

us, (though the imperfection thereof deserves damnation according to the rigour of the law,) but that it is ordained to be the way to our salvation: I mean, not its imperfection, but it, notwithstanding its imperfection.

Reader, if thou art a believer, till thy love to Jesus Christ prompts thee to a more suitable ejaculation, accept of this for a conclusion of this whole discourse:—

“A saving eternity, Father of mercy, will be short enough to praise thee for Him who hath delivered us from those many millions of sins, the least whereof deserve a damning eternity. Dear Lord Jesus, who hast saved us from the least sin that ever we had or did, help us to serve thee with the greatest love that our souls can either admit or express. And as, through grace, the guilt of the least sin shall not lie upon us, so neither let the love of the least sin lodge within us. Thou who hast made our justification perfect, daily perfect what our sanctification wants. And never, Lord, let us put limits to our thankful returns for those satisfying sufferings of thine, that knew no bounds, no measure.”

SERMON XIII. (XI.)

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THE GOOD WORKS OF BELIEVERS ARE NOT MERITORIOUS OF ETERNAL SALVATION.

WHETHER THE GOOD WORKS OF BELIEVERS BE MERITORIOUS OF
ETERNAL SALVATION.—NEGATUM EST.*

Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.—Psalm lxii. 12.

THERE is scarcely any sin more natural to us than pride, and no pride worse than spiritual pride. It was the condemnation of the devil. And spiritual pride shows itself most of all in those high and overweening thoughts [that] we are apt to have of our own worth and excellency. Though when we have done evil we are filled with guilt, yet, if we but think [that] we have done well, we are tickled with conceit: one while we are conscious [that] we have offended God, another while we are ready to believe [that] we have obliged him. We can scarcely be enlarged in a duty, pray with any life or warmth, hear with attention and affection, but we are ready to take our Lord's words out of his mouth, and greet ourselves with a “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matt. xxv. 23.) And that too not only as if the work were wholly our own, but as if we had deserved something by it.

* “The proposition is denied.”—EDIT.

We commonly contend with the Papists about the antiquity of our religion; they bear us in hand that theirs is the more ancient. For my part, I readily grant it in this sense,—that Popery, as to several of the chief points of it, is plainly the religion of corrupt nature; and nature hath the start of grace in the best of us. Men are generally born with a pope in their bellies; and they can never be eased of him, till some powerful conviction of the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and the impossibility of meriting salvation by it, like strong physic, make them disgorge themselves, and bring him up. And if the doctrine of merits be in the Papists only their faith, yet it is in carnal Protestants their nature, and in saints themselves may sometimes be their temptation.* And therefore, Christians, though my present business lie mainly with them of the Romish religion, yet do not you look upon yourselves as altogether unconcerned; but remember, that the same arguments which conclude directly against the pope without you, may at the same time be levelled against the pope within you. And the truth of it is, that acquaintance with yourselves and the constitution of your own souls is the best way to establish you against the most dangerous errors of Popery; and the better you can deal with that little young Antichrist in your hearts, the better you will be able to defend yourselves against that great old one at Rome. And that I may help you so to do, as God shall enable me, I have chosen this text; which I the rather fix upon, because I find it in the head of a whole squadron of scriptures, pressed by Bellarmine into the pope's service. His Holiness's commission, you know, can compel any scripture to maintain the Catholic cause, though against its own consent. I shall endeavour, in the progress of my discourse, to rescue both this and others from the injury of an involuntary warfare, in which they are forced to fight against that truth which God commissioned them to defend.

If we look into the body of this psalm, we shall find the royal penman of it once and again declaring and professing his faith and confidence in God, and him only, (Psalm lxii. 1, 2, 5—7,) in despite of all his enemies' opposition against him; over whose power he doth triumphantly insult, (verse 3,) as well as tax their malice; (verse 4;) and persuades others to the like fixing [of] their faith on God; (verse 8;) labouring to take them off from their false and ill-grounded confidences, whether in persons or things, either as wicked or vain; (verses 9, 10;) and then lays down the reasons and grounds of the boldness of his faith,—God's power, (verse 11,) and his mercy: (verse 12:) one showing his sufficiency and ability to overtop all those enemies, and effectually to save; the other, his readiness so to do for all that do thus trust in him, and wait for him. The latter of these, God's mercy, he sets forth by a most eminent instance of it,—that most glorious retribution he makes to those that do believe and obey him: "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work."

And so the words do both assert that great attribute of mercy in God, and prove it: the one in the former part of the verse: "To thee, O

* The most violent assault [that] Mr. Knox ever had from Satan was at his dying hour, when he was tempted to think, that, by his faithfulness in his ministry, he had merited heaven itself.—*Vide* MELCHIOREM ADAMUM in *Vita* *Knoxi*.

Lord, belongeth mercy ;” the other in the latter : “ For thou renderest to every man according to his work.” The great day of recompensing men according to what they have done in the flesh, will be the most ample proof, and illustrious manifestation, not only of the righteous but merciful nature of God.

Inquire we here what is meant by “ *work*,” and what by *rewarding men according to it*.

1. By “ *work*” we are not to understand barely one individual work ; but (the singular number being put for the plural) a plurality or complection of works of the same kind, which, all together, make up one integral work. All the particular actions [that] men do of the same kind are but parts of the great work [which] they are doing, either for God or the devil ; and so are all included in it. And the miscarriages of God’s children are so many haltings in their course, so many bunglings in their work ; which are blemishes in it, though not absolute interruptions of it.

But if it be farther inquired, “ What kind of work or works is here intended ?” I answer : Good ones, especially : for in the rewarding of them it is that God’s goodness and mercy so greatly appear ; when it is plainly enough his justice that is manifested in the recompensing of evil ones. Or we may thus paraphrase the words : “ To thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, in that thou renderest to every man according to his work : not only evil to them that do evil, and have deserved it ; but good to them that do good, though they cannot challenge it.”

2. By *rewarding men according to their works*, (briefly, because I shall meet with it again,) I understand God’s recompensing men according to the nature, or kind, or quality of their works : such as their works have been, such shall be their reward : “ Who will render to every man according to his deeds : to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life : but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.” (Rom. ii. 6—9.) And so the proportion is between the kind of work, and the kind of reward : where the work was good, the reward shall be suitable ; and where the work was evil, the reward will be answerable : * natural good the reward of moral [good], as natural evil the reward of moral evil. If it be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, who can say but the reward is according to their works, though the righteous man’s reward be a thousand times greater than his work ? (Isai. iii. 10, 11.) “ Here is therefore a likeness of quality between the work and the reward, but not a proportion of equality.” †

DOCTRINE. The truth then [which] we infer from the words thus explained is this : *that the reward of good works is not deserved by them that receive it : or, that the best of men, by their best works, do not merit the reward that God gives them.*

* *Quia tu reddis unicuique justa opera sua ; bona bonis, mala malis : damnas peccatores, remuneras justos.*—HIERONYMUS in *Psal. lxi. qui apud illum est lxi.* “ Because thou renderest unto every man according to his work ; good to the good, evil to the evil : thou damnest sinners ; thou rewardest the just.”—EDIT. † *Est igitur inter opera et premia similitudo qualitatis, non proportio æqualitatis.*—DAVENANTIUS *De Justitiâ actuali*, cap. 60.

If the consequence of this doctrine from the text be questioned, it may thus be proved: That which is merely out of the mercy of the rewarder cannot be for the merit of the worker: "And if it be by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more of grace: otherwise work is no more work:" (Rom. xi. 6:) But the Psalmist here affirms, that the reward of good works is out of the mercy of the Rewarder: And therefore it follows, that it is not for the merit of the worker. And so I come to the business in hand, to show you that good works do not merit eternal life, that being the reward spoken of by the penman of this psalm. Here we must,

- I. *Explain the terms of the question.*
- II. *Give you the state of it.*
- III. *Confirm the truth.*
- IV. *Take off objections.*
- V. *Make application.*

EXPLICATION OF THE TERMS.

I. *For explication of the terms, it would be inquired into,*

1. *What is meant by good works?*

ANSWER. Not to wrong our adversaries, they themselves do generally understand, such good works as are wrought by them that are furnished with truth of grace, or a supernatural principle suited to and productive of supernatural actions; such good works as are the vital actions of the new man, the motions of that "divine nature" whereof believers are made "partakers." (2 Peter i. 4.) And, indeed, those works which proceed not from such a principle, can be but equivocally called "good," as not partaking of the nature of that which is truly, that is, supernaturally, good.* And of those only we are here to speak, and not of any such as are antecedent to the first grace, or conversion of the heart to God. But when we speak of these good works, we mean not only those of the second table, works of justice, charity, bounty, though the Papists like them best, at least when done to themselves; (they must needs be eminently good, which bring-in good money to the popes' coffers, and good cheer to the priests' bellies;) but we take them more largely and comprehensively for the duties of both tables; and those too not only external, or such as are performed by the outward man; but likewise for the inward actings of this supernatural principle which yet proceed no farther than the heart: † such as the inward workings of love, thankfulness, hope, joy, humility, patience, &c.; and, in a word, all that good fruit of all kinds which grows upon this good root.

2. *What we are to understand by meriting.*—What is the original signification of the words *mereri* and *meritum*, I shall not stand to inquire; but that which is most in use in our present age, and which the Papists, for the advantage of their cause, make most use of, is expressed in English by "deserving" and "desert." But if we look back to

* Bellarmine requires to a meritorious work, that it proceed from one who is *amicus et gratus Deo*, ["a friend of God and pleasing to Him,"] and then *ex charitatis virtute* ["from the virtue of charity"].—*De Justificatione*, lib. v. cap. 10. † This principle always accompanies faith, "without which no works are to be called 'good.'" *Et si bona videatur facere, tamen quia sine fide facit, nec bona sunt vocanda.*—AUGUSTINUS in *Psalmum xxxi.*

former times, we shall find these words taken in a far different sense by the ancient fathers, (to say nothing of heathen writers,) than by modern Papists. The fathers commonly take *mereri*, "to merit," for the same as *consequi, obtinere*, "to obtain," or "gain;" and *meritum*, "merit," for any good work which, according to God's appointment, is rewardable with eternal life; though in the other and more strict acceptation of the word it be no merit, as not being truly worthy of the reward: and so to merit eternal life is, in their sense, no more than to do those things which are the way wherein eternal life is to be obtained. And this is evident in that they apply the word "merit" to those actions in which any real desert or proper worthiness of the reward can never be rationally imagined. Thus Augustine frequently: one while he tells us that "the worshippers of devils are said to merit certain temporal comforts." Elsewhere, that "the Virgin Mary merited to conceive and bring forth Christ." And again, that "Paul, by so many persecutions and blasphemies, merited to be called 'a chosen vessel.'" And yet again, that "the people of Israel had a stiff neck; for that they merited to be delivered from their bondage by so many miracles." * And I find a passage cited of Austin which, if merit be taken in the present Popish notion, all the world cannot reconcile to sense: *Nullis precedentibus meritis per gratiam Dei meruimus templa Dei fieri*: "By no antecedent merits, we by the grace of God merited to become the temples of God." And can a man merit without merits? deserve without deserts? If he have no merits, properly so called, he cannot properly merit to become the temple of God: but without merits he may obtain this favour of God. And yet more strange is that expression, whoever is the author of it, which some tell us is still sung in the Roman rituals, where, speaking of Adam's sin, it is said to be *felix culpa quæ tantum meruit habere Redemptorem*, "a happy transgression which merited so great a Redeemer." † And will any believe that Adam's sin deserved so well at God's hands? Was Christ's coming into the world to redeem sinners the reward of sin, or the remedy against it? And yet the reward of it it must be, if the word "meriting" be taken in its proper sense.

The same way the word is taken by others of the fathers. "If they," (that is, the Israelites,) saith Ambrose, "did not merit to come into the land, because they murmured against God; how shall we merit to come into heaven, when we live so like the Heathen?" ‡ And Cyprian, speaking of Dorcas being raised from the dead: "She," saith he, "who ministered help to the afflicted widows, that they might live, merited to be called back to life at the prayers of widows." § In the same catachrestical way we sometimes find the word used in the Vulgar translation. In Joshua xi. 20, we read it, "That they might find no

* *Cultores demonum dicuntur mereri temporalia quædam solatia.*—*De Civitate Dei*, lib. v. cap. 24. *Maria concipere et parere meruit eum, quem constat nullum habuisse peccatum.*—*De Naturâ et Gratiâ*, cap. 36. *Qui (de Paulo loquitur) pro tot persecutionibus et blasphemis, vas electionis meruit nominari.*—*De Prædest. et Grat.* cap. 16; et paulò ante: *Dura cervix in illo populo qui ex omni mundo electus est, qui de servitute decem miraculis meruit liberari.* † CHAMIERUS et RIVETI *Orthod. Cathol.* ‡ *Si illi terram intrare non meruerunt, quia murmurati sunt contra Deum; quomodo nos cælum merebimur intrare, indifferenter viventes, sicut gentes?*—AMBROSIUS in *Hebr.* iv. § *Quæ laborantibus viduis largitus fuerit subsidium vivendi, meruit ad vitam petitione viduarum revocari.*—CYPRIANUS *De Opere et Eleemosynis.*

favour;" the Vulgar hath it, *Et non mererentur ullam clementiam*, "That they might not merit any mercy." And, Gen. iv. 13, "My punishment is greater than I can bear," our margin reads it, "Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven;" but the Vulgar, *Major est iniquitas mea quàm ut veniam merear*, "Mine iniquity is greater than that I should merit forgiveness." What can "meriting" in these places signify, but "obtaining?" a signification very far differing from that in which the Papists now take it. *Usus is norma loquendi*; "words are to be taken as they are used:" and who knows not that words have their modes and fashions, as well as men's habits and manners? And so those which are in fashion in one age are quite out in another, or taken quite in a different sense: and sometimes the metaphorical signification of a word may be more in use than the proper; and we shall make strange confusion in the nature of things, if those words which properly signify those things be always taken in their proper sense. I insist the more on this, because it is all the answer I intend to the testimonies of the fathers, which the Papists think to run us down with.

But, to pass from the word to the thing: if we inquire into the pedigree of this darling doctrine of the Papists, we may easily derive it (to look no higher) from their great-grandfathers, the pharisaical Jews, from whom they have received a great part of their religion. The Pharisees were for infallibility, and a magisterial, imposing spirit in matters of conscience, before the pope was born; and the rabbins were for tradition before there were any Papists in the world. And as for merits, Camero cites a passage out of Maimonides, where he says, that "every man hath his sins, and every man his merits: and he that hath more merits than sins is a just man; but he that hath more sins than merits is a wicked man."* And that learned author, as well as others,† is of opinion, that the apostle James hath an eye to this error of the Pharisees, when he says, that "whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James ii. 10.)

Others tell us of seven sorts or degrees of Pharisees among the Jews; one of which had its name from their professing to do all still that was required of them, or asking, Was any more yet to be done?‡ like the young man in Matt. xix. 20: "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" And, indeed, we need go no farther than our Saviour's frequent reflections upon them, and the apostle's smart disputations against them in the point of justification. (Luke xviii. 9; xvi. 15; Rom. x. 3.) But from whence soever the Papists have received this doctrine of merits, thus they manage it. Merit, they say, is twofold: one out of congruity, the other out of condignity. The former is a work to which the reward is not due out of justice, but out of some kind of decency, or congruity; or, as some of them speak, out of the liberality

* על נה חוררה שב.—Vide Buxtorfii *Synagog. Jud.*; et Petrum Galesinium, lib. 4. cap. 1; Cameronem in *Matth.* xix. 3, oper. 170. † BRUGGENSIS apud DRUSIUM.
‡ פרוש מה חובתי פרוש *Phariseus qui dicit, Quid debeo facere? et faciam illud. Quasi dixerat, Quid fieri oportet quod non feci?*—DRUSIUS *De tribus Sect. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 22; et HOTTINGERI *Theaurus*, lib. 1. cap. 1. "A Pharisee is one that says, 'What ought I to do? and I will do it.' As if he should say, 'What ought I to do, that I have not done?'"—EDIT.

of the person who accepts the work: so that though the work do not really merit the reward, and is not proportioned to it, yet there is some kind of meetness or congruity that it should be rewarded. This kind of merit some of them contend to be found in men while in their natural state, in relation to that grace which is afterward bestowed on them, or wrought in them.* But others of themselves do as stiffly oppose it; and maintain that sinners cannot even in this way merit the first grace, nor the pardon of their sins; and that believers, when fallen from grace, (as they suppose they may,) cannot merit their own recovery. But this is not the merit we are to speak of. The other is that which is out of condignity, which Durand distinguisheth into two kinds: † one taken more largely for a work of that dignity or goodness which is, according to God's appointment, required in it, that it may be rewardable with eternal life; and that is no more really than the graciousness or supernatural goodness of the action, as proceeding from a supernatural principle, and ordered to a supernatural end; which, we acknowledge, must be in every good work which is capable of a supernatural reward, and is to be found in every truly gracious action. But there is a merit out of condignity in a more strict sense, which is defined to be "a voluntary action, for which a reward is due to a man out of justice, so that it cannot be denied him without injustice." ‡ Others define it much after the same manner; namely, such an action as hath an equality of dignity or worth in relation to the reward, which is therefore due to it out of justice. And this is the merit we are to speak of, to say nothing of that third kind [which] some add,—*meritum ex pacto*, "merit upon supposition of a promise;" as when a reward is promised to a man if he do some work which yet bears no proportion to that reward, and for which antecedently to the promise he could not challenge any; but, such a promise being made, he may, and consequently, say they, may be said to, merit.

THE STATE OF THE QUESTION.

II. The question then is, between us and the Papists, *whether the good works of believers, such as God doth reward in the future life, do truly and properly deserve that reward, so that it is due out of justice, and God should be unrighteous if he should deny or refuse it.*

The modern Papists generally affirm it. The council of Trent so lays down the judgment of the present church of Rome, as to assert that good works do truly merit eternal life; and anathematize any that shall say the contrary.§

* DIEGO ALVAREZ *De Auxil.* disp. 59; FRANCISCUS CUMELIUS in 1, 2, et 1 *Thom.* disp. v. lect. 3.

† *In Sentent.* lib. ii. dist. xxvii. quest. 2.

‡ *Est actio voluntaria, propter quam debetur alicui merces ex justitiâ; sic ut, si non reddatur, ille ad quem pertinet reddere, injustè facit, et est simpliciter ac propriè injustus.*—DURANDUS *ibid.*

§ *Cùm enim ille ipse Jesus Christus, tanquam caput in membra, et tanquam vites in palmites, in ipsos justificatos jugiter virtutem infuset; quæ virtus bona ipsorum opera semper antecedit, comitatur, et subsequitur, et sine quâ nullo pacto Deo grata et meritoria esse possent; nihil amplius ipsis justificatis deesse credendum est, quò minus plenè, illis quidem operibus quæ in Deo facta sunt, divinæ legi, pro hujus vitæ statu, satisfecisse, et vitam æternam, suo etiam tempore, si tamen in gratiâ decesserint, consequendam, verè promeruisse, censentur.*—Sess. vi. cap. 16. "Since Jesus Christ himself continually inspires a certain virtue or power into those who are justified, as the head into the members, and vines into their branches; which virtue always precedes, accompanies, and follows their good works, and without which

And though those cunning fathers speak somewhat darkly, and so involve things, blending truth with error, as if they designed to make younger brothers of all the world beside; yet the great interpreter of council speaks more honestly, that is, more broadly; and plainly tells us, that "eternal blessedness is no less due to the good works of good men, than eternal torments are to the evil works of wicked men;" and that "eternal life is so the recompence of good works, that it is not so much given of God freely, and out of liberality, as it is out of debt;" and that "the nature of merit and grace not being consistent, the reward is to be reckoned, not as of grace, but of debt."* Now, well fare Andradius, for a plain-dealing enemy. It is a commendable quality in any; but a rare one in a Papist. The man saves us the labour of guessing at the council's meaning. Had all spoken out like him, we should more easily have understood them, and fewer would have been deluded by them. And yet, not to wrong any, other modern Jesuits are no less rigid in the point than this author: nay, who among the Papists do not assert the worthiness of good works, in relation to the reward? though they are not yet agreed from whence that worthiness should arise. Some say, as Bellarmine tells us, from the promise of God, engaging to reward them: † but these are few, and too modest; and, indeed, half heretics for their pains. Others say, from the intrinsic worth and excellency of the works themselves, setting aside the consideration of the promise. These are the impudent children of holy church, fit sons for such a mother. And yet the cardinal himself comes little behind them, if at all: he is of opinion, that "the good works of righteous men are worthy of eternal glory, partly by reason of their own proper goodness, and partly by virtue of God's promise; yet not so, neither," (for he is afraid of speaking too diminutively of good works,) "as if, without God's covenanting with the worker and acceptance of the work, it did not itself bear an answerable proportion to eternal life; but (only) because, setting aside the promise, God is not obliged to accept a good work to eternal life, though it be equal to it." ‡ To these we may add others, who say

they could by no means be pleasing to God and meritorious: it is to be believed that nothing further is required by justified persons in order to their being accounted fully to have satisfied the divine law, with regard to the state of this life, by those works indeed which have been done in God; and to have truly merited eternal life, to be obtained also in due time, if indeed they depart in the faith.—EDIT. *Si quis dixerit, hominis justificati bona opera ita esse dona Dei ut non sint etiam bona ipsius justificati merita, aut ipsum justificatum, bonis operibus, &c., non verè mereri augmentum gratiæ, vitam æternam, &c.; anathema sit.*—CAN. 32. "If any one shall assert, that the good works of a justified man are so the gifts of God, as that they are not also the good deserts of him that is justified; or that the justified person does not by his good works truly merit an increase of grace, life eternal, &c.; let him be accursed."—EDIT.

* ANDRADIUS *apud* CHEMNITIVM. † *Ratio meriti completè est ex ordinatione voluntatis divinæ illius actus ad præmiunt.*—SCOTUS in *Sentent.* cap. i. dist. 17. "The reckoning of merit is wholly from the appointment, by the divine will, of that action to reward."—EDIT. *Et paulò post: Actu voluntatis suæ, (Deus,) ordinando ipsum (actum humanum) ad præmiunt, voluit ipsum esse meritum, qui, secundùm se consideratus absque tali acceptatione divinâ, secundùm strictam justitiã non fuisset dignus tali præmio.* "God, having, by an act of his own will, ordained a human action to reward, willed that it should be meritorious, which, considered by itself without such divine acceptation, according to strict justice would not have been deserving of such reward."—EDIT. ‡ *Opera justorum sunt meritoria vite æternæ de condigno ratione pacti et operis simul: non quidem quòd sine pacto vel acceptatione non habent opus bonum proportionem ad vitam æternam; sed quia non tenetur Deus acceptare ad illam mercedem opus bonum, quàmvis par et æquale mercedi, nisi convenitio intercedat.*—BELLAR. *De Justif.* lib. v. cap. 17.

[that] works are worthy of eternal life, as they are *tincta sanguine Christi*, "dipped in Christ's blood," dignified and commended by his merits, from which they receive virtue and power to be themselves meritorious.* And so our business is to show that good works do not on any account, either of themselves and their own internal excellency, or of God's promise or Christ's merits, deserve eternal life.

THE TRUTH CONFIRMED.

III. And so we come to *confirm the truth*.

ARGUMENT I. *Good works are rewarded merely out of God's mercy and grace; and therefore not out of man's merit.*—What more opposite than mercy and merit? † "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." (Titus iii. 5.) What a man doth really deserve by his works, cannot be said to be given him out of mere mercy and grace. But it is from thence only that the best works of God's children are ever rewarded with eternal blessedness. Thus the text: "To thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work." Were not God infinite in mercy, the best saint upon earth would fall short of a reward in heaven: "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 21.) "Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 13.) And Paul prays for Onesiphorus, "That he might find mercy of the Lord in that day," the great day of retribution. ‡ (2 Tim. i. 18.) The reward, then, that these saints expected, and would have others look for, is one given them out of mercy.

Men never need mercy more than when they come before God's tribunal; and even there, when they look for the reward of their good works, they must expect it from the mercy of the Judge. So Nehemiah did; who, after making mention of some of his good works, and praying that God would remember him for them, (Neh. xiii. 14,)—he farther prays that God would "spare him according to the greatness of his mercy." (Verse 22.) Now when is it that Nehemiah desires to be spared, but then when he expects his works should be rewarded? God's sparing extends even to his judging. God's "remembering him for good," (verse 31,) his not "wiping out his good deeds," and his "sparing him," all proceed from the same mercy of God.

EXCEPTION. "But eternal life," say the Papists, "is ascribed to God's mercy: not that it is not truly and properly the reward of man's merits; but that those merits themselves are the fruits of God's mercy."

* *Vide Catech. Rom. p. 412.*

† *Inter mercedem et meritum est quidam respectus*

mutuus, &c. : utraque autem habet quandam oppositionem ad gratiam sive donum gratuitum.—JANSENIUS YPRENSIS *De Grat. primi Homini*, cap. 16. "Between reward and merit there is a certain mutual relation: but both have some kind of opposition to grace or gratuitous gift."—EDIT.

‡ *Ἐὶ δὲ Ονησιφορος ὁ κινδυνος ἑαυτον παραβαλλον δια Χριστου απο ελεου σωζηται, πολλω μαλλον ἡμεις. Ἐὶ μὴ ελεω και φιλανθρωπια ελθου κριται, ἀλλ' ακριβη ποιησασθαι την εξετασιν, παντας ὑπευθυνους εὑρησει παντως.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Psalmum cxxx.* "If Onesiphorus, exposing himself to danger for Christ's sake, be saved by mercy, much more must we be so saved. If Christ come not to judge in mercy and benignant philanthropy, but to make a severe scrutiny, he will find us all entirely culpable."—EDIT.

ANSWER. To which we may easily reply, that if God do out of his mercy save us, and out of mercy remember us for good, and reward us according to our work; then it is clear that he doth not only enable us out of his mercy to do those good works which tend to salvation. It is one thing for a man to be saved; another thing to be put into a way of salvation, by being enabled to work for it: as it is one thing to crown a man for conquering; and another to give him weapons, and teach him to fight. God could not be truly said to save any man, if he only gave him grace to work in order to it; nor to "save him out of mercy, if for all that mercy he must still be saved by his merits, and without them might fall short of salvation." *

ARGUMENT II. *Eternal life is the gift of God; and therefore is not deserved by our good works.*—"It is your Father's good pleasure," *εὐδοκῆσε*, "to give you the kingdom." (Luke xii. 32.) "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life." (Rom. vi. 23.) That therefore eternal life is a gift, none can deny that will not deny the plain words of scripture; and that then it will follow, that good works do not deserve it, will appear by the opposition that there is between a free gift and a due reward: that which is of grace is not of debt, and that which is of debt is not of grace. (Rom. xi. 6.) What I owe, I cannot be said properly to give; and what I properly give, I cannot be said to owe. So that if God properly gives eternal life, he cannot be said to owe it; and if he do not owe it, I am sure we do not deserve it. So much we see in the apostle's antithesis, "The wages of sin is death." Death is truly and properly the wages of sin, as being deserved by us; and it is justice in God to give us our desert. But he doth not say, Eternal life is the wages of our righteousness or works, but "the gift of God;" as being free, and altogether undeserved by us.† *Ὀψωνία, stipendium*; he alludes to "the pay" that was given to soldiers in the wars, and for which they had served: "Be content with your wages," *Ἀρχεισθε τοῖς ὀψωνίοις ὑμῶν*. (Luke iii. 14.) But eternal life he calls *χαρίσμα*, "the free gift of God," such an one as is given *ex χάριτος*, "out of grace;" ‡ as soldiers sometimes were wont to have gifts, *donativa*, "largesses," given them, over and above their pay; as we know was the frequent practice of the Roman emperors to do; unto which it is not unlikely that our apostle may allude in the latter part of the verse, as well as he plainly enough doth to their pay in the former. "The apostle doth not say, 'Eternal life is your wages,'" says Theophylact; "but, 'God's

* *Neque servatus (est) ex misericordiâ, cui tam sint post eam misericordiam necessaria merita, ut possit illa absque his fieri irrita.*—CHAMIERI *Panstratia*, lib. xiv. cap. 14, tom. iii. † *Stipendium peccati mors. Rectè stipendium, quia debetur, quia dignè retribuitur, quia meritò redditur. Deinde, ne justitia humana de humano se extolleret bono merito, &c., non e contrario retulit, Stipendium justitia vitæ æternæ; sed, Dei gratiâ vitæ æternæ.*—AUGUSTINUS *Contra Pelagian.* epist. cv. "The wages of sin is death." It is rightly called 'wages,' because it is due, because it is deservedly paid, because it is rendered according to merit. Then, lest human justice should boast itself of human good deserts, the apostle has not set in opposition to the former phrase, 'The wages of justice is eternal life;' but, 'The gift of God is eternal life.'—EDIT. *Maluit dicere, Gratia Dei vitæ æternæ, ut intelligremus, non pro meritis nostris Deum nos ad vitam æternam, sed pro sua miseratione, perducere.*—Idem, *De Grat. et lib. Arbit.* "The apostle preferred saying, 'The gift of God is eternal life,' that we might understand that God does not bring us to eternal life for the sake of our merits, but on account of his own compassion."—EDIT. † "When they had nothing to pay;" *εχαρισάτο*, "he frankly forgave them both." (Luke vii. 42.)

gift : ' for you receive not the compensation and remuneration of your labours ; but all these things come by grace through Jesus Christ." *

ARGUMENT III. *Eternal life is given to believers by way of inheritance ; and therefore not by way of merit.*—" Which is the earnest of our inheritance." (Eph. i. 14.) " If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 17.) " Who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i. 14.) This none can deny. And that it follows, that if they be heirs of glory, they have it not by the merit of their works, we see by Titus iii. 5, 7 : " Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us ; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." And, Gal. iii. 18 : " If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise ; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." To have eternal life by the law and by works, is opposed to our having it by promise and by inheritance. And this may be farther confirmed ; for if a believer merit his inheritance, then either he doth it by works done before his adoption ; which Papists themselves will not say, who acknowledge eternal life not to be the wages of servants, but the portion of children ; and that merits cannot be in any who are not reconciled to God, and accepted of him. Or else it must be by works done after a man is adopted. But that cannot be neither ; because whoever merits, doth thereby acquire a right to something to which he had none before ; whereas every believer hath a right to the heavenly inheritance by his very adoption, and before those good works be wrought whereby it is pretended he merits it. " If children, then heirs," &c. (Rom. viii. 17.)

EXCEPTION. " But," say the Papists, " believers have a right to heaven by their adoption ; yet must merit the actual possession of it."

ANSWER. It is subtly distinguished ; as if an adopted person had not a title to the possession of the inheritance the very first moment he is adopted ; or as if a man might have a right to heaven, and yet not have a right to the possession of it. We acknowledge that obedience is required in a son before he come to possess his inheritance ; yet that obedience, though antecedent to his possessing that inheritance, is only the way in which he is to come to it, and the means whereby he is to be fitted for it ; but is not meritorious of it. There is no right to the inheritance acquired by his obedience which before he had not ; though farther fitness for, and suitableness to, it there may be. The Israelites were to fight, and subdue their enemies, ere they possessed the promised land ; but their right to the possession of it they had before by the promise. And who can say that they were worthy of it merely because they fought for it ?

ARGUMENT IV. *Believers owe all to God ; and therefore can merit nothing of him.*—They owe all to God, both as being *his servants*, to whom they are bound ; and *his beneficiaries*, who have received all from him.

1. *They are his servants.*—" When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." (Luke xvii. 10.) " Ye are not your own ; for ye are bought with a price."

* Ουκ ειπεν, 'Η απτιμοσια ή παρα του Θεου, αλλα, Το χαρισμα· ου γαρ αμοιβη και απτιμοσιον πορων ελαβετε, αλλα χαριτι ταυτα παντα εγενετο εν Χριστω Ιησου.—In Rom. vi.

(1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) What that price is, Peter tells us: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ," &c. (1 Peter i. 18, 19.) All the creatures are his servants, because made and employed and maintained by him; but believers are more especially his servants, because they are redeemed by him, too, from being servants to sin and Satan, (by whom, though they were never rightfully servants, yet they were held in bondage,) and "purchased" by him to be his own "possession," *περιποιησις*, (Eph. i. 14,) his "peculiar people," and to do his work, to be "zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 14.) I suppose, none can deny believers to be as much God's servants as any man's servants are his; and that he hath as absolute a dominion over them as men ever can have over those who are theirs, being bought with a price as well as any. Now who knows not that servants are so their masters', that they are not their own, not *sui juris* ["their own masters"]; cannot command themselves, not dispose of themselves, or their time, or their work? All they have and all they do is their masters'. Believers, then, being thus God's servants, have nothing, do nothing, but what belongs to their Lord; and so can deserve nothing at his hands by all the service they can do him, seeing they owe it all to him. Who indeed deserves any thing for doing what he is bound to do, and deserves punishment if he do not do? And, therefore, if God rewards his servants, he doth it out of his liberality, and because it pleaseth him to reward them; not that any thing is due to them: and if he never should reward them, never had promised them a reward, yet still they, being servants, were bound to do his work. Hence our Saviour, in that, Luke xvii. 10, bids his disciples, when they "have done all that is commanded them," or supposing they could and should do all, yet even then to acknowledge themselves to be but "unprofitable servants;" not only unprofitable to God, (so much the Papists will grant,) but unprofitable to themselves; in that, being bound by the condition of servants to obey their Lord, they could not deserve so much as thanks, (verse 9,) much less a reward. And so, in a word, if God give believers any thing, it is grace; if nothing, it is not injustice. He that would deserve any thing of his master must first be made free: manumission must go before merit.

2. *Believers owe all to God because they are his beneficiaries, and have received all from God.*—"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.) "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. iii. 5.) And indeed Papists themselves dare not in plain terms deny it; but in words confess it. And the more ancient and sounder Schoolmen roundly assert all the good we do, as well as enjoy, to come from God. "No man," says one, "is beforehand with God in doing any thing for God; but God himself in every good work and motion is the first mover and doer." * And, "Whatever we are," saith another, "whatever we have, whether good actions, or good habits, or the use of them, it is all in us out of the liberality of God, freely giving all

* *Nullus autem homo prius fecit pro Deo; ipse enim Deus in quolibet motione et factione est primus motor et factor.*—BRADWARDINUS *De Causis Dei*, p. 343.

and preserving all."* And yet another: "All our good works and merits are God's free gifts."† He calls them "merits;" and yet in that very place disputes against the condignity of merits, with this very argument [which] we have in hand. And though it be true, that the good actions we do are ours as they are wrought by us, and come from us; yet "all that is good in them is of God;"‡ and they have no more goodness in them than what they have of him.

Now then hence it will follow, that men can deserve nothing of God: "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" (Rom. xi. 35.) They that have not first given to God something which is their own, something which they never received from him, cannot oblige him to recompense them. And indeed it is contrary to common sense, that a man should deserve anything of another, by giving him back what he received from him: and so that God should be a debtor to us for those very good works which himself hath wrought in us. Thus some of the Papists themselves argue. "If God," says one, "gives a soul grace, he gives it freely; and no man will say, that because he hath given him one gift, he owes him another: therefore when God freely gives a soul charity, he is not consequently bound to give it glory."§ Nay, the others go farther, and argue, that the more good a man doeth, the more he receives from God; (seeing it is of God that he doeth that very good;) and therefore is so far from obliging God by what he doeth, that he is himself more bound to God. And indeed it is a clear case, that the more a man owes to God, the less capable he is of deserving any thing of God; but the more good a man doeth, the more he owes, because the more he doeth the more he receives; and consequently the best saints, that do most, seeing they likewise receive most, must needs owe most, and therefore merit least. Indeed, did they do their good works merely in their own strength, and without receiving grace from God, so that they could call their works purely their own, more might be said in defence of merits; but when no believer in the world ever doeth one jot of good more than what he is enabled by God to do, and which God works by him, it follows that still as his works increase, so his receipts increase; and as they grow, his merits (to speak so for once) abate, he being in every good work a new debtor to God for the grace whereby he did it.

ARGUMENT V. *The good works of believers are imperfect; and therefore they cannot merit by them.*—How can a man merit any reward of the lawgiver by doing that which doth not answer the law, which requires not only good works, but perfectly good ones? He doth not deserve his wages that doth not do his whole work, and do it as he should. Or how can a man deserve a reward by those works which deserve punishment? Can he deserve the blessing and the curse at the same time, and by the

* *Et illud quod sumus, et quod habemus, sive sint actus boni, sive habitus, seu usus, totum est in nobis ex liberalitate divini, gratis dante et conservante.*—DURANDUS in *Sent.* lib. I. dist. xxvii. quæst. 2. † *Omnes operationes nostræ et merita sunt dona Dei.*—GREGORIUS ARIMINENSIS in *Sent.* lib. I. distinct. xvii. quæst. 1. art. 2. ‡ *Totum quod est hominis bonum est a Deo.*—AQUINATIS *Summa Theol.* Prima Secundæ, quæst. cxiv. art. 1. § *Si Deus dat animæ charitatem, gratis donat; et nullus diceret quod ex eo quod Deus donet aliquid munus alicui, fiat ei alterius muneris debitor: ergo ex eo quod gratis dat animæ charitatem, non debetur consequenter etiam gloria.*—ARIMINENSIS ubi supra. Vide BRADWARDINUM et DURANDUM ubi supra.

same works? But imperfect good works, though the imperfection of them be not actually imputed, and what is good in them be accepted, yet, as imperfect, and falling short of the demands of the law, do deserve the curse; for, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) And the perfection of good works, as well as the works themselves, is one of those things which are written in the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." (Luke x. 27.) Now, that the good works of believers are imperfect, not only all together, but each of them in particular, how clear is it to any that ever really exercise themselves in them! Where is there the saint in the world but hath some sins mingled with his good works? Who ever holds on in so constant a course of obedience and holiness but that the good he doeth is interrupted with the mixture of some evil? "There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not," says Solomon. (Eccles. vii. 20.) And, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," saith St. John. (1 John i. 8.) And David, who was as holy as any Papist upon earth, speaks for himself, and all the world besides, that if God "should mark iniquity," none "could stand." (Psalm cxxx. 3.)

EXCEPTION. And though our adversaries tell us here, that the intermixture of some venial sins with the good works of the saints doth not hinder their perfection nor meritoriousness, and that their sins are no other: that believers may, as they walk toward heaven, have a little dust fall upon them, but do not wallow in the mire: that they do but turn aside in God's ways, not turn their backs upon them; but halt in them, not forsake them; but squint a little on the world, not turn their faces wholly toward it:

ANSWER. Yet this will not suffice till they can solidly establish the distinction of mortal sins and venial upon scripture-foundations; which they never can till they have made an *Index expurgatorius* upon the Bible itself, and sentenced the holy penmen of it as *authores damnatos*, "condemned" them for making those sins mortal which they themselves would so fain have only venial. No, nor after they have done that, till they can produce some one saint who hath lived all his days without ever falling into any one of their mortal sins. Let them ransack their whole college of cardinals, search all their religious houses, examine Peter's chair itself, and they shall not find one that dares (and Protestants will not) pretend to be wholly without, or free from, some or other of those sins which they themselves count mortal.

And if we look to the good works of the saints in particular, we shall find some defectiveness in every one of them. The best proceed but from an imperfect principle,—the new nature; which, in believers, during their present state, is but in its growth, not come to its full maturity: it shall be made perfect; and therefore is not yet perfect. God promises that believers shall grow in grace: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." (Psalm xcii. 12—14.) They are commanded to grow: "Grow in grace."

(2 Peter iii. 18.) It is their endeavour to grow ; they reach out to things before them, and press forward, &c. (Phil. iii. 12—14.) And it is their privilege that they do grow : “ Their inner man is renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. iv. 16.) And there is no time of a saint’s life in which it is not his duty to grow in grace ; the command obligeth them all, as long as they are on this side heaven. But if grace were come to its full perfection, there would be no more need of growing in it, no more obligation so to do. Besides, there is no saint but, as he hath some grace in him, so he hath some remainders of corruption too, sin dwelling in him, as well as Paul had ; (Rom. vii. 17 ;) the law of the members, as well as the law of the mind ; (verse 23 ;) flesh, as well as Spirit ; (Gal. v. 17 ;) as one principle which draws him off from sin, so another which inclines him to it ; as one which puts him upon good, so another which makes him in some degree averse to it ; as something which makes him do the work, and in some measure as he should, so something which checks and cools him, and makes him not do it altogether as he should.

Now from hence ariseth a double imperfection in the best works of the saints : one is a want or failing of that intenseness, or those degrees, of goodness, that height and excellency of it, which the law of God requires ; for where the principle itself is not fully perfect, the actings of that principle cannot but be imperfect ; the effect can be no better than the cause. The other is the adherence of some evil to the work, some spot or stain cleaving to it. As sin dwells in the same soul, the same mind, the same will and affections with grace, so it mingles itself with the actings of grace : there being something of mud in the fountain, it dirties the stream ; the vessel, having a tang, derives it to the liquor that runs out of it ; there being something of venom in the flower, it insinuates itself into, and mingles with, that sweet vapour that comes from it. So that, upon the whole, every act of a saint is some way or other defective and blemished, and comes short of a legal accurateness ; and therefore is not able to abide a legal trial. That any are at all accepted with God, it is upon the sole account of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter ii. 5.) Him we find offering incense with the prayers of the saints, (Rev. viii. 3,) and his type, the high priest, “ bearing the iniquities of the holy things which the children of Israel hallowed in all their holy gifts.” (Exod. xxviii. 38.) And surely, then, if the good works of believers are accepted for Christ’s sake, they are not rewarded for their own : their goodness cannot deserve a recompence, when their infirmities need a covering. Their weakness argues their not answering the law ; and if they do not answer it, they cannot deserve to be rewarded according to it.

ARGUMENT VI. *Believers need forgiveness of sin ; and therefore cannot by all their good deeds merit life.*—That they need forgiveness, is plain not only by the former argument, (in that there is no man so full of good works, but he hath some sins mingled with them ; and there are no good works in this life so full of goodness, but they have some mixture of evil too,) and by our Saviour’s command to pray for pardon, and that daily : “ Forgive us our debts ;” (Matt. vi. 12 ;) but likewise by the practice of the saints in scripture, (Psalm xxv. 11 ; Dan. ix. 19 ; 1 Kings viii. 34, 36,) and the practice of the Papists themselves. How many

Pater-nosters and *Kyrie-eleasons* ["Lord, have mercy upon us"] do they daily say! The veriest saints among them confess their sins, and pray for pardon. The pope himself, for all his holiness, and his pardoning other men's sins, yet confesseth his own. Now if saints themselves need forgiveness, how do they deserve heaven? How can "the conscience of sin," and the merit of life, consist together? (Heb. x. 2.) He that prays for pardon, confesseth himself a sinner; and he that owns himself a sinner, acknowledgeth himself to be worthy of death; and if he be worthy of death, how is he worthy of life? If he deserve a punishment, surely he doth not at the same time deserve a reward. If they shall say, that they pray only for the pardon of venial sins, it signifies little; they had as good keep their breath for something else, seeing [that] after all their seeking the forgiveness of them, yet they must be fain to expiate them hereafter in purgatory. And if they do by their venial sins deserve purgatory, how do they at the same time merit heaven? And therefore either let the Papists cease to pray for pardon, or to pretend to merit. To beg forgiveness, if they do not indeed sin, is to mock God; and to pretend to merit, if they do, is to mock themselves.

ARGUMENT VII. *The good works of believers are not commensurate and equal in goodness and value to eternal life; and therefore cannot deserve it.*—Common sense will evince the truth of the consequence. Who can say that such a work deserves such a reward, if it be not equal in worth and value to it, any more than that such a commodity deserves such a price, if it be not of equal worth with it? And Papists themselves grant as much. Aquinas makes the just reward of a man's labour, and the price of a thing bought, to be both alike of justice, and requires an equality wherever strict justice is.* And that the good works of the saints are not equal to eternal life, unless they be grown better than they were in Paul's time, is clear by Rom. viii. 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." And if the sufferings of the saints are not worthy of their glory, surely none of their other works are; their sufferings (wherein they are not merely passive, but active too; for they "choose to suffer afflictions," Heb. xi. 25) being some of the most excellent of their works, and in which most grace is exercised.

EXCEPTION. The Papists' common answer is, that the good works of believers, as they come merely from them and their free-will, are not worthy of or equal to their glory; but yet that they are so, as they proceed from grace, a supernatural principle in their hearts.

ANSWER. But we have seen before, that that very principle, though excellent, noble, divine, as to the nature of it, yet, in respect of its degrees, is but imperfect; and therefore the actings which proceed from it must needs be so too, there being such a mixture of sin in the heart where grace is seated, [that] it mingles itself with the actings of grace in our works. And how then can we say that an imperfect work deserves a full reward? that the poor, lame performances of believers are equal to that abundant glory which God in his goodness hath prepared for them?

ARGUMENT VIII. *Believers cannot recompense to God what they have*

* *Vide Primam Secundæ, quasst. cxiv. art. 1.*

already received of him; and therefore cannot by all they do merit any thing of him.—They that are debtors to God can by no means make him a debtor to them: when they owe him so much, he can owe them nothing. Debt to God must be discharged before any obligation can be laid upon him. And that saints cannot recompense God for what they have received of him, is clear by what was said before; for they have received of him all they are, all they have, all they do, their being, their powers and faculties, their good inclinations, principles, actings. And what can a man return to God which may recompense him for all these? It is a known saying of the philosopher, that no man can requite God or his parents.* And, indeed, if a son cannot return equal to his father for the being he hath received from him, though but subordinately to God, much less can he recompense God himself for that and all else which he hath received from him. But deserving a reward at God's hands, especially such an one as we speak of, is much more than merely to requite him for what he hath done for us; and therefore such a reward by all our good works we can never possibly merit. I conclude this with that of Bradwardine: "God hath given to and for man, miserable, captive man, man obnoxious to eternal flames, himself made man, suffering, dying, buried, that he might redeem him; and he promiseth and giveth himself wholly to be enjoyed by man as his great reward, which infinitely exceeds any mere man,"† and consequently all his power, all his holiness, all his good works. What saint on earth can requite God for giving himself for him? and how then can he merit the enjoyment of God? If the first be above his requital, I am sure the other is above his desert.

ARGUMENT IX. *He that deserves any thing of another must do something whereby that other hath some benefit or advantage; for no man can be said to merit at another's hand by doing that which is advantageous only to himself.*—But believers, by all they do, profit themselves, if any, not God; they bring no gain, make no addition, to him; it is their own good, their own happiness, [which] they farther and advance by all their holiness and good works, but not God's, who is still, after all the good works of all the saints on earth for these five thousand years and upwards, the same [that] he was before: all their mites have added nothing to his treasures, all their drops nothing to his ocean. "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" (Job xxii. 2, 3). And therefore it must needs follow, that believers by their good works deserve nothing of God.

* ARISTOTELIS *Ethica*, lib. viii. † *Deus dedit homini, et pro misero homine et captivo, flammis perpetuis obligato, seipsum incarnatum, passum, et sepultum, in pretium temporali ter redimendo; promittit insuper et dat seipsum totum in premium feliciter consumendo, quod excedit quemlibet purum hominem infinite.*—BRADWARDINUS, p. 345. *Certe, Domine, qui me fecisti, debeo anori tuo meipsum totum; qui me redemisti, debeo meipsum totum: inò, tantum debeo amori tuo plus quàm meipsum, quantum tu es major me, pro quo dedisti teipsum, et cui promittis teipsum.*—ANSELMUS apud BRADWARDINUM, *ibid.* "Assuredly, O Lord, who hast made me, to thy love I owe my whole self; to thee, who hast redeemed me, I owe my entire self: nay, I owe to thy love so much more than myself, by how much thou art greater than I, for whom thou gavest thyself, and to whom thou dost promise thyself."—EDIT.

ARGUMENT X. *The Popish doctrine of merits highly derogates from the honour of God and Christ; and therefore is not to be admitted.*

1. *It derogates from the glory of God,*

(1.) *In his liberality.*—For God is the most liberal giver. (James i. 5.) Every good, we say, by how much the greater it is, so much the more communicative it is; and God, being the greatest good, must needs be most communicative, most liberal, and that too to such a height as nothing can be conceived more so. Now he that gives freely, is more liberal, more generous, more communicative, than he that gives out of debt, or on the account of desert; and therefore that most free and liberal way of giving must be ascribed unto God, as most suitable to him; and we cannot say that God gives any thing to his creatures out of debt, but we diminish the glory of his liberality.

(2.) *In his liberty.*—It is a subjecting him to his creature. He that owes any thing to another is so far forth subject to him: “The borrower is servant to the lender.” (Prov. xxii. 7.) He that gives all freely is more free himself than he that gives only because he owes it. And therefore if God be a debtor to man, and bound in justice to reward him, he doth not act so freely as if no such obligation lay upon him.

2. *It derogates likewise from the glory of Christ, because from his merits.**—Whoever merits any thing, acquires thereby a right to that thing which before he had not, either in whole, or in part. A day-labourer hath no right to his wages but by his work; and till his work be done cannot challenge it: and so if believers merit eternal life, they do by their works get a title to it, which before their working they had not. And if they do by their works acquire a right wholly to eternal life, then Christ hath not at all merited it for them: if in part they merit it, then Christ hath but in part merited it for them, and something there is in eternal life which Christ hath not merited.

EXCEPTION. And it is in vain to say, that Christ hath merited for the saints a power of meriting; and that it is more for his glory to enable them to do it, than to do it wholly himself.

ANSWER. For, besides that the Papists can never prove that Christ hath merited any such power for believers, it is really more for the honour of his bounty to purchase all for them himself, than to enable them to it; as he is more bountiful who gives a man a great estate out of his own proper goods, than he that enables him to get an estate by his labour and industry.

Indeed Bellarmine speaks plainly, that God would have his children merit heaven, because it is more for their honour than to have it given them; (*De Justif.* lib. v. cap. 3;) so little is his Eminency concerned for God's glory, as zealous as he is for the credit of the saints. Methinks he might have remembered, that what is given to the one is taken away from the other; and if it be more for the saints' honour to have their inheritance by way of merit, yet it is more for God's glory that they have it as a gift.

Other arguments might be added, but I had rather mention enough than all. I have been larger in these, because, though some of the more learned among the Papists place the meritoriousness of good

* *Vide* CHAMIERUM, tom. iii. lib. xiv. cap. 20.

works upon something else than the intrinsic excellency of them, yet this is the most popular and dangerous error among them; the vulgar sort, not understanding the distinctions and niceties of some few scholars, are more apt to believe their good works to be of their own nature and for their own excellency meritorious. More briefly, therefore, of the rest: Bellarmine bears us in hand, that the complete meritoriousness of good works ariseth from the addition of God's promise to them; so that they which would not have merited eternal life otherwise, (though proportioned to it, if he may be believed,) yet, the promise being made, are truly worthy of it.

Against this we argue, that if the accession of the promise make good works to be truly meritorious, then it must be either because the promise makes good works better, more excellent and noble, than they would have been had no such promise been made; or else because (which is this cardinal's notion) the promise obligeth God in justice to reward them, which without it he were not bound to do.

1. *But the addition of God's promise doth not raise the rate of good works, nor ennoble them, nor add any intrinsical dignity or worth to them, nor make them in themselves better than they would have been if such a promise had not been made; the promise being something extrinsical to the works themselves, &c., from whence therefore they can receive no new degrees of inward goodness or worth.*—The proper formal excellency of a good action ariseth from its conformity to its rule, the rightness of the principle from whence it proceeds, and the end to which it is directed. If therefore it proceed from a supernatural principle, and be referred to a supernatural end, and be in other things agreeable to its proper rule, which is the command of God, and not the promise, (for that, though it be an encouragement to work, yet is not the rule of our working,) it hath all in it that is necessary to the essence of a good work, whether any promise be made to it or not. Indeed, the more high and intense the principle of grace is from whence it proceeds, and the more directly and expressly it is ordered to its end, and the more exactly it is conformable to its rule, the more good, the more gracious it is; but the adding of the promise makes it not one jot more gracious, more intrinsically worthy: had God never made any promise of rewarding the good works of believers, yet they would have been as good as now they are. Nay, I meet with a Schoolman that says, if the promise make any alteration in the nature of a good work, it is rather by diminishing from its goodness than adding to it, so far as it may be an occasion of a man's acting less out of love to God, and more out of love to himself.* However, did any new goodness accrue to a good work by the accession of God's promise, it would follow that the least good work

* *Nec illa promissio facit opus melius, ut patet per substantiam operis et per omnes ejus circumstantias inductive: imò, forsitan minus bonum; facit enim intentionem minus sinceram. Qui enim priùs operabatur purè propter Deum solum, nunc forsitan operetur propter retributionem promissam.*—BRADWARDINUS *De Causâ Dei*, lib. 1. p. 339. "Nor does that promise make the work better, as is plain by the substance of the work, and by all its circumstances, inductively considered: nay, perhaps the promise makes the work less good; for it causes the intention to be less sincere. For he who before acted purely for the sake of God alone, now perchance may act on account of the promised reward."—EDIT.

of a saint should thereby be so elevated and raised in its worth and value, as to be made equal to the greatest: the giving a cup of cold water to one of Christ's disciples, should be equal to a man's laying down his life for Christ. For "they which agree in some third, agree between themselves," as the learned bishop Davenant argues; * and so if the giving [of] a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ be by God's promise made equal to eternal life, dying for Christ being no more, even after the accession of the promise, they must be both equally good and (in the Papists' style) equally meritorious actions, because both commensurate to and meritorious of the same reward. Nay, supposing God should promise eternal life to a merely moral work, which had no supernatural goodness in it, or to an action in itself indifferent; yet that action, though not gracious in itself, should be of as great dignity and value as any the best and most spiritual action whatever. For the best action cannot be imagined by Papists themselves to deserve any more than eternal life, and even a mere moral or indifferent one would by the help of the promise deserve as much; and yet the Papists acknowledge that none but gracious ones can deserve it. And how absurd would it seem in the things of this life, for a promise or contract thus to raise the value of a man's labour or money above the due estimation and intrinsic worth of it! Would it not seem strange, nay, ridiculous, to affirm, when two men buy two parcels of a commodity, of equal worth in themselves, but at unequal rates, (suppose the one at a hundred pounds as the full value, the other at five pounds,) that the contract made between the buyer and seller, or the promise of the seller to let his chapman have his goods at such a price, did raise the value of his five pounds, and make it equal to the other's hundred? Who would grant this? Who would not say that such a commodity were in a manner given away, or the just price of it abated, rather than the value of the money raised? It is a case here; and what our adversaries speak of good works being made meritorious by the addition of God's promise, is no less ridiculous and void of reason.

2. *The addition of God's promise of rewarding good works, doth not bind him in strict justice to reward them.*—We acknowledge that he is engaged, by his immutability and faithfulness, to reward the holiness of his saints, having once promised so to do; but that is no more than to say, that God is engaged to act like himself, suitably to his own nature. It is agreeable to God, as God, to be faithful and true to his word. If he were not faithful, he could not be God: not to be faithful were to "deny himself." (2 Tim. ii. 13.) But it is quite another thing to be bound in strict justice to render to men such a reward as he hath promised. For the object of justice being the equality of the thing given and the thing received, and it being the business of justice to see to that equality, and that so much be returned for so much, God being bound by his promise to make such an equality of the reward to the work, argues imperfection in him; for it implies that God is man's debtor, and hath received more of him than hitherto he hath given him; or that a man's works exceed all his receipts, and all God's former bounty: in a word, that man hath done more for God than God hath yet done for him, on the account

* *Quæ conveniunt in aliquo tertio conveniunt inter se.*—*De Justitiâ actuali*, cap. 63.

whereof he is bound to give him more, (namely, the reward,) that so there may be an equality. And if this do not imply imperfection in God, what doth? Besides, if after God hath promised glory to a righteous man walking in his righteousness, yet he should not give it him, such an one could only say that God did break his word, or act contrary to his faithfulness; but he could not say he acted unjustly, or did not give him as much as he received from him. "If," saith a Papist himself, "God should not give glory to a man that died in a state of grace, or should take it away from one already possessed of it, yet in so doing he should not be unrighteous." * To conclude: justice, properly taken, implies an equality; and where equality is not, there cannot be justice. But there is no equality not only between God and man, but between man's working and God's rewarding; and it is not the addition of a promise that either levels the reward to the work, or raiseth the work to the reward.

But, say some of our adversaries, good works become meritorious of eternal life, by being sprinkled with Christ's blood, commended to God by his merits. We would willingly see the proof of it. Let them tell us, if they can, what it is which Christ's merits do superadd to the goodness of the work whereby it becomes meritorious, when before, though truly good, it was not so. We grant indeed, that as there is no goodness in ourselves, so likewise none in our works, which is not the effect of Christ's merits; but, supposing the goodness of them, we would know what it is that Christ's merits do further add to them to make them meritorious. True, indeed, the merits of Christ do procure both acceptance and reward for the good works of the saints; but they do not make these works intrinsically perfect: they are the cause why the failings of the saints in them are not imputed; but they do not remove those failings and weaknesses from them. Nay, more: Christ's merits do no more make the good works of believers meritorious, than Christ communicates to believers themselves a power of meriting.† But that can never be; a mere creature is incapable of such a power. To merit is proper to Christ only, and cannot agree to any of his members. The power of meriting eternal life consists in the infinite virtue of the person meriting answering to the glory merited; and therefore to say that Christ, by his merits, makes the good works of the saints meritorious, is to say that he communicates to themselves an infinite power, and to their works an infinite excellency.

To all these I add but this one general argument: *It is not lawful for men to trust in their own works; and therefore they do not merit any thing of God by them.*—For what reason can be given why a man might not put confidence in them, if they really deserved a reward of God, and so were really the cause of man's salvation? It is true indeed, [that] the confidence of a believer, and his rejoicing in the goodness and safety of his spiritual estate, and hope of life, may be helped on by, and in a sense proceed from, his obedience and good works; because they are an evidence of his faith, and so of his interest in Christ, acceptance with God,

* *Si Deus decedenti in gratia non daret gloriam, aut si habenti gloriam auferret, tamen nihil injustum faceret.*—DURANDUS, *ubi supra*; AQUINAS, *Prima Secundæ*, quæst. cxiv. art. 1.

† *Vide RIVETI Orthod. Cathol.*

and title to the heavenly inheritance. But this is quite another thing: there is a vast difference between a man's taking comfort in his obedience as the evidence of his title to glory, and trusting in it as that which gives him that title. Nehemiah, though he reflect on his good deeds, and comfort himself in them, yet expects his reward on another account: "Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy." (Neh. xiii. 22.) And so our Psalmist, in the text: "To thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his works." And how frequently do we find the saints disclaiming all confidence in their own holiness and obedience, when they have to do with God and his judgment! But, to descend from the saints to a cardinal: Bellarmine himself, after his laborious disputes in defence of merits, and for justification by works, in the very same chapter where he pleads for the lawfulness of men's trusting in them, at last hath this conclusion,—that "because of the uncertainty of man's own righteousness, and the danger of vainglory, it is the safest way for men to place their whole confidence in the mercy and goodness of God alone."* And if Bellarmine say it is safest, I will say it is wisest; and the cardinal doth but trifle in contending so much for the merit of good works, and so, in a business of the highest importance, putting men upon a course which he himself dares not say is safe.

PAPISTS' OBJECTIONS REMOVED.

III. Having said thus much for the confirmation of the truth against the Papists, it is high time [that] we give them leave to speak for themselves, and hear what they can say for the merit of good works in relation to the reward of eternal glory.

OBJECTION I. First, therefore, they tell us, that eternal life is in scripture frequently called "a reward:" "Great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. v. 12.) "But that we receive a full reward." (2 John 8.) "I come quickly, and my reward is with me." (Rev. xxii. 12.) And so in other places. "Now," say they, secondly, "*merces et meritum*," a reward and merit, are correlates, so that merit infers reward, and reward implies merit; and therefore if heaven, which is given to believers, be the reward of their works, their works must needs be the merit of that reward."

ANSWER I. A reward may be taken either *strictly and properly*, for that which is given to a man not only on consideration of his work, but is proportioned and measured out according to it, and is in strict justice due to him for it. And in this sense we deny that eternal life is ever in the scripture called "a reward;" and let our adversaries prove it if they can. Or, secondly, it is taken *improperly and metaphorically*; and then there is no such relation between it and merit as the objection mentions. Thus, "God hath given me" אֶתְכֶרְךָ "my hire," or "reward," saith Leah. (Gen. xxx. 18.) And yet who can say that she merited a son at God's hands by giving her handmaid to her husband? "The fruit of the womb is his reward:" (Psalm cxxvii. 3:) and I wonder, then, what is the merit? Indeed, what is "reward" in the latter part of the verse, but the same that "heritage" [is] in the former? So, Gen. xv. 1: "I

* *Propter incertitudinem propriae justitiae et periculum inanis gloriae, tutissimum est totam fiduciam in solidi Dei misericordiae et benignitate reponere.—De Justif. lib. v. cap. vii. prop. 3.*

am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." And will the Papists say that God himself falls under men's merit? And yet so it must be, if there be such a necessary relation between reward and merit. Yet more fully: "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." (Rom. iv. 4.) Here are plainly two sorts of rewards,—one proper, and of debt; the other improper, and of grace. And therefore I conclude, that eternal life is called "a reward" in scripture improperly and metaphorically; and no otherwise than as any thing given to another, on consideration of service done, may be called "a reward," though it be a thousand times greater than the service is, or though it be not at all due to him to whom it is given: as when a master gives something to his slave who hath done his work well; though he were not bound to it, his servant being his money, and being bound to do his work, and do it well, though no reward should be given him.

2. As eternal life is sometimes called "a reward," so it is other times called "a gift." (Rom. vi. 23.)

EXCEPTION. If it be here excepted, that it is properly called "a reward," and metaphorically "a gift;"

ANSWER. Camero answers,* that that which is properly a gift may metaphorically be called "a reward," as if it be given on the account of some service; as when a master gives a gift to his servant for doing his work, which yet (as before) he was not obliged to give. But that which is properly a reward can by no means be called "a gift;" because a real proper reward implies something worthy of it, whereby it is deserved, and the reward is a debt due in justice to such a work. And so if eternal life be a reward, it cannot at all be called "a gift," at least without an unpardonable catachresis; whereas, though it be properly a gift, it may figuratively be called "a reward," because of some resemblance to it, in that God rewards men with eternal glory after they have done him service, though they were bound to have served him, however no such reward were to be given them. And yet again: eternal life is called "an inheritance," as well as "a reward." "And," says a learned man,† "either both these names are given it properly; or both figuratively; or one properly and the other figuratively. The first cannot be; for to be properly an inheritance and reward too will imply a contradiction. Who knows not that a reward, properly taken, is always deserved, but an inheritance is not? And so eternal life, if it be properly both, must be given to some antecedent desert, because a reward; and without it, because an inheritance; and so freely, and not freely; out of justice, and not out of justice. If it be metaphorically only called both 'a reward' and 'an inheritance,' we gain as much as we need; for then it is not properly a reward, and so not truly deserved, the Papists themselves being judges. If one be taken properly, the other figuratively, it may easily be proved that the figurative sense must rather be applied to its being a reward than an inheritance; unless we will say not only that eternal life is properly a reward, but believers are properly mercenaries. And if the Papists are so fond of their merits, that rather than fail they will own themselves mercenaries, much good may it do them; we envy them not the honour."

* *Opera*, cap. i. p. 44.

† CHAMIERUS, *De bonis Operibus*, cap. 6.

OBJECTION II. Several places they allege where the scripture speaks of believers as worthy of the reward : *Εἰς το καταξιοθῆναι ὑμας τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ* "That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God." (2 Thess. i. 5.) *Καὶ περιπατήσουσι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς ὅτι ἀξιοὶ εἰσιν* "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." (Rev. iii. 4.) Much stress they lay upon the word "worthy;" and so argue the saints to merit eternal life, because they are said to be worthy of it.

ANSWER. The worthiness spoken of in such places is plainly the saints' fitness for, and suitableness to, the reward of glory; that disposition which God works in those whom he intends to glorify; of which the apostle speaks in Col. i. 12: "Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:" where the Vulgar Latin renders it, *Qui dignos nos fecit*, though the Greek *ἰκανωσαντι* signify no more than (as we translate it) "making meet," or "fit." And in how many other places is the same word used for fitness, or suitableness! "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" (Matt. iii. 8;) that is, such as become those who truly repent; and yet the Greek hath it, *καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετάνοιας*, "[fruits] worthy of repentance." And if we take it in the Popish sense, what fruits are they which are worthy of repentance, so as to merit it? Not works before it; for they themselves will not affirm works wrought before the first grace to merit that grace, at least by way of condignity. Nor can it be said of works after repentance; for who is so weak as to say, [that] a man may truly and properly deserve what he hath already, by something which he doeth afterwards? Other places confirm our interpretation of the word. "That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," *Ἀξίως περιπατήσαι*, (Eph. iv. 1.) is no more than to "walk suitably or agreeably to their calling;" and, *Ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου πολιτευσθαι*, "To have our conversation worthy of the gospel," (Phil. i. 27.) is no more than, (as our translation renders it,) "as becometh the gospel;" and *ἀξιουσθαι*, which we render "to count worthy," (2 Thess. i. 5.) is no more than *dignari*, "to vouchsafe." And the same use both of the Greek and Latin word is frequent in heathen authors;* so that nothing for merit in a proper sense can be inferred from it. Or if dignity must needs be in the case, the Greek word will rather signify, "to dignify" or "put honour upon another," than suppose any dignity inherent in him; or, if you please, so to deal with a man as if he were worthy, whether he be so or not: † and thus it will rather imply a kind of imputation of worthiness to a person, than its being really in him.

Again: when the saints are said to be worthy, it is not to be understood of any such dignity in them as answers to what the law requires, or of an absolute worthiness of the reward; but rather of a comparative

* *Conjugio, Anchisa, Veneris dignate superbo.*—VIRGILII *Æneid.* lib. 475.

"Whom heavenly Venus honoured with her love."—DRYDEN'S Translation.

Quos quoniam cæli nondum dignamur honore.—OVIDII *Metamorph.* l. 194.

"Since yet on them we please not to bestow

Celestial dwellings."—SANDYS'S Translation.

† *Ἀξιούμενος, qui imprimis honore dignus habetur, vel plurimi fit.* *Ἀξιουσθαι, dignum judicare.*—SUIDAS. "The Greek participle signifies 'one who is especially counted worthy of honour, or most highly esteemed.' The verb itself means, 'to judge any one worthy.'"—EDIT.

one. When they are said to be worthy, they are compared with wicked men, in respect of whom they may be said so to be ; because although, in strict justice, they do not merit life, yet they are qualified for it, and suited to it, by having those holy dispositions wrought in them which God intended to furnish them with, in order to the enjoyment of so glorious a recompence as he hath designed them for.

OBJECTION III. Those places of scripture are objected* in which the reward is said to be given men according to the proportion and measure of their works and labour ; from whence they infer, that in rewarding good works, God hath respect not merely to his liberality, or promise, or favour, but to the dignity and efficacy of the works themselves ; so that as evil works do really deserve eternal death, good ones do likewise deserve eternal life.

ANSWER. The general answer to this argument was laid down in the explication of the text ; namely, that God's rewarding men according to their works, is to be understood of the nature and kind of them, not of the value and dignity of them ; that they who do well shall fare well, and they that do otherwise shall be otherwise dealt with : it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked : there is a blessing for the one, and a curse for the other. As for the particular scriptures, they may be easily answered. First : my text is brought in against me, that God "renders to every man according to his work ;" but it carries its answer along with it,—that though God reward men according to their works ; and so give life to those that are righteous, yet it is out of mere mercy [that] he doeth it. Let but Bellarmine read the whole verse together, and make the best of it he can. And for Luke vi. 38, "With the same measure ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again ;" either it is to be understood not of God's judging and rewarding men in the future life, but of man's judgment in this life : as if he had said, "As you deal with others, so others shall deal with you ; you shall have such as you bring, and be paid in your own coin." Or else, if it be meant of God's judgment, yet it is of a judgment of condemnation, not of absolution, and so is wholly impertinent to the business in hand : Christ doth not say, "Do not absolve others, lest God should absolve you ;" but, "Do not condemn others," that is, rashly, sinfully, "lest God condemn you righteously." And so much seems to be implied in the parallel place. (Matt. vii. 1, 2.) 1 Cor. iii. 8 is alleged too : "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour ;" but to little purpose : for the apostle speaks not there of the salvation of some, and the damnation of others ; but only of the difficulty of the salvation of some, who had built on the foundation "wood, hay, stubble," (verses 12—15,) who, he says, should be saved, "yet so as by fire : " some should be saved with more difficulty than others ; yet all should be saved. The other places [that] they bring here, ("Reward every man according to his works," Matt. xvi. 27 ; "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 7 ; "Who will render to every man according to his deeds," Rom. ii. 6,) need no more than the general answer before given, which is confirmed by verses 7—10, of the same chapter, (1 Cor. iii.) which speak plainly of the kind or quality according to which the

* BELLARMINUS *De Justificatione*, lib. v. cap. 3.

reward shall be given, not of the worth or dignity of them ; and yet it is further assured by the last place [which] the Papists allege under this head : "To give to every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. xxii. 12.) This text is a commentary on all the rest ; for what is in the other places, *κατα τα εργα*, "according to their works," is in this place, *ὡς το εργον αυτου σοται*, "as his work shall be ;" that is, if a good work, eternal life ; if an evil one, eternal death.

OBJECTION IV. Those places are urged in which eternal life is so said to be given to good works, as that those works are the reason why it is given them. The chief are : "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was an hungred," &c. (Matt. xxv. 34, 35.) "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God." (Rev. vii. 14, 15.)

ANSWER. The stress of this argument lies on those particles, "for," "therefore," &c. ; too slender twigs to keep the Popish cause from sinking. For they do not always signify a connexion by way of causality, or one thing being the true and proper cause of another ; but only by way of consequence, or the following of one thing upon another ; the connexion of two things, whereof the one is antecedent, the other consequent : as, if you say, "It is day ; *for* the sun is up ;" you then assert the sun's being up to be the reason of its being day, and rightly too : but if you say, "It is day ; *for* I see the sun," you will not affirm your seeing the sun to be the reason of its being day ; and your "for" will signify no more than that your seeing the sun follows upon its being day. You prove well that it is day because you see the sun ; but you prove it not by the cause, but by the effect. If you should say, "Popery is a wicked religion ; *for* it makes treason lawful," you show why it is a wicked religion : but if you say, "Some Papists have been wicked wretches ; *for* they have been convicted of treason, and hanged for their pains," you do not allege their being convicted and hanged as the cause of their wickedness. So likewise in the places urged upon us, when the reward is said to be given to men *for* or *because* they have done thus and thus, that doth not imply their having done so and so to be the proper cause of the reward given them ; but only the connexion between their work and their reward, their so doing and so receiving.

In 1 Tim. i. 13, Paul, speaking of his blaspheming and persecuting, says, he "obtained mercy, *because*" he "did it ignorantly in unbelief." And can any man say, that Paul's ignorance and unbelief (allow that they might lessen the sinfulness of his persecution and blasphemy) were the meritorious causes of his obtaining mercy ? "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather : for the sky is red." (Matt. xvi. 2.) Is the redness of the sky the cause of fair weather, or only an indication of it ? When, therefore, Christ invites the saints to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, &c., because he was an hungred, and they gave him meat, &c., he doth not thereby signify that their good works were the meritorious causes of their inheriting that kingdom, but only the antecedents of it, and the evidences of their title to it. And that is confirmed by our Saviour's own words, in that he doth not merely call them

to take possession of it, but to "inherit" it, (Κληρονομησατε,) or "take possession of it as heirs and by right of inheritance," and consequently not in the right of their merits.* And if he had meant those works [which] he mentions to have been the meritorious cause of their salvation, he could (with Bellarmine's good leave) have more clearly expressed it, and plainly told them, that they had merited the kingdom, and he was bound in justice to see them settled in the possession of it. So that it can no more be concluded from hence, that the saints do, by their good works, deserve heaven as their reward, than if God should have said to the Israelites, at the end of their forty years' voyage toward Canaan, "Go in now and possess the promised land; for you have been forty years in the wilderness, and have been exposed to many difficulties and hazards,"—that therefore they had thereby merited that land.

EXCEPTION. If it be said that Christ speaks the same, and as much of the good works of the saints, as he doth of the evil works of the wicked, the same word "for" being used in verse 42, as well as in verse 35:

ANSWER. I answer, that it will not follow from thence that good works are as truly and properly the causes of salvation, as evil ones are of damnation, there being so great a difference in the case: and we do not conclude men's wicked works to be the cause of their damnation merely because of the conjunction used by our Saviour in this place; but from the nature of the thing itself, and other scriptures which speak more fully to it.

As for that place in Rev. vii., take but the whole words together, and Bellarmine hath his answer: "These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" (verse 14;) then follows, "Therefore are they before the throne of God." (Verse 15.) Wherefore? Because not only they "came out of great tribulation," but because they "have washed their garments," &c.

OBJECTION v. These places of scripture are urged, where eternal life is promised to good works: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. xix. 17.) "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters," &c., "for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Verse 29.) So, 1 Tim. iv. 8: "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." James i. 12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord

* *Quia fides factis declaratur, quæ omnibus nota sunt et manifesta, consentaneum est et factis potius quàm fide sententiam pronuntiari. Antequam Christus hæc sanctorum opera commemorat, veras et proprias salutis causas attingit, &c.; quando enim hereditatem eos adire jubet, Dei in Christo adoptioni omnem justitiæ et salutis causam tribuit. Quod enim jure hereditario aliquis possidet, id suis operibus minime meretur. Tum quod subjungit, paratum hoc illis fuisse regnum a jactis mundi fundamentis, æternam Dei electionem omnibus operum meritis opponit. Q. d. — WHITAKERUS Contra Duræum. "Because faith is displayed by deeds, which are known and manifest to all, it is fitting that the sentence should be pronounced on the ground of deeds, rather than on that of faith. Before Christ recounts these works of the saints, he touches upon the true and proper causes of their salvation: for, when he commands them to enter into the inheritance, he attributes all the cause of their righteousness and salvation to their adoption by God in Christ. For, what any one possesses by hereditary right, that he by no means merits by his own works. Besides, what he subjoins, —that this kingdom was prepared for them from the foundations of the world,—opposes the eternal election of God to all the merits of works."—EDIT.*

hath promised to them that love him." Thus they may argue from such places as these :—They that do these works to which eternal life is promised merit that life : But believers do those works : Therefore they merit, &c.

ANSWER 1. It is most false that they that do that to which the reward of life is promised do deserve that reward : for,

(1.) No man deserves that which is promised to him, unless by doing something which is adequate and proportionate to the thing promised : but (as before was declared) the good works of the saints are not proportionate to eternal life, nor answerable in goodness and dignity to it ; and so cannot deserve it. You may promise a man a hundred pounds for a day's labour which is not worth above two shillings : and can it then be said that he deserves your hundred pounds ?

(2.) A promise may be made to a man for doing that which he is bound to do, though nothing were given him ; as when you promise a reward to a slave, who yet was before bound to do your work ; and then his doing it doth not deserve what you give him.

(3.) Justification is promised to them that believe and repent : and will the Papists say that a man deserves to be justified by his faith and repentance ? A king promiseth pardon and life to a rebel, if he lay down his arms ; to a robber, if he leave off his robbing : and can it be said that such do deserve pardon or life for laying down their arms, or leaving off their wicked courses, when they were bound, however, to have done it, and the prince was not bound to hire them to it ?

2. To the minor proposition we answer : Eternal life is promised to good works, (so to speak for once, though improperly ; the reward being promised not to good works themselves, but to them that do them,) either,

(1.) In the first covenant, or covenant of works ; and then works are the sole and adequate condition of salvation, and a man's right to it. But then those works must be every way perfect, and answerable to the law that requires them. And thus the minor proposition is most false, —that any believer on earth doeth that to which eternal life is promised. For none do all [that] they should ; and what they do, yet they do not as they should.

(2.) Or in the second, the covenant of grace ; as where the crown of life is promised to them that love God ; (James i. 12 ;) and other places of the like import : but then it should be considered, (i.) That life is promised not to works alone, nor to works merely as works ; (for that is the very tenor of the law ;) but as joined with and proceeding from faith ; and then they are neither the only nor the complete or adequate condition of obtaining eternal life. (ii.) That they to whom this promise is made are believers, such as are accepted in Christ unto eternal life, even before those works are wrought ; and then their works are not at all the condition of their being entitled to life ; though the evidenee of their title to it, and the means of fitting them for it, they may be, as hereafter more. And so we say, that however believers do those things to which eternal life in the covenant of grace is promised, yet they are not entitled to it by their so doing, and therefore do much less deserve it.

This may suffice for the other places alleged. As for that of Matt. xix. 17, it is manifestly a legal command, suited by our Saviour Christ to the question of the young man who sought for life by the law; * our Saviour therefore accordingly answers him, and sends him to the law. "What good thing shall I do?" says the young man; "Keep the commandments," says Christ. "If thou wilt have life by the law, fulfil the righteousness of the law; if thou art only for doing, do all that God hath set thee to do." And "this was the way to bring him to faith, by convincing him of the impossibility of fulfilling the righteousness of the law;" † (which he farther doth by the following command: "Go and sell that thou hast," &c.; where he detects the young man's secret covetousness, whereby he had broken the law;) and that, after all his endeavours after a righteousness of works, if he would at last be saved, he must quit his hopes of life by them, and look to Christ alone for it, seeing elsewhere it was not to be found.

OBJECTION VI. They argue eternal life to be deserved by believers, because it is given to them out of justice; and that it is so, they prove by 2 Thess. i. 6, 7: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled rest with us," &c. 2 Tim. iv. 8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Heb. vi. 10: "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." And so James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10; and such-like places.

ANSWER. God gives eternal life to believers, not out of strict justice, in a proper sense, but out of that which we call "justice" or "righteousness of faithfulness or constancy." And though he may be said to reward both saints and sinners righteously, or out of righteousness; yet not in the same way, or out of the same kind of righteousness. It is indeed righteous for God to recompense the labours and sufferings of his people, because he hath promised so to do; and it is righteous that he should act according to his own determination and promise; but it is not so righteous for him to do it as that his recompensing them is formally an act of remunerative justice. And when the apostle tells the Hebrews that "God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love," (Heb. vi. 10,) he means no more than that he is not unfaithful, not unconstant; he will not change, nor break his word.

EXCEPTION. But is not the last day called, *ἡμέρα δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ Θεοῦ*, "the day of the righteous judgment of God;" who will render to every man according to his deeds?" (Rom. ii. 5, 6.)

ANSWER. The same day, as it is called "the day of God's righteous judgment," so is likewise called "the day of redemption;" (Eph. iv. 30;) and "a day of mercy:" "The Lord grant that he may find mercy in that day;" (2 Tim. i. 18;) and "a day of refreshment:" "When the times of refreshing shall come." (Acts iii. 19.) And as Christ is said to come to "judge the quick and the dead," (2 Tim. iv. 1,) so likewise to appear to the salvation of believers. (Heb. ix. 28.) That great day there-

* CALVINUS *in locum*. † *Neque melius inanem justitiam refutare potuit, quam si illam ad legem exigeret.*—WHITAKERUS.

fore is properly a day of mercy, of redemption, of refreshment, of salvation to believers; and but figuratively a day of righteous judgment as to them, so far as it hath some resemblance to a righteous judgment, because God then gives eternal life with respect to something going before; namely, the obedience and holiness of those whom he rewards; not as if it did really deserve that reward, but because it is the way in which God hath determined to act. He gives glory to those that have lived graciously; happiness to them that have continued in the exercise of holiness.

OBJECTION VII. Lastly. They argue from those places of scripture where God is said not to be an acceptor of men's persons: "For there is no respect of persons with God." (Rom. ii. 11.) "God accepteth no man's person." (Gal. ii. 6.) "Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work." (1 Peter i. 17.) Hence says Bellarmine, "Respecting men's persons is contrary to distributive justice; as when a judge gives a reward without merit, or a greater reward to lesser merits, or on the contrary. Therefore God, in giving rewards, considers men's merits, and according to the diversity of them assigns them their several mansions in heaven."

ANSWER. That God is no respecter of persons, we grant; and that accepting men's persons is contrary to distributive justice, we grant too. But what is that to us, who deny that God's rewarding the good works of the saints is an act of distributive justice? For it is, as was before proved, an act of grace; and accepting of persons hath no place in rewards of grace, though those rewards be never so much above the deserts [of], or altogether without deserts in, the persons so rewarded. They that laboured but one hour in the vineyard received as much as they that had been all the day at work; (Matt. xx. 9;) which ought not to have been, according to distributive justice; but well might, according to grace. What God gives, he gives out of no stock but his own: and may he not do what he will with his own? (Verse 15.) What is it to Bellarmine, if God will give glory and blessedness to those that never deserved it of him, seeing he wrongs not others in what he gives to some, and he receives nothing from any to distribute to any? What God gives, he may, if he please, not give at all; or he may give out and dispense to whom and as he sees fit.

Several other arguments Bellarmine brings to prove the merit of good works; but they are all of lesser consequence, and not likely to prevail with any that can answer the seven already mentioned; which indeed are the most plausible of any [that] he brings, and the very seven locks wherein the great strength of this great champion lies; and these being shaven off, (let them grow again, if they can!) this Romish Samson is but like another man. (Judges xvi.) As for the testimonies [that] he brings out of the fathers, you need not fear them, and I shall not trouble you with them; having in the beginning given you an account in what sense they generally take the word "merit," which makes nothing at all for the Papists' cause.

Only one argument more there is still behind, which, though all the Papists conceal, I will not. You find it in Acts xix. 25: "Ye know that by this craft we have our wealth." I dare say Demetrius speaks the very heart of Bellarmine; only he was a mechanic and a fool, and so uttered

all his mind ; whereas our cardinal was a crafty Jesuit, and knew how to keep-in his. But how to answer this argument I know not, unless by granting the whole. That the doctrine of merits is a gainful doctrine, cannot be denied, when the art of meriting is so liberal an art. It first replenisheth the church-treasury ; which again, by the help of indulgences, empties itself into the pope's exchequer. Only these good works suffer some alteration in the exchange ; and, by I know not what kind of new ferment in their last receptacle, what was merit in the church store-house, is in the pope's purse transubstantiated into metal, which puts his Holiness out of a capacity of saying, as Peter did, "Silver and gold have I none." (Acts iii. 6.) The sum is this : the doctrine of merits is no doubt a fundamental doctrine : super-erogations are built upon it ; indulgences are built upon it ; purgatory itself, and prayers for the dead are built upon it : and, not to go so far as the other world, how many good things in this life are built upon the foundation of Popish good works ! many religious houses, and many religious orders, many a fair monastery, and many a stately temple, and many a fat benefice. And who can say but the foundation must needs be precious, when the super-structure is so rich ? Well then may the Popish priests stickle for the principal, when the interest is all their own. Well may they contend for merits, as *pro aris et focis*, as "not only for their altars, but for their chimneys too," when it is the zeal of meriting that keeps their kitchens warm. In a word : well may they "sacrifice to these nets, and burn incense to these drags," when "by them their portion is made fat, and their meat plenteous." (Hab. i. 16.)

But here two queries may be made :—

QUERY I. "Upon what account are believers bound to the practice of good works, if they merit not by them ?"

ANSWER. Upon several, and good ones too : reason enough we have to persuade us to the practice of good works, though we place no merit in them.

1. *God's command is of itself sufficient, though no other reason could be given.*—He hath commanded us to "be holy ;" (1 Peter i. 15 ;) to "exercise ourselves to godliness ;" (1 Tim. iv. 7 ;) to "follow peace and holiness ;" (Heb. xii. 14 ;) to "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind," &c. ; (Col. iii. 12, 13 ;) to "be ready to distribute, willing to communicate : " (1 Tim. vi. 18 :) and, in a word, that "they who have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works." (Titus iii. 8.) God is our sovereign ; his will is our rule and our reason. What he will have us do, we must do : and his command is sufficient to make our actions not only lawful, but necessary ; not only to warrant us in the doing of them, but oblige us to do them. And we need not doubt but our actions will be as acceptable to God which are done out of compliance with his will, as any that are done with a design of meriting at his hands. Obedience will go as far as mercenariness.

2. *Good works are the way in which God hath appointed us to walk in order to our obtaining eternal life.*—They are *via ad regnum*, the path of life, "the way to God's kingdom," the work we are to do ere we receive our reward, the race we are to run ere we be crowned. Though God save us not for them as meritorious causes of his saving us, yet those that

are capable of doing them he doth not ordinarily save without them :* " We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii. 10.) " Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.) Though eternal glory be not, as hath been proved, properly a reward, nor God's giving it an act of strict justice ; yet God hath, we acknowledge, determined to give it, *per modum præmi*,† " after the manner of a reward ;" in that he will not give men the glory he intends them till they have done him some service ; not treat *them* as conquerors *who* never fought his battle ; not respect *them* as faithful servants *who* have been sluggards or loiterers. The " sanctification of the Spirit," as well as " belief of the truth," must go before salvation, " because God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation " by the one as well as the other. (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

3. *The practice of good works is a special means to strengthen and increase good habits in us.*—The actual exercise of grace heightens the principle of grace. Doing good is the ordinary way whereby we grow better. While we employ our talents, we add to our stock ; we get grace, while we act it ; and lay up for ourselves, by laying out for God. Active Christians are generally the most thriving Christians ; they gather by scattering, and are enriched by their very expenses. The more humility men act, the more humble they grow ; and the more love they exercise, the more love they have : as the more we use our limbs, the more agile and nimble they are ; and the farther a river runs, the broader it spreads.

4. *Good works fit us for the reward.*—It is by them we are " made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) Though by faith we are entitled to that inheritance, because we are " the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," (Gal. iii. 26,) " and if children, then heirs ;" (Rom. viii. 17 ;) yet, over and above our title to it, there is required in us a suitableness to and fitness for it. The father of the Prodigal first embraces and kisses his poor returning son, and then puts the robe upon him, the ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; he first pardons him, and then adorns him, and at last brings him into his house and feasts him : he fits him for his entertainment ere he brings him to it. (Luke xv. 20—24.) God's pardoning a sinner is one thing, and his fully saving him is another ; his receiving him into favour, and receiving him into heaven ; his giving him a right to the inheritance, and giving him the actual possession of it. The first is done in a sinner's justification, the other in his final salvation ; but between these two comes in a third, which is, God's working in him a fitness and meetness for that salvation, which meetness consists in a temper of spirit agreeable to and capable of such enjoyments as are expected by and settled upon them that are the heirs of glory.

And indeed, if we look into it, we shall find, that there is not only a congruity that they who are to be made happy should first be made holy, (in that it would be unbecoming the wisdom and holiness of God to let them enjoy him who never loved him, or crown them with everlasting

* *Etsi ad metam nunquam pervenitur nisi viam rectam ingredimur, via tamen non est causa mete.*—WHITAKERUS. " Although the goal is never attained unless we enter upon the right course, yet that course is not the cause of the goal."—EDIT. † TWISSE.

blessedness who never prized or sought it,) but a necessity too, in that unholy souls have no capacity for true happiness; merely natural hearts are not suited to a supernatural good: heavenly enjoyments are above the reach of sensual creatures; and the faculty, till elevated and raised by grace, would be so much below its object, that it could take no delight in it.* Now grace or holiness in the heart, is that very temper I speak of, which makes a man capable of and fit for glory,—a supernatural principle for a supernatural happiness; and though God begins this frame, and infuseth something of this principle, in the work of regeneration, yet it is further strengthened by the exercise of grace, and a course of good works; which, we therefore say, do fit men for heaven by increasing grace in them, wherein their fitness consists. Men's abounding in good works is the way to heighten those graces from whence they proceed; and the heightening their graces is the ripening [of] them for their glory. And though God himself, as the author of all grace, is the principal agent in carrying on this work of sanctification in them, and he who doth gradually "work" † them for the glory [which] he intends them; (Jer. xxxi. 18, 19;) yet they themselves having in their new birth received a new life and new power from God, so far as they are active in the exercise of grace, (which under him they are,) ‡ so far likewise they are active in preparing themselves for glory, and therefore deeply concerned to live in the daily exercise of good works, as the means of preparing them for it.

5. *Good works bear witness to the goodness of our faith.*—They evidence it to be true, and of the right kind; not counterfeit, not sophisticate. And therefore we are greatly concerned to maintain good works, that thereby we may be able to assert our faith against a quarrelling conscience, or an accusing devil, which otherwise we shall never be able to do. We acknowledge that only to be a true justifying faith, and so of the right stamp, which "purifies the heart," (Acts xv. 9,) "works by love," (Gal. v. 6,) encourageth, and promotes, and produceth holiness, and shows itself by works. (James ii. 18.) So that if faith be the root of good works, good works are the fruit of faith: and how then shall we know the root but by the fruit? So that as, if the devil or conscience charge us with disobedience to God and breach of his law, and that therefore we are liable to the curse of the law, we plead in our defence, that though we are not without sin, yet we are not without faith neither; though we have offended God, yet we have believed in Christ: so if we be accused of hypocrisy or unbelief, and told that we have not received Christ by faith, and therefore are liable to the woe of the gospel, we then

* *Operatio divina necessaria est, quia mutari nos oportet et novas creaturas effici, priusquam participes esse possimus celestium beneficiorum. Nam in nobis nihil est aliud quam inertia ineptitudo ad bonum spirituale, sive intelligendum, sive faciendum, sive denique capiendum.*—DAVENANTIUS in *Coloss. i.* "A divine operation is necessary, because we must be changed and made new creatures, before we can become partakers of celestial blessings. For in us there is nothing but the highest inaptitude for either understanding, or doing, or, lastly, for receiving that which is spiritually good."—EDIT. † 2 Cor. v. 5. Κατεργαζεσθαι, rem capillire rudem et informem.—CAMERO *Exod. xxxv. 33, apud LXXII.* Κατεργαζεσθαι τα ξυλα. "CAMERO defines the Greek verb, used by the apostle in 2 Cor. v. 5, to mean, 'to polish into form a rough and shapeless thing.' The same word is used by the Septuagint in *Exod. xxxv. 33*; where our translators render the Hebrew, 'In carving of wood.'"—EDIT. ‡ *Acti agimus.* "Being actuated, we act."—EDIT.

produce our good works, a course of holiness, as the undoubted signs and evidences of the reality and power of our faith. And in this sense we may say, that as we ourselves must be justified by our faith, so our faith must be justified by our works.

6. *Hereby they further our assurance, and help-on our comforts.*—The great comfort of a believer comes in by his faith; (Rom. xv. 13;) and therefore usually so much comfort a Christian hath, as he hath evidence of the truth and sincerity of his faith. While it is uncertain to him whether his faith be right, he can have little comfort in it: little “joy and peace in believing;” while he knows not whether he really believes or not. The same we may say of other graces, so far as they conduce to the consolation of a Christian; a believer can enjoy little comfort in them, if he perpetually doubt of them: while he suspects himself to be a hypocrite, it is no marvel if he taste not the sweetness of sincerity. Now our good works, as before, give evidence to the truth of our faith, and so likewise to the sincerity of other graces, as habits are known by their actings, and we judge what a fountain is by the streams that come from it. And therefore they that desire the comfort of grace, must be diligent in the exercise of grace; they that are concerned for their own peace and joy, are consequently so concerned to live and act, as that they may attain that end. Beside, we might add, that the applause and commendation of a sanctified conscience, upon the performance of good works, and that inward secret delight which is usually the concomitant of gracious actings, (which, so far as we are renewed, are grateful to that new nature which is within us,) is no small part of a Christian’s pleasure, and therefore no weak inducement to diligence and constancy in such a course.

7. *We are bound to the practice of good works, that so we may be conformed to God and Christ.*—Christ, when on earth, “went about doing good:” (Acts x. 38:) he did not only abound in holiness, but activity; had not only a fulness of habitual grace in him, whereby he was always in a fitness and readiness to do good, but did continually exercise himself in it: and that he did, not only that he might fulfil the law, but give us an example; and so for the imitation of believers, as well as satisfaction of divine justice. We therefore are commanded “so to walk, even as he also walked.” (1 John ii. 6.) And the apostle Paul bids us “be followers of God.” (Eph. v. 1.) And Peter [bids us] “be holy in all manner of conversation,” (and so practically,) “as he who hath called us is holy.” (1 Peter i. 15.) And our Saviour Christ bids us “be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt. v. 48.) It is our perfection to be like God, not in infiniteness, immensity, independency,—attributes wholly incommunicable to us, unimitable by us,—but in righteousness and holiness: this was our primitive perfection in innocency, and will be our final perfection in glory. And still the more we increase in righteousness and holiness, the more perfect we grow, because the more like God; and the more good works we do, still the more we go on in grace toward perfection and conformity to God. Men generally look on it as a desirable thing to be like God in one way or other: let but those desires be regulated, and carried toward that likeness to him which they may attain, and ought to seek; and that will be

inducement enough to the practice of good works, as the most proper means to bring them to that conformity.

8. *Good works are the end of good principles.*—God gives us grace, that we should exercise it; puts a price into our hands, that we should use it. Exercise is the immediate end of habits. We are not to look upon grace as an idle quality, a dormant principle, something to lie by us, and be sluggish within us. It is not to be as a “candle under a bushel, but on a candlestick;” (Matt. v. 15;) not as money hoarded up, but laid out. And the more we exercise it, the better; because so much the more we answer God’s end in bestowing it upon us.

9. *Lastly. God is most glorified by our good works;* (John xv. 8;) *and therefore we are the more to abound in them.*—The more the excellency and beauty of grace appears, so much the more God is glorified: and the exercise of grace doth most of all discover the beauty of it. Holiness is but God’s image: and if the image be so ravishing, what then (will men infer) is he that is resembled by it? If there be so much lustre in a beam, what is there in the sun? Grace in the creature is but the expression or imitation of some attribute in God to which it answers; and so the more grace we act, and the more good we do, so much the more we declare what excellences are in God, or, in Peter’s phrase, “show forth his virtues,” *ἀπεραῖς*. (1 Peter ii. 9.) So that good works are the most effectual way of glorifying God, because the most convincing demonstration of those perfections which are in God.

And is not here reason enough for the practice of good works? Is it nothing that God hath commanded them, that they are the way to glory, and fit us for glory, increase grace, and discover grace, help on our comforts, and promote God’s honour, unless withal we merit heaven by them, and oblige God to reward us for them?

QUERY II. “If good works are not truly meritorious, why then, and upon what account, doth God reward them?”

ANSWER 1. *Because he hath promised so to do.*—And he is constant and unchangeable, and will not be worse than his word.

2. *Because of the love he bears to and the delight he takes in holiness, and those good works which are the fruits of it.*—“The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.” (Psalm xi. 7.) God delights first in himself; and next in that which comes nearest to him, and most resembles him, as holiness doth, the actings of which in good works are but the beaming-out of his image in the soul; and it is not strange that God should delight in his own image. Beside that, good works are God’s works; they not only resemble him, but come from him; and then well may he delight in them; and that he may show how much he doth so, he bountifully rewards them.

3. *To encourage men to the practice of them, by the hopes of the reward.*—Though obedience be our duty, even without consideration of the reward, yet, to enliven our desires, and put more vigour into our endeavours after it, he sets the crown in our view, and assures us that if we “abound always in the work of the Lord, our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

USE.

V. *Something from this doctrine we may learn for our INFORMATION in the truth, and something for our INSTRUCTION as to duty.*

1. For the former, we see here,

(1.) *How much the best of saints are beholden to the Lord Jesus Christ for purchasing life and glory for them, which by all their good works they could never have done, though they were a thousand times more than they are.*—Had not Christ made the purchase, they could never have received the inheritance: had not he laid down the price, they could never have had a title or possession. They might work their hearts out of their bodies, ere they could work their souls into heaven. All the grace they ever have or act in this life, could never deserve the least degree of glory they receive. So fair an estate, so rich an inheritance, so weighty a crown, so transcendent a blessedness, is fit only for so great a Purchaser as the Lord Jesus Christ to buy out. They might as well purchase a kingdom in the world with a single penny, as everlasting glory with all their good works. Whatever title they have to a future happiness, whatever hopes of it, whatever rest and peace and joy they expect in it, they owe all to Christ, and are his debtors for all: they owe him more than a whole eternity of praises will ever recompense. How miserable would the best of saints have been, if Christ had not merited for them! How should they ever have obtained eternal life, got a place in heaven, or indeed have escaped everlasting burnings, had it not been for Christ's undertakings? When they had been working and labouring all their days, they would have lost their labour at last. They might have prayed, and heard, and given their goods to feed the poor, and their bodies to feed the flames, they might have done all they could, and suffered all their enemies would, and yet have fallen short of a reward. One sin committed by them would have done more to shut heaven against them, than all their good works could to open it to them.

(2.) *How unreasonable is their pride, how unpardonable is their folly, that boast of, and put confidence in, their own good works!*—That ever men should think God to be their debtor, and that they have him in bonds to them! That ever they should have such high thoughts of such pitiful things as their own works! Surely they have little knowledge of themselves that have such great conceits of themselves; know little of their ill deserts, that think they have any good ones; they have cheap thoughts of God's grace and Christ's merits, that do so magnify their own performances. David and Paul and all the ancient saints were of another mind; they durst not abide God's trial, nor confront his judgment with the choicest of their works. (Job ix. 15; xl. 4; Psalm cxliii. 2.) They, belike, were saints of a lesser size, and their graces and good works of a lower alloy: our Popish saints have over-topped them in holiness, are giants to them: Suarez and Vasquez have got the start of Job and David, and have found out a way to heaven unknown to all that went formerly thither. Jacob, poor man! counted himself "less than the least of God's mercies;" (Gen. xxxii. 10;) but these count themselves worthy of the greatest of them. "The four-and-twenty elders cast down their crowns before him that sits on the throne," (Rev. iv.

10,) in token that they had received them from him ; but Papists scorn to do so ; they think they have won them, and therefore may wear them ; and instead of giving glory, and honour, and thanks to him that liveth for ever, they take them to themselves,—at least, share them with him. The Lord tells the Israelites, that he gave them not that good land to possess it for their righteousness, (Deut. ix. 6,) speaking of the earthly Canaan ; but these audacious merit-mongers think that even the heavenly one is given them for theirs. Great saints no doubt they are, and well deserve to be canonized, when (if you will believe them) they deserve to be saved !

(3.) *And yet more egregious is their folly, in expecting advantage by the merits of others, and thinking to eke out their own righteousness by borrowing of their neighbours.*—If no good works of the saints merit any thing at God's hands, then the Popish treasury is quite empty, and his Holiness is a mere bankrupt, super-erogations fail, indulgences fail, and there is no borrowing from Peter to supply Paul. If the best have no merits at all, surely they have none superfluous, none to spare. The wise virgins have no more oil than will serve for themselves : (Matt. xxv. :) and are not they foolish ones that think to accommodate their friends ? and they yet more foolish that hope to borrow of them ? The scripture speaks indeed of a "superfluity of naughtiness" in men's hearts ; (James i. 21 ;) but it nowhere speaks of a superfluity of goodness in their hearts or lives. A redundancy of merit we acknowledge in Christ, "unsearchable riches," (Eph. iii. 8,) "all fulness ;" (Col. i. 19 ;) but woe to them that seek for the like redundancy of merit among men ! Ask the old patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, to lend you some of their merits, and they will all tell you [that] they never had any of their own ; [that] they were all beholden to Christ ; and to him you must go as well as they : the church store-house cannot furnish you.

2. *For INSTRUCTION in point of duty.* Learn hence,

(1.) *To be humble, and acknowledge the insufficiency of all you do, to deserve any thing at God's hands.*—Own yourselves as "unclean things," and your "righteousness as filthy rags." (Isai. lxiv. 6.) Do but study your hearts, the workings and lustings, the inclination and temper, of them ; study your actions and ways, the best as well as worst, your duties and choicest services ; and study God's law, the purity, holiness, spirituality, and extensiveness of it, what it forbids, what it requires, how far it reaches ; and compare both together ; and then be proud if you can ; boast if you can ; trust in your own works if you can ; and, in one word to say all, be Papists if you can.

(2.) *Learn to admire the grace of God in rewarding your works.*—It is much that he accepts them ; and what is it then that he rewards them ? It is much that he doth not damn you for them, seeing they are all defiled, and have something of sin cleaving to them ; and what is it then that he crowns them ? You would admire the bounty and munificence of a man, that should give you a kingdom for taking up a straw at his foot, or give you a hundred thousand pounds for paying him a penny-rent you owed him : how then should you adore the rich grace and transcendent bounty of God in so largely recompensing such mean services, in setting a crown of glory upon your heads, as the reward of

those works [which] you can scarcely find in your hearts to call good ones! You will even blush one day to see yourselves so much honoured for what you are ashamed of, and are conscious to yourselves [that] you have deserved nothing by. You will wonder then to see God recompensing you for doing what was your duty to do, and what was his work in you; giving you grace, and crowning that grace; enabling you to do things acceptable to him, and then rewarding you as having done them.* Take heed therefore now of rivalling God's grace, or Christ's merits; of inverting his praises, and ascribing any thing to yourselves which belongs only to him. Set the crown upon the right head; let *him* have the honour of the work *that* hath done it, the glory of your reward *that* hath purchased it. Say with yourselves, "What am I, and what are my services, that ever God should thus plentifully reward them? I never prayed but I sinned; never confessed sin, never begged pardon of it, strength against it, but I did at the same time commit it. I never heard a sermon, received a sacrament, did any good duty, but with some mixture of coldness, deadness, distractedness. I never had any grace but what God gave me, nor acted any but what he stirred up in me. All the good I ever had or did I received from him; and therefore I owe all to him. I am a thousand ways his debtor:—for my life and being, for the good things of this life, for the means and offer of eternal life, for the knowledge of his will, conviction of sin, restraint from sin, the change of my heart, the reformation of my ways, the graces of his Spirit, the privileges of his children conferred upon me. I am his debtor for all the evils he hath delivered me from, all the good he hath offered me, wrought in me, done by me. And doth God take so much notice of such poor things? Will he indeed reward such weak endeavours, such lame performances? Must I live in heaven, that never deserved to live on earth? Must I wear the crown of righteousness, who never deserved any thing but the punishment of mine iniquities? Must eternal glory and honour be my portion, who have deserved nothing better than 'shame' and 'everlasting contempt?' (Dan. xii. 2.) I have nothing to boast of, nothing to glory in. I must cry, 'Grace, grace.' (Zech. iv. 7.) All I have, and to eternity am to have, is grace. The foundation of my salvation was laid in grace; and so will the top-stone too. It was grace [that] sent Christ to redeem me; and grace will send him at last fully to save me. I have received all from God; and therefore desire to return the praise of all to him: it is but just that all should be ascribed to him from whom all came."

(3.) *Labour so to exercise yourselves in and to good works, as yet to put all your confidence in God's grace.*—I do not go about to cry down good works, or discourage the practice of them; but [to] take you off from confidence in them: nor to dissuade you from that exercise of holiness whereby God may be glorified, and your souls advantaged; but that sinful reliance on your own righteousness which is God's dishonour and your loss. Be as holy as you will, do as much good as you will, abound as much in the work of the Lord, and walk as circumspectly and closely with God, as you please; (and the Lord make you abound more and

* *Cùm Deus coronet merita nostra, nihil aliud coronat quàm munera sua.*—AUGUSTINUS *Contra Pelag. epist. cv.* "When God crowns our merits, he crowns nothing else but his own gifts."—EDIT.

more!) only, if you value your comforts, if you love your souls, if you are concerned for God's glory, take heed of putting any the least confidence in what you do, or expecting to merit a reward by your most laborious working. It is the great art and wisdom of a Christian to join the exercise of faith and holiness together, and yet distinguish their different relations to his salvation: not to give so much to the one as to exclude the other; but so to believe as still to own the usefulness of works; and so to work as to see the necessity of faith: to believe like one that had no works, and to work like one that were to be saved by his works: in a word, to be diligent in good works, but not put confidence in them; and so to acknowledge their necessity in their place, but not their meritoriousness. He is a believer of the right stamp, who neither contemns Christ's law, nor dishonours Christ's grace; but is alike an enemy to antinomian faith and antichristian works.

If you do trust in your good works, your best duties and services, consider that,

(i.) *You do but lean upon a broken reed, build upon a sandy foundation; which will at last fail you, disappoint you, undo you.*—What a defeat will it be to expect to be saved by your merits, when, at last, it appears you have no merits! to fancy yourselves worthy of a reward, when it appears you have been worthy of nothing! And as sure as the scripture is true, you can merit no more at God's hands by all your services, than a debtor can of his creditor, by paying him some small part of what he owes him; and your very confidence in your works will bereave you of any benefit by Christ's merits: Christ alone must be trusted in, relied on, and glorified by you. You must not think to be parcel-saviours with him: either he will be your only Saviour, or not at all your Saviour; your only righteousness, or not at all your righteousness. If you divide Christ's honour, you lose his help: your works cannot be your righteousness, and Christ will not; and so you will "lose those things which you have wrought," (2 John 8,) by thinking to gain too much by them; [you will] miss of the substance, while you catch at the shadow.

(ii.) *However you trust in your works while you live, you will not dare to do it when you die.*—When men come to die, and close the eyes of their bodies, usually those of their minds are most open; and as their reflections are then most strong, so their prospect is most clear. The nearer they are to death and judgment and eternity, the truer apprehensions they have of them. They then best see how holy the Judge is, how impartial his search, how righteous his sentence. And how do they fear him then, with whom they made so bold before! how doth the confidence of their lives shrink at their death! Alas! they did not think either God so strict as now they believe him, or their goodness so imperfect as now they come to find it. They see the necessity of grace, which before they slighted; and the insufficiency of works, which before they idolized. Mercy is mercy indeed to a dying man; and works are but works, and not merits. Let me see the face of the Papist that, when he is coming to the highest tribunal, dares trust to his good works, and put in his claim to the crown of glory upon the account of his merits, and tell God to his face,—“Lord, I have done all thy will, and done it as I

should; or if I have fallen short in some things, I have out-done it in others. I have heard so many Masses said, so many Pater-nosters and Ave-Marias, observed so many canonical hours, made so many confessions, done so many penances, given so many alms, gone so many pilgrimages, fasted so many Lents, mortified my flesh with hard lodging and harder blows. And this is as much as heaven is worth: thou art now a debtor to me. I have done my work; I challenge my reward. Let justice be done me, and the crown be given me. I ask no more than I have laboured for, and deserved at thy hands. It is but just that I should be joint-heir with Christ, seeing I have been joint-purchaser with him." I am persuaded there is not the Papist upon earth, unless he be most brutishly ignorant of the nature and law of God, and of his own heart, that will dare in a dying hour thus to bespeak him. And how foolish is it for men to boast of that now, which they will not dare to boast of then; and build upon a foundation in their life, which they must be forced to relinquish at their death! Remember, Christians, there is a time to die, as well as to live; a time to be judged in, as well as to act in; a day of recompense, as well as a day of service: and therefore bethink yourselves beforehand; see [that] your confidence be rightly placed. Expect your salvation from Him only now, from whom you will expect it at last; and put your souls into His hands now, into whose you would then most willingly commit them. Set aside your works, though not as to the practice of them, yet as to your confidence in them. Eye Christ alone as to the business of your justification, acceptance, reward. Labour for such a faith in Christ and free grace as will support you under the weakness and imperfections of your present righteousness, and encourage you against the terrors of approaching death. In a word: so believe and hope now that you are going on toward eternity, as you would do when you are stepping into it.

SERMON XIV. (XVI.)

BY THE REV. THOMAS LYE, A.M.

THERE ARE NOT ANY WORKS OF SUPER-EROGATION.

NO WORKS OF SUPER-EROGATION.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.—Luke xvii. 10.

THE truth that at this time lies before me, both to prove and improve, is this,—that *there are not any works of super-erogation*. On that account, I have pitched on the words read; which are an *apodosis* or *epiphonema*, the "inference" or "conclusion" which our Lord Jesus draws from his preceding parable.

