

THE GOOD POLITICIAN DIRECTED.

Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.—MATT. X. 16.

OUT of every creature (simply considered) there is some good to be learned. The divine poet* sweetly—

‘The world’s a school, where in a general story
God always reads dumb lectures of his glory.’

It is a three-leaved book—heaven, earth, and sea; and every leaf of this book, every line of every leaf, every creature in this universe, can read to man, for whom they were made, a divinity lecture. In a speaking silence they preach to us that Deity which made both them and us, and them for us. *Seculum speculum*,—the world is a glass wherein we may behold our Creator’s majesty. From the highest angel to the lowest worm, all instruct us somewhat. For one and the same almighty hand, that made the angels in heaven, made also the worms on earth. *Non superior in illis, non inferior in istis.*†

Besides this general lecture, they have all their particular schools: Solomon sends us to the ant to learn providence, Prov. vi. 7; Isaiah to the ox to learn thankfulness, Isa. i. 3. Many beasts do excel man in many natural things:—

‘Nos aper auditu præcellit, aranea tactu,
Vultur odoratu, lynx visu, simia gustu,’—

The boar excels us in hearing, the spider in touching, the vulture in smelling, the lynx in seeing, the ape in tasting. Some have observed that the art of curing the eyes was first taken from the swallows. The eagles have taught us architecture; we received the light of phlebotomy from the hippopotamus. The Egyptian bird, ibis, first gave to physicians knowledge how to use the clyster. The spider taught us to weave. Here the serpent instructs us in policy, the dove in simplicity.

Now we are fallen among serpents, stinging serpents, enemies to man; can we fetch away any good from them? Yes, those very venomous and malicious creatures shall afford us *documenta*, not *nocumenta*; they shall teach us, not touch us. I may say of them, as it is said of the Jews, *Hostes sunt in cordibus, suffragatores in codicibus*,—They are our enemies in their hearts, our friends in their books. The malice of serpents is mortal, their use shall

* Du Bartas, 1st day, 1st week.

† Aug. Solil., cap. 9.

be vital. So it may, so it shall, if our sobriety keep the allowed compass ; for our imitation is limited and qualified. We must not be in all points like serpents, nor in all respects like doves ; but in some, but in this : ‘ Be ye wise as serpents, harmless as doves.’ Perhaps other uses might be accommodated : as the serpent might teach us how with wisdom to dwell below on the earth, and the dove with wings of innocence to fly up to heaven above. We may in earthly matters keep a serpentine and winding motion ; but to heaven, with the dove, we must have a straight course. But I confine myself to the pith of the text and our Saviour’s meaning : ‘ Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves.’

The words may (not unfitly) be distinguished into—I. A perhibition ; and II. A cohibition : as it were the reins and the curb. I. The perhibition, allowance, or reins : ‘ Be wise as serpents.’ II. The cohibition, corrective, restraint, or curb : ‘ Be harmless as doves.’

They must go hand in hand, without disjunction. United they are commendous, parted dangerous. There is a necessity of their union to our peace : divide them, and you lose yourselves. Wit without innocence will offend others ; innocence without wit will not defend ourselves. *Prudentia sine simplicitate malitia ; simplicitas sine prudentia stultitia.*—Wit without innocence is wickedness ; innocence without wit is foolishness. Whosoever hath the one and wants the other, must needs be either guilty of folly or of dishonesty. Lest we be too crafty, and circumvent others, let us keep the innocency of the dove ; lest we be too simple, and others circumvent us, let us keep the wisdom of the serpent.

I. Let us first see from the serpent how we should be wise, and then go to the dove for innocence. Six principal lessons of wisdom the serpent may teach us :—

1. Their first policy is by all possible means to defend their head. If they must encounter with danger, they expose their whole body to it ; but howsoever they will safeguard their head. They write of them, that although all a serpent’s body be mangled, unless his head be cut off, (which he cunningly hides,) by a kind of attractive power and vigour, one part will come to another again.

This is to us a singular document of wisdom, to look well to our Head. Christ is our Head ; and the sinews and nerves that knit us to him are our faith and hope : let us preserve these undaunted, undamaged. We fight against an enemy that seeks especially to wound us there. He strikes indeed at every place : he hath, saith Jerome, *nomina mille, mille nocendi artes* ; therefore Paul chargeth us, Eph. vi. 11, to ‘ put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against all the wiles of the devil.’ But especially look to the head : ver. 16, 17, ‘ Above all, take the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation,’ save the head. Protect all parts, if it be possible ; let not oppression wound thee in the hand, nor blasphemy in the tongue, nor wantonness in the eye, nor covetousness in the heart ; but howsoever shield thy head : lose not thy hope of salvation, thy faith in Jesus Christ.

Homo qui habet se, habet totum in se, said the philosopher,—He that hath himself, hath all in himself. But *ille habet se, qui habet Christum, et ille habet Christum, qui habet fidem*,—he hath himself that hath Christ, and he hath Christ that hath faith. Whatsoever you lose, lose not this ; though you lose your loves, though you lose your lives, keep the faith. ‘ I will trust in thee, though thou kill me,’ saith Job, chap. xiii. 15. ‘ I have kept the faith,’ saith Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, though ‘ I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus,’ Gal. vi. 17. If insatiate death be let alone, to cut us into pieces with

the sword, to grind us into the maws of beasts, to burn us in the fire to ashes ; yet so long as our Head, Christ, is safe, he hath the serpent's attractive power to draw us to him. 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am,' John xvii. 24. The more we are cut off, the more we are united ; death, while it strives to take us from him, sends us to him. Keep faith in the Head. With what mind soever Seneca wrote it, I know to good use I may speak it : *Malo mihi successum deesse, quam fidem*,—I had rather want success than faith. *Fidem qui perdidit, nil habet ultra quod perdat*,—He that hath lost his faith, hath nothing else to lose. But it is the Lord that preserves the head. 'O God, the strength of my salvation ; thou hast covered my head in the day of battle,' Ps. cxl. 7.

2. The next policy in serpents is to stop their ears against the noise of the charmers. This is one of the similitudes which the Psalmist gives between the wicked and serpents : Ps. lviii. 4, 5, 'Their poison is like the poison of a serpent : they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear ; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.' This charming, as they write, was invented in the eastern countries, where they were pestered with abundance of serpents ; which music the serpent hearing, wisely distrusting his own strength, thinks it the surest course to stop his ears. This he doth by couching one ear close to the ground, and covering the other with his voluminous tail.

The incantations of this world are as often sung to us, as those charms to the serpents ; but we are not so wise as serpents to avoid them. Sometimes a Siren sings us the charms of lust ; and thus a weak woman overcomes him that overcame the strong lion.

' Lenam non potuit, potuit superare lenam.
Quem fera non valuit vincere, vicit hera,'

says the epigrammatist. 'He goeth after her straightway : ' though 'her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death,' Prov. vii. 22. Sometimes Satan comes to us like a goldfinch, and whistles to us a note of usury, to the tune of ten in the hundred ; we are caught presently, and fall a-dancing after his pipe. Sometimes, like Alecto, he charms us a madrigal of revenge for private wrongs ; instantly we are caught with malice, destruction sits in our looks. Not seldom he comes to a man with a drunken carol, —Lay thy penny to mine, and we will to the wine,—he is taken suddenly ; he runs to it, though he reels from it. He sings the slothful a *Dormi secure* ; and he will sleep, though his 'damnation sleepeth not,' 2 Pet. ii. 3. Yea, there are not wanting that, let him sing a song of blasphemy, they will swear with him. Let him begin to rail, they will libel with him. Let his incantation be treason, and they will answer him in gunpowder. Yea, let him charm with a charm, a witless, senseless sorcery, and if a tooth aches, or a hog groans, they will admit it, admire it. Of such folly the very serpents shall condemn us.

But as open-eared as men are to these incantations of the devil and sin, let the musical bells of Aaron be rung, the sweet songs of Zion sung, they will not listen ; they will not be charmed with all our cunning. So that we shall be fain to send them to the judgment-seat of God, with this scroll on their foreheads, *Noluerunt incantari*,—Lord, we have done our best, but this people would not be charmed.

3. Their third policy. They fly men's society as known enemies ; and rather choose a wilderness, seeking peace among briars and thorns. And may they not herein teach us with Moses, 'rather to choose affliction' in a

wilderness 'with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25. Much hath been, and may be, said to lessen men's dotage to the world; and yet one word I must add—

'Non quia vos nostra sperem prece posse moveri.'

Did ever any of you know what the peace of conscience and joy of the Holy Ghost is? Whiles that comfort and jubilation dwelt in your heart, I ask you how the world stood in your sight? Stood it not like a deformed witch, devils sucking on her breasts; a shoal of ugly sins sitting like screech-owls on her head; blood and massacres besmearing her face; lies, blasphemies, perjuries, waiting at her beck; extortion and oppression hanging on her arms; wickedness and wretchedness filling both her hands; the cries, groans, and imprecations of widows and orphans sounding in her ears; heaven thundering vengeance on her head; and the enlarged gates of the infernal pit yawning to entertain her.

Is this your paramour, O ye worldlings? Is this the beauty you hazard a soul to get? *O munde immunde*, evil-favoured world, that thou shouldst have so many lovers! *Ecce ruinosus est mundus, et sic amatur: quid si perfectus esset? Quid formosus faceret, quum deformis sic adoratur*,*—If the world being ruinous so pleaseth men, what would it do if it were sound and perfect? If it were fair and beauteous, how would we dote on it, that thus love it deformed? But how rare a man is he *qui nihil habet commune cum seculo*,†—that hath no communion with this world! that retires himself like the serpent, and doth not intricate his mind in these worldly snares; who does not watch with envy, nor travel with avarice, nor climb with ambition, nor sleep with lust under his pillow!

But for all this, *vincet amor mundi*. Money and wealth must be had, though men refuse no way on the left hand to get it. We may charge them *nummos propter Deum expendere*,—to lay out their wealth for God's sake; but they will *Deum propter nummos colere*,—worship God for their wealth's sake. We say, Let the world wait upon religion; they say, Let religion wait upon the world. You talk of heaven and a kingdom; but *tutius hoc cœlum, quod brevis arca tenet*. That heaven is surest, think they, that lies in their coffers. As those two giants bound Mars in chains, and then sacrificed to him; so men first coffer up their wealth, and then worship it. Or if they suffer it to pass their lock and key, yet they bind it in strong chains and charms of usury to a plentiful return.

'Enough' is a language they will never learn till they come to hell; where their bodies shall have enough earth, their souls enough fire. There are four adverbs of quantity: *parum, nihil, nimis, satis*,—little, nothing, too much, enough. The last, that is the best, is seldom found. The poor hath little; the beggar nothing; the rich too much; but *qui satis?*—who hath enough? Though they have too much, all is too little; nothing is enough. *Quid satis est si Roma parum?*—What is enough, if all Rome be too little? said the poet.‡ But the world itself could not be enough to such. *Æstuat infelix angusto limite mundi*. The covetous man may *habere quod voluit, nunquam quod vult*,—he may enjoy what he desired, never what he desireth; for his desires are infinite. So their abundance, which God gave them to help others out of distress, plungeth themselves into destruction: as Pharaoh's chariot drew his master into the sea. In the Massilian sea, saith Bernard, scarce one ship of four is cast away; but in the sea of this world, scarce one soul of four escapes.

* August.

† Amb. in Psal.

‡ Lucan.

4. Their next policy. When they swim, though their bodies be plunged down, yet they still keep their head above the water. And this lesson of their wisdom I would direct to the riotous, as I did the former to the covetous. Which vicious affections, though in themselves opposite,—for the covetous think *prodigum prodigium*, the spender a wonder; and the prodigal think *parcum porcum*, the niggard a hog,—yet either of them both may light his candle at the lamp of the serpent's wisdom, and learn a virtue they have not.

Though you swim in a full sea of delights, yet be sure to keep your heads up for fear of drowning. It is natural to most sensitive creatures to bear up their heads above the floods; yet in the stream of pleasure, foolish man commonly sinks. If I had authority, I would here bid gluttony and drunkenness stand forth, and hear themselves condemned by a serpent. If the belly have any ears, let it hear; and not suffer the head of the body, much less the head of the soul, reason, to be drowned in a puddle of riot. *Multa ferula, multos morbos*,—Many dishes, many diseases. Gluttony was ever a friend to *Æsculapius*. But for the throat's indulgence, Paracelsus, for all his mercury, had died a beggar. Intemperance lies most commonly sick on a down-bed; not on a pad of straw. 'Ah me's' and groans are soonest heard in rich men's houses. Gouts, pleurisies, dropsies, fevers, surfeits, are but the consequents of epicurism.

'Quæ nisi divitibus nequeunt contingere mensis.*'

A divine poet, morally—

'We seem ambitious God's whole work to undo :
Of nothing he made us, and we strive too
To bring ourselves to nothing back; and we
Do what we can to do 't as soon as he.'

We complain of the shortness of our lives, yet take the course to make them shorter.

Neither is the corporal head only thus intoxicate, and the senses drowned in these deluges of riot: but reason, the head of the soul, and grace, the head of reason, is overwhelmed. *Rarum convivium sine vitio, sine convitio*. Revellers and revilers are wonted companions. When the belly is made a Crassus, the tongue is turned into a Cæsar, and taxeth all the world. Great feasts are not without great danger. They serve not to suffice nature, but to nourish corruption. Luke ii. 42, Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem to the feast with Jesus; but there they lost Jesus. Twelve years they could keep him, but at a feast they lost him. So easily is Christ lost at a feast. And it is remarkable there, ver. 46, that in the temple they found him again. Jesus Christ is often lost at a banquet; but he is ever found in the temple. Jude speaks of some that 'feast without fear,' ver. 12. They suspect not the loss of Christ at a banquet. But Job feared his children at a feast: 'It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts,' chap. i. 5. Let us suspect these riotous meetings, lest we do not only swim but sink. Let us be like the deer, who are ever most fearful at their best feeding. Rom. xiii. 13, 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness,' that were to feast the world; 'not in chambering and wantonness,' that were to feast the flesh; 'not in strife and envying,' that were to feast the devil.

I know there be some that care not what be said against eating, so you

* Horat., lib. ii., satyr. 4.

meddle not with their drink; who cry out like that German, at a great tournament at court, when all the spectators were pleased: *Valeant ludi quibus nemo bibit*,—Farewell that sport where there is no drinking. I will say no more to them, but that the serpent's head keeps the upper hand of the waters, but drink gets the upper hand of their heads. How preposterous is this: *sobrii serpentes, ebrui homines*,—sober serpents and drunken men! The serpent is here brought to teach wisdom; and to be sober is to be wise. The philosopher so derives wisdom in his Ethics: *σωφροσύνη est quasi σώζουσα τὴν φρόνησιν*. Or as another, *quia σώζει τὴν φρένα*.

5. The fifth instance of their wisdom propounded to our imitation is vigilancy. They sleep little; and then least when they suspect the vicinity of danger. A precedent worth our following. 'See that ye walk circumspectly; not as fools, but as wise,' Eph. v. 15. Carry your eyes in your heads: 'The wise man's eyes are in his head,' Eccles. ii. 14; not like those lamiae, in a box. Nor like a hoodwinked prince, that is not suffered to see but through his flatterers' spectacles. Be watchful, saith our Saviour: 'You know not what hour your Master will come.' 1 Pet. v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'

Those are two main motives to watchfulness. First, our landlord is ready to come for his rent. Secondly, our enemy is ready to assault our fort. And let me add, the tenement we dwell in is so weak and ruinous, that it is ever and anon ready to drop down about our ears. He that dwells in a rotten ruinous house dares scarce sleep in a tempestuous night. Our bodies are earthly, decayed, or at least decaying tabernacles; every little disease, like a storm, totters us. They were indeed at first strong cities; but we then by sin made them forts of rebels. Whereupon our offended liege sent his sergeant, Death, to arrest us of high treason. And though for his mercies' sake in Christ he pardoned our sins, yet he suffers us no more to have such strong houses; but lets us dwell in thatched cottages, paper walls, mortal bodies.

Have we not then cause to watch, lest our house, whose 'foundation is in the dust,' Job iv. 19, fall, and 'the fall thereof be great?' Matt. vii. 27. Shall we still continue *sine metu*, perhaps *sine motu dormitantes*? It is a fashion in the world to let leases for three lives: as a divine poet sweetly—

'So short is life, that every tenant strives
In a torn house or field to have three lives.'

But God lets none for more than one life: and this expired, there is no hope to renew the lease. He suffers a man sometimes to dwell in his tenement 'threescore and ten years,' sometimes 'fourscore,' Ps. xc. 10; till the house be ready to drop down, like mellow fruit. But he secures none for a month, for a moment. Other farmers know the date of their leases, and expiration of the years; man is merely a tenant at will, and is thrust out often *sedibus, cædibus*, at less than an hour's warning.

We have then cause to watch. 'I sleep, but my heart waketh,' saith the church, Cant. v. 2. If temptation do take us napping, yet let our hearts wake. *Simon, dormis?*—'Sleepest thou, Peter?' Mark xiv. 37. Indeed there is a time for all things; and sometimes sleep and rest is *dabile* and *laudabile*, necessary and profitable. But now Simon, when thy Lord is ready to be given up into the hands of his enemies, when the hour and power of darkness is instant, when the great work of salvation is to be wrought, 'Simon, sleepest thou?' Thou that hast promised to suffer with me, canst thou not watch with me? *Quomodo morieris, qui spectare et expectare*

non potes? Beloved, let us all watch; for that Jesus, who was then, when Peter slept, ready to suffer, is now, though we all sleep, ready to judge quick and dead.

6. The last general point of wisdom we will learn from them is this: as they once a year slip off their old coat and renew themselves, so let us cast off the old man, and 'the garment spotted of the flesh,' Jude 13,—more speckled with lusts than the skin of any serpent,—and 'be renewed in our mind, to serve God in the holiness of truth,' Eph. iv. 24.

The Grecians have a fabulous reason of this renovation of serpents. Once mankind strove earnestly with the gods, by supplication, for perpetual youth. It was granted, and the rich treasure being lapped up, was laid upon an ass to be carried among men. The silly beast being sore thirsty, came to a fountain to drink: the keeper of this fountain was a serpent, who would not suffer the ass to drink unless he would give him his burden. The ass, both ready to faint for thirst, and willing to be lighted of his load, condescended. Hereby the serpent got from man perpetual youth. Indeed the serpent changeth his age for youth, and man his youth for age. And the ass, for his punishment, is more tormented with thirst than any other beast. The serpent may thus get the start of a man for this world; but when he dies, he dies for ever; life never returns. But we shall put off, not the skin, but this mortal body; and so be clothed with immortality and eternal life above: we shall be young again in heaven.

'Only death adds t' our strength: nor are we grown
In stature to be men, till we are none.'

Let this answer the poet:—

'Anquibus exiitur tenui cum pelle vetustas:
Cur nos angusta conditione sumus?'

Why do serpents repair themselves, and man decay? The answer is easy and comfortable: when there shall be new heavens and new earth, we shall have new bodies. They have here new bodies, and we old bodies: but there we shall have new bodies when they are no bodies.

But to our purpose. They write that the serpent gets him to some narrow passage, as between two sticks, and so slips off his skin. And this is called *spolium serpentis* or *vernatio serpentis*. If we would cast off our old coat, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts, we must pass through a 'narrow gate,' Matt. vii. 13, as it were two trees, faith and repentance. Heaven is called 'new Jerusalem,' Rev. xxi.; you cannot creep through those new doors with your old sins on your backs. Be no Gibeonites: God will not be cozened with your old garments. Put them off, saith Paul; put them off, and cast them away; they are not worthy mending. None are made of Satan's slaves God's sons, but they must put off their old livery, which they wore in the devil's service, the cognisance of Mammon. 'Let him that is in Christ be a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17. 'I saw,' saith St John, *novum caelum*, &c., 'a new heaven and new earth.' For whom provided? For new creatures.

Envy this, ye worldlings, but strive not in your lower pomps to equal it. Could you change robes with Solomon, and dominions with Alexander, you could not match it. But quake at your doom, ye wicked: 'Tophet is ordained of old,' Isa. xxx. 33: old hell for old sinners. But which way

* Tibullus.

might a man turn his eyes to behold his renovation? *Nil novi video, nil novi audio.* The hand is old, it extorts; the tongue is old, it swears. Our usuries are still on foot to hunt the poor, our gluttonies look not leaner, our drunkenness is thirsty still, our security is not waked. Old idols are in our inward and better temples. Our iniquities are so old and ripe, that they are not only *albæ ad messem*, white to the harvest; but even *siccæ ad ignem*, dry for the fire.

Not only serpents, but divers other creatures, have their turns of renewing. The eagle reneweth her bill, saith the prophet; our grandmother earth becomes new, and to all her vegetative children the spring gives a renovation. Only we her ungracious sons remain old still. But how shall we expect hereafter new glorified bodies, unless we will have here new sanctified souls? 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God,' Gal. vi. 15, 16.

I have taught you, according to my poor meditation, some wisdom from the serpent. Augustine gives six or seven other instances, worthy your observation and imitation, which I must pass over in silence. The *cohibition* challengeth some piece of my discourse; for I dare not give you the reins, and let you go without the curb. And yet I shall hold you a little longer from it; for as I have shewed you some good in serpents, that you may follow it, so I must shew you some evil in them, that you may eschew it. The vicious and obnoxious affections of serpents have more followers than their virtues. These instances are of the same number with the former.

1. The serpent, though creeping in the dust, hath a lofty spirit; reaching not only at men, but even at the birds of the air. And here is the ambitious man's emblem. He was bred out of the dust, yet he catcheth at lordships and honours; ransacks the city, forages the country, scours it through the church; but his errand is to the court. He is the maggot of pride, begot out of corruption; and looks in an office as the ape did when he had got on the robes of a senator.

2. Their flattery or treachery: they embrace, whiles they sting. They lie in the green grass, and under sweet flowers, that they may wound the suspectless passenger. Here I will couple the serpent with the flatterer—a human beast, and of the two the most dangerous. And that fitly; for they write of a serpent whose sting hath such force that it makes a man die laughing. So the flatterer tickles a man to death. Therefore his tears are called *crocodili lacrymæ*, the crocodile's tears. When he weeps, he wounds. Every frown he makes gives his patron a vomit, and every caudle of commendation a purge. His church is the kitchen, his tongue is his caterer, his young lord his god, whom at once he worships and worries. When he hath gotten a lease, he doth no longer fear his master; nay more, he fears not God.

3. Their ingratitude: they kill those that nourished them. And here I rank with serpents those prodigies of nature, unthankful persons. Seneca says they are worse. *Venenum quod serpentes in alienam perniciem proferrunt, sine sua continent. Non ita vitium ingratitudeinis continentur*.*—The poison which a serpent casts out to the danger of another, he retains without his own: but the voice of ingratitude cannot be so smothered. Let us hate this sin, not only for others' sake, but most for our own.

4. Their voracity: they kill more than they can eat. And here they would be commended to the engrossers, who hoard more than they can spend,

* Sen., epist. 48.

that the poor might starve for lack of bread. Such a man (if he be not rather a serpent, a devil, than man) makes his almanac his Bible; if it prognosticate rain on Swithin's Day, he loves and believes it beyond the Scripture. Nothing in the whole Bible pleaseth him but the story of Pharaoh's dream, where the seven lean kine did eat up the seven fat ones. He could wish that dream to be true every year, so he might have grain enough to sell. He cries out in his heart for a dear year, and yet he is never without a dear year in his belly. Solomon says, 'The people shall curse him,' and I am sure God will not bless him; but he fears neither of these so much as a cheap year.

5. Their hostility and murderous minds: they destroy all to multiply their own kind. And for this I will bring the depopulator to shake hands with serpents. For he cannot abide neighbours. If any man dwells in the town besides himself, how should he do for elbow-room? There are too many of these serpents in England. I would they were all exiled to the wilderness, where they might have room enough, and none to trouble them, except of their own generation—serpents. They complain eagerly against our negligence in discovering new parts of the world; but their meaning is to rid this land of inhabitants. They have done their best, or rather their worst: whenas in my memory from one town in one day were driven out above threescore souls,—harbourless, succourless, exposed to the bleak air and unmerciful world,—besides those that could provide for themselves.* But the Lord of heaven sees this: the clamours of many poor debtors in the dungeon, of many poor labourers in the field, of many poor neighbours crying and dying in the streets, have entered the ears of the Lord of hosts, and he will judge it. 'Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless,' Ps. x. 14.

6. Lastly, their enmity against man, whom they should reverence: which we sorely found, and cannot but think of, *quoties meminimus illius incauspicati pomi*,—as often as we remember that unlucky apple. Ælianus and Pliny report, that when a serpent hath killed a man, he can never more cover himself in the earth, but wanders up and down like a forlorn thing; the earth disdaining to receive into her bowels a man-murderer. The male doth not acknowledge the female, nor the female the male, that hath done such a deed. Since, therefore, they rebel against man whom they should honour, let me yoke with them traitors, Seminaries, and renegades, that refuse allegiance to their lieges and sovereigns. Will they say a prince may lose *jus regni*, the right of his kingdom, *per injustitiam regnandi*, by reigning with injustice and cruelty; and so they are absolved of their obedience? But how haps it that the Scripture never knew this distinction? Saul, though guilty of all sins against the first table, yet *ex solo indelebili unctionis caractere*, might not be deposed; but David calls him *Christum Domini*,—the Lord's anointed. If the prince be an offender, must they punish? Who gave them that authority? No, *sufficit ei in poenam, quod Deum expectet ultorem*,—It is enough for him that he look for God to be his judge. Oh, but when the Pope's excommunication thunders, it is no sin to decrown kings. So superstitiously they follow the Pope, that they forsake Christ, and will not give Cæsar his due. They are the firebrands and bustuaries of kingdoms; serpents hidden in ladies' and gentlewomen's chambers; in a word, long spoons for traitors to feed with the devil.

* The author of that cruel deed became afterwards the author of his own death, and willfully killed himself.

You see also now *quid non*. There is poison in serpents now told you, leave that; there is wisdom to be learned from serpents before shewed you, study that. Every vice you nourish is a venomous stinging serpent in your own bosoms. If you will have hope of heaven, expel those serpents. I have read of a contention between Scotland and Ireland about a little island, either challenging it for theirs. It was put to the decision of a Frenchman, who caused to be put into the island living serpents, arbitrating it thus: that if those serpents lived and prospered there, the ground was Scotland's; if they died, Ireland's.* If those serpentine sins, lusts, and lewdness live and thrive in your hearts, Satan will challenge you for his dominion; if they perish and die through mortification, and by reason of the pure air of God's Holy Spirit in you, the Lord seals you up for his own inheritance.

II. I have given you the reins at large: let me give but one pull at the curb, and you shall go. The cohibition is, 'Be harmless as doves.' In doves there be some things to be eschewed, many things to be commended, one thing to be followed. The dove is a timorous and faint-hearted creature: 'Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart,' Hosea vii. 11. Be ye not so. In doves there are many things commendable; but I will but name them, regarding the limits of both my text and time.

1. Beauty. By that name Christ praiseth the beauty of his spouse: 'Thou art fair, my love, my dove,' &c. 'Thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks,' Cant. iv. 1. And the church praiseth her Saviour: 'His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milk, and fitly set,' chap. v. 12, i. 15; as a precious stone in the foil of a ring. A white dove is a pleasant sight, but not like a white soul.

2. Chastity. *Nescit adulterii flammam intemerata columba*. The dove knows not the luxurious pollution of an adulterate bed. Who ever saw dove sick of that lustful disease? Happy body, that hath such continency! and blessed soul, which shall be 'presented a pure virgin to Jesus Christ!' 2 Cor. xi. 2. They are virgins, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, Rev. xiv. 4.

3. Fruitfulness. Most months in the year they bring forth young. The faithful are in this respect doves; for faith is ever pregnant of good works, travails with them, and on all occasions brings them forth.

4. Amity. They love their own mates; not changing till death give one of them a bill of divorce. *Gemit turtur*: the turtle groans when he hath lost his mate. Nature teacheth them, what reason above nature, and grace above reason, teacheth us, to 'rejoice with the wives of our youth.'

5. Unity. They live, feed, fly by companies. Many of them can agree quietly in one house: even teaching us 'how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,' Ps. cxxxiii. 1; that as we have 'one hope,' Eph. iv. 4, so have 'one heart,' Acts iv. 32. Therefore the Holy Ghost came down 'in the likeness of a dove,' Matt. iii. 16, of all birds; and it was the dove that would not leave Noah's ark, Gen. viii. 9.

But these are but circumstances; my centre is, their innocence. *Columba simplex est animal, felle caret, rostro non lædit*.† Other fowls have their talons and beaks, whereby they gripe and devour, like usurers and oppressors in a commonwealth. The dove hath no such weapon to use, no such heart to use it. They write that she hath no gall, and so free from the bitterness of anger. *Talem columbam audivimus, non talem hominem*. We have heard of such a dove, not of such a man. Who can say, he hath innocent

* For an account of this and other legends respecting the Isle of Man, see Wilson and Geikie's 'Life of Professor Edward Forbes.'—Ed. † Bern. in die Purificat.

hands and a simple heart? Indeed none perfectly in God's sight; yet some have had, and may have this in part, by the witness of their own consciences. Samuel could challenge the Israelites to accuse him: 'Whose ox have I taken? whom have I defrauded? of whose hand have I received any bribe?' 1 Sam. xii. 3. And Job sweetly: 'My heart shall not condemn me for my days. If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, let it be broken. If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,' Job xxxi. 21, &c. For that is true innocence, saith Augustine, *quæ nec inimico nocet*,—that hurts not our very enemy. 'If my land cry against me, or the furrows thereof complain, let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley.' How few amongst us dare thus plead. So David: 'O Lord, thou knowest mine innocence.'

O blessed testimony! This is *murus æneus*, a wall of brass about a man. *In malis sperare bonum, nisi innocens, nemo potest*,—To hope for good in the midst of evils, no man can but the innocent. He goes fearless of danger, though not secure. *Impavidum ferient ruinae. Nec suspectus est pati, quod se non meminit fecisse*,—He cannot look to suffer that wrong which he knows he hath not done. Innocence, saith Chrysostom, is free in servitude, safe in danger, joyful in bonds. *Cum humiliatur, erigitur: cum pugnat, vincit: cum occiditur, coronatur*,—When it is cast down, it is raised up; when it fights, it conquers; when it is killed it is crowned.

This is that harmlessness which must be joined with the serpent's wisdom. So Paul to his Romans: 'I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil,' Rom. xvi. 19. This is an excellent mixture, saith Gregory: * *ut simplicitatem columbæ astutia serpentis instrueret: ut serpentis astutiam simplicitas columbæ temperaret*,—that the wisdom of the serpent might instruct the simplicity of the dove; that the dove's simplicity might temper the serpent's policy. So Bede on the first of Job. Job is said to be simple and upright: simple in innocency, upright in discreet equity. *Simplex quia alios non lædit, rectus quia se ab aliis non corrumpi permittit*,—Simple, in that he did not hurt others; upright, in that he suffered not himself to be corrupted by others. *Non multum distat in vitio, aut decipere, aut decipi posse*.† The one is weakness, the other wickedness.

This is that grace to which the gates of heaven stand open, innocence. But alas! where shall the robbers and workers of violence appear?

What shall become of the oppressor? No creature in heaven or earth shall testify his innocency. But the sighs, cries, and groans of undone parents, of beggared widows and orphans, shall witness the contrary. All his money, like hempseed, is sowed with curses; and every obligation is written on earth with ink and blood, and in hell with blood and fire.

What shall become of the encloser of commons? Who shall plead his innocency? Hedges, ditches, fields, and towns; the weeping of the poor, the very lowings of beasts, shall witness against him.

Where shall fraud, cozenage, racking of rents, injury, perjury, mischief appear? You may conceal your craft from the eyes of man,—defraud the minister, beguile your neighbour, impoverish the commonwealth, unperceived, unpunished,—but know that the Lord will not hold you innocent.

I conclude: Make you the picture of innocency, and hang it in your houses; but especially draw it in the table of your hearts. Let it be a virgin fair and lovely, without any spot of wrong to blemish her beauty. Let her garments be white as snow, and yet not so white as her conscience. Let the tears of compassion drop from her eyes, and an angel holding a

* In locum.

† Jerom. ad Rust.

bottle to catch them. Let her weep, not so much for her own afflictions, as for the wickedness of her afflicters. Let the ways be milk where she sets her foot, and let not the earth complain of her pressure. Let the sun offer her his beams ; the clouds their rain, the ground her fruits, every creature his virtue. Let the poor bless her ; yea, let her very enemies be forced to praise her. Let the world be summoned to accuse her of wrong, and let none be found to witness it. Let peace lie in her lap, and integrity between her breasts. Let religion kiss her lips, and all laws reverence her ; patience possess her heart, and humility sit in her eyes. Let all Christians make her the precedent of their lives ; and study the doctrine that her mouth teacheth. Let the angels of heaven be her guardians ; and the mercy of God a shield of defence unto her. Let her tread upon injury, and stamp the devil and violence under her feet. Let her greatest adversaries, oppression and hypocrisy, fly from her presence. Let rapine, malice, extortion, depopulation, fraud, and wrong, be as far removed from her as hell is from heaven. Let the hand of mercy dry her eyes, and wipe away her tears. Let those glorious spirits lift her up to the place of rest. Let heaven add to her beauty, immortality set her in a throne of joy, and eternity crown her with glory : whither may all her children follow her, through the blood and merits of that innocent Lamb, Jesus Christ. Amen.