

OF VOCATION AND CALLING

DCCCXLVII.

When they who have the office of teaching, joy not therein, that is, have not regard to him that called and sent them; it is, for them, an irksome work. Truly, I would not take the wealth of the whole world, now to begin the work against the pope, which thus far I have wrought, by reason of the exceeding heavy care and anguish wherewith I have been burthened. Yet, when I look upon him that called me thereunto, I would not for the world's wealth, but that I had begun it. It is much to be lamented, that no man is content and satisfied with that which God gives him in his vocation and calling. Other men's conditions please us more than our own; as the heathen said: - "*Fertilior seges est alienis semper in agris, Vicinumque pecus grandius uber habet.*"

And another heathen: - "*Optat ephippia bos piger, optat arare caballus.*" The more we have the more we want. To serve God is for every one to remain in his vocation and calling, be it ever so mean and simple.

DCCCXLVIII.

It is said, occasion has a forelock, but is bald behind. Our Lord has taught this by the course of nature. A farmer must sow his barley and oats about Easter; if he defer it to Michaelmas, it were too late. When apples are ripe they must be plucked from the tree, or they are spoiled. Procrastination is as bad as over hastiness. There is my servant Wolf: when four or five birds fall upon the bird net, he will not draw it, but says: O, I will stay until more come, then they all fly away, and he gets none. Occasion is a great matter. Terence says well: I came in time, which is the chief thing of all. Julius Caesar understood occasion; Pompey and Hannibal did not. Boys at school understand it not, therefore they must have fathers and masters, with the rod to hold them thereto, that they neglect not time, and lose it. Many a young fellow has a school stipend for six or seven years, during which he ought diligently to study; he has his tutors, and other means, but he thinks: O, I have time enough yet. But I say: No, fellow. What little Jack learns not, great John learns not. Occasion salutes thee, and reaches out her forelock to thee, saying: "Here I am, take hold of me;" thou thinkest she will come again. Then says she: Well, seeing thou wilt not take hold of my top, take hold of my tail; and therewith flings away.

Bonaventura was but a poor sophist, yet he could say: He that neglects occasion is of it neglected, and `its a saying with us: Take hold of time, while `its time, and now, while `its

now. Our emperor Charles understood not occasion, when he took the French king prisoner before Pavia, in 1525; nor afterwards, when he got into his hands pope Clement, and had taken Rome in 1527; nor in 1529, when he almost got hold of the great Turk before Vienna. It was monstrous negligence for a monarch to have in his hands his three great enemies, and yet let them go.

DCCCXLIX.

Germany would be much richer than she is, if such store of velvets and silks were not worn, nor so much spice used, or so much beer drunk. But young fellows without their liquor have no mirth at all; gaming makes not merry, nor lasciviousness, so they apply themselves to drinking. At the princely jollification lately held at Torgau, each man drank, at one draught, a whole bottle of wine; this they called a good drink. Tacitus wrote, that by the ancient Germans it was held no shame at all to drink and swill four and twenty hours together. A gentleman of the court asked: How long ago it was since Tacitus wrote this? He was answered, about fifteen hundred years. Whereupon the gentleman said: Forasmuch as drunkenness has been so ancient a custom, and of such a long descent, let us not abolish it.

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