

by this instance our blessed Lord consigned that duty to us which, in his sermons, he had preached: that we should forgive our enemies, and pray for them, and by so doing ourselves are freed from the stings of anger, and the storms of a revengeful spirit: and we oftentimes procure servants to God, friends to ourselves, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

Of the two thieves that were crucified together with our Lord, the one blasphemed, the other had, at that time, the greatest piety in the world, except that of the blessed virgin; and particularly had such a faith, that all the ages of the Church could never shew the like: for when he saw *Christ in the same condemnation* crucified by the *Romans*, accused and scorned by the *Jews*, forsaken by his own Apostles, a dying and distressed man, doing at that time no miracles to attest his divinity or innocence, yet then he confesses him to be a Lord and King, and his Saviour: he confessed his own shame and unworthiness, he submitted to the death of the *cross*, and by his voluntary acceptance and tacite volition of it, made it equivalent to as great a punishment of his own susception; he shewed an incomparable modesty, begging but for a *remembrance* onely; he knewe himself so sinful, he durst ask no more; he reprov'd the other thief for *blasphemy*; he confessed the world to come, and owned Christ; he prayed to him, he hoped in him, and pitied him, shewing an excellent patience in this sad condition. And in this I consider, that besides the excellency of some of these acts, and the goodness of all, the like occasion for so exemplary faith never can occur; and until all these shall, in these circumstances, meet in any one man, he must not hope for so safe an *exit* after an evil life, upon the confidence of this example. But now *Christ* had the key of Paradise in his hand, and God blessed the good thief with this opportunity of letting him in, who at another time might have waited longer and been tied to harder conditions. And, indeed, it is very probable that he was much advantaged by the intervening accident of dying at the same time with Christ; there being a natural compassion produced in us toward the partners of our miseries. For Christ was not void of humane passions, though he had in them no imperfection or irregularity, and therefore might be invited by the society of misery the rather to admit him to participate his joys; and St. Paul proves him to be a *merciful High Priest*, because *he was touched with a feeling of our*