

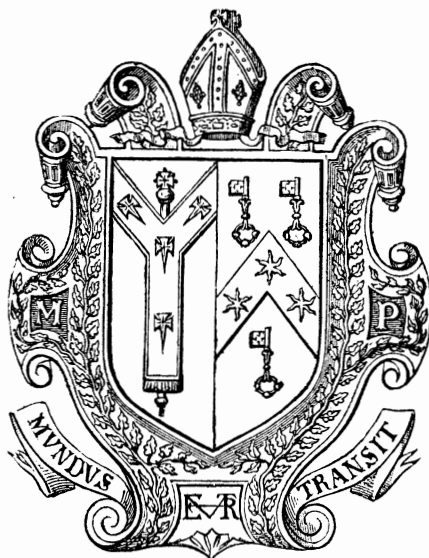
**THE WORKS**

**OF**

**JAMES PILKINGTON, B.D.**

**The Parker Society.**

**Instituted A. D. M. DCCC. XL.**



**For the Publication of the Works of the Fathers  
and Early Writers of the Reformed  
English Church.**

THE  
WORKS  
OF  
JAMES PILKINGTON, B.D.,  
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

---

EDITED FOR  
**The Parker Society,**

BY THE  
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\* Now first published.



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

OF

BISHOP PILKINGTON.

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JAMES PILKINGTON<sup>1</sup> was born at Rivington in Lancashire in the year 1520, and was the third son of Richard Pilkington Esq. of Rivington Park, a gentleman of an ancient and honourable family, which had early embraced the doctrines of the reformed religion. There is no record to shew where he received the rudiments of his education; but about his sixteenth year he was admitted a member of St John's College<sup>2</sup>, Cambridge, where he proceeded to the degree of A.B. in the year 1539, and was elected fellow on the 26th of March in the same year. He afterwards took the degrees of A.M. 1542, and B.D. 1550, but it does not appear that he ever took the higher degree of D.D.; whether out of disregard to it, as Baker intimates, or from the whole course of his pursuits being suddenly interrupted by the troubles consequent on the accession of queen Mary.

<sup>1</sup> It appears from Baker's MSS. that the bishop's brother, Leonard, signed his name Pilkinton on his admission to his fellowship, and on his restitution (having been ejected under queen Mary) Pilkington.

<sup>2</sup> This is doubtful. Mr Whitaker in his memoir of the bishop, prefixed to the "Statutes and Charter of Rivington School," conjectures that he was first admitted at Pembroke Hall, from the circumstance that the fellows of that college, in their congratulatory letter to archbishop Grindal (1576), boast of having had among their *alumni* bishops of Carlisle, Exeter, Winchester, *Durham*, London, and York. But Baker's MS. History of St John's College distinctly asserts that he was admitted of St John's; which however is not incompatible with his having first entered at Pembroke, and afterwards removed. In one of the Registrar's lists of degrees James Pilkington of Pembroke occurs; but it is doubtful whether this can have been the same that was elected fellow of St John's in 1539.

He was zealous in forwarding the Reformation; and while residing on his fellowship, read theological lectures gratuitously on the Acts of the Apostles in the public schools; of the importance of which in that deeply interesting crisis, as well as of the general estimation in which he was held, we may judge not only from the testimony of Bucer, that he “acquitted himself learnedly and piously,” but also from the fact of his being subsequently appointed to take a part in the disputation on the popish tenets, held at Cambridge on the 20th and 24th of June, 1549, a record of which is preserved in the second volume of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*. In December, 1550, he was appointed, by Edward the sixth, to the vicarage of Kendal in Westmoreland, which however he resigned in the following year, probably from his preference of a college residence. We hear nothing more of him until about the year 1554, when, to avoid the Marian persecutions, he, with many other eminent divines, retired to the continent; and lived at Zurich, at Basil, and lastly at Geneva. At Basil he read lectures on Ecclesiastes, both epistles of St Peter, and that of St Paul to the Galatians; but there is no evidence to shew that these lectures were ever printed, and Tanner’s statement to that effect may naturally be traced to the mistake of his authority (*Bal.* i. e. *Bale*) confounding the delivery of the lectures, and the conversational discussion of them, with publication<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> “John Bale says, he had expounded both the Epistles of St Peter, and had then Solomon’s Ecclesiastes under his hands; but these, I suppose, were never published.” Baker’s MS. *History of St John’s College*. Bale’s words are: Quorum Jacobus (sc. Pilkintonus) Salomonis Ecclesiasten, utramque D. Petri epistolam, ac Paulum ad Galatas; Ricardus, &c. \* \* \* nobis qui adhuc Basileæ sumus, piissime ac doctissime exposuerunt. Sed eorum scripta nondum prodierunt in lucem: quod tamen, Deo fortunante, *futurum speramus*. Vivunt hoc anno Domini 1558, quo ista scripsimus. Balei Scriptorum Illustrium M. Britannię posterior pars, p. 113. Basil. 1559.—Strype says the same thing, but he does not any where speak of these expositions as having been



Upon the death of queen Mary, in 1558, the exiles made preparation for returning home. Pilkington was then at Frankfort; and when the letter from the English church at Geneva was received there, exhorting to "unanimity in teaching and practising the knowledge of God's word" upon arriving in their own country, he was the first to sign on behalf of the church at Frankfort, and therefore probably was himself the writer of, the "peaceable letter" sent in reply, which is certainly marked by great wisdom and moderation; the general purport of which was, that the appointment of ceremonies would rest not with themselves, but with persons duly authorised; that they would "submit to such orders as should be established by authority, being not of themselves wicked;" that the reformed churches might differ in ceremonies, so that they agreed in the chief points of religion; and lastly, that in case of the intrusion of any that were offensive, they would "brotherly join to be suitors" for their reformation or abolition<sup>2</sup>.

On his return to England, he was associated with Bill, Parker, Grindal, Cox, Guest, Whitehead, and May, as commissioners to revise the Book of Common Prayer; being appointed to that office by a proclamation issued in December, 1558, and the work was completed in April of the following year. In this year, 1559, he was appointed also one of the commissioners for visiting Cambridge, to receive from the heads of houses and others their oath of allegiance to the queen and of her supremacy. By this visitation all ordinary jurisdiction in the university was suspended; and on the 20th of July he was admitted Master of St John's College and Regius Professor of Divinity: whether "by the act," or only "with

printed; nor are they mentioned in the Catalogue of English printed books, 1595, by Maunsell, where the expositions of Aggeus, Abdias, and Nehemiah, printed in this collection, are noticed.

<sup>2</sup> See Strype, *Annals*, i. i. p. 263. 8vo.

But in this volume there is only one prayer stated to be Pilkington's, viz. that printed in p. 273 of the present edition.

The "Defence of the English Service," which Watt also adds, is no doubt that defence which is contained in the Answer to popish Questions subjoined to the "Confutation." For Strype (*Annals*, 1. i. p. 201.) speaks of it as an answer to "a paper of questions;" and in his account of the answer quotes the substance of what is contained in pp. 626-8. of this edition.

The author himself refers more than once to his Exposition on Ezra; and particularly in p. 367 of this volume he seems to speak of it as if it were in print. If it ever was printed, it seems to be now irrecoverably lost. Probably bishop Pilkington wrote comments on several books of scripture, which have perished in MS.

COMMENTARY

ON

THE PROPHETS

HAGGAI AND OBADIAH.

[PILKINGTON.]

1

**C** Aggeus and  
Abdias Prophetes,  
the one corrected, the  
other newly added,  
and both at large  
declared.

**T**he earnest loue that I  
beare to thy house hath eaten  
me. Psal. lxi.  
Ioan. ii.

**H**inees hath tourned  
awaye my anger because he  
was moued with loue  
of me. Num.  
xvi.

## A PREFACE

TO ALL THAT LOVE THE EARNEST PROMOTING OF  
GOD'S GLORY IN HIS CHURCH BY  
TRUE RELIGION.

---

ALTHOUGH the common usage of dedicating books is to require the defence of some worthy personage of learning or authority for the thing that is written; yet the majesty of the matter in this book is such, that it rather defends than seeks defence; and the example of the Prophet, which writes it not to one, but many, suffers me not to send it to any one sort of men particularly, but generally to all that should unfeignedly promote the increase of God's glory, because all degrees of men do owe a duty to the building of this God's house. And if any offence be taken (as, God knows, none is purposely given) the defence of many is greater than of a few; and that authority or credit, which one man alone cannot bring to pass, all jointly together shall more easily obtain.

The Prophet is sent from God to the prince, the high priest, and the people: so I speak to the rulers, the ministers, and commonalty. The chief intent of his prophecy is to stir all to the speedy building of God's house, which they had so long neglected: my labour is to bring some of every sort (for all is not possible) to an earnest furthering of God's true religion, of late most mercifully restored unto us, which not long ago most cruelly was persecuted, of many yet hated, and of every man almost now too coldly followed and practised. But if this prophecy were read and deeply considered with such a hungry desire of God's glory, as

the Prophet spake and wrote it, and I for my part and poor ability have declared it; I doubt not, but the good should be stirred by God's Spirit more earnestly to seek God's glory, and the froward should be afraid of God's plague, and ashamed stubbornly to strive against the truth continually.

The state of religion in these our miserable days is much like to the troublesome time that this prophet lived in: God grant that after many grievous storms it may take like root in us, as it did then in them! After the long captivity of God's people in Babylon, God gave them gracious king Cyrus, which set them at liberty and sent them home to build God's house: so after our long Romish slavery God raised us up good kings, which restored us God's book that long had been buried, and loosed us from the bondage of strange gods, foreign powers, cruel hypocrites, and wicked idols. And as after that short freedom under good Cyrus ensued the cruelty of Haman, for negligently handling God's building; and not long after mild Ester, came bloody Antiochus for their falling from God: so for our talking gospel, and not worthily walking nor following it, under our gracious late Josias, crept out a swarm of Romish wasps, stinging to death all that would not worship their gods, nor believe their doctrine.

God for his mercy's sake grant, that now for our unthankful coldness in God's cause under our mild Ester burst not out again bloody Antiochus with his whelps, justly to avenge our cold slackness in God's religion and insensible dulness. God's word is never offered and given in vain, or to use at our pleasure: but it works either salvation in them that hear, believe and follow it, or else condemnation in them that proudly despise it, sturdily rebel, or forgetfully do hear, and unthankfully receive his mercies. Therefore as after a storm follows a calm, and after winter comes

summer; so now, where God hath given a breathing time, (lest our weakness had not been able to have borne his heavy displeasure any longer,) let us earnestly apply our work, while we have time; for the night will come when no man shall be able to work.

If this be true (as it is most true indeed) that every deed of our Saviour Christ is our instruction; and also that what things soever are written, they be written for our Rom. xv. learning, as St Paul teacheth; let us call to remembrance, what zeal and earnest love our Saviour Christ especially shewed in building his Father's house, and restoring the true understanding of the scriptures from the superstitious glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, and also what a fervent desire of promoting God's glory our fathers have shewed afore us, that we may be good scholars of our school-master Christ Jesus, and obedient children, walking in the steps of our fathers. Our Lord and Saviour Christ, coming John ii. Luke xix. into the temple and finding it full of buyers, sellers and changers, was grieved to see God's house so misused, gat a whip and drove them all out, saying, "My house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves:" so surely all Christians, which unfeignedly bear the name of Christ, and zealously love the building of his house, would gladly see sin punished, and lament that the whip of God's discipline is not shaken in God's house to the driving out and confusion of all greedy thieves, which if they cannot get in at the door by lawful means, will climb in at the window, and for a little money will sell the bodies and souls of Christ's sheep, and make God's house the pope's market place. But as she that had so much work to do, that she could not tell where to begin, sat her down and left all undone: so I say, worldly wise men see so many things out of order in God's house, and so little hope of redress, that

they cannot tell which to correct or amend first, and therefore let the whip lie still, and every man to do what him lust, and sin to be unpunished.

And not only this evil reigns, but the world is come to such a dissolute liberty and negligent forgetting of God, that men sleeping in sin need not so much a whip to drive any out of the church, (so few come there,) but they need a great sort of whips to drive some few thitherward. For come into a church on the sabbath day, and ye shall see but few, though there be a sermon; but the ale-house is ever full. Well worth the papists therefore in their kind: for they be earnest, zealous and painful in their doings; they will build their kingdom more in one year with fire and faggot, than the cold gossellers will do in seven. A popish summoner, spy, or promoter will drive more to the church with a word to hear a latin mass, than seven preachers will bring in a week's preaching to hear a godly sermon. If this be not true, remember the late days of popery, and see who durst offend him that ware a shaven crown. Who looked so high then, but he would give place to a priest's cap? and now who regards the best preacher ye have? O what a condemnation shall this be to all such as have the whip of God's correction in their hand, to see the wicked so diligent and earnest in their doings to set up antichrist; and christian rulers and officers of all sorts, having the whip of correction in their hand both by God's law and the prince's, so coldly behave themselves in setting up the kingdom of Christ, that neither they give good example themselves in diligent praying and resorting to the church, nor by the whip of discipline drive others thitherward! Where appears in any Christians, in these our days, this earnest zeal of Christ, to promote God's glory by such correction, that we may say we be his followers? I fear rather that Christ, of whom we

Zeal in correcting sin is godly.



more talk, than diligently follow or earnestly love, for this cold slackness that he sees in us will say unto us, "Because ye be neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth." Woe be to that realm where God is compelled to take the whip in hand to punish sin, because the rulers will not ! great shall be the plague thereof. Phinees turned away God's anger from his people, because so zealously he avenged God's quarrel, and punished that wickedness which other winked at. David, seeing God's glory defaced, and his enemies so contemptuously to forget the law of the Lord, was so grieved that he said, "the earnest love that he bare toward God made him to pine away, because his enemies had forgotten the word of God." Elias fleeing from cruel Jesabel, threatening to kill him because he had destroyed Baal's priests, lived in wilderness, desired he might die, for he was weary of his life to see how many were fallen to idolatry, and how few (or none, as he thought) worshipped truly the living God. Though Jehu was an evil man otherways, yet God gave him a worldly blessing, and commended him for his earnest zeal in rooting out the posterity of Achab, pulling down Baal and his sacrificing priests, making a common jakes of the house where they worshipped him. St Paul, seeing the Corinthians rather rejoicing than lamenting or punishing that filthiness committed among them, that one of them had defiled his step-mother, writes unto them, rebukes them all sharply, because they did not correct him, and wills them all to assemble themselves in the name of God, to excommunicate and give him to Satan that had done this wickedness, not to eat and drink with him, that he might be ashamed, repent and amend. So whereas this great zeal and love toward God and his house building stands either in correcting evil and lamenting the defacing of God's glory, or else in wishing and

Rev. iii.

Num. xxv.

Psal. cxix.

1 Kings xix.

2 Kings x.

1 Cor. v.

doing good thereto, and furthering it to our powers: for the first part to be earnestly followed, these few examples shall serve; for the other there be so many, that it is harder to tell where to end, than where to begin.

Moses in the wilderness, willing to make a tabernacle and place where the people should resort to worship their God, had the princes and people so liberal to offer and bring to the making thereof gold, silver, precious stones, silk, purple, hair, iron, brass and timber, of all sorts such plenty, that they would have given more than needed. David, earnestly desiring to build a house for the Lord, (if God would have suffered him,) left his son Salomon so great plenty of all things necessary to that building in a readiness, that he finished that costly building in seven years. Good King Cyrus restored again to God's people all that covetous Nabucho<sup>1</sup> had robbed from them: Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, and his princes gave out of their treasures to the building of the temple and maintenance of their sacrifices according to the law of Moses sufficiently, that they might pray for the king, his children, and the commonwealth. Constantinus the first, worthily called Magnus, a christian emperor, gave great liberty to the bishops and other ministers. Justinianus, Theodosius, Carolus Magnus, Ludovicus Pius, &c., augmented and increased the same with lands and laws. This zeal and earnest love to build God's house and punish sin was in our fathers: this liberality was in princes and rulers, that understood not God's benefits and mercies so plentifully as we do. They pacified God's wrath in correcting sin, and we provoke his plagues with heaping up of sin. They were grieved and weary of their lives, when they see God's enemies despise his word; we wink and cloke it, we laugh and smile at it, and think it not

Zeal to promote God's glory pleases him. Exod. xxxv.

Ezra vi. vii.

We are unlike our fathers.

[<sup>1</sup> Nabucho: Nabuchodonozor, or Nebuchadnezzar. Ed.]

to be a fault. They were offended if wickedness were unpunished, and the party not ashamed that sinned; and we be offended if any man go about to see it punished, or the offender ashamed. They were liberal in giving, relieving and maintaining the ministry; we are greedy in snatching and plucking away from them. They were ready to defend with privileges the ministers, that they should not be withdrawn from doing their duty; and we bind them to such clogs that they cannot do their duty: they restored all that was taken from them; and we study daily how to get more from them. When I compare these doings together, and see how good success the one had, and God's church was gloriously builded that way, both under the law and the gospel; it makes me to quake, when I look what shall fall upon us, going so far clean contrary way. Surely both they and we go not in the right way. The Lord for his crucified Christ's sake, which came down from the bosom of his Father to teach us to build him a house here, that afterward we might reign in glory with him there, grant us all, in all degrees from the highest to the lowest, such an earnest simple love to the true building of his house, as the prophet here teaches us, that uprightly we might walk the right way that he hath gone afore us.

If the prince and nobility will maintain that honourable estate that God hath called them to, and avoid the bondage of foreign powers; if the bishops and clergy will feed God's people with the lively food of our souls, God's doctrine and discipline, and not with man's inventions; if the people will truly serve God and obey their prince, flee from idolatry, and escape God's plagues; let us jointly together earnestly abhor popery, correct sin, turn unto the Lord, delight in his word, reverence his ministers, be diligent in prayer, that we may be lively stones, meet for his building,

and become the temples of the Holy Ghost, where he with the Father and the Son, three persons and one God, may dwell and be praised<sup>1</sup>.

I. P. L. C. D.<sup>2</sup>.

My earnest love to God hath pined me away, because my enemies have forgotten thy words. Psalm exix.

I have been earnestly zealous for the Lord God of hosts, because they have forsaken thy covenant. 1 Kings xix.

[<sup>1</sup> In the first edition, 1560, it is added:

Among many other things that I, a poor workman in God's house, would have said to encourage other workmen, and specially those that should be the chief builders and pillars of his church, these few things at this time shall serve, because the printer makes haste, and I have not leisure.

James Pylkynton, Maister of S. John's Colledge in Cambridge, to the readers.

Then follow the two verses quoted above. Ed.]

[<sup>2</sup> These letters need explanation. In the first edition, on the title page immediately after the passage from Numbers, followed the initials, I. P. L. C. and the Preface was signed by the Author as Master of St John's College, Cambridge. See the preceding note. Here we find, in the second edition, the Preface signed like the title page of the former edition, only with the addition of D.—the Author having in the mean time removed from the Mastership of St John's to the Bishoprick of Durham. It seems therefore, the initials are to be interpreted: James Pilkington, Lancastriensis, (he was a native of Lancashire,) Cantabrigiensis, Dunelmensis. Ed.]

---

# THE PROPHET AGGEUS<sup>3</sup>.

## CHAP. I.

v. 1. *In the second year of king Darius, in the sixth month, and the first day of the month, the word of the Lord was sent by the hand of Aggeus the prophet unto Zerubabel, the son of Salathiel, ruler of Juda; and unto Josua, the son of Josedec, the chief priest, saying.*

INASMUCH that the year, month and day, when this prophecy was spoken, be so diligently noted of the prophet; and also that in which king's days, by whom and to whom it was preached, is so diligently mentioned, it makes much for proving the truth of the prophecy, and that we should the rather believe it. For they that will teach lies, use not so exactly to declare the circumstances wherein things were done, lest, in examination of the same, things be proved contrary, and they found liars. But chiefly this long time here appointed of forty years teacheth us the patience and long sufferance of God, who will not punish so soon as we do a fault, but tarry and look for our repentance and amendment, as he did here so long bear the Jews. And also it setteth before us the unthankful disobedience and slothful negligence of God's people, which after so merciful a deliverance, and bringing them home again from Babylon to their own country, (from whence they were led prisoners by Nabuchodonozor) had so long and many years left off the building of that house, which God willed them so straightly to restore, and the good king Cyrus had given them liberty to do the same, and restored their old ornaments to do it withal. And in them also we learn our own slothfulness to the fulfilling of God's laws: for of ourselves we be no better than they, nor more diligent in well doing, except God stir us up by his undeserved grace.

Noting of circumstances is a token that the thing is true which is telled.

The deferring of God's punishment declareth his long suffering and our slothfulness in well doing.

Ezra i.

[<sup>3</sup> Aggeus and Abdias (sometimes written Obdias) are the Greek forms of the Hebrew names, Haggai and Obadiah, which the Bishop uses according to the practice of his day. So Micheas, Esdras, for Micah, Ezra, &c. ED.]

The Jews for their disobedience to God and his prophets preaching his word, according to the prophecy of Jeremy, had their country spoiled, their city Jerusalem burned, their temple destroyed; they themselves were many killed, some for hunger in the besiege of the city did eat their own children or dung, and the rest were led prisoners to Babylon by Nabuchodonozor, and there kept threescore and ten years in great bondage. After these years ended, by the good king Cyrus they had licence in the first year of his reign to go home and build their temple, as many as would, and all other might freely aid them with money toward that great costly work. Some good amongst them (but few in comparison) as Zorobabel, Josua, Nehemia, Mardocheus, and other whose names are reckoned in Esdras, took in hand to be captains of this worthy work: and after they came to Jerusalem, they builded an altar to serve for to make their offerings and their sacrifices on, until the time that the temple was builded. The first and second years of their coming home to Jerusalem, they were something diligent about their building, and laid the ground-work of the temple. But after, partly for complaints of the rulers in the country (which were strangers, and placed there long afore by Salmanasar, and had accused them to the king, saying, "if they were suffered to build their city, they would rebel, as they were wont, and pay no more taxes;") and partly for slothful negligence of themselves, they left off building unto now, this second year of Darius, God sent this his prophet to stir them up to their work.

By this we may learn that when we lie long on sleep in sin, we cannot wake up ourselves, until God stir us up by his prophets, his word, or holy Spirit. For David, after he had committed adultery with Uria's wife, and caused her husband to be slain, lay without remorse of conscience, without repenting for his evil doings, or asking merey, until the prophet Nathan came and rebuked him for the same. Therefore let us not lightly regard the warnings of God sent unto us by his preachers, but thankfully embrace them, praising his holy name, that not only he hath so patiently borne us so long, and not suddenly destroyed us wallowing in sin, and forgetting him without

Jere. xi.

Jerusalem was destroyed for not obeying the prophet, but after returned.

Ezra ii.

Ezra iii. iv. v.

2 Kings xvii.

Because we cannot stir up ourselves to do good, preaching is to be esteemed. 2 Sam. xii.

repentance ; but now lastly hath called us, by the preaching of his word and restoring his gospel by our gracious queen, to a new life, which God grant us for his Christ's sake.

The Jews had now lien after their coming home almost forty years, not regarding the building of the temple ; wherefore God most lovingly sent his prophet to warn them of their duty, rebuke them of their negligences, and stir them up earnestly to go about that work. And although the counting of these years be hard to count, and are diversely reckoned of divers men, because they would make the Greek histories to agree with the scriptures ; I shall let all other histories pass, because they be too troublesome, and follow that only which the scripture teacheth ; for that is the easiest and plainest to understand, and without all doubt true.

In John we read that the Jews asked our Saviour Christ John ii. what marvellous sign he would work to persuade them, that he might do such things as he did. And he said to them :

“ Destroy ye this temple, and in three days I will build it again.” He spake of his own body, which he would raise up the third day after they had put him to death : but they understood him of that great costly solemn temple of lime and stone, which now they were building, and therefore said :

“ Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou build it in three days ?” Here we see how long this temple was in building : although some expound this place otherwise : yet this is not meant that they were continually working on the same so long, (for partly they were forbidden and stopped by the kings that ruled after Cyrus, Ezra iv. and partly they were negligent and careless for it,) but that there were so many years from the beginning of that work unto the finishing of the same.

In the second year of king Cyrus, which was also the second year of their returning home to Jerusalem from Babylon, they laid the foundations of the temple. In the second year of Darius, as this present place teacheth, they are willed by Aggeus to take in hand their work again ; and in the sixth year of this same Darius they finish it : so that from the second year of Cyrus, unto the sixth year of Darius, must be forty-six years wherein they were building, as St John saith. This was a great negligence of God's people, and unthankfulness, so

This temple was XLVI years in building.

Ezra vi.

If God rule us not every minute, we forget him and ourselves. Philip. i.

long forgetting the building of the temple, and their duty to God, after so merciful and late restoring them to their country: but this is all our crooked nature bent unto, except God do not only begin the good work in us, but also continually lead us in the same to the end. Therefore have we need to look diligently unto ourselves, and pray that God would not turn his merciful eyes from us: for if he never so little withdraw his hand from us, and do not every minute guide all our doings, we fall into a forgetfulness of him and our duties.

Under what kings the temple was builded.

Ezra iv.

1 Esd. iv.

Ezra vii.

Artaxerxes.

Many doubt also which Darius this was, that is here named of the prophet, because the Greek histories make mention of divers of that name, as Darius Histaspis, and Darius Longimanus, with other more. But because the scripture makes mention of none after Cyrus' time, but this one, I will seek no further, nor trouble you with such hard shifts as many do, to make the scripture and those histories to agree. The scriptures make mention of no more kings for this building time, but of Cyrus, Assuerus, Darius and Artaxerxes: therefore in their days must this whole history, and those six and forty years mentioned of St John, be fulfilled. Assuerus I take to be husband to Queen Ester, and this Darius to be her son; whereunto also the Hebrew commentaries agree: and although other think otherwise, yet I see no scripture that they bring. Cyrus gave first licence to the Jews to go home and build this temple. Assuerus moved by the accusations of the rulers, did forbid them to build any more. Darius brought up in the fear of God by his mother Ester, and seeing the wickedness of his father, made a vow, that if he ever reigned after his father, he would build the temple; and so in his second year he gave the Jews free liberty to go home and build their temple, renewed their commission, and gave them money liberally to do it withal. Artaxerxes in his seventh year sent Esdras home again with great gifts, and gave liberty to as many as would go with him; and so the work was finished.

Many do think probably, and to whom I can well agree, that the seventh year of Artaxerxes was the seventh year of this same Darius here named, and that Artaxerxes and Darius is both one man. For Artaxerxes was a common



name to all the kings of Persia, as all the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh first, and Ptolomeus afterward, what time so ever they lived in: and as all the emperors are called Cæsar, although they have proper names of their own beside. But I will not enter further in this matter, for it is more subtile than profitable, and little edification is in the searching of it: every one judge as the scripture will best bear, and as God shall teach him.

The Jews in reckoning their years and months have divers sorts. For sometimes March is their first month and the beginning of their year, and specially when they count their solemn feasts, as God bad Moses, that the moon wherein they came out of Egypt, should be the first moon in the year. Sometime was September, when all the fruits of the earth was gathered into their barns. Sometime they reckon from the day of the coronation of their kings, as we use diversely to reckon also, and sometime to begin at New-year's day, sometime at the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, commonly called the Lady-day in Lent, sometime from the day of coronation of our kings, and sometime when they pay their rents, as Michaelmas, Martinmas<sup>1</sup>, Helenes day<sup>1</sup>, &c. But their moons were reckoned to begin ever from the change of the moon, what day soever of our moon it changed, and not by the calendar (for then there was none made), as we do. So that the first day with us in the calendar might be far from the change of the moon with them, as the 12th, 14th, 19th, 24th, or so forth. Their months for a long time, and their days always, had not proper names given them by men, as we have now, to call them Monday, Sunday, Wednesday, Friday; and January, March, August, July. But they reckoned both their months and days, thus: the first, the second, the third, fourth, &c. Nor we read<sup>2</sup> in the scripture any names given to months unto the time of Moses; and then had they no heathen names, as our days

Pharao.  
Ptolomeus.

Cæsar.

Exod. xii.

Divers sorts  
of reckoning  
years and  
months, and  
names of  
days and  
months.

[<sup>1</sup> Days observed in the Roman church, the names of which only are retained in our calendar: St Martin's day being November 11, and Helen's day, or the *Invention of the cross*, May 3, on which latter day Helena, the mother of Constantine the great, was fabled to have found the *true cross*. Ed.]

[<sup>2</sup> Nor we read: nor read we. Ed.]

and months have now. So by this reckoning, this prophecy was spoken in the second year of Darius's reign, beginning the year of the time of his coronation, whensoever it was; and in the sixth month from March, which is our August, and the first day, which is not Lammas, as we count, but the first of the change of the moon, what time soever it changed. The marking of this reckoning shall help you to understand divers places of scripture, if they be remembered, for because they use another manner of reckoning than we do.

It is hurtful  
to call days  
by heathen  
names.

And although it seem to many but a small matter, by what names the days and months be called; yet if we consider it well, there is a great thing in it. The Latin men and many other more give names to every day in the week of some one of the stars, commonly called the planets, as though the stars ruled all things; as Sunday of the sun, Monday of the moon, Saturday of Saturne: and the months many have their names of emperors, as July, August, for a vain glory that their name should not die with them. And divers other have their names of as light causes.

Wednesday,  
Friday.

If we remember the beginning of the names of two most solemn days in our week, Wednesday and Friday, we shall better perceive the rest. Fabian and other chronicles tell, that when the Saxons invaded this realm, and there were seven kings ruling here at once, they brought with them two idols, the one called Woden, and the other Fria: or else, as other write, it was a noble captain and his wife, which for their worthiness were made gods; and when they had overcome the Englishmen, they made two days in the week to be called Wednesday and Friday by the names of their false gods or captains, and so to be worshipped; and those names we keep still. Why then may it not be thought to be in remembrance of those idols or captains, if every thing have their name after their beginning? And this may be thought the beginning of the Wednesdays and Fridays to be holier than the rest; what pretence soever was found after to fast or hallow them. So this good can come by using the names of strange gods, that idols with false worshipping of God were set up.

We never read in the scripture, nor in any ancient

writer on the scripture, that I remember, that either months or days were called by names of stars, men, idols, or false gods, but Feries, as Augustine often doth use to call them: yea, the pope's Portus<sup>1</sup> calleth the days in the week thus; the second, and the third Fery, &c. But now in time it is come to pass, that every day in the year is called by the name of some saint, and not in all countries alike, but as every country is disposed to worship their saints.

In the New Testament I find no days named, but the first of the sabbath, &c., and the Lord's day, which I take Rev. i. to be the Sunday, when John saw his revelation. Thus superstition crept into the world, when men began to forget calling on the true and only God, and made them gods of every dead saint as they list.

What can we say for ourselves, but that we put great Astronomers do evil in calling some days unfortunate. superstition in days, when we put openly in calendars and almanacks, and say, These days be infortunate, and great matters are not to be taken in hand these days; as though we were of God's privy council? But why are they infortunate? Is God asleep on those days? or doth he not rule the world and all things those days, as well as on other days? Is he weary, that he must rest him in those days? Or doth he give the ruling of those days to some evil spirit or planet? If God give to stars such power that things cannot prosper on those days, then God is the author of evil. If stars do rule men those days, then man is their servant. But God made man to rule, and not be ruled; and all creatures should serve him.

What shall be the cause? If astronomers say true, every man at his birth by his constellation have divers things and desires appointed him. Why then, how can so many divers constellations in so many men at your birth agree, to make one day unlucky in your life to all men? Either let him prove it by learning; or for shame and sin hold your tongue. Stars may have some power on the natural qualities and actions of the body, and for physic; but on the civil voluntary actions of Christians' minds, none.

St Paul says, the children of God be led with the Spirit [Rom. viii. 14.] of God: why then, not by stars. It is faithless superstition

[<sup>1</sup> Portus: breviary. Ed.]

to teach or believe such things; that either at the birth or after we be ruled by stars. All astronomers could never tell why Jacob and Esau, brother twins, born in one moment, should have so contrary natures. What star ruled when Sodom and Gomorrah were burned, and the next towns escaped? were all born under one star that then perished? or all Noe's flood? was not then divers sorts, men and women, young and old, good and bad? Doth not the scripture say that God made seven days, and when he had made all things, he did behold them all, and they were very good? Why shall we then be bold to call them evil, infortunate, and dismal days? If God rule our doings continually, why shall they not prosper on those days, as well as on other? God blessed the seventh day: and yet we dare call that infortunate, evil, and cursed, which he blessed.

Although it be impossible to redress this old common error, so deeply rooted in all tongues and countries; yet it is not unprofitable to note the beginning of these things, that this superstition may be something known. When God made seven days, he called them the first, the second, third, fourth, &c.; but the last day he called the sabbath, which betokens rest, and hath not the name given to be called of any other creature, man, saint, star, or idol; but as the name sounds, so should we on the seventh day rest from all bodily labour, except need compel, but specially from all filthy sin. This is not the right way to make holy men to be remembered, nor surest to avoid idolatry. It were better to be done by writing the chronicles, lives and deaths, of such as were godly indeed, and not every rascal, as *Legenda aurea*, the Legend of lies, does. Pope Boniface the VIII., finding them of Farrare worshipping twenty years one Hermanius as a saint, digged him out of the ground, and burned him for a heretic and author of the sect called Fratricelli, and forbad to worship such evil men<sup>1</sup>. So I

Holy men  
are better  
remembered  
by writing  
than  
calling days  
by their  
names.  
Boniface  
VIII.

[<sup>1</sup> Hæresin Fratricellorum, sacramenta et potestatem ecclesiasticam contemnentium, promiscuos concubitus exercentium, animarum purgatarum beatitudinem ad extremum iudicii diem usque differri docentium, condemnavit [Bonifacius Papa VII. vulgo VIII.] Corpus cujusdam Hermanni, qui, ut scribunt Platina et Sanderus, Fratricellorum dux erat, Ferrariæ exhumari et cremari jussit, licet pro sancto cole-

think we, scraping together a number of saints as we list, worship many evil persons. What holiness was in Thomas Becket, which had gotten two days in the calendar called by his name, and priests must evermore mumble him one wicked memory in matins and evensong? If papists, rebels, and traitors to their kings, as this stout champion of the pope was, may be thus rewarded, it is no marvel if many rebel against their kings as he did.

Thomas  
Becket of  
Canterbury.

In that that he saith, "the word of the Lord was sent by the hand of Aggeus the prophet," it teaches the duty both of the hearer and the preacher. For neither must we teach any thing of man's devices, nor the hearer must regard him so much which preaches, that for his cause we must either more or less believe the thing which is taught, (for the preacher takes his authority of the word of God, and not the word takes his authority of the preacher;) but only because it is the word of God, of whose truth we must not doubt, but with obedience receive it. Unto the preacher saith St Peter, "He that speaks, let him speak as the words of God:"<sup>1 Pet. iv.</sup> and Aggeus being but a poor Levite, keeping this rule, was not to be despised more than the priest. And whereas preaching and believing the things preached is the highest and most pleasant service and worship of God; what thing should be taught, and what punishment is for them which do it not, the scripture teaches plain. St Matthew saith: "They worship me in vain, teaching learnings which are the commandments of men." And the false prophet, which runs before he be sent and deceives the people, speaking in the name of God that which he was not commanded, or else speaking in the name of false gods, shall be put to death. Therefore let the prating pardoner, or the popish priests,

The word  
of God is  
only to be  
taught and  
believed.

Deut. xviii.

retur. Concil. Tom. xxviii. p. 675, Paris. 1644.—But the true name appears to be *Fratricelli*, as given in the Bishop's text, and in the following extract: "This Hermann lived at Ferrara in this century, and was highly esteemed for his sanctity; and after his death, in 1269, he was magnificently entombed in the principal church of Ferrara, and was long held by all for a distinguished saint, whose sanctity God had demonstrated by numerous miracles. But as the *inquisitors of heretical pravity* had long been suspicious of him, &c. &c." Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III. Cent. 13, Part 2, Chap. II. Ed.]

take heed in whose names they speak, and what they teach, when for the greedy gaining of a little money they condemn themselves, and set out to sell heaven, purgatory, and hell, as they were all in their power to give at their pleasure. In the pope's name they promise forty, sixty, an hundred days of pardon; and for a trental<sup>1</sup> they may be brought from hell. The true prophets of God, as appeareth in their writings, always use to say: "Thus saith the Lord," "the word of God was spoken to me," &c.; but the pope's creatures, as pardoners, priests, friars, &c., say: "Thus saith pope Alexander, Gregory, John, Clement, or some such other like;" and nothing will they do without money. Let the true preacher teach the mercies of God, that "God hath so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that every one which believes in him shall not be damned, but have life everlasting;" and yet shall the drunken pardoner and Sir John Lacklatin be better believed than Christ, which spake these words, and promised it: yea, rather the people will buy forgiveness of their sins at the pope and such his messengers' hands, than take it freely at Christ, paying nothing therefore; such is the brutish, blind unthankfulness of the world. "Come and buy freely without money," saith the prophet: and again, "It is I, it is I that put away thy sins for mine own sake;" then it is not for thy money, nor the pope's bulls nor pardons. Let the world therefore take heed; for "if the blind lead the blind, both fall in the ditch." This miserable common excuse, which is so often in their mouths, shall not excuse them, when they say, Thus we are taught, our ghostly fathers say so, and our fathers before us have so believed: Christ says, ye shall both fall in the pit. Believe no doctrine that teaches to go to heaven otherways than by Christ freely, or which is not written and contained in the bible: for that only is the perfect word of God, and which only teaches true salvation. Look the pope's testament throughout, called his decrees and decretals, and you shall not once there be taught to seek comfort at Christ in any trouble of mind; but only to set out his vain glory, and that he is lord of heaven and earth, purgatory and hell; and if thou live never so wickedly,

John iii.

Isai. lv.;  
xliii.Matt. xv.  
Vain ex-  
cuses.

[<sup>1</sup> Trental: trigintal, a service of thirty masses. Ed.]

he and his chaplains have full authority to bring thee from purgatory, so that thou bring them money. I think it hath not been oft heard tell of, that any priest ever said trental without money, or hired any said for themselves: but if they were good, why should they not have them for themselves? If they had charity, they would say them for the poor as well as for the rich: they would not suffer so many poor souls to lie broiling in purgatory, as they think do; no, they would do nothing night nor day all their lives but say masses, if they had such love towards their brethren as they should, and if they were able so to deliver them. For what charity is in him that may help his brother, and will not by all means possible? But they shew by their doings their meaning well enough, when they turn them to the people and say: Of your devotion and charity pray ye for the soul of N.; as though they should say: We pray for money without charity, but ye must do freely of devotion without money. These false prophets, papists, and members of antichrist, came not in the Lord's name, nor speak his word; therefore they be accursed.

Priests pray not without money, nor hire any for themselves.

Also in that he saith, "the word was sent by the hand of Aggeus," we are taught how to esteem preaching ministers by this Hebrew kind of speaking. For as the hand serves to do more things withal than any part of the body; so when they will signify any thing to be done by the ministry and service of any man, they used to say, It was done by the hand of such a man. Therefore the word and message which he brought was the Lord's, and Aggeus was but the servant that brought it. So must we think of the preachers: they be but servants, though they be never so good and learned preachers, and their message is the word of the Lord. Thus says Christ: "It is not you that speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you." St Paul also teaches how we should think upon him and others such preachers, when he says: "Let a man judge and think thus of us, that we be the servants of Christ, and dispensers of God's secret mysteries." Therefore they which seek rather to be lords than servants, and be hinderers of preaching God's word, rather than faithful teachers of God's holy will to his people, are not to be counted amongst the

Preachers are but servants, and must not go before they besent; but their word is God's. Matt. x.

1 Cor. iv.

servants and ministers of Christ, but rather enemies, seeking their own glory more than God's.

And as Aggeus did not go with this message afore he was commanded and sent by God, and therefore was a true prophet; so they which thrust in themselves to teach, not called by God, nor sent by man ordinarily, come often afore they be welcome, and are not true prophets. For it is written: "Let no man take honour unto him, but he which is called of God, as Aaron was." And if the worser learned be preferred afore the better to the ministry, if they be both true teachers, let not the better disdain him, but know God to see further than he doth, and that there be just causes why the other is preferred afore him.

The civil ruler is above the priest.

Adrian IV.

Whereas Zerubabel is first named here, and set in order afore Josua the high priest, and the prophet Aggeus was sent by commission from God to the civil magistrate first; it teaches the pre-eminence the temporal rulers have afore priests, by what name soever they be called. If the pope should have received such letters as these be, and seen a layman preferred and named afore him, he would not have been well content; and specially such a man as Zerubabel was, being neither king nor emperor. What a railing letter wrote Pope Adrian the fourth, an Englishman, to Frederick the emperor, because the emperor in his letters had set his name afore the pope's, writing thus his superscription of his letters: Frederick by the grace of God emperor, &c. unto the holy father Adrian, pope. If he had written thus: To the most reverend and holy father the pope Adrian, God's vicar here in earth, &c., your poor and humble servant Frederick, by the grace of God emperor of Almaine, &c., and had placed the pope's name before his own, all had been well. Because he did not, he called the emperor traitor and rebel against God and St Peter, &c.<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Hadrianus Episcopus servus servorum Dei, Friderico Romano Imperatori, salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem.

Lex divina sicut parentes honorantibus longævitatē promittit, ita maledicentibus patri et matri sententiā mortis intendit. Veritatis autem voce docemur, quia *omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur*. Quapropter, dilecte in Domino fili, super prudentia tua non mediocriter admiramur, quod beato Petro et sanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ non quantam deberes exhibere reverentiam videris. In litteris enim ad nos missis



The commonwealth of the Jews was ruled first by judges, from Moses unto Saul; then by kings, from David to their captivity in Babylon; and now last, from their returning home unto Christ, by princes of the stock of Juda. Their judges <sup>Judges.</sup> were raised up of God to deliver the people, sometime of one tribe or kindred, some time of other, as pleased God; and the children did not succeed the father in such authority. Kings were always of the stock of Juda only, and the <sup>Kings.</sup> son was king after the father; but these princes, although they <sup>Princes.</sup> were for the most part of the stock of Juda, and the succession was by heritage, (except the Machabees,) yet they had not a kingly majesty, crown and power; for they were but as mayors or dukes, and head men amongst the people, as the Hebrew word signifies, *pachath*; and yet they be preferred before the high priest. By which we must learn chief power in all commonwealths to be joined with the temporal sword, though he be but a mean man; and that every man, as St Paul says, “must be subject under him.” Chry- <sup>Rom. xiii.</sup> sostom notes well, writing on that place, that every man must obey the civil power, whether he be apostle, evangelist, prophet, or by what name soever he be called<sup>2</sup>. St Peter himself (being bishop, as they say, at Rome, and of whom they claim all their authority to be above princes, kings, and emperors) was not only obedient to the civil rulers himself, but left written in his epistle, that we should all obey the king, as chief and highest ruler above all other. And although kings and rulers in commonwealths were then infidels, and not christened, yet he bids obey them as the chief and highest; and neither wills any to be disobedient, to pull the sword out of their hands, nor to set up himself

nomen tuum nostro præponis: in quo insolentiæ, ne dicam arrogantia, notam incurris. Acta Conciliorum, etc. Tom. vi. Pars ii. p. 1339. Paris. 1714.

The emperor was Frederick Barbarossa, and the circumstance took place about the year 1155. Ed.]

[<sup>2</sup> Καὶ δεικνύς ὅτι πᾶσι ταῦτα διατάττεται, καὶ ἱερεῦσι καὶ μοναχοῖς, οὐχὶ τοῖς βιωτικοῖς μόνον, ἐκ προουμιῶν αὐτὸ δῆλον ἐποίησεν, οὕτω λέγων· πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω· καὶ ἀπόστολος ἦς, καὶ ἐναγγελιστῆς, καὶ προφήτης, καὶ ὁστισοῦν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀνατρέπει τὴν εὐσέβειαν αὕτη ἢ ὑποταγή. Chrysost. in Rom. xiii. 1. Paris. 1837. Tom. ix. p. 752. Ed.]

above them, but humbly to obey them in all things not contrary to God's truth and religion. But if they command anything contrary to God's word, we must answer with the apostles: "We must rather obey God than man." And let no man think that in displeasing God he can please man: for God, who hath all men's hearts in his hand, will turn his heart to hurt thee, whom thou would please and flatter by displeasing and disobeying God; nor we owe any obedience to any man in such things wherein God is offended and disobeyed. If England had learned this lesson in the time of persecution, we should neither for fear at the voice of a woman have denied our Master with Peter; nor for flattery have worshipped Baal, nor rashly rebelled; but humbly have suffered God's scourge, until it had pleased God to have cast the rod in the fire: the which he would sooner have done, if our unthankful sturdiness had not deserved a longer plague. The Lord for his mercies' sake grant, that both we and all other may hereafter beware from like pulling on our heads the righteous scourge of God for our wickedness, and the impatient bearing of the same when it comes.

Obey God  
rather than  
man.

The text. v. 2. *Thus saith the God of hosts, saying: This people say, The time is not yet come to build the house of God.*

The scrip-  
ture is only  
to be taught.

The prophet dare speak nothing in his own name, or of his own device, but always names the Lord who sent him, and whose message he brought; which thing all preachers must follow most diligently, or else they are not to be believed. St Paul saith: "If I, or an angel from heaven, should teach you any other gospel, beside that which you have received, cursed be he." And mark that he says not, if he teach contrary to that which ye have received, but besides and more than that which ye received: for the pope and his clergy think that they may for our salvation add more to the gospel, so that it be not contrary to the gospel. But St Paul says, besides or more than that which ye received. And Moses saith: "Thou shalt neither put to nor take away anything from the word of God," but content thyself only with that which he teaches; for he only is true,

Gal. i.

Deut. iv. [2.]

and all men be liars, and no man is of his counsel, to teach thee what pleases or displeases him, except he speak himself. And although rulers may ordain some things for an order in the church, yet none of their decrees are articles of our faith; but they may and ought to be changed, when they be hurtful, or turn to any misuse or superstition.

And for all that, that the people had grievously sinned in not building the Lord's house so many years; yet while God did vouchsafe to speak unto them by his prophets and rebuke their sin, there was hope enough of forgiveness, so that they would amend and turn unto God. For like as long as the physician doth appoint the sick man what he shall do, how to diet himself, and what medicines to take, there is hope of life; but if he forsake him, and will not speak unto him, we look for present death: so as long as God of his goodness lets his word be among us, there is good hope of forgiveness; but if he take away his word, there is no comfort left. Saul, when Samuel was dead, asked counsel of God, but he would not speak to him, neither by dreams, nor at the ark of God, nor by visions or prophets; and then he runs to witches: so we, when God teaches not, but are left to ourselves, seek such unlawful means.

While God lets us have his word, it is a token of his love; and the taking it away, of his displeasure. 1 Sam. xxviii.

The Jews had lien almost forty years in this negligence of building God's house: it is almost as many years, since we under pretence of receiving the gospel, and building God's house, have pulled it down: and to root out all the rabble of monks, friars, nuns, canons, &c., we for the most part have sought to enrich ourselves, and one (like thieves) robbed another, and have not of pure love destroyed God's enemies, nor provided for the poor, and furthered learning, nor placed preaching ministers in place of dumb dogs, after the rule of his word, as we should have done, and builded his house.

And what remedy do the wicked papists find to redress this withal? They pull away God's word, and say it was never good world since it came abroad, and that it is not meet for the people to have or read it, but they must receive it at their mouths. They are the nurses, they say, and must chew the meat afore the children eat it. Woe be unto such dissemblers, as under pretence of chewing eat all up; or else, that little which they give (for they say it

Pambo. is not necessary to preach often, by the example of Pambo<sup>1</sup>, which when he had heard one lesson, the first verse of the thirty-ninth Psalm, which begins thus, "I thought with myself, I will keep my ways, that I offend not in my tongue," would hear no more until he had in many years learned to practise that one: which example rather proves that we should diligently learn, than seldom preach); it is, I say, so poisoned in their filthy mouths and stinking breaths, that it poisons and feeds not the hearer. David

Psal. cxix. says: "By what things shall a young man amend his evil ways?" and he answers: "by keeping the sayings of God." And how shall we see to do this? "Thy word, O Lord," he says, "is a lantern for my feet, and a light to my paths." But these thieves that take away the word of God from the people, which is the lantern and light to teach them to go aright, would have them in darkness still, that they should neither see their own faults nor others'. When the fault is not seen, how can it be amended? And how can it be seen, seeing it is in darkness, except the light of God's truth do open it unto us? Moses bids the fathers tell their children the law of God oftentimes, and to study on it in their houses, in going by the way. David bids the same, and the children to ask the fathers. Paul bids fathers bring up their children in the nurture and learning of God; and

Deut. vi. wives, if they will learn anything, ask their husbands at home. Then if the father must teach the son, and the son must ask the father, and the wife must learn of the husband; how shall those fathers and husbands teach, except they be learned? and how can they be learned, having none to teach them but Sir John Mumble-matins, nor cannot be suffered to read themselves? But it is true that St John

1 Cor. xiv. saith: "He that doeth evil hateth the light, and will not come to the light, lest his evil doings be reprov'd." And this to be true their common sayings declare, when they said, it was never good world since every shoemaker could tell the priest's duty. They were ashamed of their faults, and therefore would have you in blindness still, that ye should see neither your own faults, nor tell them of theirs;

John iii.

All sorts  
must learn  
the scrip-  
tures.

[<sup>1</sup> Pambo: a monk of great reputed sanctity in the 4th century. Palladius, Hist. Lausiac. Cap. x. Ed.]

for that specially they cannot abide. But our good God when he blessed his people, and offereth his pardons, he sends many teachers and opens divers ways to learn; and when he is most angry, he takes away his word, that they shall not see how to amend, as Amos sayeth: "I will send Amos viii. a hunger unto the earth, not a hunger of bread, but of the word of God, that they shall seek it from east to west, and not find it." Therefore they which take away his word, or be hinderers thereof, are nothing else but instruments of his wrath and God's scourge to his people.

And that they should the more diligently mark the message which he brought, he tells them in whose name he spake, and saith, "The Lord of hosts spake those words," or, as the Hebrew is, JEHOVA: which is as much to say What Jehovah signifies. as, that God of might, majesty and power, which hath his being and substance of himself, and by whom all other things Exod. iii. [14.] Acts xvii. [28.] Psal. civ. [29.] stand and be, and without whom all things fall to nothing if he do not uphold them, he speaks these words. The other word joined withal, when he calls him the God of hosts, is a word of fear and reverence, as JEHOVA is a name of love and power: so that if either they loved him as a father and God of power, or else feared him as a Lord and master, and one that had many hosts of soldiers to conquer them withal, if they did rebel against him still, they should receive and obey this message. In like manner God Malach. i. by Malachy rebukes the people, which called him father and master in words, but in deeds would nothing do as he taught them, and saith: "If I be your father, where is my love that you owe me? If I be your master, where is the fear that is due to me?" This word and name is seldom read in the New Testament, to call him the God of hosts, because it is a word of fear more than of love, and rather threatens than comforts, which the New Testament doth not commonly. St James says: "The withholden wages of them James v. that have reaped your fields cries vengeance in the ears of Why God is called the Lord of hosts, and how he useth his weakest creatures to pull down the proud withal. the Lord of hosts." It is as much to say in this place as, Thus says that mighty Lord of hosts, whom if ye hear and obey, he will make all his creatures to serve and obey you: but if you be disobedient to him still, he hath many armies and hosts to fight with against you, and all his creatures

from the highest to the least shall be harnessed against you. Think not, that if ye escape one plague, that ye shall escape the rest: for deferring or escaping one is but to see whether ye will amend before the next come. His arrows and thunderbolts are never spent, but he hath new in store: and in the end the victory shall be his, and all disobedient shall perish. And for the better understanding of this to be true, the scripture hath set out divers examples, where God hath fought against man with all his creatures, to let him see how divers kinds of hosts he hath to beat him down withal. The angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone, and killed with pestilence in three days' space seventy thousand for David's offence; and also in one night destroyed in the tents of Sennacherib one hundred and eighty-five thousand. The sun at the commandment of Josua stood still, giving him light, until God's enemies, the Amorites, in the chase were killed by him, so that one day was as long as two. In Egypt the stars and sun gave no light to the Egyptians; but the darkness was so great, gross and thick mists, that no man stirred out of his place, and men might grope the mists, and feel them with their hand: but where the children of Israel were, the sun shone bright and pleasantly. Against Sisara God fought out of heaven. The water drowned the whole world, save eight persons under Noe. The Red Sea suffered God's people to pass, but it drowned Pharao and all his host. The earth swallowed up quick Dathan, Corah and Abiron, and all those rebels with them. In Egypt storms of hail killed the Egyptians' beasts, and destroyed their corn; but harmed not the Israelites. So the tower in Siloe fell and killed eighteen within it. Such drought was in the time of Elias, that it rained not for the space of three years and a half. Such hunger in all countries, that Jacob with all his house went into Egypt; and there also the Egyptians for hunger sold their land, their cattle, wives, children, and themselves, to be bondmen and slaves to their king.

In the besiege of Samaria for hunger an ass's head and dove's dung was sold dear, and women did eat their own children. Joel threatens that God will send four hosts, one of grasshoppers, another of caterpillars, blasting, and locusts,

Gen. xix.  
2 Sam. xxiv.  
2 Kings xix.  
Joshua x.  
Exod. x.  
Judg. v.  
Gen. vii.  
Exod. xiv.  
Num. xvi.  
Exod. ix.  
Luke xiii.  
1 Kings xvii.  
Gen. xlvii.  
2 Kings vi.  
Joel i.

to devour all the fruit of the ground; and all that which one of these left the next should destroy. In Egypt, mark <sup>Exod. viii.</sup> what mighty men of war God chose to fight withal: it rained frogs even into the king's privy chamber and his bed, and flies<sup>1</sup> fought against Pharaoh and the whole country, and made them weary, and a murrain fell among the beasts; but by these means God gat the victory. When the ten <sup>2 Kings xvii.</sup> tribes were led away prisoners, the wild beasts increased, so that they devoured the dwellers in the country, because they feared not God. God closed up the wombs of all <sup>Gen. xx.</sup> Abimelech's women, that they should not bear children, because he had taken Abraham's wife. When the Philistians <sup>1 Sam. v.</sup> had taken the ark of God and misused it, God smote them with emorraides in their secret parts<sup>2</sup>. Herod and divers <sup>Acts xii.</sup> emperors were worried with lice. Arius sitting on the privy avoided all his bowels<sup>3</sup>. Nabuchodonozor of a king <sup>Dan. iv.</sup> was made a beast, eat hay, and lived in woods.

Gedeon with three hundred men, knocking their pot- <sup>Judg. vii.</sup> sherds together, made his enemies (which were so many, that they lay as thick as grasshoppers use to lie on the ground) so afraid, that they strove who might run away first; and if his fellow stood in his way, he killed him straight. The <sup>Josh. vi.</sup> walls of Jericho fell without violence or hand laid on them: the Syrians thinking they heard a noise in the night, and <sup>2 Kings vii.</sup> that their enemies came against them (where there was none such indeed), ran all away. Judith, a weak woman, <sup>Judith xv.</sup> cut off Holophernes' head. Jonathan and his man alone <sup>1 Sam. xiv.</sup> put to flight all the Philistians, whereof many were slain

[<sup>1</sup> In the second edition *flees*; in the first the former vowel is indistinct, *e* or *i*. Ed.]

[<sup>2</sup> The expression of Scripture, 1 Sam. v. 9, is here substituted for the word used by the Author. Ed.]

[<sup>3</sup> This word is also a variation from the original.—The historical fact is recorded as follows: Σύν τε τῷ φόβῳ τῆς γαστρὸς ἐκνεῖτο χαίνωσις, ἐρόμιός τε εἰ ἀφεδρών που πλησίον, μαθῶν τε εἶναι ὀπισθεν τῆς ἀγορᾶς Κωνσταντίνου, ἐκέῖσε ἐβάδιζε. λαμβάνει οὖν λιποθυμία τὸν ἄνθρωπον. καὶ ἅμα τοῖς διαχωρήμασιν ἢ ἔδρα τότε παραντικά ἐκπίπτει, καὶ αἵματος πλῆθος ἐπηκολούθει, καὶ τὰ λεπτὰ τῶν ἐτέρων [ἐντέρων]. συνέτρεχε δὲ αἷμα αὐτῷ τῷ σπληνί τε καὶ τῷ ἥπατι. αὐτίκα οὖν ἐτεθνήκει. Socrat. Eccles. Hist. lib. i. c. 38. p. 190. Paris. 1544. Ed.]

Gen. xi. in the chase. The proud enterprise in building the tower of Babel was stopped by confounding their language, that  
 1 Sam. xvii. one could not understand another. David, a young man with a sling and a stone, kills Goliath so strongly harnessed. A bishop of Mentz<sup>1</sup>, being persecuted with rats from house to house, fled into a tower he had standing in the midst of the river, lying a mile from any land: but the rats followed him and swam over; neither doors nor stone walls could keep them out, but they worried him for his unmercifulness to the people in a year of dearth. Thus our God may well be called the Lord of hosts, which hath so many weapons and divers to punish us withal, as fire, water, earth, darkness, frogs, lice, grasshoppers, caterpillars, pestilence, hail, drought, &c.; so that there is no help to be disobedient and strive against him, for he will have the victory. There is ways above and beneath us, within us and without us, to throw us down at his pleasure: there is no remedy but to obey him, either willingly and be rewarded, or else against our wills and be punished. His power is not yet minished, but he fights still with his enemies, that all glory may be his. He hath foughten sore of late with his utter enemy, the pope: and with what weapons? with a goose-feather and old clouts, (whereof be made pen and paper); and such simple men hath he used to do this feat, as the world hates and despises. But he hath so shaken his seat, that his fall is begun; and every man which is not wilfully blind sees it. His abominations and his wickedness is opened  
 Nahum iii. to the world, as the prophet saith: "I will shew thy filthy parts in thy face, and will set forth thy nakedness to people."

These be the ordinances<sup>2</sup>, great guns, and bulwarks, that he will set up his church with and pull down antichrist; that all victory may be his, which by such small and weak things throws down the glory of the world. And although their faults were grievous, yet our good God is content with a little rebuking of them, and doeth no more but cast in their teeth their unthankfulness, and saith: "This people

To be rebuked of unthankfulness is the greatest grief to a loving heart.

[<sup>1</sup> A popular legend of that day. See the wonderful tale in Jo. Wolfii Lect. Memorab. Tom. i. p. 343. Lauingæ, 1600. Ed.]

[<sup>2</sup> Ordinances: i. e. ordnance. Ed.]



says, It is not yet time to build the house of God :” as though he should say, This people whom I chose amongst all the world, and in respect of whom I seem to regard no other people but them, bestowing on them only or chiefly my blessings ; whose fathers I brought out of slavery in Egypt, and made them lords of this plenteous land, destroying the dwellers of it, and subduing their enemies round about them ; to whom I send my prophets in all ages to teach them my will and pleasure ; and whom now of late, when they were led prisoners to Babylon, I brought home again, and restored to them their land, and willed nothing of them but to build my house and keep my laws ; this unkind people, I say, says, It is not yet time to build God’s house. This stiff-necked people, that will neither be overcome and moved with gentleness to do their duties, nor yet fear my plagues and threatenings, will not diligently go about to do that which I willed them so straitly to do. The rod is sharp to the flesh, when we be beaten ; but to a gentle heart there can be no sharper rebuke than to have his unkindness cast in his teeth. “ My people,” says God by his prophet, “ in what Mic. vi. thing have I offended thee, that thou dost so disobey me ? or what have I done to thee ? tell me.” And that we should better consider our unthankfulness, he compares us to beasts, and says : “ The ox knows his master, and the ass knows Isai. i. his master’s stable and manger ; but my people will not know me.” So saith Jeremy : “ The turtle, swallow, and the stork Jer. viii. know their times of the year to come ; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.” If a king should marry a poor woman, and make her queen, and when she displeased him, should say unto her, “ When thou wast but a poor woman, and never looked to have been married to me, I forsook all other women for thy sake, and made thee my wife and fellow ; hath it becomen thee to do this fault against me ?”—if she have any honest heart in her, it will make her burst out into tears, and ask forgiveness : so will it move any christian heart that fears God, when he hears his unthankful disobedience laid to his charge ; and specially if he consider what goodness and how often he hath received at God’s hands, and how forgetful he hath been again to so loving a Lord God. The Lord for his mercies’ sake grant us

such tender hearts, that we may burst out into tears, when we consider his goodness and our wickedness, his undeserved mercy, and our great unthankfulness! What a bitter grief shall this be, to hear him lay our unkindness to our charge! ‘I gave you a good king, many true preachers, my word plenteously, my sacraments purely, rooted out idolatry, delivered you from strangers, with all wealth; and yet you would not fear me.’ What can we say for shame, but condemn ourselves? God grant we may! for then he will not condemn us.

Excuses of  
our negli-  
gence be  
vain.  
Ezra iv.

I do not doubt but many of them had great excuses to lay for themselves, if they had been asked why they did not build God’s house, as well as we have for our negligence in the same doing. . Some would say, We are forbidden by the king and his officers, (and so they were indeed, as appears in Esdras). Some, We must first provide a house for ourselves to dwell in, for our wives and children: other, We are unlearned, we know not how to do it: other, We be poor, and not able to take in hand such a costly work: other, Let the rulers begin, and we will help: other, We shall lose our life and goods, if we disobey the king’s commandment. But God would allow no such excuse, but casts in all their teeth their disobedient unkindness, and says: “This people say, It is not yet time to build God’s house.” The priests would say, It is not our duty to build, but to offer sacrifices and sing psalms, as we be appointed. The rulers might say, their office was to see the commonwealth well ruled, and not to meddle in such matters. The people might say, it belonged not to them, being such a costly thing, that required wisdom, learning, riches, and power; but they must apply their husbandry, merchandise, &c. Even as they said in the gospel: “I have bought a farm, or, five yoke of oxen, that I will not come; hold me excused. Or, I have married a wife, that I cannot come.” So none could or would take God’s work in hand. Therefore, that one sort should not think themselves blameless, and the other to be in fault; or that one should not despise another, because that they were more holy than the rest, and would have builded God’s house more gladly than other, the prophet is sent to rebuke them all, for all were guilty in not building. And he says

1 Chron.  
xxiii. [30,  
31.]

Luke xiv.

not, The rulers say, It is not yet time to build God's house ; or, The priests say so, or the merchants, or husbandmen : but generally, All this people of all degrees say, It is not yet time to build God's house. And so, because the rebuke is general to all sorts, young and old, poor and rich, learned and unlearned, they may understand that it is their duties to build God's house, what manner of men soever they be.

What a comfort is this for the poor unlearned man, when he heareth that God refuses not, but requires and takes in good worth, that little service which he can do, and wills him to build his house as well as the rich ; that he should not think God loves not poor men, nor we are not able to serve him, but he loves only the rich and learned, and they must serve him ! Nor again, he must not think, I may do what I will, God cares not for me, nor he hath no work for me to do in his house.

God accepts  
and requires  
the service  
of the sim-  
plest.

It is in building God's spiritual house, as it is here with us in our buildings. In buildings there be master-masons and carpenters, which do devise the work, draw out the fashion of it, and set their men on work : there be also some that fell trees, carry stones, bring mortar, and make clean the place, &c. So in building God's house there be rich and learned, there be poor and meaner learned ; but the lowest and meanest of all, as he is the creature of God, and made not himself, so God hath some work for him to do and requires his service. If he be not a ruler or a preacher, yet he hath wife and children whom he must see live in the fear of God, and that God will require of his hand : and though he be not married, but both lame and blind, yet he hath a body and soul which Christ died for ; and they be the house of God and temple of the Holy Ghost, which we should build, and of that thou shalt make account. He that hath received greater gifts hath a greater charge, and more work shall be looked for of him : but if he have no more but life in him, and be not able to stir any part of him, neither hand nor foot, yet God will look that his mind shall be continually occupied in prayer for himself and others, that he be no drunkard, glutton, &c. ; and think not but this is the highest service that the best man living can do to God. Such a loving God is our God even to the poorest man

All things to salvation are given indifferently to the poor and rich.

living, that he gives him as well as the rich all things indifferently, which should bring him to heaven; as baptism, faith, hope and charity, repentance, prayer, fasting, avoiding whoredom, theft, murder, anger, &c., all are as common and as easy to come by, or rather more easy, for the poor than the rich. He disdains not, but thankfully takes, the poorest service that the least creature he hath can do, so that he do it diligently and willingly; and will reward that little so done as liberally as he doth the greater. He that hath received much shall make account of much; and he that hath but little, yet shall make account of that little.

But this is marvellous, that where all sorts of the people were in fault, the prophet is sent by commission from God namely<sup>1</sup> to Zerubabel the chief ruler in the commonwealth, and to Josua the high priest; as though they had only sinned, or they could or should remedy this matter.

What reason seems this, that when many do offend, a few shall be rebuked; and when all the people be negligent, the chief rulers, both in civil matters of the commonwealth, and the chief priest and highest in matters of religion, are blamed? This is the high wisdom of God, that man's wit cannot attain unto: and there is great reason, if it be well considered, why it should be so. God our heavenly Father, knowing the crookedness of man's heart and how ready we be all to evil, hath appointed rulers in the commonwealth to minister justice, punish sin, defend the right, and cause men to do their duties: and in his church he hath placed preachers to teach his law, to pull down superstition and idolatry, and to stir up the slothful and negligent to serve and fear him. If either the one or both of these rulers be negligent in their office, the people (which be always ready to seek their own ease and pleasures) fall from God: but God will punish the rulers for their negligence, that neither they did their duties themselves nor see the people do theirs; and they shall be guilty of the sins of the people, and partakers of their wickedness, because it was done through their negligence in not punishing and seeing the people do their duties, both to God and man.

The rulers and ministers are to be blamed, if the people offend through their negligence. For as brethren they must agree to promote God's glory.

Exod. iv.

When God gathered his church first, he appointed Moses

[<sup>1</sup> Namely: expressly, by name. Ed.]

and Aaron, two brethren, to be the chief rulers of the people, the one in religion, and the other in civil matters: to teach us, that these two kinds of rulers be lawful and necessary in a commonwealth, that they should love and stick together like brethren, and that the one with the word and the other with the sword should jointly build God's house, pull down antichrist the pope, and set up the kingdom of Christ.

When the children of Israel had committed idolatry in Baal-peor, and fallen to adultery with the women of Moab, Moses in the name of God commands all the rulers of the people to be hanged on gallows against the sun, because they did not their duties in keeping the people from such mischief. To the preachers saith Ezekiel: "Thou son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel: thou shalt hear words of my mouth, and shew them from me. If I say to the wicked, Thou wicked, thou shalt die the death, and thou wilt not speak to him that he may keep him from his wickedness, the wicked shall die in his wickedness, but I will require his blood of thy hands: but if he will not leave his wickedness when thou tellest him, he shall die in his wickedness, and thou hast saved thine own soul, because thou hast done thy duty in warning him." By these punishments we may see, that it is neither the duty of civil rulers, by what name soever they be called, to be negligent in their duty, or to set in an evil deputy for them to gather up the profits, that they may go hawk, or hunt, game, or keep whores; for God, that gave them that authority, will look for account for it of them: nor that it is lawful for bishop, dean, archdeacon, prebendary, or parson, to set in a parish priest to make conjured water, and serve the people in a strange tongue, which neither he nor they understand: for by these means the people be not amended.

Hely, having complaints made to him of the unhappiness of his children, fell and brake his neck, because he would not punish them; and they themselves were killed in battle, and the ark of God was taken by God's enemies: so shall the fathers of the people perish, if they punish not faults of the people.

"He that desires a bishop's office," saith St Paul, "desires a good labour:" he calls it not a good lordship, nor

idleness and wealth, but labour. What a man the labourer should be, Ezekiel tells particularly, saying: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel, which feed themselves, and not my flock! ye have eaten the fat, and been clothed with the wool; but ye have not strengthened the weak, nor healed the sick, nor brought home the stray, nor sought the lost, but ye have ruled over them with sharpness." These be the duties of good shepherds and their labours, and not masking masses, mumming matins, and babble they know not what: and he that either cannot or will not do these things, seeking his own ease and wealth, and not bring the people to God, is a thief and murderer. Also, the patron of a benefice or bishop, which admit any such as cannot do these duties to have cure of souls, are partakers of his wickedness; and, as much as in them lies, murder so many souls as perish this ways for want of wholesome doctrine. St Paul says to Timothy: "Lay not thy hand rashly on any man, nor without good trial appoint him a minister, lest thou be partaker of other men's sins." We must neither do evil ourselves, nor consent to other to do it, but, as much as in us lies, stop it: for both the doer and he which agrees to it are worthy death, as St Paul saith. But he that places an unworthy or unable minister wittingly in a benefice, consents to the evil which he doeth, because he might stop him from it if he would; and therefore is he worthy death also.

To admit an unable minister is to be partaker of the evil that he doeth.

1 Tim. v.

Rom. i. [32.]

A tailor that is not cunning to make a gown may mend hose; a cobbler that cannot make shoes may mend them; a carpenter which is not cunning to make the house, yet may he square trees or fell them: but an unable priest to teach is good to nothing in that kind of life or ministry. "Ye are the salt of the earth," saith our Saviour Christ; "but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith shall it be salted? it is not good enough to be cast on the dunghill (for so it would do good in dunging the field); but it is meet for nothing but to be cast in ways to be trodden under our feet."

Matt. v.

An unlearned minister is not to be suffered in the ministry.

So these priests, which have not the salt of God's word to season man's soul withal, are meet for nothing in that kind of life, but to be put to some occupation which they can do, and get their living with the sweat of their face,

and not occupy a place among God's shepherds, seeing they be rather dumb and devouring dogs than good preachers.

Are not we in England guilty of the like fault? When God stirred up our kings as chief in the realm, and Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, with others, for matters in religion, to drive the buyers and sellers of masses, pardons, trentals, &c. out of God's house, which they had made a den of thieves, was not this in all our mouths: It is not yet time to build God's house, the people cannot bear it; we fear strange princes and rebellions?—as though God were content to suffer idolatry for a time, and would not or could not promote his own matters without our politic devices. And almost as many years have we lien loitering as these men did, and not builded God's house, but pulled it down; builded our own houses goodly without any stop or fear, where rebellion most should have been feared, because it was done oft with the injury of others, as by extreme raising of rents, taking great incomes and fines, &c., by these means seeking our own rest and profit. It wants not much of so many years since king Henry began to espy the pope; and yet God's house is not built. What marvel is it then, if we have been thus grievously plagued for our negligence in thus doing, and that every one hath been sought out to death, that was judged to love God's word? When the good king Cyrus had given free liberty to the Jews every one to go home that would, the most part had so well placed themselves in strange countries and waxed so wealthy, that they would not go home when they might to build God's house. What marvel was it then, if God, to punish this great wickedness, stirred up king Assuerus by the means of Haman, to make proclamation through all countries, that it should be lawful for any man to kill all the Jews he could, to take their goods, and order them at their pleasure; that if gentleness could not drive them home to serve God, yet sharpness should compel them to go build God's house?

And hath it not been so in England taught, that all gossellers should be destroyed, and should not leave one man alive? And this thing God of love and mercy did unto us, that where we would not know him by gentleness,

[<sup>1</sup> The phrase used by the author is as in 1 Kings xxi. 21. Ed.]

We are like  
the Jews in  
long negli-  
gence.

Ezra ii.

Esther iii.

we should be compelled by the rod and sharpness to seek him. All faults in our late popery (were they never so great) might be pardoned, save this, to love God's word. But as God took Haman in his own device, and the vengeance light on him and his; so God hath mercifully delivered many in England from the persecutors, gloriously called many to be his witnesses in the fire, and turned the devices of his enemies on their own heads, and sharply destroyed them which murdered his saints, when they thought most to have enjoyed the world at their will. Therefore let us think that God speaks to us by his prophet, saying: This people of England, to whom I have given so plentiful a land, delivered them so often, and sent them my preachers; and whom, when they forgot me and their duty, I punished, sometimes sharply of fatherly love, and sometime gently that they might turn to me; yet they say, It is not yet time to build God's house, for fear of their own shadows: they would lie loitering still, and not be waked out of this sleep. Let us consider what benefits we have received daily of our good God, and see what a grief it is to be unthankful, and have our unkindness thus cast in our teeth. Poor cities in Germany, compassed about with their enemies, dare reform religion thoroughly, without any fear, and God prospers them: and yet this noble realm, which all princes have feared, dare not. We will do it by our own policies, and not by committing the success to God; and so we shall overthrow all.

- The Text. v. 3. *And the word of God was sent by the hand of Aggeus the prophet, saying:*  
 4. *Is it time for you that ye should dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?*

This is most worthy to be noted, that the prophet dare speak nothing of his own head, but always in the name of God, and as he received it of God's mouth; and for our example, most diligently it is to be followed, seeing he durst not so much as rebuke sin, but as God taught him. But of this enough is spoken afore in the first and second verses.



This prophet, having a gentler spirit than many of the other prophets, doth not so sharply threaten utter destruction of them and their country for their disobedience; but chiefly sets before them their slothfulness towards the building of God's house, and their shameful and shameless scraping and scratching together of goods, their polling and piling, their labour, diligence, and pains taken to build costly gorgeous houses for themselves: as though he would say, Is it not a shame for you to take so much labour and spend so much money in making yourselves ceiled and carved houses, and can find no time nor money to spend on God's house? Do you love yourselves better than your God? Do ye set more by your own pleasure than God's honour? Will you first satisfy your own lusts, and then, when ye can find any leisure, peradventure God and his house shall have a piece bestowed on him? Is not this to set the cart before the horse? Ye should first serve God, seek his will, and after look to your own necessities, and not vain pleasures. The heathen poet could reprove this in heathen people, saying: "O citizens, citizens, is money to be sought first, and then virtue after riches!"—as though he should say, Nay, not so. This is spoken to all: "First seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and all other things necessary shall be given you."

God's house  
is to be built  
before our  
own.

Matt. vi.

But was this so grievous a fault in God's sight, to build their own houses afore God's house, that they were so plagued for, as appears in the second verse following? Or was there not other as great sins as this amongst them? Yes, truly, there were other heinous sins amongst them, and which God abhors as well as this. They had gotten into their hands all the lands and goods of their poor brethren by usury; and not content with that, they had so handled the matter, that the poor sort had sold themselves, their wives and children, to be bondmen and slaves to the rich. And yet their usury was but little in comparison of ours, which we can more wisely and worldly, than wisely and godly, defend to be lawful. They took but one at the hundred; of a hundred shillings one, of a hundred pounds one; and yet Nehemias

Usury  
unlawful.

Nehem. v.

[<sup>1</sup> O cives, cives! quærenda pecunia primum est,  
Virtus post nummos. Hor. Epist. l. i. 53-4. Ed.]

makes them to restore all again. But we can defend ten at the hundred to be charitable and godly. Surely, if they could not keep it, but were compelled to restore it again, it was theft and robbery so to get it, or yet to keep it: for he is as well a thief that keeps that which is evil got, as he that got it or took it. And if they did make restitution, taking but one at the hundred; I see no cause why our usurers should not be compelled by authority to restore that which was so gotten by ten or sixteen at the hundred. This was our gospelling in England, when we should have builded God's house, as they should have done here.

All sin is forbidden alike, if it let God's house.

The prophet speaks here of building houses namely<sup>1</sup>, but under that one sin he rebukes all such like: as when we say, "give us our daily bread," we desire under the name of bread as well drink and cloth, as all other things necessary to live withal. And he saith as well to the drunkards, Is it time for you to drink until ye be thriftless and witless, and God's house lie unbuilded? It is written by the prophet, "Woe be to you that rise early in the morning to drink, and to follow drinking till it be evening!" He saith likewise to the dainty sluggard, that lies wallowing in his costly beds and soft pillows: Is it time for you to lie slovening in your couches night and day, and God's house unbuilded? Is it not written, "Woe be unto you which sleep in your costly beds, and play the wantons in your couches?" And he saith likewise to the greedy carle and prowling poller, that is never filled, but always heaping together: Is it time for you that ye scrape and scratch together all ye can lay your hands on, and God's house lie unbuilded? Do ye not know it to be written, "Woe be to you which join house to house, and land to land, and never cease?" Thus must every man think that God speaks to him still by this his prophet, and says to the ambitious prelate: Is it time for thee, which should chiefly build my house, to gape for promotion, to join benefice to benefice, prebend to deanery, &c., and my house lie unbuilt? Remember thou not Paul's saying, "If we have meat, drink, and clothes, let us be content therewith"? Thou that chiefly should further this work, dost hinder and pull down my house, as much as in thee is.

[<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 34. Ed.]

Let the merchant, that spares not to sail through all jeopardy on the sea and travail by land, so that he get much gains, think that God says to him still: "Is it time for thee to run and ride, buy and sell, and my house lie unbuilt?" Let the unthrift think that God speaks to him, saying: "Is it time for thee to hawk and hunt, card and dice, and follow whores, and God's house lie unbuilt?" Think not it is enough to say, I am a gentleman; what should I do but take my pleasure? it becometh not me to take such pains. Yes, truly; for God hath no more allowed thee to waste unthriftilly thy goods, nor to misspend thy time, than the poor man. For like as thou hast the same baptism, faith, Lord, God, and Father in heaven with him, and hopest for the same kingdom that the poor man doth; so hast thou the same law given thee to live after, and by the same shall we all be judged.

Merchants.

Unthrifths.

God allows the rich nothing more to misuse than the poor.  
Ephes. iv.

Why, will no excuse serve, but that every man must lay his helping hand to the building of God's house? No, verily: remember them which were called to the feast, and one excused himself, saying, "I have bought a farm;" another, "I have bought five yoke of oxen;" and both said, "I pray thee hold me excused:" and the third had married a wife, making no excuse, but flatly denying he could not come. But it skills not whether he make excuse or not: all were shut out, and had no part of the feast.

Luke xiv.

And so shall all that build not God's house, though they seem to themselves to have good excuses: God allows none at all. Why, they were forbidden by the king to build any more, as appears in Esdras, and must they not obey? they should have run in the king's displeasure, been in jeopardy to have lost life, land, and goods: should they have been rebels and traitors to the king? No, surely; this is not treason to kings to do that which God commands. When Daniel did pray thrice a day to God contrary to the king's commandment, and the apostles did preach contrary to the wills and commandments of the rulers, it was neither treason nor rebellion. So must we do always that which God commands: and if the rage of the rulers go so far as to kill or cast us into lions' dens, as Daniel was, or whip and scourge us, as the apostles were; we must suffer with Daniel, and say with the

No excuse is allowed in not building God's house.

Ezra iv.

Daniel vi.

Acts iv.

God is rather to be obeyed than man.

apostles, “ We must rather obey God in doing our duty, than man forbidding the same;” knowing always, that God hath ever ways enough to deliver us out of their dangers, if he will, as he did Daniel and the apostles; or else will strengthen us to die in his quarrel, whether soever shall be more for his glory and the edifying of his church. If the sheriff should bid thee one thing, and the king command thee another, wilt thou obey the lower officer afore the higher? So is the king God’s under officer, and not to be obeyed before him.

- Luke xiv. It is written, that “ if any man come to Christ, and hate not father and mother, wife and children, brother and sister, yea, even his own life,” rather than forsake and offend God, “ he can be none of Christ’s scholars.” Christ takes all excuses
- Matt. v. from us when he saith: “ If thy right eye let thee, pull it out; if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; for it is better to go into life with one eye and one hand, than to be cast into hell with both thine eyes and hands.” In the ninth of Luke, when Christ called two disciples to follow him, the one said, “ Let me go and bid them farewell at home;” and the other said, “ Let me go and bury my father, and then I will come.” But our Saviour Christ would suffer neither of them both to go to do so little things and honest, as reason would judge, but saith: “ Let the dead bury the dead; and he that puts his hand to the plough and looks back, is not meet for the kingdom of God.” “ Remember,” he saith, “ Lot’s wife,” how she for looking back was turned into a pillar of salt. Therefore there is no excuses admitted in not building God’s house, and that earnestly.
- Luke xvii.

Princes may have houses to their degree, so they build God’s house first.

2 Sam. vii.

Yet is not this so spoken of the prophet, that it is unlawful for noblemen to have costly houses, so it be not above their degree, nor built with oppressing the poor, or that they take not more pleasure and pains in building their own houses than God’s; but that they should study and take more pains to build God’s house than their own. For David, Salomon, and other good kings, had gorgeous houses according to their estate: but when David had builded him a goodly house, he sat down, looked on it, and remembered how the ark of God, and the treasures that God had given them, were but in tents covered with sackcloth, made of goat’s hair; he was sorry, sware an oath, and made a vow to the God of Jacob, that he

Psal. cxxxii.

would not go into his house nor his bed, and that he would neither nap nor sleep, nor take rest, until he had a place for the Lord to dwell in, and builded his house. Such a desire have all good men to the building of God's house in all ages, that they will prefer God's matters and the common profit of many afore their own.

But here in this people, as among us also, the rich men would not, the poor could not; the priests had forgotten the law, and followed their own fantasies; the unlearned knew not how to do it; young men were given to pastimes, old men to greediness, noblemen greedily to get<sup>1</sup>, and unprofitable to spend it; the common sort, as men without guides, followed their own wills: summer was too hot, and winter was too cold: so that no sort of men nor time was given to the building of God's house; but every man followed his own will, and either they could not, would not, or durst not go about the building of God's house. Thus we in England, while we have lien following our own fantasies, and seeking vain excuses under pretence of religion, have destroyed religion; and in pulling away superstition did seek our own profit and promotion. To pull down abbeys, colleges, chantries, and such dens of thieves, we are ready enough, because we hoped to have part of the spoil ourselves; but to maintain schools and hospitals was not for our profit: to take away masses, idols, unpreaching prelates, we durst not, sometime for fear of the king's displeasure, sometime for rebellion or insurrections of the commons; otherwhiles, to bear with the weakness of the people, or for loss of life or goods, or some such like excuse, we would not.

Vain excuses in not building God's house be not allowed.

But Salomon, to pull away all fond, feigned excuses, teaches divers good lessons and worthy to be noted. To the sluggish fearful man, that feareth and casteth perils to do that which God commandeth him, he saith, mocking and rebuking him thus: "There is a lion in the way, saith the slothful man (when he is willed to do his duty), and he will worry me if I go:" which is as much to say, Cast no perils in serving God; go diligently about to do thy duty; and God will defend thee, though thou go through lions, wolves, bears, bishops, and all wild beasts: and that we should more

Fearful.

Prov. xxii.

[<sup>1</sup> The first edition reads, *noblemen to ambition, and*— Ed.]

boldly do our duties to God without fear of man, St John in his Revelation, xxi., saw: "The fearful, unbelievers, abominable, murderers, &c., shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Prov. xxvi.  
Slothful.

To the slothful delicate man, which will not forego his pleasures, he saith: "As the door is turned in and out upon the hinges and gins, so is the sluggard rolled about in his bed from one side to another:" as though he should say, As the door when it is opened or shut, it stirs in and out, but it stirs not out of his place, but is on the hinges still; and the sluggard that rolls himself from one side of the bed to another, is a sloven still, and lies slovening in his bed, taking no pains to do good: so they that be given to any kind of pleasure, if they stir to any thing, it is so little that it doeth no good; they roll but from one side to another, from one pleasure to another, to seek where they may find most ease. They move as the snail doth, always creeping and never the

Worldlings.

Eccles. xi.

Worldlings. Unto them that seek excuses, that either they dare not or cannot, he saith: "He that watches the winds doth not sow, and he that marks the clouds shall never mow:" as if he should say, As he that waits for a good wind to sow in, or whether any clouds arise betokening rain, or there be none at all but great drought towards, that he may sow, shall never sow nor mow: for either blows the north wind, and that is too cold; or the south, and that is too hot; or the east, and that is too dry; or the west, and that is too wet; and the wind is ever in one of these corners, and ever is it drought or clouds like to rain when the wind is so: so he that waits when he may build God's house, and have the world with him without displeasure of the rulers, the people, the clergy, or the laity, shall never do his duty; for ever the gospel hath some enemies. Therefore he concludes, saying:

Eccles. xi.

The gospel  
is never  
without  
enemies.

ing: "Sow thy seed in the morning and in the evening, and let not thine hand cease;" meaning, that evening and morning, early and late, fair weather and foul, with favour or with displeasure, we should not cease to build God's house. Do ye not know that God and the world are enemies; and he that will please the one shall displease the other; and impossible it is to please both? Never look to have the world to favour thee, when thou goest about to serve God: and if

Matt. vi.

thou wilt seek the friendship of the world, thou shalt be an enemy to God. So saith St Paul to Timothy: "Preach the word, be earnest, reprove, rebuke in season and out of season;" spare no time, place, labour, nor person; lay it amongst them, tell them their duty, let it work as God will. Do thou thy duty, and as much as in thee lies; and let God alone with the rest. God requires nothing of thee but thy labour: the increase belongs to God alone to give as he thinks good. St Paul, comparing himself with the other apostles, saith, he "laboured more than any of the rest, and filled all places and countries with the gospel betwixt Jerusalem and Illyricum;" but he never tells how many he converted to the faith, for that is the work of God, and neither he which grafts, nor he which waters, is anything, but God which gives the increase.

James iv.

2 Tim. iv.

1 Cor. xv.  
Rom. xv.

1 Cor. iii.

And although the scripture require that a preacher, which is a steward of God's house, must be ware as a serpent and simple as a dove, and the weakness of our brethren that have not learned their liberty, must be borne with for a time; yet are we not bidden always to do it, nor be so wise that to please man we displease God. When our Saviour Christ had taught that it was lawful to eat all kinds of meats, at all times, for all men, in all places, the Pharisees were angry with him, and his disciples told him of their anger; but he answered: "Let them alone; they be blind guides of the blind:" he passed not for the offending of them, for they might have learned the truth if they had lust. So must we bear with the weak until they be taught sufficiently: and if they will not learn, we must not lose our liberty for their foolishness, but answer them as Christ did. And as the faithful husband is not bound to the unfaithful wife, if she will not abide with him; so is not our liberty bound to the froward superstitious papists that will not learn. It is better to offend, says Gregory, than to forsake a truth: and Chrysostom<sup>1</sup> teaches, that when more commodity comes by offending than hurt, we must not care for the offence: but this commodity that he means is not worldly,

How far the  
weak is to  
be borne  
withal.

Matt. xv.

1 Cor. vii.

[<sup>1</sup> Διὰ δὴ τοῦτο, ὅταν μὲν ἴδῃ πολὺ τὸ κέρδος καὶ τῆς τοῦ σκανδάλου βλάβης μεῖζον, καταφρονεῖ τῶν σκανδαλιζομένων. Contra eos qui subintroductas habent virgines. Tom. i. p. 284. Paris. 1834. Ed.]

1 Cor. viii. but godly, and bringing many to Christ. "I had rather never eat flesh," saith St Paul, "than offend my brother:" but that is spoken for the weak, that have not been sufficiently taught, and all doubts they can lay, taken away; but to the stubborn, sturdy, stiffnecked papists (which teach that some meats at some times are unclean and unholy for some men to eat, and so makes man to serve creatures in conscience, that he dare not handle that over which God made him lord) he never said so, but contrarily, "Let them alone; they be blind guides of the blind." Like is to be said in marriage of priests, handling their chalice, corporas<sup>1</sup>, and such other burdens as they lay not only on the bodies, but miserably on the consciences, of them which will believe them. Gal. v. "Stand in the liberty to the which ye be called," saith St Paul, "and be not subject to such yokes and beggarly ceremonies:" let not such Cayphas tread you down; but keep your consciences in knowledge free to use freely all the good creatures of God made for your use, according to the scripture, with soberness and thanksgiving.

Thus all the people is chid here for their disobedience, that they builded not God's house, although they were forbidden by the king, or could make like excuses. God sent them all home to do this work, and required it of them all; and yet they were all so far from doing it, that they let it lie, not only unbuilded, but waste, desert, never regarding it. There was work for all sorts of men, the costly pieces for the rich, the meaner for the common sort, and the felling of trees, carrying mortar, &c. for the poorest and simplest.

All sorts  
have work  
in God's  
house to do.

Exod. xxxv. When Moses should make the tabernacle and tent, where- in they should resort to serve God until the temple was builded, the rich sort offered gold, silver, brass, iron, silk, and such like; but the poorest when they came and brought but goats' hair, it was thankfully taken, and did good service in that work; for the uppermost cloth, that covered the tent, was made thereof to keep away rain and storms. And to the younger sort, that they should not think themselves unmeet, saith St Paul, "Let no man despise thy youth;" and generally to every man he saith, "It is now time to rise out of sleep." Bring

1 Tim. iv.

Rom. xiii.

[<sup>1</sup> Corporas: the cloth on which the consecrated wafer was deposited. Ed.]



so much to this building as you can; let no fault be found in you for lack of good will. God will take in good part the little ye can do. Let not the simplest think, I am unworthy to do such things, God needs not my labour, I am too vile to serve him; or it belongs not to me: for he only is worthy whom God makes worthy, and he only is welcome whom he will vouchsafe to take in good worth. Of ourselves the best man living is unworthy; and the more unworthy that thou thinkest thyself unfeignedly, the more worthy thou art afore him. Gedeon, when he was taken from threshing his corn, and made a captain to deliver God's people, said: "Who am I, the youngest and least of all my brethren, or what is my father's house, that his stock afore all the rest should be taken to this honour?" So said Saul also, taken from the plough following his oxen, and made a king: and as long as he continued in this lowliness of mind, and did his duty, he was a good king. So Amos keeping beasts, an herdman, and pulling mulberries off the trees, when he was called to be a prophet, wondered that God would call such a simple man as he was to that high office. So the Virgin Mary, when the angel saluted her, wondered that God would call such a poor maiden and virgin to be the mother of his Son. But ever he that thinks himself unworthy, God takes him as worthy; and those that think so highly of themselves that they be worthy, God refuses, and makes unworthy. Therefore let every man that feels himself in conscience withdrawn from doing his duty to God by any kind of sin, say thus to himself: Is it time for thee to delight thyself in this or that kind of sin, and God's house unbuilt? Think that God hath left this in writing to rebuke him, and stir him up to be more diligent in repairing his house wherein God dwells. And let every man comfort himself that God not only requires, but takes in good part, the least service that the poorest man living can do.

And as he said afore in the second verse, "This people saith, It is not time to build," &c., noting the unkindness of that people, to whom he had so often and long been so loving a lord and master; so he saith now, "This house lies waste," to set out before them the greatness of their disobedience; that they did not neglect and leave unbuilt a common house,

He that thinks lowliest of himself is meetest afore God to build.

Judges vi.

1 Sam. ix.

Amos vii.

Luke i.

Every man think this to be spoken to himself.

The worthiness of the place maketh the fault greater being neglected.

a bishop's palace, or an abbey; but that house wherein God himself said he would dwell, where only they should offer their sacrifices, which only not out of the whole world, but among the places, towns, and cities in all Jewry, he chose by name to be worshipped in; in which only he was most delighted, and made promise to Salomon in the dedication of the same, that he would hear the prayers of them that there called upon him in faith. That house, they did not only suffer it to decay, but were so forgetful of it that they let it lie waste, desolate, laid no hand to it, as though it belonged not to them, nor it were their duty; they had so far forgotten God, which willed them so straitly to do it. The Lord for his mercy sake grant, that the same unkindness may not be laid justly against us, which leave that house unbuilt, yea, tread under our feet like filthy swine, wherein not the sacrifices of Moses are offered, but for the salvation of which Christ offered his body a sacrifice to be killed, and his blood shed, and in which his Holy Spirit dwells, if through unthankfulness we drive him not away. This house is the holy church of Christ generally, and our own bodies and souls particularly, which be not only members and parts of his mystical body, but the temple and house where the Holy Ghost dwells, and wherein he will chiefly be worshipped.

God's house.

The text. v. 5. *And now thus saith the Lord of hosts: Consider in your hearts your own ways.*

6. *You have sown much, and brought in but little; ye have eaten, and not been satisfied; ye have drunk, and not been filled with drink; ye have been clothed, and not kept warm; ye have wrought for wage, and put your wages in a purse with a hole in the bottom.*

Although ye have lien long without consideration of your duty toward God and his house building; and have been sore punished of God, and not known the cause of it; and have sought your pleasure and profit, but not obtained them, being so blinded in fulfilling your worldly lusts; yet now the mighty Lord of hosts and power, whom all other creatures (except you) obey, gives you warning now to consider better in your heart your time past, and not so negligently weigh

the working of God with you ; for he hath long punished you to have had you to amend, and ye regard it not at all. Sin of itself is darkness, and whosoever walks in sin walks in darkness, and knows not what he doeth : and if a man give himself to be ruled by sin, it makes of fools madmen, and darkens so the reason, that it knows not what to do or say. They had thus many years been plagued, and knew not the cause why, but laid it on some other chance than not building God's house, which was the chief cause ; or else, like insensible beasts without the fear of God, regarded it not, as though it had come of some natural cause, and God had not plagued their sin. But as his disease is most perilous, which lies sick and feels not his sickness, nor cannot complain of one part more than another, (for then the disease hath equally troubled the whole body :) so they which lie wallowing in sin, so forgetting God and all goodness, that they feel no remorse of conscience, are desperate and almost past all recovery : yet God, most mercifully dealing with this people, sends his prophet to warn them, and stir them out of their sleep, that there they should no longer so lightly weigh God's displeasure towards them, but deeply weigh why and wherefore these plagues were thus poured upon them. The schoolmaster corrects not his scholar, nor the father his child, but for some fault, and for their amendment : no more hath God sent these plagues to you so many years, but to remember you of your disobedience towards him, and that ye should turn to him. But if the lewd scholar or unthrifty son do not regard the correction laid upon him, nor consider not the greatness of his fault, nor the displeasure of his father or schoolmaster, there is no goodness to be hoped for of him : so is it with you, if ye thus lightly or else not at all consider your life past, God's dealing with you, and how evil things have prospered with you all the time ye thus have disobeyed God. "When the life of man pleases God," says Salomon, "all things prosper and go forwards with him :"<sup>Prov. xvi. [7.]</sup> but when he offends his God, all creatures turn to his hurt and hinderance. "If thou hear the voice of the Lord thy God," saith Moses,<sup>Deut. xxviii.</sup> "and keep all the commandments which I teach thee, the Lord will make thee greater than all other people : thou shalt be blessed in the city and in the field ; thy children, the fruit

of the earth, and all thy cattle, thy sheep and oxen shall be blessed, and increase : but if thou hear not the voice of the Lord thy God, and keep his commandments, thou shalt be cursed in the town and in the field ; thy children shall be cursed, and the fruit of the earth, and the fruit of thy cattle, thy sheep and thy oxen : the Lord will send upon thee need and trouble and destruction on every thing thou goest about, until he destroy thee," &c. These plagues, when they fall in any country, are not lightly to be considered.

The cause of God's plague is diligently to be searched.

But as the physician, seeing in a glass by the water the disease within the body, by the learning searches out the cause of the disease, and ministers good things for the same ; so in looking in the glass of God's word, the diseases and sins which are in commonwealths, we shall soon perceive the cause of these plagues, and wholesomely minister some profitable and comfortable remedies for the same. God is here so good to his people, that he makes them judges themselves, and mistrusts not the cause but, if they would consider it well, it would move their hard hearts : therefore he sends them not to any strange judges, but bids them be judges themselves, weigh it well first, and then judge ; for the thing of itself is so plain that, if they had not altogether been blind, they should in the midst of these plagues have perceived God's anger and their own wickedness, neither of which they had yet worthily considered. "Ye have sown much," saith the prophet, "and brought into your barns but little:" ye have wrought and toiled, ye have spared no labour, thinking to have enriched yourselves thereby and filled your barns : but all was in vain, for ye sought not first to be reconciled with God, which ye ought to have done, and fulfilled his will and not your own.

Psal. xxiv.

"The earth is the Lord's, and all the plenty on it;" and it obeys the will of God in serving him, and giving her fruits to them that love the Lord their God, and not to them which disobey God, that made and rules both man and the whole earth. Let the greedy carle think then, that though he be the owner of the land and field by man's law, yet he is not the lord and master over him whom the earth will obey in bringing forth her fruit. Let him dig, ditch, and delve, weed, stone, harrow, plough, sow, mow, clot and roll, root up trees and bushes, water, hedge, and water-furrow, or what other

Our labour is in vain except God bless us.

thing soever he can devise to make the ground fruitful: yet there can no fruit grow, nor increase come, but by the gift and blessing of the living Lord. It is written of king Kauntus<sup>1</sup>, king of this realm, that as he was standing by the water side after a great rain, marking how the water did rise, by leisure so it increased that it met his foot where he stood: and he being so proud in his heart, that he thought whatsoever he said every thing would obey, straight commanded the water that it should rise no further, nor wet his master's feet any more: but when he saw that the water rose still, and would not obey him, but ran into his shoes, he perceived his foolishness, and confessed there was another God and king above him, whom the waters would obey: so shall all greedy churls well perceive, when they have wrought themselves weary, and gotten little, that all increase comes from the Lord, and not of themselves. For David saith, that promotion comes neither from the east nor the west, but the Lord is judge. It is not the way to wax rich, to get much, but to get it rightly; "for it is better," saith David, "to have a little righteously gotten, than to have the great riches of sinners:" nor it is not the way to be filled, to gather much together, but thankfully to take and use that little which thou hast, and be content therewith.

These rich gluttons, which the prophet rebukes here, did eat and drink so well, so costly, so finely, and so much as they could devise; and yet they were never full, but the more they drank, the dryer they were, and one good feast provoked another, and their study was how to fill their greedy stomachs. A drunken man is always dry, according to the proverb; and a gluttonous appetite is never filled, but the more daintily he is fed at one meal, the more desirous is he at the next. All greedy affections of man's heart are unsatiable, if they be not bridled with the fear of God. And the way to rule them is not to follow their lusts and desires, but to keep them under and not let them have their full desire. The dropsy desires drink, and drink increases it: so evil desires if they be followed, they increase, and in refraining them they decay. *Crescit amor nummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit*: that is to say, "as thy money increases,

Kauntus.

Psal. lxxv.

Psal. xxxvii.

No desires  
can be ruled  
but by grace  
and keeping  
it under.

Ovidius.

[<sup>1</sup> Kauntus: Canute. Ed.]

so does the love of it." Therefore, if thou wilt have thy meat to do thee good, and thy drink to slake thy thirst, take it soberly with thanksgiving at God's hand; acknowledge it to be the good creature of God, given to nourish thy necessity, and not to fill thy beastly appetite. So St Paul saith, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God:" as though he should appoint how much a man should eat and drink; that is to say, so much that the mind be not made sluggish by cramming in meat, or pouring in drink, that it cannot lift up himself to the praising of God.

1 Cor. x.

Eat not so  
that it make  
thee un lusty  
to serve  
God.

Therefore he that eateth until his belly ache, or that he lie down to sleep that he cannot praise God, which hath fed him; or he that drinks till his eyes water or his tongue begin to swerve, swear, stut or prate, he doeth it not to the glory of God, which is his duty, nor to the nourishing of his weak body, which is lawful and necessary: but he kindles such an unnatural heat in his body, that it stirs up his appetite to desire more than it should, and is not content with enough, (and that be called here not to be filled nor satisfied in eating and drinking;) or else it overcomes the stomach, and is undigested, and fills the body full of sluggishness, makes it un lusty and unmeet to serve God or man, not nourishing the body but hurting it, and last of all casts him into many kinds of incurable diseases and desperate deaths. Look the end of the rich glutton in the gospel, feasting every day with his brethren, and at length cast into hell fire without hope; but the poor beggar Lazarus, that was content to gather up the crumbs (if he might have had them) which fell from the glutton's table, was carried up by angels to the bosom of Abraham to joy without end. Daniel taken prisoner to Babel, being but a boy, and having a fine diet and costly meats appointed for him by Nabuchodonozor the king from his own table, because he was born of the king's stock, desired his tutor to give him coarse meat, brown bread, pottage and water: but when his tutor said he durst not, because the king had given contrary commandment; and if he through eating such coarse meat should not be so well-liking as his fellows, then the king would be angry with him: "Well," said Daniel, "prove me but ten days, and if I look

Luke xvi.

A thin diet  
with the  
fear of God  
is better  
than feasting.  
Dan. i.

not so well and lusty as my fellows, then I will desire no more:" but God blessed him and his meat, so that he was so well fed as they which had all dainties, as lusty, as healthful and well-liking as his fellows. For except God bless thy meat and give it strength to feed thee; and except God strengthen thy nature to digest thy meat, and thee to take profit of it; either it shall lie wallowing in thy stomach, and thou shalt vomit it up again, or else it shall lie within thy body unprofitable, stinking as in a sink or kennel, and engender infinite diseases within thee. But if God bless thee and thy meat, though it be never so coarse and thou so hungry, thou shalt digest it, and it shall feed thee, and make thee as lusty, as strong, as healthful, as well liking, as he which is fed with capon, partridge, quail, pheasant, or the finest dishes he can devise. And as God here by this prophet willeth them to consider well in their own hearts whether these things were true indeed; so God bids us now look ourselves, and judge whether it be not so amongst us to this day.

If God bless thee and thy meat, it skills not how coarse it be: if not, the best cannot feed thee.

Look how many of your poor neighbours eat brown bread, drink thin drink, have little flesh, live with milk, butter and cheese, lie on the straw without mattress or feather-bed; and judge yourselves whether they be not more lusty, strong, healthful, and well-liking than thou, when thou art crammed full of all dainties which thou can invent or desire. Thus we may see what it is to eat and drink, and not be filled therewith, as the prophet saith in this place.

We wonder much at the great miracles of God, when he changed water into blood and plagued Egypt, when he turned water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and such other, because they were done but seldom. But surely to feed our bodies with meat is as great a miracle, if it be well considered, as any other such thing that God works. What is more marvellous, than to see the flesh of the sheep or ox, beast, fish or fowl, which thou did see yesterday running in the fields, flying in the air, or swimming in the water, this day to be changed into thy flesh and blood, and the substance of thy body? We are not nourished only with accidents and qualities of things, as smells and tastings; but with the substance of that thing which we eat and drink. Nourishing is defined of the physicians to be a changing of

Exod. vii.

John ii.

To feed our bodies is as great a miracle as any.

Nourishing.

The commonness of God's works makes them to seem no miracles, which of themselves be wonderful.

1 Kings xix.

the nourishment into the substance of the body which is nourished. All the works of God, if they be well considered in their own nature, are miracles and above all reason: but our dull blindness is so great, that because we see them daily, we regard them not; and because we be cloyed with them, and plenty is no dainty, we consider them not worthily. But surely, if we had these great miracles of God afore our eyes, as we ought to have, how by his mighty power he changes the substance of that which we eat and drink into the substance of our flesh and blood; we should eat and drink with more reverence than we do, more diligently thank him that he would vouchsafe to feed us, and wonder at his mighty power that he can, and praise his merciful goodness that he will, work such a miracle so oft, and so wonderful a work upon such vile worms, greedy gluttons, and unthankful creatures as we be, and sustain our sinful nature by feeding us so marvellously, and changing the good nature of his other creatures, which never sinned, and yet are killed for us to feed us; changing them, I say, into the substance of our bodies, which can do nothing of themselves but sin. Elias, fleeing from Jezabel, found a therfe<sup>1</sup> cake baked in the ashes, and a dish full of water at his head, when he waked out of sleep, and was commanded by the angel to rise and eat, for he had a long journey to go. And when he had eaten, he walked in the strength of that bread forty days and forty nights, eating nothing else. So shall all they which fear the Lord, as Elias did, in their persecution be able and strong to do great things by slender meat and drink (as we this day have proved), God blessing them and their meat, be it never so coarse and simple: and they that seek to strengthen themselves by dainty meats, forgetting God, shall not be filled in eating and drinking, nor have profit of that which they receive; but the more they have the more they shall desire, and never think they have enough, as the prophet here saith.

Sin reigning in a man will let nothing that he hath do him good.

Such is the stinking nature of sin, that while it lies lurking in the heart of man, ruling him, and not ruled of him by grace, but stirring him to a further forgetting of God

[<sup>1</sup> Old editions *therse*. *Therf* is the word used by Wickliffe and others for *unleavened*. Ed.]



and his duty; that it will not let the corn grow in the field and increase, it will not suffer the meat and drink to feed thee, but it shall go through thee unprofitably as through a sink (which as it avoids one filth, is ready gaping to receive more); it doth not quench, but rather increase thy appetite. God will not bless any thing thou goest about; thy clothes will not keep thee warm, nor thy money will abide in thy purse, but shall waste away, thou not weeting how nor when, as if there were a hole in the bottom. To a good man every thing shall serve and prosper; but to an evil man nothing shall do good. What a wonderful thing is this, that the more a man eats and drinks, the more he shall desire and not be filled; the more clothes he putteth on, the colder he is; yea, if he have never so warm a fire nor soft feather bed, he shall be more grieved with cold, than they which fare coarsely, be homely apparelled, and lie hard! Let every man judge how true this saying of God is. These fine fingered rufflers with their sables about their necks, their fine furred gowns, corked slippers, trimmed buskins, and warm mittens, they chill for cold and tremble when they come abroad; they cannot abide the wind to blow on them; yea, and always the more tenderly they keep themselves, hurting or not helping the poor, by the just punishment of God the more are they pierced with cold themselves: contrariwise, the labouring man can abide in the field all the long day, when the north wind blows, with few clothes on him, and never grieved with cold: he hath his health, feeds savourly on brown bread, thin drink, and a poor supper: yea, many poor beggars run from door to door with few clothes on them and torn, dining with a piece of bread under a hedge when they can get it, and at night lapping themselves in a little straw, not once in a week filling their bellies; yet they look more lusty, healthful, strong, than thou which hast thy cieled chamber, furred stomacher, long gown, and good cheer. And what can be the cause of this, but that God blessed the one which is content with his poor kind of life, and thanks God for it, thinking it better than he is worthy; and the other, which thinks so highly of himself, that nothing is good enough for him, taking no care but how to cherish himself most tenderly, God doth not bless

Costly apparel, and above their degrees.

him, nor those things on which his pleasure is set? The  
 Deut. xxix. Israelites in wilderness desiring flesh had quails great plenty  
 given them; but when the meat was in their mouths, the  
 Exod. xvi. plague fell on them: and after repenting, they were so bless-  
 ed of God, that their shoes and clothes lasted them forty  
 years; and those clothes which the fathers had worn, the  
 children were content to use afterward. But these tender  
 pernels<sup>1</sup> must have one gown for the day, another for the  
 night; one long, another short; one for winter, another for  
 summer; one furred through, another but faced; one for the  
 work day, another for the holy day; one of this colour, and  
 another of that; one of cloth, another of silk or damask;  
 change of apparel, one afore dinner, another after, one of  
 Spanish fashion, another Turkey; and to be brief, never con-  
 tent with enough, but always devising new fashions and  
 strange: yea, a ruffian will have more in a ruff and his hose  
 than he should spend in a year. I read of a painter that  
 would paint every country man in his accustomed apparel,  
 the Dutch, the Spaniard, the Italian, the Frenchman; but  
 when he came to the Englishman, he painted him naked,  
 and gave him clothe, and bad him make it himself, for he  
 changed his fashion so often, that he knew not how to make  
 it: such be our fickle and unstable heads, ever devising and  
 desiring new toys.

English  
 apparel.

But what? would ye have all apparel alike? There be  
 divers degrees of authority, and so better apparel for them.  
 I do not wish all alike, but every one according to his de-  
 gree. Give a king cloth of gold and silver, a duke velvet and  
 silk, a marquis satin and damask; then an earl, a lord, a  
 baron, a knight, an esquire, a gentleman, a yeoman, accord-  
 ing to their degrees; and see whether those shall not be  
 compelled to go in a russet coat, which now spend as much  
 on apparel for him and his wife, as his father would have  
 kept a good house with.

God grant every one might be brought to his degree!  
 Matt. x. Our Saviour Christ bad his disciples, they should not have  
 two coats: but we, because we will be most unlike his scho-  
 lars, have our presses so full of apparel, that many know

[<sup>1</sup> Pernel: pimpernel, a flower that always "shuts up its blossoms  
 before rain." Ed.]

not how many sorts and change of raiment they have. We are in the number of those rich men, to whom St James saith, “Woe,” because they had so great plenty of apparel, <sup>James v.</sup> that the moths did eat them, and their poor neighbours went cold and naked, wanting them.

And although those be wonderful and strange kinds of plagues that God laid upon them for their sins, that neither the corn nor the fruit of the earth could increase, their meat would not feed them, nor drink fill them, nor their clothes keep them warm; yet this is most marvellous, that the money which they had in their purses, would not abide with them, but wasted away, they could not tell how, not profiting them, but even as though it had fallen out at the bottom of their purses, or that their purses had been torn so fast, it went from them as they gat it, they did not thrive by it. But such is the wisdom of God, that which way we think to enrich ourselves, displeasing him, the same is turned to our own hurt, and we be caught in our own snares. A man would think his money sure enough when it were in his purse: but lay it where thou wilt, under lock and key, yea, in stone houses if thou wilt; if it be wrongfully gotten, or niggardly laid up, and not bestowed to relieve the need of other, as occasion requires, rather than thou shalt enjoy that wicked mammon, the rust and canker shall eat it, thieves shall steal it, or fire shall come from heaven, if it cannot some other ways, and destroy thee and it, rather than thou shalt continue wealthy contrary to God’s will, disobeying him. It is with money as in corn and other fruits: for as he that sows much, and that in good ground, reaps much, so he that liberally bestows much of his truly gotten goods on the needy members of Jesus Christ, shall be enriched much of Christ: for the poor are the good ground that brings thee forth much increase by the blessing of God. “I have seen,” saith Salomon, <sup>Prov. xi.</sup> “some give their own goods, and they waxed richer: other scrape that which is not their own, and are ever in need.” So he that will thrive, must first get it righteously, and after spend it liberally: for that which is evil gotten, though it be after dealt in alms, displeases God. When blind father Toby heard a kid blea in his house, he bids them take heed that it be not stolen. He saith also to his

Evil gotten goods never thrive.

Tob. ii. son: "Of thine own substance give alms" (but that which  
 Tob. iv. is evil gotten, is not thine own), "and if thou have much,  
 give much; and if thou have but a little, yet give it will-  
 ingly." These men whom the prophet here rebukes, did none  
 of all these things: for neither it was well gotten, nor liber-  
 ally spent. What marvel was it then, though it fell out of  
 the purse bottom, and consumed away they wist not how,  
 nor yet did them any good?

This greediness was so far grown into all sorts of men,  
 that the poor labouring man, which wrought for his day's  
 wage, was not content to work a true day's work, but would  
 loiter and be idle, make his work subtle and full of craft  
 and deceit, have a greater wage than his work was worth.  
 Jer. vi. It was true now also, that Jeremy complained on in his  
 time, saying: "From the highest to the lowest, from the  
 prophet to the priest, all study for covetousness and deceits."  
 Evil gotten But I would wish all such greedy guts to mark this simili-  
 goods waste tude of Chrysostom, where he compares a penny evil gotten,  
 that which is truly come by. and laid amongst the other silver which is truly come by,  
 to a worm that lies at the heart of an apple. For as she  
 first corrupts the heart of the apple, and that once being  
 rotten, it rots the next piece unto him, and so forth every  
 piece that which is next unto him, until the whole apple be  
 rotten (though for a great space it seem on the outside to  
 be a fair hard apple and sound); so that evil gotten penny,  
 saith Chrysostom, shall infect that which lies next him, and  
 so forth every one his fellow, until all be wasted. Thus the  
 plague being general, that all sorts of men were punished,  
 and nothing did go forward with any kind of men, because  
 generally all sorts had sinned; and God requiring generally of  
 all sorts that his house should be built; it proves that every  
 one had a portion to do in the building of God's house, and  
 that none could be excused from this work.

So we in England all be guilty, all have been punished,  
 because every sort of men should have laid his helping hand  
 to the building of God's house, reforming his religion, restoring  
 and maintaining his gospel, which none or very few have  
 earnestly done: and therefore all these plagues have fallen  
 upon us that these people felt, yea, and more too; for all  
 that would hold fast their profession, either were cast into

the fire or banished. No country has more belly cheer than we, and we eat as though we were hungry still. None has more store of apparel, and yet we be a-cold. How our money has wasted, if I seek but only of the sundry falls of money, many can remember, and yet feel the smart of it; though I trust much good shall follow on it. The Lord for his mercy open our eyes, that we may see and consider the cause of these plagues which he hath laid on us so long, and speedily turn us to amend those faults for which we be punished! For even from the highest unto the poor labouring man we have all sinned, and one plagued another: yea, servants have sought to wax wealthy by great wages taking and little working: but, as this prophet saith, their wages was put into a bottomless purse, and they have not thriven by it. What hath been the end of ambitious and covetous men, from the highest to the lowest, which never being content with enough desired more; he which is not blind may see it more among us than all Christendom.

v. 7. *Thus saith the God of hosts: consider in your hearts* The Text.  
*your own ways.*

8. *Go up to the hill, and bring home timber, build this house; and I will have delight in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.* Targ. dwell in it with glory.

The prophet hath never done enough in beating<sup>1</sup> in the authority and majesty of his God that sent him with his commission to his people, and never speaks things in his own name; but in the beginning and ending of these short verses addeth the glorious name of God JEHOVA, calling him the Lord of hosts, at whose commandment all creatures be, and who will arm all his creatures to fight against all such as either do not build his house and hinder his glory, or else stop them which would further it. With such words of fear and power must all stubborn stomachs be pulled down: and they which will not be overcome by gentleness to do their duty, must be feared with authority. Thus must preachers learn to temper their tongues, never to speak but that which they find in God's book: and where the people be hard- An example for preachers.

[<sup>1</sup> Second edition, *bearing*. See p. 84, *repeat and beat in*. Ed.]

hearted to believe and stiff-necked to hear, they must use such words of God's majesty and power, which will make stony hearts to tremble; and where fear reigns, there to comfort and raise them up by the gentle loving mercies of God offered to the world in his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And yet once again he refers them to their own judgment, and bids them consider in their own hearts their own ways, and be judges themselves. As if he should say: Hitherto have ye followed your own desires, and have had no profit in so doing; but being sundry wise plagued ye have not considered it. Nothing that ye have gone about hath prospered with you: your fruit of the earth hath not increased; your meat and drink hath not fed you; your clothes hath not kept you warm; your money wasted in your purse, ye could not tell how. But now build my house, and mark your own doings well, whether every thing shall not be blessed and increased that ye go about. I will be delighted in your building, and I will shew my glory to the whole world among you, in defending you, and that my house and worship there. I will be your God, and ye shall be my people, and no enemies shall overcome you: the earth shall be fruitful unto you; your meat, drink, clothes and money shall feed and nourish you. Choose you whether ye will let my house lie unbuilt still, and still be plagued; or ye will repair it diligently, and be blessed.

“Go up to the hill, bring home timber, and build this house:” these three things God requires of them, and he promises them two blessings for them; first, that he will be delighted in that house building, then that he will shew his glory amongst them. For these causes, rather than for worldly profit, they should be more earnestly stirred to do their duty, when they were certain that they pleased God in so doing.

Ezra iii. The hill that he wills them to go to is Libanus, as appears in Esdras<sup>1</sup>, which is not within the bounds of Jewry, but of Tyrus and Sidon: for there grew the fairest trees of any country. From thence had Salomon trees in his time also for the same building. This figure doth teach us, that as

1 Kings v.

[<sup>1</sup> Esdras: Ezra. It is here and elsewhere quoted by the author as the 1st book of Esdras, according to the practice then in use of calling the book of Nehemiah the second book of Esdras or Ezra. See the 6th Article of our Church. Ed.]

God's temple was then builded of trees that grew amongst the heathen people; so when the full time was comen, Christ's church should be builded of the Gentiles and heathen people, when the gospel should be preached through all the world. And this is comfortable for us, that although we be not born of Jews, yet we be trees meet to build God's house on; and God wills us to be brought home to him by the preaching of his word, that we may be partakers of that house, wherein he will dwell, and be delighted in us, and among whom he will shew his glory. He bids them climb up the hill, draw home trees, and build the house; which all be words of great labour and pains, and speaks nothing of the easier sort of work, as devising, casting the work, framing the posts, &c., but wills them not to refuse the greatest labour that belongs thereto, and that nothing should be thought painful that God commands. And he bids them not look for any great worldly wealth when they had done, (although God of his goodness would give them that beside;) but think this a sufficient reward, that God was pleased in their doings, and would shew his glory among them.

The heathen be called to be members of Christ's church.

The painful labour must be borne without respect.

This is the greatest reward that we can look for, when God is delighted with us: and happy is that people to whom it falls. What have the angels in heaven more, than that God is delighted to be among them, and shew his glorious majesty to them? Thus in building God's house we may make of earth heaven, and of men angels. For where God shews himself glorious, there is heaven: and we shall be like angels, delighting ourselves in praising our God; and God will be delighted and dwell with us, shewing his glorious majesty to us, be our God and bless us.

When they had fallen these trees and carried them home, lest they should turn them to their own use, and build their own houses with them, he saith, "Build this house," meaning the house of God and temple which God had chosen among all other places, and where only he willed them to offer their sacrifices. In which we are taught, that we should not turn to our own pleasure those things which God will have dedicate to himself and to the building of his house. If England had not been so greedy to turn to their own use church goods, which should have necessarily been bestowed

Necessary church goods are not to be taken away.

to the building of God's house, we should not have felt God's rod so sharply, but God would have been pleased, and shewed his glory among us.

But when men would not give lands fast enough to abbeys, then the pope, rather than his chaplains should want, would rob many parishes to feed his monks. God grant that the gospel may restore that justly, which the pope took wrongfully away, and gave them yet a right name of impropriations, because improperly they be taken away, and properly belong to the parishes. The workman is worthy his hire: he that serves the gospel, must live of the gospel. Therefore those impropriations, which take away the preacher's living, be against the word of God.

But what, doth this belong to us or our time? doth God require of us to build him abbeys, nunneries, chantries, &c.? No, surely; but this was an outward exercise for that gross, hard-hearted people for a time to be exercised in, that they should not build temples to idols; and teacheth us to build God's spiritual house, wherein we may offer spiritual sacrifices and prayers to him, wherein he is well delighted and will shew his majesty. This house is now for us to be understood generally the whole church and company of Christians, and the body and soul, the heart, mind, or conscience of all Christians particularly, wherein God dwells by his holy Spirit, as St Paul saith to the Corinthians: "Do ye not know that your bodies be the temples of the Holy Ghost," and which he hath sanctified to be kept holy for himself alone by baptism, and for the which Christ hath died that we might live by him, whom he hath redeemed with his blood, and washed clean from all sin, that we should live no more to our own lusts and desires, but to him that hath redeemed us? It is written, that God dwells not in temples made with hands, nor is worshipped with any work of man's hands; but he is a Spirit, an invisible substance, and will be worshipped in spirit and truth; not in outward words only of the lips, but with the deep sighs and groanings of the heart, and the whole power of the mind, and earnest hearty calling on him in prayer by faith. And therefore he doth not so much require of us to build him a house of stone and timber; but hath willed us to pray in all places, and hath taken away that

God's house generally is the whole church, or every particular person.

1 Cor. vi.

Acts vii.

John iv.

1 Tim. ii.