

THE FATAL BANQUET.

THE SHOT; OR, THE WOEFUL PRICE WHICH THE WICKED PAY FOR THE FEAST OF VANITY.

But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.—PROV. IX. 18.

SATAN's guests are unhappily come from the end of a feast to the beginning of a fray. As the Sodomites ate and drank till the fire was about their ears, so these are jovial and sing care away; but it seems by the sequel that the devil will not be pleased with a song, as the host in the fable with the singing guest. He cries out, as the usurer at his spawning hour, 'Give me my money.' Arguments are held compliments; persuasions, entreaties, promises of speedy satisfaction, will do no good on him that hath no good in him: he is like the cuckoo, always in one tune, 'Give me my money.' The debtor may entreat, this creditor will not retreat; he will to war, (you know the usurer's war,) except he may have his money. So the great usurer, the devil,—I hope usurers do not scorn the comparison,—when the feast is done, looks for a reckoning. The usurer, perhaps, will take security; so will the devil. Security and deadness of heart will a great while please him. But when Dives hath dined, the devil takes away. Death is his knife, and hell his voider. He takes away one dish more than he set down: instead of the reversion, the feasters themselves, nay, the feastmaker too; for Dives is the founder and Satan is the confounder: the one provides meat for the belly, the other, by God's sufferance, 'destroys them both,' 1 Cor. vi. 13. Satan, according to the tricks of some shifting hostess, bids many friends to a feast, and then beats them with the spit. Dainty cheer, but a saucy reckoning. The feast is vanity, the shot vexation, Eccles. i. Thus they that worship their belly as god, temple themselves in hell; and as 'their end is damnation,' Phil. iii. 19, so their damnation is without end. 'Therefore shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed,' Amos vi. 7.

I would willingly lead you through some suburbs before I bring you to the main city of desolation, and shew you the wretched conclusion of this

banquet, and confusion of these guests. All which arise from the conterminant situation, or, if I may so speak, from the respondent opposition of these two sermons, Wisdom's and Folly's,—that is, God's and Satan's. For this sad sequel is, if not a relative, yet a redditive demonstration of their misery; for after the infection of sin follows that infliction of punishment. The turrets I would lead you by are built and consist of farewells and welcomes; of some things deposed, and some things imposed; positive and privative circumstances; valedictions and maledictions: they take their leaves of temporal and affected joys, and turn upon eternal and cursed sorrows. I will limit these general observations into four.

Obs. 1.—All sinful joys are dammed (if not damned) up with a *but*. They are troubled with a *but*-plague, like a bee with a sting in her tail. They have a worm that crops them, nay, gnaws asunder their very root; though they shoot up more hastily, and spread more spaciouly than Jonah's gourd. There is great preparation of this banquet, properation to it, participation of it; all is carried with joy and jousance: there is a corrective *but*, a *veruntamen* spoils all in the upshot; a little coloquintida, that embitters the broth; a perilous, a pernicious rock, that splits the ship in the haven. When all the prophecies of ill success have been held as Cassandra's riddles, when all the contrary winds of afflictions, all the threatened storms of God's wrath, could not dishearten the sinner's voyage to these Netherlands, here is a *but* that shipwrecks all; the very mouth of a bottomless pit, not shallower than hell itself.

It is observable that Solomon's proverbial says are so many select aphorisms, containing, for the most part, a pair of cross and thwart sentences, handled rather by collation than relation, whose conjunction is disjunctive. The proverbs are not joined with an *et* but an *at*, with a *but* rather than with an *and*. 'Stolen waters are sweet,' &c.; '*but* he knoweth not,' &c. It stands in the midst, like a rudder or oar, to turn the boat another way. 'Rejoice, O young man,' &c.; '*but* know that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment,' &c., Eccles. xi. 9. All runs smooth, and inclines to the bias of our own affections, till it lights upon this rub. The Babel of iniquity is built up apace, till confusion steps in with a *but*. It is like the sudden clap of a serjeant on a gallant's shoulder. He is following his lusts, full scent and full cry; the arrest strikes him with a *but*, and all is at a loss.

As in a fair summer's morning, when the lark hath called up the sun, and the sun the husbandman; when the earth hath opened her shop of perfumes, and a pleasant wind fans coolness through the air; when every creature is rejoiced at the heart, on a sudden the furious winds burst from their prisons, the thunder rends the clouds, and makes way for the lightning, and the spouts of heaven stream down showers; a hideous tempest sooner damps all the former delight than a man's tongue can well express it. With no less content do these guests of sin pass their life; they eat to eat, drink to drink, often to sleep, always to surfeit; they carol, dance, spend their present joys, and promise themselves infallible supply. On a sudden this *but* comes like an unlooked-for storm, and turns all into mourning, and such mourning as Rachel had for her children, that will not be comforted, because their joys are not.

A wicked man runs headlong in the night of his unwaked security after his wonted sports, and because he keeps his old path, which never interrupted him with any obstacle, he nothing doubts but to speed as he had wont; but his enemy hath digged a pit in his way, and in he topples, even to the depths of hell. Thus wicked joys end with wretched sorrows, and as man hath his

sic, so God hath his *sed*. If we will have our will in sin, it is fit he should have his will in punishing. To this sense, Solomon frequently in his Proverbs. They will pursue wickedness, *but* they shall be plagued. I have forbidden usury, adultery, swearing, malice, as unclean meats; you will feed on them; *but* you shall be punished. There is a reckoning behind, a *butt* they never shot at; but they shot besides the *but* the whiles. God hath prepared them as the miserable marks, Job vii. 20, that shall receive the arrows of his vengeance, till they are drunk with blood. They shall suffer that in passion which Job spake in apprehension: chap. vi. 4, 'The arrows of the Almighty shall be within them, the poison whereof shall drink up their spirits; and the terrors of God shall set themselves in array against them.' So Moses sung in the person of God against the wicked, Deut. xxxii. 42, 'I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall eat flesh,' &c. They forget that when God shall 'rebuke them in his wrath, and chasten them in his hot displeasure, his arrows shall stick fast in them, and his hand shall press them sore,' Ps. xxxviii. 1, 2. This is their sad epilogue, or rather the breaking off their scene in the midst. The banquet of stolen waters and secret bread is pleasant; *but* 'the dead are there, and the guests be in the depths of hell.'

Obs. 2.—The devil doth but cozen the wicked with his cates: as before in the promise of delicacy, so here of perpetuity. He sets the countenance of continuance on them, which indeed are more fallible in their certainty than flourishable in their bravery. Their banqueting-house is very slippery, Ps. lxxiii. 18; and the feast itself a mere dream, ver. 20. Let the guest preserve but reason, and he shall easily make the collection: that if for the present *gaudia plus aloes quam mellis habent*, to the compound of his joys there go more bitter than sweet simples, what will then the end be? Even such a one as at once *consumit delicias, consummat miseras*,—makes an end of their short pleasures, and begins their lasting pains. This my text salutes them as the mason was wont to salute the emperor at his coronation, with a lapful of stones:—

'Elige ab his saxis, ex quo, augustissime Cæsar,
Ipse tibi tumulum me fabricare velis;'

'Choose, great emperor, out of this whole heap, what stone thou best likest for thine own sepulchre.' You that crown your days with rosebuds, and flatter your hearts with a kingdom over pleasures, think of a low grave for your bodies, and a lower room for your souls. It is the subtlety of our common enemy to conceal this woe from us so long, that we might see it and feel it at once. For if we could but foresee it, we would fear it; if we truly feared it, we would use the means not to feel it.

Our most fortified delights are like the child's castle, done down with a fillip: *οἷα*, nay, *οἷα; ὄναρ*, a shadow, the very dream of a shadow; a rotten post, slightly painted; a paper tower, which the least puff overturns.

'Cuncta trahit secum, vertitque volubile tempus;'

Time whirls about the world, and makes all inferior things to travel and spend themselves together with him. Sinful and earthly delight is well called amiable, fragile, feeble, a thing soon loved, sooner ended; but long, very long, lamented: a rotten nut, fair, but hollow. Though philosophy saith there is no vacuity in *rerum natura*, yet divinity saith there is nothing but vacuity in *naturæ rebus*. Nature, as it is not only corrupt of itself, but made more foul in the evil man's use, hath nothing in it but vanity; and

vanity is nothing, a mere emptiness, a vacuity. Hence, if Aristotle commends the 'nature of things,' the better philosopher, Solomon, discommends the 'things of nature,' especially in their base and bad usage. Only the devil's feast-house hath a fair bush at the door, (yet if the wine were good, what needs the ivy?) and 'therefore his people turn in thither, and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them,' Ps. lxxiii. 10. But when they are once in, they find themselves deceived, for 'the dead are there,' &c.

Then put no trust in so weak comforts, that will be unto you, as Egypt to Israel, a reed, which when you lean upon, it will not only fail you, but the splinters shall run into your hand. 'You shall be ashamed of your weak confidence. The burden of the beasts of the south : into the land of trouble,' &c., Isa. xxx. 5, 6. I am no prognosticator; yet if cosmography affirm that we live in a southern climate, and experience testify that we have many beasts among us, methinks the words lie as fit for us as if they were purposely made. How many in our land by loss of conscience are become atheists, and by loss of reason, beasts; who run so fast to this Egyptian feast of wickedness, that he speaks easiest against them that speaks but of a burden! These having found Satan's temptations sweet for the daintiness, judging by their own lusts, dare also take his word for the continuance. But if the great table of this earth shall be overthrown, what shall become of the dainties that the hand of nature hath set on it? To which purpose saith Jerome, *Oh si possemus in talem ascendere speculam, de qua universam terram sub nostris pedibus cerneremus, jam tibi ostenderem totius orbis ruinas*, &c.*—If it could be granted us to stand on some lofty pinnacle, from which we might behold the whole earth under our feet, how easy a persuasion would make these earthly pleasures seem vile in our opinion! You say, your pleasures are for number manifold, for truth manifest, for dimension great; grant all, though all be false; yet they are for time short, for end sour. *Breve est, quod dilectat : eternum, quod cruciat*.—It is short, that pleaseth them; everlasting, that plagueth them. Pleasure is a channel, and death the sea whereinto it runs. *Mellifluus ingressus, fellifluus regressus*.—Yield your joys sweet at the porch, so you grant them bitter at the postern. *Securus et securis* must meet; wickedness and wretchedness must be made acquainted. The lewd man's dinner shall have that rich man's supper, Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' The devil then, you see, is a crafty and cheating host, whose performance falls as short of his promise as time doth of eternity. Let then the Apostle's caveat, Eph. v. 6, be the use of this observation: 'Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience.'

Obs. 3.—The punishments of the wicked are most usually in the like; proper and proportional to their offences. Solomon here opposeth the 'house of mourning' to the 'house of feasting;' as in express terms, Eccles. vii. 2: for as it is fit in the body that surfeit should be followed with death, so those that greedily make themselves sick with sin become justly dead in soul. They have affected the works of hell, therefore it is just that hell should expect them, and that every one should be granted their own place, Acts i. 25. As they would not know what they did till they had done it, so they fitly know not the place whither they go till they are in it. *Nescit*,—'he knoweth not,' &c. For the high places, which their ambition climbed to, ver. 14, they are cast down, like Lucifer, to the lowest place, the depth of hell. As Simon Magus would fly with arrogance, so he came down with a vengeance,

* Hier. lib. ii., Epist. ad Heliod.

and broke his neck. See how fitly they are requited. 'They eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence,' Prov. iv. 17; now they are scanted of both, except they will eat the bread of gall, and drink their own tears.

Thus Pharaoh drowns the Hebrew males in a river, Exod. i. 22; therefore is drowned himself with his army in a sea, Exod. xiv. 28. He had laid insupportable burdens on Israel; God returns them with full weight, number, measure. When Israel had cut off the thumbs and great toes of Adoni-bezek, hear the maimed king confess the equity of this judgment: Judges i. 7, 'Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.' As proud Bajazet threatened to serve Tamerlane, being conquered,—to imprison him in a cage of iron, and carry him about the world in triumph,—so the Scythian having took that bragging Turk, put him to the punishment which himself had lessoned; carrying and carting him through Asia, to be scorned of his own people. Thus Haman is hanged on his own gallows, Esth. vii. 10. Perillus tries the trick of his own torment.

The Papists, that would have fired us in a house, were themselves fired out of a house. Gunpowder spoiled some of their eyes, musket-shot killed others, the engines of their own conspiracy; and the rest were advanced higher by the head than the Parliament-house, that would have lifted us higher, of purpose to give us the more mortal fall. God hath retaliated their works into their own bosoms. 'They travailed with iniquity, conceived mischief;' and, lo, the birth is their own sorrow. 'They have digged a pit for us,'—and that low, unto hell,—'and are fallen into it themselves,' Ps. vii. 14, 15.

'Nec enim lex æquior ulla est
Quam necis artifices, arte perire sua;'

No juster law can be devised or made,
Than that sin's agents fall by their own trade.'

The order of hell proceeds with the same degrees; though it give a greater portion, yet still a just proportion of torment. These wretched guests were too busy with the waters of sin; behold, now they are in the depth of a pit, 'where no water is.' Dives, that wasted so many tuns of wine, cannot now procure water, not a pot of water, not a handful of water, not a drop of water, to cool his tongue. *Desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam.** A just recompense! He would not give a crumb; he shall not have a drop. Bread hath no smaller fragment than a crumb, water no less fraction than a drop. As he denied the least comfort to Lazarus living, so Lazarus shall not bring him the least comfort dead. Thus the pain for sin answers the pleasure of sin. Where now are those delicate morsels, deep carouses, loose laughers, proud port, midnight revels, wanton songs? Why begins not this fellow-guest with a new health, or the music of some ravishing note? or, if all fail, hath his fool-knavish parasite no obscene jest that may give him delight? Alas! hell is too melancholy a place for mirth. All the music is round-echoing groans; all the water is muddy with stench; all the food anguish!

Thus damnable sins shall have semblable punishments; and as Augustine of the tongue, so we may say of any member: *Si non reddet Deo faciendo quæ debet, reddet ei patiundo quæ debet*,—If it will not serve God in action, it shall serve him in passion. Where voluntary obedience is denied, in-

* Aug. Hom. 7.

voluntary anguish shall be suffered. Know this, thou swearer, that as thy tongue spits abroad the flames of hell, so the flames of hell shall be poured on thy tongue. As the drunkard will not now keep the cup of satiety from his mouth, so God shall one day hold the cup of vengeance to it, and he shall drink the dregs thereof. As the usurers are tormentors of the commonwealth on earth, so they shall meet with tormentors in hell, that shall transcend them both in malice and subtlety, and load them with bonds and executions, and (which is strangely possible) heavier than those they have so long traded in. The church-robber, encloser, engrosser, shall find worse prowling and pilling in hell than themselves used on earth; and as they have been the worst devils to their country's wealth, so the worst of devils shall attend them. The unclean adulterer shall have fire added to his fire. And the covetous wretch, that never spake but in the horse-leech's language, and carried a mouth more yawning than the grave's, is now quitted with his *nunquam satis*, and finds enough of fire 'in the depths of hell.'

Obs. 4.—The devil hath feasted the wicked, and now the wicked feast the devil, and that with a very chargeable banquet. For the devil is a dainty prince, and more curious in his diet than Vitellius. He feeds, like the cannibal, on no flesh but man's flesh. He loves no venison but the heart, no fowl but the breast, no fish but the soul. As the 'ungodly have eaten up God's people as bread,' Ps. xiv. 4, so themselves shall be eaten as bread: it is just that they be devoured by others that have devoured others. As they have been lions to crash the bones of the poor, so a lion shall crash their bones; they are Satan's feast, he shall 'devour them,' 1 Pet. v. 8. Thus they that were the guests are now the banquet: as they have been feasted with evils, so they feast the devils.

Make a little room in your hearts, ye fearless and desperate wretches, for this meditation. Behold, now, as in a speculative glass, the devil's hospitality. Once be wise; believe without trial, without feeling. Yield but to be 'ashamed of your sins,' Rom. vi. 21, and then I can, with comfort, ask you 'what fruit they ever brought you.' Let me but appeal from Philip of Macedon when he is drunk, to Philip of Macedon when he is sober,—from your bewitched lusts to your waked consciences,—and you must needs say, that *brevis hæc, non vera voluptas*. All 'the works of darkness are unfruitful,' Eph. v. 11, except in producing and procuring 'utter darkness,' Matt. viii. 12. Sin is the devil's earnest-penny on earth; in hell he gives the inheritance. Temptation is his press-money: by rebellion, oppression, usury, blasphemy, the wicked, like faithful soldiers, fight his battles. When the field is won, or rather lost, (for if he conquers, they are the spoil,) in the depth of hell he gives them pay. Who, then, would march under his colours, who, though he promise kingdoms, Matt. iv. 9, cannot perform a hog? Matt. viii. 31. Alas, poor beggar! he hath nothing of his own but sin, and death, and hell, and torment. *Nihil ad effectum, ad defectum satis*,—No positive good, enough privative evil.

Even those that pass their souls to him by a real covenant, he cannot enrich: they live and die most penurious beggars, as they do pernicious villains. And they upon whom God suffers him to throw the riches of this world, as a snare over their hearts, which he cannot do but at second-hand, have not enough to keep either their heads from aching or their consciences from despairing. Thus, though God permit them, to help 'the rich man to fill his barns,' Luke xii, the usurer to swell his coffers, the luxurious to poison his blood, the malicious to gnaw his bowels, the sacrilegious to amplify his revenues, the ambitious to advance credit; yet there is neither will in God, nor

willingness in the devil, that any of these should be a blessing unto them. All is but borrowed ware, and the customers shall pay for day : the longer they abuse them, the larger arrearages they must return. Only here I may say, that *bona sunt quæ dona sunt*,—they are goods that are gifts. God gives his graces freely, the devil his junkets falsely ; for the guests must pay, and that dearly, when the least item in the bill, for pains, is beyond the greatest dish of the feast, for pleasures.

Solomon's sermon spends itself upon two circumstances:—

I. The persons.

II. The place.

I. The persons are—

1. The tempter ; *she*, a right harlot, as appears—(1.) By her prostitution ; (2.) By her prodigality ; (3.) By her perdition.

2. The tempted ; *the dead*. All death, whether, (1.) corporal, (2.) spiritual, or, (3.) eternal, is from sin.

3. The attempted ; *he knoweth not*. Whose ignorance is either—(1.) natural ; (2.) invincible ; (3.) affected ; or, (4.) arrogant.

II. The place. Where their misery is amplified, 1. In part personally ; *per infirmitatem*, by their weakness to resist ; soon in. 2. In part locally—(1.) *Per infernitatem*, in hell ; (2.) *Per profunditatem*, in the depth of hell.

I. 1. The person tempting, or the harlot, is vice ; ugly and deformed vice : that with glazed eyes, sulphured cheeks, pied garments, and a Siren's tongue, wins easy respect and admiration. When the heat of temptation shall glow upon concupiscence, the heart quickly melts. The wisest, Solomon, was taken and snared by a woman ; which foul adultery bred as foul an issue, or rather *progeniem vitiosiore*, a worse, idolatry. Satan therefore shapes his temptation in the lineaments of a harlot, as most fit and powerful to work upon man's affections. Certain it is that all delighted vice is a spiritual adultery.

The covetous man couples his heart to his gold ; the gallant is incontinent with his pride ; the corrupt officer fornicates with bribery ; the usurer sets continual kisses on the cheek of his security. The heart is set where the hate should be ; and every such sinner spends his spirits to breed and see the issue of his desires. Sin, then, is the devil's harlot, which being tricked up in tempting colours, draws in visitants, *præmittendo suavia, promittendo perpetua*,—giving the kisses of pleasure, and promising them perpetual. We may observe in this strumpet—

(1.) *Prostitution*. Prov. vii. 13, 'So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,' &c. Shame now-a-days begins to grow so stale, that many vices shall vie in impudent speeches and gestures with the harlot. 'Come, let us take our fill of love,' ver. 18 ; as Potiphar's wife to Joseph, without any preparatory circumlocutions or insinuations, 'Come, lie with me.' Sin never stands to untie the knot of God's interdiction, but bluntly breaks it ; as the devil at first to the roots of mankind, Gen. iii., 'Ye shall not die.' The usurer never loseth so much time as to satisfy his conscience ; it is enough to satisfy his concupiscence. A good mortgage lies sick of a forfeit, and at the usurer's mercy. It is as surely damned as the extortioner will be when he lies at the mercy of the devil. These are so far from that old *quære* of Christians, *Quid faciemus* ?—What shall we do ? that they will not admit the novel question of these toyt-headed times, What shall we think ? They will not give the conscience leave, after a tedious and importunate solicitation, to study of the matter ; but are more injurious and obdurate to their own souls than that unjust judge to the widow.

A cheat is offered to a tradesman, an enclosure to a landlord, an underhand fee clapped in the left hand of a magistrate ; if they be evil, and corruption hath first marshalled the way, the field is won. They never treat with sin for truce, or pause on an answer, but presently yield the fort of their conscience. No wonder, then, if the devil's harlot be so bold, when she is so sure of welcome. It is our weakness that gives Satan encouragement ; if we did resist, he would desist. Our weak repulses hearten and provoke his fiercer assaults. He would not shew the worldling his apparent horns, if he did not presume of his covetous desire to be horsed on the back of Mammon, and hurried to hell. Hence sin is so bold as to say 'in the wicked heart,' *Non est Deus*,—'There is no God,' Ps. xiv. 1 ; and so peremptorily to conclude to itself, Ps. x. 6, 'I shall not be moved ; for I shall never be in adversity.' Hence, Ps. xlix. 11, 'Even their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever,' &c. This is presumptuous and whorish prostitution, to set out iniquity barefaced, without the mask of pretexts to hide her ugly visage : an impetuous, a meretricious impudence, that not with a feminine rapture, but rather with a masculine rape, captives the conscience. You see folly's prostitution.

(2.) *Prodition* is the rankling tooth that follows her ravishing kisses. Judas kissed his Master with the same heart. Iniquity hath an infectious breath, if a fair countenance. All her delights are like fair and sweet flowers, but full of serpents. The vanquished concludes with a groan—

'Sic violor, violis, oh violenta, tuis ;'—

Thy soft flowers have stung me to death. For indeed it is most true, *Nemo ipsum peccatum amat, sed male amando illud quod amat, illaqueatur peccato*,*—No man loves sin for its own sake ; but by an irregular and sinister love to that he doth love, he is snared with sin. The devil knows that his Ephesian harlot, vice, would want worshippers, if treason and death were written upon the temple door ; therefore health and content are proclaimed, and as on the theatre presented ; but there is hell under the stage, there is treason in the vault.

Thus temptation misleads the navigators with a pirate's light ; deceives the living fowls with a dead bird : a Siren, a Judas, a Jebusite, a Jesuit. For were the Jesuit to play the devil, or the devil the Jesuit, on the stage of this world, it would be hard to judge which was the Jesuit, which the devil, or which played the part most naturally. As iniquities are Satan's harlots to corrupt the affections, so Jesuits are his engines to pervert the brains ; for if the new guest here be heart-sick, so their proselyte is brain-sick. Both are made so dissolute, till they become desolate, robbed, and destitute of all comfort.

Sin deals with her guests as that bloody prince, that having invited many great states to a solemn feast, flattered and singled them one by one, and cut off all their heads. As fatal a success attends on the flatteries of sin. Oh, then, *fuge exulceratricem hanc*,—fly this harlot, that carries death about her. Go aloof from her door, as, they say, the devil doth by the cross ; but (lest that savour of supposition, nay, of superstition) do thou in sincere devotion fly from sin, *quasi à facie colubri*,—as from a serpent. She hath a Siren's voice, mermaid's face, a Helen's beauty to tempt thee ; but a leper's touch, a serpent's sting, a traitorous hand to wound thee. The best way to conquer sin is by Parthian war, to run away. So the poet—

* August.

‘Sed fuge; tutus adhuc Parthus ab hoste fuga est.’

Tunc peccata fugantur, cum fugiantur,—We then put sin to a forced flight, when it puts us to a voluntary flight. That poetical *amoris artifex et medietus* so counsels: *Fuge conscia vestri concubitus*, &c. But beyond all exception, the holy Apostle gives the charge, ‘Flee fornication.’ Shun the place, suspect the appearance of evil. You see her prodiction.

(3.) Her *perdition* follows. She undoes a man; not so much in estate of his carcase, as of his conscience. The guest is not so much damnified in respect of his goods, as damned in respect of his grace. Every man is not undone that is beggared; many, like Job, *minime pereunt, cum maxime perire videntur*,—are indeed least undone, when they seem most undone. Nay, some may say with the philosopher, *Perieram, nisi perissem*,—If I had not sustained loss, I had been lost. So David’s great trouble made him a good man; Naaman’s leprous flesh brought him a white and clean spirit. But the perdition that vice brings is not so visible as it is miserable. The sequel of the text will amplify this; only now I apply it to the harlot. The harlot destroys a man many ways:—

[1.] In his goods. It is a costly sin. Tamar would not yield to Judah without a hire. The hire makes the whore.

‘Stat meretrix certo quovis mercabilis ære,
Et miseras jusso corpore quaerit opes;’—

‘Compared with harlots, the worst beast is good:
No beasts, but they, will sell their flesh and blood.’

The old proverb conjoins venery and beggary. The prodigal returned not from his harlot without an empty purse. Sin doth no less undo a man’s estate. It is a purgatory to his patrimony. It is objected: it rather helps him to riches, and swells his purse. Doth not a bribed hand, a sycophant tongue, a covetous and griping palm, make men wealthy? Yield wealthy, not rich. He is rich that possesseth what he got justly, and useth what he possesseth conscionably. Other wealthy men are not unlike either the Capuchins or the Seculars. Some, like the former, profess beggary, though they possess the Indies; these had rather fill their eye than their belly, and will not break a sum though they endanger their healths. The other sort are like the Seculars, that will fare well, though with a hard farewell. But as the harlot, so often vice ‘brings a man to a morsel of bread,’ Prov. vi. 26. Thus *tibi fit damno, vitio lucrosa voluptas*,—pleasure is no less than a loss to thee, than a gain to sin. It is not amiss to answer Satan’s inviters to this feast, as the vicious poet his cockatrice—

‘Cur sim mutatus quaeris? quia munera poscis.
Hæc te non patitur causa placere mihi;’—

It is even one reason to dissuade us from sin, that it is costly.

[2.] In his good name. No worldly undoing is like this shipwreck. Goods may be redeemed, but this *semel amissa, postea nullus eris*, once utterly lost, thou art nobody. It is hard to recover the set, when a man is put to the after-game for his credit. Though many a man’s reputation be but *hypenemium ovum*, a rotten egg, whiles he is a great dealer with other men’s goods, and of himself no better than a beggar; and though the most famous are but *astmatici*, short-breathed men, and their reputation no better than Ephraim’s righteousness, but ‘a morning dew;’ yet *actum est de homine, cum actum est de nomine*,—when a man’s good name is done, himself is undone.

A man indeed may lose his good name without cause, and be at once accused and abused, when slanders against him are maliciously raised and easily accepted; but 'God shall bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day,' Ps. xxxvii. 6. Contrarily, another man hides the ulcers of his sore conscience with the plasters of sound repute. But to be puffed up with the wrongful estimation of ourselves, by the flattering breath of others' blown praises, is a ridiculous pride. *Sape flagellatur in corde proprio, qui laudatur in ore alieno*.—Many that are commended in others' mouths are justly subdued in their own conscience. Such a one cozens his neighbours, they one another, and all himself. And as originally the deceit came from him, so eventually the shame will end in him. Hence they whose fames have been carried furthest on the wings of report, have been after, by the manifestation of their wickedness, more dead in men's thoughts than in their own carcase; for 'the name of the wicked shall rot,' Prov. x. 7.

This is the mischief which sin in general, as whoredom in particular, works to the name: a rotten reputation, an infamous fame, a reproach for a report; that their silent memories are never conjured up from the grave of oblivion, but, as the 'son's of Nebat,' for their own disgrace, and to deter men from the imitation of their wickedness. It were well for them, if Time, which unnaturally devours his own brood, could as well still their mention as it hath stayed their motion; or that their memorial might not survive their funeral. Now, though it be no evident demonstration, yet it is a very ominous and suspicious thing to have an ill name. The proverb saith, he is half-hanged. A thief before the judge speeds the worse for his notorious name. Is this all? No; but as he whose breath is stifled with a cord is wholly hanged, so he that hath strangled his own reputation, which is the breath of his breath, with a lewd life, is at least half suspended. His infamy hangs on the gibbet of popular contempt till it be recovered. He is half alive, half a corpse. It was the plain meaning of the proverb.

Now, that a bad name is a broad shame, it appears, because no stews-hunter would be called a whoremonger, no Papist an idolater, no usurer a usurer. All sinners are ashamed to be accounted what they have assumed to be. But it is certain that if a man be ashamed of his name, his name may be ashamed of him. As thou lovest thy reputation with men, seek the testimony of thine own conscience. It is the best fame that carries credit with God. Let men say what they list, O Lord, thou knowest mine innocence. Yet, because it is hard to do good unless a man be reputed good, therefore dare not to darken the light of thy name by the gross clouds of thy impieties. This is the second destruction that continued vice brings her lovers. Prov. vi. 33, 'A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.' When he hath done it, he is undone by it. *Perdit honorem, perdendo honestatem*.—The dishonesty in him shall bring dishonour to him: he builds, Haman-like, a gallows for his own credit.

[3.] In his health. The precepts of Wisdom, practised with obedience, 'bring health to the flesh, and are life to those that find them,' Prov. iv. 22; but sin is 'rottenness to the bones.' 'He that committeth fornication,' saith St Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 18, 'sinneth against his own body.' Let it be inevitably true in this sin, it is, at least accidentally, true in all sins. For though God suffers some reprobates to keep 'firm health,' and to escape 'common plagues;' that they have 'fat eyes,' Ps. lxxiii. 4, 5, 7, and clear lungs, 'merry hearts' and 'nimble loins,' Job xxi. 12; and can stroke their grey hairs, ver. 7; yet often he either puts them on the rack of some ter-

rible disease, or quite puts out their candle. 'Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days,' Ps. lv. 23. All sickness originally proceeds from sin, all weakness from wickedness. As Mephibosheth caught his lameness by falling from his nurse, so all men their diseasedness by falling from their Christ. The evil disposition of the soul mars the good composition of the body. There is no disaster to the members but for disorder in the manners. All diseases are God's real sermons from heaven, whereby he accuseth and punisheth man for his sins.

The harlot is a plague to the flesh : she is worse than a fever, more infectious than the pestilence. Every nation hath his several disease ; but the harlot is a universal plague, whereof no nation is free. She makes the strong man glad of potion, brings health acquainted with the physician ; and he that stoutly denied the knowledge of his gate, now stands trembling at his study door, with a bare head, a bending knee, and a humble phrase. She is the common sink of all corruptions, both natural and preternatural, incident to the conscience or corpse ; and hath more diseases attending on her than the hospital.

The Midianitish harlot, Num. xxv., sin, leads in a train of no fewer nor weaker plagues. Consumptions, fevers, inflammations, botches, emerods, pestilences, are *peccati pedissequæ*, the observant handmaids of iniquity. As it is, then, wicked to 'take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot,' 1 Cor. vi. 15 ; so it is wretched to divorce the affections of the mind from God, and wed them to any impiety. Thus do these pair of harlots impair the health.

[4.] They both concur to spoil a man's soul ; whiles the Soul of the soul, God's Spirit, *quo agitante calescimus*, is by this bereaved us. Acts xvii. 28, 'In him we live, move, and have our being.' *In illo vivimus : vivimus per naturam, bene vivimus per gratiam. In illo movemur, vel movemur potius, ad humana, ad divina opera suscipienda. Kai ἴσμεν ; essentiam habemus, quoad esse, et quoad bene esse ;*—In him all live naturally, some graciously. In him we move, or rather are moved, to the performance, all of human works, some of divine. In him we have our being ; both that we are at all, and that we are well. This better life is the soul spoiled of when sin hath taken it captive. 'The adulteress will hunt for the precious life,' Prov. vi. 26. She is ambitious, and would usurp God's due, and claim the heart, the soul. 'He that doth love her destroyeth his own soul,' ver. 32 : which she loves not for itself, but for the destruction of it ; that all the blossoms of grace may dwindle and shrink away, as blooms in a nipping frost ; and all our comforts run from us, as flatterers from a falling greatness, or as vermin from a house on fire. Nay, even both thy lives are endangered. The wicked man 'goeth after her, as a fool to the correction of the stocks ; till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life,' Prov. vii. 23. It is as inevitably true of the spiritual harlot's mischief ; for 'the turning away of the simple shall slay them,' Prov. i. 32. Save my life, and take my goods, saith the prostrate and yielding traveller to the thief. But there is no mercy with this enemy : the life must pay for it. She is worse than that invincible navy, that threatened to cut the throats of all, men, women, infants ; but I would to God she might go hence again without her errand, as they did, and have as little cause to brag of her conquests.

2. Thus have we described the temptress. The *tempted* follows, who are here called the *dead*. There be three kinds of death—corporal, spiritual, eternal : corporal, when the body leaves this life ; spiritual, when the soul

forsakes and is forsaken of grace ; eternal, when both shall be thrown into hell. The first is the separation of the soul from the body ; the second is the separation of body and soul from grace ; and the third is the separation of them both from everlasting happiness. Man hath two parts by which he lives, and two places wherein he might live if he obeyed God : earth for a time, heaven for ever. This harlot, sin, deprives either part of man in either place of true life, and subjects him both to the first and second death. Let us therefore examine in these particulars, first, what this death is ; and, secondly, how Satan's guests, the wicked, may be said to be liable thereunto.

(1.) Corporal death is the departure of the soul from the body, whereby the body is left dead, without action, motion, sense ; for the life of the body is the union of the soul with it. For which essential dependence the soul is often called and taken for the life : ' Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now ? I will lay down my soul for thy sake,' John xiii. 37,—*τὴν ψυχὴν*, his soul, meaning, as it is translated, his life. And, ' He that findeth his soul shall lose it ; but he that loseth his soul for my sake shall find it,' Matt. x. 39. Here the soul is taken for the life. So that in this death there is the separation of the soul and the body, the dissolution of the person, the privation of life, the continuance of death ; for there is no possible regress from the privation to the habit,* except by the supernatural and miraculous hand of God. This is the first, but not the worst, death which sin procureth. And though the special deadness of the guests here be spiritual, yet this, which we call natural, may be implied, may be applied ; for when God threatened death to Adam's sin, *In illo die morieris*,—' In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,'—yet Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years after. There was, notwithstanding, no delay, no delusion of God's decree ; for *in ipso die*, in that very day, death took hold on him. And so is the Hebrew phrase, Gen. ii. 17, ' dying, thou shalt die,' fall into a languishing and incurable consumption, that shall never leave thee till it bring thee to thy grave. So that he instantly died, not by present separation of soul and body, but by mortality, mutability, misery, yea, by sorrow and pain, as the instruments and agents of death. Thus said that father, ' After a man beginneth to be in this body,' by reason of his sin, ' he is even in death.'

The wicked, then, are not only called dead because the conscience is dead, but also in respect of God's decree, whose inviolable substitution of death to sin cannot be evaded, avoided. It is the statute-law decreed in the great parliament of heaven. *Statutum omnibus semel mori*,—' It is appointed unto men once to die,' Heb. ix. 27. This is one special kindness that sin doth us ; one kiss of her lips. She gives her lovers three mortal kisses. The first kills the conscience ; the second, the carcase ; the third, body and soul for ever. Rom. v. 12, ' Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' So Paul schools his Corinthians : 1 Cor. xi. 30, ' For this cause many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.' And conclusively, Rom. vi. 23, *Peccati stipendium mors*,—' The wages of sin is death.' This death is to the wicked death indeed, even as it is in its own full nature the curse of God, the suburbs of hell. Neither is this unjust dealing with God, that man should incur the death of his body that had rejected the life of his soul. *Nisi praeceisset in peccato mors animæ, nunquam corporis mors in supplicio sequeretur*,†—If sin had not first wounded the body, death could not have killed the soul. Hence saith Augustine, ' Men shun the death of the flesh

* That is, having.—Ed.

† Fulgent.

rather than the death of the spirit; that is, the punishment rather than the cause of the punishment.*

Indeed death, considered in Christ, and joined with a good life, is to God's elect 'an advantage,' Phil. i. 21; nothing else but a bridge over this tempestuous sea to paradise. God's mercy made it so, saith St Augustine,† 'not by making death in itself good, but an instrument of good to his.' This he demonstrates by an instance: 'As the law is not evil when it increaseth the lust of sinners, so death is not good though it augment the glory of sufferers.' The wicked use the law ill, though the law be good. The good die well, though the death be evil. Hence saith Solomon, Eccles. vii. 1, 'The day of death is better than the day of one's birth.' For our death is *non obitus, sed abitus*,—not a perishing, but a parting. *Non amittitur anima, præmittitur tantum*,—The soul is not lost to the body, but only sent before it to joy. *Si durius seponitur, melius reponitur*,—If the soul be painfully laid off, it is joyfully laid up. Though every man that hath his *Genesis* must have his *Exodus*, and they that are born must die; yet, saith Tertullian of the saints, *Profectio est, quam putas mortem*,—Our dying on earth is but the taking our journey into heaven. Simeon departs, and that in peace. *In pace, in pacem*. Death cannot be eventually hurtful to the good; for it no sooner takes away the temporal life but Christ gives eternal in the room of it.

Alas! *σῶματα, πῶματα, corpora, cadavera*. Our graces shall as surely be coffins to our bodies, as our bodies have been coffins to our souls. The mind is but in bondage whiles the body holds it on earth; *σῶμα, quasi σῆμα*, as Plato affirms. Of whom saith an author, that when he saw one too indulgent to his flesh in high diet, he asked him, What do you mean, to make your prison so strong? Thus, *qui gloriatur in viribus corporis, gloriatur in viribus carceris*,—he that boasteth the strength of his body, doth but brag how strong the prison is wherein he is jailed.

Σῶμα πάθος ψυχῆς, ἀδης, μοῖρ', ἄχθος, ἀνάγκη,—†

The body is the disease, the grave, the destiny, the necessity, and the burden of the soul.

'Hinc cupiunt, metuuntque, dolent, gaudentque; nec auras
Respiciunt clausæ tenebris et carcere cæco;—

'Fears, joys, griefs, and desires man's life do share :
It wants no ills that in a prison are.'

It was a good observation that fell from that Stoic, § *Homo calamitatis fabula, infelicitatis tabula*,—Man is a story of woe, and a map of misery. So the Mantuan :—

'Nam quid longa dies nobis, nisi longa dolorum
Colluvies? Longi patientia carceris, ætas?'

It appears, then, that death is, to the good, a procurer of good. *Mors intermitit vitam, non eripit: venit iterum, qui nos in lucem reponat dies.*|| Their death is but like the taking in sunder of a clock, which is pulled a-pieces by the maker's hand, that it may be scoured and repolished, and

* De Trin., lib. iv., cap. 12.

† De Civit., lib. xiii., cap. 4 :—'Non quia mors bonum aliquod facta est, quam vitæ constat esse contrariam; sed ut instrumentum fieret, per quod transiretur in vitam.'

‡ Hom.

§ Epictet. :—'Qui tolerandas esse injurias, et abstinendum à voluptate docuit.'

|| Lactant.

made go more perfectly. But death to the wicked is the second step to that infernal vault, that shall breed either an innovation of their joys, or an addition to their sorrows. Dives, for his momentary pleasure, hath insufferable pains. Judas goes from the gallows to the pit; Esau from his dissolution in earth, to his desolation in hell. 'The dead are there.' Though the dead in soul be meant literally, yet it fetcheth in the body also. For as original sin is the original cause of death, so actual sins hasten it. Men speed out a commission of iniquities against their own lives. So the envious man rots his own bones; the glutton strangles, the drunkard drowns himself. The malecontent dries up his blood with fretting. The covetous, whiles he Italianates his conscience, and would Romanise his estate, starves himself in plain English, and would hang himself when the market falls, but that he is loath to be at the charges of a halter. Thus it is a feast of death, both for the present sense and future certainty of it. 'The dead are there.'

(2.) Spiritual death is called the death of the soul; which consisteth not in the loss of her understanding and will, (these she can never lose, no, not in hell,) but of the truth and grace of God, wanting both the light of faith to direct her, and the strength of love to incite her to goodness. 'For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace,' Rom. viii. 6. The soul is the life of the body, God of the soul. The spirit gone utterly from us, we are dead. And so especially are the guests of Satan dead. 'You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,' Eph. ii. 1. And the widow 'that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,' 1 Tim. v. 6. This divorcement and separation made betwixt God and the soul by sin is *mors animæ*,—the death of the soul. 'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God,' Isa. lix. 2. But 'we live by faith,' Heb. x. 38, and that 'in the Son of God,' Gal. ii. 20. 'His Spirit quickens us,' Eph. ii. 5, as the soul doth a lump of flesh, when God infuseth it.

Now, because these terms of spiritual death are communicated both to the elect and reprobates, it is not amiss to conceive that there is a double kind of spiritual death, both in regard to the *subject* that dieth, and in regard to the *object* whereunto it dieth. Spiritual death in the faithful is threefold:—

[1.] They are dead to *sin*. Rom. vi. 2, 'How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' A dead nature cannot work. He that is dead to sin cannot, as he is dead, sin. We sin indeed, not because we are dead to sin, but because not dead enough. Would to God you were yet more dead, that you might yet more live! This is called mortification. What are mortified? Lusts. The wicked have mortification too, but it is of grace. Matt. viii. 22, they are both jointly expressed: 'Let the dead bury the dead.' Which St Augustine expounds, 'Let the spiritually dead bury those that are corporally dead.' The faithful are dead to sin; the faithless are dead in sin. It is true life to be thus dead. *Mortificatio concupiscentiæ, vivificatio animæ*,—So far is the spirit quickened as the flesh is mortified. So true is this paradox, that a Christian so far lives as he is dead; so far he is a conqueror as he is conquered. *Vincendo se, vincitur à se*,—By overcoming himself, he is overcome of himself. Whiles he overrules his lusts, his soul rules him. When the outward cold rageth with greatest violence, the inward heat is more and more effectual. When death hath killed and stilled concupiscence, the heart begins to live. This war makes our peace.

This life and death is wrought in us by Christ, who at one blow slew our sins and saved our souls. *Una eademque manus vulnus opemque tulit*,—One and the same hand gave the wound and the cure. *Vulneratur concupis-*

centia, sanatur conscientia,—The deadly blow to the concupiscence hath revived the conscience. For Christ takes away as well *dominandi vim* as *damnandi vim*,—the dominion of sin as the damnation of sin. He died ‘that sin might not reign in our mortal body,’ Rom. vi. 12; he came ‘to destroy’ not only the devil, but ‘the works of the devil,’ 1 John iii. 8. Hence if you would, with the spectacles of the Scriptures, read your own estates to God, ‘reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord,’ Rom. vi. 11. This triumph consists not in being free from lusts, but in bridling them; not in scaping temptation, but in vanquishing it. It is enough that ‘in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us,’ Rom. viii. 37.

[2.] They are dead to the *law*. ‘For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God,’ Gal. ii. 19; wherein he opposeth the law against the law, the new against the old, the law of Christ against that of Moses. This accuseth the accusing, condemneth the condemning law.* The Papists understand this of the ceremonial law; but Paul plainly expresseth that the law moral, which would have been to us a law mortal, is put under: we are ‘dead unto it.’ As Christ at once came under death and overcame death, *et superit, et superat*; so we, in him, are exempted from the condemning power and killing letter of the law, and by being dead unto it are alive over it. Indeed, the law still abides. As Christ when he rose from the dead, the grave remained still; Peter freed from the prison, the palsied from his bed, the young man from his coffin, the prison, bed, coffin remain still; the persons are delivered: so the law abides to mortify our lusts still more and more, but our conscience is freed from the bondage of it. ‘We are dead unto it.’

[3.] They are dead to the *world*. This death is double—*active* and *passive*.

Active.—The world is dead unto us. The vanity of carnal joys, the variety of vanities, are as bitter to us as pleasant to the cosmopolite or worldling. And since we must give our voices either to God or Mammon, when God asketh, as Jehu, ‘Who is on my side, who?’ we stand out for our God. *Angustum est stratum pectoris humani, et utrumque operire non potest*,—Man’s heart is too narrow a bed to lodge both God and the world in at once. *Qui utrumque ambit, in utroque deficit*,—The hound that follows two hares will catch neither. *Nemo potest duobus dominis, neque dominiis, inservire*,—‘No man can serve two masters,’ Matt. vi. 24, with true service; especially when they command contrary things. Thus is the world dead to us. For, since the world is not so precious as the soul, we leave the world, to keep our soul, since both cannot well be affected at once; therefore ‘we account all things dross and loss for the excellent knowledge of Christ,’ Phil. iii. 8.

Passive.—We are dead to the world. As we esteem it dross, it esteems us filth: 1 Cor. iv. 13, ‘We are made as the filth of the world, and as the offscouring of all things unto this day.’ As we, in a holy contempt, tread it under in our works, and vilify it in our words, so it looks upon us betwixt scorn and anger, and offers to set his foot on our necks. But *vicimus*, we have conquered: 1 John v. 4, ‘Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’ Let us rejoice, therefore, in ‘our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to us, and we to the world,’ Gal. vi. 14.

These are good deaths! Blessed souls, that are thus dead! Their death is mortification, and, like the phoenix, they are no sooner dead but they are

* Luth. in Gal.

new-born. Their old man's autumn is their new man's spring-tide. There are none thus dead at this feast.

The dead here have seared consciences, poisoned affections, warped, withered, rotten souls. 'Twice dead,' saith St Jude; and some, without hope of growing, 'plucked up by the roots.' Though the Pythagorean error, the transanimation or the departure of the soul from man to man, was brought to the Basilidean heresy; nay, which was more gross, though the poets feigned that the souls of men departed in beasts,—Orpheus into the swan, Ajax into the lion, Agamemnon into the eagle, politicians into bees and ants, the luxurious into hogs, tyrants in wolves; which were positions for Machiavel, and articles of Lucian's faith: yet they might rather (and that more favourably to their own credits, speaking according to men's lives) have affirmed that the spirits of beasts might rather seem to have entered men, if at least the beasts do not preserve their nature better than men. They live whiles they live; men are dead even living. *Impie vivere est diu mori*,—A wicked life is a continual death. And we may say of an old wicked man, not that he hath lived, but that he hath been long. *Deus vita, à qua qui distinguitur perit*,—God is the true life, without whom we cannot live.

The heart of a wicked man thus becometh dead. The devil works by suggesting, man by consenting, God by forsaking. He forsakes thus:—[1.] By suffering a hard heart to grow harder. [2.] By giving success to ill purposes, which he could have disappointed. [3.] By not imparting the assistance of his Spirit. Thus he leaves them in darkness that would not choose the light; and finding their hearts undisposed to believe, delivers them up to infidelity. His not willing to soften is enough to harden; his not willing to enlighten is enough to darken. *Dei claudere est clausis non aperire*,—God is then said to shut up when he doth not open to them that are shut up. God is able to soften the hard heart, open the blind eye, pierce the deaf ear. When he doth, it is mercy; when not, it is justice. Only our falling is from ourselves. Hos. xiii. 9, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.' For God is ever foremost in love, but last in hate. He loved us before we loved him; but we hate him before he hates us. *Multi ne laberentur detenti, nulli ut laberentur impuls*i,—God preserves many from falling, but he thrusteth none down. By his strength we stand; through our own weakness we fall.

As in the sickness of the body, so of the soul, there are critical days, secret to ourselves, but well known to God; whereby he sees our recovery unlikely, and therefore turns us over to the danger of our sickness: that now, too late, Jerusalem knows what was offered her 'in the day of her visitation.' God blinds the soul, blinded before by Satan; and hardens again Pharaoh's self-hardened heart: *Et quia non faciunt bona quæ cognoscunt, non cognoscunt mala quæ faciunt*,—Because they would not do the good they knew, they shall do the evil they know not. Thus is the soul's death degreed up. Sin gathers strength by custom, and creeps like some contagious disease in the body from joint to joint; and, because not timely spied and medicined, threatens universal hazard to the whole. It swells like the sea: *unda levis, majora volumina, fluctus ad cælum*. An egg, a cockatrice, a serpent, a fiery flying serpent. Custom indeed kills the soul. The curse that the Cretians used against their enemies was not fire on their houses, nor rottenness on their beasts, nor a sword at their hearts, but that which would treble to them all mischief—that they might be delighted with an evil custom: *Ut mala consuetudine delectentur*. Temptation assaults the heart; consent wounds it: it lies sick of action; it dies by delight in sin; it is buried by custom.

The bell hath tolled for it; God's word hath mourned; the church hath prayed for it; but *quid valeant signa precesve?*—what good can signs and prayers do, when we voluntarily yield our heart to him that violently kills it? Thus God leaves the heart, and Satan seizeth on it, whose gripes are not gentler than death.

Thus the habit of sin takes away the sense of sin; and the conscience, that was at first raw and bleeding, as newly wounded, is now 'seared up with a hot iron,' 1 Tim. iv. 2. The conscience of a wicked man first speaks to him, as Peter to Christ, Matt. xvi. 22, 'Master, look to thyself.' But he stops her mouth with a violent hand. Yet she would fain speak to him, like the importunate widow, to do her justice. He cannot well be rid of her, therefore he sets her a day of hearing, and when it is come faileth her. She cries yet louder for audience; and when all his corrupt and bribed affections cannot charm her silence, he drowns her complaints at a tavern, or laughs her out of countenance at a theatre. But if the pulse beats not, the body is most dangerously sick; if the conscience prick not, there is a dying soul. It is a lawless school where there is an awless monitor. The city is easily surprised where the watch cannot ring the alarms. No marvel if numbness be in the heart when there is dumbness in the conscience.

These are the dead guests; dead to all goodness. Deaf ears, lame feet, blind eyes, maimed hands, when there is any employment for them in God's service. 'Eyes full of lust,' void of compassion; ears deaf to the word, open to vanity; feet swift to shed blood, slow to the temple; hands open to extortion, shut to charity. To all religion the heart is a piece of dead flesh. No love, no fear, no care, no pain can penetrate their senseless and remorseless hearts. I know, that according to the speech of the philosopher, *nemo fit repente miser*,—this is no sudden evil: they were born sick, they have made themselves dead. Custom hath inveterated the ulcer, rankled the conscience, and now sin flouts the physician's cure, knowing the soul dead. Through many wounds they come to this death. At first they sin and care not, now they sin and know not. The often taken potion never works. Even the physic of reproof turns now to their hardening. Oh that our times were not full of this deadness! How many never take the mask of religion but to serve their own turns! And when piety becomes their advantage, yet they at once counterfeit and condemn it. If a wished success answer the intention of their minds and contention of their hands, God is not worthy of the praise; either their fortune or their wit hath the glory of the deed, and thanks for it. But if they be crossed, God shall be blasphemed under the name of destiny; and he shall be blamed for their ill to whom they will not be beholden for their good.

God is not thought of but in extremity, not spoken of but in blasphemy. O dead hearts! whose funeral we may lament, whose reviving we can almost not hope. But what? Will this deadness never be a little wakened? True it is, that God must miraculously raise up the soul thus dead, and put the life of his grace into it, or it is desperate. The conscience, I confess, will not ever lie quiet in these dead guests; but as they have jailed up that for a while in the darkness of security, so when God looseth it, it will rage as fast against them, and dog them to their graves. For as there is a heaven on earth, so a hell on earth. The dead to sin are heavened in this world; the dead in sin are helled here, by the tormenting anguish of an unappeasable conscience. As Bishop Latimer, in a sermon, told these guests of a feast in hell, which will afford them little mirth; where weeping is served in for the first course, gnashing of teeth for the second: so, after their feast on

earth,—which was no better than Numa's, where the table swam with delicate dishes, but they were swimming dishes, *spectandæ non gustandæ dapes*,—let them prepare for another banquet where groans shall be their bread, and tears their drink, sighs and sorrows all their junkets; which the Erynnyis of conscience and the Megæra of desperation shall serve in, and no everlastingness of time shall take away.

But these spiritually dead guests do not evermore scape so long; sometimes God gives them in this life a draught of that vial of his wrath which they shall after sup off to the bottom. The wicked man, that had no fear, now shall have too much fear. He that began with the wanton comedy of presumption and profaneness, ends with the tragedy of horror and despair. Before, he was so asleep that nothing could waken him; now, he is so waking that nothing can bring him asleep. Neither disport abroad nor quiet at home can possess him; he cannot possess himself. Sin is not so smooth at setting forth as turbulent at the journey's end. The wicked have their day, wherein they run from pleasure to pleasure, as Job's children from banquet to banquet; their joys have changes of variety, little intermission, no cessation; neither come they faster than their lusts call for them. So God hath his day: Amos v. 18, 19, 'And woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.' Such is the unrest of a conscience brought to fret for his sins. So Augustine (in Psal. xlv.): *Fugit ab agro in civitatem, à publico ad domum, à domo in cubiculum*,—He runs from the field into the city, from the city to his house, and in his house to the privatest chamber; but he cannot fly from his enemy that cannot fly from himself.

At first the devil's guest pursues pleasure so eagerly, that he would break down the bars that shut it from him, and quarrel with venture of his blood for his delights, nay, for the conditions of his own sorrow and damnation. Now pleasure is offered him; no, it will not down. Music stands at his window; it makes him as mad with discontent as it did once with joy. No jest can stir his laughter, no company can waken his unreasonable and unseasonable melancholy. Now he that was madder than Nero in delights, 'fear compasseth him on every side.' He starts at his own shadow, and would change firmness with an aspen leaf. He thinks, like the Burgundians, every thistle a lance, every tree a man, every man a devil. 'They fear where no fear was,' saith the Psalmist. They think they see what they do not see. This is the wicked man's alteration: time is, he will not be warned; time comes, he will not be comforted. Then he is satisfied with lusts that thought such a satisfaction impossible. Riches weary him now to keep them more than they wearied him once to get them; and that was enough. So I have read the oppressor's will: *Lego omnia bona mea domino regi, corpus sepulture, animam diabolo*,—I bequeath all my goods to the king, my body to the grave, my soul to the devil. He that did wrong to all would now seem to do right to some: in giving his coin to the prince, whom he had deceived; his soul to the devil, whom he had served. Wherein, as he had formerly injured man, now he injures both God and himself too.

(3.) I have dwelt the longer on this spiritual deadness, because the guests at this banquet have this death in present: the precedent and subsequent are both future; the one naturally incurred by sin, the other justly inflicted for unrepented sin. For all shall die the corporal death: Eccles. ix. 2, 'He that feareth an oath,' as well as 'he that sweareth;' the religious as the pro-

fane. But this last, which is eternal death, shall only seize on them that have beforehand with a spiritual death slain themselves. This therefore is called the 'second death.' Rev. xx. 6, 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,' which is the spiritual life by grace; 'on such the second death hath no power.' He that is by Christ raised from the first death shall by Christ also scape the second. But he that is dead spiritually, after he hath died corporally, shall also die eternally. This is that everlasting separation of body and soul from God, and consequently from all comfort. 'Fear him,' saith our Saviour, Matt. x. 28, 'that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.' Dan. xii. 2, 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' This is that death that God delights not in, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. His goodness hath no pleasure in it, though his justice must inflict it.

Man by sin hath offended God, an infinite majesty, and therefore deserves an infinite misery. Now, because he is a nature finite, he cannot suffer a punishment infinite in greatness, *simul et semel*, together and at once; he must therefore endure it *successivè sine fine*, successively without end. The punishment must be proportioned to the sin; because not in present greatness, therefore in eternal continuance. Christ for his elect suffered in short time sufficient punishment for their sins; for it is all one for one that is eternal to die, and for one to die eternally. But he for whom Christ suffered not in that short time must suffer for himself beyond all times, even for ever.

This is the last death: a living death, or a dying life, what shall I term it? If it be life, how doth it kill? If death, how doth it live? There is neither life nor death but hath some good in it. In life there is some ease, in death an end; but in this death neither ease nor end. *Prima mors animam dolentem pellit de corpore; secunda mors animam nolentem tenet in corpore*,*—The first death drives the soul unwillingly from the body; the second death holds the soul unwillingly in the body. Rev. ix. 6, 'In these days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.' 'Their worm shall not die.' Thus saith the Scripture: *Morientur mortem*, 'They shall die the death.' Yet their death hath too much life in it. For there is a perfection given to the body and soul after this life; as in heaven to the stronger participation of comfort, so in hell to the more sensible receiving of torment. The eye shall see more perspicuously, and the ear hear more quickly, and the sense feel more sharply, though all the objects of these be sorrow and anguish. *Vermis conscientiam corrodet, ignis carnem comburet, quia et corde et corpore deliquerunt*,—The worm shall gnaw the conscience, the fire burn the flesh, because both flesh and conscience have offended. This is the fearful death which these guests incur; this is the shot at the devil's banquet. God in his justice suffers him to reward his guests as he is rewarded himself; and, since they loved his work, to give them the stipend due to his service. These are the tempted guests—dead.

The Vulgar translation, I know not upon what ground, hath interpreted here for *mortui*, *Gigantes*: thus, 'he knoweth not that the giants are there.' Monstrous men, that would dart thunder at God himself, and raise up mountains of impiety against heaven. As if they were only great men that feasted at Satan's banquet, whose riches were able to minister matter to their pleasure. And surely such are in these days: of whose sins when we

* Aust. de Civit. Dei, lib. xxi, cap. 3.

have cast an inventory account, we might thus with the poet sum up themselves—

‘Vis dicam quid sis? magnus es Ardelio;’—

‘Thou hast great lands, great powers, great sins; and then
Dost ask me what thou art? Th’art a great man.’

The giants in the Scripture, Gen. vi 4, were men of a huge stature, of a fierce nature. The poets feigned their giants to be begotten and bred of the sun and the earth, and to offer violence to the gods: some of them having an hundred hands, as Briareus was called *centimanus*, meaning they were of great command; as Helen wrote to Paris of her husband Menelaus: *An nescis longas regibus esse manus?* This word giants, if the original did afford it, must be referred, either to the guests, signifying that monstrous men resorted to the harlot’s table, and that it was *giganteum convivium*, a tyrannous feast; or else, and that rather, to the tormentors, which are laid in ambush, to surprise all the comers in, and carry them as a prey to hell. But because the best translations give no such word, and it is far fetched, I let it fall as I took it up.

3. The third person here inserted is the *attempted*, the new guest whom she strives to bring in to the rest. He is described by his ignorance: *Nescit*,—‘He knoweth not’ what company is in the house, ‘that the dead are there.’ It is the devil’s policy, when he would ransack and rob the house of our conscience, like a thief to put out the candle of our knowledge; that we might neither discern his purposes nor decline his mischiefs. He hath had his instruments in all ages to darken the light of knowledge. Domitian turns philosophy into banishment. Julian shuts up the school doors. The barbarous soldiers under Clement the Seventh burned that excellent Vatican library. Their reasons concurred with Julian’s prohibition to the Christians: *ina μή οικείους πτεροῖς βαλλώμεθα*,—lest they kill us with their own weapons. For it is said even of Gentile learning: *Hic est Goliath gladius, quo ipse Goliath jugulandus est: hic Herculis clava, qua rabidi inter Ethnicos canes percutiendi sunt*;—This is that Goliath’s sword, whereby the Philistine himself is wounded: this is that Hercules’s club, to smite the mad dogs amongst the heathen. Habadallus, Mohammed’s scholar, that Syrian tyrant, forbade all Christian children in his dominions to go to school, that by ignorance he might draw them to superstition. For *ταῖς ἀφιλοσόφους ἐν τῷ σκότει ὀρχεῖσθαι*,—to be destitute of learning is to dance in the dark. These were all Satan’s instruments; yet they come short of the Pope, whose policy to advance his hierarchy is to oppress men’s consciences with ignorance; teaching that the fulness of zeal doth arise from the emptiness of knowledge,—even as fast as fire flasheth out of a fish-pond.

There are degrees in sin, so in ignorance. It is a sin to be ignorant of that we should know; but a greater sin to be ignorant of that we have means to know. Ignorance may be distinguished into five kinds: human, natural, affected, invincible, proud and puffed up.

The *first* is human. This is not sinful, as in Adam not to know his nakedness nor Satan’s subtlety. So in the angels, yea, even in the Head of the angels, Christ himself, as man, not to know the latter day, Mark xiii. 32. *Proprium est naturæ humanæ futura ignorare*,*—It is a thing simply proper to the nature of man, to be ignorant of future things. No legal injunction binds us to it; no censure shall pass against us for the want of it. This is called *ignorantia justa*, an unfaulty ignorance.

* Cyril.

The *second* is natural : called *ignorantia infirmitatis vel imperitiæ*,—the ignorance of infirmity, incident to man's nature since his fall. For desiring to know more, he knew less. This is the effect of sin, sin in itself, and the cause of sin. It was bred by transgression, it doth breed transgression, and is no less than transgression of its own nature ; for God's law binds us to the knowledge of his law. The blind swallows many a fly ; the ignorant cannot be innocent. This is *ignorantia simplex, involuntaria, privata*, as the school calls it : a sin which the Papists generally, and, I fear, many Protestants particularly, never repent of. David doth. It is this that makes us aliens from God : ' Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, and through the blindness of their heart,' Eph. iv. 18. St Paul calls his ignorance the cause of his sins, 1 Tim. i. 13. *Et nescius servus poenas luet*, saith Christ,—even ' the ignorant servant shall be beaten with some stripes.' ' Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge,' Isa. v. 13. A prophecy mystically fulfilled in these days, in respect of our spiritual bondage to Satan ; ' the god of this world having blinded the minds of unbelievers,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. This ignorance cannot excuse, for we are bound to know. The breach of our national statutes cannot go impune by the plea of ignorance. It may (*à tanto*, not *à toto*) a little qualify and allay our punishments, not annihilate them. This is *ἀνομία*, folly ; and he that drinks of folly's cup shall have little cause to lick his lips after it. Nature is a common schoolmaster ; and the Gentiles, sinning against that monitor, justly perish. For ' the invisible things of God may be understood by things that are made : so that they are without excuse,' Rom. i. 20. Even the errors of the Jews had their sacrifices, and shall not the ignorances of the Christians cry God mercy ? This ignorance is sinful, yea, even in those that cannot have the means of knowledge.

The *third* is an affected ignorance. John iii. 19, ' This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' These shut their ears when God calleth ; and, being housed in their security, will not step to the door to see if the sun shines. This ignorance, if I may say so, doth reside rather in their affection than understanding part. ' They wilfully know not,' saith St Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 5. They know, but will not know, and run with broad eyes to destruction. Tell them that Christ is at Jerusalem : no, it is too far off. Nay, *venit ad limina virtus*,—' the kingdom of heaven is among you : ' then, if they must needs go to church, they will go hooded. Prejudice of affections shall muffle the eyes of knowledge. Thus the devil carries them quietly to hell ; as the falconer his hooded hawk, which barefaced would bite, and be too wild to sit on his fist. These sometimes have grey hairs and green affections. Like a man that being born near a great city, yet never travelled to it, he can direct others the way he never went. Those, to avoid that fault which the traveller found in England, *horologia non bene ordinata*,—that our clocks were not well kept, (he meant our hours were ill spent,)—will have no clock at all in their house to tell them how their time passeth ; no informer of their erring ways. And, as if a candle would set their house on fire, they live perpetually in the dark. Micah was glad he had got a priest ; these are glad they are got far from a priest, and had as lief go to hell darkling as with a torch.

The *fourth* is an invincible ignorance : when God hath naturally darkened the understanding, by a sore punishment of original sin,—*idioticum hoc*. No art nor eloquence can put knowledge into that heart which nature hath not

opened to receive it ; as no mind can be opened which God hath locked up. He keeps the keys : Rev. iii. 7, 'He openeth, and no man shutteth ; he shutteth, and no man openeth.' The door of this mind is so fast barred up that no help of man can open it. Neither can there be, in this, a complaint against God's justice, since that our first sin hath deserved a greater punishment.

The *last* is a proud ignorance : whereof there is no hope, saith Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 1. The other is invincible, indeed this more invincible ; a fool is sooner taught. So Christ foiled the Pharisees with their own weapons, and proved their weakness by the arguments they brought for their own strength. John ix. 41, 'If you were blind, you should have no sin : but now you say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth.' The Pharisees, though blind, will be seers : Nicodemus 'a master in Israel,' and yet knew nothing of regeneration, John iii. 10. *Nihil gravius, quam si id, quod ignorat quis, scire se credat.**—There is nothing more grievous than that a man should be persuaded he knows that soundly whereof he is totally ignorant. Therefore saith Chrysostom, *Præstat proba ignoratione detineri quam falsa opinione mancipari*,†—It is better to be held in with an honest ignorance than to run out with a false opinion. It is hard ploughing in the ground not stocked ; ill writing on a paper full of lines. These fly from instruction as the tiger from the trumpet. Others are comprehended of the light ; these think they comprehend the light, when, as the Apostle saith, 'they are held of darkness.'‡

Let us now see which of these ignorances are here meant. I answer, exempting the first, Satan's harlot, vice, hath guests of all these sorts : many that 'go after her as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks,' Prov. vii. 22. Some run to the banquet, and know not ; some know, and run : all are fools, and destitute, if not of natural, yet of spiritual understanding. To this purpose she apteth her speech here : ver. 16, 'Who is simple, let him turn in hither ; and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith,' &c. Knowledge is good, yet if disjoined from grace, οὐδὲν ἔστιν, 'it is nothing,' 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *Nihil in esse gratiæ, quamvis aliquid in esse nature*,—Nothing in grace, though something in nature. Knowledge human is a good stirrup to get up by to preferment ; divine, a good gale of wind to waft us to heaven ; but charity is better. 'Knowledge often bloweth up, but charity buildeth up,' 1 Cor. viii. 1. Aristotle calls knowledge the soul's eye ; but then, saith our Saviour, 'If the light be darkness, how great is that darkness ?'

True it is that knowledge without honesty doth more hurt. The unicorn's horn, that in a wise man's hand is helpful, is in the beast's head hurtful. If a man be a beast in his affections, in his manners ; the more skilful, the more wilful. Knowledge hath two pillars, learning and discretion. The greatest scholar without his two eyes, of discretion and honesty, is like blind Samson ; apt to no good, able to much mischief. Prudence is a virtue of the soul, nay, the very soul of virtue, the mistress to guide the life in goodness. All moral virtues are beholden to Wisdom. She directs bounty what to give, when to give, where to give ; and fortitude, with whom, for what, and how to fight. Knowledge is excellent to prevent dangers imminent, and to keep us from the snares of this 'strange woman.' But if the devil in our days should have no guests but those that are merely ignorant, his rooms would be more empty than they are, and his ordinary break for want of customers. But now-a-days,—alas ! when was it much better, and yet how can it be much

* Clem.

† Chrys. in Math., Hom. 76.

‡ Tenebræ, a tenendo.

worse?—we know sin, yet affect it, act it. Time was, we were ignorant and blind; now we have eyes and abuse them. Tyre and Sidon burn in hell, and their smoke ascends for evermore, that had no preaching in their cities; but our country is sown with mercies, and ourselves fattened with the doctrine of life. Who shall excuse our lame, lean, and ill-favoured lives? Let us beware Bethsaida's woe. If the heathen shall wring their hands for their ignorance, then many Christians shall rend their hearts for their disobedience. Heb. x. 28, 'He that despised Moses's law died without mercy under two or three witnesses.' He that despiseth, not he that transgresseth, for so do all. He that rejected and departed from the law and church of Israel 'died without mercy' eternally, for other transgressors died without mercy temporally. Ver. 29: 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy that treads under his foot,' not Moses, but 'Christ, and counts,' not the 'blood' of goats, but of 'God's Son unholy; and despiseth,' which is more than despiseth, 'the Spirit,' not of fear and bondage, but 'of grace?'

* All the learning of the philosophers was without a head, because they were ignorant of God: seeing, they were blind; speaking, they were dumb; hearing, they were deaf, like the idol-gods in the psalm. We want not a head, but a heart; not the sense of knowledge, but the love of obedience: we hear, and see, and say, and know, but do not.

If you know that God's cheer is so infinitely better, why do you enter commons at Satan's feast? The school calls one kind of knowledge *scientia contristans*, a sorrowful knowledge. Though they intend it in another sense, it may be true in this, for it is a woeful knowledge when men with open eyes run to hell. This is Uriah's letter, containing his own death. These tell Christ, Luke xiii. 26, 'We knew thee:' Christ tells them, Matt. vii. 23, 'I know not you.' These times are sick of Adam's disease, that had rather eat of the tree of knowledge than of the tree of life: speculative Christians, not active and obedient saints. You cannot plead that you 'know not the dead are there;' behold, we have told you: quit yourselves. But many men's ignorance is disobedience: they *will* 'not know that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.' Which now presseseth upon us to be considered.

II. Solomon hath described the persons feasting and feasted. The place remains, 'the depths of hell.' This is the banqueting-house. It amplifies the misery of the guests in three circumstances:—1. Their weakness; they are soon in. 2. The place; hell. 3. The unrecoverableness of it; the depth of hell.

1. *Per infirmitatem*,—In regard of their weakness. No sooner come to the banquet, but presently in the pit; they are in, they are soon in. They would not resist the temptation when it was offered; they cannot resist the tribulation when it is to be suffered: they are in. No wrestling, no contending can keep them from falling in. Into the pit they run against their will, that ran so volently, so violently to the brink of it: as a man that hath taken his career, and runs full fling to a place, cannot recoil himself, or recall his strength on the sudden. He might have refused to enter the race, or recollected himself in time, but at the last step he cannot stop, nor *revocare gradum*, rescue himself from falling. The guests that hasten themselves all their life to the feast of vanity, and neither in the first step of their youth nor in the middle race of their discreetest age return to God, do at last (without Christ's help) precipitate themselves into the depth of hell. Think, oh think, ye greedy dogs, that can never fast enough devour your sinful plea-

* *Lactant.*

tures, if in the pride of your strength, the May of your blood, the marrow and virtue of your life, when you are seconded with the gifts of nature, nay, blest with the helps of heaven, you cannot resist the allurements of Satan; how unable will you be to deal with him, when custom in sin hath weakened your spirits, and God hath withdrawn his erst afforded comforts! They that run so fiercely to the pit are quickly in the pit. 'The guests are in the depths of hell.'

2. *Per infernitatem*.—In regard of the place, it is hell. The prophet Isaiah, chap. xxx. 33, thus describes it: 'Tophet is prepared of old; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a flame of brimstone, doth kindle it.' Tophet was a place which the children of Israel built in the valley of Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire to Moloch, 2 Kings xxiii. 10; which valley was near to Jebus, afterwards Jerusalem, as appears Josh. xviii. 16. The council of Jerusalem, whiles their power lasted, used to punish certain offenders in that valley, being near their city. By this is hell resembled; and that, in Peter Martyr's opinion, for three reasons. (1.) Being a bottom, a low valley, it resembleth hell, that is believed to be under the earth. (2.) By reason of the fire wherewith the wicked are tormented in hell, as the children were in that valley burnt with fire. (3.) Because the place was unclean and detestable, whither all vile and loathsome things were cast out of the city Jerusalem, Jer. vii. 31, 32. So hell is the place where defiled and wicked souls are cast, as unworthy of the holy and heavenly city.

This place shall begin to open her cursed jaws, when the Judge of all men and angels shall have given his last sentence: at that day, when *quæstor scelerum veniet, vindexque reorum*,—the Searcher of all, and Punisher of wicked hearts, shall give his double voice of dread and joy; when, having spoken peace to his saints, he shall thunder out condemnation to the wicked: 'Go ye into everlasting fire.'

'Dent ocios omnes,
Quas meruere pati, sic stat sententia, pœnas.'

And if here on earth *se judice, nemo nocens absolvitur*, a man's own conscience condemn him for his sins, how much greater shall be the just sentence of God? 1 John iii. 20. Then all murdering Cains, scoffing Hams, persecuting Sauls, thievish and sacrilegious Achans, oppressing Ahabs, covetous Nabals, drunken Holofernesses, cruel Herods, blasphemous Rabshakehs, unjust Pilates, shall reap the seed in their eternal deaths which they have sown in their temporal lives. There shall be scorching heat and freezing cold: *ex vehementissimo calore, ad vehementissimum frigus*,—without either act of refreshing or hope of releasing. Every day hath been their holiday on earth: every day shall be their work-day in hell. The poets feigned three furies—

'Scindet latus una flagello:
Altera tartareis sectos dabit anguibus artus:
Tertia fumantes incoquet igne genas;'

'One brings the scorpion, which the conscience eats:
Another with iron whips the black flesh beats:
Whiles the third boils the soul in scalding heats.'

Nemo ad id sero venit, unde nunquam, cum semel venit, poterit reverti,*—No man can come too late to these sufferings, from whence, being once come, he can never return.

This is hell; where darkness shall be their prison, everlastingness their

* See.

fetters, flames their torments, angry angels their tormentors : *ubi nec tortores deficiant, nec torti miseri moriantur*,*—where the scourgers shall never be weary of afflicting, nor the scourged fail in their suffering ; but there shall be always torments for the body, and a body for torments. Fire shall be the consummation of their plagues, not the consumption of their persons. *Ubi per millia millia annorum cruciandi, nec in secula seculorum liberandi*,†—Myriads of years shall not accomplish nor determine their punishments. It shall be their misery, *semper velle quod nunquam erit, semper nolle quod nunquam non erit*,‡—to have a will never satisfied, a nill never gratified.

3. *Per profunditatem*,—The depth of hell. The Scripture is frequent to testify hell a deep place, and beneath us. Luke x. 15, Capernaum ‘shall be cast down to hell.’ Solomon so speaks, Prov. xv. 24, ‘The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.’ And of this harlot, chap. vii. 27, ‘Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death ;’ chap. v. 5, ‘Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell.’ Down and beneath do witness the depth of hell. There are three places—earth, heaven, hell. Earth we all enjoy, good and bad, promiscuously. Heaven is prepared for the good ; and it is upwards : Col. iii. 1, ‘If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above.’ Hell is ordained for the wicked ; and it is downward, called here *profundum*, a depth. To define the local place of hell, it is too deep for me ; I leave it to deeper judgments. I do not give Demonax’s answer, being asked where hell was : *Expecta simul ac illuc venero, et tibi per literas significabo*,§—Tarry till I come thither, and I will send thee word by letters. I only say this, there is one, we are sure of it ; let us by a good life be as sure to escape it.

But to confine my speech to the bounds of my text : I take it, that by hell, and the depth of it, here, is meant the deep bondage of the wicked souls ; that they are in the depth of the power of hell, Satan having by sin a full dominion over their consciences. For hell is often allegorically taken in the Scriptures. So Jonah ‘cries unto God out of the belly of hell,’ chap. ii. 2: David sung *De profundis*, Ps. cxxx. 1, ‘Out of the depth have I cried unto thee, O Lord.’ So Christ spake of the unbeliever, John iii. 18, that he is ‘already damned.’ And the reprobate are here affirmed in the depth of hell. This exposition I esteem more natural to the words. For as the godly have a heaven, so the wicked a hell, even upon earth ; though both in a spiritual, not a literal sense. The reprobates’ hell on earth is double, or of two sorts :—

(1.) In that the power of hell rules in his conscience : Eph. ii. 2, ‘He walks according to the course of this world, and according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.’ He is taken and led captive of the devil ; as hereafter in the chains of damnation, so here in the bands of dominion ; which Solomon calls *funes peccatorum* : as he hath ‘drawn iniquity with the cords of vanity,’ Isa. v. 18, so he ‘shall be holden with the cords of his sins,’ Prov. v. 22.

(2.) There is a hell in his conscience. So St Augustine,|| *Sunt duo tormentores animæ, Timor et Dolor*,—The soul hath two tormentors even in this life—grief for evil felt, fear of evil to be felt. Whereof the poet—

‘Sic mea perpetuos curarum pectora morsus,
Fine quibus nullo conficiantur, habent.’

These are the fearful terrors whereof the guilty heart cannot be quitted, cannot

* Aug.
§ Eras. Aphor., lib. viii.

† Ibid.

‡ Isiod.

|| De Verb. Dom. sec. Joh., Serm. 42.

be quieted, though pleasure itself were his physician, and the whole world his minstrel. *Domino privante suo gaudio, quid esse potest in gaudium ?**—When God withholdeth his music and peace, what can make the heart merry ? Polidore Virgil thus writes of Richard the Third's dream the night before Bosworth-field : that he thought all the devils in hell pulled and haled him, in most hideous and ugly shapes ; and concludes of it at last : *Id credo, non fuit somnium, sed conscientia scelerum*,—I do not think it was so much his dream as his wicked conscience that brought those terrors. When this evil spirit comes to a wicked Saul, let him go to his merriest good-fellows, beguile at once the time and himself with plays and sports, feast away his cares at his own table, or bury them together with his wits at a tavern : alas ! these are piteous shifts, weaker than walls of paper.

Sleep cannot make his conscience sleep ; perhaps the very dreams are fearful. It will not leave thee till it hath shewed thee thy hell ; no, not when it hath shewed thee it, will it leave thee quiet. The more thou offerest to dam up this current, the more ragingly it swells and gusheth over the resisting banks. This wounded conscience runs, like the stricken deer with the arrow of death in the ribs, from thicket to thicket, from shelter to shelter, but cannot change her pain with her place. The wound rankles in the soul, and the longer it goes on, the worse still it festers. Thus sin, that spake thee so fair at her inviting to the banquet, now presents to thy wicked soul her true form, and plays the makebate betwixt God and thee, betwixt thee and thyself. So long as security hath kept thee sleeping in thy delighted impieties, this quarrel is not commenced. The mortalest enemies are not always in pitched fields one against another.

This truce holds some till their deathbeds ; neither do they ever complain till their complaints can do them no good. For then at once, the sick carcase, after many tossings and turnings to find the easiest side, moans his unabated anguish ; and the sicker conscience, after trial of many shifts, too late feeleth and confesseth her unappeased torment. So Cain, Judas, Nero, in vain seek for foreign helps when their executioner is within them. The wicked man cannot want furies so long as he hath himself. Indeed, the soul may fly from the body, not sin from the soul. An impatient Judas may leap out of the private hell in himself into the common pit below, as the boiling fishes out of the caldron into the flame ; but the gain hath been the addition of a new hell without them, not the riddance of the old hell within them. The worm of conscience doth not then cease her office of gnawing, when the fiends begin their office of torturing. Both join their forces to make the dissolutely wicked desolately wretched. If this man be not in the depth of hell, deeply miserable, there is none.

Lo now the shot at the devil's banquet ! A reckoning must be paid, and this is double :—(1.) The earnest in this life ; (2.) The full payment in the life to come. The earnest is, whiles hell is cast into the wicked ; the full satisfaction is, when the wicked shall be cast into hell. Rev. xx. 15, 'Who-soever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.' I will take leave to amplify both these a little further :—

(1.) The earnest is the horror of an evil conscience, which sparkles with the beginning of future torments. I know that some feel not this in the pride of their vanities, or at least will not seem to feel it. Some 'whorish foreheads' can outface their sins, and laugh them out of countenance, Jer. iii. 3 ; wide gorges, that can swallow perjuries, bloodiness, adulteries, usuries, extortions, without trouble. But it may be, the heart doth not laugh with

* Cyril.

the look, 2 Cor. v. 12. He dares be a hypocrite that durst be a villain. If he would speak truth of himself, he would testify that his thoughts will not afford him sleep, nor his sleep afford him rest; but whiles his senses are bound, his sin is loose. No command of reason can quiet the tempest in his heart. No son of Sceva, no help of the world, can cast out this devil. The blood of the body, often being stopped in the issue at the nostrils, bursts out at the mouth, or finds way into the stomach. The conscience thus wounded will bleed to death, if the blood of Jesus Christ do not stanch it.

'Think of this, ye that forget God,' Ps. l. 22, and are only indulgent to yourselves: the time shall come you shall remember God, neither to your thanks nor ease, and would forget yourselves. Happy were it for you, if you, having lost your God, could also lose yourselves! But you cannot hide yourselves from yourselves. Conscience will neither be blinded in seeking, nor bribed in speaking. You shall say unto it, as that wicked Ahab to Elias, 1 Kings xxi. 20, 'Hast thou found me, O thou mine enemy?' Yet, alas! all this is but the earnest. A hell, I may call it, and a deep hell; and, as I may say, a little smoke reeking out of that fiery pit, whereby the afflicted may give a guess at hell, as Pythagoras guessed at the stature of Hercules by the length of his foot. But else, *par nulla figura gehennæ*,—nothing can truly resemble hell.

(2.) The earnest is infinitely short of the total sum. Matt. xviii. 34, 'And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.' The guest must endure a death not dying, live a life not living: no torment ends without the beginning of a worse. The sight is afflicted with darkness and ugly devils; the hearing with shrieks and horrible cries; the smelling with noisome stench; the taste with ravenous hunger and bitter gall; the feeling with intolerable, yet unquenchable fire. Thousands pointing at, not one among thousands pitying, the distressed wretch. I know this earth is a dungeon in regard of heaven, yet a heaven in respect of hell; we have misery enough here, it is mercy to what is there. Think of a gloomy, hideous, and deep lake, full of pestilent damps and rotten vapours, as thick as clouds of pitch, more palpable than the fogs of Egypt, that the eye of the sun is too dull to pierce them, and his heat too weak to dissolve them. Add hereunto a fire flashing in the reprobate's face, which shall yield no more light than with a glimpse to shew him the torments of others, and others the torments of himself; yet withal, of so violent a burning, that, should it glow on mountains of steel, it would melt them like hills of snow.

This is the guest's reckoning: a sore, a sour payment, for a short and scarce sweet banquet. All his senses have been pleased, now they are all plagued. Instead of perfumes and fragrant odours, a sulphurous stench shall strike up into his nostrils; instead of his lascivious Delilahs, that fathomed him in the arms of lust, behold adders, toads, serpents, crawling on his bosom; instead of the Dorian music charming his ears, mandrakes and night-ravens still shrieking to them the reverberating groans of ever and never dying companions, tolling their funeral—not final—knells and yells round about him; instead of wanton kisses, snakes ever sucking at his breath, and galling his flesh with their never-blunted stings.

Think of this feast, you riotous feasters in sin. There is a place called hell, whither, after the general and last assizes, the condemned shall be sent through a black way,—death is but a shadow to it,—with many a sigh and sob, and groans, to those cursed fiends that must be their tormentors, as they have been their tempters. Behold now a new feast, a fatal, a final one.

To sup in the vault of darkness with the princes and subjects of horror, at the table of vengeance, in the chair of desperation : where the difference on earth betwixt master and servant, drudge and commander, shall be quite abolished ; except some atheistical Machiavel, or traitorous Seminary, or some bloody delegate of the Inquisition, be admitted the upper end of the table. But otherwise there is no regard of age, beauty, riches, valour, learning, birth. The usurer hath not a cushion more than his broker. There is not the breadth of a bench between Herod and his parasites. The Pope himself hath no easier a bed than the poorest mass-priest. Corinthian Lais speeds no better than her chambermaid. The cardinal hath not the upper hand of his pander. There is no priority between the plotter and the intelligencer, between the vestal and the nun, between the proud prodigal and his unconscionable creditor.

Indeed, the greatest sinner shall have the greatest punishment ; and he that hath been a principal guest to the devil on earth, shall—and that on earth were a strange privilege—hold his place in hell : Rev. xviii. 6, 7, ‘ Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works : in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.’ Dives, that fed so heartily on this bread of iniquity, and drank so deep draughts of the waters of sin, reserves his superiority in torment that he had in pleasure. Behold, he craves, with more floods of scalding tears than ever Esau shed for the blessing, but ‘ one drop of water to cool his tongue,’ and could not be allowed it, Luke xvi. 25. But what if all the rivers in the south, all the waters in the ocean, had been granted him, his tongue would still have withered and smarted with heat, himself still crying, in the language of hell, a *Non sufficit*,—It is not enough ! Or what if his tongue had been eased, yet his heart, liver, lungs, bowels, arms, legs, should still have fried !

Thus he that ate and drank with superfluity, the purest flour of the wheat, the reddest blood of the grape, his body kept as well from diseases as soft linen and fine raiment could preserve it, here finds a fearful alteration : from the table of surfeit, to the table of torment ; from feeding on junkets, to gnaw his own flesh ; from bowls of wine, to the want of cold water ; from the soft folds of fine silks, to the winding lashes of furies ; from chains of gold for ornament, to chains of iron for torment ; from a bed of down, to a bed of flames ; from laughing among his companions, to howling with devils ; from having the poor begging at his gates, to beg himself, and that, as that rich man, for one drop of water. Who can express the horror and misery of this guest ?

‘ Non mihi si centum linguæ sint, oraque centum,
Ferreæ vox, omnes scelerum comprehendere formas,
Omnia penarum percurrere nomina possim.’ *

‘ No heart of man can think, no tongue can tell,
The direful pains ordain’d and felt in hell.’

Now sorrows meet at the guest’s heart as at a feast ; all the furies of hell leap on the table of his conscience. Thought calls to fear, fear to horror, horror to despair, despair to torment, torment to extremity—all to eternity : Come and help to afflict this wretch. All the parts of his body and soul leave their natural and wonted uses, and spend their times in wretchedness and confusion. He runs through a thousand deaths, and cannot die. Heavy

* Æneid, vi.

irons are locked on him: all his lights and delights are put out at once. He hath no soul capable of comfort. And though his eyes distil like fountains, yet God is now inexorable: his *mittimus* is without bail, and the prison can never be broken. God will not hear now, that might not be heard before.

That you may conceive things more spiritual and remote by passions nearer to sense, suppose that a man, being gloriously robed, deliciously feasted, prince-like served, attended, honoured, and set on the proudest height of pleasure that ever mortality boasted, should, in one unsuspected moment, be tumbled down to a bottom more full of true miseries than his promontory was of false delights; and there be ringed about with all the gory murderers, black atheists, sacrilegious church-robbers, and incestuous ravishers, that have ever disgorged their poison on earth, to reassume it in hell: nay, add further to this supposition, that this depth he is thrown into was no better than a vast charnel-house, hung round with lamps burning blue and dim, set in hollow corners, whose glimmering serves to discover the hideous torments; all the ground, instead of green rushes, strewn with funeral rosemary and dead men's bones; some corpses standing upright in their knotted winding-sheets, others rotted in their coffins, which yawn wide to vent their stench; there the bare ribs of a father that begat him, here the hollow skull of a mother that bare him;—how direful and amazing are these things to sense!

Or if imagination can give being to a more fearful place, that, or rather worse than that, is hell. If a poor man, suddenly starting out of a golden slumber, should see his house flaming about him; his loving wife and loved infants breathing their spirits to heaven through the merciless fire; himself infringed with it, calling for despaired succour; the miserable churl, his next neighbour, not vouchsafing to answer, when the putting forth of an arm might save him;—such shall be their miseries in hell, and not an angel nor a saint shall refresh them with any comfort. These are all but shadows, nay, *not* shadows, of the infernal depth here expressed. You hear it; fear it, fly it, scape it. Fear it by repentance, fly it by your faith, and you shall scape it by God's mercy.

This is their *pœna sensus*, positive punishment. There is also *pœna damni* to be considered, their privative punishment. They have lost a place on earth, whose joy was temporal; they have missed a place in heaven, whose joy is eternal. Now they find that 'a dinner of green herbs, with God's love, is better than a stalled ox, and his hatred withal,' Prov. xv. 17. A feast of salads, or Daniel's pulse, is more cherishing, with mercy, than Belshazzar's banquet without it. Now they find Solomon's sermon true, that though 'the bread of deceit be sweet to a man,' yet the time is come that 'the mouth is filled with gravel,' Prov. xx. 17. No, no; 'the blessing of God only maketh fat,' Prov. xxviii. 25; and 'he addeth no sorrow unto it.' Waters the wicked desired, and bread they lusted after; behold, after their secure sleep and dreamed joys on earth, with what hungry souls do they awake in hell!

But what are the bread and the waters they might have enjoyed with the saints in heaven? Such as shall never be dried up, Isa. lviii. 11. 'In thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. Happy is the undefiled soul, who is innocent from 'the great offence,' all whose sins are washed 'as white as snow,' in that blood which alone 'is able to purge the conscience from dead works!' Heb. ix. 14. 'He that walketh righteously,' &c., 'he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters

shall be sure,' Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16. His joys are certain and stable; no alteration, no alternation, shall impair them. The wicked, for the slight breakfast of this world, lose the Lamb's supper of glory, Rev. xix. 9; where these four things concur that make a perfect feast: *Dies lectus, locus electus, cætus bene collectus, apparatus non neglectus*.—A good time, eternity; a good place, heaven; a good company, the saints; good cheer, glory.

(1.) God himself is the feast-maker: he is landlord of the world, and 'fill-eth every living thing with goodness.' The eagles and lions seek their meat of God. But though all the sons of Jacob have good cheer from Joseph, yet Benjamin's mess exceeds. Esau shall have the prosperity of the earth, but Jacob goes away with the blessing. Ishmael may have outward favours, but the inheritance belongs to Isaac. The king favoureth all his subjects, but they of his court stand in his presence, and partake of his princely graces. God's bounty extends to the wicked also, but the saints shall only sit at his table in heaven. This is that feaster *qui est super omnia, et sine quo nulla sunt omnia*. 'Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever,' Rom. xi. 36.

(2.) The cheer is beyond all sense, all science: 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things God hath prepared for them that love him.' The eye sees much, the ear hears more, the heart conceives most; yet all short of apprehension, much more of comprehension, of these pleasures. Therefore 'enter thou into thy Master's joy,' for it is too great to enter into thee.

(3.) The company is excellent: the glorious presence of the blessed Trinity—the Father that made us, the Son that bought us, the Holy Ghost that brought us to this place; the holy and unspotted angels, that rejoiced at our conversion on earth, much more at our consolation in heaven; all the patriarchs, prophets, saints, before the law, in the law, in the gospel; the full communion of saints. Here, the more the merrier, yea, and the better cheer too. Oh the sweet melody of hallelujahs, which so many glorified voices shall sing to God in heaven! the hoarseness of sin and the harshness of punishment being separated from us with a bill of everlasting divorce.

(4.) Admirable is the banqueting-place: the high court of heaven, where our apparel shall be such as beseemeth the attendants on the King of kings, even 'the fashion of the glorious body of Christ,' Phil. iii. 21. The purest things are placed highest. The earth, as grossest, is put in the lowest room, the water above the earth, the air above the water, the fire above the air, the spheres of heaven above any of them; and yet the place where this feast is kept is above them all, the heaven of heavens. Take here a slight relish of the cheer in God's kingdom, where your welcome shall be answerable to all the rest: 'Eat, O my friends; and make you merry, O well-beloved,' Cant. v. 1. And then, as those that have tasted some delicate dish find other plain meats but unpleasant, so you that have tasted of heavenly things cannot but condemn the best worldly pleasures. And therefore as some dainty guest, knowing there is so pleasant fare to come, let us reserve our appetites for that, and not suffer ourselves to be cloyed with the coarse diet of the world. Thus as we fast on the eves that we may feast on the holidays, let us be sure that, after our abstinence from the surfeits of sin, we shall be everlastingly fed and fatted with the mercies of God. Which resolution the Lord grant us here; which banquet the Lord give us hereafter! Amen.