great and Powerful, aſſuring peace to their flock, and authority to their miniſtry!

But ſtill further, my beloved, by your virtues, you render virtue reſpectable to thoſe who do not love it,—and it is no longer a ſhame to be a chriſtian, when once people reſemble You by ſo doing. You take from impiety that air of confidence and oſtentation, with which it appears every day ſo boldly; and libertiniſm ceaſes to be genteel, from the moment Your conduct reproves it: You keep up among the people the religion of our forefathers: You preſerve the faith even to ſucceeding ages; and often it requires but one Great Man in a kingdom, firm in faith, to check the progreſs

of

of error and innovation, and preſerve to a whole ſtate the religion of its anceſtors. Eſther alone preſerved the people and the laws of God in a great empire. * Mattathias alone ſtood it out againſt the ſtrange altars, and prevented the prevalence of ſuperſtition in the midſt of Judah †: And France owes the light of the goſpel, and the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, to the piety of a devout Princeſs, who, in oppoſition to the heart of an unbelieving huſband, ſubdued the whole kingdom to the faith which ſhe herſelf profeſſed. Oh, my brethren, how great are you, when you are ſo to Jeſus Chriſt! with how much more ſplendor and dignity do your birth and elevation appear, in the copious fruits of your Piety, than in all the pomp of earthly paſſions, or all the vain parade of human magnificence!

The ſecond conſequence of your Piety is, "The Recompence of Virtue." You bring it into honour, by giving a due preference in the choice of ſuch poſts as depend upon you, and by entruſting employments to thoſe only, whoſe piety merits the public confidence; by truſting to the fidelity of ſubalterns, ſo far only as they are faithful to God; and principally ſeeking in men that rectitude of conſcience, and innocence of manners, without which all other talents form but a merely equivocal merit, that becomes either hurtuſeleſs.

* Eſth. vii. 3, 4.

† 1 Macc. ii. 14, &c.

And

And hence, my brethren, what a new bleſſing is derived to the public! What an happineſs is it for a Kingdom, where good men occupy the firſt places, where employments are the rewards of virtue; where the public affairs are entruſted to thoſe only, who ſeek the public intereſts more than their own, and who count the gain of a whole world as nothing, if it muſt be obtained with the loſs of their own ſoul!

What an advantage for the People, when they find fathers in their judges; protectors of their weakneſs in the arbiters of their fortunes: Conſolers of their troubles, in the expounders of their intereſts! What abuſes are thus prevented! What tears dried up! What acts of injuſtice avoided! What peace ſecured to families! What conſolation to the wretched! Nay, what an honour is it even for Virtue, when the people are rejoiced to behold her in place, and when the world itſelf, all worldly as it is, is nevertheleſs well pleaſed to have honeſt men for its defenders and judges! What an attraction is it to be virtuous, when Virtue is beheld as the high road to Favour; and when beſide the promiſes of the future world, it hath moreover in hand the rewards of this preſent life: "Having the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." *

Nor let it be ſaid, my brethren, that by rewarding virtue we do not correct ſinners, and only multiply hypocrites. I know how far the love

* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

of

of exaltation can carry men, and of what abuſes of religion they are capable, in order to gain their ends; But then, at leaſt, you oblige vice to conceal itſelf; at leaſt you take from it that luſtre and ſecurity which diffuſe and communicate it. You preſerve at leaſt the externals of religion amongſt the people; You multiply at leaſt examples of piety among the faithful; and if there be not leſs Irregularity, there are at leaſt much fewer occaſions of Scandal.

The third and laſt conſequence is, "The holy munificence of Virtue;" — but I feel my ſubject draw me on, and it is time to conclude. Yes, my brethren, What new bleſſings ſtill ariſe to the people, from the chriſtian and charitable uſe of Your riches! You ſhelter innocence from oppreſſion; You prepare aſylums of penitence for the offending; You render Virtue lovely to the miſerable, by the reſources which they find in Yours: You aſſure to huſbands the fidelity of their wives; to parents the happineſs of their children; to paſtors the ſafety of their flocks: You give peace to families, conſolation to the afflicted, innocence to the deſerted widow, ſuccour to the orphan, good order to the public; and to all, a ſupport of their virtue, or a remedy for their vices.

Here then, my brethren, conceive if you can, the immenſe fruits of Your virtue, and the unſpeakable advantages reſulting from thence to the Church! What ſcandals avoided! What public evils ſuppreſſed! What numbers of the weak preſerved,

ſerved, of the juſt confirmed! of ſinners reclaimed, and of ſouls drawn back from the precipice of ruin! How do you contribute, by ſerving God, to the glory of the church, to the encouragement of Chriſt's kingdom, to the honour of religion, to the perfecting of the ſaints, and the ſalvation of all that believe! What a number of the elect ſhall one day be found in heaven, of every language, and of every tribe, who ſhall caſt at your feet their immortal crown, as it were to confeſs publicly how highly they are indebted to You! * What a conſolation, for you to be able to ſay to yourſelves, that in ſerving your God you gain ſervants to Him, and that Your piety is become a ſource of bleſſings to the People around you! No, my brethren, if there be any thing flattering in exalted ſtation, it is not in thoſe vain diſtinctions which cuſtom hath annexed to it; — it is in the power of becoming, as the ſervants of God, fountains of public good; the ſupports of religion; a conſolation to the church, and chief inſtruments in the hands of God, for the accompliſhment of his deſigns of mercy to mankind.

What then do you loſe, my brethren, by not living agreeably to God! What doth the Church loſe, in loſing You! What do not We ourſelves loſe, when you fail us; of what advantages do you deprive the Faithful! what conſolations do you not take away from Yourſelves! Think, what joy there is in heaven, for the converſion of a ſingle

* See Dan. xii. 3.

ſinner elevated in the world. O how culpable are you, my beloved, when you do not live agreeably to God! You can neither deſtroy yourſelves nor ſave yourſelves alone: You either reſemble that Dragon, in the book of Revelation, which on falling from heaven, whither it was exalted, drew by its fall ſo many of the ſtars into the abyſs *; or elſe, that myſterious Serpent ſpoken of by Jeſus Chriſt, which being lifted up from the earth ſhould happily draw all men after it. † You "are ſet for the fall, or for the ſalvation of many ‡,"—and are either public peſts, or public bleſſings. May you, my brethren, know your true intereſts! feel what you are, in the deſignation of God! what you may be for His glory! what he expects from you; what the Church alſo expects; and what We expect ourſelves! Alas! what a pity is it that you have ſo high an idea of your rank, and of your places, with reference to this paſſing world!

But, my brethren, permit me to tell you, you yet do not know all Their grandeur: You ſee but half of what you really are; You are ſtill much greater, with reference to Piety; and the privileges of your Virtue are much more brilliant and more ſingular than thoſe of your Titles! May You, my beloved, fill up your deſtination! And Thou, O my God, in theſe "days of ſalvation," touch the Great and the Mighty by the force of that Truth which thou putteſt into our mouths!

* See Rev. xii. 4, 9.

† John xii. 32. ‡ Luke ii. 34.

Do

Do thou draw unto thyſelf thoſe hearts, whoſe conqueſt aſſures to Thee that of the reſidue of believers. Have pity on thy Poor, by ſanctifying thoſe, whom thy Providence hath placed at their head! Save thou our Iſrael, by ſaving thoſe who govern it! Give to thy church ſuch great examples, as may perpetuate Virtue from age to age, and help continually to form that immortal Aſſembly of the Juſt, which ſhall bleſs thy name eternally in glory! AMEN!

THE END.

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