Transcription Note for James Archer Sermons 62 and 72

Sermons 62 and 72 comprise a related pair. The chronological order of these sermons is unknown, although Sermon 62 appears to be the original draft; Sermon 72 the revised and corrected copy, apparently written in Archer's own hand at some later date. Sermon 72 is a closely related and condensed version of Sermon 62. Textual alterations consisted of synonymic changes in selected words and phrases, the deletion or addition of words, sentences, and paragraphs, and significant rephrasing. Stylistic modifications involved changes in abbreviation, punctuation, and capitalization. Both sermons have been transcribed and annotated in their entirety.

JAMES ARCHER SERMONS [72]

Luke 9:23

A Clothing[1] Discourse

Dicebat autem ad omnes: *si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam quotitie* [*quotidie*].

And he said to all. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily. Words taken out of the 9th C. of St Luke and 23rd V.

It is not to them alone who aspire unto religious perfection that the Saviour of the world here addresses himself, but to all mankind; he said to all remarks the Evangelist: he excepts neither age, sex, nor condition; he requires of all that the moment they become Christians, they deny themselves and take up their Cross daily in order to obtain admittance |be admitted| into the rank of his Disciples. At the time our Blessed Saviour pronounced |spoke| these words, there were no ~~Cloisters nor~~ Monasteries. He declared indeed that

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Celebacy [ME var.; Celibacy] did not regard all persons. All men receive not this word but they to whom it is given[.] St Matth. 19th V 11th But as to mortification and selfdenial he exempts no one: <u>*dicebat ad omnes*</u>.

In vain would the world pretend to justify its abandonment of the Law by the plea of custom, for their can be nor prescriptio[n] against the Gospel; the word of J.C. [Jesus Christ] will yield neither to the power of the Great, nor to the Pride of the Wise, nor to the authority of the Rich, nor to the softness of the Voluptuous: <u>*dicebat autem ad omnes*</u>.

It is not therefore retirement into a Monastery that will be a security of a persons virtue. Tis[2] not even the sanctity of the habit and profession that will secure the religious[3] person from the enemies of his Salvation. These indeed are helps thereunto & when accompanied by the constant practice of self denial and mortification of the passions, which is as it were the soul of religious institute[s], he need not fear the attacks of all the enemies of his

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[1 "Clothing" A reference to the ceremony of investiture of the religious habit.]
[2 "Tis" – The contracted form of "it is."]
[3 "religious" – Archer uses the term "religious" in its noun form, meaning those who are bound by monastic vows or devoted to a spiritual life.]

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salvation; the Devil, the world, and the flesh. And why? because the continual practice of self denial is a preservative against great crimes |faults| which they are exposed to, who follow the bent of their natural inclinations[.] 2ndly because selfdenial is a remedy that purifies the soul from the daily faults of human frailty. The subject of my discourse, and of your pious attention[.]

I acknowledge my Friends that the sages of the World, who, with a profane eye view the ordinary observances of religious Communities, hold them in contempt, and think it amazing that man should reduce himself to such slavery as to debar himself the most innocent satisfactions. They regard the yoke of the Law as a sufficient burthen without an addition of so many works of supererogation,[4] and that a person may be saved |attain his salvation| by more easy means. Such are their sentiments who are insensible of the extreme frailty of man and of the difficulty of the Law:

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but whoever shall have attentively reflected on the one and the other, and entered into the spirit of the Gospel, will admire the wisdom of the Founders of so many different religious orders and candidly own that they could not require less to conduct us with safety, to the end unto which we aspire.

In fact, my friends, they well foresaw that whatever means they should take to conduct men to the sovereign degree of perfection, only a small number, would be distinguished in Religious Houses by consummate virtue. However they well knew that it was necessary to provide for the Salvation of others; and that in order to bring them to the perfect accomplishment of the Law ~~it would be necessary~~ they required of them the observance of the evangelical perfections. Convinced by a long and fatal experience of the extreme frailty and weakness of man, which cause him to fall short of what he proposes, they judged very

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properly that if he did not aim at something more sublime than the simple observance of the Law, he would be exposed to fail in that |things| which is |are| necessary for |essential to| his salvation.

Hence to preserve him from falling into great vices |faults| they strove to eradicate even the least imperfections. Thus |Hence| to prevent ambition so natural to man, they would have him stifle this monster in its very birth; addict himself to the constant exercise of humility; live in silence and hidden retirement; have his defects always in his sight that he be thereby habituated

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[4 "supererogation" – (Lat.: *super*; in addition, beyond + *erogare*; to pay out, expend, distribute, give) In Roman Catholic theology, morally good deeds and acts that exceed those required for salvation (e.g., charity, beneficence, chastity, obedience). See also, related scriptural allusions: Matthew 5:39–42, 19:16–30; Luke 10:30–37, 17:9–10; 1 Corinthians 7:7–8; James 4:17.]

to a contempt of himself. Thus |Hence| to prevent the disorders of selfwill, what exertions did they not use to subdue it? sometimes requiring of him ~~to do~~ things that appeared wholely [ME var.; wholly] inconsistent with sense and reason. Thus |Hence| to prevent the vices of the flesh and to render it subservient to the spirit and the Law, they judged it

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expedient to mortify it by all those austerities which their zeal inspired them to ordain. Thus |Hence| to root out covetousness which causes an attachment to the things of the earth, they require that the religious person divest himself of every thing, that he be not allowed the propriety even of those things that are permitted for his use; that the badge of holy poverty be visible in all things about him, and serve him as a monitor of the state he has embraced. In a word; it was to inspire into religious persons a blind submission to the Divine Will that they have obliged them to renounce their own; and that they have placed this at the head of their Constitutions viz. that they continually apply themselves to the practice of selfdenial and the mortification of their senses and passions; persuaded that the security of the Religious state depends thereon

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and that the moment they cease to labour to subdue themselves, they will expose themselves to fall a pray[5] to their enemies.

Religion by the multiplicity of its observances seems to insinuate to all its professors this salutary advice of S^{t} Paul to the Ephesians: Take unto you the armour of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day. C. 6 He then gives a detail thereof: the shield of Faith says he, the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, the helmet of salvation, all the celestial armour with which the gospel furnishes a Christian to resist the Enemy.[6] And why all this? The Apostle tells you, that you may be able to resist in the evil day. As though he had said to you. Judge not of yourselves by the present disposition of your hearts: perhaps you are now in a very tranquil and happy state; but rely not upon this serenity; a certain day awaits you when you will stand in need of the most perfect self denial and of the purest virtue

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prepare yourselves to stand firm in those days of trouble and confusion, wherein it is difficult to discern whether Jesus Christ or the world reigns in us; in those days of trial in which columns of the Church have fallen, stars of Heaven have been eclipsed, the solitary in the Desert has perished; in those days, in a word, so tremendous, that all the sanctity of a David, all the wisdom

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[5 "fall a pray" (ME var.; prey) – To be deceived, influenced, controlled, negatively affected, or harmed by others.]
[6 See Ephesians 6:11–17.]

of a Soloman [Solomon], and all the strength of a Sampson, do not suffice to secure frail man from deplorable falls, which are celebrated examples of human frailty.

Remember D^r^ [Dear] Candidate that your contest is not only against flesh and blood, but also against the most watchful, subtle, and cruel enemy. If he tempt you to be neglectful in small things in order to dispose you to fall into great faults; turn his device to his confusion: deny yourself in these little observances that you may be able to support the most arduous contests. If you are punctual

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in the practice of selfdenial and mortification you will grow daily in virtue and your virtue will be firm and immovable |constant|. You will be, ~~take unto the~~ as I may say, that house of which our Blessed Saviour speaks in the Gospel, which the fury of the winds and the waves will in vain attempt to overthrow; you will brave all the storms and temptation being founded on a Rock;[7] whereas those virtuous persons who have not the foundation of self denial are easily borne away because they built upon sand.

You will not be like unto that weak King mentioned in the Gospel, who at the time he ought to engage in Battle, is obliged to send an Embassy[8] to sue for peace and thus make a disgraceful avowal of his weakness:[9] No, having daily exercised and prepared yourself by light trials, you will have raised sufficient forces to withstand the most formidable enemies of your salvation[.]

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You have seen, D^r^ Cadidate [Candidate], that selfdenial is a preservative against great faults; it now remains for me to shew you that it effaces the daily faults committed through human frailty.

It is an incontestable truth in Christian morality that God will let no sin go unpunished; either man must efface it by his tears or God will reserve it to his Judgement. <u>I feared all my works</u>, said holy Job, <u>knowing that thou didst not spare the offender:</u>[10] He does not here speak of the guilt of sin which is remitted when a Sinnner is truely [ME var.; truly] converted to God, but of the punishment due to it, which God has been pleased to change from eternal into temporal, but does not entirely remit it without atonement.

One of the principal advantages of the Religious State is, that the penitential and crucified life that is therein led, in the constant practice of selfdenial, prevents in man the severity of God's

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[7 See Matthew 7:24–29.]
[8 "Embassy" – In this sense: (1) A person or delegation sent on a formal political or diplomatic mission or negotiation; (2) a message sent or delivered by an ambassador.]
[9 See Luke 14:28–32.]
[10 See Job 9:28.]

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judgments for which reason the Fathers of the Chuch [Church] regard it as a State of penance. If a fault escape a Religious person, from which human frailty is not exempt, it is soon expiated. If there should be some defect in one religious Observance, it is immediately repaired by the fulfilment [var.; fulfillment] of another. If some indiscreet word escape him, it is forthwith punished by long silence. If some sensuality should occur at table, frugal as is that of Religious Communities, it is soon repaired and effaced by fasting and abstinence. If there should ~~happen to be some deficiency in obedience, it~~ be some departure from the path of obedience, an abundant reparation is made by a continual submission in all the actions of life. If some negligence should happen in the service of God, it is compensated by long and assiduous prayer. If the mind be occasionaly [ME var.; occasionally] somewhat dissipated, this is avenged by perpetual retirement. This penance is so austere that people

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in the World who have made eight days retreat, persuade |imagine| themselves that they have made a very great and painful satisfaction to the Almighty. In a word the slightest sins are herein condemned and more severely punished than the most enormous crimes in the World.

For this reason S^{t} Thomas, in a book which he wrote on this subject shews that there is no penance in the Church comparable to that of a Religious Life, not even the public penances, which were the most rigorous the Church ever enjoined; because these were but for a limited time, whereas those of a Religious Life terminate only ~~end with~~ by death.[11]

Behold D^{r} Candidate the consolation of a Religious person who lives according to the Spirit of her vocation, I know,

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my God, my great weakness, and am grieved that notwithstanding the sanctity of my Profession, I cannot live with all that purity of Soul I could wish: however I live in a state in which I may easily and daily expiate my faults: if I have the displeasure of seeing myself guilty of some offence of your adorable Majesty, I have the happiness of offering you daily satisfaction for it, without waiting till you require it of me. Although your justice should yield so far as to spare an ungrateful and rebellious creature, my heart would never consent |assent| to it. It is but too just, O

[11 Archer's mention of "a book which he wrote" is perhaps an indication he has conflated Aquinas with Augustine, and is referring to *Liber de Vera et Falsa Pœnitentia* (The Book of True and False Penitence), whose authenticity was attacked by Luther and now widely considered to have been written by pseudo-Augustine (see Lea, H. *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church*, 1896, Vol. 1, p209, second paragraph and footnote 3, https://books.google.com/books?id=eb0ZAAAAMAAJ&vq=vera%20et%20falsa&pg=PA209#v=onepage&q=%22vera%20et%20falsa%22&f=false). Aquinas refers to this text on several occasions in the *Summa Theologica* (see https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~ST.III.Q84.A9.SC and passim). No English translation could be located, however a Latin version is available at http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/02m/0354-0430,_Augustinus,_De_Vera_Et_Falsa_Poenitentia_Ad_Christum_Devotam,_MLT.pdf.]

my God, that one who could offend so bountiful a Father should experience the bitterness of her fault. I am willing O my God that

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this should be the only consolation of my state. It suffices me that the penitential life that I have embraced for the love of you will be acceptable to you, and that at the great day of retribution, you will not punish in me that which I shall have punished in myself. It is with joy that I will take up my Cross in imitation of my Divine Master, and bear my sufferings, lest I should depart out of this World indebted to your Divine Justice. I desire as much as possible to fall into the hands of your pure mercy and to render myself worthy to possess you as soon as you shall have broken asunder the bonds which detain me here; that then my Soul may take her flight to the bosom of her Divine Spouse, there to enjoy his chast [ME var.; chaste] embraces. I do not esteem

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my state only because it preserves me from great falls, but also because it affords me the opportunity of making immediate satisfaction for my daily faults. O happy necessity for me to purify my Soul by a life of penance, that at its departure hence it may go to eternal enjoyment of my God. |A happiness| Which may he in his infinite mercy grant us all.

In the Name &c [et cetera].