

THE VICTORY OF PATIENCE;

WITH

THE EXPIRATION OF MALICE.

We went through fire and through water ; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.—PSALM LXVI. 12.

I DID not, in the former sermon, draw out the oppressing cruelty of these persecutors to the utmost scope and period of their malice, nor extend their *impium imperium* to the furthest limit and determination thereof. There is yet one glimpse of their stinking candle before the snuff goes out ; one groan ere their malice expire. 'We went through fire and water.'

The Papists, when they hear these words, 'went through fire and water,' startle, and cry out, Purgatory! direct proofs for purgatory! With as good reason as Sedulius,* on that dream of Pharaoh's officer, Gen. xl. 10, 'A vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches,' says that the vine signifies St Francis, and the three branches the three orders derived from him. And as a Pope, on that of Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 'Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice ; and stubbornness is as idolatry,' infers, that not to obey the apostolic see of Rome was idolatry by the witness of Samuel. Or as one writes of St Francis, that because it is said, 'Unless you become as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,' he commanded one Massæus to tumble round like a little child that he might enter. Or as when the contention was betwixt the services of Ambrose and Gregory, which should take place ; by the common consent, both the mass-books were laid on the altar of St Peter, expecting some decision of that doubt by revelation. The church-doors being opened in the morning, Gregory's missal-book was rent and torn into many pieces, but Ambrose's lay whole and open upon the altar. Which event, in a sober exposition, would have signified the mass of Gregory cancelled and abolished, and that of Ambrose authentic and allowed. But the wise Pope Adrian expounds it thus : that the rending and scattering of Gregory's missal intended that it should be dispersed over all the Christian world, and only received as canonical.† Or as that simple friar, that finding *Maria* in the Scripture, used plurally for seas, cried out,

* Apol. contr. Alcor. Francis. lib. ii., c. 1.

† Jacob. de Vorag. in Vita Gregor.

in the ostentation of his lucky wit, that he had found in the Old Testament the name of *Maria* for the Virgin Mary.

But I purpose not to waste time in this place, and among such hearers, in the confutation of this ridiculous folly; resting myself on the judgment of a worthy learned man in our church,* that purgatory is nothing else but a mythology, a moral use of strange fables. As when Pius the Second had sent abroad his indulgences to all that would take arms against the Turk, the Turk wrote to him to call in his 'epigrams' again. Or as Bellarmine excused Prudentius, when he appoints certain holidays in hell, that he did but poetise. So all their fabulous discourse of purgatory is but epigrams and poetry; a more serious kind of jest, wherein they laugh among themselves how they cozen the world, and fill the Pope's coffers, who for his advantage, *ens non esse facit, non ens fore*. So that if Roffensis† gather out of this place that in purgatory there is great store of water,—'We went through fire and water,'—we may oppose against him Sir Thomas More, who proves from Zech. ix. that there is no water at all: 'I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, where is no water.' Set then the frost against the rain, and you may go in purgatory dry-shod. If there be nothing left but fire, I make no question but there is not a spark difference betwixt purgatory and hell.

I should narrow up the scope and liberty of God's Spirit, if I should here tie my discourse to the letter, 'We went through fire and through water.' It is an effect of our persecution, and may thus be resolved: We were by their malice driven to great extremity. Fire and water are two elements which, they say, have no mercy; yet either of them more than our oppressors. The time was that a Red Sea divided the waters, and gave dry passage to the children of Israel and of God, Exod. xiv. Whereof the Psalmist here sings, ver. 6, 'He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot; there did we rejoice in him.' And the fire in an oven whose heat was septupled touched not those three servants of the Lord. But these more incensed and insensible creatures have no mercy, nor can they invent a cruelty which they forbear to execute.

Some translations have it, 'We went into fire and into water;' which extends their persecution to our deaths, and comprehends the latitude of mortal martyrdom. And thus understood, the next words of the deliverance, 'Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place,' must be meant of our glory in heaven. But the evident circumstances following deny that interpretation; therefore I adhere to the last and best translation, 'We went through fire and through water.'

Wherein two things may seem to be imported and imparted to our consideration:—First, *We went*. They went, so conveniently as they might, and so conscionably as they durst, from the hands of their persecutors. Secondly, The hard exigents they were driven to, when to pass through fire and water was but a less evil compared with that they eschewed.

'Per mare mactantes fugimus, per saxa, per ignes.'

1. From the former, observe, That it may be lawful in time of persecution to fly. This was granted, yea, in some respects, enjoined by Christ. But must be warily understood; and the rule, in a word, may be this: When our suffering may stand the church of God in better stead than our flying, we must then lose our lives, to save God's honour and our own souls. To deny God this fealty and tribute of our bloods, when his glory hath use of such a service at our hands, is not only to deny him that is his own by many

* Pseudo Martyr., p. 106, de Purgator.

† Contr. Luther., art. xxxvii.

dear titles,—of creation, which was *ex spiritu oris*, by the breath of his mouth ; and of redemption, which was *ex sanguine cordis*, by the blood of his heart,—but to withdraw this justly required testimony is to betray and crucify him, and scarce inferior to their perjury whose false witness condemned him.

In this we restore to God his talent with profit ; not only our own soul he gave us, but as many more as our example works upon and wins to him. When the people admired the great bounty of John, called Eleemosynarius, he answered them, O brethren, I have not yet shed my blood for you, as I ought to do for my Master's sake and testimony. In the early morning of the world did Abel dedicate martyrdom without example ; and the Lord did approve it by accepting Abel's sacrifice, and Abel for a sacrifice.* I have read that a worthy martyr of ours, Dr Rowland Taylor, wrote first with ink, and after with his blood, that it is not enough to profess the gospel of Christ *ad ignem exclusivè*, but we must cleave to it even *ad ignem inclusivè*. This was an honour that Christ accepted presently after his birth, Matt. ii., the holocaust or hecatomb of many innocent infants, murdered and martyred for his sake.

So that suffering for Jesus is a thing to which he promiseth an ample reward. 'No man shall forsake parents, or friends, or inheritance, or living, or life, for my sake, but he shall have' in exchange 'a hundred-fold' so much comfort 'in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting.' But all times and occasions yield not warrant for such a service. Much less can the Seminaries, dying in England for treason, arrogate to themselves the glory of martyrdom, though a vicious affectation of it hath hardened them to such a prodigality of their bloods. They come not to maintain the verity of Scriptures, but the vanity of traditions ; the entangling perplexities of school-men ; the obscure, tetrical, and contradictory assertions of Popes, who command them to seal that with their lives which not only is involved being, but in future contingence—whatsoever the Roman church, that is, the Pope, shall hereafter constitute or declare.

2. From the latter words, *through fire and water*, observe, That the children of God must not expect a gentle and soft entertainment in this world, but hard exigents ; when to fly from their enemies they are fain to pass through fire and water. Affliction for the gospel is called by Paul, Gal. vi. 17, 'the marks of the Lord Jesus.' The world often sets a man as those three servants of God were set in Daniel's prophecy, Dan. iii. On the one side, a harmony of sweet music, the cornet, flute, &c. ; on the other side, a burning furnace, heated above ordinary seven times. Worship the idol, and enjoy the delight of music ; not worship it, and be cast into the fiery oven. Join with the world in his ungodly customs, and the world will love, feast, tickle your ears with music. Separate yourselves, and it will hate you : John xv. 19, 'If you were of the world, the world would love his own : but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Thou shalt be like Abraham's ram, Gen. xxii. 13, tied in a bush of thorns ; from which thou canst not extricate thyself till thou be made a sacrifice.

I have read that Caligula the tyrant being dead, there were found in his closet *duo libelli*,—one called a sword, the other a dagger ; wherein many were by name pricked for death, and destined to it in the emperor's bloody intention. Presumptuous enemies so cast lots on a nation before they have it, and talk of dividing a spoil ere they come at it. Judges v. 30, 'Have they not sped ? have they not divided the prey ?' So the proud adversary in that wonderful year '88, that came with an invincible navy and impla-

* Chrysostom.

cable fury, the ensigns of whose ships were *Victoria, victoria*, brought ready with them instruments of torture, as if the land of peace and mercy had in it no such engines of cruelty, and swallowed down an abundant hope of our desolation. They threw at dice for our wives and daughters, lands and vineyards, houses and heritages, shires and kingdom. They purposed to drive us through fire and water, but fire and water was their destruction. Fire broke the sinews of their combination, and the waves devoured both their hopes and themselves. The godly at last shall be as mighty men, Zech. x. 5, 'treading down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight, because the Lord is with them.'

The grievousness of these afflictions must teach us two useful lessons—
1. Patience; 2. Prayer.

1. Patience. Acts v. 41, the apostles 'departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.' A true Christian rejoiceth in his tribulation, especially when it is for his Saviour's sake, and takes greater pleasure in his iron fetters than a proud courtier doth of his golden chain. Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord.' But if it be so blessed a thing to die *in* the Lord, what is it to die *for* the Lord? Ps. cxvi. 15, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' It was Harding's invective against our reverend, learned, and precious Jewell, that Protestants were worse than the devil; for whereas bread and water and the cross could scare away devils, princes could be rid of them by no means but fire. To whom that excellent bishop answers, That though it pleased his malicious humour to make but a jest of the blood of God's saints, yet it was no more ignominy for lambs to suffer what Christ suffered, than it was praise and credit for wolves to betray him, as Judas did.

Our patience is our crown and others' conversion. Eusebius from Clement reporteth, that when a wicked accuser had brought St James to condemnation, seeing his Christian fortitude, he was touched in conscience, confessed himself a Christian, and so was taken to execution with him. Where earnestly beseeching St James to forgive him, he after a little pause kissed him, and said, 'Peace be to thee, brother,' and they were beheaded together. O blessed patience! which not only gets honour to ourselves, but brings others to salvation, and in all glorifies God.

2. Prayer. This was the apostles' refuge in the time of affliction, Acts ii. 24. Bernard, in a fiction, doth excellently express this necessity, enforce this duty. He supposeth the kings of Babylon and Jerusalem (by whom he means the world and the church) to be at war one against the other. During this hostility, a soldier of Jerusalem was fled to the castle of Justice. Siege was laid to this castle, and a multitude of enemies environed and entrenched it round. There lies near this soldier a faint-hearted coward called Fear. This speaks nothing but discomfort, and when Hope would step in to give him courage, Fear thrusts her out of doors. Whilst these two opposites, Fear and Hope, stand debating, the Christian soldier resolves to appeal to the direction of sacred Wisdom, who was chief councillor to the captain of the castle, Justice. Hear Wisdom speak: Dost thou know, saith she, that the God whom we serve is able to deliver us. Is he not the Lord of hosts, even the Lord mighty in battle? We will despatch a messenger to him with information of our necessity.

Fear replies, What messenger? Darkness is on the face of the world; our walls are begirt with an armed troop, which are not only strong as lions, but also watchful as dragons. What messenger can either escape through

such a host, or find the way into so remote a country? Wisdom calls for Hope, and chargeth her with all speed to despatch away her old messenger. Hope calls to Prayer, and says, Lo here a messenger speedy, ready, trusty, knowing the way. Ready, you cannot sooner call her than she comes; speedy, she flies faster than eagles, as fast as angels; trusty, what embassy soever you put in her tongue she delivers with faithful secrecy. She knows the way to the court of Mercy, and she will never faint till she come to the chamber of the royal presence.

Prayer hath her message, away she flies, borne on the sure and swift wings of faith and zeal; Wisdom having given her a charge, and Hope a blessing. Finding the gate shut, she knocks and cries, 'Open, ye gates of righteousness; and be ye open, ye everlasting doors of glory, that I may enter, and deliver to the king of Jerusalem my petition.' Jesus Christ hears her knock, opens the gate of mercy, attends her suit, promiseth her infallible comfort and redress.

Back returns Prayer, laden with the news of consolation. She hath a promise, and she delivers it into the hand of Faith: that were our enemies more innumerable than the locusts in Egypt, and more strong than the giants, the sons of Anak, yet Power and Mercy shall fight for us, and we shall be delivered. Pass we then through fire and water, through all dangers and difficulties, yet we have a messenger, holy, happy, accessible, acceptable to God, that never comes back without comfort—*Prayer*.

And here fitly I will end our *misery*, and come to God's *mercy*. Desolation hath held us long, but our consolation is eternal. 'But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.'

The song, you see, is compounded like music; it hath *acutum* and *grave*, high and low, sharp and flat. 'Thou causedst men to ride over us. But thou broughtest us out.' Sorrow and joy, trouble and peace, sour and sweet, come by vicissitudes. *Invicem cedunt dolor et voluptas*. This discord in music hurts not, but graceth the song. Whiles grief and pleasure keep this alternation in our life, they at once both exercise our patience and make more welcome our joys. If you look for the happiness of the wicked, you shall find it *in primis*, at the beginning; but if you would learn what becomes of the righteous, *intelliges in novissimis*, you shall know it at last. Ps. xxxvii. 37, 'Mark the upright man, and behold the just: for the end of that man is peace.' We were sore oppressed, 'but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.'

Every word is sweetly significant, and amplifies God's mercy to us. Four especially are remarkable:—1. The deliverer; 2. The deliverance; 3. The delivered; and, 4. Their felicity or blessed advancement. So there is in the deliverer, *aliquid celsitudinis*, *Thou*; in the delivery, *certitudinis*, *brought out*; in the delivered, *solitudinis*, *us*; in the happiness, *plenitudinis*, *into a wealthy place*. There is highness and lowness, sureness and fulness. The deliverer is great, the deliverance certain, the distress grievous, the exaltation glorious. There is yet a first word, that like a key unlocks this golden gate of mercy, a *veruntamen*:—

BUT.—This is *vox respirationis*, a gasp that fetcheth back again the very life of comfort. 'But thou broughtest,' &c. We were fearfully endangered into the hands of our enemies; they rode and trode upon us, and drove us through hard perplexities: 'But thou,' &c. If there had been a full point or period at our misery, if those gulfs of persecution had quite swallowed us, and all our light of comfort had been thus smothered and extinguished, we might have cried, *Periit spes nostra*, yea, *periit salus nostra*,—Our hope, our

help is quite gone. He had mocked us that would have spoken, Be of good cheer. This same *but* is like a happy oar, that turns our vessel from the rocks of despair, and lands it at the haven of comfort. 'But,' &c.

THOU.—Thou only, without help or succour of either man or angel; that art able to save with a few as well as with many; that art 'a man of war,' Exod. xv. 3, and comest armed against thine enemies, with a spear of wrath and a sword of vengeance: thou, of whose greatness there is no end, no limits, no determination: thou, O Lord, without any partner either to share thy glory or our thanks: 'thou broughtest us out.'

Thou of thine own goodness, so well as by thy own greatness, hast delivered us. No merit of ours procured, or deserved this mercy at thy hands; but our freedom comes only by thy majesty, of thy mercy. Here were no arms of flesh, nor armies of angels, in this work of our redemption; but 'thou hast brought us out,' that we might praise thy name. Therefore we say, 'Bless the Lord, O our souls: O Lord, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty,' Ps. civ. 1.

Eduxisti: BROUGHTEST OUT.—Great works become a great God. *Opera testantur de me*, saith our Saviour,—'My works bear witness of me.' I heal the sick, cleanse the leprous, give sight to the blind, raise the dead, cast out devils. Will you not believe, O ye carnal eyes, unless you see? Will you trust your five senses above the four Gospels? 'Come then, and see the works of God.' See works: not a fancy, speculation, or deceiving shadow; but real, visible, acted, accomplished works. *Eduxisti. Sensus assensus*. Let demonstration convince you; 'The snare is broken, and we are delivered.' The Lord works *potenter* and *patenter*. There is not only manifold mercy, but manifest mercy, in his doings. He 'brought us out.'

When the ungodly see us so low brought, that persecutors ride over our heads, they are ready to say, 'Where is now their God?' Behold, *hic est Deus*,—our God is here, where there was need of him; *opus Deo*, a work fit for the Deity to perform. Misery had wrapped and entangled us; the wicked hands had tied us, as the Philistines did Samson, with the bands of death. Here then was *dignus vindice nodus*,—a knot worthy the finger of God to untie. Ps. cii. 20, 'He looked down from the height of his sanctuary: from heaven did the Lord behold the earth.' For what purpose? 'To hear the groaning of the prisoner: to loose those that are appointed to death.' Behold, the waters went over our soul, yet we were not drowned. Malice had doomed us to the fire; but our comfort is, *nihil potestatis in nos habuisse ignem*,—that the fire had not power over us. They trod us under their cruel insultations, but the Lord hath lifted us up. 'The Lord of hosts was with us: the God of Jacob was our refuge,' Ps. xlvi. 11.

Us.—To this act of God, if we tie the subject wherein he works, and knit to *eduxisti, nos*,—which I called *verbum solitudinis*, a word of former wretchedness and calamity,—we shall find our misery a fit subject for God's mercy; especially if you set the others' malice against our meekness, their wickedness against our weakness, the persons whom God delivers, and the persons from whom, will greatly commend the mercy of our deliverance.

It is a pleasure to God to have his strength perfected in our infirmity. When the danger is most violent in its own nature and our sense, then is his helping arm most welcome. Isa. xvii. 11, 'In the day of grief and of desperate sorrow, the harvest shall be great;' a plentiful crop of joy. *Qui Deus est noster, Deus est salutis*; Ps. lxxviii. 20, 'He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.' He delights to have us say in this deep extremity, *Eduxisti*, 'Thou hast brought

us out.' When Jonah was taken up by the mariners, put from the succour of the ship, no help in any rocks, nor mercy in the waters; neither means nor desire to escape by swimming,—for he yields himself into the jaws of death with as mortified affection as if a lump of lead had been thrown into the sea,—a man would have thought that salvation itself could not have saved Jonah. Yet Jonah shall not die. Here is now a delivery fit for God, a cure for the almighty hand to undertake.

Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Distressed desire is importunate. Ps. cii. 13, 'It is time that thou have mercy upon us; yea, the time is come.' But if God do not presently answer, we are ready to pant out a groan of despair, 'The time is past.' If our importunity prevail not, we think all opportunity is gone. But God says, *Tempus nondum venit*,—The time is not yet. God waits the maturity of the danger, the more to increase his honour. As Alexander cheered himself when he should fight with men and beasts, haughty enemies, and huge elephants: *Tandem par animo meo periculum video*,—I see at last a danger somewhat equal to my mind. Will you hear when this time is come? John xi. 21, Martha tells Christ, 'Master, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' Christ knew that before: ver. 15, 'Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you might believe.' Observe the different thoughts of God and man. Martha is sorry, Christ is glad. She thought that the time of help was past; Christ thought that the time was not opportune till now. Jairus's servant comes and tells him, Mark v. 35, 'Thy daughter is dead; trouble the Master no further.' This was the word Christ expected to hear; and now he says, 'Be not afraid, only believe.' Hear the Israelites' desperate complaint. The waters of the sea roar before their faces; the wheels of the chariots rattle behind their backs; hereon they cry to Moses, Exod. xiv. 11, 'Were there no graves in Egypt, that thou hast brought us hither to die?' Now saith Moses, 'Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of God.'

From that which hath been spoken, and that which follows, we may observe two works of God's mercy: which consists—1. *Removendo*; 2. *Promovendo*; the one removing away much evil, the other referring to much good. *Eduxisti*, shews his kindness in freeing us from calamity; *in locum opulentum*, his goodness in exalting us to dignity. The former is an act of deliverance, the latter of advancement. So there is *terminus à quo*, from whence we are freed; and *terminus ad quem*, to which we are exalted.

1. For the former, we have God here *educentem*, bringing out of trouble. Sometimes we find God *ducentem*, leading, guiding, directing: 'Wilt not thou, O Lord, go forth with our hosts?' And, 'he led them through the wilderness, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' Sometimes *inducentem*: ver. 11, 'Thou broughtest us into the net; thou hast laid affliction upon our loins.' Sometimes *adducentem*: 'Thou, O Lord, hast brought us home to thyself,' &c. Sometimes *reducentem*: Ps. cxxvi. 4, 'Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.' Often *educentem*: Ps. cv. 43, 'He brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness.' Never *seducentem*, beguiling, deceiving, causing to err; for that is *opus diaboli*, who is the accuser and seducer of men.

2. For the latter: *into a wealthy place*. The greatness of our felicity doth far transcend the grievousness of our past misery. The dimension of our height exceeds that of our depth; neither did affliction ever bring it so low, as our elevation hath advanced us high. Hereon St Paul, Rom. viii. 18, 'The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the

glory which shall be revealed in us,' whether we compare their strength or their length.

(1.) For their vigour or *strength*; the affliction of man, in the greatest extremity that he can lay it on man, is but finite as the afflicter. The blow comes but from an arm of flesh, and therefore can wound but flesh. Yield the extension of it to reach so far as any possible malice can drive it, yet it can but rack the body, distend the joints, sluice out the blood, and give liberty to the imprisoned soul: which soul they cannot strike. Therefore saith Christ, 'Fear not him that hath power over the body' only, not over the soul. And even in the midst of this dire persecution, God can either quite deliver us, that the storm shall bow over our heads, and hurt us not; or if he suffers us to suffer that, yet he will so qualify the heat of it, that the cool refreshing of his blessed Spirit inwardly to the conscience shall in a manner extinguish the torment. But now this 'wealthy place,' the spring of joy that succeeds this winter of anguish, is illimited, inexpressible, infinite: so strongly guarded with an almighty power, that no robber violently, nor thief subtly, can steal it from us. Some pleasure is mixed with that pain, but no pain is incident to this pleasure. There was some laughter among those tears, but there shall be no tears in this laughter; for 'tears shall be quite wiped from our eyes.' By how much then the power of God transcends man's, yea, God's mercy man's malice, by so much shall our rejoicing exceed our passion. By how much the glorious city of heaven, walled with jasper and pure gold, shining as brass,* Rev. xxi. 12, 18, is stronger than the undefenced and naked cottage of this transient world; our future comforts arise, in measure, pleasure, and security, above our past distress.—Thus for strength.

(2.) If we compare their *length*, we shall find an infinite inequality. Paul calls affliction momentary, glory eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Time shall determine the one, and that a short time, a very winter's day; but the other is above the wheels of motion, and therefore beyond the reach of time. 'For a moment, in mine anger,' saith the Lord, 'I did hide my face from thee; but with everlasting mercy I have had compassion on thee.' Nothing but eternity can make either joy or sorrow absolute. He can brook his imprisonment that knows the short date of it; and he finds poor content in his pleasure that is certain of a sudden loss. We know that our pilgrimage is not long through this valley of tears and miserable desert; but our Canaan, home, inheritance, is a wealthy place: glorious for countenance, blessed for continuance; wealthy, without want; stable, without alteration; a constant mansion, an immoveable kingdom. Unto which our Lord Jesus in his appointed time bring us! To whom, with the Father and Spirit of consolation, be all praise and glory for ever. Amen.

* Glass.—Ed.

Staatsbib
München