

Chapter 5

Nehemias blameth couetous richmen, for oppressing the poore: 14. himfelfe geueth largely of his owne to the needie.

And there was ^{a)}a great crie of the people, and of their wiues againft their brethren the Iewes. ² And there were that faid: Our fonnes and our daughters are verie manie: let vs take corne for the price of them, and let vs eate, and liue. ³ And there were that fayd: Let vs pledge our fieldes, and vineyardes, and our houfes, and let vs take corne in famine. ⁴ And others fayd: Let vs borow money for the kings tributes, and let vs giue our fields and vineyardes, ⁵ and now as the flefh of our bretheren, fo is our flefh: and as their children fo alfo our children. Behold we fubdew our fonnes, and our daughters into bondage, and our daughters there are bondwomen, neither haue we wherewith they may be redemed, and our fieldes and our vineyardes other men doe poffeffe. ⁶ And I was exceeding angrie, when I had heard their crie according to thefe wordes. ⁷ And my hart thought with my felfe: and I rebuked the princes and magiftrates, and fayd to them: Do you euery one exact vfuries of your brethren? and I gathered againft them a great affembly, ⁸ and I fayd to them: We as you know, haue redemed our bretheren the Iewes, that were fold to the gentiles, according to our abilitie: and wil you therfore fel your bretheren, and fhall we redeme them? And they held their peace, neither did they find what to anfwer. ⁹ And I fayd to them: The thing is not good, which you doe: why walke ^{b)}you not

^a S. Beda in his time lamented that fome fpiritual Superiors neglected to feede their flock, either fpiritually or temporally, and yet exacted temporal reuenues, and oppreffed the poore people. *li. 3. c. 21. in Efd.* How much more may we with him, with an other Nehemias, that is a *comforter from our Lord* to correct this fault, & to releue poore Catholiques diftreffed?

^b A right propertie of a true paffor, to do that good which he preacheth to others. *S. Beda ibidem.*

in the feare of our God, left we be vpbroyded with al the gentiles our enimies? ¹⁰ I also and my bretheren, and my seruantes, haue lent money and corne to very manie: let vs not aske this againe in common, let vs remitte them the debt, that is dewe to vs. ¹¹ Restore ye to them their fieldes this day, and their vineyards, and their oliuets, and their houfes: yea the hundreth part also of money, corne, wine, and oyle, which you were wont to exact of them, giue it rather for them. ¹² And they sayd: We wil restore, and we wil seeke nothing of them: and we wil do so as thou speakest. And I called the Priestes, and adiuured them, to do according to that which I had sayd. ¹³ Moreouer I shooke my bosome, and sayd: God so shake every man, that shal not accomplish this word, out of his house, and out of his labours, so be he shaken out, and made emptie. And al the multitude sayd: Amen. And they prayfed God. And the people did as it was sayd. ¹⁴ And from that day, wherin the king commended me to the duke in the land of Iuda, from the twentieth yeare til the two & thirtieth yeare of Artaxerxes the king for twelue yeares, I and my bretheren did not eate the yearly allowance, that was dewe to the dukes. ¹⁵ But the former dukes, that had bene before me, burdened the people, and tooke of them in bread, and wine, and money euery day fourtie sicles: yea and their officers oppressed the people. But I did not so for the feare of God. ¹⁶ Yea I builded rather in the worke of the wal, and field I bought not, and al my seruantes were gathered together to the worke. ¹⁷ The Iewes also and the magistrates an hundred fiftie men, and they that came to vs out of the nations, that were round about vs were at the table. ¹⁸ And there was prepared for me day by day one oxe, six chofen rammes, beside foules, and within ten dayes diuers wines, & many other things did I giue. Moreouer also the yearly allowance of my dukedome I fought not, for the people was very much empouerished. ¹⁹ ^a)Remember me my God to good, ac-

^a A good conscience hath great confidence in God and iustly hopeth for reward.

according to all things, which I have done to this people.