

THE HAPPINESS OF PRACTICE.

TO THE
WORSHIPFUL THE BAILIFFS, BURGHERS, AND COMMONALTY
OF THE TOWN OF IPSWICH.

SPEECH requires presence, writings have their use in absence ; sermons are as showers of rain that water for the instant, books are as snow that lies longer on the earth : these may preach when the author cannot, and which is more, when he is not. Zisca desired his skin might serve the Bohemians in their wars, when his body could no more do it. Such is my affection towards you, that I ever desire to be sounding in your ears, and putting you in mind of these things, in season, out of season, in absence, in presence, whiles I remain in this tabernacle, and what I may, even after dissolution. For which purpose I have improved a little leisure, occasioned against my will, to whet upon you the scope and fruit of all my former labours, whose they are, and whose I am. To whom should I wish happiness but to you, whose happiness shall redound upon mine own head, and well-doing be put upon mine own account ? And what other can be your happiness, but to be doers of what you are knowers ? One-half of the Scriptures I have handled among you, endeavoured to acquaint you with the whole counsel of God ; and what is now the top of all my ambition, but to make you doers of what you have been hearers ? Wherein consists the delight of a husbandman ? Not in his ploughing, sowing, or carting, but to see the furrows crowned, and barns filled, with the fruit of his labours.* When we preach we sow the seed ; when we see good desires, then the corn sprouts up ; when the people begin to do well, then it blades ; but, when they are abund-

* Quum desideria bona concipimus, semen in terram mittimus ; quum vero opera recta incipimus, herba sumus ; quum ad profectum boni operis crescimus, ad spicam pervenimus ; quum in ejusdem boni operis perfectione solidamur, bonum frumentum in spica proferimus.—Greg. in Hom.

ant in good works, then are the ears laden with corn ; when steadfast and persevering to the end, then are they ripe for God's barn. It was a pride in Montanus to overween his Pepuza and Tymium, two peltng parishes in Phrygia, and to call them Jerusalem,* as if they had been the only churches in the world. But this is the commendable zeal of every true pastor, to adorn his own lot, and to wish his garden as the Eden of God. Such shall you be, if God shall please to water the means you have with the dew of his Spirit, to continue and increase your love to hearing and doing ; to the muzzling of the mouths of all scoffers and scorners at profession, to the joy, crown, and eternal happiness of your own souls, and such as God hath made watchmen over them, and of me the unworthiest of the rest.

SAMUEL WARD.

* Πίσκουαι καὶ Τυμίον Ἱερουσάλημ δρομαίους.—Euseb. l. 5, cap xvii.

THE HAPPINESS OF PRACTICE.

These things if you know, happy are you if you do them.—

JOHN XIII. 17.

THE fastening nail of the chief Master of the assemblies, the great Shepherd's peg, driving home, and making sure, all his former counsels, chosen as a farewell close, making and leaving a deep impression of all his deeds and sayings, as the last strong and loud knoll of a bell, that ends all the peals going before. A text that puts life into all other texts, urging the life of them, which is the practice of them, and is therefore aptly and duly pronounced by many at the end of their sermons. A sermon upon which text the world hath as much need of as of any one yet extant; the multitude of them, as statutes and proclamations, wanting yet one to enforce the observation of the rest. The necessity of doing was the scope of our Lord's solemn and uncouth action of girding himself with a towel, rising from his magisterial seat, washing and wiping his disciples' feet. He had indeed two other by-ends: one mystical, intimated in his dialogue with Peter, typifying the great end of his descent from heaven, and begirding himself with our flesh, viz., that he might totally wash our souls in the bath of justification (*ἐν ἁλοῦσιν*) once for all, and partially in the laver of regeneration so often (*ἐν ὁδοῦσιν*) as we soil our feet in the mire of this world by daily sins of infirmity. The other moral, to set his disciples a pattern of humility and love, stooping to the meanest offices of mutual service, without emulation or affectation of priority, which he foresaw would else be the bane of their sacred function. But his third and most principal aim was, by this his both verbal and real strange kind of lesson, to learn them not so much what they knew not as the use of doing that they knew, else would words only have served the turn, and not so much ado have needed; but he first does the things, and then expresses his intent, 'These things if you do,' &c.

In this conditional benediction, observe first the object on which happiness is conferred, and to which it is confined: 'These things.' Secondly, the two acts required hereto: 'if you know, if you do;' chiefly, the chief of them is, 'if you do.' To which happiness is fore-annexed specially: 'Happy are you if ye do,' &c.

'These things.' The knowledge and practice of these things only blesteth; these main arch-mysteries of faith, and these divine and cardinal virtues

of love and humility, symbolised in their ablution, and not the doing or knowing of all the natural, moral, and manual sciences in the world besides.

If one knew all the circle of learning, and knew, as was said of Berengarius, all that was knowable, all the rules of policy, secrets of state, mysteries of trading, and could execute them all; yet in his such knowing and doing he might not bless himself, were not happy, nor so to be reputed of Christians. The right placing or misplacing of happiness is the rudder of a man's life, the fountain of his well or ill doing; according to which men take their marks, and shoot right or wrong, all the actions of their lives. He that admireth in his heart, and blesseth with his mouth, any other idol of good, instead of this only true good, must needs miss of his end, and be a miserable man, grossly mistaking his marks, as silly country people that oftentimes give terms of honours and majesties to mean persons. So do most people, when they transfer this transcendent word and stately thing happiness unto any shadow of skill save of these things to which it is perpetually restrained in Scriptures, Psalm i., Luke ii., James i. Insomuch that Christ himself was displeased when they bestowed it on the paps and womb of his mother, in comparison of hearing and keeping his Father's will. Here then, and here only, is to be found the lost jewel of happiness, which well may be likened to a stake set up in the midst of a field, which blinded men grope after, to make the beholders sport at their wanderings.

Augustine tells of a mountebank that undertook, in a city of great trading, to tell every man his wish, which was in his fallible conjecture, to buy cheap and sell dear. But here he who hath made, and knoweth the hearts of all, tells every man the end of his desire; and that which is more, shews him the way of attaining them. 'These things if you know, and if you do them, happy are you.'

The first *if*, providently premixed, and cautelously presupposed by Christ, intimates that knowledge must be the pilot, guide, and usher of practice, else superstitious deeds done by rote and random, the blind whelps of ignorant devotion, God regards not. Good works, the fruits of faith, and children of a believer that knows what he does, such are only pleasing in his sight. Christ divinely foresaw the devilish policy of subtle worldlings, that would cry up practice to cry down knowledge, as cunning papists will extol St James to disparage St Paul; praise good meanings and works, with an evil eye to hearing sermons and reading good books; and carnal protestants be ever commending reading to disgrace preaching; and another sort ever talking of a good heart, a good meaning, and the power of religion, ever disliking all show and profession of it; which, if well observed, are the least and worst doers in a country. Which Satanical sophism St James deeply prevents; who, though the chief aim of his epistle was to urge hypocrites to be doers, and vain boasters of justifying faith to justify their faith by their works, yet forelaid this caveat, 'Be swift to hear:' needful even in these hearing and knowing times, wherein though knowledge cover the earth as waters the sea, yet may the Lord have justly a controversy with the land, or a great number at least in it, like dry rocks in the midst of this sea, who have not a dram of saving and well-grounded knowledge. But this is but a pre-requisite to the main thing here required, which happiness is intendedly fore-placed, knowledge being but a step to this turret of happiness, 'happy are you if you do them.'

Here is the labour, here is the difficulty, here is the happiness, in the conjunction of doing with knowing, to practise that we know; to perform

the duties prescribed in the gospel; to believe the things to be believed, and to do the things to be done; the sum of faith and love, sweetly coupled in this significant solution of his disciples' feet.

Three noble ends divinity propounds to her followers: the first and greatest, God's glory; the second, next to that, man's own content here, and salvation hereafter; the last like to the former, the edification and conversion of our neighbours. In the attainment of these is a Christian's perfection and happiness, none whereof bare theory shall ever more than come near. All three practice, joined thereto, fully apprehends.

Of these three, that must needs be the noblest which God primarily intended in the revelation of his will to mankind, and Moses oft tells us, is that we might observe to do them. For if (as Wolphius reasoneth by a distribution) he had given us his laws to preserve only, he safer might have committed them to iron coffers and marble pillars; if only to talk and prate of them, better to geese and parrots; if only for contemplation, to owls in ivy-woods, or to monks in cloisters, and not to all sorts of people. His scope sure was not to make trial of the wits of men, who could sharpest conceive; nor of their memories, who could faithfullest retain; of their eloquence, who could roundliest discourse; but of their wills, who would most obediently do them: this being his chief honour, to have his throne and command, not in the head and brains, but in the strongholds of their hearts and lives. For what shall God reward thee, O man, but for that which men praise God for in thee? Now for admirable gifts of science and learning, men may admire thee, but they give God thanks only for the good they receive from thee. The sun itself, if it did not shine and give warmth unto the creatures, were the glorious hue of it ten times more than it is, none would half so much bless God for it.

The men for whom our heavenly Father is glorified, are such whose works shine afore men, who warm the loins of the poor, and with their knowledge are an eye to the blind. I can hardly believe that God ever made any creature only to behold; neither star, pearl, flower, or feathered fowl, only to shew their glorious outsides, but to have influence, virtues, qualities, beneficial to mankind; much less a man to know only, or an art only to be known, but all to his glory, and man's service, which to effect is all the glory of men and arts. Some sciences, I know, in comparison of others more operative, are termed speculative; but not one of these, whose speculation tends and ends not in some operation, by which man is profited, and God honoured; specially divinity, which makes us his workmanship, not to knowledge; but to good works, to the praise of his grace. Who commends a schoolmaster, whose scholars can say and understand their rules, but speak not and write not any good styles by them? A captain, whose soldiers can skill of military terms and orders, unless their arts and exploits of war be suitable? Who praiseth a horse that feeds well, but is not deedly for the race or travel, speed or length? Little says the Scripture of the learning of the apostles, but much of their *acts*. These are the richest, and usual styles of commendation in Scripture. Moses, 'a man mighty in words and deeds;' Cornelius, 'a man fearing God, and giving much alms;' the Centurion, worthy of favour, for 'he hath built us a synagogue;' Dorcas 'made thus many coats for the poor;' Gaius, the 'host of the church;' &c. Such benefactors their works shall follow them, and praise them in the gates here, yea, at the great day obtain that, 'Come, you blessed of my Father: for I was naked, and you clothed me.' For such men God is blessed of men, and such men shall be blessed of God in their deeds; and as the more

knowing without doing shall procure the more stripes, because God for them is the more blasphemed; so the more doing with knowing, shall have double honour, because God was doubly honoured in them. 'Behold I come quickly, and my reward is in mine hand, to give every man according to his deeds.' Blessed are they that do my commandments. If you know them, and do not, miserable are you; but these things if you know, and do them, you are the happiest men living.

The second branch of happiness, wherein doing hath the advantage of knowing, is in the personal benefit, consisting in the present sweetness, and future gain accruing thereby. Some luscious delight, yea, a kind of ravishing dounceness there is in studying good books, ruminating on good notions, not unlike that which is in tasting and swallowing sweet meats, which made the epicure in Ælian wish his throat as long as the crane's; but all the benefit is in the strength and nourishment it breedeth after concoction, when thoughts breed works, and studies turn into manners, when the fat pasture is seen in the flesh and fleece of the sheep. One apple of the tree of life hath more sweet relish, than ten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; which yet we fondly prefer in our longing, ever since our first parents' teeth were set on edge therewithal. For instance, thou findest thine ear tickled with an elaborate discourse of temperance, but try the practice of it, and tell me if it bring thee not in sundry real commodities to body and mind, beyond a poor, auricular transient titillation. Were it not for the different energy and efficacy in the heart and life, there might be well near as much pleasure in reading the witty commendations of folly, or pride, as in the sound tractate of wisdom, and humility; I had almost said in the language of fools; in the reading of Sir Philip, as St Peter.

All discourses of faith and hope are but dry things, in comparison of the acts and practice of them, which are delicate above the honey and the honeycomb, sweeter than the taste of any nectar. Some say, the study of the law is cragged, that if the gain of practice did not sweeten it, few would plod upon Ployden. But, I believe, few would study Saint Paul, and preach as Saint Paul did, instantly in season and out of season (quaintly and rarely they might for credit and preferment), but painfully and profitably, I hardly believe they would; fervently and feelingly they cannot, except the sweetness of their practice drives and constrains them. Of all men I hold them fools that bend their studies to divinity, not intending to be doers, as well as students and preachers; not much wiser, such as will be professors of religion and not practitioners. The parables in the Talmud fit their folly well, resembling them to such as plough and sow all the year, and never reap; to the grasshopper that sings all the summer and wants in the winter; to women ever conceiving, and ever making abortion, never coming to the birth; and, best of all, that of Christ, distinguishing hearers into foolish, that build on the sand of hearing, and professing, blown down with every puff of trouble; and the wise, that build on the rock of doing, unshakable. Search all the Scripture, and see if any covenants or grants were made to knowing, and not all to doing. Is not the ancient tenor of the law, 'Do this and live?' and the gospel, 'Believe and live?' which implies an act to be done, and that act implying sundry consequents and fruits of it: 'He that doth my Father's will, he is my brother and sister.' 'Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, but he that doth my Father's will.' To him that doth ill shall be tribulation and anguish, to every soul, of Jew and Grecian; to him that doth well shall be honour and peace upon all the Israel of God. Unto whom shall that *Euge* be given at that great day but the doer; and

in what form, but, 'Well done, good servant,' that hast not buried thy talent in a napkin? He himself expresseth the manner: 'Behold, I come quickly; my reward is in my hand, to give every man according to his works. Blessed is every one that doth my commandments, that he may eat of the tree of life, and enter through the gates into the city.' In all which, happiness in this life and that to come, is conferred upon the living acts and exercises, not upon the dead habits of any grace whatsoever. In all labour there is abundance, but in the conceits of the brain and talk of the lips, nothing but emptiness and misery. If one could do as much as Mr Stoughton prints, and many credible witnesses report of the young gentlewoman of nine years old, that can say every syllable of the New Testament by heart, and, upon trial, not fail in returning a line without the right chapter and verse, and yet practise never a jot nor tittle of it, happier were such as never heard word of God's word. If one should take pains to get together a great number of songs, curiously set, artificially composed, yea, and knew how to sing or play them, and yet never heard them sung or played, what pleasure had he of them? The practice and use of all operative arts is all in all; in divinity, the chief of all, which else is as the vine, excellent only in the sweet juice of it, otherwise fit not so much as for pin or peg.

Next to God's glory and a man's own good, a Christian placeth much happiness in winning and edifying others; to which purpose a speechless life hath more life in it than a lifeless speech. Irresistible is the *Suada* of a good life above a fair profession. Chrysostom* calls good works unanswerable syllogisms, invincible demonstrations, to confute and convert pagans. Withal, tells us they have a louder language than the sun and moon, whose sound yet goes over all the world, publishing God's glory, not in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, which many barbarous nations understand not, but in an oratory they can better skill of. An archer puts not more force into an arrow he shoots, than the life of the speaker into his speech; whence it comes that one and the same sermon, or counsel, in several men's mouths, differ as much as a shaft out of a giant's, or child's, shooting. Miracles (says he) are now ceased, good conversation comes in their place; the apostles might have preached long enough without audience, or acceptance, had not their miracles, as bells, tolled to their sermons, and as harbingers, made way into men's hearts for their doctrine; by such weapons they conquered the world, as Gideon's soldiers the Midianites, carrying in one hand the burning lamp of a good life, and in the other the loud, shrill trumpets of preaching;† otherwise, plain men will answer as Jovinian, to the orthodox and Arian bishops contending about the faith. Of your learning and subtle disputations I cannot so well judge, but I can well mark and observe which of your behaviours is most peaceable and fruitful; and as one, Moses,‡ renowned for piety, to Lucius, reputed an Arian bishop, tendering the confession of his faith to clear himself: Tush, says he, what tellest thou me of the faith of the ears? Let me have the faith of the hands. I will rather go without my instatement than take it of hands imbrued in blood, bribery, and injustice, as all know and report thine to be. Arguments are dark, and persuasions dull things, to lives and actions; and most people are like sheep, easilier following example than led or driven by pre-

* In 1 Cor. i. 10, *σὺλλογισμοὺς ἀνἀπαραρτήτους, φωνὴν λαμπροτέραν.*

† Theod. in Jud., *φίροντες λαμπράδας πραιγματῶν ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ, καὶ σαλπιγγαὶς κηρυμάτων ἐν τῇ λαίᾳ.*

‡ Rufinus eccl. hist. lib. ii. c. x.

cepts and rules. Let any make proof of both. Let a gentleman or minister persuade parishioners to contribute liberally to a brief, and set a niggardly example, and see how much less will come of it, than if he said less and gave more. What else moved Christ and the prophets so frequently to use that potent figure, which rhetoricians, from the special usefulness of it, call *χρησις*, that is, when the orator seconds and enlives his speech with some action; as Christ, when here in my text, he girds himself with a towel; and elsewhere, when he took the child and set him in the midst of the apostles; the prophet when he took Paul's girdle, and the old divine in Dorotheus, that had his auditor pluck at a great old tree, which he could not stir, and at a young sprout easily plucked up, to shew the difficulty of rooting out an old habit, in comparison of its beginnings.

The reason is, words are but wind, and vanish into the wind, leaving no print or impression more than a ship in the sea, in comparison of actions, which men take marks and notice of. This same inartificial argument of examples, though scholars less regard it as having less art in it, yet is it all the countryman's logic; as the martyr that answered Bishop Bonner, 'My lord, I cannot dispute, but I can die for the truth,' moved the spectators as much as many learned discourses. By this, Christ demonstrated to John's disciples his Messiahship, 'Go and tell, not what you heard me preach, but saw me do; how the blind receive sight,' &c. If I do not such works as none other hath done before me, I desire not men to believe in me. By these courses, Peter would have Christians win their neighbours, and wives their husbands, rather than by tutoring of them. Then would neighbours follow one another to the right religion and the true church, as tradesmen do to those markets where they see them gather wealth; yea, imitate their lives, and bring forth fruits as Jacob's sheep, if they saw their rods speckled with works, as well as with words. Thus Monica, Saint Augustine's famous mother, taught one of her neighbour gentlewomen, complaining of her churlish Nabal, and wondering how she won her perverse husband. Why, says she, I observed his mind, pleased him in all indifferent things, forbore him in his passions, gave him all content in diet, attendance, and so have made him first God's, and then mine by degrees. These are the arts and charms that, if now used by preachers and professors, would convert multitudes of people, and cover multitudes of sins, and cause themselves to shine as stars. These things mind and exercise. These things, if you know and do, you shall save yourselves, and those you live withal, and so be every way happy men.

Thus in all these three references, you see that doing only brings in the happiness; without which, all our knowing makes and leaves us but dishonourable to God, uncomfortable to ourselves, scandalous to others, in no nearer terms of happiness, than Balaam, Judas, and the devil himself, who, the more they know, the worse for them; the more sin, and the more punishment. They do but teach God how to condemn them.

Use 1; of reproof.—If knowing made up happiness, England were an happy nation, our times as happy as ever any; but if doing be required, great is the felicity of both. Of which, shall I complain in the words of Seneca? Men now-a-days choose rather to discourse than to live;* study styles rather than deeds; or in Bernard's, men desire knowledge to be known by it;† or as Anacharsis taxed the Athenians for using their money to count withal, and knowledge to know withal;‡ or as Tully of the philo-

* *Malint disputare quam vivere.*

† *Scire ut sciatur.*

‡ *Nummis ad numerandum, scientia ad sciendum.*

sophers, that their lives and their discourses miserably crossed one another.* The truth is this, a plethora and dropsy there is of hearing and reading; a dearth and consumption of doing; most ever gathering, never using; not unlike some old university drones, ever in studying and learning, never preaching or venting their studies. Like tedious musicians, ever tuning and never playing, or like the changeling Luther mentions, ever suckling, never battling; or like dying men, and sick of apoplexies, with speech, but no faculty locomotive, no power to stir hand or foot. Few (I confess) troubled in these times with the deaf and dumb spirits, but most having withered hands, and dried arms, and lame feet.

This same want of doing what we know, what does it else but make common people blaspheme God? doubt whether all divinity be but policy, and the Scriptures a fable? Verily, the atheism of the times hath this for its principal fountain and pretext. There was a woman lately living, much spoken of in some parts of this land, living in professed doubt of the Deity, after illumination and repentance hardly comforted, who often protested, that the vicious and offensive life of a great learned man in the town where she lived occasioned those damned doubts. This opens men's mouths, and gives the hint of all blasphemies, scorns, and scoffs of religion; such as he broke upon the Jesuits, whom in foreign nations they call apostles. 'The apostles, indeed, shewed the world heaven, left the earth to earthly men, got heaven themselves; but we are more beholden to our new ones; they shew us heaven, leave it to us to purchase, and cozen us only of earthly possessions in the mean time.' This made Linacre, reading upon the New Testament the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Saint Matthew, and comparing those rules with Christians' lives, to throw down the book, and burst out into this protestation, 'Either this is not God's gospel, or we are not Christians and gossellers.' Questionless, the more any men know, or profess to know, and the less they do, the more do they dishonour God.

And what are such themselves the better for their knowledge? but as the preacher experimentally speaks, 'He that increaseth such knowledge, addeth sorrow.' Their folly I cannot better express than Erasmus, in his dialogue of a carnal gosseller, whom he calls *Cyclops Evangeliphorus*, a swaggering ruffian, affecting yet the name of a gosseller, whom he describes, having by one side hanging a bottle of rich sack, and by the other a Testament of Erasmus's translation, richly bound and bossed, the leaves gilt over as fair as his life was foul, and conditions base. This man he discovers by certain interrogatories, to have no inward knowledge or affection to the gospel, nor better proof of his love thereto, than that he carried it always about him, and had laid it upon the pate of a Franciscan, that had railed on Erasmus and the new gossellers. To convince him, he asks him, What if he were tied ever to carry the bottle at his girdle and never to taste of it; or but to taste only and never to drink it down? His answer is, that were but a punishment, Tantalus-like. But what if he did, as his manner was, drink deeply of it? He then answers, it would warm his heart, refresh his spirits, cheer his countenance. So, says he, would that little book, if thou didst eat it down; concoct, digest, and turn it into nutriment in thy life and practice. My meaning is not in this relation to tax Bible carrying, which I hold a better grace than rapiers or fans of feathers, but only to shew the foppery of them that carry them in their hands, or in their memories or understandings, as asses do dainty burdens and taste not of them, have no fruit of them themselves. Verily, a man

* Cum Philosophorum vita miserabiliter pugnât oratio.

knows no more rightly than he practises. It is said of Christ, he knew no sins, because he did no sin; and in that sense, he knows no good that doth no good. He that will obey shall know my Father's will, and such as will not do what they know to be good, shall soon unknow that which they know, and become as if they never had known any such matter; it being just with God to punish shipwreck of a good conscience, with loss of the freight of knowledge; according to that imprecation of the Hebrews, that if they should abuse their skill in music, their right hand might forget its cunning, and their tongue cleave to the roof of their mouths. From which just judgment, I persuade myself, it comes to pass that many become in matters of religion mere sceptics, because they would not be practises, and that the commonest religion of our times is Socrates's uncertainty. Men know nothing now-a-days. It is become a disputable problem whether the Pope be antichrist, Rome a good church; whether a man may worship God before pictures, play upon any part of the Sabbath as well as upon the week days; whether election be of foreseen faith; whether the true believer may apostatise? Shortly, I think, whether the Scripture be scripture, and whether there be a God or no? To conclude, a good understanding have all they that do thereafter; and cursed are all such as know these things and do the clean contrary.

Cursed (I say) are they, because they lay a stumbling-block before others, both weak ones within and bad ones without; such, I say, as know God, and yet deny him in their lives, and are reprobate to every good word and work; such as buy by one balance and sell by another, have a form of knowledge which they prescribe to others and live themselves by contrary rules. Of such I would I could speak with as much detestation, as Paul writes of them, Phil. iii., friends in show, but enemies in truth to the cross of Christ. Unclean beasts, for all their chewing of the cud, repeating of sermons, because they divide not the hoof, walk without all differences, and judgment, as if God had given them their lights to tread in puddles and gutters withal, to walk and wallow in the mire of all filthiness, which makes men mislike not only their persons, but the very religion which they retain too. Some few wise and grounded Christians will do as they say, and not as they do; hear them, because they sit in the chair of Moses; but the greatest number will loathe their sayings for their doings, as men the good light of a candle for the ill savour the stinking tallow yields, resolving as the Indians of the Spaniards, whatever their religion be, they will be of the clean contrary; if such go to heaven, they will go to hell. I wonder with what face such can call themselves Christians, or with what ears hear themselves so called.* Does any man look to be called a carpenter that never squared timber, or erected frames? What if never so skilful? I say of all such skill, as Cato of superfluous useless trifles, they are dear of a farthing that are good for nothing.

Oh! rather let us all lay claim to that honourable name, do the works of Christians, and thereby approve ourselves to God and man, as the angel to Manoah, who, being asked of his name, made answer, It was wonderful, and did wonderfully, ascended in the flame and made good his name by his action. Here is the labour, and here lies all the difficulty; the maxims and sanctions of things to be done and believed are but few, contained in brief summaries; but the incentives, motives, directions, reproofs, and such like appurtenances of practice, these make volumes swell, these lengthen sermons, and multiply books.† The art of doing is that which requires

* Greg. Nyssen. de nomine Christiani.

† Sic Epictetus de Philosophia.

study, strength, and divine assistance. Do the sins that swarm in our times proceed from ignorance, or incontinence rather, and wilfulness? It were happy if men had that plea; if the light were not so great, the times and the nation had not sin. May we not use the apostle's ordinary in-crepation and exprobration? Know you not that idolatry, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, drinking, and whoring are sins? Know you not that for these things comes the anger of God? Is any so simple that he knows not the ten commandments, and the sum of the gospels? yet how desperately do men rush upon these pikes, carelessly, wittingly, and willingly, seeing the gulf, and yet leaping into it! Many condemning themselves in Medea's terms, see the better and yet follow the worse, having a heart to leave that they see to be evil: as if men thought that ignorance only should condemn; as if God should only come in flaming fire to render vengeance upon poor pagans, savages, and Indians, or heretics, that know not the truth, and not much more upon his own servants, that knew and refused to do his will.

The infidel disputes against the faith, the impious lives against it; * the one denies it in terms, the other in deeds; and therefore both shall be held as enemies to the faith, and never attain salvation: of the two, it is worse to kick against the prick one sees, than to stumble in the dark at a block one sees not. But here is the chief cause of all impiety; illumination is easy, sanctification is hard to flesh and blood, requires crossing and mastery, yea, crucifying of our lusts, wills, and affections, which is not done without much prayer and travail; and therefore men neglect that, and content themselves with the easier and cheaper work. Upon this therefore do I wish Christians would set their prizes, and spend their studies, even about the art of doing. But how shall we attain this facility and faculty of doing? I answer: to wish it and heartily to desire it is half, yea, and the best half, of the work; as Socrates was wont to say, He that would be an honest man shall soon be one, and is past the hardest part of the work. To affect goodness above cunning is a good sign, and a good help, and step to be such an one, especially when this desire breeds prayer for power to do, knowing that without Christ we can do just nothing, but lie becalmed and unable to move or promote; as a ship on the sea, a mill on the land, without the breath of the Spirit. And this I commend as the best and first general help of practice, that every morning, and in the enterprise of all thy affairs, thou acknowledge thine own disability, or rather deadness, to every good work, and commend thyself to the work of his grace for the will and the deed: for preventing and subsequent, operating and co-operating, preserving and perfecting grace: entreating him not only to regenerate thee, and give thee new principles of motion, but to renew his inspiration upon every new act of thine, that by Christ, or rather Christ by and in thee, may do all things, pray as if thou hadst no will, vow as if there were no grace, that is seriously both.

Secondly, in the use of all means of practice, when thou goest to hear, read, or meditate, pray and desire thou mayest light upon profitable and pertinent themes, books, and sermons, applicatory, and levelling at thyself, and orations as if made for thee rather than for anybody else: desire not to gather flowers, but pot-herbs and fruit. Charms are said to have no effect unless one go with a belief unto them: I am sure no means ordinarily will do thee any good unless thou go with a mind to be bettered by them.

* Aug. lib. iv. contra Donat.

Thirdly, In the use of these, attend to thyself as well as to the matter, have one eye and ear fixed on what is said, and another on thyself; lay thyself to the rule, and say, What is this to me? how do I and that agree? Be not as little children, who, while they are looking in the glass, think only it is the baby's face, and not their own. Observe not, in hearing a sermon, the pleasing sound of the pipe, but how thou dancest thereunto; in reading of the Scriptures, at the end of every period ask thy heart, How do I practise this? or, How does this reproof tax me? This promise comfort me? When thou art well persuaded to do anything, resolve thoroughly to do it; and when resolved, dispatch and execute it speedily.

Fourthly, After the sermon is ended, say not, as the common manner is, Now the sermon is done; but consider it is not done till thou hast done it. After reading and hearing do as men do after dinner, sit a while, concoct it, by pondering of it, digest it, and after draw it out into action. So do such as learn music or writing: they play over their lesson, write after the copy. This, I think, Paul meant when he saith, *ἀσκάω*. I exercise myself to have an inoffensive conscience, &c. Most err grossly in the fall of this, thinking it enough to retain it in memory, to repeat it over, serving divinity as absurdly as the countryman his physick, who, being bidden to take his bill or receipt, took it home, and carried it in his pocket, and after finding no ease upon his complaint, being directed to take it in posset ale, put the bill in a cup, but never took the ingredients prescribed into his body. And look how much good his physick did him, so much good will divinity do us, taken into our memories and tongues, and no further.

Fifthly, In all thy talk, discourses, and counsels to others, lick first thine own fingers. That wise man is a fool that is not wise for himself. And yet many such there be that can preach and write good books, like Tusser, that wrote well of husbandry, and was the most unthrifty husband himself that ever water wet.

Sixthly and lastly, In all thy privy reckonings with thyself, which must be duly observed at the close of every week, month, and year, less and more solemnly, observe what thou hast done, consider if thou shouldst keep a diary or journal, as many thriving Christians do, what acts it would record when I go out of the world. What, shall the world say, hath this man done singular or memorable? Take such accounts of thyself daily as masters of their journeymen and apprentices. As Pharaoh's taskmaster of the Israelites, Where is the work done this day? lest thou be as huntmen and falconers that have toiled all the day and have no quarry or roast at night.

A WORD OF APPLICATION.

If now, at the end of my sermon, my several hearers and readers would do, as St John Baptist's did, ask, What shall I do? and what shall I do? You have said much in the general of doing, what say you in particular to this nation, and to the several conditions of men in it?

I answer: What can I say to these knowing times, which hath not been said before me. What new doctrine, unheard of before, is it possible for me to broach? I will, therefore, say no more but 'do that which you know you should do.' If you know that Baal be God, if Rome be the church, let us return to it again. If you know that swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and fashion-following be good things, let us all fall to do these things. But if God hath given us the truth and the light, let us walk in it,

and work by it while it is to-day, lest, if we play revel and riot by it, the candlestick be removed, and the light put out. If purity, sanctity, and sobriety be known to you to be good things, and pleasing to God, 'happy are you if you do them.'

Certain things there are known and acknowledged at all hands as meet to be done, that an able minister might be provided for every parish, that popery, swearing, and drunkenness would be suppressed. But why are they ever spoken of and never done? How did they, in superstition, maintain so many idle bellies? How was [the head of the beast cut off at the first in this nation? Is it harder for us to cut off the friggling tail of that hydra of Rome? How was the infinite swarm of rogues and beggars suppressed by good laws? Verily, nothing is hard to industrious and active spirits, God assisting; and now it is high time, and God looks that these things should be done.

To the reverend clergy, and such as carry holiness in their fronts. Let such be sure to have Thummim as well as Urim on their breasts; their right thumbs and feet anointed with holy oil, as well as their right ears; their fruitful pomegranates on their skirts, as well as their bells to ring and make a sound withal, lest they be as tinkling cymbals to God's and men's ears. You know better than I can tell you what should be done. Happy are you if you do what you know.

To nobles and great persons. It is not your countenancing of religion will serve the turn, which yet were well if many of you would afford but your practising of it, not the having of a chaplain to say and do you such service as Ahab's four hundred did, but a faithful Micaiah to direct you, what God would have done, whom you may hear as Cornelius did Peter, with an intent to obey, not him, but the message he delivers out of God's book unto you.

To gentlemen. For God's sake, do something, besides hawking and hunting and living upon your lands and patrimonies. You have better means of knowing and doing than meaner men. Happy if you do what you know.

To lawyers and soldiers. I remit you to St John's counsel, which will serve you both. And happy should they and their clients be if they would practise it, be content with their wages, and do no wrong.

To merchants and tradesmen. If you believe there be a country and city that lies eastward, a new Jerusalem, where there are rich commodities, as rich as any in the East Indies, send your prayers and good works to factor there for you, and have a stock employed in God's banks to pauperous and pious uses; and think of religion as of tradings that will bring no gain unless diligently followed and practised. It is not a nimble head, but a diligent hand, that maketh rich.

In a word, to all hearers and goers to sermons. Play not the fools, as most do. Hear not to hear. Go not to church as many now-a-days do to universities and inns of court, neither to get learning, law, nor money, for mere form or fashion; or as boys go into the water to play and paddle there only, not to wash and be clean. To all sorts: I say not a word more; but do that which you know to be good, and happy are you.

Brevis predicatio, longa ruminatio, actio perpetua.
Denique, quid verbis opus spectemur agendo.

A POSTSCRIPT.

READER, if thou hadst read over a treatise of physick, polity, mathematics, or any other mystery, earnestly promising thee health, wealth, or special benefit, wouldst thou not long till thou hadst made some trial of it in practice? Here, if thou wilt be persuaded to do the like, without all *if* or *and*, happy shalt thou be. To conclude: before thou be tired, consider well much reading is a weariness to the flesh, but much doing a refreshing to the spirit. The general complaint of the world is that there is no end of making many books, because there is little or no fruit in those that read them, but as the grass on the housetop, which withers before it cometh forth, whereof the mower filleth not his hand nor the gleaner his lap, neither they which go by say, The blessing of the Lord be on you, or, We bless you in the name of the Lord. Thou, therefore, who desirest to be a wise reader, one of a thousand, read to some purpose; that is, intend of a reader to become a doer. So shalt thou avert this curse and reproach from thee. So shall God and man call thee blessed; and blessed shalt thou feel thyself in so doing. Do, then; and so he hath done, that layeth no heavier burden on thee than on himself, nor wisheth other happiness than to himself.

SA. WARD.