

John Tillotson (1630-94), Archbishop of Canterbury, was the son of a clothier at Sowerby near Halifax, and was brought up in the Calvinistic faith of the Puritans. At Clare Hall, Cambridge, his early opinions were modified by Chillingworth's *Religion of the Protestants*; and though at the Savoy Conference (1661) he still ranked with the Presbyterians, on the Act of Uniformity in 1662 he submitted without hesitation and accepted a curacy. He very quickly became noted as a preacher, and began to rise in the Church. In 1663 he became rector of Kedington in Suffolk; it was when (1664) he became preacher at Lincoln's Inn that his sermons attracted attention, though his mild and evangelical, but undoctinal, theology provoked criticism. In 1670 he became Prebendary, in 1672 Dean, of Canterbury. He used his influence in favour of the Nonconformists, whom he was anxious to bring within the pale of the Establishment; but his efforts led to nothing but disappointment. Meanwhile he had married a niece of Oliver Cromwell. His moderate principles commended him to William III., who made him Clerk of the Closet in 1689, and Dean of St Paul's. In 1691 he was raised to the see of Canterbury, vacant by the death of the Nonjuror Sancroft. He accepted the elevation with the greatest reluctance, and the insults of the Nonjurors to the end of his life, three years after, extorted neither complaint nor retaliation. As Archbishop he exerted himself to remove the abuses in the Church, such as non-residence among the clergy; and these efforts and his latitudinarianism excited much enmity. His Sermons, his widow's sole endowment, were purchased by a bookseller for no less than two thousand five hundred guineas, and for long were the most popular of English sermons. Tillotson's style is frequently careless and languid, and he lacks the power and humour of Barrow and South; yet there is in him such manifest sincerity, earnestness, kindness, simplicity, and freedom from affectation that the Sermons well deserved the popularity they enjoyed in an unenthusiastic age. Whitefield, the apostle of a more fervid faith, saw in him the conspicuous representative of the lukewarmness of eighteenth-century religion, and called him 'that traitor who sold his Lord'—a judgment he afterwards repented as unjust. Contemporary judgment was summed up by Burnet: 'He was not only the best preacher of the age, but seemed to have brought preaching to perfection; his sermons were so well heard and liked, and so much read, that all the nation proposed him as a pattern, and studied to copy after him.' Voltaire reported him the wisest and most eloquent of English preachers; and Addison said he was 'the most eminent and useful author of the age we live in.' Dryden, born the year after him, used with undue modesty to say that what talent he had for English prose was due to his familiarity with Tillotson. Locke recommended him as a model of perspicuity and propriety; his most notable difference from great

contemporaries such as Barrow and South is his eminently modern tone, in virtue of which he ranks with Temple and Halifax as one of the founders of modern English prose.

Advantages of Truth and Sincerity.

Truth and reality have all the advantages of appearance, and many more. If the show of anything be good for anything, I am sure sincerity is better: for why does any man dissemble or seem to be that which he is not but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pretends to? for to counterfeit and dissemble is to put on the appearance of some real excellency. Now the best way in the world for a man to seem to be anything is really to be what he would seem to be. Besides that it is many times as troublesome to make good the pretence of a good quality as to have it; and if a man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to want it, and then all his pains and labour to seem to have it is lost. There is something unnatural in painting, which a skilful eye will easily discern from native beauty and complexion.

It is hard to personate and act a part long; for where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always be endeavouring to return, and will peep out and betray herself one time or other. Therefore if any man think it convenient to seem good, let him be so indeed, and then his goodness will appear to everybody's satisfaction; for truth is convincing, and carries its own light and evidence along with it; and will not only commend us to every man's conscience, but, which is no less more, to God, who searcheth and seeth our hearts. So that upon all accounts sincerity is true wisdom. Particularly as to the affairs of this world, integrity hath many advantages over all the fine and artificial ways of dissimulation and deceit; it is much the plainer and easier, much the safer and more secure way of dealing in the world; it has less of trouble and difficulty, of entanglement and perplexity, of danger and hazard in it; it is the shortest and nearest way to our end, carrying us thither in a straight line, and will hold out and last longest. The arts of deceit and cunning do continually grow weaker, and less effectual and serviceable to them that use them; whereas integrity gains strength by use; and the more and longer any man practiseth it, the greater service it does him, by confirming his reputation, and encouraging those with whom he hath to do to repose the greater trust and confidence in him, which is an unspeakable advantage in the business and affairs of life. . . .

Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out; it is always near at hand, and sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware: whereas a lie is troublesome, and sets a man's invention upon the rack, and one trick needs a great many more to make it good. It is like building upon a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to shore it up, and proves at last more chargeable than to have raised a substantial building at first upon a true and solid foundation; for sincerity is firm and substantial, and there is nothing hollow or unsound in it, and because it is plain and open, fears no discovery; of which the crafty man is always in danger; and when he thinks he walks in the dark, all his pretences are so transparent, that he that runs may read them. He is the last man that finds himself to be found out; and whilst he takes it for granted that he makes fools of others, he renders himself ridiculous.