

has, thenceforward a right to abandon us there, and to grant us no longer that special protection with which he favours the just. Now, what a misfortune, if this should ever happen to you, and if you should one day have to reproach yourself with being in a state for which God did not destine you? In this case, though you should be on the first throne in the world, though you should be a queen and a sovereign, you would have to bemoan your lot, and regard it as the most deplorable condition.

III. Nevertheless, behold the disorder, and at the same time the misery of states in the world. They are embraced through interest, through ambition, through passion, and for the establishments of fortune. God is never, or almost never thought of, and the last thing done is to examine whether the state of life be chosen according to his will, and whether salvation can be ensured in it. This is too frequently the case. For example, if an alliance is going to take place between two young persons, by the tie of marriage, what is it they pay most attention to? It is to consider if there be a suitable fortune at each side, if there be birth and rank, if a connection with such a family will bring any worldly honour and advantages. The moment these questions are satisfactorily answered, there is no concern about a divine vocation, or rather, it is supposed to

be infallibly connected with these advantages.

IV. Not that it is absolutely bad to have some regard to these things. There is a human prudence which is not contrary, provided it be subordinate, to the wisdom of the gospel. But the abuse consists in listening only to this worldly prudence, in being guided by the principles of the world, in considering the matter only in reference to the world, and in forming decisions on merely worldly considerations. For this is offering to God the same outrage and injustice, as would be offered by a master to his servant, if he wished to make himself independent of him, and would act only under the orders and authority of another.

V. From hence it happens, that there are few persons in the world, who can reasonably flatter themselves on being in the state of life to which God has called them. By this I do not wish you to suppose, that the different states which compose what we call the world, are not generally connected with the vocation of God. It was he established them, he that divided them, he that by his infinite wisdom disposed and arranged them. Now, he did not establish and regulate them, in order that they should remain vacant, or without subjects to fill them. Whence, it undeniably follows, that there are a great number amongst mankind whom he has created for these states, and destined to fill them, so that it would be a