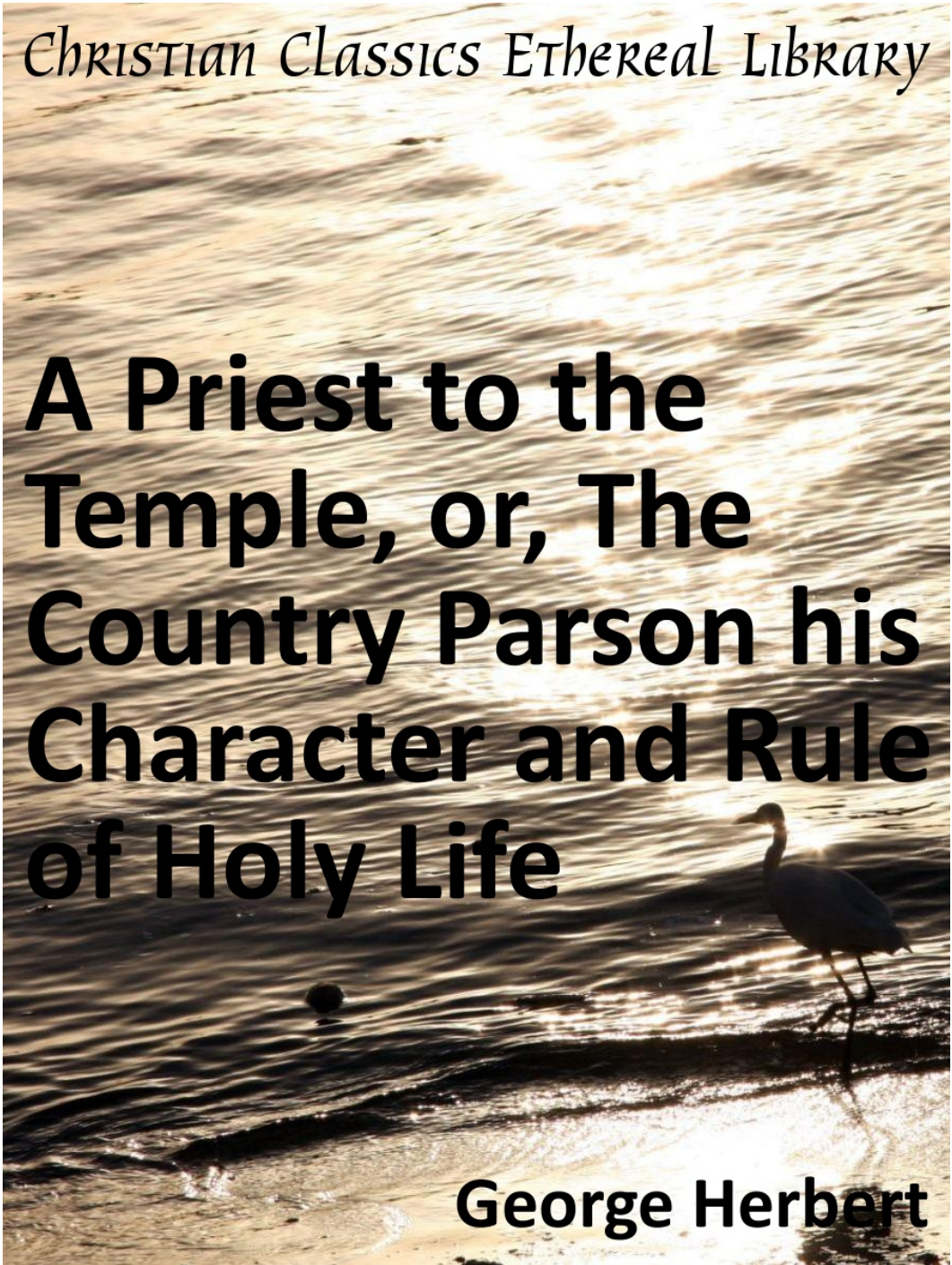


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**A Priest to the
Temple, or, The
Country Parson his
Character and Rule
of Holy Life**

George Herbert





A Priest to the Temple, or, The Country Parson his Character and Rule of Holy Life

Author(s): Herbert, George (1593-1633)

Publisher: Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library

Description: George Herbert was one of England's more famous 17th century poets; like John Donne, his contemporary, he also served as an Anglican priest. Contemporary readers may recognize him as the author of the well-known poem, "Easter Wings." *A Priest to the Temple*, on the other hand, is a prose discourse designed to offer practical advice to Anglican clergy. As well as covering such topics as prayer, preaching, and the administration of the sacraments, Herbert counsels his pastoral peers on everyday matters of household governance, dancing, food, and farming. In every area of his life, Herbert wrote, church leaders should "serve for lights even of Heavenly Truths."

Kathleen O'Bannon
CCEL Staff

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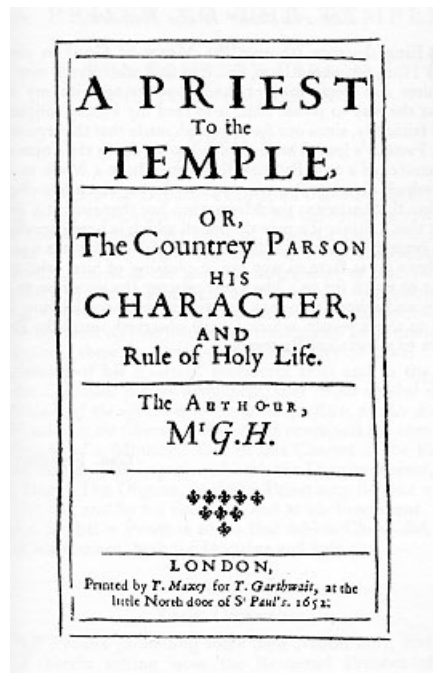
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The Authour to the Reader.

BEing desirous (thorow the Mercy of GOD) to please Him, for whom I am, and live, and who giveth mee my Desires and Performances; and considering with my self, That the way to please him, is to feed my Flocke diligently and faithfully, since our Saviour hath made that the argument of a Pastour's love, I have resolved to set down the Form and Character of a true Pastour, that I may have a Mark to aim at: which also I will set as high as I can, since hee shoots higher that threatens the Moon, then hee that aims at a Tree. Not that I think, if a man do not all which is here expressed, hee presently sinns, and displeases God, but that it is a good strife to go as farre as wee can in pleasing of him, who hath done so much for us. The Lord prosper the intention to my selfe, and others, who may not despise my poor labours, but add to those points, which I have observed, untill the Book grow to a compleat Pastorall.

1632

GEO. HERBERT.

**A PRIEST TO THE TEMPLE
OR,
THE COUNTRY PARSON
HIS CHARACTER, &c.**

CHAP. I. *Of a Pastor.*

A Pastor is the Deputy of Christ for the reducing of Man to the Obedience of God. This definition is evident, and contains the direct steps of Pastorall Duty and Aucturity. For first, Man fell from God by disobedience. Secondly, Christ is the glorious instrument of God for the revoking of Man. Thirdly, Christ being not to continue on earth, but after hee had fulfilled the work of Reconciliation, to be received up into heaven, he constituted Deputies in his place, and these are Priests. And therefore St. *Paul* in the beginning of his Epistles, professeth this: and in the first [v.24] to the *Colossians* plainly avoucheth, that he *fills up that which is behinde of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his Bodie's sake, which is the Church.* Wherein is contained the complete definition of a Minister. Out of this Chartre of the Priesthood may be plainly gathered both the Dignity thereof, and the Duty: The Dignity, in that a Priest may do that which Christ did, and by his aucturity, and as his Vicegerent. The Duty, in that a Priest is to do that which Christ did, and after his manner, both for Doctrine and Life.

CHAP. II. *Their Diversities.*

OF Pastors (intending mine own Nation only, and also therein setting aside the Reverend Prelates of the Church, to whom this discourse ariseth not) some live in the Universities, some in Noble houses, some in Parishes residing on their Cures. Of those that live in the Universities, some live there in office, whose rule is that of the Apostle; *Rom. 12.6. Having gifts differing, according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministring, or he that teacheth, on teaching, &c. he that ruleth, let him do it with diligence, &c.* Some in a preparatory way, whose aim and labour must be not only to get knowledge, but to subdue and mortifie all lusts and affections: and not to think, that when they have read the Fathers, or Schoolmen, a Minister is made, and the thing done. The greatest and hardest preparation is within: For, *Unto the ungodly, saith God, Why dost thou preach my Laws, and takest my Covenant in thy mouth? Psal. 50.16.* Those that live in Noble Houses are called Chaplains, whose duty and obligation being the same to the Houses they live in, as a Parsons to his Parish, in describing the one (which is indeed the bent of my Discourse) the other will be manifest. Let not Chaplains think themselves so free, as *many of them do*, and because they have different Names, think their Office different. Doubtlesse they are Parsons of the families they live in, and are entertained to that end, either by an open, or implicite Covenant. Before they are in Orders, they may be received for Companions, or discoursers; but after a man is once Minister, he cannot agree to come into any house, where he shall not exercise what he is, unlesse he forsake his plough, and look back. Wherefore they are not to be over-submissive, and base, but to keep up with the Lord and Lady of the house, and to preserve a boldness with them and all, even so farre as reprove to their very face, when occasion calts, but seasonably and discreetly. They who do not thus, while they remember their earthly Lord, do much forget their heavenly; they wrong the Priesthood, neglect their duty, and shall be so farre from that which they seek with their over-submissiveness, and cringings, that they shall ever be despised. They who for the hope of promotion neglect any necessary admonition, or reprove, Sell (with *Judas*) their Lord and Master.

CHAP. III. *The Parsons Life.*

THE Country Parson is exceeding exact in his Life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his wayes. And because the two highest points of Life, wherein a Christian is most seen, are Patience, and Mortification; Patience in regard of afflictions, Mortification in regard of lusts and affections, and the stupifying and deading of all the clamorous powers of the soul, therefore he hath throughly studied these, that he may be an absolute Master and commander of himself, for all the purposes which God hath ordained him. Yet in these points he labours most in those things which are most apt to scandalize his Parish. And first, because Country people live hardly, and therefore as feeling their own sweat, and consequently knowing the price of mony, are offended much with any, who by hard usage increase their travell, the Country Parson is very circumspect in avoiding all coveteousnesse, neither being greedy to get, nor niggardly to keep, nor troubled to lose any worldly wealth; but in all his words and actions slighting, and disesteeming it, even to a wondring, that the world should so much value wealth, which in the day of wrath hath not one dramme of comfort for us. Secondly, because Luxury is a very visible sinne, the Parson is very carefull to avoid all the kinds thereof, but especially that of drinking, because it is the most popular vice; into which if he come, *he prostitutes himself* both to shame, and sin, and by having *fellowship, with the unfruitfull works of darknesse*, he disableth himself of authority *to reprove them*: For sins make all equall, whom they finde together; and then they are worst, who ought to be best. Neither is it for the servant of Christ to haunt Innes, or Tavernes, or Ale-houses, *to the dishonour of his person and office*. The Parson doth not so, but orders his Life in such a fashion, that when death takes him, as the Jewes and Judas did Christ, he may say as He did, *I sate daily with you teaching in the Temple*. Thirdly, because Country people (as indeed all honest men) do much esteem their word, it being the Life of buying, and selling, and dealing in the world; therefore the Parson is very strict in keeping his word, though it be to his own hinderance, as knowing, that if he be not so, he wil quickly be discovered, and disregarded: neither will they beleeve him in the pulpit, whom they cannot trust in his Conversation. As for oaths, and apparell, the disorders thereof are also very manifest. The Parsons yea is yea, and nay nay; and his apparrell plaine, but reverend, and clean, without spots, or dust, or smell; the purity of his mind breaking out, and dilating it selfe even to his body, cloaths, and habitation.

CHAP. IIII. *The Parsons Knowledge.*

THE Countrey Parson is full of all knowledg. They say, it is an ill Mason that refuseth any stone: and there is no knowledg, but, in a skilfull hand, serves either positively as it is, or else to illustrate some other knowledge. He condescends even to the knowledge of tillage, and pastorage, and makes great use of them in teaching, because people by what they understand, are best led to what they understand not. But the chief and top of his knowledge consists in the book of books, the storehouse and magazene of life and comfort, the holy Scriptures. There he sucks, and lives. In the Scriptures hee findes four things; Precepts for life, Doctrines for knowledge, Examples for illustration, and Promises for comfort: These he hath digested severally. But for the understanding of these; the means he useth are first, a holy Life, remembring what his Master saith) that *if any do Gods will, he shall know of the Doctrine, John 7[:17]*. and assuring himself, that wicked men, however learned, do not know the Scriptures, because they feel them not, and because they are not understood but with the same Spirit that writ them. The second means is prayer, which if it be necessary even in temporall things, how much more in things of another world, where the well is deep, and we have nothing of our selves to draw with? Wherefore he ever begins the reading of the Scripture with some short inward ejaculation, as, *Lord open mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy Law. &c.* The third means is a diligent Collation of Scripture with Scripture. For all Truth being consonant to it self, and all being penn'd by one and the self-same Spirit, it cannot be, but that an industrious, and judicious comparing of place with place must be a singular help for the right understanding of the Scriptures. To this may be added the consideration of any text with the coherence thereof, touching what goes before, and what follows after, as also the scope of the Holy Ghost. When the Apostles would have called down fire from Heaven, they were reprov'd, as ignorant of what spirit they were. For the Law required one thing, and the Gospel another: yet as diverse, not as repugnant: therefore the spirit of both is to be considered, and weigh'd. The fourth means are Commenters and Fathers, who have handled the places controverted, which the Parson by no means refuseth. As he doth not so study others, as to neglect the grace of God in himself, and what the Holy Spirit teacheth him; so doth he assure himself, that God in all ages hath had his servants, to whom he hath revealed his Truth, as well as to him; and that as one Countrey doth not bear all things, that there may be a Commerce; so neither hath God opened, or will open all to one, that there may be a traffick in knowledg between the servants of God, for the planting both of love, and humility. Wherefore he hath one Comment at least upon every book of Scripture, and ploughing with this, and his own meditations, he enters into the secrets of God treasured in the holy Scripture.

CHAP. V. *The Parsons Accessary Knowledges.*

THE Countrey Parson hath read the Fathers also, and the Schoolmen, and the later Writers, or a good prortion of all, out of all which he hath compiled a book, and body of Divinity, which is the storehouse of his Sermons, and which he preacheth all his Life; but diversly clothed, illustrated, and enlarged. For though the world is full of such composures, yet every mans own is fittest, readiest, and most savory to him. Besides, this being to be done in his younger and preparatory times, it is an honest joy ever after to looke upon his well spent houres. This Body he made by way of expounding the Church Catechisme, to which all divinity may easily be reduced. For it being indifferent in it selfe to choose any Method, that is best to be chosen, of which there is likeliest to be most use. Now Catechizing being a work of singular, and admirable benefit to the Church of God, and a thing required under Canonically obedience, the expounding of our Catechisme must needs be the most usefull forme. Yet hath the Parson, besides this laborious work, a slighter forme of Catechizing, fitter for country people; according as his audience is, so he useth one, or other; or sometimes both, if his audience be intermixed. He greatly esteemes also of cases of conscience, wherein he is much versed. And indeed, herein is the greatest ability of a Parson to lead his people exactly in the wayes of Truth, so that they neither decline to the right hand, nor to the left. Neither let any think this a slight thing. For every one hath not digested, when it is a sin to take something for mony lent, or when not; when it is a fault to discover anothers fault, or when not; *when the affections of the soul in desiring and procuring increase of means, or honour, be a sin of covetousnes or ambition, and when not, when the appetites of the body in eating, drinking, sleep, and the pleasure that comes with sleep, be sins of gluttony, drunkenness, sloath, lust, and when not,* and so in many circumstances of actions. Now if a shepherd know not which grass will bane, or which not, how is he fit to be a shepherd? Wherefore the Parson hath throughly canvassed al the particulars of humane actions, at least all those which he observeth are most incident to his Parish.

CHAP. VI. *The Parson praying.*

THE Countrey Parson, when he is to read divine services, composeth himselfe to all possible reverence; lifting up his heart and hands, and eyes, and using all other gestures which may expresse a hearty, and unfeyned devotion. This he doth, first, as being truly touched and amazed with the Majesty of God, before whom he then presents himself; yet not as himself alone, but as presenting with himself the whole Congregation, whose sins he then beares, and brings with his own to the heavenly altar to be bathed, and washed in the sacred Laver of Christs blood. Secondly, as this is the true reason of his inward feare, so he is content to expresse this outwardly to the utmost of his power; that being first affected himself, hee may affect also his people, knowing that no Sermon moves them so much to a reverence, which they forget againe, when they come to pray, as a devout behaviour in the very act of praying. Accordingly his voyce is humble, his words treatable, and slow; yet not so slow neither, to let the fervency of the supplicant hang and dy between speaking, but with a grave liveliness, between fear and zeal, pausing yet pressing, he performes his duty. Besides his example, he having often instructed his people how to carry themselves in divine service, exacts of them all possible reverence, by no means enduring either talking, or sleeping, or gazing, or leaning, or halfe-kneeling, or any undutifull behaviour in them, but causing them, when they sit, or stand, or kneel, to do all in a strait, and steady posture, as attending to what is done in the Church, and every one, man, and child, answering aloud both Amen, and all other answers, which are on the Clerks and peoples part to answer; which answers also are to be done not in a hudling, or slubbering fashion, gaping, or scratching the head, or spitting even in he midst of their answer, but gently and pausably, thinking what they say; so that while they answer, *As it was in the beginning, &c.* they meditate as they speak, that God hath ever had his people, that have glorified him as wel as now, and that he shall have so for ever. And the like in other answers. This is that which the Apostle cals a reasonable service, [Rom. 12 \[:1\]](#). when we speak not as Parrats, without reason, or offer up such sacrifices as they did of old, which was of beasts devoyd of reason; but when we use our reason, and apply our powers to the service of him, that gives them. If there be any of the gentry or nobility of the Parish, who somtimes make it a piece of state not to come at the beginning of service with their poor neighbours, but at mid-prayers, both to their own loss, and of theirs also who gaze upon them when they come in, and neglect the present service of God, he by no means suffers it, but after divers gentle admonitions, if they persevere, he causes them to be presented: or if the poor Church-wardens be affrighted with their greatness, notwithstanding his instruction that they ought not to be so, but even to let the world sinke, so they do their duty; he presents them himself, only protesting to them, that not any ill will draws him to it, but the debt and obligation of his calling, being to obey God rather than men.

CHAP. VII. *The Parson preaching.*

THE Countrey Parson preacheth constantly, the pulpit is his joy and his throne: if he at any time intermit, it is either for want of health, or against some great Festivall, that he may the better celebrate it, or for the variety of the hearers, that he may be heard at his returne more attentively. When he intermits, he is ever very well supplied by some able man who treads in his steps, and will not throw down what he hath built; whom also he intreats to press some point, that he himself hath often urged with no great success, that so in the mouth of two or three witnesses the truth may be more established. When he preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art, both by earnestnesse of speech, it being naturall to men to think, that where is much earnestness, there is somewhat worth hearing; and by a diligent, and busy cast of his eye on his auditors, with letting them know, that he observes who marks, and who not; and with particularizing of his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor, and now to the rich. This is for you, and This is for you; for particulars ever touch, and awake more then generalls. Herein also he serves himselfe of the judgements of God, as of those of antient times, so especially of the late ones; and those most, which are nearest to his Parish; for people are very attentive at such discourses, and think it behoves them to be so, when God is so neer them, and even over their heads. Sometimes he tells them stories, and sayings of others, according as his text invites him; for them also men heed, and remember better then exhortations; which though earnest, yet often dy with the Sermon, especially with Countrey people; which are thick, and heavy, and hard to raise to a poynt of Zeal, and fervency, and need a mountaine of fire to kindle them; but stories and sayings they will well remember. He often tels them, that Sermons are dangerous things, that none goes out of Church as he came in, but either better, or worse; that none is careless before his Judg, and that the word of God shal judge us. By these and other means the Parson procures attention; but the character of his Sermon is Holiness; he is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy. A Character, that *Hermogenes*¹ never dream'd of, and therefore he could give no precepts thereof. But it is gained, first, by choosing texts of Devotion, not Controversie, moving and ravishing texts, whereof the Scriptures are full. Secondly, by dipping, and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts, before they come into our mouths, truly affecting, and cordially expressing all that we say; so that the auditors may plainly perceive that every word is hart-deep. Thirdly, by turning often, and making many Apostrophes to God, as, Oh Lord blesse my people, and teach them this point; or, Oh my Master, on whose errand I come, let me hold my peace, and do thou speak thy selfe; for thou art Love, and when thou teachest, all are Scholers. Some such irradiations scatteringly in the Sermon, carry great holiness in them. The Prophets are admirable in this. So *Isa. 64 [1]*. *Oh that thou would'st rent the Heavens, that thou wouldst come down, &c.*

1 Hermogenes = a disciple who deserted Paul. 2 Timothy 1:15

And [Jeremy² Chapt. 10 \[:23\]](#). after he had complained of the desolation of *Israel*, turnes to God suddenly, *Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, &c.* Fourthly, by frequent wishes of the peoples good, and joying therein, though he himself were with Saint *Paul* even sacrificed upon the service of their faith. For there is no greater sign of holinesse, then the procuring, and rejoycing in anothers good. And herein St *Paul* excelled in all his Epistles. How did he put the *Romans* in all his prayers? [Rom.1.9](#). And ceased not to give thanks for the *Ephesians*, [Eph. 1.16](#). And for the [II] *Corinthians*, [chap. 1.4](#). And for the *Philippians* made request with joy, [ch.1.4](#). And is in contention for them whither to live, or dy; be with them, or Christ, [verse 23](#). which, setting aside his care of his Flock, were a madnesse to doubt of. What an admirable Epistle is the second to the *Corinthians*? how full of affections? he joyes, and he is sorry, he grieves, and he gloryes, never was there such care of a flock expressed, save in the great shepherd of the fold, who first shed teares over *Jerusalem*, and afterwards blood. Therefore this care may be learn'd there, and then woven into Sermons, which will make them appear exceeding reverend, and holy. Lastly, by an often urging of the presence, and majesty of God, by these, or such like speeches. Oh let us all take heed what we do, God sees us, he sees whether I speak as I ought, or you hear as you ought, he sees hearts, as we see faces: he is among us; for if we be here, hee must be here, since we are here by him, and without him could not be here. Then turning the discourse to his Majesty, And he is a great God, and terrible, as great in mercy, so great in judgement: There are but two devouring elements, fire, and water, he hath both in him; *His voyce is as the sound of many waters*. [Revelations 1 \[:15\]](#). And he himselfe is *a consuming fire*, [Hebrews 12 \[:29\]](#). Such discourses shew very Holy. The Parsons Method in handling of a text consists of two parts; first, a plain and evident declaration of the meaning of the text; and secondly, some choyce Observations drawn out of the whole text, as it lyes entire, and unbroken in the Scripture it self. This he thinks naturall, and sweet, and grave. Whereas the other way of crumbling a text into small parts, as, the Person speaking, or spoken to, the subject, and object, and the like, hath neither in it sweetnesse, nor gravity, nor variety, since the words apart are not Scripture, but a dictionary, and may be considered alike in all the Scripture. The Parson exceeds not an hour in preaching, because all ages have thought that a competency, and he that profits not in that time, will lesse afterwards, the same affection which made him not profit before, making him then weary, and so he grows from not relishing, to loathing.

CHAP. VIII. *The Parson on Sundays.*

THE Country Parson, as soon as he awakes on Sunday morning, presently falls to work, and seems to himselfe so as a Market-man is, when the Market day comes, or a shopkeeper, when customers use to come in. His thoughts are full of making the best of the day, and contriving it to his best gaines. To this end, besides his ordinary prayers, he makes a peculiar one for a blessing on the exercises of the day, That nothing befall him unworthy of that Majesty before which he is to present himself, but that all may be done with reverence to his glory, and with edification to his flock, humbly beseeching his Master, that how or whenever he punish him, it be not in his Ministry: then he turnes to request for his people, that the Lord would be pleased to sanctifie them all, that they may come with holy hearts, and awfull mindes into the Congregation, and that the good God would pardon all those, who come with lesse prepared hearts then they ought. This done, he sets himself to the Consideration of the duties of the day, and if there be any extraordinary addition to the customary exercises, either from the time of the year, or from the State, or from God by a child born, or dead, or any other accident, he contrives how and in what manner to induce it to the best advantage. Afterwards when the hour calls, with his family attending him, he goes to Church, at his first entrance *humbly adoring, and worshipping the invisible majesty, and presence of Almighty God,* and blessing the people either openly, or to himselfe. Then having read divine Service twice fully, and preached in the morning, and catechized in the afternoone, he thinks he hath in some measure, according to poor, and fraile man, discharged the publick duties of the Congregation. The rest of the day he spends either in reconciling neighbours that are at variance, or in visiting the sick, or in exhortations to some of his flock by themselves, whom his Sermons cannot, or doe not reach. And every one is more awaked, when we come, and say, *Thou art the man.*³ This way he findes exceeding usefull, and winning; and these exhortations he cals his privy purse, even as Princes have theirs, besides their publick disbursments. At night he thinks it a very fit time, both sutable to the joy of the day, and without hinderance to publick duties, either to entertaine some of his neighbours, or to be entertained of them, where he takes occasion to discourse *of such things as are both profitable, and pleasant, and to raise up their mindes to apprehend Gods good blessing to our Church, and State; that order is kept in the one, and peace in the other, without is disturbance, or interruption of publick divine offices.* As he opened the day with prayer, so he closeth it, humbly beseeching the Almighty to pardon and accept our poor services, and to improve them, that we may grow therein, and that our feet may be like hindes feet ever climbing up higher, and higher unto him.

3 [2 Samuel 12:7](#) And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; The King James Version, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

CHAP. IX. *The Parsons state of Life.*

THE Country Parson considering that virginity is a higher state then Matrimony, and that the Ministry requires the best and highest things, is rather unmarried, then married. But yet as the temper of his body may be, or as the temper of his Parish may be, where he may have occasion to converse with women, and that among suspicious men, *and other like circumstances considered*, he is rather married then unmarried. Let him communicate the thing often by prayer unto God, and as his grace shall direct him, so let him proceed. If he be unmarried, and keepe house, he hath not a woman in his house, but findes opportunities of having his meat dress'd and other services done by men-servants at home, and his linnen washed abroad. If he be unmarried, and sojourne, he never talkes with any woman alone, but in the audience of others, and that seldom, and then also in a serious manner, never jestingly or sportfully. *He is very circumspect in all companyes, both of his behaviour, speech, and very looks, knowing himself to be both suspected, and envyed. If he stand steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart, that he will keep himself a virgin, he spends his dayes in fasting and prayer, and blesseth God for the gift of continency, knowing that it can no way be preserved, but only by those means, by which at first it was obtained. He therefore thinkes it not enough for him to observe the fasting dayes of the Church, and the dayly prayers enjoyned him by auctORITY, which he observeth out of humble conformity, and obedience, but adds to them, out of choyce and devotion, some other dayes for fasting, and hours for prayers; and by these hee keeps his body tame, serviceable, and health- full; and his soul fervent, active, young, and lusty as an eagle. He often readeth the Lives of the Primitive Monks, Hermits, and Virgins, and wondreth not so much at their patient suffering, and cheerfull dying under persecuting Emperours, (though that indeed be very admirable) as at their daily temperance, abstinence, watchings, and constant prayers, and mortifications in the times of peace and prosperity. To put on the profound humility, and the exact temperance of our Lord Jesus, with other exemplary vertues of that sort, and to keep them on in the sunshine, and noone of prosperity, he findeth to be as necessary, and as difficult at least, as to be cloathed with perfect patience, and Christian fortitude in the cold midnight stormes of persecution and adversity. He keepeth his watch and ward, night and day against the proper and peculiar temptations of his state of Life, which are principally these two Spirituall pride, and Impurity of heart: against these ghostly enemies he girdeth up his loynes, keepes the imagination from roving, puts on the whole Armour of God,⁴ and by the vertue of the shield of faith, he is not afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darknesse, [carnall impurity] nor of the sicknesse that destroyeth at noone day, [Ghostly pride and self-conceite.] Other temptations he hath, which, like mortall enemies, may sometimes disquiet him likewise; for the humane soule being bounded, and kept in, in her sensitive faculty, will runne out more or*

4 Ephesians 6:10-18

lesse in her intellectuall. Originall concupisence is such an active thing, by reason of continuall inward, or outward temptations, that it is ever attempting, or doing one mischief or other. Ambition, or untimely desire of promotion to an higher state, or place, under colour of accomodation, or necessary provision, is a common temptation to men of any eminency, especially being single men. Curiosity in prying into high speculative and unprofitable questions, is another great stumbling block to the holinesse of Scholars. These and many other spirituall wickednesses in high places doth the Parson fear, or experiment, or both; and that much more being single, then if. he were married; for then commonly the stream of temptations is turned another way, into Covetousnesse, Love of pleasure, or ease, or the like. If the Parson be unmarried, and means to continue so, he doth at least, as much as hath been said. If he be married, the choyce of his wife was made rather by his eare, then by his eye; his judgement, not his affection found out a fit wife for him, whose humble, and liberall disposition he preferred before beauty, riches, or honour. He knew that (the good instrument of God to bring women to heaven) a wise and loving husband could out of humility, produce any speciall grace of faith, patience, meeknesse, love, obedience, &c. and out of liberality, make her fruitfull in all good works. As hee is just in all things, so is he to his wife also, counting nothing so much his owne, as that he may be unjust unto it. Therefore he gives her respect both afore her servants, and others, and halfe at least of the government of the house, reserving so much of the affaires, as serve for a diversion for him; yet never so giving over the raines, but that he sometimes looks how things go, demanding an account, but not by the way of an account. And this must bee done the oftner, or the seldomer, according as hee is satisfied of his Wifes discretion.

CHAP. X. *The Parson in his house.*

THE Parson is very exact in the governing of his house, making it a copy and modell for his Parish. He knows the temper, and pulse of every person in his house, and accordingly either meets with their vices, or advanceth theirvertues. His wife is either religious, or night and day he is winning her to it. In stead of the qualities of the world, he requires onely three of her; first, a trayning up of her children and mayds in the fear of God, with prayers, and catechizing, and all religious duties. Secondly, a curing, and healing of all wounds and sores with her owne hands; which skill either she brought with her, or he takes care she shall learn it of some religious neighbour. Thirdly, a providing for her family in such sort, as that neither they want a competent sustentation, nor her husband be brought in debt. His children he first makes Christians, and then Commonwealths-men; the one he owes to his heavenly Country, the other to his earthly, having no title to either, except he do good to both. Therefore having seasoned them with all Piety, not only of words in praying, and reading; but in actions, in visiting other sick children, and tending their wounds, and sending his charity by them to the poor, and somtimes giving them a little mony to do it of themselves, that they get a delight in it, and enter favour with God, who weighs even childrens actions, [I King. 14. 12, 13.](#) He afterwards turnes his care to fit all their dispositions with some calling, not sparing the eldest, but giving him the prerogative of his Fathers profession, which happily for his other children he is not able to do. Yet in binding them prentices (in case he think fit to do so) he takes care not to put them into vain trades, and unbefitting the reverence of their Fathers calling, such as are tavernes for men, and lace-making for women; because those trades, for the most part, serve but the vices and vanities of the world, which he is to deny, and not augment. However, he resolves with himself never to omit any present good deed of charity, in consideration of providing a stock for his children; but assures himselfe, that mony thus lent to God, is placed surer for his childrens advantage, then if it were given to the Chamber of *London*. Good deeds, and good breeding, are his two great stocks for his children; if God give any thing above those, and not spent in them, he blesseth God, and lays it out as he sees cause. His servants are all religious, and were it not his duty to have them so, it were his profit, for none are so well served, as by religious servants, both because they do best, and because what they do, is blessed, and prospers. After religion, he teacheth them, that three things make a compleate servant, Truth, and Diligence, and Neatnesse, or Cleanliness. Those that can read, are allowed times for it, and those that cannot, are taught; for all in his house are either teachers or learners, or both, so that his family is a Schoole of Religion, and they all account, that to teach the ignorant is the greatest almes. Even the wals are not idle, but something is written, or painted there, which may excite the reader to a thought of piety; especially the *IoI Psalm*, which is expressed in a fayre table, as being the rule of a family. And when they go abroad, his wife among her neighbours is the beginner of good discourses, his children among children, his servants among other servants; so that

as in the house of those that are skill'd in Musick, all are Musicians; so in the house of a Preacher, all are preachers. He suffers not a ly or equivocation by any means in his house, but counts it the art, and secret of governing to preserve a directnesse, and open plainnesse in all things; so that all his house knowes, that there is no help for a fault done, but confession. He *himselſe*, or his *Wife*, takes account of Sermons, and how every one profits, comparing this yeer with the last: and besides the common prayers of the family, he straitly requires of all to pray by themselves before they sleep at night, and stir out in the morning, and knows what prayers they say, and till they have learned them, makes them kneel by him; esteeming that this private praying is a more voluntary act in them, then when they are called to others prayers, and that, which when they leave the family, they carry with them. He keeps his servants between love, fear, according as hee findes them; but generally he distributes it thus, To his Children he shewes more love then terrour, to his servants more terrour then love; but an old servant boards a child. The furniture of his house is very plain, but clean, whole, and sweet, as sweet as his garden can make; for he hath no mony for such things, charity being his only perfume, which deserves cost when he can spare it. His fare is plain, and common, but wholesome, what hee hath, is little, but very good; it consisteth most of mutton, beefe, and veal, if he addes any thing for a great day, or a stranger, his garden or orchard supplies it, or his barne, and back-side: he goes no further for any entertainment, lest he goe into the world, esteeming it absurd, that he should exceed, who teacheth others temperance. But those which his home produceth, he refuseth not, as coming cheap, and easie, and arising from the improvement of things, which otherwise would be lost. Wherein he admires and imitates the wonderfull providence and thrift of the great householder of the world: for there being two things, which as they are, are unuseful to man, the one for smalnesse, as crums, and scattered corn, and the like; the other for the foulnesse, as wash, and durt, and things thereinto fallen; God hath provided Creatures for both: for the first. Poultry; for the second, swine. These save man the labour, and doing that which either he could not do, or was not fit for him to do, by taking both sorts of food into them, do as it were dresse and prepare both for man in themselves, by growing them selves fit for his table. The Parson in his house oserves fasting dayes; and particularly, as Sunday is his day of joy, so Friday his day of Humiliation, which he celebrates only with abstinence of diet, but also of company, recreation, and all outward contentments; and besides, with confession of sins, and all acts of Mortification. Now fasting dayes containe a treble obligation; first, of eating lesse that day, then on other dayes; secondly, of eating no pleasing, or over-nourishing things, as the Israelites did eate sowre herbs: Thirdly, of eating no flesh, which is but the determination of the second rule by Authority to this particular. The two former obligations are much more essentiall to a true fast, then the third and last; and fasting dayes were fully performed by keeping of the two former, had not Authority interposed: so that to eat little, and that unpleasant, is the naturall rule of fasting, although it be flesh. For since fasting in

Scripture language is an afflicting of our souls, if a peece of dry flesh at my table be more unpleasant to me, then some fish there, certainly to eat the flesh, and not the fish, is to keep the fasting day naturally. And it is observable, that the prohibiting of flesh came from hot Countreys, where both flesh alone, and much more with wine, is apt to nourish more then in cold regions, and where flesh may be much better spared, and with more safety then elsewhere, where both the people and the drink being cold and flegmatick, the eating of flesh is an antidote to both. For it is certaine, that a weak stomack being prepossessed with flesh, shall much better brooke and bear a draught of beer, then if it had taken before either fish, or rootes, or such things; which will discover it selfe by spitting, and rheume, or flegme. To conclude, the Parson, if he be in full health, keeps the three obligations, eating fish, or roots, and that for quantity little, for quality unpleasant. If his body be weak and obstructed, as most Students are, he cannot keep the last obligation, nor suffer others in his house that are so, to keep it; but only the two former, which also in diseases of exinanition (as consumptions) must be broken: For meat was made for man, not man for meat. To all this may be added, not for emboldening the unruly, but for the comfort of the weak, that not onely sicknesse breaks these obligations of fasting, but sicklinesse also. For it is as unnatural to do any thing, that leads me to a sicknesse, to which I am inclined, as not to get out of that sicknesse, when I am in it, by any diet. One thing is evident, that an English body, and a Students body, are two great obstructed vessels, and there is nothing that is food, and not phisick, which doth lesse obstruct, then flesh moderately taken; as being immoderately taken, it is exceeding obstructive. And obstructions are the cause of most diseases.

CHAP. XI. *The Parson's Courtesie.*

THE Countrey Parson owing a debt of Charity to the poor, and of Courtesie to his other parishioners, he so distinguisheth, that he keeps his money for the poor, and his table for those that are above Alms. Not but that the poor are welcome also to his table, whom he sometimes purposely takes home with him, setting them close by him, and carving for them, both for his own humility, and their comfort, who are much cheered with such friendliness. But since both is to be done, the better sort invited, and meaner relieved, he chooseth rather to give the poor money, which they can better employ to their own advantage, and sutable to their needs, then so much given in meat at dinner. Having then invited some of his Parish, hee taketh his times to do the like to the rest; so that in the compasse of the year, hee hath them all with him, because countrey people are very observant of such things, and will not be perswaded, but being not invited, they are hated. Which perswasion the Parson by all means avoyds, knowing that where there are such conceits, there is no room for his doctrine to enter. Yet doth hee oftenest invite those, whom hee sees take best courses, that so both they may be encouraged to persevere, and others spurred to do well, that they may enjoy the like courtesie. For though he desire, that all should live well, and vertuously, not for any reward of his, but for vertues sake; yet that will not be so: and therefore as God, although we should love him onely for his own sake, yet out of his infinite pity hath set forth heaven for a reward to draw men to Piety, and is content, if at least so, they will become good: So the Countrey Parson, who is a diligent observer, and tracker of Gods wayes, sets up as many encouragements to goodnesse as he can, both in honour, and profit, and fame; that he may, if not the best way, yet any way, make his Parish good.

CHAP. XII. *The Parson's Charity.*

THE Countrey Parson is full of Charity; it is his pre- dominant element. For many and wonderfull things are spoken of thee, thou great Vertue. To Charity is given the covering of sins, *I Pet. 4. 8.* and the forgiveness of sins, *Matthew 6. 14. Luke 7. 47.* The fulfilling of the Law, *Romans 13. 10.* The life of faith, *James 1. 26.* The blessings of this life, *Proverbs 22. 9. Psalm 41. 2.* And the reward of the next, *Matth. 25. 35.* In brief, it is the body of Religion, *John 13. 35.* And the top of Christian vertues, *I Corin. 13.* Wherefore all his works relish of Charity. When he riseth in the morning, he bethinketh himseife what good deeds he can do that day, and presently doth them; counting that day lost, wherein he hath not exercised his Charity. He first considers his own Parish, and takes care, that there be not a begger, or idle person in his Parish, but that all bee in a competent way of getting their living. This he effects either by bounty, or perswasion, or by authority, making use of that excellent statute, which bindes all Parishes to maintaine their own. If his Parish be rich, he exacts this of them; if poor, and he able, he easeth them therein. But he gives no set pension to any; for this in time will lose the name and effect of Charity with the poor people, though not with God: for then they will reckon upon it, as on a debt; and if it be taken away, though justly, they will murmur, and repine as much, as he that is disseized of his own inheritance. But the Parson having a double aime, and making a hook of his Charity, causeth them still to depend on him; and so by continuall, and fresh bounties, unexpected to them, but resolved to himself, hee wins them to praise God more, to live more religiously, and to take more paines in their vocation, as not knowing when they shal be relieved; which otherwise they would reckon upon, and turn to idlenesse. Besides this generall provision, he hath other times of opening his hand; as at great Festivals, and Communions; not suffering any that day that hee receives, to want a good meal suting to thejoy of the occasion. But specially, at hard times, and dearths, the even parts his Living, and life among them, giving some corn outright, and selling other at under rates; and when his own stock serves not, working those that are able to the same charity, still pressing it in the pulpit, and out of the pulpit, and never leaving them, till he obtaine his desire. Yet in all his Charity, he distinguisheth, giving them most, who live best, and take most paines, and are most charged: So is his charity in effect a Sermon. After the consideration of his own Parish, he enlargeth himself, if he be able, to the neighbourhood; for that also is some kind of obligation; so doth he also to those at his door, whom God puts in his way, and makes his neighbours. But these he helps not without some testimony, except the evidence of the misery bring testimony with it. For though these testimonies also may be falsified, yet considering that the Law allows these in case they be true, but allows by no means to give without testimony, as he obeys Authority in the one, so that being once satisfied, he allows his Charity some blindness in the other; especially, since of the two commands, we are more enjoined to be charitable, then wise. But evident miseries have a naturall priviledge, and exemption from all law. When-ever hee gives any thing, and sees

them labour in thanking of him, he exacts of them to let him alone, and say rather, God be praised, God be glorified; that so the thanks may go the right way, and thither onely, where they are onely due. So doth hee also before giving make them say their Prayers first, or the Creed, and ten Commandments, and as he finds them perfect, rewards them the more. For other givings are lay, and secular, but this is to give like a Priest.

CHAP. XIII. *The Parson's Church.*

THE Countrey Parson hath a speciall care of his Church, that all things there be decent, and befitting his Name by which it is called. Therefore first he takes order, that all things be in good repair; as walls plaistered, windows glazed, floore paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform, especially that the Pulpit, and Desk, and Communion Table, and Font be as they ought, for those great duties that are performed in them. Secondly, that the Church be swept, and kept cleane without dust, or Cobwebs, and at great festivalls strawed, and stuck with boughs, and perfumed with incense. Thirdly, That there be fit, and proper texts of Scripture every where painted, and that all the painting be grave, and reverend, not with light colours, or foolish anticks. Fourthly, That all the books appointed by Authority be there, and those not torne, or fouled, but whole and clean, and well bound; and that there be a fitting, and sightly Communion Cloth *of fine linnen, with an handsome, and seemly Carpet of good and costly Stuffe, or Cloth, and all kept sweet and clean, in a strong and decent chest, with a Chalice, and Cover, and a Stoop, or Flagon; and a Bason for Almes and offerings; besides which, he hath a Poor-mans Box conveniently seated, to receive the charity of well minded people, and to lay up treasure for the sick and needy.* And all this he doth, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition, and slovenlinesse, and as following the Apostles two great and admirable Rules in things of this nature: The first whereof is, *Let all things be done decently, and in order:* [I Cor. 14:40] The second, *Let all things be done to edification,* I Cor. 14 [:26]. For these two rules comprize and include the double object of our duty, God, and our neighbour; the first being for the honour of God; the second for the benefit of our neighbor. So that they excellently score out the way, and fully, and exactly contain, even in externall and indifferent things, what course is to be taken; and put them to great shame, who deny the Scripture to be perfect.

CHAP. XIV. *The Parson in Circuit.*

THE Countrey Parson upon the afternoons in the week- days, takes occasion sometimes to visite in person, now one quarter of his Parish, now another. For there he shall find his flock most naturally as they are, wallowing in the midst of their affairs: whereas on Sundays it is easie for them to compose themselves to order, which they put on as their holy-day cloathes, and come to Church in frame, but commonly the next day put off both. When he comes to anyhouse, first he blesseth it, and then as hee finds the persons of the house imployed, so he formes his discourse. Those that he findes religiously imployed, hee both commends them much, and furthers them when hee is gone, in their imployment; as if hee findes them reading, hee furnisheththem with good books; if curing poor people, hee supplies them with Receipts, and instructs them further in that skill, shewing them how acceptable such works are to God, and wishing them ever to do the Cures with their own hands, and not to put them over to servants. Those that he finds busie in the works of their calling, he commendeth them also: for it is a good and just thing for every one to do their own busines. But then he admonisheth them of two things; first, that they dive not too deep into worldly affairs, plunging themselves over head and eares into carking, and caring; but that they so labour, as neither to labour anxiously, nor distrustfully, nor profanely. Then they labour anxiously, when they overdo it, to the loss of their quiet, and health: then distrustfully, when they doubt Gods providence, think- ing that their own labour is the cause of their thriving, as if itwere in their own hands to thrive, or not to thrive. *Then they labour profanely, when they set themselves to work like brute beasts, never raising their thoughts to God, nor sanctifying their labour with daily prayer; when on the Lords day they do unnecessary servile work, or in time of divine service on other holy days, except in the cases of extreme poverty, and in the seasons of Seed-time, and Harvest.* Secondly, he adviseth them so to labour for wealth and maintenance, as that they make not that the end of their labour, but that they may have wherewithall to serve God the better, and to do good deeds. After these discourses, if they be poor and needy, whom he thus finds labouring, he gives them somewhat; and opens not only his mouth, but his purse to their relief, that so they go on more cheerfully in their vocation, and himself be ever the more welcome to them. Those that the Parson findes idle, or ill imployed, he chides not at first, for that were neither civill, nor profitable; but always in the close, before he departs from them: yet in this he distinguisheth; for if he be a plaine countryman, he reproveth him plainly; for they are not sensible of finenesse: if they be of higher quality, they commonly are quick, and sensible, and very tender of reproof: and therefore he lays his discourse so, that he comes to the point very leasurely, and oftentimes, as *Nathan* did, in the person of another, making them to reprove themselves. However, one way or other, he ever reproveth them, that he may keep himself pure, and not be intangled in others sinnes. Neither in this doth he forbear, though there be company by: for as when the offence is particular, and against mee, I am to follow our Saviours rule, and to take my

brother aside, and reprove him; so when the offence is publicke, and against God, I am then to follow the Apostles rule, *I Timothy 5. 20.* and to *rebuke openly* that which is done openly. Besides these occasionall discourses, the Parson questions what order is kept in the house, as about prayers morning and evening on their knees, reading of Scripture, catechizing, singing of Psalms at their work, and on holy days; who can read, who not; and sometimes he hears the children read himselfe, and blesseth them, encouraging also the servants to learn to read, and offering to have them taught on holy-dayes by his servants. If the Parson were ashamed of particularizing in these things, hee were not fit to be a Parson: but he holds the Rule, that Nothing is little in Gods service: If it once have the honour of that Name, it grows great instantly. Wherefore neither disdaineth he to enter into the poorest Cottage, though he even creep into it, and though it smell never so lothsomly. For both God is there also, and those for whom God dyed: and so much the rather doth he so, as his accesse to the poor is more comfortable, then to the rich; and in regard of himselfe, it is more humiliation. These are the Parsons generall aims in his Circuit; but with these he mingles other discourses for conversation sake, and to make his higher purposes slip the more easily.

CHAP. XV. *The Parson Comforting.*

THE Countrey Parson, when any of his cure is sick, or afflicted with losse of friend, or estate, or any ways distressed, fails not to afford his best comforts, and rather goes to them, then sends for the afflicted, though they can, and otherwise ought to come to him. To this end he hath throughly digested all the points of consolation, as having continuall use of them, such as are from Gods generall providence extended even to lillyes; from his particular, to his Church; from his promises, from the examples of all Saints, that ever were; from Christ himself, perfecting our Redemption no other way, then by sorrow; from the Benefit of affliction, which softens, and works the stubborn heart of man; from the certainty both of deliverance, and reward, if we faint not; from the miserable comparison of the moment of griefs here with the weight of joyes hereafter. *Besides this, in his visiting the sick, or otherwise afflicted, he followeth the Churches counsell, namely, in perswading them to particular confession, labouring to make them understand the great good use of this antient and pious ordinance, and how necessary it is in some cases: he also urgeth them to do some pious charitable works, as a necessary evidence and fruit of their faith, at that time especially: the participation of the holy Sacrament, how comfortable, and Sovereigne a Medicine it is to all sin-sick souls; what strength, and joy, and peace it administers against all temptations, even to death it selfe, he plainly, and generally intimateth to the disaffected, or sick person, that so the hunger and thirst after it may come rather from themselves, then from his perswasion.*

CHAP. XVI. *The Parson a Father.*

THE Countrey Parson is not only a father to his flock, but also professeth himselfe throughly of the opinion, carrying it about with him as fully, as if he had begot his whole Parish. And of this he makes great use. For by this means, when any sinns, he hateth him not as an officer, but pityes him as a Father: and even in those wrongs which either in tithing, or otherwise are done to his owne person, hee considers the offender as a child, and forgives, so hee may have any signe of amendment; so also when after many admonitions, any continue to be refractory, yet hee gives him not over, but is long before hee proceede to disinheriting, or perhaps never goes so far; knowing, that some are called at the eleventh houre, and therefore hee still expects, and waits, least hee should determine Gods houre of coming; which as hee cannot, touching the last day, so neither touching the intermediate days of Conversion.

CHAP. XVII. *The Parson in Journey.*

THE Countrey Parson, when a just occasion calleth him out of his Parish (which he diligently, and strictly weigheth, his Parish being all his joy, and thought) leaveth not his Ministry behind him; but is himselfe where ever he is. Therefore those he meets on the way he blesseth audibly, and with those he overtakes or that overtake him, hee begins good discourses, such as may edify, interposing sometimes some short, and honest refreshments, which may make his other discourses more welcome, and lesse tedious. And when he comes to his Inn, he refuseth not to joyne, that he may enlarge the glory of God, to the company he is in, by a due blessing of God for their safe arrival, and saying grace at meat and at going to bed by giving the Host notice, that he will have prayers in the hall, wishing him to informe his guests thereof, that if any be willing to partake, they may resort thither. The like he doth in the morning, using pleasantly the outlandish proverb, that *Prayers and Provender never hinder journey.* When he comes to any other house, where *his kindred, or other relations give him any authority over the Family,* if hee be to stay for a time, hee considers diligently the state thereof to Godward, and that in two points: First, what disorders there are either in Apparell, or Diet, or too open a Buttery, or reading vain books, or swearing, or breeding up children to no Calling, but in idleness, or the like. Secondly, what means of Piety, whether daily prayers be used, Grace, reading of Scriptures, and other good books, how *Sundayes, holy-days, and fasting days* are kept. And accordingly, as he finds any defect in these, hee first considers with himselfe, what kind of remedy fits the temper of the house best, and then hee faithfully, and boldly applyeth it; yet seasonably, and discreetly, by taking aside the Lord or Lady, or *Master and Mistres* of the house, and shewing them cleerly, that they respect them most, who wish them best, and that not a desire to meddle with others affairs, but the earnestnesse to do all the good he can, moves him to say thus and thus.

CHAP. XVIII. *The Parson in Sentinell.*

THE Countrey Parson, where ever he is, keeps Gods watch; that is, there is nothing spoken, or done in the Company where he is, but comes under his Test and censure: If it be well spoken, or done, he takes occasion to commend, and enlarge it; if ill, he presently lays hold of it, least the poyson steal into some young and unwary spirits, and possesse them even before they themselves heed it. But this he doth discretely, with mollifying, and suppling words; This was not so well said, as it might have been forborn; We cannot allow this: or else if the thing will admit interpretation; Your meaning is not thus, but thus; or, So farr indeed what you say is true, and well said; but this will not stand. This is called keeping Gods watch, when the baits which the enemy lays in company, are discovered and avoyded: This is to be on Gods side, and be true to his party. Besides, if he perceive in company any discourse tending to ill, either by the wickedness or quarrelsomnesse thereof, he either prevents it judiciously, or breaks it off seasonably by some diversion. Wherein a pleasantness of disposition is of great use, men being willing to sell the interest, and ingagement of their discourses for no price sooner, then that of mirth; whither the nature of man, loving refreshment, gladly betakes it selfe, even to the losse of honour.

CHAP. XIX. *The Parson in reference.*

THE Countrey Parson is sincere and upright in all his relations. And first, he is just to his Countrey; as when he is set at an armour, or horse, he borrowes them not to serve the turne, nor provides slight, and unusefull, but such as are every way fitting to do his Countrey true and laudable service, when occasion requires. To do otherwise, is deceit; and therefore not for him, who is hearty, and true in all his wayes, as being the servant of him, in whom there was no guile. Likewise in any other Countrey-duty, he considers what is the end of any Command, and then he suits things faithfully according to that end. Secondly, he carries himself very respectfully, as to all the Fathers of the Church, so especially to his Diocesan, honouring him both in word, and behaviour, and resorting unto him in any difficulty, either in his studies or in his Parish. He observes Visitations, and being there, makes due use of them, as of Clergy counsels, for the benefit of the Diocese. And therefore before he comes, having observed some defects in the Ministry, he then either in Sermon, if he preach, or at some other time of the day, propounds among his Brethren what were fitting to be done. Thirdly, he keeps good Correspondence with all the neighbouring Pastours round about him, performing for them any Ministeriall office, which is not to the prejudice of his own Parish. Likewise he welcomes to his house any Minister, how poor or mean soever, with as joyfull a countenance, as if he were to entertain some great Lord. Fourthly, he fulfills the duty, and debt of neighbourhood to all the Parishes which are neer him. For the Apostles rule [Philip. 4.\[8\]](#) being admirable, and large, that *we should do whatsoever things are honest, or just, or pure, or lovely, or of good report, if there be any vertue, or any praise,* and Neighbourhood being ever reputed, even among the Heathen, as an obligation to do good, rather then to those that are further, where things are otherwise equall, therefore he satisfies this duty also. Espesily, if God have sent any calamity either by fire, or famine, to any neighbouring Parish, then he expects no Briefe; but taking his Parish together *the next Sunday, or holy-day,* and exposing to them the uncertainty of humane affairs, none knowing whose turne may be next, and then when he hath affrighted them with this, exposing the obligation of Charity, and Neighbour-hood, he first gives himself liberally, and then incites them to give; making together a summe either to be sent, or, which were more comfortable, all together choosing some fitt day to carry it themselves, and cheere the Afflicted. So, if any neighbouring village be overburdened with poore, and his owne lesse charged, hee findes some way of relieving it, and reducing the Manna, and bread of Charity to some equality, representing to his people, that the Blessing of God to them ought to make them the more charitable, and not the lesse, lest he cast their neighbours poverty on them also.

CHAP. XX. *The Parson in Gods stead.*

THE Countrey Parson is in Gods stead to his Parish, and dischargeth God what he can of his promises. Wherefore there is nothing done either wel or ill, whereof he is not the rewarder, or punisher. If he chance to finde any reading in anothers Bible, he provides him one of his own. If he finde another giving a poor man a penny, he gives him a tester for it, if the giver be fit to receive it; or if he be of a condition above such gifts, he sends him a good book, or easeth him in his Tithes, telling him when he hath forgotten it, This I do, because at such, and such a time you were charitable. This is in some sort a discharging of God; as concerning this life, who hath promised, that Godlinesse shall be gainfull: but in the other God is his own immediate paymaster, rewarding all good deeds to their full proportion. *The Parsons punishing of sin and vice, is rather by withdrawing his bounty and courtesie from the parties offending, or by private, or publick reproof, as the case requires, then by causing them to be presented, or otherwise complained of. And yet as the malice of the person, or hainousness of the crime may be, he is carefull to see condign punishment inflicted, and with truly godly zeal, without hatred to the person, hungreth and thirsteth after righteous punishment of unrighteousnesse. Thus both in rewarding vertue, and in punishing vice, the Parson endeavoureth to be in Gods stead, knowing that Countrey people are drawne, or led by sense, more then by faith, by present rewards, or punishments, more then by future.*

CHAP. XXI. *The Parson Catechizing.*

THE Countrey Parson values Catechizing highly: for there being three points of his duty, the one, to infuse a competent knowledge of salvation in every one of his Flock; the other, to multiply, and build up this knowledge to a spirituall Temple; the third, to inflame this knowledge, to presse, and drive it to practice, turning it to reformation of life, by pithy and lively exhortations; Catechizing is the first point, and but by Catechizing, the other cannot be attained. Besides, whereas in Sermons there is a kinde of state, in Catechizing there is an humblenesse very sutable to Christian regeneration, which exceedingly delights him as by way of exercise upon himself, and by way of preaching to himself, for the advancing of his own mortification; for in preaching to others, he forgets not himself, but is first a sermon to himself, and then to others; growing with the growth of his Parish. He useth, and preferreth the ordinary Church-Catechism, partly for obedience to Authority, partly for uniformity sake, that the same common truths may be every where professed, especially since many remove from Parish to Parish, who like Christian Souldiers are to give the word, and to satisfie the Congregation by their Catholick answers. He exacts of all the Doctrine of the Catechisme; of the younger sort, the very words; of the elder, the substance. Those he Catechizeth publickly, these privately, giving age honour, according to the Apostles rule, [I Tim. 5. I.](#) He requires all to be present at Catechizing: First, for the authority of the work; Secondly, that Parents, and Masters, as they hear the answers prove, may when they come home, either commend or reprove, either reward or punish. Thirdly, that those of the elder sort, who are not well grounded, may then by an honourable way take occasion to be better instructed. Fourthly, that those who are well grown in the knowledg of Religion, may examine their grounds, renew their vows, and by occasion of both, inlarge their meditations. When once all have learned the words of the Catechisme, he thinks it the most usefull way that a Pastor can take, to go over the same, but in other words: for many say the Catechisme by rote, as parrats, without ever piercing into the sense of it. In this course the order of the Catechisme would be kept, but the rest varied: as thus, in the Creed: How came this world to be as it is? Was it made, or came it by chance? Who made it? Did you see God make it? Then are there some things to be beleaved that are not seen? Is this the nature of believe? Is not Christianity full of such things, as are not to be seen, but beleaved? You said, God made the world; Who is God? And so forward, requiring answers to all these, and helping and cherishing the Answerer, by making the Question very plaine with comparisons, and making much even of a word of truth from him. This order being used to one, would be a little varied to another. And this is an admirable way of teaching, wherein the Catechized will at length finde delight, and by which the Catechizer, if he once get the skill of it, will draw out of ignorant and silly souls, even the dark and deep points of Religion. *Socrates* did thus in Philosophy, who held that the seeds of all truths lay in every body, and accordingly by questions well ordered he found Philosophy in silly Trades-men. That position will not hold

in Christianity, because it contains things above nature: but after that the Catechisme is once learn'd, that which nature is towards Philosophy, the Catechism is towards Divinity. To this purpose, some dialogues in *Plato* were worth the reading, where the singular dexterity of *Socrates* in this kind may be observed, and imitated. Yet the skill consists but in these three points: First, an aim and mark of the whole discourse, whither to drive the Answerer, which the Questionist must have in his mind before any question be propounded, upon which and to which the questions are to be chained. Secondly, a most plain and easie framing the question, even containing in vertue the answer also, especially to the more ignorant. Thirdly, when the answerer sticks, an illustrating the thing by something else, which he knows, making what hee knows to serve him in that which he knows not: As, when the Parson once demanded after other questions about mans misery; since man is so miserable, what is to be done? And the answerer could not tell; He asked him again, what he would do, if he were in a ditch? This familiar illustration made the answer so plaine, that he was even ashamed of his ignorance; for he could not but say, he would hast out of it as fast as he could. Then he proceeded to ask, whether he could get out of the ditch alone, or whether he needed a helper, and who was that helper. This is the skill, and doubtlesse the Holy Scripture intends thus much, when it condescends to the naming of a plough, a hatchet, a bushell, leaven, boyes piping and dancing; shewing that things of ordinary use are not only to serve in the way of drudgery, but to be washed and cleansed, and serve for lights even of Heavenly Truths. This is the Practice which the Parson so much commends to all his fellow-labourers; the secret of whose good consists in this, that at Sermons, and Prayers, men may sleep or wander; but when one is asked a question, he must discover what he is. This practice exceeds even Semons in teaching; but there being two things in Sermons, the one Informing, the other Inflaming; as Sermons come short of questions in the one, so they farre exceed them in the other. For questions cannot inflame or ravish, that must be done by a set, and laboured, and continued speech.

CHAP. XXII. *The Parson in Sacraments.*

THE Countrey Parson being to administer the Sacraments, is at a stand with himself, how or what behaviour to assume for so holy things. Especially at Communion times he is in a great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break, and administer him. Neither findes he any issue in this, but to throw himself down at the throne of grace, saying, Lord, thou knowest what thou didst, when thou appointedst it to be done thus; therefore doe thou fulfill what thou didst appoint; for thou art not only the feast, but the way to it. At Baptisme, being himselfe in white, he requires the presence of all, and Baptizeth not willingly, but on Sundayes, or great dayes. Hee admits no vaine or idle names, but such as are usuall and accustomed. Hee says that prayer with great devotion, where God is thanked for calling us to the knowledg of his grace, Baptisme being a blessing, that the world hath not the like. He willingly and cheerfully crosseth the child, and thinketh the Ceremony not onely innocent, but reverend. He instructeth the God-fathers, and God-mothers, that it is no complementall or light thing to sustain that place, but a great honour, and no less burden, as being done both in the presence of God, and his Saints, and by way of undertaking for a Christian soul. He adviseth all to call to minde their Baptisme often; for if wise men have thought it the best way of preserving a state to reduce it to its principles by which it grew great; certainly, it is the safest course for Christians also to meditate on their Baptisme often (being the first step into their great and glorious calling) and upon what termes, and with what vowes they were Baptized. At the times of the Holy Communion, he first takes order with the Church-Wardens, that the elements be of the best, not cheape, or course, much lesse ill-tasted, or unwholsome. Secondly, hee considers and looks into the ignorance, or carelesness of his flock, and accordingly applies himselfe with Catechizings, and lively exhortations, not on the Sunday of the Communion only (for then it is too late) but the Sunday, or Sundayes before the Communion, or on the Eves of all those dayes. If there be any, who having not received yet, are to enter into this great work, he takes the more pains with them, that hee may lay the foundation of future Blessings. The time of every ones first receiving is not so much by yeers, as by understanding: particularly, the rule may be this: When any one can distinguish the Sacramentall from common bread, knowing the Institution, and the difference, hee ought to receive, of what age soever. Children and youths are usually deferred too long, under pretence of devotion to the Sacrament, but it is for want of Instruction; their understandings being ripe enough for ill things, and why not then for better? But Parents, and Masters should make hast in this, as to a great purchase for their children, and servants; which while they deferr, both sides suffer; the one in wanting many excittings of grace; the other, in being worse served and obeyed. The saying of the Catechism is necessary, but not enough; because to answer in form may still admit ignorance: but the Questions must be propounded loosely and wildely, and then the Answerer will discover what hee is. Thirdly, For the manner of receiving, as the Parson useth all reverence himself, so he administers to none but to the

reverent. The Feast indeed requires sitting, because it is a Feast; but man's unpreparednesse asks kneeling. Hee that comes to the Sacrament, hath the confidence of a Guest, and hee that kneels, confesseth himself an unworthy one, and therefore differs from other Feasters: but hee that sits, or lies, puts up to an Apostle: Contentiousnesse in a feast of Charity is more scandall then any posture. Fourthly, touching the frequency of the Communion, the Parson celebrates it, if not duly once a month, yet at least five or six times in the year; as, at Easter, Christmasse, Whitsuntide, afore and after Harvest, and the beginning of Lent. And this hee doth, not onely for the benefit of the work, but also for the discharge of the Church-wardens, who being to present all that receive not thrice a year; if there be but three Communions, neither can all the people so order their affairs as to receive just at those times, nor the Church-Wardens so well take notice who receive thrice, and who not.

CHAP. XXIII. *The Parson's Completeness.*

THE Countrey Parson desires to be all to his Parish, and not onely a Pastour, but a Lawyer also, and a Phisician. Therefore hee endures not that any of his Flock should go to Law; but in any Controversie, that they should resort to him as their Judge. To this end, he hath gotten to himself some insight in things ordinarily incident and controverted, by experience, and by reading some initiatory treatises in the Law, with *Daltons* Justice of Peace, and the Abridgements of the Statutes, as also by discourse with men of that profession, whom he hath ever some cases to ask, when he meets with them; holding that rule, that to put men to discourse of that, wherein they are most eminent, is the most gain full way of Conversation. Yet when ever any controversie is brought to him, he never decides it alone, but sends for three or four of the ablest of the Parish to hear the cause with him, whom he makes to deliver their opinion first; out of which he gathers, in case he be ignorant himself, what to hold; and so the thing passeth with more authority, and lesse envy. In judging, he followes that, which is altogether right; so that if the poorest man of the Parish detain but a pin unjustly from the richest, he absolutely restores it as a Judge; but when he hath so done, then he assumes the Parson, and exhorts to Charity. Neverthelesse, there may happen somtimes some cases, wherein he chooseth to permit his Parishioners rather to make use of the Law, then himself: As in cases of an obscure and dark nature, not easily determinable by Lawyers themselves; or in cases of high consequence, as establishing of inheritances: or Lastly, when the persons in difference are of a contentious disposition, and cannot be gained, but that they still fall from all compromises that have been made. But then he shews them how to go to Law, even as Brethren, and not as enemies, neither avoyding therfore one anothers company, much lesse defaming one another. Now as the Parson is in Law, so is he in sicknesse also: if there be any of his flock sick, hee is their Physician, or at least his Wife, of whom in stead of the qualities of the world, he asks no other, but to have the skill of healing a wound, or helping the sick. But if neither himseife, nor his wife have the skil, and his means serve, hee keepes some young practicioner in his house for the benefit of his Parish, whom yet he ever exhorts not to exceed his bounds, but in tickle cases to call in help. If all fail, then he keeps good correspondence with some neighbour Phisician, and entertaines him for the Cure of his Parish. Yet is it easie for any Scholer to attaine to such a measure of Phisick, as may be of much use to him both for himself, and others. This is done by seeing one Anatomy, reading one Book of Phisick, having one Herball by him. And let *Fernelius* be the Phisick Authour, for he writes briefly, neatly, and judiciously; especially let his Method of Phisick be diligently perused, as being the practicall part, and of most use. Now both the reading of him, and the knowing of herbs may be done at such times, as they may be an help, and a recreation to more divine studies, Nature serving Grace both in comfort of diversion, and the benefit of application when need requires; as also by way of illustration, even as our Saviour made plants and seeds to teach the people: for he was the true house-

holder, who bringeth out of his treasure things new and old; the old things of Philosophy, and the new of Grace; and maketh the one serve the other. And I conceive, our Saviour did this for three reasons: first, that by familiar things hee might make his Doctrine slip the more easily into the hearts even of the meanest. Secondly, that labouring people (whom he chiefly considered) might have every where monuments of his Doctrine, remembring in gardens, his mustard-seed, and lillyes; in the field, his seed-corn, and tares; and so not be drowned altogether in the works of their vocation, but sometimes lift up their minds to better things, even in the midst of their pains. Thirdly, that he might set a Copy for Parsons. In the knowledge of simples, wherein the manifold wisdom of God is wonderfully to be seen, one thing would be carefully observed; which is, to know what herbs may be used in stead of drugs of the same nature, and to make the garden the shop: For home-bred medicines are both more easie for the Parsons purse, and more familiar for all mens bodies. So, where the Apothecary useth either for loosing, Rubarb, or for binding, Bolearmena, the Parson useth damask or white Roses for the one, and plantaine, shepherds purse, knot-grasse for the other, and that with better successe. As for spices, he doth not onely prefer home-bred things before them, but condemns them for vanities, and so shuts them out of his family, esteeming that there is no spice comparable, for herbs, to rosemary, time, savoury, mints; and for seeds, to Fennell, and Carroway seeds. Accordingly, for salves, his wife seeks not the city, but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish gums. And surely hyssope, valerian, mercury, adders tongue, yerrow, melilot, and Saint *Johns* wort made into a salve; And Elder, camomill, mallowes, comphrey and smallage made into a Poultis, have done great and rare cures. In curing of any, the Parson and his Family use to premise prayers, for this is to cure like a Parson, and this raiseth the action from the Shop, to the Church. But though the Parson sets forward all Charitable deeds, yet he looks not in this point of Curing beyond his own Parish, except the person bee so poor, that he is not able to reward the Phisician: for as hee is Charitable, so he is just also. Now it is a justice and debt to the Commonwealth he lives in, not to incroach on others Professions, but to live on his own. And justice is the ground of Charity.

CHAP. XXIV. *The Parson arguing.*

THE Countrey Parson, if there be any of his parish that hold strange Doctrins, useth all possible diligence to reduce them to the common Faith. The first means he useth is Prayer, beseeching the Father of lights to open their eyes, and to give him power so to fit his discourse to them, that it may effectually pierce their hearts, and convert them. The second means is a very loving, and sweet usage of them, both in going to, and sending for them often, and in finding out Courtesies to place on them; as in their tithes, or otherwise. The third means is the observation what is the main foundation, and pillar of their cause, whereon they rely; as if he be a Papist, the Church is the hinge he turnes on; if a Schismatick, scandall. Wherefore the Parson hath diligently examined these two with himselfe, as what the Church is, how it began, how it proceeded, whether it be a rule to it selfe, whether it hath a rule, whether having a rule, it ought not to be guided by it; whether any rule in the world be obscure, and how then should the best be so, at least in fundamentall things, the obscurity in some points being the exercise of the Church, the light in the foundations being the guide; The Church needing both an evidence, and an exercise. So for Scandall: what scandall is, when given or taken; whether, there being two precepts, one of obeying Authority, the other of not giving scandall, that ought not to be preferred, especially since in disobeying there is scandall also: whether things once indifferent, being made by the precept of Authority more then indifferent, it be in our power to omit or refuse them. These and the like points hee hath accurately digested, having ever besides two great helps and powerfull perswaders on his side; the one, a strict religious life; the other an humble, and ingenuous search of truth; being unmoved in arguing, and voyd of all contentiousnesse: which are two great lights able to dazle the eyes of the misled, while they consider, that God cannot be wanting to them in Doctrine, to whom he is so gracious in Life.

CHAP. XXV. *The Parson punishing.*

Whensoever the Countrey Parson proceeds so farre as to call in Authority, and to do such things of legall opposition either in the presenting, or punishing of any, as the vulgar ever consters for signes of ill will; he forbears not in any wise to use the delinquent as before, in his behaviour and carriage towards him, not avoyding his company, or doing any thing of aversenesse, save in the very act of punishment: neither doth he esteem him for an enemy, but as a brother still, except some small and temporary estrangling may corroborate the punishment to a better subduing, and humbling of the delinquent; which if it happily take effect, he then comes on the faster, and makes so much the more of him, as before he alienated himselfe; doubling his regards, and shewing by all means, that the delinquents returne is to his advantage.

CHAP. XXVI. *The Parson's eye.*

THE Countrey Parson at spare times from action, standing on a hill, and considering his Flock, discovers two sorts of vices, and two sorts of vicious persons. There are some vices, whose natures are always deer, and evident, as Adultery, Murder, Hatred, Lying, &c. There are other vices, whose natures, at least in the beginning, are dark and obscure: as Covetousnesse, and Gluttony. So likewise there are some persons, who abstain not even from known sins; there are others, who when they know a sin evidently, they commit it not. It is true indeed, they are long a knowing it, being partiall to themselves, and witty to others who shall reprove them from it. A man may be both Covetous, and Intemperate, and yet hear Sermons against both, and himselfe condemn both in good earnest: and the reason hereof is, because the natures of these vices being not evidently discussed, or known commonly, the beginnings of them are not easily observable: and the beginnings of them are not observed, because of the suddain passing from that which was just now lawfull, to that which is presently unlawfull, even in one continued action. So a man dining, eats at first lawfully; but proceeding on, comes to do unlawfully, even before he is aware; not knowing the bounds of the action, nor when his eating begins to be unlawfull. So a man storing up mony for his necessary provisions, both in present for his family, and in future for his children, hardly perceives when his storing becomes unlawfull: yet is there a period for his storing, and a point, or center, when his storing, which was even now good, passeth from good to bad. Wherefore the Parson being true to his businesse, hath exactly sifted the definitions of all vertues, and vices; especially canvassing those, whose natures are most stealing, and beginnings uncertaine. Particularly, concerning these two vices, not because they are all that are of this dark, and creeping disposition, but for example sake, and because they are most common, he thus thinks: first, for covetousnes, he lays this ground: Whosoever when a just occasion calls, either spends not at all, or not in some proportion to Gods blessing upon him is covetous. The reason of the ground is manifest, because wealth is given to that end to supply our occasions. Now, if I do not give every thing its end, I abuse the Creature, I am false to my reason which should guide me, I offend the supreme Judg, in perverting that order which he hath set both to things, and to reason. The application of the ground would be infinite; but in brief, a poor man is an occasion, my countrey is an occasion, my friend is an occasion, my Table is an occasion, my apparell is an occasion: if in all these, and those more which concerne me, I either do nothing, or pinch, and scrape, and squeeze blood undecently to the station wherein God hath placed me, I am Covetous. More particularly, and to give one instance for all, if God have given me servants, and I either provide too little for them, or that which is unwholsome, being sometimes baned meat, sometimes too salt, and so not competent nourishment, I am Covetous. I bring this example, because men usually think, that servants for their mony are as other things that they buy, even as a piece of wood, which they may cut, or hack, or throw into the fire, and so they pay them their

wages, all is well. Nay, to descend yet more particularly, if a man hath wherewithall to buy a spade, and yet hee chuseth rather to use his neighbours, and wear out that, he is covetous. Nevertheless, few bring covetousness thus low, or consider it so narrowly, which yet ought to be done, since there is a Justice in the least things, and for the least there shall be a judgment. Country people are full of these petty injustices, being cunning to make use of another, and spare themselves: And Scholers ought to be diligent in the observation of these, and driving of their generall Schoole rules ever to the smallest actions of Life; which while they dwell in their bookes, they will never finde; but being seated in the Countrey, and doing their duty faithfully, they will soon discover: especially if they carry their eyes ever open, and fix them on their charge, and not on their preferment. Secondly, for Gluttony, the parson lays this ground: He that either for quantity eats more then his health or employments will bear, or for quality is licorous after dainties, is a glutton; as he that eats more then his estate will bear, is a Prodigall; and hee that eats offensively to the Company, either in his order, or length of eating, is scandalous and uncharitable. These three rules generally comprehend the faults of eating, and the truth of them needs no prooffe: so that men must eat neither to the disturbance of their health, nor of their affairs, (which being overburdened, or studying dainties too much, they cannot wel dispatch) nor of their estate, nor of their brethren. One act in these things is bad, but it is the custome and habit that names a glutton. Many think they are at more liberty then they are, as if they were Masters of their health, and so they will stand to the pain, all is well. But to eat to ones hurt, comprehends, besides the hurt, an act against reason, because it is unnaturall to hurt ones self; and this they are not masters of. Yet of hurtfull things, I am more bound to abstain from those, which by mine own experience I have found hurtfull, then from those which by a Common tradition, and vulgar knowledge are reputed to be so. That which is said of hurtfull meats, extends to hurtfull drinks also. As for the quantity, touching our employments, none must eat so as to disable themselves from a fit discharging either of Divine duties, or duties of their calling. So that if after dinner they are not fit (or unweeldy) either to pray, or work, they are gluttons. Not that all must presently work after dinner; (For they rather must not work, especially Students, and those that are weakly,) but that they must rise so, as that it is not meate or drinke that hinders them from working. To guide them in this, there are three rules: first, the custome, and knowledg of their own body, and what it can well digest: The second, the feeling of themselves in time of eating, which because it is deceitfull; (for one thinks in eating, that he can eat more, then afterwards he finds true:) The third is the observation with what appetite they sit down. This last rule joynd with the first, never fails. For knowing what one usually can well digest, and feeling when I go to meat in what disposition I am, either hungry or not, according as I feele my self, either I take my wonted proportion, or diminish of it. Yet Phisicians bid those that would live in health, not keep an uniform diet, but to feed variously, now more, now lesse: And *Gerson*, a spirituall man, wisheth all to incline rather to too much,

then to too little; his reason is, because diseases of exinanition are more dangerous, then diseases of repletion. But the Parson distinguisheth according to his double aime, either of Abstinence a morall vertue, or Mortification a divine. When he deals with any that is heavy, and carnall; he gives him those freer rules: but when he meets with a refined, and heavenly disposition, he carryes them higher, even somtimes to a forgetting of themselves, knowing that there is one, who when they forget, remembers for them; As when the people hungred and thirsted after our Saviours Doctrine, and tarryed so long at it, that they would have fainted, had they returned empty, He suffered it not; but rather made food miraculously, then suffered so good desires to miscarry.

CHAP. XXVII. *The Parson in mirth.*

THE Countrey Parson is generally sad, because hee knows nothing but the Crosse of Christ, his minde being defixed on it with those nailes wherewith his Master was: or if he have any leisure to look off from thence, he meets continually with two most sad spectacles. Sin, and Misery; God dishonoured every day, and man afflicted. Neverthelesse, he somtimes refresheth himselfe, as knowing that nature will not bear everlasting droopings, and that pleasantnesse of disposition is a great key to do good; not onely because all men shun the company of perpetuall severity, but also for that when they are in company, instructions seasoned with pleasantnesse, both enter sooner, and roote deeper. Wherefore he condescends to humane frailties both in himseife and others; and intermingles some mirth in his discourses occasionally, according to the pulse of the hearer.

CHAP. XXVIII. *The Parson in Contempt.*

THE Countrey Parson knows well, that both for the generall ignominy which is cast upon the profession, and much more for those rules, which out of his choysed judgment hee hath resolved to observe, and which are described in this Book, he must be despised; because this hath been the portion of God his Master, and of Gods Saints his Brethren, and this is foretold, that it shall be so still, until things be no more. Neverthelesse, according to the Apostles rule, he endeavours that none shall despise him; especially in his own Parish he suffers it not to his utmost power; for that, where contempt is, there is no room for instruction. This he procures, first by his holy and unblameable life; which carries a reverence with it, even above contempt. Secondly, by a courteous carriage, & winning behaviour: he that wil be respected, must respect; doing kindnesses, but receiving none; at least of those, who are apt to despise: for this argues a height and eminency of mind, which is not easily despised, except it degenerate to pride. Thirdly, by a bold and impartial reproof, even of the best in the Parish, when occasion requires: for this may produce hatred in those that are reprov'd, but never contempt either in them, or others. Lastly, if the contempt shall proceed so far as to do any thing punishable by law, as contempt is apt to do, if it be not thwarted, *the Parson having a due respect both to the person, and to the cause, referreth the whole matter to the examination, and punishment of those which are in Authority*, that so the sentence lighting upon one, the example may reach to all. But if the Contempt be not punishable by Law, or being so, the Parson think it in his discretion either unfit, or bootelesse to contend, then when any despises him, he takes it either in an humble way, saying nothing at all; or else in a slighting way, shewing that reproaches touch him no more, then a stone thrown against heaven, where he is, and lives; or in a sad way, grieved at his own, and others sins, which continually breake Gods Laws, and dishonour him with those mouths, which he continually fills, and feeds: or else in a doctrinall way, saying to the contemner, Alas, why do you thus? you hurt your selfe, not me; he that throws a stone at another, hits himselfe; and so between gentle reasoning, and pitying, he overcomes the evill: or lastly, in a Triumphant way, being glad, and Joyfull, that he is made conformable to his Master; and being in the world as he was, hath this undoubted pledge of his salvation. These are the five shields, wherewith the Godly receive the darts of the wicked; leaving anger, and retorting, and revenge to the children of the world, whom anothers ill mastereth, and leadeth captive without any resistance, even in resistance, to the same destruction. For while they resist the person that reviles, they resist not the evill which takes hold of them, and is farr the worse enemy.

CHAP. XXIX. *The Parson with his Church-Wardens.*

THE Countrey Parson doth often, both publickly, and privately instruct his Church-Wardens, what a great Charge lyes upon them, and that indeed the whole order and discipline of the Parish is put into their hands. If himselfe reforme any thing, it is out of the overflowing of his Conscience, whereas they are to do it by Command, and by Oath. Neither hath the place its dignity from the Ecclesiasticall Laws only, since even by the Common Statute-Law they are taken for a kinde of Corporation, as being persons enabled by that Name to take moveable goods, or chattels, and to sue, and to be sued at the Law concerning such goods for the use and profit of their Parish: and by the same Law they are to levy penalties for negligence in resorting to church, or for disorderly carriage in time of divine service. Wherefore the Parson suffers not the place to be vilified or debased, by being cast on the lower ranke of people; but invites and urges the best unto it, shewing that they do not loose, or go lesse, but gaine by it; it being the greatest honor of this world, to do God and his chosen service; or as *David* says, to be even a door-keeper in the house of God. Now the Canons being the Church-wardens rule, the Parson adviseth them to read, or hear them read often, as also the visitation Articles, which are grounded upon the Canons, that so they may know their duty, and keep their oath the better; in which regard, considering the great Consequence of their place, and more of their oath, he wisheth them by no means to spare any, though never so great; but if after gentle, and neighbourly admonitions they still persist in ill, to present them; yea though they be tenants, or otherwise ingaged to the delinquent: for their obligation to God, and their own soul, is above any temporall tye. Do well, and right, and let the world sinke.

CHAP. XXX. *The Parson's Consideration of Providence.*

THE Countrey Parson considering the great aptnesse if Countrey people have to think that all things come by a kind of naturall course; and that if they sow and soyle their grounds, they must have corn; if they keep and fodder well their cattel, they must have milk, and Calves; labours to reduce them to see Gods hand in all things. and to beleeve. that things are not set in such an inevitable order, but that God often changeth it according as he sees fit, either for reward or punishment. To this end he represents to his flock, that God hath and exerciseth a threefold power in every thing which concernes man. The first is a sustaining power; the second a governing power; the third a spirituall power. By his sustaining power he preserves and actuates every thing in his being; so that corne doth not grow by any other vertue, then by that which he continually supplies, as the corn needs it; without which supply the corne would instantly dry up, as a river would if the fountain were stopped. And it is observable, that if anything could presume of an inevitable course, and constancy in its operations, certainly it should be either the sun in heaven, or the fire on earth, by reason of their fierce, strong, and violent natures: yet when God pleased, the sun stood stil, the fire burned not. By Gods governing power he preserves and orders the references of things one to the other, so that though the corn do grow, and be preserved in that act by his sustaining power, yet if he suite not other things to the growth, as seasons, and weather, and other accidents by his governing power, the fairest harvests come to nothing. And it is observeable, that God delights to have men feel, and acknowledg, and reverence his power, and therefore he often overturnes things, when they are thought past danger; that is his time of interposing: As when a Merchant hath a ship come home after many a storme, which it hath escaped, he destroyes it sometimes in the very Haven; or if the goods be housed, a fire hath broken forth, and suddenly consumed them. Now this he doth, that men should perpetuate, and not break off their acts of dependance, how faire soever the opportunities present themselves. So that if a farmer should depend upon God all the yeer, and being ready to put hand to sickle, shall then secure himself, and think all cock-sure; then God sends such weather, as lays the corn, and destroys it: or if he depend on God further, even till he imbarn his corn, and then think all sure; God sends a fire, and consumes all that he hath: For that he ought not to break off, but to continue his dependance on God, not onely before the corne is inned, but after also; and indeed, to depend, and fear continually. The third power is spirituall, by which God turnes all outward blessings to inward advantages. So that if a Farmer hath both a faire harvest, and that also well inned, and imbarned, and continuing safe there; yet if God give him not the Grace to use, and utter this well, all his advantages are to his losse. Better were his corne burnt, then not spirituallly improved. And it is observable in this, how Gods goodnesse strives with mans refractorinesse; Man would sit down at this world, God bids him sell it, and purchase a better: Just as a Father, who hath in his hand an apple, and a piece of Gold under it; the Child comes, and with pulling, gets the apple out of his Fathers hand:

his Father bids him throw it away, and he will give him the gold for it, which the Child utterly refusing, eats it, and is troubled with wormes: So is the carnall and wilfull man with the worm of the grave in this world, and the worm of Conscience in the next.

CHAP. XXXI. *The Parson in Liberty.*

THE Countrey Parson observing the manifold wiles of Satan (who plays his part sometimes in drawing Gods Servants from him, sometimes in perplexing them in the service of God) stands fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. This Liberty he compasseth by one distinction, and that is, of what is Necessary, and what is Additionary. As for example: It is necessary, that all Christians should pray twice a day, every day of the week, and four times on Sunday, if they be well. This is so necessary, and essentiall to a Christian, that he cannot without this maintain himself in a Christian state. Besides this, the Godly have ever added some houres of prayer, as at nine, or at three, or at midnight, or as they think fit, & see cause, or rather as Gods spirit leads them. But these prayers are not necessary, but additionary. Now it so happens, that the godly petitioner upon some emergent interruption in the day, or by over-sleeping himself at night, omits his additionary prayer. Upon this his mind begins to be perplexed, and troubled, and Satan, who knows the exigent, blows the fire, endeavouring to disorder the Christian, and put him out of his station, and to enlarge the perplexity, untill it spread, and taint his other duties or piety, which none can perform so wel in trouble, as in calmness. Here the Parson interposeth with his distinction, and shews the perplexed Christian, that this prayer being additionary, not necessary; taken in, not commanded, the omission thereof upon just occasion ought by no means to trouble him. God knows the occasion as wel as he, and He is as a gracious Father, who more accepts a common course of devotion, then dislikes an occasionall interruption. And of this he is so to assure himself, as to admit no scruple, but to go on as cheerfully, as if he had not been interrupted. By this it is evident, that the distinction is of singular use and comfort, especially to pious minds, which are ever tender, and delicate. But here there are two Cautions to be added. First, that this interruption proceed not out of slacknes, or coldness, which will appear if the Pious soul foresee and prevent such interruptions, what he may, before they come, and when for all that they do come, he be a little affected therewith, but not afflicted, or troubled; if he resent it to a mislike, but not a griefe. Secondly, that this interruption proceede not out of shame. As for example: A godly man, not out of superstition, but of reverence to Gods house, resolves whenever he enters into a Church, to kneel down, and pray, either blessing God, that he will be pleased to dwell among men; or beseeching him, that whenever he repaires to his house, he may behave himself so as befits so great a presence; and this briefly. But it happens, that neer the place where he is to pray, he spyes some scoffing ruffian, who is likely to deride him for his paines: if he now, shall either for fear or shame, break his custome, he shall do passing ill: so much the rather ought he to proceed, as that by this he may take into his Prayer humiliation also. On the other side, if I am to visit the sick in haste, and my neerest way ly through the Church, I will not doubt to go without staying to pray there (but onely, as I passe, in my heart) because this kinde of Prayer is additionary, not necessary, and the other duty overweighs it: So that if any scruple

arise, I will throw it away, and be most confident, that God is not displeas'd. This distinction may runne through all Christian duties, and it is a great stay and setling to religious souls.

CHAP. XXXII. *The Parson's Surveys.*

THE Countrey Parson hath not onely taken a particular Survey of the faults of his own Parish, but a generall also of the diseases of the time, that so, when his occasions carry him abroad, or bring strangers to him, he may be the better armed to encounter them. The great and nationall sin of this Land he esteems to be Idleness; great in it selfe, and great in Consequence: For when men have nothing to do, then they fall to drink, to steal, to whore, to scoffe, to revile, to all sorts of gamings. Come, say they, we have nothing to do, lets go to the Tavern, or to the stews, or what not. Wherefore the Parson strongly opposeth this sin, whersoever he goes. And because Idleness is twofold, the one in having no calling, the other in walking carelesly in our calling, he first represents to every body the necessity of a vocation. The reason of this assertion is taken from the nature of man, wherein God hath placed two great Instruments, Reason in the soul, and a hand in the Body, as ingagements of working: So that even in Paradise man had a calling, and how much more out of Paradise, when the evils which he is now subject unto, may be prevented, or diverted by reasonable employment. Besides, every gift or ability is a talent to be accounted for, and to be improved to our Masters Advantage. Yet is it also a debt to our Countrey to have a Calling, and it concernes the Common-wealth, that none should be idle, but all busied. Lastly, riches are the blessing of God, and the great Instrument of doing admirable good; therefore all are to procure them honestly, and seasonably, when they are not better employed. Now this reason crosseth not our Saviours precept of selling what we have, because when we have sold all, and given it to the poor, we must not be idle, but labour to get more, that we may give more, according to St. Pauls rule, [Ephes. 4. 28.](#) [I Thes. 4. 11, 12.](#) So that our Saviours selling is so far from crossing Saint Pauls working, that it rather establisheth it, since they that have nothing, are fittest to work. Now because the onely opposer to this Doctrine is the Gallant, who is witty enough to abuse both others, and himself, and who is ready to ask, if he shall mend shoos, or what he shall do? Therefore the Parson unmoved, sheweth, that ingenuous and fit employment is never wanting to those that seek it. But if it should be, the Assertion stands thus: All are either to have a Calling, or prepare for it: He that hath or can have yet no employment, if he truly, and seriously prepare for it, he is safe and within bounds. Wherefore all are either presently to enter into a Calling, if they be fit for it, and it for them; or else to examinewith care, and advice, what they are fittest for, and to prepare for that with all diligence. But it will not be amisse in this exceeding usefull point to descend to particulars: for exactnesse lyes in particulars. Men are either single, or married: The married and house-keeper hath his hands full, if he do what he ought to do. For there are two branches of his affaires; first, the improvement of his family, by bringing them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and secondly, the improvement of his grounds, by drowing, or draining, or stocking, or fencing, and ordering his land to the best advantage both of himself, and his neighbours. The Italian says, None fouls his hands in his own businesse: and it is an honest, and just

care, so it exceed not bounds, for every one to imploy himselfe to the advancement of his affairs, that hee may have wherewithall to do good. But his family is his best care, to labour Christian soules, and raise them to their height, even to heaven; to dresse and prune them, and take as much joy in a straight-growing childe, or servant, as a Gardiner doth in a choice tree. Could men finde out this delight, they would seldome be from home; whereas now, of any place, they are least there. But if after all this care well dispatched, the house-keepers Family be so small, and his dexterity so great, that he have leisure to look out, the Village or Parish which either he lives in, or is neer unto it, is his employment. Hee considers every one there, and either helps them in particular, or hath generall Propositions to the whole Towne or Hamlet, of advancing the publick Stock, and managing Commons, or Woods, according as the place suggests. But if hee may bee of the Commission of Peace, there is nothing to that: No Common-wealth in the world hath a braver Institution then that of Justices of the Peace: For it is both a security to the King, who hath so many dispersed Officers at his beck throughout the Kingdome, accountable for the publick good; and also an honourable Employment of a Gentle, or Noble-man in the Country he lives in, inabling him with power to do good, and to restrain all those, who else might both trouble him and the whole State. Wherefore it behoves all, who are come to the gravitie, and ripenesse of judgement for so excellent a Place, not to refuse, but rather to procure it. And whereas there are usually three Objections made against the Place; the one, the abuse of it, by taking petty Countrey bribes; the other, the casting of it on mean persons, especially in some Shires; and lastly, the trouble of it: These are so far from deterring any good man from the place, that they kindle them rather to redeem the Dignity either from true faults, or unjust aspersions. Now, for single men, they are either Heirs, or younger Brothers: The Heirs are to prepare in all the fore-mentioned points against the time of their practice. Therefore they are to mark their Fathers discretion in ordering his House and Affairs; and also elsewhere, when they see any remarkable point of Education or good husbandry, and to transplamt it in time to his own home, with the same care as others, when they meet with good fruit, get a graffe of the tree, inriching their Orchard, and neglecting their House. Besides, they are to read Books of Law, and Justice; especially, the Statutes at large. As for better Books of Divinity, they are not in this Consideration, because we are about a Calling, and a preparation thereunto. But chiefly, and above all things, they are to frequent Sessions and Sizes; for it is both an honor which they owe to the Reverend Judges and Magistrates, to attend them, at least in their Shire; and it is a great advantage to know the practice of the Land; for our Law is Practice. Sometimes he may go to Court, as the eminent place both of good and ill. At other times he is to travell over the King's Dominions, cutting out the Kingdome into Portions, which every yeer he surveys peecemeal. When there is a Parliament, he is to endeavour by all means to be a Knight or Burgess there; for there is no School to a Parliament. And when he is there, he must not only be a morning man, but at Committees also; for there the

particulars are exactly discussed, which are brought from thence to the House but in generall. When none of these occasions call him abroad, every morning that hee is at home hee must either ride the Great Horse, or exercise some of his Military gestures. For all Gentlemen, that are now weakned, and disarmed with sedentary lives, are to know the use of their Arms: and as the Husbandman labours for them, so must they fight for, and defend them, when occasion calls. This is the duty of each to other, which they ought to fulfill: And the Parson is a lover of and exciter to justice in all things, even as John the Baptist squared out to every one (even to Souldiers) what to do. As for younger Brothers, those whom the Parson finds loose, and not ingaged into some Profession by their Parents, whose neglect in this point is intolerable, and a shamefull wrong both to the Common-wealth, and their own House: To them, after he hath shew'd the unlawfulness of spending the day in dressing, Complementing, visiting, and sporting, he first commends the study of the Civill Law, as a brave, and wise knowledg, the Professours whereof were much imployed by Queen Elizabeth, because it is the key of Commerce, and discovers the Rules of forraine Nations. Secondly, he commends the Mathematicks, as the only wonder-working knowledg, and therefore requiring the best spirits. After the severall knowledg of these, he adviseth to insist and dwell chiefly on the two noble branches therof, of Fortification, and Navigation; The one being usefull to all Countreys, and the other especially to Hands. But if the young Gallant think these Courses dull, and phlegmatick, where can he busie himself better, then in those new Plantations, and discoveries, which are not only a noble, but also as they may be handled, a religious imployment? Or let him travel into Germany, and France, and observing the Artifices, and Manufactures there, transplant them hither, as divers have done lately, to our Countrey's advantage.

CHAP. XXXIII. *The Parson's Library.*

THE Countrey Parson's Library is a holy Life: for besides the blessing that that brings upon it, there being a promise, that if the Kingdome of God be first sought, all other things shall be added, even it selfe is a Sermon. For the temptations with which a good man is beset, and the ways which he used to overcome them, being told to another, whether in private conference, or in the Church, are a Sermon. Hee that hath considered how to carry himself at table about his appetite, if he tell this to another, preacheth; and much more feelingly, and judiciously, then he writes his rules of temperance out of bookes. So that the Parson having studied, and mastered all his lusts and affections within, and the whole Army of Temptations without, hath ever so many sermons ready penn'd, as he hath victories. And it fares in this as it doth in Physick: He that hath been sick of a Consumption, and knows what recovered him, is a Physitian so far as he meetes with the same disease, and temper; and can much better, and particularly do it, then he that is generally learned, and was never sick. And if the same person had been sick of all diseases, and were recovered of all by things that he knew; there were no such Physician as he, both for skill and tendernesse. Just so it is in Divinity, and that not without manifest reason: for though the temptations may be diverse in divers Christians, yet the victory is alike in all, being by the self-same Spirit. Neither is this true onely in the military state of a Christian life, but even in the peaceable also; when the servant of God, freed for a while from temptation, in a quiet sweetnesse seeks how to please his God. Thus the Parson considering that repentance is the great vertue of the Gospel, and one of the first steps of pleasing God, having for his owne use examined the nature of it, is able to explaine it after to others. And particularly, having doubted sometimes, whether his repentance were true, or at least in that degree it ought to be, since he found himselfe sometimes to weepe more for the losse of some temporall things, then for offending God, he came at length to this resolution, that repentance is an act of the mind, not of the Body, even as the Originall signifies; and that the chiefe thing, which God in Scriptures requires, is the heart, and the spirit, and to worship him in truth, and spirit. Wherefore in case a Christian endeavour to weep, and cannot, since we are not Masters of our bodies, this sufficeth. And consequently he found, that the essence of repentance, that it may be alike in all Gods children (which as concerning weeping it cannot be, some being of a more melting temper then others) consisteth in a true detestation of the soul, abhorring, and renouncing sin, and turning unto God in truth of heart, and newnesse of life: Which acts of repentance are and must be found in all Gods servants: Not that weeping is not usefull, where it can be, that so the body may joyn in the grief, as it did in the sin; but that, so the other acts be, that is not necessary: so that he as truly repents, who performes the other acts of repentance, when he cannot more, as he that weeps a floud of tears. This Instruction and comfort the Parson getting for himself, when he tels it to others, becomes a Sermon. The like he doth in other Christian vertues, as of Faith, and Love, and the Cases of Conscience

belonging thereto, wherein (as Saint *Paul* implies that he ought, [Romans 2.\[21\]](#)) hee first preacheth to himselfe, and then to others.

CHAP. XXXIV. *The Parson's Dexterity in applying of Remedies.*

THE Countrey Parson knows, that there is a double state of a Christian even in this Life, the one military, the other peaceable. The military is, when we are assaulted with temptations either from within or from without, The Peaceable is, when the Divell for a time leaves us, as he did our Saviour, and the Angels minister to us their owne food, even joy, and peace; and comfort in the holy Ghost. These two states were in our Saviour, not only in the beginning of his preaching, but afterwards also, as [Mat. 22. 35](#). He was tempted: And [Luke 10. 21](#). He rejoyced in Spirit: And they must be likewise in all that are his. Now the Parson having a Spirituall Judgement, according as he discovers any of his Flock to be in one or the other state, so he applies himselfe to them. Those that he findes in the peaceable state, he adviseth to be very vigilant, and not to let go the raines as soon as the horse goes easie. Particularly, he counselleth them to two things: First, to take heed, lest their quiet betray them (as it is apt to do) to a coldnesse, and carelesnesse in their devotions, but to labour still to be as fervent in Christian Duties, as they remember themselves were, when affliction did blow the Coals. Secondly, not to take the full compasse, and liberty of their Peace: not to eate of all those dishes at table, which even their present health otherwise admits; nor to store their house with all those furnitures which even their present plenty of wealth otherwise admits; nor when they are among them that are merry, to extend themselves to all that mirth, which the present occasion of wit and company otherwise admits; but to put bounds, and hoopes to their joyes: so will they last the longer, and when they depart, returne the sooner. If we would judg ourselves, we should not be judged; and if we would bound our selves, we should not be bounded. But if they shall fear, that at such, or such a time their peace and mirth have carryed them further then this moderation, then to take Jobs admirable Course, who sacrificed lest his Children should have transgressed in their mirth. So let them go, and find some poore afflicted soul, and there be bountifull, and liberall; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Those that the Parson findes in the military state, he fortifies, and strengthens; with his utmost skill. Now in those that are tempted, whatsoever is unruly, falls upon two heads; either they think, that there is none that can or will look after things, but all goes by chance, or wit: Or else, though there be a great Governour of all things, yet to them he is lost, as if they said, God doth forsake and persecute them, and there is none to deliver them. If the Parson suspect the first, and find sparkes of such thoughts now and then to break forth, then without opposing directly (for disputation is no Cure for Atheisme) he scatters in his discourse three sorts of arguments; the first taken from Nature, the second from the Law, the third from Grace. For Nature, he sees not how a house could be either built without a builder, or kept in repaire without a house-keeper. He conceives not possibly, how the windes should blow so much as they can, and the sea rage so much as it can, and all things do what they can, and all, not only without dissolution of the whole, but also of any part, by taking away so much as the usuall seasons of summer and winter, earing and

harvest. Let the weather be what it will, still we have bread, though sometimes more, sometimes lesse; wherewith also a carefull *Joseph* might meet. He conceives not possibly, how he that would beleve a Divinity, if he had been at the Creation of all things, should lesse beleve it, seeing the Preservation of all things; For Preservation is a Creation; and more, it is a continued Creation, and a creation every moment. Secondly, for the Law, there may be so evident, though unused a proof of Divinity taken from thence, that the Atheist, or Epicurian can have nothing to contradict. The Jewes yet live, and are known: they have their Law and Language bearing witness to them, and they to it: they are Circumcised to this day, and expect the promises of the Scripture; their Countrey also is known, the places, and rivers travelled unto, and frequented by others, but to them an unpenetrable rock, an unaccessible desert. Wherefore if the Jewes live, all the great wonders of old live in them, and then who can deny the stretched out arme of a mighty God? especially since it may be a just doubt, whether, considering the stubbornnesse of the Nation, their living then in their Countrey under so many miracles were a stranger thing, then their present exile, and disability to live in their Countrey. And it is observable, that this very thing was intended by God, that the Jewes should be his proof, and witnesses, as he calls them, *Isaiah 43. 12*. And their very dispersion in all Lands, was intended not only for a punishment to them; but for an exciting of others by their sight, to the acknowledging of God and his power *Psalm 59. 11*. And therefore this kind of Punishment was chosen rather then any other. Thirdly, for Grace. Besides the continuall succession (since the Gospell) of holy men, who have born witness to the truth, (there being no reason, why any should distrust Saint *Luke*, or *Tertullian*, or *Chrysostome*, more then *Tully*, *Virgill*, or *Livy*;) There are two Prophecies in the Gospel, which evidently argue Christs Divinity by their success: the one concerning the woman that spent the oyntment on our Saviour, for which he told, that it should never be forgotten, but with the Gospel it selfe be preached to all ages, *Matth. 26. 13*. The other concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; of which our Saviour said, that that generation should not passe, till all were fulfilled, *Luke 21.32*. Which *Josephus's* History confirmeth, and the continuance of which verdict is yet evident. To these might be added the Preaching of the Gospel in all Nations, *Matthew 24. 14*. which we see even miraculously effected in these new discoveries, God turning mens Covetousnesse, and Ambitions to the effecting of his word. Now a prophesie is a wonder sent to Posterity, least they complaine of want of wonders. It is a letter sealed, and sent, which to the bearer is but paper, but to the receiver, and opener, is full of power. Hee that saw Christ open a blind mans eyes, saw not more Divinity, then he that reads the womans oyntment in the Gospell, or sees Jerusalem destroyed. With some of these heads enlarged, and woven into his discourse, at severall times and occasions, the Parson setleth wavering minds. But if he sees them neerer desperation, then Atheisme; not so much doubting a God, as that he is theirs; then he dives unto the boundlesse Ocean of Gods Love, and the unspeakeable riches of his loving kindnesse. He hath one argument unanswerable.

If God hate them, either he doth it as they are Creatures, dust and ashes; or as they are sinfull. As Creatures, he must needs love them; for no perfect Artist ever yet hated his owne worke. As sinfull, he must much more love them; because notwithstanding his infinite hate of sinne, his Love overcame that hate; and with an exceeding great victory, which in the Creation needed not, gave them love for love, even the son of his love out of his bosome of love. So that man, which way soever he turnes, hath two pledges of Gods Love, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; the one in his being, the other in his sinfull being: and this as the more faulty in him, so the more glorious in God. And all may certainly conclude, that God loves them, till either they despise that Love, or despaire of his Mercy: not any sin else, but is within his Love; but the despising of Love must needs be without it. The thrusting away of his arme makes us onely not embraced.

CHAP. XXXV. *The Parson's Condescending.*

THE Country Parson is a Lover of old Customes, if they be good, and harmlesse; and the rather, because Country people are much addicted to them, so that to favour them therein is to win their hearts, and to oppose them therin is to deject them. If there be any ill in the custome, that may be severed from the good, he pares the apple, and gives them the clean to feed on. Particularly, he loves Procession, and maintains it, because there are contained therein 4 manifest advantages. First, a blessing of God for the fruits of the field: Secondly, justice in the Preservation of bounds: Thirdly, Charity in loving walking, and neighbourly accompanying one another, with reconciling of differences at that time, if there be any: Fourthly, Mercy in relieving the poor by a liberall distribution and largesse, which at that time is, or ought to be used. Wherefore he exacts of all to bee present at the perambulation, and those that withdraw, and sever themselves from it, he mislikes, and reproves as uncharitable, and unneighbourly; and if they will not reforme, presents them. Nay, he is so farre from condemning such assemblies, that he rather procures them to be often, as knowing that absence breedes strangeness, but presence love. Now Love is his business, and aime; wherefore he likes well, that his Parish at good times invite one another to their houses, and he urgeth them to it: and somtimes, where he knowes there hath been or is a little difference, hee takes one of the parties, and goes with him to the other, and all dine or sup together. There is much preaching in this friendliness. Another old Custome there is of saying, when light is brought in, God send us the light of heaven; And the Parson likes this very well; neither is he affraid of praising, or praying to God at all times, but is rather glad of catching opportunities to do them. Light is a great Blessing, and as great as food, for which we give thanks: and those that thinke this superstitious, neither know superstition, nor themselves. As for those that are ashamed to use this forme, as being old, and obsolete, and not the fashion, he reformes, and teaches them, that at Baptisme they professed not to be ashamed of Christs Cross, or for any shame to leave that which is good. He that is ashamed in small things, will extend his pusillanimity to is greater. Rather should a Christian Souldier take such occasions to harden himseife, and to further his exercises of Mortification.

CHAP. XXXVI. *The Parson Blessing.*

THE Countrey Parson wonders, that Blessing the people is in so little use with his brethren: whereas he thinks it not onely a grave, and reverend thing, but a beneficial also. Those who use it not, do so either out of niceness, because they like the salutations, and complements, and formes of worldly language better; which conformity and fashionableness is so exceeding unbefitting a Minister, that it deserves reproof, not refutation: Or else, because they think it empty and superfluous. But that which the Apostles used so diligently in their writings, nay, which our Saviour himselfe used, *Marke IO. 16.* cannot bee vain and superfluous. But this was not proper to Christ, or the Apostles only, no more then to be a spirituall Father was appropriated to them. And if temporall Fathers bless their children, how much more may, and ought Spirituall Fathers? Besides, the Priests of the Old Testament were commanded to Blesse the people, and the forme thereof is prescribed, *Numb. 6.[22-27.]* Now as the Apostle argues in another case; if the Ministration of condemnation did bless, how shall not the ministration of the spirit exceed in blessing? The fruit of this blessing good *Hannah* found, and received with great joy, *I Sam. I. 18.* though it came from a man disallowed by God: for it was not the person, but Priesthood, that blessed; so that even ill Priests may blesse. Neither have the Ministers power of Blessing only, but also of cursing. So in the Old Testament *Elisha* cursed the children, *2 Kin. 2. 24.* which though our Saviour reprov'd as unfitting for his particular, who was to shew all humility before his Passion, yet he allows in his Apostles. And therefore St. *Peter* used that fearfull imprecation to *Simon Magus*, *Act. 8. [18-25].* *Thy mony perish with thee:* and the event confirmed it. So did St. *Paul*, *2 Tim. 4.14.* and *I Tim. I. 20.* Speaking of *Alexander* the Coppersmith, who had withstood his preaching, *The Lord (saith he) reward him according to his works.* And again, of *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, he saith, he had *delivered them to Satan, that they might learn not to Blaspheme.* The formes both of Blessing, & cursing are expounded in the Common-Prayer-book: the one in, *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. and: The Peace of God, &c.* The other in generall, in the Commination. Now blessing differs from prayer, in assurance, because it is not performed by way of request, but of confidence, and power, effectually applying Gods favour to the blessed, by the interesting of that dignity wherewith God hath invested the Priest, and ingaging of Gods own power and institution for a blessing. The neglect of this duty in Ministers themselves, hath made the people also neglect it; so that they are so far from craving this benefit from their ghostly Father, that they oftentimes goe out of church, before he hath blessed them. In the time of Popery, the Priests *Benedicite*, and his holy water were over highly valued; and now we are fallen to the clean contrary, even from superstition to coldnes, and Atheism. But the Parson first values the gift in himself, and then teacheth his parish to value it. And it is observable, that if a Minister talke with a great man in the ordinary course of complementing language, he shall be esteemed as ordinary complementers; but if he often interpose a Blessing, when the other gives him just oppor-

tunity, by speaking any good, this unusuall form begets a reverence, and makes him esteemed according to his Profession. The same is to be observed in writing Letters also. To conclude, if all men are to blesse upon occasion, as appears [Rom. 12. 14.](#) how much more those, who are spiritual Fathers?

CHAP. XXXVII. *Concerning detraction.*

THE Countrey Parson perceiving, that most, when they are at leasure, make others faults their entertainment and discourse, and that even some good men think, so they speak truth, they may disclose anothers fault, finds it somewhat difficult how to proceed in this point. For if he absolutely shut up mens mouths, and forbid all disclosing of faults, many an evill may not only be, but also spread in his Parish, without any remedy (which cannot be applyed without notice) to the dishonor of God, and the infection of his flock, and the discomfort, discredit, & hinderance of the Pastor. On the other side, if it be unlawful to open faults, no benefit or advantage can make it lawfull; for we must not do evill, that good may come of it. Now the Parson taking this point to task, which is so exceeding useful, and hath taken so deep roote, that it seems the very life and substance of Conversation, hath proceeded thus far in the discussing of it. Faults are either notorious, or private. Again notorious faults are either such as are made known by common fame (and of these, those that know them, may talk, so they do it not with sport, but commiseration;) or else such as have passed judgment, & been corrected either by whipping, or imprisoning, or the like. Of these also men may talk, and more, they may discover them to those that know them not: because infamy is a part of the sentence against malefactours, which the Law intends, as is evident by those, which are branded for rogues, that they may be known; or put into the stocks, that they may be looked upon. But some may say, though the Law allow this, the Gospel doth not, which hath so much advanced Charity, and ranked backbiters among the generation of the wicked, [Rom. I. 30](#). But this is easily answered: As the executioner is not uncharitable, that takes away the life of the condemned, except besides his office, he add a tincture of private malice in the joy, and hast of acting his part; so neither is he that defames him, whom the Law would have defamed, except he also do it out of rancour. For in infamy, all are executioners, and the Law gives a malefactor to all to be defamed. And as malefactors may lose & forfeit their goods, or life; so may they their good name, and the possession thereof, which before their offence and Judgment they had in all mens brests: for all are honest, till the contrary be proved. Besides, it concerns the Common-Wealth, that Rogues should be known, and Charity to the publick hath the precedence of private charity. So that it is so far from being a fault to discover such offenders, that it is a duty rather, which may do much good, and save much harme. Neverthelesse, if the punished delinquent shall be much troubled for his sins, and turne quite another man, doubtlesse then also mens affections and words must turne, and forbear to speak of that, which even God himself hath forgotten.

The Authour's Prayer before Sermon.

O Almighty and ever-living Lord God! Majesty, and Power, and Brightnesse, and Glory! How shall we dare to appear before thy face, who are contrary to thee, in all we call thee? for we are darknesse, and weaknesse, and filthinesse, and shame. Misery and sin fill our days: yet art thou our Creatour, and we thy work: Thy hands both made us, and also made us Lords of all thy creatures; giving us one world in our selves, and another to serve us: then did'st thou place us in Paradise, and wert proceeding still on in thy Favours, untill we interrupted thy Counsels, disappointed thy Purposes, and sold our God, our glorious, our gracious God for an apple. O write it! O brand it in our foreheads for ever: for an apple once we lost our God, and still lose him for no more; for money, for meat, for diet: But thou Lord, art patience, and pity, and sweetnesse, and love; therefore we sons of men are not consumed. Thou hast exalted thy mercy above all things; and hast made our salvation, not our punishment, thy glory: so that then where sin abounded, not death, but grace superabounded; accordingly, when we had sinned beyond any help in heaven or earth, then thou saidest, Lo, I come! then did the Lord of life, unable of himselfe to die, contrive to do it. He took flesh, he wept, he died; for his enemies he died; even for those that derided him then, and still despise him. Blessed Saviour! Many waters could not quench thy love! nor no pit overwhelm it. But though the streams of thy blood were currant through darknesse, grave, and hell; yet by these thy conflicts, and seemingly hazards, didst thou arise triumphant, and therein mad'st us victorious. Neither doth thy love yet stay here! for, this word of thy rich peace, and reconciliation, thou hast committed, not to Thunder, or Angels, but to silly and sinfull men: even to me, pardoning my sins, and bidding me go feed the people of thy love. Blessed be the God of Heaven and Earth! who onely doth wondrous things. Awake therefore, my Lute, and my Viol! awake all my powers to glorifie thee! We praise thee! we blesse thee! we magnifie thee for ever! And now, O Lord! in the power of thy Victories, and in the wayes of thy Ordinances, and in the truth of thy Love, Lo, we stand here, beseeching thee to blesse thy word, wherever spoken this day throughout the universall Church. O make it a word of power and peace, to convert those who are not yet thine, and to confirme those that are: particularly, blesse it in this thy own Kingdom, which thou hast made a Land of light, a store-house of thy treasures and mercies: O let not our foolish and unworthy hearts rob us of the continuance of this thy sweet love: but pardon our sins, and perfect what thou hast begun. Ride on Lord, because of the word of truth, and meeknesse. and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Especially, blesse this portion here assembled together, with thy unworthy Servant speaking unto them: Lord Jesu! teach thou me, that I may teach them; Sanctifie, and inable all my powers, that in their full strength they may deliver thy message reverently, readily, faithfully, & fruitfully. O make thy word a swift word, passing from the ear to the heart, from the heart to the life and conversation: that as the rain returns not empty, so neither may thy word, but accomplish that for which it is given. O

Lord hear, O Lord forgive! O Lord, hearken. and do so for thy blessed Son's sake, in whose sweet and pleasing words, we say, *Our Father*, &c.

A Prayer after Sermon.

Blessed be God! and the Father of all mercy! who continueth to pour his benefits upon us. Thou hast elected us, thou hast called us, thou hast justified us, sanctified, and glorified us: Thou wast born for us, and thou livedst and diedst for us: Thou hast given us the blessings of this life, and of a better. O Lord! thy blessings hang in clusters, they come trooping upon us! they break forth like mighty waters on every side. And now Lord, thou hast fed us with the bread of life: so man did eat Angels food: O Lord, blesse it: O Lord, make it health and strength unto us; still striving & prospering so long within us, untill our obedience reach the measure of thy love, who hast done for us as much as may be. Grant this dear Father, for thy Son's sake, our only Saviour: To whom with thee, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one most glorious, incomprehensible God, be ascribed all Honour, and Glory, and Praise, ever. Amen.

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