

everlastingly busy; He rested once from that great work of creation; but yet "my Father," saith our Lord, "worketh still," and He never will rest from His works of providence and grace. His eyes continue watchful over the world, and His hands stretched out in upholding it. He hath a singular regard to every creature, supplying the needs of each, and satisfying the desires of all.

And shall we alone be idle, while all things

are so busy? Shall we keep our hands in our bosom, or stretch ourselves on our beds of laziness, while all the world about us is hard at work in pursuing the designs of its creation? Shall we be wanting to ourselves while so many things labour for our benefit? Shall not such a cloud of examples stir us to some industry? Not to comply with so universal a practice, to cross all the world, to disagree with every creature—is it not very monstrous and extravagant?

JOHN TILLOTSON.

1630-1694.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

CONSIDER him in himself, as compounded of soul and body. Consider man in his outward and worst part, and you shall find that to be admirable, even to astonishment; in respect of which the Psalmist cries out (Psalm cxxxix. 14), "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." The frame of our bodies is so curiously wrought, and every part of it so full of miracle, that Galen (who was otherwise backward enough to the belief of a God), when he had anatomised man's body, and carefully surveyed the frame of it, viewed the fitness and usefulness of every part of it, and the many several intentions of every little vein, and bone, and muscle, and the beauty of the whole; he fell into a pang of devotion, and wrote a hymn to his Creator. And those excellent books of his, *De Usu Partium*, "of the usefulness and convenient contrivance of every part of the body," are a most exact demonstration of the Divine wisdom, which appears in the make of our body; of which books, Gassendus saith the whole work is writ with a kind of enthusiasm. The wisdom of God, in the frame of our bodies, very much appears by a curious consideration of the several parts of it; but that requiring a very accurate skill in anatomy, I choose rather wholly to forbear it, than by my unskilfulness to be injurious to the Divine wisdom.

But this *domicilium corporis*, "the house of our body," though it be indeed a curious piece, yet it is nothing to the noble inhabitant that dwells in it. The cabinet, though it be exquisitely wrought, and very rich; yet it comes infinitely short in value of the jewel that is hid and laid up in it. How does the glorious faculty of reason and understanding exalt us above the rest of the creatures. Nature hath not made that particular provision for man, which it hath made for other creatures, because it hath provided for him in general, in giving him a mind

and reason. Man is not born clothed, nor armed with any considerable weapon for defence; but he hath reason and understanding to provide these things for himself; and this alone excels all the advantages of other creatures; he can keep himself warmer and safer; he can foresee dangers, and provide against them; he can provide weapons that are better than horns, and teeth, and paws, and, by the advantage of his reason; is too hard for all other creatures, and can defend himself against their violence.

If we consider the mind of man yet nearer, how many arguments of divinity are there in it. That there should be at once in our understandings distinct comprehensions of such variety of objects; that it should pass in its thought from heaven to earth in a moment, and retain the memory of things past, and take a prospect of the future, and look forward as far as eternity. Because we are familiar to ourselves, we cannot be strange and wonderful to ourselves; but the great miracle of the world is the mind of man, and the contrivance of it an eminent instance of God's wisdom.

Consider man with relation to the universe, and you shall find the wisdom of God doth appear, in that all things are made so useful for man, who was designed to be the chief inhabitant of this visible world, the guest whom God designed principally to entertain in this house which he built. Not that we are to think that God hath so made all things for man, that He hath not made them at all for Himself, and possibly for many other uses than we can imagine; for we much overvalue ourselves, if we think them to be only for us; and we diminish the wisdom of God, in restraining it to one end; but the chief and principal end of many things is the use and service of man; and in reference to this end, you shall find that God hath made abundant and wise provision.

More particularly we will consider man, in his natural capacity as a part of the world. How many things are there in the world for the service

and pleasure, for the use and delight of man, which, if man were not in the world, would be of little use? Man is by nature a contemplative creature, and God has furnished him with many objects to exercise his understanding upon, which would be so far useless and lost, if man were not. Who should observe the motions of the stars, and the courses of those heavenly bodies, and all the wonders of nature? Who should pry into the secret virtues of plants, and other natural things, if there were not in the world a creature endowed with reason and understanding? Would the beasts of the field study astronomy, or turn chemists, and try experiments in nature?

What variety of beautiful plants and flowers is there, which can be imagined to be of little other use but for the pleasure of man. And if man had not been, they would have lost their grace, and been trod down by the beasts of the field, without pity or observation; they would not have made them into garlands and nosegays. How many sorts of fruits are there which grow upon high trees out of the reach of beasts; and, indeed, they take no pleasure in them. What would all the vast bodies of trees have served for, if man had not been to build with them, and make dwellings of them? Of what use would all the mines of metal have been, and of coal, and the quarries of stone? would the mole have admired the fine gold? would the beasts of the forest have built themselves palaces, or would they have made fires in their dens?—*Sermon, The Wisdom of God in the Creation of the World.*

DOING GOOD.*

When almighty God designed the reformation of the world, and the restoring of man to the image of God, the pattern after which he was first made, He did not think it enough to give us the most perfect laws of holiness and virtue, but hath likewise set before us a living pattern, and a familiar example to excite and encourage us, to go before us and show us the way, and as it were to lead us by the hand, in the obedience of those laws. Such is the sovereign authority of God over men, that He might, if He had pleased, have only given us a law written with His own hand, as he did to the people of Israel from Mount Sinai; but such is His goodness that He had sent a great Ambassador from heaven to us, "God manifested in the flesh," to declare and interpret His will and pleasure, and not only so, but to fulfil that law Himself, the observation whereof He requires of us. The bare rules of a good life are a very dead and ineffectual thing in comparison of a living example, which shows us the possibility and practicableness of our duty, both that it may be done and how to do it.

Religion, indeed, did always consist in an imitation of God, and in our resemblance of those excellences which shine forth in the best and most perfect being; but we may imitate Him now with much greater ease and advantage, since God was pleased to become man, on purpose to show us how men may become like to God. And this is one great end for which the Son of God came into the world, and "was made flesh, and dwelt among us," and conversed so long and familiarly with mankind, that, in His own person and life, He might give us the example of all that holiness and virtue which His laws require of us. And as He was in nothing liker the Son of God than in being and doing good, so is He in nothing a fitter pattern for our imitation than in that excellent character given of Him here in the text, that "He went about doing good."

Our Saviour's great work and business in the world, which was to do good; who employed Himself in being a benefactor to mankind. This refers more especially to His healing the bodily diseases and infirmities of men—"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," intimating to us, by this instance of His doing good, that He who took so much pains to rescue men's bodies from the power and possession of the devil, would not let souls remain under his tyranny. But though the text instances, though only in one particular, yet this general expression of doing good comprehends all those several ways whereby he was beneficial to mankind.

His great work and business in the world was to do good; the most pleasant and delightful, the most happy and glorious work in the world. It is a work of a large extent, and of a universal influence, and comprehends in it all those ways whereby we may be useful and beneficial to one another. And indeed it were pity that so good a thing should be confined within narrow bounds and limits. It reacheth to the souls of men, and to their bodies; and is conversant in all those ways and kinds whereby we may serve the temporal or spiritual good of our neighbour, and promote his present and his future happiness.

By good instruction; and under instruction I comprehend all the means of bringing men to the knowledge of their duty, and exciting them to the practice of it, by instructing their ignorance, and removing their prejudices, and rectifying their mistakes by persuasion and by proofs, and by making lasting provision for the promoting of these ends.

By instructing men's ignorance; and this is a duty which every man owes to another as he hath opportunity, but especially to those who are under our care and charge—our children and servants and near relations, those over whom we have a special authority, and a more immediate influence. This our blessed Saviour made His great work in the world, to instruct all sorts of

* "Who went about doing good" (Acts x. 38).

persons in the things which concern the kingdom of God, and to direct them in the way to eternal happiness; by public teaching, and by private conversation, and by taking occasion, from the common occurrences of human life, and every object that presented itself to him, to instil good counsel unto men, and to raise their minds to the consideration of divine and heavenly things; and though this was our Saviour's great employment, and is theirs more particularly whose office it is to teach others, yet every man hath private opportunities of instructing others, by admonishing them of their duty, and by directing them to the best means and helps of knowledge, such as books of piety and religion, with which they that are rich may furnish those who are unable to provide for themselves.

And then by removing men's prejudices against the truth, and rectifying their mistakes. This our Saviour found very difficult; the generality of those with whom He had to do being strongly prejudiced against Him and His doctrine by false principles, which they had taken in by education, and been trained up to by their teachers; and therefore He used a great deal of meekness in instructing those that opposed themselves, and exercised abundance of patience in bearing with the infirmities of men, and their dulness and slowness of capacity to receive the truth.

And this is great charity to consider the inveterate prejudices of men, especially those which are rooted in education, and which men are confirmed in by the reverence they bear to those that have been their teachers. And great allowance is to be given to men in this case, and time to bethink themselves, and to consider better, for no man that is in an error thinks he is so; and therefore, if we go violently to rend their opinions from them, they will but hold them so much the faster; but if we have patience to unrip them by degrees, they will at last fall in pieces of themselves.

And when this is done, the way is open for counsel and persuasion. And this our Saviour administered in a most powerful and effectual manner by encouraging men to repentance, and by representing to them the infinite advantages of obeying His laws, and the dreadful and dangerous consequences of breaking them. And these are arguments fit to work upon mankind, because there is something within us that consents to the equity and reasonableness of God's laws. So that, whenever we persuade men to their duty, how backward soever they may be to the practice of it, being strongly addicted to a contrary course, yet we have this certain advantage, that we have their consciences and the most inward sense of their minds on our side, bearing witness that what we counsel and persuade them to is for their good.

And, if need be, we must add reproof to counsel. This our Saviour did with great free-

dom, and sometimes with sharpness and severity, according to the condition of the persons he had to deal withal. But because of His great authority, being a teacher immediately sent from God, and of His intimate knowledge of the hearts of men, He is not a pattern to us in all the circumstances of discharging this duty, which, of any other, requires great prudence and discretion, if we intend to do good, the only end to be aimed at in it: for many are fit to be reprov'd, whom yet every man is not fit to reprove; and in that case we must get it done by those that are fit; and great regard must be had to the time and other circumstances of doing it, so as it may most probably have its effect.

I will mention but one way of instruction more, and that is by making lasting provision for that purpose; as, by founding schools of learning, especially to teach the poor to read, which is the key of knowledge; by building of churches, and endowing them; by buying or giving in impropriations, or the like. These are large and lasting ways of teaching and instructing others, which will continue when we are dead and gone; as it is said of Abel, that "being dead, he yet speaks." And this our Saviour virtually did, by appointing His apostles, after He had left the world, to "go and teach all nations;" and ordering a constant succession of teachers in His Church, to instruct men in the Christian religion, together with an honourable maintenance for them. This we cannot do in the way that He did, who had "all power in heaven and earth;" but we may be subservient to this design in the ways that I have mentioned, which I humbly commend to the consideration of those whom God hath blest with great estates, and made capable of effecting such great works of charity.

Another way of doing good to the souls of men is by good example. And this our blessed Saviour was in the utmost perfection; for He "fulfilled all righteousness, had no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." And this we should endeavour to be, as far as the frailty of our nature and imperfection of our present state will suffer; for good example is an unspeakable benefit to mankind, and hath a secret power and influence upon those with whom we converse, to form them into the same disposition and manners. It is a living rule that teacheth man without trouble, and lets them see their faults without open reproof and upbraiding; besides that, it adds great weight to a man's counsel and persuasion when we see that he advises nothing but what he does, nor exacts anything from others from which he himself deserves to be excused; as, on the contrary, nothing is more cold and insignificant than good counsel from a bad man; one that does not obey his own precepts, nor follow the advice of which he is so forward to give to others.

These are the several ways of doing good to

the souls of men, wherein we, who are the disciples of the blessed Jesus, ought, in imitation of His example, to exercise ourselves according to our several capacities and opportunities. And this is the noblest charity and the greatest kindnesses that can be shown to human nature. It is in the most excellent sense to "give eyes to the blind, to set the prisoners at liberty;" to rescue men out of the saddest slavery and captivity, and to save souls from death. And it is the most lasting and endurable benefit, because it is to do men good to all eternity.

The other way of being beneficial to others is procuring their temporal good, and contributing to their happiness in this present life. And this, in subordination to our Saviour's great design of bringing men to eternal happiness, was a great part of His business and employment in this world. He went about healing all manner of diseases, and rescuing the bodies of men from the power and possession of the devil.

And though we cannot be beneficial to men in that miraculous manner that He was, yet we may be so in the use of ordinary means. We may comfort the afflicted and vindicate the oppressed, and do a great many acts of charity, which our Saviour, by reason of His poverty, could not do without a miracle. We may supply the necessities of those that are in want, "feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and visit the sick," and minister to them such comforts and remedies as they are not able to provide for themselves. We may take a child that is poor, and destitute of all advantages of education, and bring him up in the knowledge and fear of God, and without any great expense put him into a way wherein, by his diligence and industry, he may arrive to a considerable fortune in the world, and be able afterwards to relieve hundreds of others. Men glory in raising great and magnificent structures, and find a secret pleasure to see sets of their own planting to grow up and flourish; but surely it is a greater and more glorious work to build up a man, to see a youth of our own planting, from the small beginnings and advantages we have given him, to grow up into a considerable fortune, to take root in the world, and to shoot up to such a height, and spread his branches so wide, that we who first planted him may ourselves find comfort and shelter under his shadow. We may many times, with a small liberality, shore up a family that is ready to fall, and struggles under such necessities that it is not able to support itself. And if our minds were as great as sometimes our estates are, we might do great and public works of a general and lasting advantage, and for which many generations to come might call us blessed. And those who are in the lowest condition may do great good to others by their prayers, if they themselves be as good as they ought; for "the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The intercession of those who are in

favour with God, as all good men are, are not vain wishes, but many times effectual to procure that good for others which their own endeavours could never have effected and brought about.

I have done with the first thing, the great work and business which our blessed Saviour had to do in the world, and that was to do good.

I proceed to our Saviour's diligence and industry in this work. He went about doing good; He made it the great business and constant employment of His life; He travelled from one place to another to seek out opportunities of being useful and beneficial to mankind.

How unwearied our blessed Saviour was in doing good. He made it His only business, and spent His whole life in it. He was not only ready to do good to those that came to Him and gave Him opportunity for it, and besought Him to do it, but went Himself from one place to another to seek out objects to exercise His charity upon. He went to those who could not, and to those who would not come to Him; for so it is written of Him, He "came to seek and to save that which was lost." He was contented to spend whole days in this work, to live in a crowd, and to be almost perpetually oppressed with company; and when His disciples were moved at the rudeness of the people in pressing upon Him, He rebuked their impatience; and for the pleasure He took in doing good, made nothing of the trouble and inconvenience that attended it.

If we consider how much He denied Himself in the chief comforts and conveniences of human life, that He might do good to others. He neglected the ordinary refreshments of nature, His meat, and drink, and sleep, that He might attend this work. He was at everybody's beck and disposal, to do them good. When He was doing cures in one place He was sent for to another; and He either went, or sent healing to them, and did by His word at a distance what He could not come in person to do. Nay, He was willing to deny Himself in one of the dearest things in the world, His reputation and good name; He was contented to do good, though He was ill thought of and ill spoken of for it. He would not refuse to do good on the Sabbath day, though He was accounted profane for so doing. He knew how scandalous it was among the Jews to keep company with publicans and sinners, and yet He would not decline so good a work for all the ill words they gave Him for it.

If we consider the malicious opposition and sinister construction that His good deeds met withal. Never did so much goodness meet with so much enmity, endure so many affronts, and so much contradiction of sinners. This great benefactor of mankind was hated and persecuted as if He had been a public enemy. While He was instructing them in the meekest manner,

they were ready to stone Him for telling them the truth; and when the fame of His miracles went abroad, though they were never so useful and beneficial to mankind, yet upon this very account they conspire against Him and seek to take away His life. Whatever He said or did, though never so innocent, never so excellent, had some bad interpretation put upon it, and the great and shining virtues of His life were turned into crimes and matter of accusation. For His casting out of devils He was called a magician; for His endeavour to reclaim men from their vices, "a friend of publicans and sinners;" for His free and obliging conversation, "a wine-bibber and a glutton." All the benefits which He did to men, and the blessings which He so liberally shed among the people, were construed to be a design of ambition and popularity, and done with an intention to move the people to sedition, and to make Himself a king, enough to have discouraged the greatest goodness, and have put a damp upon the most generous mind, and to make it sick and weary of well-doing. For what more grievous than to have all the good one does ill interpreted, and the best actions in the world made matter of calumny and reproach?

If we consider how cheerfully, notwithstanding all this, He persevered and continued in well-doing. It was not only His business but His delight—"I delight," says He, "to do Thy will, O my God;" the pleasure which others take in the most natural actions of life, in eating and drinking when they are hungry, He took in doing good. It "was His meat and drink to do the will of His Father." He plied this work with so much diligence as if He had been afraid He should have wanted time for it. "I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." And when He was approaching towards the hardest and most unpleasant part of His service, but of all others the most beneficial to us—I mean His death and sufferings—He was not at ease in His mind till it was done; "How am I straitened," says He, "till it be accomplished;" and just before his suffering, with what joy and triumph does He reflect upon the good he had done in His life? "Father, I have glorified Thee upon earth, and finished the work which Thou hast given me to do!" What a blessed pattern is here of diligence and industry in doing good! How fair and lovely a copy for Christians to write after!

ROBERT SOUTH.

1633-1716.

FRIENDSHIPS HUMAN AND DIVINE.

WHEN we have said and done all; it is only the true Christian and the religious person who is or can be sure of a friend—sure of obtaining, sure of keeping him. But as for the friendship of the world, when a man shall have done all that he can to make one his friend, employed the utmost of his wit and labour, beaten his brains, and emptied his purse, to create an endearment between him and the person whose friendship he desires, he may, in the end, upon all these endeavours and attempts, be forced to write vanity and frustration; for by them all he may at last be no more able to get into the other's heart than he is to thrust his hand into a pillar of brass; the man's affection, amidst all these kindnesses done him, remaining wholly unconcerned and impregnable, just like a rock which, being plied continually by the waves, still throws them back again into the bosom of the sea that sent them, but is not at all moved by any of them.

People at first, while they are young and raw, and soft-natured, are apt to think it an easy thing to gain love, and reckon their own friendship a sure price of another man's. But when

experience shall have once opened their eyes, and showed them the hardness of most hearts, the hollowness of others, and the baseness and ingratitude of almost all, they will then find that a friend is the gift of God, and that He only, who made hearts, can unite them. For it is He who creates those sympathies and suitablenesses of nature, that are the foundation of all true friendship, and then by His providence brings persons so affected together.

It is an expression frequent in Scripture, but infinitely more significant than at first it is usually observed to be, namely, that God gave such or such a person grace or favour in another's eyes. It is an invisible hand from heaven that ties this knot, and mingles hearts and souls, by strange, secret, and unaccountable conjunctions.

That heart shall surrender itself and its friendship to one man, at first view, which another has in vain been laying siege to for many years, by all the repeated acts of kindness imaginable.

Nay, so far is friendship from being of any human production, that, unless nature be pre-disposed to it by its own propensity or inclination, no arts of obligation shall be able to abate the secret hatreds and hostilities of some persons