

## THE SACRIFICE OF THANKFULNESS.

---

*God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light : bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*—PSALM CXVIII. 27.

THE first and last words of this psalm are, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good : because his mercy endureth for ever.'

Thanksgiving is the prescript and the postscript. He that is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last, requires that our beginning and ending should be, 'Praise to the Lord.'

You see the head and the foot, the bulk, body, members, are not dissonant, There is scarce any verse in the psalm that is not either a *hosanna* or a *hallelujah* ; a prayer for mercy, or a praise for mercy.

I have singled out one ; let it speak for the rest : 'God is the Lord, that hath shewed,' &c.

Here is somewhat received ; somewhat to be returned. God hath blessed us, and we must bless God. His grace, and our gratitude, are the two lines my discourse must run upon. They are met in my text ; let them as happily meet in your hearts, and they shall not leave you till they bring you to heaven.

The sum is, God is to be praised. The particulars are—I. Wherefore he is to be praised ; and, II. Wherewith he is to be praised.

I. Wherefore : 'God is the Lord, that hath shewed us light.'

II. Wherewith : 'Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.'

I. In the *for what* we will consider—1. The author ; and, 2. His blessing.

1. The author : 'God is the Lord.'

2. His blessing : 'That hath shewed us light.'

The Lord, the light. The author is called God and Lord ; which lead us to look upon his goodness and his greatness.

1. GOD AND GOOD.—Lo, I begin with him that hath no beginning, but is the beginning of all other beings—God ; and would only tell you, (for I must not lose myself in this mystery,) that this God is good. In himself goodness ; good to us. Ps. c. 5, 'The Lord is good : his mercy is everlasting.' He is true life, saith Augustine : \* *A quo averti cadere ; in quem converti resurgere ; in quo manere vivere est*,—From him to turn is to fall ; to him to return is to rise ; in him to abide is to live for ever.

\* In Orat. Dom.

David, in the 59th Psalm, calls him his mercy: ver. 10, *Deus meus, misericordia mea*,—‘My God, my mercy.’ Whereupon Augustine sweetly discourses:—

‘If thou hadst said, My health, I know what thou hadst meant; because God gives health. If thou hadst said, My refuge, I understand; because thou fliest unto him. If thou hadst said, My strength, I conceive thy meaning; because he gives strength. But *Misericordia mea; quid est? Totum, quicquid sum, de misericordia tua est*,—My mercy; what is it? I am by thy mercy, whatsoever I am.’\*

Bernard† would have us speak of God in *abstracto*: not only to call him wise, merciful, good, but wisdom, mercy, goodness, because the Lord is without accidents at all. For as he is most great without quantity, so he is most good without quality. *Nil habet in se nisi se*,—He hath nothing in him but himself.

God, then, being good,—not only *formaliter*, good in himself, but also *effective*, good to us,—teacheth us to love him. We should love goodness for its own sake; but when it reflects upon us, there is a new invitation of our love.

THE LORD.—We have heard his goodness; listen to his greatness. In this title we will consider his majesty, as we did in the other his mercy.

Lord implies a great state: the title is given to a great man upon earth. But if an earthen lord be great, *quantus est Dominus, qui dominos facit?* ‡—how great is the Lord, which makes lords! Yea, and unmakes them, too at his pleasure.

This is an absolute and independent Lord. 1 Cor. viii. 5, ‘There may be many gods, and many lords.’ But this is *ille Dominus*,—the Lord, or that Lord, that commands and controls them all. They are *Domini titulares*; this is *Dominus tutelar*. They are in title and name, this in deed and power.

There are *many*, saith St Paul. Many in title, many in opinion. Some are lords and gods *ex autoritate*; so are kings and magistrates. Ps. lxxxii. 1, ‘God standeth in the congregation of lords: he is judge among the gods.’ Others will so style themselves *ex usurpatione*; as the canonists say of their Pope, *Dominus Deus noster Papa*,—‘Our Lord God the Pope.’ But he is but a lord and god in a blind and tetrical opinion.

The Lord is only almighty; able to do more by his absolute power than he will by his actual; able for potent, not impotent works. He cannot lie, he cannot die.§ *Dicitur omnipotens faciendo quod vult, non patiundo quod non vult*,—He is called almighty in doing what he pleaseth, not in suffering what he pleaseth not.

This is his greatness. As his mercy directs us to love him, so let his majesty instruct us to fear him. I will briefly touch both these affections; but love shall go foremost.

Love.—Our God is good, and good to us; let us therefore love him. (1.) It is an affection that God principally requires. (2.) It is a nature wherein alone we can answer God.

(1.) For the former; God requires not thy wisdom to direct him, nor thy strength to assist him, nor thy wealth to enrich him, nor thy dignity to advance him; but only thy love. ‘Love him with all thy heart.’

(2.) For the second; man cannot indeed answer God well in any other thing. When God judgeth us, we must not judge him again. When he reproves us,

\* Aug. in Ps. lix.: Si dicas, Salus mea, intelligo; quia Deus dat salutem, &c.

† Serm. 80 in Cant. ‡ Augustine. § Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. v., cap. 10.

we must not justify ourselves. If he be angry, we must answer him in patience; if he command, in obedience. But when God loves us, we must answer him in the same nature, though not in the same measure, and love him again. We may not give God word for word; we dare not offer him blow for blow; we cannot requite him good turn for good turn; yet we may, can, must, give him love for love. *Nam cum amat Deus, non aliud vult quam amari.\**

Now, because every man sets his foot upon the freehold of love, and says, It is mine, let us ask for his evidence whereby he holds it. We call an evidence a deed; and deeds are the best demonstration of our right in love. If thou love God for his own sake, shew it by thy deeds of piety. If thou love man for God's sake, shew it by thy deeds of charity. The root of love is in the heart; but it sends forth veins into the hands, and gives them an active and nimble dexterity to good works. 'If you love me,' saith Christ, 'keep my commandments,' John xiv. 15. If you love man, shew your compassion to him, 1 John iii. 17. Obedience to our Creator, mercy to his image, testify our loves. He that wants these evidences, these deeds, when that busy informer, the devil, sues him, will be unhappily vanquished.

FEAR.—Let us pass from love to fear. We must love our good God; we must fear our great Lord. It is objected against this passage of union, that 'perfect love casteth out fear,' 1 John iv. 18. It is answered that fear brings in perfect love, as the needle draws in the thread. And it is not possible that true love should be without good fear; that is, a filial reverence. For slavish fear, be it as far from your hearts as it shall be from my discourse.

Now this fear is a most due and proper affection, and, I may say, the fittest of all to be towards God. Indeed God requires our love; but we must think that then God stoops low, and bows himself down to be loved of us. For there is such an infinite inequality betwixt God and us, that without his sweet dignation, and descending to us, there could be no fitness of this affection. But look we up to that infinite glory of our great Lord, look we down on the vileness of ourselves, sinful dust, and we will say, that by reason of the disproportion between us, nothing is so suitable for our baseness to give so high a God as fear. Therefore, Ps. xxxiv. 11, 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' Ps. xxxi. 23, 'Fear the Lord, all ye his servants;' as well as 'Love the Lord, all ye his saints,' Ps. ii. 11.

Now this fear hath as many challengers as love had. When this book is held out, every man's lips are ready to kiss it; and to say and swear that they fear the Lord. Love had the testimony, charity; and fear must have his, service. Ps. ii., 'Serve the Lord with fear.'

It is man's necessitated condition to be a servant. Happy they that can truly call Christ Master! 'Ye call me Lord and Master: and ye say well; for so I am,' John xiii. 13.

He that serves the *flesh* serves his fellow; and a beggar mounted on the back of honour rides post to the devil. This is a choleric master; so fickle, that at every turn he is ready to turn thee out of doors. We may say of him, as of the Spaniard, he is a bad servant, but a worse master.

He that serves the *world* serves his servant, as if Ham's curse was lighted on him: *servus servorum*,—a drudge to slaves, a slave to drudges.

He that serves the *devil* serves his enemy, and this is a miserable service. Sure it was a lamentable preposterous sight that Solomon saw, Eccles. x. 7,

\* Bern. Sermon. 83 in Cant.

'I have seen servants on horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.' And Agur, Prov. xxx. 22, numbers it among those four things whereby the world is disquieted: 'A servant when he reigneth, and a fool when he is filled with meat; an odious woman when she is married, and a handmaid that is heir to her mistress.'

Judge then how horrible it is that men should set (as the savages of Calicut) the devil, or his two angels, the world and the flesh, in the throne, whiles they place God in the footstool; or that in this commonwealth of man, reason, which is the queen or the princess over the better powers and graces of the soul, should stoop to so base a slave as sensual lust. 'Delight is not seemly for a fool: much less for a servant to have rule over princes,' Prov. xix. 10.

St Basil, not without passion, did envy the devil's happiness, who had neither created us, nor redeemed us, nor preserveth us, but violently labours our destruction; that yet he should have more servants than God that made us, than Jesus Christ that, with his own precious blood and grievous sufferings, bought us. Well, he is happy that can truly say with David, Ps. cxvi. 16, 'I am thy servant, O Lord; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid.' This service is true honour; for so kings and princes, yea, the blessed angels of heaven, are thy fellows.

God is good, that we may love him; the Lord is great, that we may fear him. We have heard both severally; let us consider them jointly, and therein the security of our own happiness. It is a blessed confirmation, when both these, the goodness and the greatness of God, meet upon us. His greatness that he is able, his goodness that he is willing to save us. Were he never so great, if not good to us, we had little help. Were he never so good, if not great, and of ability to succour us, we had less comfort. He would stand us in small stead if either his will or his power was defective; if either he could not or would not save us.

His goodness without his greatness might fail us; his greatness without his goodness would terrify us. It is a happy concurrence when 'mercy and truth meet together; when righteousness and peace kiss each other,' Ps. lxxxv. 10. So sweetly sings the Psalmist, Ps. cxvi. 5, 'Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.' Whereupon St Ambrose, *Bis misericordiam posuit, semel justitiam*,\*—He is once said to be righteous, but twice in one verse to be gracious. It is sweet when both are conjoined, as in the first and last verse of this psalm: 'O give thanks to the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.' The Lord is good; though great, yet also good; and his mercy, so well as his justice, endures for ever. Man hath no such assurance of comfort in God as to meditate that his great power and good-will, his glory and grace, his majesty and mercy, meet together.

These be God's two daughters, justice and mercy. Let us honour them both, but let us kiss and embrace mercy. But, alas! we have dealt unkindly with them both. God hath two daughters, and we have ravished them.

There is a story of a man, that meeting in a desert with two virgin sisters, he did ravish both of them. Afterwards, on his apprehension, the former desired that he might justly die for it. The other did entreat as earnestly that he might live, and that she might enjoy him for her husband.

Man is that ravisher, and those two virgins are the justice and mercy of God. Against his justice we have sinned, and provoked his indignation to strike us; yea, even his mercy we have abused. For her sake we have

\* Orat. de obitu Theodosii.

been spared, and a longer day of repentance given us; yet we have despised the riches of this mercy, and presuming on mercy, have dared to multiply our transgressions. Justice pleads to God that we should die; urgeth this law, 'Whosoever sinneth shall die,' and, 'Death is the wages of sin.' Mercy entreats, beseecheth that we may live, and produceth the gospel, 'Whosoever repents, shall be pardoned: whosoever believes, shall be saved;' and for further assurance, brings forth that blessed pardon, sealed in the wounds and blood of Jesus Christ. God hearkens to mercy for his Son's sake; though we have ravished and wronged his mercy, yet for mercy's sake we shall be forgiven. But then we must be married to mercy; married in our faith, believing on Christ; married in our good life, being merciful unto men.

2. THE BLESSING.—We see the author; let us look on his blessing, *light*. 'He hath shewed us light.' We are come into the light, and therefore have light enough of an ample discourse. But my purpose is only to shew you this light, as the word is in my text, not to dwell on it, though I pray that all you and myself may for ever dwell in it.

*Light*.—Such as the giver is, such is the gift. 1 John i. 5, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' And St James, chap. i. 17, calls him the 'Father of light.' God is—

So glorious a light, that as the sun dazzleth the eyes too steadfastly fixed on it, so his incomprehensible majesty confounds all those that too curiously pry into it.

So clear a light, that he sees into all corners. Prov. xv. 3, 'The eyes of God are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' He searcheth more narrowly than the beams of the sun. He sees bribery in the office, adultery in the closet, fraud in the shop, though the pent-house makes it as dark as a room in bedlam.

So good a light, that in him is no darkness; not so much as a shadow. There is none in him, there comes none from him. Indeed he made 'outward darkness' of hell, the wages of sin. But he never made the inward darkness of the soul, which is sin.

So constant a light, that though the sun be variable in his course, sometimes shining bright, often clouded, yet God is without change, as the moon; without eclipsing, as the sun; without setting, as the stars.

So spreading a light, that he communicates it to us. John i. 9, 'This is the true light, which lighteth every one that cometh into the world.' Without whom we should have been wrapped in an eternal miserable darkness, but that he sent one 'to give light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet in the way of peace,' Luke i. 79.

And this is the light which he here sheweth us. By the consent of all expositors, in this psalm is typed the coming of Christ, and his kingdom of the gospel. This is manifested by an *exaltation*, by an *exultation*, by a *petition*, by a *benediction*.

The *exaltation*: ver. 22, 'The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.' The Jews refused this stone, but God hath built his church upon it.

The *exultation*: ver. 24, 'This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.' A more blessed day than that day was wherein he made man, when he had done making the world; 'Rejoice we, and be glad in it.'

The *petition*: ver. 25, 'Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.' Thy justice would not suffer thee to

save without the Messiah; he is come, 'Save now, O Lord, I beseech thee.' Our Saviour is come, let mercy and salvation come along with him.

The *benediction* makes all clear: ver. 26, 'Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' For what David here prophesied, the people after accomplished: Matt. xxi. 9, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.'

The corollary or sum is in my text: ver. 27, 'God is the Lord, that hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.'

It was truly said, *Lex est lux*,—The law is light. But unable to light us to heaven; not through its own, but our deficiency. Hereon it did not save, but condemn us. *Lex non damnans est ficta et picta lex*,\*—That law that doth not condemn us is a feigned and painted law. The Apostle calls it the 'ministration of death.'

Let then the less light give place to the greater. *Legalia fuerunt ante passionem Domini viva, statim post passionem mortua, hodie sepulta*,†—The legal rites were before the passion of Christ alive, straight after his passion dead, now buried. Or as another: The ceremonies of the law were, in their prime, *mortales*; in Christ's age, *mortuæ*; in our time, *mortifera*. They were at first dying, in our Saviour's time dead, in ours deadly. 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,' John i. 17.

We have now found out the light, and, blessed be God, above these fifty years we have found it: that if any should say, as Philip to Christ, John xiv. 8, 'Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us;' to whom Jesus answers, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;'—so if any should say, Shew us the light, and it sufficeth us, I answer, Hast thou been so long in the light, and hast thou not known it? Art thou one of the country that Apollonius writes of, that can see nothing in the day, but all in the night? Hath the light made thee blind? If no other, the continuance of this exercise shews that the light is among us.

I should trifle the time to prove by arguments to the ear a thing so visible to the eye; and waste the light of the day to demonstrate the evidence of this light being amongst us. Meditation and wonder better become this subject than discourse.

It is the blessing of God's right hand. Prov. iii. 16, 'Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour,' saith Solomon of Wisdom; he meant it of Christ. This light shall procure to a man blessed eternity. All those blessings of the left hand, as riches and honour, are frail and mortal. Nothing lasts long in this world, except a suit at law. But this light, if ourselves fault not, shall outshine for countenance, and outlast for continuance, the sun in the firmament. Therefore our Psalmographer, ver. 15, having shewed that 'the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous,' he adds, 'The right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly;' yea, he doubles and trebles it: 'The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly.' This is the God of lights, that 'had the seven stars in his right hand,' Rev. i. 16.—This light must enlighten us to some duties.

1. Rejoice in this light: ver. 24, 'This is the light-day that the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.' Not for a spurt, as the stony ground, Matt. xiii. 20, that with joy receives the sermon, but goes home as stony-hearted as Judas after the sop. Nor as the Jews, to whom John Baptist was 'a burning and a shining lamp; and they for a season rejoiced

\* Luth. in Galat.

† Aug.

in his light,' John v. 35 ; but afterwards never rested till they had eclipsed the Sun on the cross, and slain his morning-star in the prison. Nor as children, that come abroad to play in the sunshine, and make no more account of it. Nor as a people that never saw the sun, step out of their doors to gaze upon it, and then turn their backs on it. But rejoice with a solid joy, as they whom God hath 'brought out of darkness into his marvellous light.'

2. Walk worthy of this light. This was St Paul's request to his Ephesians, that they would 'walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called,' Eph. iv. 1. The night is past, the light is come ; let us 'therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light,' Rom. xiii. 12. Be children of the light. As the light shines on thee, let it shine in thee. Thou hast small comfort to be in the light unless the light be in thee. Saith the prophet to the church, Isa. lx. 1, 'Arise, shine ; for thy light cometh, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' As God hath shewed his light to you, 'so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,' Matt. v. 16. There are some that boast their communion with God ; against whom St John reasons *a natura Dei*, 1 John i. 5, 6, 'God is light : if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and know not the truth.' St Paul's argument is of the same fashion : 'What communion hath light with darkness ?' The holy writ calls all sins *opera tenebrarum*, the 'works of darkness.' Because—

(1.) They are perpetrated against God, who is the 'Father of lights,' James i. 17.

(2.) They are suggested by the devil, who is the 'prince of darkness,' Eph. vi. 12.

(3.) They are most usually committed in the dark. *Male agens odit lucem*. 'They that sleep sleep in the night ; and they that be drunken be drunken in the night,' 1 Thess. v. 7.

(4.) They are the effects of blindness of mind ; and ignorance is a grievous inward darkness. 'Their foolish heart was darkened ;' and hence issued those deadly sins, Rom. i. 11.

(5.) Their reward shall be utter darkness : 'Cast that unprofitable servant into utter darkness,' Matt. xxv. 30 ; and, Jude, ver. 13, 'To them is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.'

If then God hath shewed thee light, shew not thou the deeds of darkness ; but 'walk honestly, as in the day,' Rom. xiii. 13.

3. Take heed of sore eyes. Pleasures, lusts, and vanities make the eyes sore that are dotingly fastened on them. The usurer with telling his gold ; the haughty with contemplating his greatness ; the drunkard with looking at the wine laughing in the cup ; the lustful with gazing on his painted damnations, make their eyes so sore, that they cannot look up and behold this light.

4. Take benefit of this light while it shines. It may be clouded, as it was in the days of Popery. Either this light may be set to thee, or thou be set to it. That to thee, by removing the candlestick ; thou to that, by the hand of death, which shall send thee to the land of forgetful darkness. Our Saviour taught us this, not only in precept, but in practice : John ix. 4, 'I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day ; for the night cometh, wherein no man can work.' Let us not do like some courtiers, that having light allowed them, play it out at cards, and go to bed darkling.

5. Lastly, help to maintain this light, that it go not out. If you would

have the lamps of the sanctuary shine, pour in your oil. Grudge not a little cost to keep this light clear. The Papists have their Candlemass; they bestow great cost in lights about a service of darkness. Repine not you then at a little charges for the everlasting lamp of the gospel. Some of you, I bear you witness, do not grudge it. Go on and prosper; and whiles you make the church happy, make yourselves so.

II. WHEREWITH.—I must now step from heaven to earth; I pass from the *for what* to the *with what* God is to be praised.

He hath shewed you his light, shew him yours. He hath given us an inestimable blessing, what shall we return him? What? 'Bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar.'

This is man's thankfulness for God's bountifulness. We will first cast over the particulars, and then sum them.

1. Here is *sacrifice* to be offered.

2. This sacrifice must be *bound*: 'Bind the sacrifice.'

3. This sacrifice must be *bound with cords*: 'Bind the sacrifice with cords.'

4. This sacrifice must be bound with cords *to the altar*: 'Bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar.'

5. This sacrifice must be, (1.) bound; (2.) with cords; (3.) to the altar; (4.) yea, even to the horns of the altar. Ye see the *totum* is thankfulness; and the bill hath five particulars:—

(1.) The sacrifice is *devotion*.

(2.) Binding the sacrifice, *constant devotion*.

(3.) With cords, *fervent devotion*.

(4.) To the altar, *rectified devotion*.

(5.) To the horns of the altar, *confident devotion*

Devotion is the mother, and she hath four daughters:—

1. *Constancy*. Bind the sacrifice.

2. *Fervency*. Bind it with cords.

3. *Wisdom*. Bind it to the altar.

4. *Confidence*. Even to the horns of the altar.

*Sacrifice* is the act of our devout thankfulness. I might here (to no great purpose) travel a large field of discourse for sacrifices. But it were no other but where the Scripture offereth us the company a mile, to compel it to go with us twain.

All sacrifices are either expiatory or gratulatory; expiatory for the condonation of sins, gratulatory for the donation of graces. So, in a word, they were either sin-offerings or peace-offerings.

The sin-offerings of the Jews had two main ends—

1. To acknowledge *peccati stipendium mortem*,—that death was the wages of sin, due to the sacrificers, laid on the sacrificed.

2. Mystically and symbolically to prefigure the killing of the 'Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' So Calvin: *Semper illis ante oculos symbola proponi oportuit*,—They had ever need of signs, and types, and figurative demonstrations before their eyes.

But those sacrifices are abolished in Christ, Heb. x. 12, 'who offered one sacrifice for sins for ever;' and that was such a one as was 'a sweet-smelling savour to God,' Eph. v. 2. It was a pretty observation, that the last character of the Hebrew alphabet was a plain figure of Christ's cross, to shew that his sacrifice ended all theirs.

Ours is the second kind, gratulatory sacrifice; our prophet here speaking of the days of the gospel. Then 'bind this sacrifice with cords,' &c. Christ



is our altar, let ourselves be the sacrifice ; the fire that kindles it, the love of God ; the smoke that goes up, the consumption of our sins.

That this sacrifice may be acceptable, I will shew you how it must be done, how it must not be done.

1. What is to be excluded.
2. How it ought to be qualified.

1. *Exclusively.* It must be *sine pelle, sine melle, sine felle, sine macula.*

(1.) *Sine pelle*, without the skin of ostentation ; which indeed makes them not *sacrificia* but *sacrilegia*, not sacrifices but sacrileges. They are so *opera muta*, dumb deeds ; nay, rather, *opera mendacii*, loud-lying works ; as if they told God a good tale how they loved him, when they meant to deceive him. God will require all untruths between man and man ; but fallacies and falsehoods done between the porch and the altar, in the shadow of the church and under the pretence of his service, he will sorely revenge.

The casting up of the eyes, the bowing down of the knees, the uncovering the head, moving the lips, knocking the breast, sighing and crying, what mean they ? Are they not symptoms and demonstrative witnesses of an inward compunction ? Are they not a protestation that the soul is speaking to God ? If there be not an honest heart within, this is but the skin of a sacrifice ; and they that give God the skin for the body, God will give them the skin for the body ; the shadow of blessings for the substance.

It is storied of one that sold his wife glasses for pearls, *Imposturam fecit, et passus est*,—He cozened, and was cozened. They that sell the Lord of heaven (howsoever they may deceive his spouse, the church on earth) glasses for pearls, shells for kernels, copper for gold, bark for bulk, show for substance, fancy for conscience, God will be even with them, and give them stones for bread, images of delight for substantial joys. *Imposturam faciunt, et patientur*,—They deceive, and shall be deceived.

(2.) *Sine melle* ; there must be no honey of self-complacency in this sacrifice. Ps. li. 17, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' A true sacrifice consists not only *faciendo*, but *patiendo*,—in doing, but in dying or suffering for Christ.

In the law, beasts appointed for sacrifice were first slain, and so offered. In the gospel, Christians must first mortify their earthly members and crucify their carnal lusts, and then offer up themselves. As death takes away the natural life, so mortification must take away the sensual life. *Moriatur ergo homo, ne moriatur ; mutetur, ne damnetur*,\*—Let a man die, that he may not die ; let him be changed, that he be not damned. Only the mortified man is the true 'living sacrifice.' It must not then be honey to our palates, but bitter ; even so bitter as *abnegare suos, sua, se*,—to deny our friends, to deny our goods, to deny ourselves, for Christ's cause.

(3.) *Sine felle* ; there must be no *amarulentia*, no gall of bitterness in this sacrifice. Matt. v. 23, 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee ; leave there thy gift, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then offer it.' If thy brother hath aught against thee, God hath more. If thou have somewhat against thy brother, God hath somewhat against thee. 'Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' Matt. ix. 13.

Whiles you trip up men's heels with frauds, lay them along with suits, tread on them with oppressions, blow them up with usuries, injuries ; your sacrifice is full of gall. It was said in wonder, 'Is Saul among the prophets ?' So, what makes a slanderer, a defrauder, a usurer, an oppressor, at church ?

\* Aug. Serm. cxli. de Temp.

They come not *sine felle*, without the gall of uncharitableness; they shall return *sine melle*, without the honey of God's mercies. Heb. xiii. 16, 'To do good, to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' Merciful works are *pro sacrificiis*, *imo præ sacrificiis*,—equal to sacrifices, above sacrifices in God's acceptance.

(4.) *Sine macula*. Lev. xxii. 20, God commands that his sacrifices be 'without blemish; nor blind, nor broken, nor maimed, nor infected,' &c. Therefore a lamb without spot was offered for a morning and an evening sacrifice. And the Lamb of God, in an antitypical relation, is truly said, *immaculatus*, 'a lamb without spot, without blemish,' 1 Pet. i. 19.

The drunkard is without a head, the swearer hath a garget in his throat, the covetous hath a lame hand, he cannot give to the poor, the epicure hath a gorbelly, the adulterer is a scabbed goat, the worldling wants an eye, the ruffian an ear, the coward a heart: these are *mutila sacrificia*,—lame, defective, luxate, imperfect sacrifices.

The prophet Isaiah begins and ends his prophecy with a denunciation of God's contempt and refusal of such oblations; who will forget those to be the sons of grace that forget his sacrifices to be the sacrifices of a God. Isa. lxvi. 3, 'He that sacrificeth a lamb is as if he cut off a dog's neck.'

2. *Affirmatively*. It must be *cum thure*, *cum sale*, *cum sanguine*, *cum integritate*.

(1.) *Cum thure*. The frankincense is prayer and invocation: Ps. cxli. 2, 'Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.'

These the prophet calls *vitulos laborum*,—the calves, not of our folds, but of our lips; whereof the Lord more esteemeth than of the bullock that hath horn and hoof.

This is the special sacrifice here meant. God expects it of us: *non ut avarus*, (as Ambrose,\*) not as if he were covetous of it, but *ex debito*. Yet as he must give the beast to us before we can give it to him, Joel ii. 14, for the Lord must 'leave a blessing behind him, even a meat-offering and a drink-offering for himself;' so this spiritual sacrifice of prayers and praise must be *datum* as well as *mandatum*, conferred as required. *Tribuat Deus, ut homo retribuatur*,—Let God give it to man, that man may give it to God. He that commands it must bestow it.

(2.) *Cum sale*. There must be salt to season this sacrifice: Lev. ii. 13, 'With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.'

Salt hath been usually taken for *discretion*. What St Paul speaks of our words should hold also in our deeds: Col. iv. 6, 'powdered with salt.' The proverb is true, An ounce of discretion is worth a pound of learning. *Tolle hanc, et virtus vitium erit*,—Banish this, and you shall run virtue into vice, blow heat into a flame, turn conscience into a fury, and drive devotion out of her wits. Zeal without this is like a keen sword in a mad hand.

(3.) *Cum sanguine*. Not literally, as in the sacrifices of the law,—'Almost all things by the law are purged with blood,' Heb. ix. 22,—but spiritually, to make them acceptable, they must be dipped, not in ours, but in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Without this they are not holy: as one expounds, *Sanctum, quasi sanguine consecratum*. Here is then the necessity of a true faith, to sprinkle all our sacrifices with our Saviour's blood; no sacrifice otherwise good. For 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin,' Rom. xiv. 23. Therefore if any man comes to

\* De Noah., cap. xxii.

the church more for fear of the law than love of the gospel, he offers a thankless sacrifice.

(4.) *Cum integritate.* And this in respect *sacrificii et sacrificantis.*

Of the *sacrifice.* God reproves the Jews, Mal. i. 7, 8, that they had 'laid polluted bread upon his altar. If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? If ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil?' The Lord's sacrifice must be fat and fair; not a lean, scraggling, starved creature.

Paul beseecheth the Romans that they would 'present themselves a living' or quick 'sacrifice to God,' Rom. xii. 1. When infirmities have crazed it, and age almost razed it, then to offer it—alas! it is not a living, but a dying; not a quick, but a sick sacrifice. This must be a whole and holy oblation.

Of the *sacrificer.* The life and soul of a sacrifice is not the outward action, but the inward affection of the heart. *Mens cujusque, is est quisque,*—As the mind is, so is the man; as the man is, so is his sacrifice. If we bring our sheep to God's altar, and them alone, we had as good left them behind us as an unprofitable carriage: Micah vi. 6, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? With burnt-offerings, and calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' No; learn another oblation: 'God hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth he require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

The poet could ask the priest, *In templo quid facit aurum?* He bids them bring *compositum jus, fasque animi*, &c. Put these into my hands, *et farre litabo.* Lay upon the altar of your heart, faith, repentance, obedience, patience, humility, chastity, charity, *bona pignora mentis*, and consecrate these to the Lord.

When the Searcher of the reins shall find a carcase of religion without a quickening spirit, he will turn his countenance from it. Beasts died when they were sacrificed.

The oracle answered, to him that demanded what was the best sacrifice to please God, *Da medium lunæ, solem simul, et canis iram,*—Give the half-moon, the whole sun, and the dog's anger; which three characters make cor, the heart. *Deus non habet gratum offerentem propter munera, sed munera propter offerentem,*—God values not the offerer by the gift, but the gift by the offerer. Let not then thy heart be as dead as the beast thou immolatest.

So Peter Martyr (in Rom. xii.) expounds Paul's 'living sacrifice.' Those things that can move themselves are living and quick: they are dead that cannot stir themselves but by others' violence. Compelled service to God—as to keep his statutes for fear of man's statutes—is an unsound oblation, not quick and lively. God loves a cheerful giver and thanksgiver. *Non respicit Deus munera, nisi te talem præstes, qualem te munera promittunt,*—God regards not thy gifts, unless thou dost shew thyself such a one as thy gifts promise thee. *Ad te, non munera spectat.*

You see the sacrifice, *Devotion.* The mother hath held us long; we will deal more briefly with her daughters.

*Constancy.*—The first-born is Constancy: 'Bind the sacrifice.' Grace is like a ring, without end; and the diamond of this ring is constancy. Deut. vi. 8, 'Thou shalt bind my statutes for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.' It is the advice of Wisdom, Prov. iii. 3, 'Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; and write them upon the table of thy heart.'

The leaf of a righteous man never fadeth, saith the Psalmist. If it doth,

then *lapsus foliorum, mortificatio arborum*, saith the Gloss,—the fall of the leaves will be the death of the tree. It is to small purpose to steer the vessel safe through the main, and split her within a league of the haven; to put your hand to the plough, and thrive well in the best husbandry, and with Demas to look back.

*Vincenti dabitur*; and fulfilled holiness wears the crown, Rev. ii, iii. Some have derived *sanctum, quasi sancitum*,—an established nature. All virtues run in a race; only one winneth the garland, the image of eternity, happy Constancy. ‘Wisdom is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her; and blessed is he that retains her,’ Prov. iii. 18: therefore, ‘make sure your election;’ fast bind, fast find. ‘Bind the sacrifice.’

*Fervency*.—The next daughter of this righteous generation is Fervency: ‘Bind the sacrifice with cords.’ Thou canst not make heaven too sure. Men use to bind the world to them faster than the Philistines Samson, or the jailor his fugitive prisoner, with cords, with cords of iron; that it may not start from them, and run away.

Riches is known to be a wild bedlam; therefore they will keep it in bonds. They bind their lands with entails, their goods with walls, their moneys with obligations, that on no condition they may give them the slip. But they care not how loose the conscience be: they give that liberty enough, even to licentiousness.

But the sacrifice of devotion must be bound with cords: a cord of love, a cord of fear, a cord of faith; and this ‘threefold cord is not easily broken,’ Eccles. iv. 12.

*Wisdom*.—A third daughter, and one of the beautifulest, is Wisdom: ‘Bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar.’ Rectified devotion is specially acceptable.

A man may be devout enough; too much, when their zeal is like the horn in the unicorn’s head; it doth more hurt than good. You would not have wished Baal’s priests do more for their master; lo, the gashes and mouths of their self-given wounds speak their forwardness: they wanted a lamp of direction to guide it to God’s altar.

Aristotle\* calls discretion, *virtutum normam et formam*,—the eye of the soul, the soul of virtue. I would to God some amongst us had one dram of this grace mingled with their whole handfuls of zeal. It would a little cool the preternatural heat of the fling-brand fraternity, as one wittily calleth them.

Hollerius writes of an Italian, that, by often smelling to the herb basil, had scorpions bred in his brain. Proud *faction* is the weed they so much smell on, and make posies of, that the serpents bred in their brains do sting and wound the bosom of the church. These ‘bind,’ and ‘with cords,’ but not to the altar. Devotion is not their scope, but distraction. Oh, may the spirit of meekness bind their sacrifice to the altar, direct their zeal with discretion, to the glory of God! And let us every one say resolutely with David, Ps. xxvi. 6, ‘I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord: and so will I compass thine altar.’ Wisdom is a fair daughter in this progeny. ‘Bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar.’

*Confidence*.—The youngest daughter of this fair sisterhood is Faith. Copious matter of discourse might here be offered me about the site, matter, fashion of the altar; and to what purpose these four horns of the altar served: ‘Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.’

Perhaps many precious mines of mysteries might here be found out, which

\* Eth., lib. vi., cap. 5.

I dig not for. Among divers other ends, I find that these horns of the altar were for refuge; and guilty men did flee unto them for fear of the law. 1 Kings i. 50, 'Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.' So Joab, in the next chapter, ver. 28, 'fled to the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.' They fled thither in a hopeful confidence of mercy.

Christ is our altar, Heb. xiii. 10; his merits the horns of the altar. Ver. 15, 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.' Our faith must catch hold on these horns, Christ's merits, that our sacrifice may be acceptable.

The law of God shall surprise us, and the sword of eternal death shall kill us, if we bind not our sacrifice to the horns of the altar; if we rest not upon the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ.

This is the mother of her, of whom she is also the daughter. It may be said of these, as the poet of ice and water, the mother brings forth the daughter, and the daughter brings forth the mother.

All her sisters are beholden to her. Never a damsel of Israel dares enter Ahasuerus's court but she. She alone must bring all graces to the horns of the altar. O blessed Faith, 'many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all!' Prov. xxxi. 29. 'Bind, then, the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.'

You hear the mother and her children: these are the daughters that true Devotion bringeth forth. Compare we our progeny with these, and we shall find that we bring forth daughters of another countenance.

Distinguish this land of ours (let the word *divide* be held heresy in manners) into four C's—*Court, City, Country, Church*.

The *Court* may be said to have three daughters—as Fulco boldly told Richard the First\*—which are vicious, and of a wicked disposition. The king answered, he had no daughters at all. Fulco said, he cherished three in his court that were no better than strumpets; and therefore wished him timely to provide them husbands, or else they would undo him and his realm. The angry king would have them named. Fulco told him they were *Pride, Avarice, and Luxury*. The blushing, penitent, and discreet prince confessed, and resolved to bestow them. So he gave *Pride* to the Templars, *Avarice* to the Cistercian monks, and *Luxury* to the Popish prelates: the like matches, as fitter then in England could not be found for them.

The *City* hath four daughters too: *Fraud, Hypocrisy, Usury, Sensuality*. Let me say, the breeding and indulgence to such daughters shame you. Shall I tell you how to cast them away upon husbands? Marry *Fraud* to the professed cheaters. Bestow *Usury* upon the brokers. Banish *Sensuality* to the forest, to see if any beast will take it up. And for *Hypocrisy* wed it to the brain-sick separatist, though you send it to them with a letter of mart to Amsterdam.

The *Country* hath three daughters: *Ignorance, Uncharitableness, and Ill-custom*. *Ignorance* they might bestow on the Papists; they will make much of it. Let them send *Uncharitableness* to the savages and Saracens; and *Ill-custom* to the Jews, who will rather keep their customs than their Saviour.

For the *Church*; we have but two children, and those none of our own breeding neither, though we are fain to bring them up with patience, *Poverty* and *Contempt*; and take them who will, so we were rid of them.

\* Acts and Monu.

These are not the daughters of Devotion, but the wretched brood of our indevotion.

There are amongst us—

1. Some that will not bind.
2. Some that will bind, but not with cords.
3. Some that will bind with cords, but not the sacrifice.
4. Some that will bind the sacrifice with cords, but not to the altar.
5. Some that will bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar, but not to the horns of the altar.

1. Some will not bind; nay, they will not be bound. There are so many religions in the world, that they will be tied to none of them. Such a one is like a loose tooth in the head, of little use, of much trouble. Their trepidations are more shaking than cold ague-fits; their staggers worse than a drunkard's.

A feather in the air, a vane on the house, a cock-boat in the sea, are less inconstant. The course of a dolphin in the water, of a buzzard in the air, of a whore in the city, is more certain. They are full of farraginous and bullimong mixtures; pour them forth into liberty, and they run wilder than quicksilver on a table.

But let a good man be, as John Baptist was commended by our Saviour, 'no reed shaken with the wind.' Let our actions have ballast, our affections balance. Be we none of those that will not bind.

2. Some will bind, but not with cords. They will take on them an outward profession, but not be fervent in it: they will not bind themselves to devotion, as the Philistines bound Samson with new withs or with new ropes, Judg. xvi.; but only with a rush, or a hair, or a twine-thread of coldness.

A sermon or a mass is all one to them; they come with equal devotion to either. All the religion in the world with these Gergesenes is not worth a fitch of bacon. For handfuls of barley and morsels of bread you may win them to worship the 'queen of heaven,' Jer. xlv. 17.

Their lukewarmness is so offensive that they trouble all stomachs. God shall spue them out of the church, the earth shall spue them into the grave, and the grave shall spue them into hell.

3. Some will bind, and with cords, but not the sacrifice. Such are the utterly irreligious, the openly profane. They have their cords to bind, but they will not meddle with the sacrifice, devotion. The prophet Isaiah gives them a *Væ* for their labour, chap. v. 18, 'Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope!' But in a just quittance for their strong-haled wickedness, they draw on their own destruction with cords, and damnation as it were with a cart-rope. So those *funes peccatorum* that Solomon speaks of, Prov. v. 22, shall be rewarded: 'His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.' There is such a concatenation of their wickedness,—rioting, swearing, drunkenness, whoredom,—that at last the cord's end reaches to hell.

Their whole life is but like a firework, that runs along the rope of wickedness, till at last he goes out in the grave, and is rekindled in the flaming pit. They bind sin sure to themselves with cords, and with the same cords the devil binds them as fast to him. They shall speed as himself doth, and be at last bound with the cords or chains of darkness.

The magistrate should do well, in meantime, to bind them with material cords of severe punishment. Chain up their feet from brothel-houses,

manacle their hands from slaughters ; give them the cords of correction, lest at last by a cord they depart the world.

The three special twists of this cord are—drunkenness, whoredom, cozenage. If you could untwine these three, and separate them, there were some hope of breaking them all. You say, on their deprehension they have sure punishment ; be as careful to find them out. But it is reported you have roused these sins from their old nests, and sent them home to your own houses. Cheating winds into some of your own shops ; adultery creeps into some of your own chambers ; and, I know not how, sometimes justices and magistrates have whipped drunkenness out of the alehouse into their own cellars.

There is one amongst us that is a terrible binder, and that is the usurer. He binds strangely, strongly, with the cords of obligations. You know he that enters into obligation is said to come into bonds ; it is all one, into cords. This man's whole life is spent in tying of knots ; his profession is cordage. And for this cause he is beloved of the cord-makers, for setting them on work ; and of nobody else.

This fellow binds, but he will never bind the sacrifice ; his conscience shall be loose enough. I could say much to this binder, if there were any hope of him. But I remember a true story that a friend told me of a usurer. There was a godly preacher in his parish, that did beat down with all just convictions and honest reproofs that sin. Many usurers flocked to his church, because he was a man of note. Among the rest, this usurer did bid him often to dinner, and used him very kindly. Not long after, this preacher began to forbear the touching usury, not in any connivance or partiality, but because he had dealt plentifully with it, and now his text led him not to it. Now begins the usurer to be heavy, sorrowing, and discontent, and turned former kindness into sullenness. The preacher must needs observe it, and boldly asked him the reasons of this sudden aversion. The usurer replied, If you had held on your first course to inveigh against usury, I had some hope you would have put all the usurers down, and so I should have had the better vent and custom for my money. For my part, say what you will, I never meant to leave it ; but I should have been beholden to you if you could have made me a usurer alone. You see the hope of a usurer's conversion.

But I would to God that every one thus bound with the cords of wickedness would consider, that so long as a cord is whole it is not easily broken ; but untwist it, and lay it thread by thread, and you may snap it asunder. Beloved, first untwine the cord of your sins by serious consideration, and then you may easily break them off by repentance.

4. Some will bind with cords, yea, and the sacrifice, but not to the altar. There are many of these in our land : they bind the sacrifice exceeding fast to themselves, not to the altar. All the *altaragia*, the dues that belong to them that serve at God's altar, and which the laws of God and man bound to the altar, they have loosened, and bound to themselves and their heirs.

These bind the sacrifice, and with cords, but not to the right place ; nay, I would to God they would bind no more. But now the fashion is to hold God to custom ; and if a poor minister demand those remnants which are left to the altar, he is overthrown by custom. Oh the pity of God, that England should have any such custom !

And for you that never think yourselves well but when you have bound the sacrifice to yourselves ; and imagine that the milk or fleece of your flocks, which God hath tithed for himself, is too good for the minister ; and will

either *astu* or *armis*, with force of law or craft of cozening, keep it to yourselves; that will plead the rate of a penny in law for a pound in conscience; chop and change your sheep, to defraud Christ of his tenth fleece;—know, that as you bind the sacrifice from the altar, so you shall have no comfort by the altar, but the justice of God shall bind you from his mercy. Though you may repent,—which if you restore not, is impossible, and your restitution is improbable,—yet for the present the devil hath eleven points of the law against you; that is, possession.

5. Lastly, some bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar, but not to the horns of the altar. These are deficient in a special degree of devotion—faith. They have many good moral virtues; but they want that which should make both their virtues and themselves acceptable to God, faith in his Son Jesus Christ. It is a vain devotion whence this is excluded; the law finds no works righteous. But *quod lex operum minando imperat, lex fidei credendo impetrat*,\*—what the law of works commanded with threatening, the law of faith obtains by believing. Affy we then the merits of our blessed Saviour, who is our only refuge, and take fast hold on the horns of the altar: 'Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.'

*The Sum.*—To gather these scattered branches to their root; now we have cast over the particulars, let us sum them. The sum is our thankfulness: 'Bind the sacrifice with cords,' &c.

Ingratitude hath been ever held a monster, a preternatural thing; one of those privations and deficiencies which God never made, but the devil thrust in upon the absence of the positive and primitive virtues. Hereupon we call an ungrateful person an unnatural man.

No man wonders at dogs, and wolves, and foxes; but at satyrs, and centaurs, and such monsters in nature, all gaze upon. Ebriety, adultery, avarice, though equally heinous, are less odious, because they have nature and custom on their side; but an unthankful person named, we all detest, as a solecism in sense, a paradox in manners, a prodigy in nature.

To demonstrate this sin to be so far from humanity, that the very beasts abhor it:—There is a story of a poor man that went often to a forest to gather sticks, where suddenly one day he heard the voice of a man in distress. Making towards it, he found a rich neighbour fallen into a deep pit; and together with him an ape, a lion, and a serpent. He made his moan, being endangered both of the pit and of the beasts. Pity and charity moved the poor man to help the rich, and that seldom moves the rich to help the poor. He lets down the cord wherewith he bound his sticks, and up comes the ape. Again he puts for the man, and the lion ascends. A third offer he makes, and the serpent takes the advantage. Last he draweth up the man, who, freed by his help from instant death, promised him a bounteous requital, if on the next day he did visit him. The poor man affyng his word, came to him accordingly, in a hopeful expectation of reward. But now the rich man would not know him. He hath forgotten that ever he stood in any need of him, and impudently denies him any recompense. The discomforted poor man is fain to travel the forest again for his fuel, where the ape spying him, had ready broken, with his teeth and nails, sticks enough for his burden: there was his utmost gratitude. Another day coming, the lion approacheth him, presenting to him divers laden camels, which driving home and disburdening, he found precious treasure that enriched him. A third time, upon other occasions travelling the forest, the serpent, creeping, salutes him with a precious stone in her mouth, letting it fall at her savor's

\* Aug.



feet. The intent of the fable is to demonstrate that beasts and serpents condemn man of ingratitude.

You will say this is but a fiction; then hear a truth: Isa. i. 3, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.' The very beast looketh to his master's hand that feeds him.

The vice is so horrible, that God need not sit to judge it; the devil himself will condemn it. When he reasoned with God about Job, he pleads, chap. i. 10, that God had 'set a hedge about him, and blessed the work of his hands;' and therefore implies, 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' If he will be unthankful to a God so kind, Satan himself will censure him. It must needs be a horrid sin that the devil taxeth and abominates. If we be unthankful, we are sure to be condemned; for if God would not condemn it, the devil will. An ungrateful man, then, in some sort, is worse than the devil.

Men and brethren, let us be thankful. Let our meditations travel with David, in the 148th Psalm, first up into heaven: ver. 1, even the very 'heavens and heights praise him;' and those blessed angels in his court sing his glory. Descend we then by the celestial bodies, ver. 3, and we shall find 'the sun, moon, and all the stars of light praising him.' Pass we by the waters, ver. 4, which the Maker's decree hath confined there, and we shall hear these praising him. A little lower, ver. 8, we shall perceive the meteors and upper elements, the 'fire and hail, snow and vapour, magnifying him;' even the 'wind and storms fulfilling his word.' Fall we upon the centre, the very earth, we shall hear the 'beasts and cattle, mountains and hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, extolling his name.' The chirping birds sing sweet psalms and carols to their Creator's praise every morning when they rise, every evening ere they go to rest. Not so much as the very 'creeping things,' saith the Psalmist, noisome dragons, and crawling serpents in the deep, but they do, in a sort, bless their Maker. Let not then man, the first-fruits of his creatures, for whose service all the rest were made, be unthankful. If these, much more let all 'kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the world; young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord,' ver. 11, 12.

There are some that 'kiss their own hands,' Job xxxi. 27, for every good turn that befalls them. God giveth them blessings, and their own wit or strength hath the praise. Others receive them but as due debt, as if God were obliged to them. But, alas! 'What hast thou,' O man, that is good, 'that thou hast not received?' Thou hast not a rag to thy back, nor a bit to thy belly, nor a good hair on thy head, nor a good thought in thy heart but God giveth it.

Our evils are properly our own. *Omnia mea mala pure sunt mala, et mea sunt; omnia mea bona pure sunt bona, et mea non sunt,\**—All my evils are truly evil, and mine own; all my good things are truly good, but none of my own. Now, is not the Author of all good, good enough to be remembered? When the benefits are gotten, must the benefactor be forgotten? And shall thanks wax old while gifts are new? *Boni siquid habeo, a Deo sumpsi, non a me præsumpsi?†*—Shall we then set the receivers in the place of the giver, and worship ourselves?

This is a sacrilegious theft. The stealing of temporal goods may be requited with restitution; but the purloining of God's glory can never be answered. These are subtle thieves: for though heaven be sure and secure

\* Hugo.

† Aug.

enough from violent robbers, yet these by a wily insidiation enter into it, and rob God of his honour. Other thieves steal for necessity, and but from their equals, men. These filch from God his holy right, and that out of a scornful pride.

It would here be examined whether England hath any ground in it guilty of this barren ingratitude. If I should fall to discoursing the favours of God, rained in such plentiful showers upon us,—our peace, plenty, tranquillity, and all those gifts of his left hand; together with that grace of his right, which blesseth all the rest, and without which they were but a summer without a spring, full of heat, but infertile, the gospel,—you would say, *Satis hæc*, We have heard this often enough, *ad nauseam usque*. A sermon of such repetition is but like a suit of the old make. Your curious ears are too fine for such recognitions. You think we never speak of these things but for want of other matter.

The wonders which God wrought in Egypt by Moses, in Canaan by Joshua, were commanded to be proclaimed to all succeeding generations. How many psalms did this sweet ‘singer of Israel’ compose of this subject? How many excellent sermons did the prophets preach when they had no other ground or text but those principles? Neither did the people fling away from before the pulpit with—We have heard these things often enough; they are tedious.

God’s mercies to us shall vie in weight and number with theirs. We are, if not their parallel, yet their second in the favours of heaven. God hath hedged us in with his providence, and ‘compassed us about with songs of deliverance.’ We are the plant of his own hand, and he continually waters us with the saving showers of his gospel. We need not travel to our neighbours’ cisterns; every man hath his own well, and such a well as yields the water of life, if we would bring buckets with us—ears of attention, and hearts of retention—to draw it out withal. What nation, so far as the world is christened, hath so many learned divines? Neither is this learning like a coal, burning to themselves, but a bright lamp shining to us. Even those reverend fathers that sit at the stern of the church, and charge their minds with her greatest troubles, are yet continually preaching to some particular congregation. It cannot be denied but the ‘Lord hath shewed us light.’

Now where be the fruits that he must look for? I dare scarcely enter into this search, as the elephant refuseth to drink in a clear water, lest he should see his own deformity. I fear to find the responsency of the deeds of darkness. I know God hath his number amongst us; I hope it is not small. God every day increase it, to his glory and the church’s comfort! Let me have freedom to speak generally.

Beloved, our lives shame us. If men and angels should hold their peace, our own open and manifest iniquities will proclaim us unthankful. Fraud in our houses, drunkenness in our streets, oppression in our fields, adultery in corners, injustice on seats, impiety in our temples, rapine upon our temples, devastation of our temples, at least of the means that God hath given them: these, these are the fruits too many of us return for God’s mercies. Thus, thus do we adorn the gospel.

The greatness of God’s kindness to us we strive to match with our unkindness to God. He that in his own person stood for our defence, and bore the heat and burden of the day for us, hath this requital, to have his cause put off to others. We dare not stand for his glory. Could we else brook his holy days profaned, holy name abused, holy church despised, his servants impoverished, if we were as kind to him as he is to us?

Whereas every man hath a charge for God's glory, we put it off from one to another : the poor man to the rich, and says he should look to these disorders ; the rich man to the minister ; the minister, after a hearty dehortation, to the magistrate. But still wickedness holds up the head, and the heat of rebellion is not qualified.

It is storied of a certain king, that fighting a desperate battle, for the recovery of his daughter injuriously stolen from him, found ill success, and the day utterly against him ; till by the faithful valour of a strange prince, disguised in habit of a mean soldier, that pitied his loss, and bore love to his daughter, he recovered both her and victory ; the prince interposing himself to hazard of death and many wounds for the other's redemption. Not long after, this prince received some wrong concerning his honour, which he deservedly prized. He made his complaint to the king, and besought him to give a just censure of his cause. The forgetful king put him over to a judge. The prince replies, O king, when thou wast lost, I endangered myself for thy rescue : I did not bid another save thee, but I saved thee myself. Lo, the scars of those wounds I bore to free thee and thy state from inevitable ruin. And now my suit is before thee, dost thou shuffle me off to another ?

Such was our case. Satan had stolen our dear daughter, our soul. In vain we laboured a recovery ; principalities and powers were against us, weakness and wretchedness on our sides. Christ the Son of God took pity on us ; and though he were an eternal Prince of peace, disguised himself in the habit of a common soldier,—*induens formam servi*,—putting on him the ' likeness of a servant,' undertook this war against our too strong enemies, set himself betwixt us and death, bore those wounds which should have lighted on us. By no angel nor saint, by no gold or precious minerals, did he redeem us, but by his own grievous sufferings. Now his glory is in question, his name, his honour is abused, dear to him as his own majesty, we stand by and behold it : he appeals to our censure, remembers us of the wounds, passions, sorrows he endured for us ; we put him off from one to another, and let the cause of him that saved us fall to a loss. Who shall plead for our ingratitude ? Heaven and earth, sun and stars, orbs and elements, angels and devils, will cry shame upon us.

If we ask now, as the wicked will at the latter day, Matt. xxv., ' Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and did not feed thee ? when naked, and did not clothe thee ? '—when was thy cause before us, which we defended not ?—I answer, Any day, every day, when we hear swearers wound and tear his holy name in pieces ; when we see idolaters give his honour to carved or painted blocks ; when ruffians speak contemptibly of his holy rites ; when his sabbaths, sacraments, word, ministers, are vilipended, ourselves standing by with a guilty silence. Oh, which of us hath not been guilty of this ingratitude !

It was the exprobration of Athens, that she suffered those men to die in exile, ignominy, oblivion, that with their virtuous endeavours had reared her up on the pillars of fame. Miltiades, Aristides, Solon, Phocion : *Ubi vixerunt ? ubi jacent ?*—Where lived they ? where lie they ? Their worthy acts gave glory to that city, and that city covered them with the inglorious dust of obscurity. So the Lord Jesus had made us live that were dead, and we do what we can to let his living name die amongst us.

The Grecians had a proverb amongst them against them—

' Pro meritis male tractarunt Agamemnona Graii ; '—

Agamemnon, for the honour of Greece, had done great service to the

conquest and subversion of Troy ; and when he came home was slain by his own wife, Clytemnestra, by the help of Ægisthus, the adulterer. Christ loved us as his wife, endowed us with all his own riches ; conquers Troy for us, subdues all our enemies ; and returning home, when he expects to find peace and kind entertainment in our hearts, we fall to vexing and wounding him, forsaking his love, and cleaving to the world in a cursed adultery. So

‘ Dulcem pro meritis tractamus acerrime Christum,’—

So bitterly do we requite our sweet Saviour for his mercies.

Scipio had made Rome lady of Africa. And coming home with triumph over that and Hannibal, the senate banished him into a base village ; where dying, he commanded this sculpture to be engraven on his tomb : *Ingrata patria, ne ossa quidem mea habes*,—Unthankful country, thou hast not so much as my very bones. Many and mighty deliverances hath the Lord given us : from furious Amalekites, that came with a navy, as they bragged, able to fetch away our land in turfs ; from an angry and raging pestilence, that turned the popular streets of this city into solitude ; from a treason wherein men conspired with devils, for hell was brought up to their conjurations, and a whole brewing of that salt sulphur was tunned up in barrels for us to drink.

Behold, and kiss the feet of his mercy. We are delivered by Jesus Christ from all these miseries and mischiefs. Oh, let us not voluntarily call upon ourselves a worse than all these by our own unthankfulness. Let not Christ say, *Ingrata Anglia, ne ossa quidem mea habes*,—Unthankful England, thou hast not so much as (my bones) the prints and sensible impressions of these favours in thy memory. Thou hast shut thy Saviour out of thy mind, and buried him in neglectful oblivion. Take heed, lest in a just quittance he exclude thee from his thoughts, and forget to do thee any more good ; lest he take away his name, his glory, his light, his gospel from thee, and bestow it on those unchristened borders where now his great majesty is not adored.

How justly might he leave us in our former wretchedness ! There is a pretty fable, the moral of it will profitably fit our present discourse. A serpent accidentally enclosed betwixt two great stones, that he could no ways extricate himself, made his moan to a man passing by to deliver him. The man with much force removed the stone, and set him free. The serpent now feeling his liberty, thus bespake his deliverer : I confess you have done me kindness in helping me out, being almost famished ; but now I am out, my hunger is so violent, that I must needs take the benefit of my fortune, and devour you. The man urged his ingratitude, but to no purpose, for the serpent would eat him. Instantly he spied an ass coming, and desired the serpent to put it to his judgment. The serpent was contented, knowing that the ass durst not but condemn the man for his prey, lest he endangered himself. The case was pleaded on both sides ; the man urging his kindness, the serpent his hunger. But the ass gave judgment on the serpent's side, who is now ready to set on the man. Hereupon flies by an eagle, to whom the man appealed for judgment in this controversy. The eagle hearing the cause debated, demanded of the serpent if he could have freed himself without the man's aid. The serpent answered affirmatively, and said it was only his policy by this trick to get the man within his reach. The eagle desires to see the place, the man shews it. The eagle bids the serpent go into the hole again for the more certain demonstration. The serpent doth so, and the man removes the other stone as it was before, and re-encloseth the serpent. The eagle now bids the serpent deliver himself ;

he replied he could not. Then, quoth the eagle, this is my judgment : the next time the man lets thee forth, do thou take him for thy prey, and eat him.

It cannot be denied but we were once surer in Satan's hold than this serpent is imagined to be between the stones. The man Christ Jesus in pity redeemed us and gave us liberty. We are no sooner out but we fall to devour him ; to make his poor members, his poor ministers our prey ; to wound his name with blasphemies ; to steal his goods with sacrilege ; and to give his honour either to other creatures or to our own wits, as if we could have delivered ourselves. Let any be judge but the ass, our own flesh and blood, and we are sure to be condemned for ingratitude. But if Christ should, in his justice, put us again into our former hole, leave us in the power of Satan, who would not say with the eagle, the next time he sets us free, let us take him for our booty, and devour our Redeemer ?

It is recorded of Alexander, an emperor famed for his liberality, and of Julius Cæsar, no less commended for his patience, that the former would never give, nor the other forgive, an ungrateful person. Wretched were we if the Lord should withhold from us either of these mercies : if he should shut up the flood-gates of his bounty, and cease giving ; or lock up the treasure-house of mercy, and leave forgiving. If he should neither *donare bona sua*, nor *condonare mala nostra*, woe unto us ! We might curse our births, or rather our ingratitude.

We hope still God will be merciful to us for Christ's sake ; so God of us, we hope we will be obedient to him for Christ's sake. *Petimusque, damusque vicissim*. As we expect God should save us for the merits of his Son, so God expects we should serve him for the merits of his Son. If the bitter sufferings and heart-blood of Jesus cannot get of us the forbearance of iniquity, how shall it get for us the forgiveness of iniquity ? As we entreat God, for his mercy, to be good to us ; so God entreats us, for his mercy, to be good to him, and therein most good to ourselves.

Oh, let that goodness that reconciles us both prevail with us both ! With God, to bless us by his bountifulness ; with us, to bless God by our thankfulness. What should I say ? For Jesus Christ's sake, let us be thankful. Ps. xcii. 1, 'It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord,' saith our Psalmist. Good for the virtue of the action ; good for the excellency of the object ; good for the happiness of the retribution.

For the action ; it is better to bless than to curse. Rom. xii. 14, 'Bless them that persecute you ; bless, and curse not.'

For the object ; our praises are sung to a most glorious God, one that is beauty itself, Ps. xxvii. 4, and only worthy to 'inhabit the praises of Israel.'

For the retribution ; if we bless God, God will bless us : as one notes that all David's psalms were either *Hosanna* or *Hallelujah*,—that is, 'God bless,' or 'God be blessed ;' either a prayer for mercy or a praise for mercy. *Ascendat ergo gratia ut descendat gratia* ; for *gratiarum cessat decursus, ubi recursus non fuerit*,—Grace will not come down unless gratitude go up ; all rivers run back to the sea, whence they were first derived.

Let us send up our gifts to God, that he may send down his gifts to us. Let us not *uti datis, tanquam imatis*, but remember that we hold all *in capite*, and are suitors to the court of heaven ; worthy to forfeit our estates if we pay not the quit-rent of thankfulness, acknowledge not gratitude and obedience.

God will not long *catulis indulgere luporum*, pamper the wolves' whelps, as the proverb speaks ; but he will forget them that forget him. We have

a saying from Aristotle, *Nec in puerum, nec in senem collocandum esse beneficium*,—That our beneficence should not be fixed upon a child or an old man; for the child, before he comes to age will forget it, and the old man will die before he can requite it. Are we all either children or old men, that we either not remember, or not return thankfulness to God for his mercies? Yet, saith the Psalmist, Ps. cxlviii. 12, 'Old men and children, praise the name of the Lord.'

With him let us then say, 'What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits towards us?' Ps. cxvi. 12. David was inward with God; yet he studied what present he should offer him. He lights upon that which he was only able to give, and God most willing to receive, thankfulness. 'I will take the cup of salvation, and bless the name of the Lord.' Pray we then to God to give us thankfulness, that we may give it him; for of ourselves we have not what to give, unless the Lord give us wherewith to give.

Let us 'shew forth his loving-kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness every night,' Ps. xcii. 2. Morning and evening let us praise him, that hath made the day for our labour, and the night for our rest; and that not *ex usu, magis quam sensu*, but with a hearty humility. 'Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name; bring your sacrifice, and come into his courts,' Ps. xcvi. 8. Let no opportunity steal by neglected, but 'rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness,' Ps. xcvii. 12. No garment better becomes you, though you have almost put it out of fashion, than to praise the Lord; for 'praise is comely for the righteous,' Ps. xxxiii. 1.

Thanksgiving is the best sauce to our meat, and blesseth all the dishes on the table. 'When thou hast eaten, and art full, thou shalt bless the Lord thy God,' Deut. viii. 10. Whether we eat or drink, work or rest, let us set that golden posy on all our labours which the angel to Zechariah gave of the headstone, 'Grace, grace unto it,' chap. iv. 7. He spake pleasant truth that said, He that riseth from the table without giving of thanks, goes his way and owes for his ordinary. He is unthankful that is unmindful of a benefit, unthankful that requites it not, unthankful that dissembles it, but most unthankful that denies it. Though we cannot requite God's favour, we will neither forget it, nor dissemble it, nor deny it.

I have purposely been liberal in this doctrine; neither beg I pardon for prolixity. It was necessary for the text; no less for our times. 'God hath shewed us his light,' and we bring forth the works of darkness.

We say we all are thankful. Our words will not pass with God without our deeds. Our words are so fickle and false, that we dare not trust one another without manuscripts. Scriveners must be employed in all our commerce; and shall God take our words, with whom we have broke so often? No, beloved, we must set our hands to it; and, to speak to our capacity in the city, seal it, and deliver it as our act and deed. We must work that which is good.

I appeal from men's lips to their lives. *Verba rebus probate*, saith Seneca,—The form, the life, the soul of thankfulness is obedience. We, like blind Isaac, cannot see your hearts, but say, 'Let me feel thee, my son.' If your lives be rugged, like the hands of Esau, we dare not trust your voice for the voice of Jacob. If your deeds be rough, and sensible of rebellion, in vain you tell us you are thankful. It is somewhat that you 'enter into his courts, and speak good of his name,' Ps. c. 4; but you must also do good for his name, and you shall be blessed. I have begun and will end with a psalm: Ps. xcv.

1-3, 'O come, then, let us sing unto the Lord ; let us rejoice to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.' 'God is the Lord, that hath shewed us light : bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar.'