

S E R M O N XI.

Whether the good Works of Believers be
Meritorious of Eternal Salvation? *Neg.*

Mr. Edwards Deal.

*Psalm 62. 12. Also to thee, O Lord, belongeth Mercy: for Thou
rendrest to every man according to his work.*

THere is scarce 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 shews it self most of all in
those high and overweening thoughts 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 we have done well, we are tickled
with conceit; one while we are conscious we have offended God, ano-
ther while we are ready to believe we have obliged him. We can scarce
be enlarged in a duty, pray with any life or warmth, hear with atten-
tion and affection, but we are ready to take our Lords words out of his
mouth, and greet our selves with a *Well done good and faithful Servant.*
And that too not only, as if the work were wholly our own, but as if
we had deserved something by it. 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 Re-
ligion 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 Physick 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 them-
selves, may sometimes be their temptation. And therefore, Christians,
though my present business lie mainly with them of the Romish Re-
ligion; yet do not you look upon your selves as altogether unconcerned;
from Saran was at his dying hour, when he was tempted to think that by his faithfulness in his Mi-
nisty, he had merited Heaven it self. *Vid. Melch. Adam. in vita Cnox.*

Mat. 25.

*The most vio-
lent assault Mr.
Cnox ever had*

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 your selves, 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 your selves 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 *Bellarmino* into the Popes service: his Holiness his Commission you know can compel any Scripture to maintain the Catholick 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 Pen-man of it, once and again, declaring and professing his faith and confidence in God, and him only, *ver. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7*: in despite of all his enemies opposition against him, over whose power he doth triumphantly insult, *ver. 3*. as well as tax their malice, *ver. 4*. and persuades others to the like fixing their faith on God, *ver. 8*. labouring to take them off from their false and ill-grounded confidences, whether in persons or things, either as wicked or vain, *ver. 9. 10*. and then lays down the reasons and grounds of the boldness of his faith, Gods power, *ver. 11*. and his mercy, *ver. 12*. one shewing 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, Gods 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 to 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 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.

Enquire 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 altogether make up one integral work. All the particular actions men do of the same kind are but parts of the great work they are doing, either for God, or the

the Devil, and so are all included in it. And the miscarriages of Gods 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 enquired, what kind of Work or Works is here intended? I answer, good ones, especially; for in the rewarding of them it is that Gods goodness and mercy so greatly appears, 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 be-longeth 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 Gods recompensing men according to the nature, or kind, or quality of their works: such as their works have been, such shall be their reward, Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. *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 to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, &c.* 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, as natural evil the reward of Moral evil, Isa. 3. 10, 11. 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 mans reward be a thousand times greater than his work? Here is therefore a likeness of quality between the work and the reward, but not a proportion of equality.

Doctr. The truth then 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. If the consequence of this doctrine from the Text be questioned, it may thus be proved. That which is meerly out of the mercy of the rewarder, cannot be for the merit of the worker, Rom. 11. 6. *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.* 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 shew you that good works do not merit eternal life, that being the reward spoken of by the Pen-man of this Psalm. Here we must,

1. Explain the terms of the Question.
2. Give you the State of it.

Quia tu reddis unicuique juxta opera sua; bona bonis, mala malis: damnas peccatores, remuneras justos. Hierony. in Ps. 62. qui apud illum est 61.

Est igitur inter opera & premia similitudo qualitatis, non proportionis equalitatis. Daven. de justitia. A8. C. 60.

3. Confirm the Truth.
4. Take off Objections.
5. Make Application.

1: For explication of the terms, it would be enquired into,

1. What is meant by good works? *Ans.* 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 suted to, and productive of supernatural actings: such good works as are the vital actions of the new man, the motions of that *Divine nature* whereof believers are *made partakers*. 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, *i. e.* 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 mony 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 enquire, 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 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 Gods 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 *Augustin* frequently, one while he tells us that the Worshippers of Devils are said to *Merit* certain temporal comforts: Elsewhere, that the Virgin *Mary* *merited*

Bellarmin. requires to a meritorious work, that it proceed from one who is *Amicus et gratus Deo*, and then *ex charitatis virtute*. De Justific. l. 5. c. 10. Pet. 2. 1, 4.

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.* Aug. in Ps. 31.

Cultores demonum dicuntur mereri temporalia quedam solatia. de Civit. Dei. l. 5. c. 24. *Maria concipere et parere meruit eam, quem constat nullum habu-*

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*

templi 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 *Adams* sin, it is said to be *Felix culpa quæ tantum meruit habere redemptorem*. An happy transgression which merited so great a Redeemer. And will any believe that *Adams* sin deserved so well at Gods hands? Was Christs 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, i. e. 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, *Josh. 11. 20.* we read it, That they might find no favour: the vulgar hath it, that they might not merit any mercy. And *Gen. 4. 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, Mine iniquity is greater than that should merit forgiveness. What can meriting in these places signifie, 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 mens 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 signifie those things, be always taken in their proper sense. I insist the more in this, because it is all the Answer I intend to the Testimonies of the Fathers, which the Papists think to run us down with.

isse peccatum. de Nat. & Grat. c. 35. qui (de Paulo loquitur) pro tot persecutionibus et blasphemis, vas electionis meruit nominari. de Predict. & grat. c. 16. et paulo ante, dura cervix in illo populo qui ex omni Mundo electus est, qui de servitute decem miraculis meruit liberari.

Chamier. &
River. Orchod.
Cathol.

Si illi terram intrare non meruerunt, quia a murmurati sunt contra Deum, quomodo Nescimus mereremur intrare, in differenter viventes, sicut Gentes. Amb. in 4. ad Hebr. Quæ laboribus viduis largita fuerat subsidia vivendi, meruit ad vitam petitione viduarum revocari. Cypr. de Op. & Eleemos. Et non meretur ullam commendationem. Major est iniquitas mea, quam ut veniam merear.

But to pass from the word to the thing: if we enquire into the Pedigree of this darling doctrine of the Papists, we may easily derive it (to look no higher) from their Great-grand-fathers 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 Rabbines 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, *Chap. 2. ver. 10. That whoever offends the Law in one point is guilty of all.*

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, *Mat. 19. 20. All these have I kept from my youth, what lack I yet?* And indeed we need go no farther than our Saviours frequent reflections upon them, and the Apostles smart disputations against them, in the point of justification. But from whence soever the Papists have received this doctrine of Merits, thus they mannage it: Merit, say they, 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 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 stily 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 Gods 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

Est actio voluntaria propter quam debetur alicui merces ex iustitia, sic ut si non reddatur, ille ad quem pertinet reddere, iniuste facit, et est simpliciter ac proprie injustus. *Durand. ibid.*

out

צלה

תורה

Vid. Bux.

Synag. Jud. &
Petr. Galetine.

l. 1. c. 1.

Camero in

Matth. 19. 3.

oper. 170.

Burgens. apud
Drus.מה חובתי
פרושPhariseus qui
dicit, quid de-
beo facere et fa-
ciam illud, q. d.
quid fieri oportet
quod non
feci? Druf. de

trib. Sect. Jud.

l. 2. c. 22. &

Hotting. The-

saur. l. 1. c. 1.

Luk. 18. 9. &

16. 15.

Rom. 10. 3.

Di Alvar. de

Auxil. disp. 59.

Franc. Cumel.

in 1. 2. & 1.

Thom. disp. 5.

lect. 3.

In Sent. l. 2.

dist. 27. q. 2.

out of Condignity in a more strict sense, which is defined to be *Avoluntary 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, viz. 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 ^{Meritum ex pacto.} this is the merit we are to speak of, to say nothing of that third kind some add, 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 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. ^{2. The state of the Question.}

fiatos jagiter virtutem insleat, quæ virtus bona ipsorum opera semper antecedit, comitatur et subsequitur, et sine qua nullo pacto Deo grata et meritoria esse possent, nihil amplius ipsos justificatis deesse credendum est, quominus plene illis quidam operibus quæ in Deo facta sunt, divinæ legi, pro hujus vitæ statu, satisfecisse, et vitam eternam suo etiam tempore, si tamen in gratia decesserint, consequendam, vere promeruisse censeantur. Sess. 6. Cap. 16. *Siquis dixerit hominis justificati bona opera ita esse dona Dei ut non sint etiam bona ipsius justificati merita, aut ipsum justificatum bonis operibus & non vere mereri augmentum gratiæ vitam eternam, &c. Anathema sit.* Can. 32. ^{Cum enim ille ipse Jesus Christus, tanquam caput in membra, et tanquam vites in palmites, in ipsos justificatos.}

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 Counsel speaks more honestly, that is more broadly, and plainly tells us, ^{Andred. apud Chamnit.} *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 Andredius 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 Councils meaning, had all spoke 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

Ratio meriti complete est ex ordinatione voluntatis divine illius actus ad premium. Srot. in Sentent. e. 1. dict. 17. & paulo post.

Actu voluntatis sue (Deus) ordinando ipsum (actum humanum) ad premium, voluit ipsum esse meritum, qui secundum se consideratus absque tali acceptatione divina, secundum strictam justitiam non fuisset dignus tali premio.

Opera justorum sunt meritoria vite eternæ de condigna ratione patti, et operis simul non quidam quod sine pacto vel acceptatione non habeat opus bonum proportionem ad vitam eternam. Sed quia non tenetur Deus acceptare ad illam mercedem opus bonum, quamvis par et æquale mercedi, nisi converso intercedat. Bellarm. de justis. l. 5. c. 17.

Vid. Catech. Rom. p. 412.

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 Hereticks 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 Gods promise ; yet not so neither (for he is afraid of speaking too diminutively of good works) as if without Gods 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 good works are worthy of eternal life, as they are *tincta sanguine Christi*, dip'd in Christs blood, dignified and commended by his merits, from which they receive virtue and power, to be themselves meritorious. And so our business is to shew that good works do not on any account, either of

themselves, and their own internal excellency, or of Gods promise, or Christs Merits deserve eternal life. And so we came to confirm the truth.

Inter mercedem et meritum est quidam respectus mutus &c. utramque autem habet quandam oppositam ad gratiam sive donum gratuitam. Jansen. Iprens. de grat. primi hominis. c. 16.

Arg. 1. Good works are rewarded meerly out of Gods mercy and grace, and therefore not out of mans merit. What more opposit than Mercy, and Merit? Tit. 3. 5. *Not by works of righteousness, but of his mercy he saved us.* What a man doth really deserve by his works, cannot be said to be given him out of meer mercy and grace. But it is from thence only that the best works of Gods 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. Jude 21. *Looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal life.* 1 Pet. 1. 13. *Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* And Paul prays for Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. 1. 18. *That he might find mercy of the Lord in that day, the great day of retribution.* The reward then that these Saints expected, and would have others look for, is one given them out

Ἐὶ δὲ ὁ ἀνθρώπος ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων παρακαλῶν διὰ χριστὸν ἀπὸ ἐλπίδος ζήσεται, πὸν ὃ μὲν ὁ ἡμεῖς.

Ἐὶ μὴ ἐλπίς καὶ εὐαγγελιστοὶ ἔλθου κερῆσαι, ἀλλ' ἀνελεῖν ποιήσονται τὴν ἐξέτασιν, πάντας ὑπευθύνους εὐφροσύνῃ πάντων. Chrysost. in Psal. 130.

of Mercy. Men never need mercy more than when they come before Gods 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, chap. 13. ver. 14. he farther prayes that God would *spare him according to the greatness of his mercy*, ver. 22. Now when is it that *Nehemiah* desires to be spared, but then when he expects his works should be rewarded? Gods sparing extends even to his judging. Gods remembring him for good, ver. 31. his not wiping out his good deeds, and his sparing him, all proceed from the same mercy of God. But eternal life (say the Papists) is ascribed to Gods mercy, not that it is not truly, and properly the reward of mans Merits, but that those merits themselves are the fruits of Gods mercy. 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 & 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.

Arg. 2. Eternal life is the gift of God, and therefore is not deserved by our good works, Luk. 12. 32, *It is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* Rom. 6. 23, *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.* 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. 11. 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 Apostles 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. *Ὁλόνια*, *Stipendium*, he alludes to the pay that was given to Souldiers in the Wars, and for which they had served. Luk. 3. 14.

Neque servatus (est) ex misericordia, cui tam sicut post eam misericordiam necessaria merita, ut possit illa absque his fieri irrita. Cham. Panch. l. 14. c. 14. To. 3.

iudicium.
Stipendium peccati mors. Recte stipendium, quia debetur, quia digne retribuitur, quia merito redditur deinde ne iustitia humana de humano se extollerat bono merito, &c. non e contrario retulit, stipendium iustitiæ vita æterna, sed Dei gratia vita æterna. Aug contra Pelag. Epist. 105.

Malluit dicere gratia Dei vita æterna, ut intelligeremus, non pro meritis nostris Deum nos ad vitam æternam, sed pro sua miseratione perducere. Aug. de grat. & lib. Arb.

Luk. 7. 42.
When they
had nothing to
pay he frank-
ly forgave
them both.
ἰχαιρίσται.

ἐκ εἰπεν ἡ ἀν-
τιμισία ἡ παρὰ τῷ
θεῷ ἀλλὰ τὸ χά-
ρισμα, ὃ γὰρ
ἀμοιβὴν καὶ ἀντίδο-
τον πούουν ἐλάβε-
ται, ἀλλὰ χάρις
τοῦτο πάντα
ἰσχύει. In Sext.
c. 2d Rom.

Be content with your wages ἀπαιτεῖτε τοὺς ἐξουσίους ὑμῶν. But Eternal life he calls χάρισμα the free gift of God, such an one as is given, ἐκ χάριτος out of grace, as Souldiers 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 Emperours 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 Gods gift, for you receive not the compensation, and remuneration of your labours, but all these things come by grace through Jesus Christ.

Arg. 3. Eternal life is given to believers by way of Inheritance, and therefore not by way of Merit, Eph. 1. 14, Which is the earnest of our inheritance. Rom. 8. 17, If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joynt heirs with Christ. Heb. 1. 14. Who shall be heirs of Salvation. 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 Tit. 3. 5, 7. Not by works of righteousness, &c. that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs, &c. Gal. 3. 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. Rom. 8. 17. If children, then heirs, &c. But say the Papists, believers have a right to heaven by their adoption, yet must merit the actual possession of it. It is subtilly 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 required by his obedience which before he had not, though farther fitness for, and suitability 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?

Arg. 4.

Exc.

Ans.

Arg. 4. 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, Luk. 17. 10. *Say we are unprofitable servants.* 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; what that price is Peter tells us, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. not corruptible things, gold, silver, but the precious blood of Christ, &c.* 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, his peculiar people, and to do his work, to be *zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. I suppose none can deny Believers to be as much Gods servants, as any mans servants are his, and that he hath as absolute a dominion over them, as men ever can have over those which 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*, 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 Gods 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 17. of *Luk.* 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*, ver. 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 ; Manu-mission must go before Merit.

2. Believers owe all to God because they are his beneficiaries, and have received all from God, 1 Cor. 4. 7. *What hast thou that thou hast not received ? It is God that worketh in you to will, and to do of his own good pleasure.* Phil. 2. 13. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* 2 Cor. 2. 5. And indeed Papists themselves dare not in plain terms deny it,

Nullus autem homo prius fecit pro Deo, ipse enim Deus in qualibet motione et factione est primus motor et factor. Bradw. de causa Dei. p. 343.

Et illud quod sumus, et quod habemus, siue sint actus boni, siue habitus, seu usus, totum est in nobis ex liberalitate divina gratis dante, et conservante. Durand. in Sent. l. i. dist. 27. q. 2.

Omnes operationes nostræ et merita sunt dona Dei. Gregor. Arimin. in Sent. l. i. distinct. 17. q. 1. Art. 2.

Totum quod est hominis bonum est a Deo. Aquin. sum. 1. 2. q. 14. Art. 1.

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 before-hand 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, and preserving all. And yet another, All our good works and merits are Gods free gifts. He calls them merits, and yet in that very place disputes against the con-dignity of merits, with this very Argument 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, Rom. 11. 35. *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* 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 any thing of another by giving him back what he received from him, and so that God should be a debtor

Si Deus dat animæ charitatem gratis donat, et nullus diceret quod ex eo quod Deus donet aliquod munus alicui, fiat ei alterius muneris debitor, ergo ex eo quod gratis dat animæ charitatem, non debetur consequenter etiam gloria. Arimin. ubi supra. Vid. Bradward. & Durand. ubi supra.

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 other go farther, and argue that the more good a man doth the more he receives from God, (seeing it is of God that he doth that very good) and therefore is so far from obliging God by what he doth,

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 doth the more he owes, because the more he doth 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 meerly 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 doth 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 encrease, so his receipts encrease, 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.

Arg. 5. 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 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, Gal. 3. 10. *Cursed is every one that continues not in all that is written in the book of the Law to do it.* And the perfection of good works as well as the works themselves is one of those things which are written in the Law, Luk. 10. 27. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c.* Now that the good works of believers are imperfect, not only altogether, 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 doth is interrupted with the mixture of some evil? *There is not a just man upon the earth that doth good, and sins not,* says Solomon Eccles. 7. 20. *And if we say we have no sin we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us,* saith St. John, 1 Joh. 1. 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, Psal. 130. 3. 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 Gods 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. 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 it self, and sentenced the holy Penmen of it as *Autores 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 Colledge of Cardinals, search all their Religious houses, examine Peters Chair it self, and they shall not find one that dares (and Protestants will not) pretend to be wholly with-

Exc.

Ans.

out,

out, 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, Psal. 92. 12, 13, 14. *The righteous shall flourish as the Palm tree, and grow like a Cedar in Lebanon.* They are commanded to grow, 2 Pet. 3. 18. *Grow in grace.* It is their endeavour to grow, Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14. *They reach out to things before them, and press forward,* &c. And it is their privilege that they do grow, 2 Cor. 4. 16. *Their inner man is renewed day by day.* And there is no time of a Saints 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. 7. 17, *the Law of the members* as well as the Law of the *mind*, ver. 23. *flesh* as well as *spirit*, Gal. 5. 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 it self 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 it self 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 it self 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 Pet. 2. 5. Him we find, Rev. 8. 3. offering incense with the prayers of the Saints, and his Type the High Priest, Exod. 28. 38. *Bearing the iniquities of the holy things which the children of Israel hallowed in all their holy gifts.* And sure then if the good works of be-

lievers

lievers are accepted for Christs 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.

Arg. 6. 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 Saviours command to pray for pardon, and that daily, *Mat. 6. 12. Forgive us our debts.* But likewise by the practice of the Saints in Scripture, *Psal. 25. 11. Dan. 9. 19. 1 King. 8. 34, 36.* and the practice of the Papists themselves; How many *Pater Nosters*, and *Kyrie Eleesons*, 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 *pardonning* other mens 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? 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, sure 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 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.

Arg. 7. 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 mans labour, and *Vid. 1. 2. 3.* the price of a thing bought to be both alike of Justice, and requires an *114. Art. 1.* 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 *Pauls* time, is clear by *Rom. 8. 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,

glory, sure none of their other works are; their sufferings, (wherein they are not merely passive, but active too, for *they chuse to suffer afflictions*, Heb. 11. 25.) being some of the most excellent of their works, and in which most grace is exercised. 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. 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, it mingles it self 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?

Exc.

Answ.

Arg. 8. Believers cannot recompense to God what they have 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 subordnately 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 Gods hands, especially such a 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

Arist. Eth. l. 8.

Deus dedit homini, & pro misero homine, & captivo, Flammiis perpetuis obligato, seipsum incarnatum, passum, & sepultum, in precium temporaliter redimendo; promittit insuper & dat seipsum totum in premium felicitatis consumendo, quod excedit quolibet parum hominem infinite. Bradw.

P. 345.

Certe domine qui me fecisti, debeo tui amoris tuo meipsum totum, qui me redemisti, debeo meipsum totum: imo tantum debeo tui amoris tuo plus quam meipsum, quantum tu es major me, pro quo dedisti teipsum, & cui promittis teipsum. Anselm. apud Bradw. ibid.

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 meer 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.*

Arg. 9.

Arg. 9. 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 anothers 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 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 5000 years and upwards, the same he was before: All their mites have added nothing to his Treasures, all their drops nothing to his Ocean. *Job 22. 2. Can a man be profitable to God as a man that is wise may be profitable to himself? ver. 3. Is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?* And therefore it must needs follow, that Believers by their good works deserve nothing of God.

Arg. 10. 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, *Jam. 1. 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 an 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. 22. 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. 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. For, besides that, the Papists can never prove that Christ hath

Exc.

Ans.

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 *Bellarmino* 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. l. 5. c. 3.* So little is his eminency concern'd for God's glory, as zealous as he is for the credit of the Saints: methinks he might have remembred, 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 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: *Bellarmino* bears us in hand, that the compleat 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 Cardinals 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, not ennoble them, nor add any intrinsic 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 extrinsic 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 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

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 School-man 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 mans acting less out of love to God, and more out of love to himself. However did any new goodness accrew to a good work by the accession of God's promise, it would follow, that the least good work 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 mans 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 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 stile) 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 it self indifferent, yet that action, though not gracious in it self, should be of as great dignity and value as any the best and most spiritual action what-ever; for the best action cannot be imagined by Papists themselves to deserve any more than eternal life, and even a meer moral or indifferent one would by the help of the promise deserve as much, and yet the Papists acknowledg 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 mans labour or money, above the due estimation, and intrinsick 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 100*l.* as the full value, the other at 5*l.* 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 others 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.

Nec illa promissio facit opus melius, ut patet per substantiam operis, & per omnes ejus circumstantias inductive; imo forsitan minus bonum; facit enim intentionem minus sinceram; quoniam prius operabatur pure propter Deum solum, nunc forsitan operetur propter retributionem promissam.
Bradw. de Causa Dei, l. i. p. 339.
Que conveniunt in aliquo tertio conveniunt inter se. De just. actu. c. 63.

2. The addition of God's promise of rewarding good works, doth not bind him in strict justice to reward them. We acknowledg 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. 2. 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 mans debtor, and hath received more of him than hitherto he hath given him, or that a mans 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 whereof he is bound to give him more, (*viz.* 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 mans working, and Gods 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.

*Si Deus de-
denti in gratia
non deret glori-
am, aut si ha-
benti gloriam
auferret, tamen
nihil injustum
faceret. Durand.
ubi supr. Aquin.
1. 2. p. 114.
Art. 1.*

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 super-add 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 our selves, 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 re-

move

move those failings and weakneses 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 meer 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 mans salvation? It is true indeed, the confidence of a believer, and his rejoycing 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, and title to the heavenly inheritance; but this is quite another thing; there is a vast difference between a mans 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, *Chap. 13. ver. 22. Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy*; and so our Psalmist in the Text, *To thee 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, *Bellarmino* 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 mens trusting in them, at last hath this conclusion, *That, because of the uncertainty of mans own righteousness, and the danger of vain-glory, it is the safest way for men to place their whole confidence in the mercy and goodness of God alone*. And if *Bellarmino* 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.

Having said thus much for the confirmation of the truth against the Papists, it is high time 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.

First therefore they tell us, that eternal life is in Scripture frequently called a reward, *Matt. 5. 12. Great is your reward in Heaven*; *2 Joh. 8.*

Vid. Rivet. Orthod. Cathol.

Propter incertitudinem propriæ justitiæ, & periculum inanis gloriæ, tutissimum est totam fiduciam in sola Dei misericordia, & benignitate reponere. De Justif. l. 5. c. 7. Prop. 3.

Obj. 1.

But.

But that we receive a full reward; Rev. 22. 12. *I come quickly, and my reward is with me*: and so in other places. Now, say they, *Mereas & 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.

Ans.

1. 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, Gen. 30. 18. *God hath given me my hire, or reward*, saith Leah, and yet who can say that she merited a son at God's hands, by giving her hand-maid to her husband? Psal. 127. 3. *The fruit of the womb is his reward*; and I wonder then what is the merit? Indeed, what is reward in the latter part of the verse, but the same that heritage in the former? So, Gen. 15. 1. *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*. And will the Papists say that God himself falls under mens merit? and yet so it must be, if there be such a necessary relation between reward and merit. Yet more fully, Rom. 4. 4. *To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt*. 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.

Exc.

Ans.

Opus. p. 44. c. 1.

2. As eternal life is sometimes called a reward, so it is other times called a gift, Rom. 6. 23. If it be here excepted, that it is properly called a reward, and metaphorically a gift: 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

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.

Chamier. de
bon. oper. c. 6.

Several places they alledge where the Scripture speaks of believers as worthy of the reward : 2 *Thes.* 1. 5. *That ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God:* Rev. 3. 4. *They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.* 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.

Obj. 25.

εἰς τὸ κατὰ ἰσθμὸν
 ναὶ ὑμῶς τῆς βα-
 σιλείας τῆ θεῶ.
 καὶ περιπατήσας
 μετ' ἐμῶ ἐν λευκοῖς
 ὑπὸ ἄξιοί ἐσσι.

The *worthiness* spoken of in such places, is plainly the Saints fitness for, and suitability to, the reward of glory; that disposition which God works in those whom he intends to glorify: of which the Apostle speaks, *Col. 1. 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 *ἱκανοποιᾶν* 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 suitability? *Math. 3. 8. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, that is, such as become those who truly repent, and yet the Greek hath it, 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, a man may truly and properly deserve what he hath already, by something which he doth afterwards? Other places confirm our interpretation of the word, *Eph. 4. 1. That ye walk worthy of the vocation where-with ye are called*; *Ἀξίως μετεπειρωμένοι* is no more than to walk suitably or agreeably to their calling. And *Phil. 1. 27.*

καρπὸς ἀξίος τῆς
μετανοίας.

2. A_2^2 100

*Conjugio Aenea
Veneris digni-
tate superbo.
Vi g.
Quos quoniam
caeli nondum
dignamur ho-
nore. Ovid.
Ἀξιόμηνον,
qui imprimis
hor ore dignus
habetur, vel
plurimi fit.
Ἀξιόδου
dignum judi-
care. Suid.*

Ἀξίως τῇ εὐαγγελίᾳ πολιτεύεσθαι, to have our conversation *worthy* of the Gospel, is no more, than as our translation renders it; as *becomes the Gospel*. And ἀξιόδου, 2 *Theff.* 1. 5. which we render to *count worthy*, 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 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.

Obj. 3.

*Bellarmin. de
Justific. l. 5.
c. 3.*

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 meerly 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.

Ans.

The general answer to this Argument was laid down in the explication of the Text, *viz.* 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 meer mercy he doth it: let but *Bellarmin.* read the whole verse together, and make the best of it he can. And for *Luke* 6. 38. *With the same measure you mete, 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 mans 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 coyn: Or else, if it be meant of God's judgment, yet it is of a judgment of

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, *i. e.* rashly, sinfully, lest God condemn you righteously; and so much seems to be implied in the parallel place, *Matth. 7. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 3. 8.* is alledged 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, ver. 12, 13, 14, 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 they bring here (*Matth. 16. 27. Reward every man according to his works, Gal. 6. 7. What-ever a man soweth, that also shall he reap, Rom. 2. 6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds,*) need no more than the general answer before given, which is confirmed by *ver. 7, 8, 9, 10.* of the same Chapter, which speak plainly of the kind or quality, according to which the reward shall be given, not of the worth or dignity of them; and yet it is further assured by the last place the Papists alledge under this head, *Rev. 22. 12. To give to every man as his work shall be.* This text is a Commentary on all the rest, for what is in the other places, *κατὰ τὰ ἔργα*, according to their works, is in this place, *ὡς τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ ἔσται*, as his work shall be; that is, if a good work, eternal life; if an evil one, eternal death.

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, *Matth. 25. 34, 35. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, &c. for I was an hungred, &c. Rev. 7. 14, 15. These are they which come out of great tribulation, &c. therefore are they before the Throne of God.*

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 alwaies 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 Suns 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 signifie 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 shew why it is a wicked Religion; but if you say some Papists have been wicked wretches, *for* they have been convicted of Treason, and hang'd for their pains; you do not al-

Obj. 4.

Answ.

ledge their being convicted, and hang'd, 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; 1 *Tim.* 1. 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? *Matth* 16. 2. *When it is evening ye say it will be fair weather, for the skie is red.* 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

Whitak. contra Duræum. Quia fides factis declaratur, quæ omnibus nota sunt, & manifesta, consentaneum est ex factis potius quam fide sententiam pronounciari.

xxnegv, uho dli.

Antequam Christus hæc sanctorum opera commemorat veras & proprias salutis causas attingit, &c. quando enim hereditatem eos adire jubet, Dei in Christo Adoptioni omnem iustitiæ & salutis causam habuit. Quod enim jure hereditario aliquis possidet, id suis operibus minime meretur. Tum quod subjungit peratum hoc illis fuisse regnum a factis mundi fundamentis æternum Dei electionem omnibus operum meritis opponit. Qd.

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, 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 he mentions to have been the meritorious cause of their salvation, he could (with *Bellarmino'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.

Exc.

Ans.

If it be said that Christ speaks the same, & 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, *ver.* 42, as well as *ver.* 35. 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 mens 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 it self, and other Scriptures, which speak more fully to it.

As for that place, *Rev. 7.* take but the whole words together, and *Bellarmino* hath his answer, *ver. 14.* *These are they that come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,* then follows *ver. 15.* *Therefore are they before the Throne of God.* Wherefore? because not only they come out of great tribulation, but because they have washed their garments, &c.

These places of Scripture are urged where eternal life is promised to good works, *Matth. 19. 17.* *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments,* *ver. 29.* *Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, &c. for my name sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life;* so *1 Tim. 4. 8.* *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* *Jam. 1. 12.* *Shall receive a Crown of life, &c.* 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.

Obj. 5.

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 100 *l.* for a days labour, which is not worth above two shillings, and can it then be said that he deserves your 100 *l.*? (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?

Answ.

2. To the min. propos. 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 mans right to it; but then those works must be every way perfect, and answerable to the Law that requires them; and thus the min. prop. is most false, that any believer on earth doth that to which eternal life is promised; for none do all 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, Jam. 1. 12.* and other

places of the like import: but then it would be considered, (1.) That life is promised not to works alone, nor to works meerly as works, (for that is the very tenor of the Law) but as joyned with, and proceeding from Faith; and then they are *neither the only, nor the compleat or adequate condition of obtaining* eternal life. (2.) 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 evidence of their title to it, and the means of sitting 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 alledged. As for that of *Matth. 19. 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, fulfill 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 sell all thou hast*, &c. where he detects the young mans 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.

Calv. in loc.
Neq; melius in-
anem justitiam
refutare potuit,
quam se illam
ad legem exi-
geret. Whitak.

Obj. 6.

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. 1. 6, 7.* *It is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled, rest with us*, &c. 2 *Tim. 4. 8.* *A Crown of righteousness*, Heb. 6. 10. *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love*: and so, *Jam. 1. 12.* *Rev. 2. 10.* and such like places.

Ans. w.

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 recompence 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 recompencing 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, he means no more; than

than that he is not unfaithful, not unconstant, he will not change, nor break his word. But is not the last day called the day of *the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds?* Rom. 2. 5, 6. The same day, as it is called the day of God's righteous judgment, so is likewise called the day of *redemption*, Eph. 4. 30. And a day of *mercy*, 2 Tim. 1. 18. *The Lord grant that he may find mercy in that day*; and a day of *refreshment*, Act. 3. 19. *When the times of refreshing shall come*. And as Christ is said to come to judge the quick and the dead, 2 Tim. 4. 1. So likewise to appear to the *salvation* of believers, Heb. 9. 28. That great day therefore 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, *viz.* 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.

Lastly, they argue from those places of Scripture where God is said not to be an acceptor of mens persons, Rom. 2. 11. *For there is no respect of persons with God*; Gal. 2. 6. *God accepteth no mans person*; 1 Pet. 1. 17. *Who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every mans work*. Hence, says Bellarmine, *respecting mens 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 mens merits, and according to the diversity of them assigns them their several mansions in Heaven.*

That God is no respecter of persons we grant, and that accepting mens 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, 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, 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*? 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 dispence 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 like to prevail with

Exc.

ἡμεῖς δὲ καὶ
οὐ κατὰ τὴν θεοῦ.

Answ.

Obj. 7.

Answ.

Matth. 20.

with any that can answer the seven already mentioned, which indeed are the most plausible of any 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 Sampson* is but like another man. As for the testimonies 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, *Act. 19. 25. Te know that by this craft we have our wealth.* I dare say *Demetrius* speaks the very heart of *Bellarmino*; only he was a mechanick, and a fool, and so uttered all his mind, whereas our Cardinal was a crafty Jesuite, 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 it self 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, *Gold and silver have I none.*

Act. 3. 6.

The sum is this; the Doctrine of merits is no doubt a fundamental Doctrine, Supererogations are built upon it, Indulgences are built upon it, Purgatory it self, 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 superstructure 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 & 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 plentiful.

Hab. 1. 16.

But here two Quæries may be made.

Qu. 1. Upon what account are believers bound to the practice of good works, if they merit not by them?

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

1. God's command is of it self sufficient, though no other reason could be given. He hath commanded us to be holy, 1 *Pet. 1. 15. To exercise*

our selves to godliness; 1 Tim. 4. 7. To follow peace and holiness; Hebr. 12. 14. To put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, &c. Col. 3. 13. To be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 1 Tim. 6. 18. And in a word, that they who have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works; Tit. 3. 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. Eph. 2. 10. *We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them*, Heb. 12. 14. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. 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 præmii*, 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 battel; 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 Theff. 2. 13.

*Est ad metam
nunquam perve-
nitur, nisi viam
rectam ingredi-
mur, via tamen
non est causa
metæ.* Whitak.

Twiss.

3. The practice of good works is a special means to strengthen and encrease 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 our selves by laying out for God. Active Christians are generally the most thriving Christians, they gather by scattering, and are enriched by their very expences. 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. 1. 12. Though by Faith we are entitled to that inheritance, because we are *the children of God by Faith in Jesus Christ*; Gal. 3. 26. *And if children, then heirs,*

Luke 15.

Operatio divina
necessaria est,
quia mutari no-
oportet, & no-
vas Creaturas
effici, priusquam
participes esse
possimus cele-
stium beneficio-
rum. Nam in
nobis nihil est
aliud quam
summa in-
eppitudo ad
bonum spiritu-
ale sive intelli-
gendam, sive fa-
ciendum, sive
denique capien-
dum. Daven.
in primum ad-
Coloss.

2 Cor. 5. 5.
natusque datus,
rem expolire ru-
dem, & infor-
mam; Camero,
apud Lxxii.
natusque datus
na. 20da.
Exod. 35. 33.
Jer. 31. 18, 18.
Acti agimus.

beirs, Rom. 8. 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 shooes 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. 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 sinners 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 unbeseeming the wisdom and holiness of God to let them enjoy him, who never loved him; or crown them with everlasting blessedness, who never prized or sought it) but a necessity too, in that unholy souls have no capacity for true happiness, meerly 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 encreasing Grace in them, wherein their fitness consists. Mens abounding in good works is the way to heighten those graces from whence they proceed, and the heightning their graces is the ripening 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 he intends them, 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.

do. We acknowledg that only to be a true justifying Faith, and so of the right stamp, which *purifies the heart*, Act. 15. 9. *Works by love*, Gal. 5. 6. encourageth, and promotes, and produceth holiness, and *shews* it self by *works*, Jam. 2. 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 hypocrisie, or unbelief, and told that we have not received Christ by Faith, and therefore are liable to the woe of the Gospel, we then produce our good works, a course of holiness, as the undoubted signs and evidences of the reallity and power of our Faith: and in this sense we may say, that as we our selves 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. 15. 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 an 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 judg 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 Christians 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*, Act. 10. 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 Joh. 2. 6. And the Apostle Paul bids us *be followers of God*, Eph. 5. 1. And Peter, *be holy in all manner of conversation*, (and so practically) *as he who hath called us is holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. And our Saviour Christ bids us *be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*, Matth. 5. 48. It is our perfection to be like God, not in Infiniteness, Immenlity, 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 encrease 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 candle-stick; 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, *Joh. 15. 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, & the more good we do, so much the more we declare what excellencies are in God, or in Peter's phrase, *shew forth his virtues*, 1 Pet. 2. 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, encrease 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?

Qu. 2. If good works are not truly meritorious, why then, and upon what account doth God reward them?

Ans. 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*, Psal. 11. 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, is 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 shew 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. 15. ult.

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. What-ever title they have to a future happiness, what-ever hopes of it, what-ever 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 recompence. 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

use.

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! Sure 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. They be-like were Saints of a lesser size, and their graces and good works of a lower alloy: our Popish Saints have over-top'd 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*, but these count themselves worthy of the greatest of them. The 24 Elders, *Rev. 4. 10.* Cast down their Crowns before him that sits on the Throne, 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, *Deut. 9. 6.* That he gave them not that good Land to possess it, for their righteousness, 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 meer bankrupt, Supererogations fail, Indulgences fail, and there is no borrowing from *Peter* to supply *Paul*. If the best have no merits at all, sure they have none superfluous, none to spare. The wise Virgins, *Matth. 25.* have no more oil than will serve for themselves, 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 mens hearts, but it no-where speaks of a superfluity of goodness in their hearts.

Job. 9. 15. and

40. 4.

Psal. 143. 2.

Gen. 32. 10.

hearts or lives. A redundance of merit we acknowledg in Christ, *unsearchable riches, all fulness*; but woe to them that seek for the like redundance 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 they never had any of their own, 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 your selves as *unclean things*, and your *righteousness as filthy rags*. 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 an 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 you can scarce find in your hearts to call good ones? you will even blush one day, to see your selves so much honoured for what you are ashamed of, and are conscious to your selves 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 your selves 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 your selves, *What am I, and what are my services, that ever God should thus plentifully reward them? I never pray'd but I sinn'd, never confessed sin, never begg'd 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*

Cum Deus coronet merita nostra nihil aliud coronat quam munera sua.
August. contra Pelag. Epist. 105.

Zech. 4. 7.

me, nor acted any but what he stirr'd 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 priviledges of his children conferr'd 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? I have nothing to boast of, nothing to glory in. I must cry Grace, Grace. 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 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 your selves 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 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 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 joyn 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 work, 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,

1. 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 your selves 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 the things you have wrought*, by thinking to gain too much by them; miss of the substance while you catch at the shadow. 2 Joh. ver. 2.

2. 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 Maria's, 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 harden 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 joynt heir with Christ, seeing I have been joynt Purchaser with him.* I am perswaded 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 be-
speak.

Speak 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 recompence, as well as a day of service: and therefore bethink your selves before-hand; see 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.

SERM.