

GOD'S HOUSE;

OR,

THE PLACE OF PRAISES.

I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings : I will pay thee my vows.—
PSALM LXVI. 13.

THE former verse connexed with this demonstrate, with words of life, David's affliction and affection.

His affliction, to be overridden with persecutors ; his affection, to bless God for his deliverance. Great misery, taken away by great mercy, requires great thankfulness : 'I will go into thy,' &c.

Before we put this song into parts, or derive it into particulars, two general things must be considered : the matter, or substance ; and the manner, or form.

The matter and substance of the verse is thankfulness ; the manner and form, resolution. The whole fabric declares the former ; the fashion of the building, the latter. The tenor of all is praising God ; the key of tune it is set in, purpose : 'I will go into thy house ; I will pay thee my vows.' So that first I must entreat you to look upon a solution and a resolution ; a debt to be paid, and a purpose of heart to pay it.

The DEBT is thankfulness. This is the matter and substance of the words. God having first, by affliction, taught us to know ourselves, doth afterwards, by deliverance, teach us to know him. And when his gracious hand hath helped us out of the low pit, he looks that, like Israel, *Exod. xv.*, we should stand upon the shore and bless his name. David, that prayed to God *de profundis*, *Ps. cxxx. 1*, 'Out of the depths have I called unto thee,' doth after praise him *in excelsis*, with the highest organs and instruments of laud.

General mercies require our continual thanks, but new favours new praises. *Ps. xcvi. 1*, 'O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things.' There is a fourfold life belonging to man, and God is the keeper of all : his natural, civil, spiritual, and eternal life. Bloody man would take away our natural life, (*Ps. xxxvii. 32*, 'The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him ;') God keeps it. The slanderous world would blast our civil life ; God blesseth our memory. The corrupted flesh would poison our spiritual life ; God 'hides it in Christ,' *Col. iii. 3*.

The raging devil would kill our eternal life; God preserves it in heaven. Unworthy are we of rest that night wherein we sleep, or of the light of the sun that day wherein we rise, without praising God for these mercies. If we think not on him that made us, we think not to what purpose he made us. When I consider the works of God, saith Augustine, I am wonderfully moved to praise the Creator, *qui prorsus ita magnus est in operibus magnis, ut minor non sit in minimis*,*—who is so great in his great works, that he is not less in his least. But when we consider his work of redemption, about which he was, not as about the creation, six days, but above thirty years, where *non sua dedit, sed se*,—he gave not his riches, but himself, and that *non tam in dominum, quam in servum et sacrificium*,—not to be a lord, but a servant, a sacrifice; we have adamantine hearts, if the blood of this salvation cannot melt them into praises.

But special favours require special thanks, whether they consist *in eximendo* or *in exhibendo*; either in redeeming us from dangers, or heaping upon us benefits. Our prophet, in five instances, Ps. cvii., exemplifieth this duty: of travellers, captives, sick men, seamen, and others subject to the manifold varieties of life.

For travellers: ver. 4, 'They wander in the wilderness in a solitary way; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainting in them. They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivers them out of their distresses.' For captives: ver. 10, 'They sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, fast bound in affliction and iron.' Their prayers find a way out of the prison to God, and God delivers them out of the prison to liberty. For sick: ver. 17, 'Because of their transgression they are afflicted: their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.' The strength of their prayers recovers the strength of their bodies. For mariners: ver. 27, 'They reel to and fro, staggering like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.' They by their prayers appease the wrath of God, and he appeaseth the wrath of the waves and winds.

Now the burden of the song to all these deliverances is this, ver. 8, 15, 21, 31, 'Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!' And because these four dangers are short of the innumerable calamities incident to man's life, therefore in the end of the psalm much misery is heaped up, and the Lord is the scatterer and dissolver of that heap; that all flesh might sing, 'Salvation is of the Lord.'

And because these mercies are infinite, so that what Christian may not say with David, Ps. xxiii. 6, 'Thy goodness hath followed me all the days of my life;' therefore I infer with Paul, 1 Thess. v. 18, 'In all things give thanks.' So our Psalmist, 'My mouth shall be filled with thy praise all the day long.' What is meant by 'all the day,' saith Augustine, but a praise without intermission? As no hour slips by thee without occasion, let none slip from thee without manifestation of gratitude. 'I will praise thee,' saith he, 'O Lord,' *in prosperis, quia consolaris; in adversis, quia corrigis*,—in a prosperous estate, because thou dost bless me; in affliction, because thou dost correct me. *Fecisti, refecisti, perfecisti*,—Thou madest me when I was not, restored me when I was lost, suppliest my wants, forgivest my sins, and crownest my perseverance. But as *quo acerbior miseria, eo acceptior misericordia*,—the more grievous the misery, the more gracious the mercy; so the richer benefit requires the heartier thanks. Great deliverances should not have small gratitude; where much is given, there is not a little required.

* Contr. Faust. Manich., l. xxi., cap. 5.

To tell you what God hath done for us, thereby to excite thankfulness, would be to lose myself in the gates of my text. I told you this was the ground and module of the psalm. But I know your curious ears care not so much for plain-song; you expect I should run upon division. Hear but the next general point, and I come to your desire, reserving what I have more to say of this to my farewell and last application.

I come from the debt to be paid, to his resolution to pay it: 'I will go into thy house; I will pay,' &c. Though he be not instantly *solvendo*, he is *resolvendo*. He is not like those debtors that have neither means nor meaning to pay. But though he wants actual, he hath votal retribution. Though he cannot so soon come to the place where this payment is to be made, yet he hath already paid it in his heart: 'I will go; I will pay.' Here, then, is the debtor's

RESOLUTION.—There is in the godly a purpose of heart to serve the Lord. This is the child of a sanctified spirit, born not without the throbs and throes of true penitence. Not a transient and perishing flower, like Jonah's gourd, —*filius noctis; oriens, moriens*,—but the sound fruit, which the sap of grace in the heart sends forth. Luke xv. 18, when the prodigal son 'came to himself,' saith the text,—as if he had been formerly out of his wits,—his first speech was, 'I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned.' And what he purposed, he performed: he rose and went.

I know there are many that intend much, but do nothing; and that earth is full of good purposes, but heaven only full of good works; and that the tree gloriously leaved with intentions, without fruit, was cursed; and that a lewd heart may be so far smitten and convinced at a sermon, as to will a forsaking of some sin. Which thoughts are but swimming notions, and vanishing motions; embryos, or abortive births.

But this resolution hath a stronger force: it is the effect of a mature and deliberate judgment, wrought by God's Spirit, grounded on a voluntary devotion, not without true sanctification, though it cannot, without some interposition of time and means, come to perform that act which it intends. It is the harbinger of a holy life; the little cloud, like a hand, that Elijah's servant saw, 1 Kings xviii. 44, pointing to the showers of devotion.

Well, this is but the beginning; and, you know, many begin that do not accomplish: but what shall become of them that never begin? If he doeth little that purposeth and performs not, what hope is there of them that will not purpose? It is hard to make a usurer leave his extortion, the unclean his lusts, the swearer his dishallowed speeches, when neither of them saith so much as, I will leave them. The habit of godliness is far off, when to will is not present; and we despair of their performance in whom cannot be wrought a purpose.

But to you of whom there is more hope, that say, We *will* praise the Lord, forget not to add David's execution to David's intention. God loves the present tense better than the future, a *facio* more than a *faciam*. Let him that is president over us be a precedent for us: Heb. x. 7, 'Ἰδοὺ, ἦκα, 'Behold, I come'—not, I will come, but, I do come—'to do thy will, O God.'

You have heard the matter and manner of the song: the substance is gratitude; the form, a resolution to give it. To set it in some

DIVISION OR METHOD.

That every present soul may bear his part, here be three strains, or stairs, and gradual ascents, up which our contemplations must mount with David's actions.

1. An entrance into God's house : 'I will go into thy house.' It is well that David will bring thither his praises himself. But many enter God's house that have no business there, that both come and return empty-hearted, that neither bring to God devotion, nor carry from God consolation.

2. Therefore the next strain gives his zeal : he will not come empty-handed, but 'with burnt-offerings.' Manifold and manifest arguments of his hearty affection. Manifest, because *burnt-offerings* ; real, visible, actual, and accomplished works. Manifold, because not one singular oblation, but plurally, *offerings*, without pinching his devotion.

3. But yet divers have offered sacrifices, and burnt-sacrifices, that stunk, like Balaam's, in God's nostrils : tendering bullocks and goats, not their own hearts. Therefore the third strain affirms that David will not only offer beasts, but himself : 'I will pay thee my vows.' So that in his gratitude is observable, *quo loco, quo modo, quo animo*.

In what place? *God's house* ; after what manner? *with burnt-offerings* ; with what mind? *I will pay thee my vows*. His devotion is without exception : all the labour is to work our hearts to an imitation.

I will go into thy house.—The first note hath two strains : place and entrance.

The *place* he purposeth to enter is described by the property, *domus* ; the proprietary, *Dominus*.

This house was not the temple, for that was after built by Solomon, but the tabernacle, or sanctuary. God had his house in all ages ; as the wise Creator of all things, he reserved to him a portion in all things ; *non propter indigentiam*, not that he had need of them, but that he might be acknowledged in them. Though he be Lord of all nations in the world, because the maker of all men, yet he reserved a particular number of men, and appropriated them to himself ; and these he called *suum populum*, 'his people,' Luke i. 68.

Though thousands of angels stand before him, and ten thousand thousands of those glorious spirits minister unto him, yet he culleth and calleth out some particular men to celebrate his service, sanctifying or setting them apart to that office ; and these he calls *suos ministros*, his priests, his ministers.

Though he be a spirit, immortal, most rich, and Lord of all things,—'The earth is his, and the fulness thereof ;' yea, heaven and the glory thereof : Ps. l. 12, 'If I were hungry, I would not tell thee ; for the world is mine,' &c.,—yet he reserveth to himself a certain share of these inferior things : and this he calls *suam sortem*, his portion ; Mal. iii. 8, 'his tithes, his offerings.'

Though he be eternal, first and last, without beginning, without end ; God of all times, and yet under no time ; with whom 'a thousand years is but as one day ;' and everlastingly to be honoured ;—yet he reserveth to himself a certain time wherein he looks for our general worship ; and that he calls *suam diem*, his day, 'his sabbaths,' Isa. lviii. 13.

Though he be the 'high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy,' Isa. lvii. 15 ; though infinite and comprehended in no place, yet he sets apart some special place wherein his great name shall be called on ; and this he calls *suam domum*, his house. So, Matt. xxi. 13, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.' Here, 'I will go into thy house.'

God never left his church destitute of a certain sacred place, wherein he would be worshipped. Adam had a place wherein he should present himself

to God, and God did present himself to him—Paradise. God appeared to Abraham in a place, and sanctified it; and there, Gen. xii. 7, 'Abraham built an altar,' for it was holy. When he commanded him to sacrifice his son Isaac, he appointed him a place on a mountain, Gen. xxii. 2. And on this very mountain, 2 Chron. iii. 1, was afterwards Solomon's temple built. Jacob, according to the several places he dwelt in, built several altars to serve God on. The Israelites were translated out of Egypt for this very cause, that they might have a place to sacrifice to the Lord. When they were come into Canaan, God commanded and directed Moses to make a tabernacle; which was but *mobile tabernaculum*, to be dissolved when Solomon's glorious temple was finished. Now all these particular places were consecrated to the service of God, and called *loca Dei*, God's places; as David calls this *domum Dei*, God's house.

This is the first note of the strain, the *place*. The next is his *entrance*; wherein observe—

1. That David's first care is to visit God's house. It is very likely that this psalm was written by David either in exile under Saul, or in persecution by Absalom, or in some grievous distress; whereout being delivered, he first resolves to salute God's house. Chrysostom in *Opere Imperfecto*, or whosoever was the author of that book, notes it the property of a good son, when he comes to town, first to visit his father's house, and to perform the honour that is due to him. We find this in Christ. Matt. xxi. 10–12, so soon as ever he came to Jerusalem, first he visits his Father's house: 'He went into the temple.' What the Son and Lord of David did there, the same course doth the servant of his Son take here: first, 'I will go into thy house.'

Oh for one dram of this respect of God's house in these days! Shall that place have a principal place in our affections? We would not then think one hour tedious in it, when many years delight us in the 'tents of Kedar.' This was not David's opinion: Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand.' Nor grudge at every penny that a levy taxeth to the church, as if *tegumen parietibus impositum* was enough,—bare walls, and a cover to keep us from rain; and *aliquid ornatus* was but superfluous, except it be a cushion and a wainscot seat, for a gentleman's better ease. The greatest preparation usually against some solemn feast is but a little fresh straw under the feet, the ordinary allowance for hogs in the sty or horses in the stable. For other cost, let it be *domus opportuna volucrum*,—a cage of unclean birds; and so it must be so long as some sacrilegious persons are in it. It was part of the epitaph of King Edgar—

'Templa Deo, templis monachos, monachis dedit agros,'—

He gave temples to God, ministers to those temples, and maintenance to those ministers. But the epitaphs of too many in these days may well run in contrary terms. They take tenths from good ministers, good ministers from the churches, yea, and some of them also the churches from God. But here *quicquid tetigero ulcus erit*, that which I should touch is an ulcer; and I will spend no physic in *immedicabile vulnus*, upon an incurable wound; but leave it *ense recidendum Domini*, to be cut off with the sword of God's vengeance.

2. Observe the reason why David would go into God's house; and this hath a double degree. To give him, (1.) praise; (2.) public praise.

(1.) *Praise*. Might not David praise God in any place? Yes; David might and must bless the Lord in any place, in every place; but the place

that is principally destined to this purpose is *domus Dei*, God's house. The name which God imposed on his house, and by which, as it were, he christened it, was *domus orationis*, the house of prayer. As Christ, Matt. xxi. 13, derives it from Isa. lvi. 7, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.' Therefore those houses were called in the primitive times *dominica*, the Lord's houses; and *oratoria*, houses of prayer, devoted to the praise of God.

I might here take just cause to tax an error of our times. Many come to these holy places, and are so transported with a desire of hearing, that they forget the fervency of praying and praising God. The end is ever held more noble than the means that conduce unto it. Sin brought in ignorance, and ignorance takes away devotion. The word preached brings in knowledge, and knowledge rectifies devotion. So that all our preaching is but to beget your praying; to instruct you to praise and worship God. The most immediate and proper service and worship of God is the end, and hearing but the means to that end. And the rule is true: *Semper finis excellit id quod est ad finem*.—The end ever excels that which leads to the end. *Scientia non est qualitas activa, sed principium quo aliquis dirigitur in operando*,*—Knowledge is not an active quality, but only a means to direct a man in working.

Non tam audire, quam obedire requirit Deus,—God reckons not so much of our audience as of our obedience: not the hearers, but the 'doers, are blessed in their deed,' James i. 25. Indeed, Christ saith, 'Blessed are they that hear the word of God;' but with this condition, that 'they keep it.' The worship of God is the fruit of hearing; shew me this fruit. Our *oratoria* are turned into *auditoria*, and we are content that God should speak earnestly to us, but we will not speak devoutly to him. I hope that no man will so ignorantly and injuriously understand me, as if I spake against hearing of sermons frequently. God forbid; you must hear, and we must preach. The apostles 'gave themselves continually to prayer, and to the preaching of the word,' Acts vi. 4: where yet prayer is put in the first place.

I complain not that our churches are auditories, but that they are not oratories; not that you come to sermons, (for God's sake, come faster,) but that you neglect public prayer: as if it were only God's part to bless you, not yours to bless God. And hereof I complain with good company. Chrysostom saith,† that such a multitude came to his sermons, that there was scarce room for a late comer; and those would all patiently attend the end of the sermon: but when prayers were to be read, or sacraments to be administered, the company was thin, the seats empty. *Vacua desertaque ecclesia reddebatur*.

Beloved, mistake not. It is not the only exercise of a Christian to hear a sermon; nor is that Sabbath well spent that despatcheth no other business for heaven. I will be bold to tell you, that in heaven there shall be no sermons; and yet in heaven there shall be hallelujahs. And this same end, for which David came to God's house, shall remain in glory—to praise the Lord. So that all God's service is not to be narrowed up in hearing, it hath greater latitude; there must be prayer, praise, adoration, and worship of God. Neither is it the scope of Christianity to know, but the scope of knowledge is to be a good Christian. You are not heathen, to ask, *Quid credendum?* What must we believe? nor catechists, to demand, *Quid faciendum?* 'What must we do?' Luke iii. 10. You know what to believe, you know what to do. Our preaching hath not so much need *monere* as *movere*; though you also need instruction, yet more need of exhortation; for you

* Th. 1, qu. 117, art. 1.

† De Incompreh. Dei Natura, Hom. iii.

have learned more than ever you have followed. Come then hither, both to hear God and to praise God; as David was not only here a praiser, but, ver. 16, a preacher: 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.'

(2.) Which fitly brings me to the further exemplifying of this cause moving David to enter into God's house. Which was not only to praise him, but to praise him *publicly*. Otherwise he might have muttered his orisons to himself; no, he desires that his mouth should be a trumpet of God's glory; as frequently in the Psalms: 'I will praise thee before the great congregations.' There are some, that whatsoever service they do to God, desire many witnesses of it; others desire no witnesses at all.

The former are hypocrites, who would have all men's eyes take notice of their devotion; as if they durst not trust God without witness, for fear he should deny it. Such were the Pharisees; they gave no alms without the proclamation of a trumpet, and their prayers were at the corners of streets; such corners where divers streets met, and so more spectable to many passengers. To these Christ, Matt. vi. 4, 'Do thy devotion in secret; and he that seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.'

The other have a little desire to serve God, but they would have no witnesses at all. They depend upon some great man, that will be angry with it. And these would fain have God take notice of their devotion, and nobody else. So Nicodemus stole to Christ by night; and many a Papist's servant would come to church if he were sure his master might not know of it. For he fears more to be turned out of his service than out of God's service. To these Christ, Luke xii. 4, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body,' and no more; 'but fear him that hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.' A man may better lose his landlord's favour than the Lord's favour; his farm on earth than his manor or mansion in heaven.

David was neither of these. His thankfulness shall not be hidden *pro timore minantium*, nor yet will he manifest it *pro amore laudantium*,—neither for fear of commanders nor for love of commendors. He is neither *timidus* nor *tumidus*, not fearful of frowns nor luxurious of praises; but only desires to manifest the integrity of his conscience in the sight of God. It is the manner of the godly not only to ruminate in their minds God's mercies, but to divulge them to the bettering of others. When we yield thus to the world a testimony of our faith and thankfulness in God's public honour, we provoke others to hearken to religion, and inflame their hearts with a fervent desire to partake the like mercies. The fame of Alexander gave heart to Julius Cæsar to be the more noble warrior. The freedom of our devotion gives an edge to others.

*Beneficium qui dedit, taceat; narret qui accepit,**—Let him that gives a benefit be silent; let him speak of it that hath received it. There is that law of difference, saith that philosopher, betwixt the doer of a good turn and the receiver of it: *Alter statim oblivisci debet dati; alter accepti nunquam*,—The one ought quickly to forget what he hath given; the other ought never to forget what he hath received. We are the receivers, and must not forget. God gave the law to Israel, and the custom of the saints observed it: Ps. lxxviii. 3, 4, 'What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from our children, shewing to the generations to come the praises of the Lord.'

Indeed there was a time when Christ forbade the publishing of his benefit: Mark i. 44, to the leper, 'See thou say nothing to any man of it.' But 'he

* Sen. de Benef., lib. ii., cap. 11.

went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter.' I know, divers divines, by curious distinctions, have gone about to excuse the matter, by making this an admonitory, not an obligatory precept. But I subscribe to Calvin and Marlorat, who tax it for an offence, and manifest breach of Christ's commandment. And Jerome on that place says that *non erat necesse ut sermone jactaret, quod corpore præfererat*,—his tongue might be silent, for his whole body was turned into a tongue to publish it. The act was good, but not good at that time. Disobedient he was, be it granted; yet of all disobedient men commend me to him. Let not then any politic or sinister respects tie up our tongues from blessing him that hath blessed us. Suffocate not the fire of zeal in thy heart by silent lips, lest it prove key-cold; but say with our prophet, Ps. xxvi. 12, 'My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the Lord.'

We perceive now the motive-cause that brought David into God's house. I would take leave from hence in a word to instruct you with what mind you should come to this holy place. We are in substance inheritors of the same faith which the Jews held; and have—instead of their tabernacle, sanctuary, temple—churches, places set apart for the assembly of God's saints; wherein we receive divine mysteries, and celebrate divine ministries; which are said by Damascene,* *Plus participare operationis et gratiæ diviniæ*,—There is nothing lost by the gospel which the law afforded; but rather all bettered. It is observable that the building of that glorious temple was the maturity and consummation of God's mercy to the Jews. Infinite were his favours betwixt their slavery in Egypt and their peace in Israel. God did, as it were, attend upon them to supply their wants. They have no guide: why, God himself is their guide, and goes before them in a pillar of fire. They have no shelter: the Lord spreads a cloud over them for a canopy. Are they at a stand, and want way? The sea shall part and give them passage, whilst the divided waters are as walls unto them. For sustenance, they lack bread: heaven itself shall pour down the food of angels. Have they no meat to their bread? A wind shall blow to them innumerable quails. Bread and flesh is not enough without drink: behold, a hard rock, smitten with a little wand, shall pour out abundance of water. But what is all this, if they yet in the wilderness shall want apparel? Their garments shall not wax old on their backs. Do they besiege? Jericho's walls shall fall down before them; for want of engines, hailstones shall brain their enemies; lamps, and pitchers, and dreams shall get them victory. 'The sun shall stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon,' Josh. x. 12, to behold their conquests. Lack they yet a land to inhabit? The Lord will make good his promise against all difficulties, and give them a land that 'flows with milk and honey.'

But is all this yet short of our purpose, and their chief blessedness? They want a house to celebrate his praise that hath done all this for them: behold, the Lord giveth them a goodly temple; neither doth he therein only accept their offerings, but he also gives them his oracles, even vocal oracles between the cherubims. I might easily parallel England to Israel in the circumference of all these blessings; but my centre is their last and best, and whereof they most boasted: Jer. vii. 4, 'The temple of the Lord,' and the law of their God. To answer these we have the houses of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have all, though all in a new manner: 2 Cor. v. 17, 'Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' They had an 'Old Testament,' Heb. viii. 13; we have the 'New Testament.' They had

* *Orthod. Fid.*, lib. cap. 16.

the Spirit; we have a new Spirit. They had commandments; we have *novum mandatum*,—the 'new commandment,' John xiii. 34. They had an inheritance, Canaan; we have a new inheritance promised: *Vidi novum cælum et novam terram*,—Rev. xxi. 1, 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth.' To conclude, they had their temple, we have our churches; to which as they were brought by their sabbath, so we by our Lord's day; wherein as they had their sacraments, so we have our sacraments. We must therefore bear the like affection to ours as they did to that. We have greater cause. There was the shadow, here is the substance; there the figure, here the truth; there the sacrifices of beasts, here of 'the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world.'

I find myself here occasioned to enter a great sea of discourse; but you shall see I will make but a short cut of it. It is God's house you enter; a house where the Lord is present; the place where his honour dwelleth. Let this teach us to come—

1. With *reverence*. Lev. xix. 30, 'Ye shall hallow my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.' The very mention of this reverence, methinks, should strike our hearts with our self-known guiltiness. How few look to their feet before they enter these holy doors! Ecces. v. 1; and so they offer the sacrifice of imprudent and impudent fools. If they are to hear, they regard *quis*, not *quid*: anything is good that some man speaks, the same in another trivial. If the man like them not, nor shall the sermon. Many thus contend like those two Germans in a tavern. One said he was of Dr Martin's religion, the other protested himself of Dr Luther's religion; and thus among their cups the litigation grew hot between them: whereas indeed Martin and Luther was but one man. Others, when they come first into the church, they swap down on their seats, clap their hats before their eyes, and scarce bow their knees; as if they came to bless God, not to entreat God to bless them. 'They would quake in the presence of an offended king, who are thus impudent-faced in the house of God. But saith the Lord, whose 'throne is the heaven, and the earth his footstool; I will look to him that trembleth at my word,' Isa. lxvi. 2. So Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 17, 'was afraid, and said, How fearful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' Whereupon Bernard, *Terribilis plane locus*, &c.,—'A fearful place indeed, and worthy of all reverence; which saints inhabit, holy angels frequent, and God himself graceth with his own presence.' As the first Adam was placed in paradise to keep it, so the second Adam is in the congregation of his saints to preserve it. Therefore enter not without reverence: Ps. v. 7, 'I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercies; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.'

2. With *joy*. None but a free-will offering is welcome to God. It is a common opinion in the world that religion doth dull a man's wits and deject his spirits, as if mirth and mischief were only sworn brothers. But God's word teacheth, and a good conscience findeth, that no man can be so joyful as the faithful; nor is there so merry a land as the holy land; no place of joy like the church. Let the wicked think that they cannot laugh if they be tied to the law of grace, nor be merry if God be in the company; but the Christian knows there is no true joy but the good joy: and if this be anywhere, it is in the temple. Ps. cxxiv. 1, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.' Indeed, therefore, we are not merry enough, because we are not enough Christians. Can you wish more joy to be received than that, Rom. xiv. 17, 'peace of conscience, and joy of

the Holy Ghost,'—*hilaris cum pondere virtus*, a joy that can neither be suppressed nor expressed,—or more joy to be communicated than, Col. iii. 16, 'in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord?' Think, think, thy God is here. The angels of heaven rejoice in his glorious presence, and crown it as their chief felicity; and shall not poor man rejoice in his gracious presence,—as it were, his most blessed society? Yes; the light of thy countenance, O Lord, shall put more gladness into our hearts than into the worldlings' their abundance of corn and wine, Ps. iv. 6, 7. Cast away then your dulness and unwillingness of heart; come merrily and with a joyful soul into the house of God.

3. With *holiness*. It is holy ground, not by any inherent holiness, but in regard of the religious use. For that place which was once *Bethel*, the house of God, proved afterward *Bethaven*, the house of iniquity. But it is thus God's sanctuary, the habitation of his sanctity: *Procul hinc, procul este profani*. 'Put off thy shoes,'—doff thy carnal affections,—'the place where thou standest is holy ground;' 'wash thy hands,' yea, thy heart, 'in innocency,' before thou 'come near to God's altar.' Be the minister never so simple, never so sinful, the word is holy, the action holy, the time holy, the place holy, ordained by the Most Holy to make us holy. Saith a reverend divine, God's house is for godly exercises; they wrong it, therefore, that turn *sanctuarium* into *promptuarium*, the sanctuary into a buttery, and spiritual food into belly-cheer. And they much more, that pervert it to a place of pastime, making the house of praise a house of plays. And they most of all, that make it a house, not *laudis*, but *fraudis*,—Matt. xxi. 13, 'My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves,'—robbing, if not men of their goods, yet God of the better part, sincerity of conscience.

What a horrid thing would it be, beloved, if you should depart from this church, where you learn to keep a good conscience, but into the market, and there practise deceit, circumvention, oppression, swearing, drunkenness! Oh, do not derive the commencement of your sins from God's house! What a mockery is this, and how odious in the sight of heaven, if you should begin your wickedness with a sermon, as the Papists begin their treasons with a mass! I tax no known person; but for the facts and faults, *non ignota cano*, I do not speak of things unknown. I would to God your amended lives might bring me with shame again hither to recant and unsay it.

But it often so falls out, that as those conspirators met at the Capitol, so the church is made the *communis terminus*, where many wickednesses have appointed to meet. 'What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?' 2 Cor. vi. 16. Begin not the day with God, to spend all the rest with Satan. Your tongues have now blessed the Lord; let not the evening find them red with oaths, or black with curses. Let not that saying of Luther be verified by you, that *in nomine Domini incipit omne malum*,—in the name of God begins all mischief. Whatsoever your morning sacrifice pretend, look to your afternoon. You have done so much the worse, as you have made a show of good; and it had been easier for your unclean hearts to have missed this admonition. This caveat, before I leave God's house, I thought to commend to your practice, when you leave it.

I have held you too long in the church, speaking of the church. It was the most material point I propounded to my discourse; forgive the prolixity, the brevity of the rest shall make amends. The first strain or stair was his entrance into God's house. Now he is in, what doth he? What bringeth he? We find—

Burnt-offerings.—I have three dissuasions from punctual tractation of

this point. First, The poor remnant of the fugitive time. Secondly, I have liberally handled it on former occasions.* Thirdly, The necessity is not great of discoursing the sacrifices of the law in these days of the gospel. We have the light, and therefore need not trouble ourselves to cast back the shadows.

Sacrifices are of great antiquity. Not only the book of God, but even the law of nature, hath imprinted in man's heart that sacrifices must be offered. It is written in the conscience, that a homage is due to the superior power, which is able to revenge itself of dishonour and contempt done it, and to regrantify them with kindness that served it. But David's sacrifice was the earnest of a thankful heart. I might amplify it, and perhaps pick up some good gleanings after others' full carts.

I could also observe, that David came not before God empty-handed, but brought with him some actual testimony of his devoted affection,—burnt-offerings,—to the confusion of their faces who will no longer serve God if he grows chargeable to them. If they may receive from God good things, and pay him only with good words, they are content to worship him. But if they cannot be in his favour but it must cost them the setting on, they will save their purses though they lose their souls. If he requires aught for his church, poor ministers or poor members, they cry with Judas, *Ad quid perditio hæc?*—Why is this waste? They are only so long rich in devotion as they may be rich by devotion, and no longer.

But for ourselves, be we sure that the best sacrifice we can give to God is obedience; not a dead beast, but a living soul. The Lord takes not delight in the blood of brutish creatures, a spirit in bodies, the impassible in savours arising from altars. It is the mind, the life, the soul, the obedience, that he requires: 1 Sam. xv. 22, 'To obey is better than sacrifice.' Let this be our burnt-offering, our holocaust, a sanctified body and mind given up to the Lord, Rom. xii. 1, 2. First the heart: 'My son, give me thy heart.' Is not the heart enough? No, the hand also: Isa. i. 16, 'Wash the hands' from blood and pollution. Is not the hand enough? No, the foot also: 'Remove thy foot from evil.' Is not the foot enough? No, the lips also: 'Guard the doors of thy mouth;' Ps. xxxiv. 13, 'Refrain thy tongue from evil.' Is not thy tongue enough? No, the ear also: 'Let him that hath ears to hear, hear.' Is not the ear enough? No, the eye also: 'Let thine eyes be toward the Lord.' Is not all this sufficient? No, give body and spirit: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' When the eyes abhor lustful objects, the ears slanders, the foot erring paths, the hands wrong and violence, the tongue flattery and blasphemy, the heart pride and hypocrisy; this is thy holocaust, thy whole burnt-offering.

I will pay thee my vows.—The third and highest degree of this song is, *vows*; 'I will pay thee my vows.' And here among vows, I might sooner than with burnt-offerings lose the time, your patience, and myself. This vow was no meritorious or supererogatory work in David. But though the law generally binds him to God's service, yet to some particular act of God's service he may newly bind himself by a vow. So, Gen. xxviii. 20, 22, 'Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me,' &c., 'this stone that I have set for a pillar shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.' Our prophet did vow performance of that duty to which without vowing he was obliged: Ps. cxix. 106, 'I have vowed and sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.'

* See Sermon on Ps. cxviii. 27.

There are many cautions in vows which I must vow to omit: only Solomon's rule excepted, Eccles. v. 4, 6, 'When thou vowest a vow to God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that thou hast vowed. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin.' Let nothing be vowed that is not *penes voventum*, in the power of the vower; and then the thing being good, and thou enabled to perform it, this vow must be kept. For thy vows are a heavy charge: Ps. lvi. 12, 'Thy vows are heavy upon me, O God.'

The Papists have strange, and often impossible vows, of poverty, virginity, pilgrimage. I will teach thee to make vows too; God enable thee to keep them! If thou wilt vow *poverty*, let it be *in spirit*. Vow thyself not in the company of a beggar, but a beggar to Christ. Many blessed saints have served God with their wealth, and thought not that religion was only in them that begged. If thou wilt vow *virginity*, vow thyself a virgin to Christ; whether thou be married or single, keep the bed undefiled, that, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 'thou mayest be presented a pure virgin to Christ.' If thou wilt vow *pilgrimage*, let it not be to our Lady of Loretto, or of Halle and Zichem, indeed not to our Lady, but to our Lord; vow thyself a pilgrim to Christ. Load not thyself with the luggage of this world, lest it hinder thy journey; and cease not travelling till thou come to thy home, the place of peace and eternal rest. These are lawful, laudable vows; the Lord send us all to make them, and to keep them!

You see I am quickly got up these two latter stairs. Some more special use remains only to be made, and so give way to conclusion. I will take from these three branches a just reproof of three sorts of people,—*refusers, intruders, backsliders*. Refusers to come, being called; intruders, that come being not prepared; and backsliders, that make vows but not keep them. The first say not, 'We will go into thy house.' The second say, 'We will go into thy house,' but not 'with burnt-offerings.' The last deny not both the former: 'We will go into thy house,' and 'with burnt-offerings;' but *non solvent vota*, they will not 'pay their vows.'

1. Refusers or recusants are of two sorts—Papists and separatists, or schismatics.

(1.) Papists; and they have so much recourse *ad transmarina judicicia*, to beyond-sea judgments, that they dare not come into God's house because of the Pope's interdiction. And the Popes have so wrought and brought it about now, that they will not only *in abstracto* be had in reverence, but *in concreto* be feared with observation. Though at first thirty bishops there successively yielded their heads to the block for Christ; yet afterwards, by change of bishops in that see, and of humours in those bishops, such alteration hath followed, that Rome is no liker to what Rome was than Michal's image on a pillow of goat's hair, 1 Sam. xix., was like David. The cause therefore of their not communicating with us is awe of the Pope's supremacy. For some of their greatest writers have justified our communion-book to contain all doctrine necessary to salvation. The not suffering them to come to God's house is then rather a point of Popish policy and state than of Christian devotion. But indeed they are the satanical Jesuits that set them afoot. The common people, like the *mare mortuum*, a dead sea, would be quiet enough, if these blustering winds did not put them into tumult. And so long as those dogs can bark against God's house, the poor affrighted people dare not come there. So that England may have their bodies, but Rome hath their hearts; and the danger is fearful, lest Satan also come in for his share, and take possession of their souls.

(2.) Schismatics; who, because their curious eyes, looking through the

spectacles of opinion, spy some morphew* of corruption upon the church's face, will utterly forsake it. There are some that refuse peaceable obedience, as the poet made his plays, to please the people; or as Simon Magus was christened, for company. The separatists are peevishly wretched; discontent drives them from God, and though they say they fly for their conscience, indeed they fly from their conscience, leaving all true devotion behind them, and their wives and children upon the parish.

2. Well, they are gone, and my discourse shall travel no further after them, but fall upon others nearer hand. There are some so far from refusers, that they are rather intruders. They will come into God's house, but they will bring no burnt-offerings with them; no preparation of heart to receive benefit in the church. They come without their wedding-garment, and shall one day hear that fearful and unanswerable question, 'Friends, how came you in hither?'

These are the utterly profane, that come rather with a lame knowledge than a blind zeal. For some of them, good clothes carry them to church; and they had rather men should note the fashion of their habits than God the habit of their hearts. They can better brook ten disorders in their lives than one in their locks. Others are the secure semi-atheistical cosmopolites; and these come too: and none take a truer measure of the sermon, for their sleep begins with the prayer before it, and wakens just at the psalm after it. These think that God may be served well enough with looking on; and their utmost duty, but to bring their bodies a little further living than they shall be brought dead: for then perhaps they shall come to the churchyard, now they will bring them to the church. Devotion and they are almost strangers, and so much as they know of it, they dishonour by their acquaintance. Their burnt-offerings are nothing else but a number of eyes at utmost lift up to heaven; their heart hath another centre. They bring as many sins with them every day to church as they have been all their lives in committing. Their hands are not washed from aspersions of lust and blood; their eyes are full of whoredom, their lips of slander, their affections of covetousness, their wits of cheating, their souls of impiety. If there were no saints in the church, how could they hope the roof would not fall on their guilty heads? But I will leave them to the Lord's reproof: Jer. vii. 9-11, 'Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, and swear falsely; and come and stand before me in this house,' staring me in the face, as if you were innocent? 'Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.'

3. There is yet a last sort, that will come into God's house, and bring with them burnt-offerings, a show of external devotion; but they will not pay their vows. Distress, war, captivity, calamity, famine, sickness, brings down the most elate and lofty spirits. It turns the proud gallant's feather into a kerchief; pulls the wine from the lips of the drunkard; ties up the tongue of the swearer, whom thunder could not adjure to silence; makes the adulterer loathe the place of his sin, the bed. And though the usurer stuff his pillow with nothing but his bonds and mortgages, softer and sweeter in his opinion than down or feathers, yet his head will not leave aching.

This misery doth so sting, terrify, and put sense into the dead flesh of the numbed conscience, that (all worldly delights being found like plummets of lead tied about a man while he is cast into this sea, so far from helping him to swim, that they sink him rather,) the eye looks about for another shore, and finds none but God. To this so long forgotten God, the heart begins to address a messenger, and that is prayer. God, the wicked see,

* That is, a scab or scurf.—ED.

must be called on, but they know not how. They have been so mere strangers to him, that they cannot tell how to salute him. Like beggars that are blind, they are forced to beg, but they see not of whom. Or if their eyes are so far open, *vident quasi e longinquo salutem, sed interjacente pelago; vident quo eundrum, non qua*,—they see health afar off, as it were beyond the sea; they see whither they would go, but not which way.

If any inferior thing or created prop could uphold them, God should not be solicited. If friends will, if physic will, if money will, if all the delicate objects for any sense will ease or appease their grief, they will not seek to heaven. Yea, if Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, can cure them, they will not trouble the God of Israel. But all lower pleasures to one thus sick are but like a sweet harmony of music to a deaf man. There is no hope of comfort but from above the clouds. Health and prosperity is but as a coach to carry our desires to heaven, but sickness is the post-horse. Only this *sub-pœna* can bring us to put up a supplication in the high court of requests and mercy. Now, lo, they pray, they beseech, they sigh, they weep, they bleed, and lastly they vow.

What vow they? Either some new act to be done, or some old act to be left undone. Now the drunkard vows abstinence, the lustful vows continence, the swearer vows to leave his blasphemy, the encloser vows to throw open his taken-in commons, the proud vow to leave their gaudy vanity, the worldling vows to be charitable and to relieve the poor; and perhaps, at such a pinch or dead lift, one usurer in a thousand years may vow to forsake his usury, and to restore all that he hath so gotten. Now they say, Lord, remove from me this malady, this extremity, and I will hereafter serve thee better, love thee more, believe thy gospel, relieve thy poor, give something to an hospital, or do some such act as may testify my thankfulness.

Well, God hears and grants; health comes, strength is recovered, the danger is over, they are well. Now *ubi vota?*—where be their vows? Alas! we rise from our beds of sickness, and leave our vows behind us.

‘Ægrotus surgit, sed pia vota jacent.’

Physicians have a rule among themselves concerning their patients: Take whiles they be in pain. For whatsoever they promise sick, when they are well they will not perform it. So God had need to take what devotion he can get at our hands in our misery, for when prosperity returns we forget our vows. You have often heard that old verse—

‘Dæmon languebat, monachus tunc esse volebat;
Dæmon convaluit, dæmon ut ante fuit;’

and as wittily Englished—

‘The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;
The devil was well, the devil of monk was he.’

The moral of it suits full to our present purpose. It is reported of Constantinople that a terrible earthquake had overthrown many houses, slain much people. Hereupon the remaining inhabitants, affrighted, fell devoutly to their prayers and vows, privately in their chambers, publicly in their churches; the poor were relieved, justice administered, their lives much amended. But afterwards, when God held his hand, they held their tongues; he forbore plaguing, and they forbore praying; the rod ceased, and their piety withal: they forgot their vows.

When the Lord hath stricken us by famine, in withholding the rain from

us, or in pouring down too much too fast upon us ; or by a grievous plague, turning our popular streets into a desert ; we straight grow penitent : zeal carries up our cries to heaven, we pray, we sigh, we weep. Sorrow sits in our eyes, devotion on our lips ; God hath at that time more hearty prayers in an hour than ordinarily in a year. But as the poet spake—

‘Nocte pluit tota, redeunt spectacula mane;’—

The Lord no sooner takes off the burden of misery, but we also shake off the burden of piety ; we forget our vows. Oh the mercy of God, that such forgetfulness should possess Christian hearts ! This was unthankful Israel's fault : Ps. cvi. 13, ‘They soon forgot his works ;’ they forgat, yea, soon ; they made haste to forget, so the original is : ‘They made haste, they forgat.’ Like men that in sleep shake Death by the hand, but when they are awake will not know him.

It is storied of a merchant, that in a great storm at sea vowed to Jupiter, if he would save him and his vessel, to give him a hecatomb. The storm ceaseth, and he bethinks that a hecatomb was unreasonable ; he resolves on seven oxen. Another tempest comes, and now he vows again the seven at least. Delivered then also, he thought that seven were too many, and one ox would serve the turn. Yet another peril comes, and now he vows solemnly to fall no lower ; if he might be rescued, an ox Jupiter shall have. Again freed, the ox sticks in his stomach, and he would fain draw his devotion to a lower rate ; a sheep was sufficient. But at last, being set ashore, he thought a sheep too much, and purposeth to carry to the altar only a few dates. But by the way he eats up the dates, and lays on the altar only the shells. After this rate do many perform their vows. They promise whole hecatombs in sickness, but they reduce them lower and lower still as they grow well. He that vowed to build an hospital, to restore an impropriation to the church, to lay open his enclosures, and to serve God with an honest heart, brings all at last to a poor reckoning, and thinks to please the Lord with his empty shells. There was some hope of this man's soul's health while his body was sick ; but as his body riseth to strength, his soul falls to weakness.

It is the reproach of Rome, *No penny, no paternoster* ; let it not be our reproach and reproof too, No plague, no paternoster ; no punishments, no prayers. Thy vows are God's debts, and God's debts must be paid ; he will not, as men do desperate debtors, dismiss thee on a slight composition. No ; *juste exigitur ad solvendum, qui non cogitur ad vovendum*,*—he is justly required to pay that was not compelled to vow. *Non talis eris, si non feceris quod vovisti, qualis mansisti si nihil tale vovisses : minor enim tunc esses, non pejor*,†—Thou remainest not the same, having vowed and not performed, as thou hadst been hadst thou not vowed : thou hadst then been less, thou art now worse.

Well then, beloved, if we have vowed a lawful vow to the Lord, let us pay it. Let it not be said of us, that we do *aliud sedentes, aliud stantes*,—one thing sitting in our chair of sickness, another thing standing in our stations of health. The Lord doth not deliver us out of the bond of distress, that we should deliver ourselves out of the bond of obedience. Gal. vi. 7, ‘Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap.’ The next blow of his hand will be heavier, because thou hast soon forgotten this. Who can blame justice, if he strike us with yet greater plagues, that have on our deliverance from the former so mocked him with the fall-

* Bern.

† Aug. in Ep. ad Armentar. et Paulinum.

ing fruits of our vowed devotion? Come we then whose hearts the mercy of God and blood of Jesus Christ hath softened, and say with our Psalmist, 'We will go to thy house, O Lord: we will pay thee our vows.'

You see all the parts of this song; the whole concert or harmony of all is praising God. I have shewed you *quo loco*, in his house; *quo modo*, with burnt-offerings; *quo animo*, paying our vows. Time hath abridged this discourse, contrary to my promise and purpose.

In a word, which of us is 'not infinitely beholden to the Lord our God, for sending to us many good things, and sending away from us many evil things? Oh, where is our praise, where is our thankfulness? 'What shall we do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?' What but 'take the cup of salvation, and bless the name of the Lord?' Ps. c. 4, 'Oh, let us enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: let us be thankful unto him, and bless his name.' And let us not bring our bodies only, but our hearts; let our souls be thankful.

Man's body is closed up within the elements: his blood within his body, his spirits in his blood, his soul within his spirits, and the Lord resteth in his soul. Let then the soul praise the Lord; let us not draw near with our lips, and leave our hearts behind us; but let us give the Searcher of the hearts a hearty praise. Ingratitude is the devil's text; oaths, execrations, blasphemies, and lewd speeches are commentaries upon it. But thankfulness is the language of heaven; for it becometh saints to be thankful. As therefore we would give testimony to the world, and argument to our own conscience, that we serve the Lord, let us promise and perform the words of my text, 'We will go into thy house with burnt-offerings: we will pay thee our vows.' The Lord give thankfulness to us, and accept it of us, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.