



John Adams Library,



IN THE CUSTODY OF THE
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.



SHELF N^o

ADAMS
181.2



F I F T E E N
S E R M O N S

Preached at the
ROLLS CHAPEL

Upon the following SUBJECTS.

Upon Humane Nature.	Upon Forgiveness of Injuries.
Upon the Government of the Tongue.	Upon Self-deceit.
Upon Compassion.	Upon the Love of our Neighbour.
Upon the Character of <i>Balaam</i> .	Upon the Love of God.
Upon Repentment.	Upon the Ignorance of Man.

To which are added,

S I X S E R M O N S

Preached on PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

By *JOSEPH BUTLER*, LL. D.
Late Lord Bishop of DURHAM.

The FIFTH EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for ROBERT HORSFIELD, at the
CROWN in LUDGATE-STREET.
M.DCC.LXV.

ADAMS 181.2



To the Right Honourable

Sir JOSEPH JEKYLL,

Master of the ROLLS, &c.

The following S E R M O N S,
preached in his Chapel, are
with all Humility Dedi-
cated,

BY

his most dutiful, and

most obedient Servant,

JOSEPH BUTLER.

T H E

P R E F A C E.

THOUGH 'tis scarce possible to avoid judging, in some Way or other, of almost every thing which offers itself to one's Thoughts; yet 'tis certain that many Persons, from different Causes, never exercise their judgment, upon what comes before them, in the way of determining whether it be conclusive and holds. They are perhaps entertained with some things, not so with others; they like and they dislike: But whether that which is proposed to be made out, be really made out or not; whether a Matter be stated according to the real Truth of the Case, seems to the Generality of People merely a circumstance of no Consideration at all. Arguments are often wanted for some accidental Purpose: But Proof as such is what they never want for Themselves; for their own Satisfaction of Mind, or Conduct in Life. Not to mention the Multitudes who read merely for the sake of Talking, or to qualify themselves for the World, or some such Kind of Reasons; there are, even of

the few who read for their own Entertainment, and have a real Curiosity to see what is said, several, which is prodigious, who have no sort of Curiosity to see what is true: I say, Curiosity; because 'tis too obvious to be mentioned, how much that religious and sacred Attention, which is due to Truth, and to the important Question, What is the Rule of Life, is lost out of the World.

F O R the Sake of this whole Class of Readers, for they are of different Capacities, different Kinds, and get into this way from different Occasions, I have often wished, that it had been the Custom to lay before People nothing in Matters of Argument but Premises, and leave them to draw Conclusions themselves; which, though it could not be done in all Cases, might in many.

T H E great Number of Books and Papers of Amusement, which, of one kind or another, daily come in one's way, have in Part occasioned, and most perfectly fall in with and humour, this idle way of reading and considering things. By this Means, Time even in Solitude is happily got rid of, without the Pain of Attention: Neither is any Part of it more put to the Account of Idleness, one can scarce forbear saying, is spent with less Thought, than great Part of that which is spent in Reading.

T H U S People habituate themselves to let things pass through their Minds, as one may
speak,

ſpeak, rather than to think of them. Thus by Uſe they become ſatisfied merely with ſeeing what is ſaid, without going any further. Review and Attention, and even forming a Judgment, becomes Fatigue ; and to lay any thing before them that requires it, is putting them quite out of their Way.

T H E R E are alſo Perſons, and there are at leaſt more of them than have a Right to claim ſuch Superiority, who take for granted, that they are acquainted with every thing ; and that no Subject, if treated in the Manner it ſhould be, can be treated in any Manner but what is familiar and eaſy to them.

'T I S true indeed, that few Perſons have a Right to demand Attention ; but 'tis alſo true, that nothing can be underſtood without that Degree of it, which the very Nature of the Thing requires. Now Morals, conſidered as a Science, concerning which ſpeculative Difficulties are daily raiſed, and treated with Regard to thoſe Difficulties, plainly require a very peculiar Attention. For here Ideas never are in themſelves determinate, but become ſo, by the Train of Reasoning and the Place they ſtand in ; ſince 'tis impoſſible that Words can always ſtand for the ſame Ideas, even in the ſame Author, much leſs in different ones. Hence an Argument may not readily be apprehended, which is different from its being miſtaken ; and even Caution to avoid being miſtaken, may, in ſome Caſes,

P R E F A C E.

render it less readily apprehended. 'Tis very unallowable for a Work of Imagination or Entertainment not to be of easy comprehension, but may be unavoidable in a Work of another Kind, where a Man is not to form or accommodate, but to state Things as he finds them.

It must be acknowledged that some of the following Discourses are very abstruse and difficult; or, if you please, obscure: But I must take Leave to add, that those alone are Judges, whether or no and how far this is a Fault, who are Judges, whether or no and how far it might have been avoided—those only who will be at the Trouble to understand what is here said, and to see how far the Things here insisted upon, and not other Things, might have been put in a plainer Manner; which yet I am very far from asserting that they could not.

Thus much however will be allowed, that general Criticisms concerning Obscurity considered as a distinct Thing from Confusion and Perplexity of Thought, as in some Cases there may be Ground for them; so in others, they may be nothing more at the Bottom than Complaints, that every thing is not to be understood with the same Ease that some Things are. Confusion and Perplexity in Writing is indeed without Excuse, because any one may, if he pleases, know whether he understands and sees through
what

P R E F A C E.

v

what he is about : and 'tis unpardonable for a Man to lay his Thoughts before Others, when he is conscions that he himself does not know whereabouts he is, or how the Matter before him stands. 'Tis coming Abroad in Disorder, which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at Home.

B U T even Obscurities arising from other Causes than the Abstruseness of the Argument, may not be always inexcusable. Thus a Subject may be treated in a Manner, which all along supposes the Reader acquainted with what has been said upon it, both by ancient and modern writers; and with what is the present state of Opinion in the World concerning such Subject. This will create a Difficulty of a very peculiar Kind, and even throw an Obscurity over the whole before those who are not thus informed; but those who are, will be disposed to excuse such a Manner, and other Things of the like Kind, as a saving of their Patience.

H O W E V E R upon the whole, as the Title of *Sermons* gives some Right to expect what is plain and of easy Comprehension, and as the best Auditories are mixt, I shall not set about to justify the Propriety of Preaching, or under that Title Publishing, Discourses so abstruse as some of these are: Neither is it worth while to trouble the Reader with the Account of my doing either. He must not however impute to me, as a Repetition of the
Impro-

P R E F A C E.

Impropriety, this second Edition *, but to the Demand for it.

W H E T H E R he will think he has any Amends made him, by the following Illustrations of what seemed most to require them, I myself am by no Means a proper Judge.

T H E R E are two Ways in which the Subject of Morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract Relations of Things: the other from a Matter of Fact, namely, what the particular Nature of Man is, its several Parts, their Oeconomy or Constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what Course of Life it is, which is correspondent to this whole Nature. In the former Method the Conclusion is express'd thus, that Vice is contrary to the Nature and Reason of Things: In the latter, that 'tis a Violation or Breaking in upon our own Nature. Thus they both lead us to the same Thing, our Obligations to the Practice of Virtue; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other, The first seems the most direct formal Proof, and in some Respects the least liable to Cavil and Dispute: The latter is in a peculiar Manner adapted to satisfy a fair Mind; and is more easily applicable

* The Preface stands exactly as it did before the second Edition of the Sermons.

plicable to the several particular Relations and Circumstances in Life.

THE following Discourses proceed chiefly in this latter Method. The three first wholly. They were intended to explain what is meant by the Nature of Man, when it is said that Virtue consists in following, and Vice in deviating from it; and by explaining to shew that the Assertion is true. That the antient Moralists had some inward Feeling or other, which they chose to express in this Manner, that Man is born to Virtue, that it consists in following Nature, and that Vice is more contrary to this Nature than Tortures or Death, their Works in our Hands are Instances. Now a Person who found no Mystery in this Way of speaking of the Ancients; who, without being very explicit with himself, kept to his natural Feeling, went along with them, and found within himself a full Conviction that what they laid down was just and true; such an one would probably wonder to see a Point, in which he never perceived any Difficulty, so laboured as this is, in the second and third Sermons; insomuch perhaps as to be at a Loss for the Occasion, Scope and Drift of them. But it need not be thought strange that this Manner of Expression, though familiar with them, and, if not usually carried so far, yet not uncommon amongst Ourselves, should want explaining; since there are several Perceptions daily felt and spoken of,
which

which yet it may not be very easy at first View to explicate, to distinguish from all others, and ascertain exactly what the Idea or Perception is. The many Treatises upon the Passions are a Proof of this; since so many would never have undertaken to unfold their several Complications, and trace and resolve them into their Principles, if they had thought, what they were endeavouring to shew, was obvious to every one, who felt and talked of those Passions. Thus, though there seems no Ground to doubt, but that the Generality of Mankind have the inward Perception express'd so commonly in that Manner by the ancient Moralists, more than to doubt whether they have those Passions; yet it appeared of Use to unfold that inward Conviction, and lay it open in a more explicit Manner, than I had seen done; especially when there were not wanting Persons, who manifestly mistook the whole Thing, and so had great Reason to express themselves dissatisfied with it. A late Author of great and deserved Reputation, says, that to place Virtue in following Nature, is at best a loose Way of Talk. And he has Reason to say this, if what I think he intends to express, though with great Decency, be true, that scarce any other Sense can be put upon those Words, but acting as any of the several Parts without Distinction, of a Man's Nature happened most to incline him.*

W H O E V E R

* *Rel. of Nature delin. Ed. 1724. P. 22, 23.*

W H O E V E R thinks it worth while to consider this Matter thoroughly, should begin with stating to himself exactly the Idea of a System, Oeconomy or Constitution of any particular Nature, or particular any Thing : And he will, I suppose, find, that 'tis an One or a Whole, made up of several Parts ; but yet, that the several Parts even considered as a Whole, do not compleat the Idea, unless in the notion of a Whole, you include the Relations and Respects, which those Parts have to each other. Every Work both of Nature and of Art is a System : And as every particular Thing both natural and artificial is for some Use or Purpose out of and beyond itself, one may add, to what has been already brought into the Idea of a System, its Conduciveness to this one or more Ends. Let us Instance in a Watch—Suppose the several Parts of it taken to Pieces, and placed apart from each other : Let a Man have ever so exact a Notion of these several Parts, unless he considers the Respects and Relations which they have to each other, he will not have any Thing like the Idea of a Watch. Suppose these several Parts brought together and any how united: Neither will he yet, be the Union ever so close, have an Idea which will bear any Resemblance to that of a Watch. But let him view those several Parts put together, or consider them as to be put together in the Manner of a Watch ; let him form a
Notion

P R E F A C E.

Notion of the Relations which those several Parts have to each other—all conducive in their respective Ways, to this Purpose, shewing the hour of the Day; and then he has the Idea of a Watch. Thus it is with Regard to the inward Frame of Man. Appetites, Passions, Affections, and the Principle of Reflection, considered merely as the several Parts of our inward Nature, do not at all give us an Idea of the System or Constitution of this Nature: Because the Constitution is formed by somewhat not yet taken into Consideration, namely by the Relations, which these several Parts have to each other; the chief of which is the Authority of Reflection or Conscience. 'Tis from considering the Relations which the several Appetites and Passions in the inward Frame have to each other, and above all the Supremacy of Reflection or Conscience, that we get the Idea of the System or Constitution of Humane Nature. And from the Idea itself 'twill as fully appear, that this our Nature *i. e.* Constitution is adapted to Virtue, as from the Idea of a Watch it appears, that its Nature, *i. e.* Constitution or System is adapted to measure Time. What in Fact or Event commonly happens, is nothing to this Question. Every Work of Art is apt to be out of Order: But this is so far from being according to its System, that let the Disorder increase, and 'twill totally destroy it. This is merely by Way of Explanation,

nation, what an Oeconomy, System or Constitution is. And thus far the Cases are perfectly parallel. If we go further, there is indeed a Difference, nothing to the present Purpose, but too important a one ever to be omitted. A Machine is inanimate and passive: But we are Agents. Our Constitution is put in our own Power. We are charged with it: And therefore are accountable for any Disorder or Violation of it.

T H U S nothing can possibly be more contrary to Nature than Vice; meaning by Nature, not only the *several Parts* of our internal Frame, but also the *Constitution* of it. Poverty and Disgrace, Tortures and Death are not so contrary to it. Misery and Injustice are indeed equally contrary to some different Parts of our Nature taken singly: But Injustice is moreover contrary to the whole Constitution of the Nature.

If it be asked whether this Constitution be really what those Philosophers meant, and whether they would have explained themselves in this Manner: The Answer is the same, as if it should be asked, whether a Person, who had often used the Word Repentment and felt the Thing, would have explained this Passion exactly in the same Manner, in which 'tis done in one of these Discourses. As I have no Doubt, but that this is a true Account of that Passion, which he refer'd to and intended to express by the Word Repentment;

ment ; so I have no Doubt, but that this is the true Account of the Ground of that Conviction, which they referred to, when they said, Vice was contrary to Nature. And though it should be thought that they meant no more than, that Vice was contrary to the higher and better Part of our Nature ; even this implies such a Constitution as I have endeavoured to explain. For the very Terms, higher and better, imply a Relation or Respect of Parts to each other ; and these relative Parts, being in one and the same Nature, form a Constitution, and are the very Idea of it. They had a Perception that Injustice was contrary to their Nature, and that Pain was so also. They observed these two Perceptions totally different, not in Degree, but in Kind : And the reflecting upon each of them as they thus stood in their Nature, wrought a full intuitive Conviction, that more was due, and of Right belonged to one of these inward Perceptions, than to the other ; that it demanded in all Cases to govern such a Creature as Man. So that upon the whole, this is a fair and true Account of what was the Ground of their Conviction ; of what they intended to refer to when they said, Virtue consisted in following Nature : A Manner of speaking not loose and undeterminate, but clear and distinct, strictly just and true.

THOUGH I am persuaded the Force of this Conviction is felt by almost every one ;
yet

yet since, considered as an Argument and put in Words, it appears somewhat abstruse, and since the connection of it is broken in the three first Sermons, it may not be amiss to give the Reader the whole Argument here in one View.

MANKIND has various Instincts and Principles of Action, as brute Creatures have; some leading most directly and immediately to the good of the Community, and some most directly to private Good.

MAN has several which Brutes have not; particularly Reflection or Conscience, an Approbation of some Principles or Actions, and Disapprobation of others.

BRUTES obey their Instincts or Principles of Action, according to certain Rules; suppose the Constitution of their Body, and the Objects around them.

THE generality of Mankind also obey their Instincts and Principles, all of them; those Propensions we call Good, as well as the Bad, according to the same Rules; namely the Constitution of their Body, and the external Circumstances which they are in. [Therefore it is not a true Representatation of Mankind, to affirm that they are wholly governed by Self-love, the love of Power and sensual Appetites: Since, as on the one Hand, they are often actuated by these, without any Regard to Right or Wrong; so on the other, 'tis manifest fact, that the same Persons, the Generality, are frequently influenced by Friendship, Compassion, Gratitude; and even

a general Abhorrence of what is base, and liking of what is fair and just, takes its Turn amongst the other Motives of Action. This is the partial inadequate Notion of Human Nature treated of in the first Discourse: And 'tis by this Nature, if one may speak so, that the World is in fact influenced, and kept in that tolerable Order, in which it is.]

B R U T E S in acting according to the Rules before-mentioned, their bodily Constitution and Circumstances, act suitably to their whole Nature. [It is however to be distinctly noted, that the reason why we affirm this, is not merely that Brutes in fact act so; for this alone, however universal, does not at all determine, whether such Course of Action be correspondent to their whole Nature: But the Reason of the Assertion is, that as in acting thus, they plainly act conformably to somewhat in their Nature, so from all Observations we are able to make upon them, there does not appear the least Ground to imagine them to have any thing else in their Nature, which requires a different Rule or Course of Action.]

M A N K I N D also in acting thus would act suitably to their whole Nature, if no more were to be said of Man's Nature, than what has been now said; if That, as it is a true, were also a compleat, adequate Account of our Nature.

B U T That is not a compleat Account of Man's Nature. Somewhat further must be brought

brought in to give us an adequate Notion of it; namely that one of those Principles of Action, Conscience or Reflection, compared with the rest as they all stand together in the Nature of Man, plainly bears upon it Marks of Authority over all the rest, and claims the absolute Direction of them all, to allow or forbid their Gratifications: A Disapprobation of Reflection being in itself a Principle manifestly superiour to a mere Propension. And the Conclusion is, that to allow no more to this superiour Principle or Part of our Nature, than to other Parts; to let it govern and guide only occasionally in common with the rest, as its Turn happens to come, from the Temper and Circumstances one happens to be in; this is not to act conformably to the Constitution of Man: Neither can any Human Creature be said to act conformably to his Constitution of Nature, unless he allows to that superiour Principle the absolute Authority which is due to it. And this Conclusion is abundantly confirmed from hence, that one may determine what Course of Action the Oeconomy of Man's Nature requires, without so much as knowing in what Degree of *Strength* the several Principles prevail, or which of them have actually the greatest Influence.

THE practical Reason of insisting so much upon this natural Authority of the Principle of Reflection or Conscience is, that it seems in great Measure overlooked by many, who

are by no Means the worfe sort of Men. 'Tis thought sufficient to abstain from gross Wick- edness, and to be humane and kind to such as happen to come in their Way. Whereas in reality the very Constitution of our Na- ture requires, that we bring our whole Con- duct before this superior Faculty; wait its Determination; enforce upon ourselves its Authority, and make it the Business of our Livés, as it is absolutely the whole Business of a Moral Agent, to conform ourselves to it. This is the true Meaning of that ancient Pre- cept, *Reverence thy Self*.

THE not taking into Consideration this Authority, which is implied in the Idea of reflex Approbation or Disapprobation, seems a material Deficiency or Omission in *Lord Shaftsbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue*. He has shewn beyond all Contradiction, that Virtue is naturally the Interest or Happiness, and Vice the Misery of such a Creature as Man, placed in the Circumstances which we are in this World. But suppose there are particular Exceptions; a Case which this Au- thor was unwilling to put, and yet surely it is to be put: Or suppose a Case which he has put and determined, that of a Sceptick not convinced of this happy Tendency of Virtue, or being of a contrary Opinion. His Deter- mination is, that 'twould be *without Remedy* *. One may say more explicitly, that leaving out the Authority of reflex Approbation or Dif-

* *Characteristicks*. V. II. p. 69.

Disapprobation, such an one would be under an Obligation to act viciously ; since Interest, one's own Happiness, is a manifest Obligation, and there is not supposed to be any other Obligation in the Case. “ But does “ it much mend the Matter, to take in that “ natural Authority of Reflection? There “ indeed would be an Obligation to Virtue ; “ but would not the Obligation from sup- “ posed Interest on the side of Vice remain ? ” If it should, yet to be under two contrary Obligations, *i. e.* under none at all, would not be exactly the same, as to be under a formal Obligation to be vicious, or to be in Circumstances in which the Constitution of Man's Nature plainly required, that Vice should be preferred. But the Obligation on the side of Interest really does not remain. For the natural Authority of the Principle of Reflection, is an Obligation the most near and intimate, the most certain and known : Whereas the contrary Obligation can at the utmost appear no more than probable ; since no Man can be *certain* in any Circumstances, that Vice is his Interest in the present World, much less can he be certain against another : And thus the certain Obligation would intirely supersede and destroy the uncertain one ; which yet would have been of real Force without the former.

IN Truth the taking in this Consideration, totally changes the whole state of the Case ; and shews, what this Author does not

seem to have been aware of, that the greatest Degree of Scepticism which He thought possible, will still leave Men under the strictest Moral Obligations, whatever their Opinion be concerning the Happiness of Virtue. For that Mankind upon Reflection felt an Approbation of what was Good, and Disapprobation of the Contrary. He thought a plain Matter of Fact, as it undoubtedly is, which none could deny, but from mere Affectation. Take in then that Authority and Obligation, which is a constituent Part of this reflex Approbation, and it will undeniably follow, though a Man should doubt of every thing else, yet, that he would still remain under the nearest and most certain Obligation to the Practice of Virtue; an Obligation implied in the very Idea of Virtue, in the very Idea of reflex Approbation.

AND how little Influence soever this Obligation alone, can be expected to have in Fact upon Mankind, yet one may appeal even to Interest and Self-love, and ask, since from Man's Nature, Condition, and the Shortness of Life, so little, so very little indeed, can possibly in any Case be gained by Vice; whether it be so prodigious a thing to sacrifice that little, to the most intimate of all Obligations; and which a Man cannot transgress without being Self-condemned, and, unless he has corrupted his Nature, without real Self-dislike: This Question I say may be asked, even upon Supposition that
the

the Prospect of a future Life were ever so uncertain.

T H E Observation that Man is thus by his very nature a Law to himself, pursued to its just Consequences, is of the utmost Importance; because from it 'twill follow, that though Men should, through Stupidity or Speculative Scepticism, be ignorant of, or disbelieve any Authority in the Universe to punish the Violation of this Law; yet, if there should be such Authority, they would be as really liable to Punishment, as though they had been before-hand convinced, that such Punishment would follow. For in whatever Sense we understand Justice, even supposing, what I think would be very presumptuous to assert, that the End of Divine Punishment is no other than that of civil Punishment, namely to prevent future Mischief; upon this bold supposition, Ignorance or Disbelief of the Sanction would by no Means exempt even from this Justice: Because it is not Foreknowledge of the Punishment, which renders obnoxious to it; but merely violating a known Obligation.

A N D here it comes in one's Way to take Notice of a manifest Error or Mistake, in the Author now cited, unless perhaps he has incautiously expressed himself so as to be misunderstood; namely, that *it is Malice only, and not Goodness, which can make us afraid* *. Whereas in Reality, Goodness is the natural

b 4

and

* Charact. V. I. p. 39.

P R E F A C E.

and just Object of the greatest Fear to an ill Man. Malice may be appeas'd or satiated; Humour may change, but Goodness is a fixt, steady, immoveable Principle of Action. If either of the former holds the Sword of Justice, there is plainly Ground for the greatest of Crimes to hope for Impunity: But if it be Goodness, there can be no possible Hope, whilst the Reasons of Things, or the Ends of Government, call for Punishment. Thus every one sees how much greater Chance of Impunity, an ill Man has, in a partial Administration, than in a just and upright one. It is said that *the Interest or Good of the Whole, must be the Interest of the universal Being, and that He can have no other.* Be it so. This Author has proved, that Vice is naturally the Misery of Mankind in this World. Consequently it was for the Good of the Whole, that it should be so. What Shadow of Reason then is there to assert, that this may not be the Case hereafter? Danger of future Punishment (and if there be Danger, there is Ground of Fear) no more supposes Malice, than the present Feeling of Punishment does.

THE Sermon *upon the Character of Balaam*, and that *upon Self-Deceit* both relate to one Subject. I am persuas'd, that a very great Part of the Wickedness of the World, is, one Way or other, owing to the Self-partiality, Self-flattery and Self-deceit endeavoured there to be laid open and explained.

'Tis

'Tis to be observed amongst Persons of the lowest Rank, in Proportion to their Compass of Thought, as much as amongst Men of Education and Improvement. It seems, that People are capable of being thus artful with Themselves, in Proportion as they are capable of being so with others. Those who have taken Notice that there is really such a Thing, namely, plain Falseness and Insincerity in Men with Regard to Themselves, will readily see the Drift and Design of these Discourses: And nothing, that I can add, will explain the Design of them to him, who has not beforehand remarked, at least, somewhat of the Character. And yet, the Admonitions they contain, may be as much wanted by such a Person, as by Others; for 'tis to be noted, that a Man may be intirely possess'd by this Unfairness of Mind, without having the least speculative Notion what the Thing is.

THE Account given of *Resentment* in the Eighth Sermon, is introductory to the following one *Upon Forgiveness of Injuries*. It may possibly have appeared to some, at first sight, a strange Assertion, that Injury is the only natural Object of settled Resentment, or that Men do not in Fact resent deliberately any Thing but under this Appearance of Injury. But I must desire the Reader not to take any Assertion alone by itself, but to consider the Whole of what is said upon it: Because this is necessary, not only in order to
judge

judge of the Truth of it, but often, such is the Nature of Language, to see the very Meaning of the Assertion. Particularly as to this, Injury and Injustice is, in the Sermon itself, explained to mean, not only the more gross and shocking Instances of Wickedness, but also Contempt, Scorn, Neglect, any sort of disagreeable Behaviour towards a Person, which he thinks other than what is due to him. And the general Notion of Injury or Wrong, plainly comprehends this, though the Words are mostly confined to the higher Degrees of it.

F O R G I V E N E S S of Injuries is one of the very few moral Obligations which has been disputed. But the Proof that it is really an Obligation, what our Nature and Condition require, seems very obvious, were it only from the Consideration that Revenge is doing Harm merely for Harm's Sake. And as to the love of our Enemies: Resentment cannot supercede the Obligation to universal Benevolence, unless they are in the Nature of the thing inconsistent, which they plainly are not*.

T H I S Divine Precept, to forgive Injuries and love our Enemies, though to be met with in Gentile Moralists, yet is in a peculiar Sense a Precept of Christianity; as our Saviour has insisted more upon it, than upon any other single Virtue. One Reason of this doubtless is, that it so peculiarly becomes an imperfect, faulty Creature. But it may be
observed

observed also, that a virtuous Temper of Mind, Consciousness of Innocence and good Meaning towards every body, and a strong Feeling of Injustice and Injury, may itself, such is the Imperfection of our Virtue, lead a Person to violate this Obligation, if he be not upon his Guard. And it may well be supposed, that this is another Reason why it is so much insisted upon by Him, who *knew what was in Man*.

THE chief Design of the Eleventh Discourse is to state the Notion of Self-love and Disinterestedness, in Order to shew that Benevolence is not more unfriendly to Self-love, than any other particular Affection whatever. There is a strange Affectation in many People of explaining away all particular Affections, and representing the whole of Life as nothing but one continued Exercise of Self-love. Hence arises that surprizing Confusion and Perplexity in the *Epicureans* * of old, *Hobbs*, the Author of *Reflections Sentences et Maxims Morales*, and this whole Sett of Writers;

* One need only look into *Torquatus's* Account of the Epicurean System, in *Cicero's* first Book *De Finibus*, to see, in what a surprizing Manner this was done by Them. Thus the Desire of Praise, and of being beloved, he explains to be no other than Desire of Safety: Regard to our Country, even in the most virtuous Character, to be nothing but Regard to Ourselves. The Author of *Reflections. &c. Morales*, says, Curiosity proceeds from Interest or Pride; which Pride also would doubtless have been explained to be Self-love. Pag. 85. *Ed. 1725*. As if there were no such Passions in Mankind, as Desire of Esteem, or of being beloved, or of Knowledge. *Hobbs's* Account of the Affections of Good-will and Pity, are Instances of the same Kind.

Writers ; the confusion of calling Actions interested which are done in Contradiction to the most manifest known Interest, merely for the Gratification of a present Passion. Now all this Confusion might easily be avoided, by stating to Ourselves wherein the Idea of Self-love in general consists, as distinguished from all particular Movements towards particular external Objects ; the Appetites of Sense, Resentment, Compassion, Curiosity, Ambition, and the rest *. When this is done, if the Words *Selfish* and *Interested* cannot be parted with, but must be applied to every thing ; yet, to avoid such total Confusion of all Language, let the Distinction be made by Epithets : And the first may be called cool or settled Selfishness, and the other passionate or sensual Selfishness. But the most natural Way of speaking plainly is, to call the first only, Self-love, and the Actions proceeding from it, Interested : And to say of the latter, that they are not love to Ourselves, but Movements towards somewhat external : Honour, Power, the Harm or Good of Another : And that the Pursuit of these external Objects, so far as it proceeds from these Movements (for it may proceed from Self-love †) is no otherwise interested, than as every Action of every Creature must, from the Nature of the Thing, be ; for no one can act but from a Desire, or Choice, or Preference of his own.

S E L F - L O V E

* p. 205. &c.

† See the Note, p. 9.

S E L F - L O V E and any particular Passion may be joined together; and from this Complication, it becomes impossible in numberless instances to determine precisely, how far an Action, perhaps even of one's own, has for it's Principle general Self-love, or some particular passion. But this need create no Confusion in the Ideas themselves of Self-love and particular Passions. We distinctly discern what one is, and what the other are: though we may be uncertain how far one of the other influences us. And though from this Uncertainty, it cannot but be, that there will be different Opinions concerning Mankind, as more or less governed by Interest: and some will ascribe actions to Self-love, which Others will ascribe to particular Passions: Yet 'tis absurd to say that Mankind are wholly actuated by either; since 'tis manifest that both have their Influence. For as on the one Hand, Men form a general Notion of Interest, some placing it in one Thing, and some in another, and have a considerable Regard to it throughout the Course of their Life, which is owing to Self-love; so on the other Hand, they are often set on Work by the particular Passions themselves, and a considerable Part of Life is spent in the actual Gratification of them, *i. e.* is employed, not by Self-love, but by the Passions.

B E S I D E S, the very Idea of an interested Pursuit, necessarily pre-supposes particular Passions and Appetites; since the very
Idea

Idea of Interest or Happiness consists in this, that an Appetite or Affection enjoys its Object. 'Tis not because we love Ourselves that we find Delight in such and such Objects, but because we have particular Affections towards them. Take away these Affections, and you leave Self-love absolutely nothing at all to employ itself about *; no End or Object for it to pursue, excepting only that of avoiding Pain. Indeed the *Epicureans*, who maintained that Absence of Pain was the highest Happiness, might, consistently with themselves, deny all Affection, and, if they had so pleased, every sensual Appetite too: But the very Idea of Interest or Happiness other than Absence of Pain, implies particular Appetites or Passions; these being necessary to constitute that Interest or Happiness.

THE Observation that Benevolence is no more disinterested than any of the common particular Passions †, seems in itself worth being taken Notice of; but is insisted upon to obviate that Scorn, which one sees rising upon the Faces of People who are said to know the World, when Mention is made of a disinterested, generous or public-spirited Action. The Truth of that Observation might be made appear, in a more formal Manner of Proof: For whoever will consider all the possible Respects and Relations which any particular Affection can have to Self-love and private Interest, will, I think, see demonstrably,

* pag. 210.

† pag. 213, &c.

monstrably, that Benevolence is not in any Respect more at Variance with Self-love, than any other particular Affection whatever, but that it is in every Respect, at least, as friendly to it.

IF the Observation be true, it follows, that Self-Love and Benevolence, Virtue and Interest, are not to be opposed, but only to be distinguished from each other; in the same Way as Virtue and any other particular Affection, Love of Arts, suppose, are to be distinguished. Every Thing is what it is, and not another Thing. The Goodness or Badness of Actions does not arise from hence, that the Epithet, interested or disinterested, may be applied to them, any more than that any other indifferent Epithet, suppose inquisitive or jealous, may or may not be applied to them; not from their being attended with present or future Pleasure or Pain; but from their being what they are: Namely, what becomes such Creatures as we are, what the State of the Case requires, or the contrary. Or in other Words, we may judge and determine, that an Action is morally Good or Evil, before we so much as consider, whether it be interested or disinterested. This Consideration no more comes in to determine, whether an Action be virtuous, than to determine whether it be resentful. Self-love in its due Degree is as just and morally Good, as any Affection whatever. Benevolence towards particular
Persons

Persons may be to a Degree of Weakness, and so be blameable: And Disinterestedness is so far from being in itself commendable, that the utmost possible Depravity, which we can in Imagination conceive, is that of disinterested Cruelty.

N E I T H E R does there appear any Reason to wish Self-love were weaker in the Generality of the World, than it is. The Influence which it has, seems plainly owing to its being constant and habitual, which it cannot but be, and not to the Degree or Strength of it. Every Caprice of the Imagination, every Curiosity of the Understanding, every Affection of the Heart, is perpetually shewing its Weakness, by prevailing over it. Men daily, hourly sacrifice the greatest known Interest, to Fancy, Inquisitiveness, Love or Hatred, any vagrant Inclination. The Thing to be lamented is, not that Men have so great Regard to their own Good or Interest in the present World, for they have not enough*; but that they have so little to the Good of Others. And this seems plainly owing to their being so much engaged in the Gratification of particular Passions unfriendly to Benevolence, and which happen to be most prevalent in them, much more than to Self-love. As a Proof of this may be observed, that there is no Character more void of Friendship, Gratitude, natural Affection, Love to their Country, common Justice,

* Pag. 21

Justice, or more equally and uniformly hard-hearted, than the *abandoned* in, what is called, the Way of Pleasure——hard-hearted and totally without Feeling in Behalf of Others; except when they cannot escape the Sight of Distress, and so are interrupted by it in their Pleasures. And yet it is ridiculous to call such an abandoned Course of Pleasure interested, when the person engaged in it knows before-hand, and goes on under the Feeling and Apprehension, that it will be as ruinous to himself, as to those who depend upon him.

U P O N the Whole, if the Generality of Mankind were to cultivate within themselves the Principle of Self-love; if they were to accustom themselves often to set down and consider, what was the greatest Happiness they were capable of attaining for themselves in this Life, and if Self-love were so strong and prevalent, as that they would uniformly pursue this their supposed chief temporal Good, without being diverted from it by any particular Passion; it would manifestly prevent numberless Follies and Vices. This was in a great Measure the *Epicurean* System of Philosophy. It is indeed by no Means the religious, or even moral Institution of Life. Yet, with all the Mistakes Men would fall into about Interest, it would be less mischievous, than the Extravagancies of mere Appetite, Will and Pleasure: For certainly Self-love, though confined to the Interest of this Life, is, of the two, a much
c
better

better Guide than Passion *, which has absolutely no Bound nor Measure, but what is set to it by this Self-love, or Moral Considerations.

FROM the Distinction above made between Self-love, and the several particular Principles or Affections in our Nature, we may see how good Ground there was for that Assertion, maintained by the several ancient Schools of Philosophy, against the *Epicureans*, namely, that Virtue is to be pursued as an End, eligible in and for itself. For, if there be any Principles or Affections in the Mind of Man distinct from Self-love, that the Things those Principles tend towards, or that the Objects of those Affections are, each of them, in themselves eligible, to be pursued upon its own Account, and to be rested in as an End, is implied in the very Idea of such Principle or Affection †. They indeed asserted much higher Things of Virtue, and with very good Reason; but to say thus much of it, that it is to be pursued for itself, is to say no more of it, than may truly be said of the Object of every natural Affection whatever.

THE Question, which was a few Years ago disputed in *France*, concerning *the Love of God*, which was there called *Enthusiasm*, as it will every where by the Generality of the World; this Question I say, answers in *Religion*, to that old one in *Morals* now mentioned.

* Pag 39.

† p. 265.

tioned. And both of them are, I think, fully determined by the same Observation, namely, that the very Nature of Affection, the Idea itself, necessarily implies resting in its Object as an End.

I SHALL not here add any thing further, to what I have said in the two Discourses upon that most important Subject, but only this: That if we are constituted such sort of Creatures, as from our very Nature, to feel certain Affections or Movements of Mind, upon the Sight or Contemplation of the meanest inanimate Part of the Creation, for the Flowers of the Field have their Beauty; certainly there must be somewhat due to Him Himself, who is the Author and Cause of all Things; who is more intimately present to us, than any thing else can be, and with whom we have a nearer and more constant Intercourse, than we can have with any Creature: There must be some Movements of Mind and Heart which correspond to his Perfections, or of which those Perfections are the natural Object. And that when we are commanded to *love the Lord our God, with all our Heart, and with all our Mind, and with all our Soul*; somewhat more must be meant than merely that we live in Hope of Rewards, or Fear of Punishments from Him; somewhat more than this must be intended: Though these Regards themselves are most just and reasonable, and absolutely

necessary to be often recollected, in such a World as this.

IT may be proper just to advertise the Reader, that he is not to look for any particular Reason for the Choice of the greatest Part of these Discourses; their being taken from amongst many Others, preached in the same Place, through a Course of Eight Years, being in great Measure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any other Connection between them, than that Uniformity of Thought and Design, which will always be found in the Writings of the same Person, when he writes with Simplicity and in Earnest.

Stanhope, Sept. the 16th, 1729.

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M. I. II. III. Upon Humane Nature, or Man considered as a Moral Agent.

S E R M. I. Upon the Social Nature of Man.

R O M. xii. 4. 5.

For as we have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same Office: So we being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another,
page 1

S E R M. II. III. Upon the Natural Supremacy of Conscience.

R O M. ii. 14.

For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things contained in

C O N T E N T S.

*in the Law, these having not the Law, are
a Law to themselves,* 25, 45

S E R M. IV. Upon the Government of
the Tongue.

J A M E S i. 26.

*If any Man among you seem to be religious,
and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth
his own Heart, this Man's Religion is
vain,* 59

S E R M. V. VI. Upon Compassion.

R O M. xii. 15.

*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with
them that weep,* 81, 101

S E R M. VII. Upon the Character of
Balaam.

N U M B. xxiii. 10.

*Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let
my last End be like his,* 117

S E R M. VIII. IX. Upon Resentment, and
Forgiveness of Injuries.

M A T T H.

C O N T E N T S.

M A T T H. v. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you,
137, 155

S E R M. X. Upon Self-Deceit.

2 S A M. xii. 7.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the Man,
179

S E R M. XI. XII. Upon the Love of our Neighbour.

R O M. xiii. 9.

And if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself,
203, 233

S E R M. XIII. XIV. Upon Piety, or the Love of God.

M A T T H.

C O N T E N T S.

M A T T H. xxii. 37.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, 261, 279

S E R M. XV. Upon the Ignorance of Man.

E C C L E S. viii. 16, 17.

When I applied mine Heart to know Wisdom, and to see the Business that is done upon the Earth: Then I beheld all the Work of God, that a Man cannot find out the Work that is done under the Sun: Because though a Man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further, though a wise Man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it, 301

S E R M O N I.

Upon Humane Nature.

R O M. xii. 4, 5.


For as we have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same Office: So we being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.

TH E Epistles in the New Testa- SERM.
ment have all of them a particular I.
Reference to the Condition and ~~~~~
Usages of the Christian World at
the Time they were written. Therefore as
they cannot be thoroughly understood, unless
that Condition and those Usages are known
B and

SERM. and attended to: so further, though they be
 I. known, yet if they be discontinued or changed;
 ~~~~~ Exhortations, Precepts, and Illustrations of  
 things, which refer to such Circumstances now  
 ceased or altered, cannot at this Time be urged  
 in that Manner, and with that Force which  
 they were to the Primitive Christians. Thus  
 the Text now before us, in it's first Intent  
 and Design, relates to the decent Manage-  
 ment of those extraordinary Gifts which  
 were then in the Church \*, but which are  
 now totally ceased. And even as to the  
 Allusion that *we are one body in Christ*;  
 though what the Apostle here intends is  
 equally true of Christians in all Circum-  
 stances; and the Consideration of it is plain-  
 ly still an additional Motive, over and above  
 moral Considerations, to the Discharge of  
 the several Duties and Offices of a Christian:  
 Yet it is manifest this Allusion must have ap-  
 peared with much greater Force to those, who  
 by the many Difficulties they went through  
 for the sake of their Religion, were led to  
 keep always in View the Relation they stood  
 in to their Saviour, who had undergone  
 the same; to those, who from the Idola-  
 tries of all around them, and their ill Treat-  
 ment,

## *Upon Humane Nature.*

3

ment, were taught to consider themselves S E R M.  
as not of the world in which they lived, I.  
but as a distinct Society of themselves; with   
Laws and Ends, and Principles of Life and  
Action, quite contrary to those which the  
World profess'd themselves at that Time  
influenced by. Hence the Relation of a  
Christian was by them considered as nearer  
than that of Affinity and Blood; and they  
almost literally esteemed themselves as Mem-  
bers one of another.

It cannot indeed possibly be denied,  
that our being God's Creatures, and Virtue  
being the natural Law we are born under,  
and the whole Constitution of Man being  
plainly adapted to it, are prior Obligations  
to Piety and Virtue, than the Consideration  
that God sent his Son into the World to  
save it, and the Motives which arise from  
the peculiar Relation of Christians, as Mem-  
bers one of another under Christ our Head.  
However, though all this be allowed, as it  
expressly is by the inspired Writers; yet 'tis  
manifest that Christians at the Time of the  
Revelation, and immediately after, could not  
but insist mostly upon Considerations of this  
latter Kind.

S E R M. T H E S E Observations show the original particular Reference of the Text; and the peculiar Force with which the Thing intended by the Allusion in it, must have been felt by the primitive Christian World. They likewise afford a Reason for treating it at this Time in a more general Way.

I.   
 T H E Relation, which the several Parts or Members of the natural Body have to each other and to the whole Body, is here compared to the Relation which each particular Person in Society, has to other particular Persons and to the whole Society: And the latter is intended to be illustrated by the former. And if there be a Likeness between these two Relations, the Consequence is obvious: That the latter shows us we were intended to do good to others, as the former shows us that the several Members of the natural Body were intended to be Instruments of Good to each other and to the whole Body. But as there is scarce any Ground for a Comparison between Society and the mere material Body, this without the Mind being a dead unactive Thing; much less can the Comparison be carried to any length. And since the Apostle speaks of the several Members as having distinct Offices, which implies



## Upon Humane Nature.

5

plies the Mind; it cannot be thought an un-allowable Liberty; instead of the *Body and its Members*, to substitute the *whole Nature of Man*, and *all the variety of internal Principles which belong to it*. And then the Comparison will be between the Nature of Man as respecting Self, and tending to private Good, his own Preservation and Happiness; and the Nature of Man as having respect to Society, and tending to promote public Good, the Happiness of that Society. These Ends do indeed perfectly coincide; and to aim at public and private Good are so far from being inconsistent, that they mutually promote each other: Yet in the following Discourse they must be considered as entirely distinct; otherwise the Nature of Man as tending to one, or as tending to the other, cannot be compared. There can no comparison be made, without considering the Things compared as distinct and different.

FROM this Review and Comparison of the Nature of Man as respecting Self, and as respecting Society, it will plainly appear, that *there are as real and the same kind of Indications in Humane Nature, that we were made for Society and to do good to our Fel-*

SERM. *low-creatures ; as that we were intended to*  
 I. *take Care of our own Life and Health and*  
 ~~~~~ *private Good : And that the same Objections*  
lie against one of these Assertions, as against
the other. For

First, THERE is a natural Principle of Benevolence * *in Man ; which is in some Degree to Society, what Self-love is to the Individual.*

* Suppose a Man of Learning to be writing a grave Book upon *Humane Nature*, and to shew in several Parts of it that he had an Insight into the Subject he was considering ; Amongst other Things, the following one would require to be accounted for ; The Appearance of Benevolence or Good-will in Men towards each other in the Instances of Natural Relation, and in others †. Cautious of being deceived with outward Show, he retires within himself to see exactly, what That is in the Mind of Man from whence this Appearance proceeds ; and, upon deep Reflection, asserts the Principle in the Mind to be only the Love of Power, and Delight in the Exercise of it. Would not every Body think here was a Mistake of one Word for another ? That the Philosopher was contemplating and accounting for some other *Humane Actions*, some other Behaviour of Man to Man ? And could any one be thoroughly satisfied, that what is commonly called Benevolence or Good-will was really the Affection meant, but only by being made to understand that this Learned Person had a general Hypothesis, to which the Appearance of Good-will could no otherwise be reconciled ? That what has this Appearance is often nothing but Ambition ; That Delight in Superiority often (suppose always) mixes itself with Benevolence, only makes it more specious to call it Ambition than Hunger, of the two : But in reality that Passion does no more account for the whole Appearances of Good-will, than this Appetite does. Is there not often the Appearance of one Man's wishing that Good to another,

Upon Humane Nature.

7

dual. And if there be in Mankind any Disposition to Friendship; If there be any such thing as Compassion, for Compassion

SERM.

I



B 4

is

another, which he knows himself unable to procure him; and rejoicing in it, though bestowed by a third Person? And can Love of power any way possibly come in to account for this Desire or Delight? Is there not often the Appearance of Mens distinguishing between two or more Persons, preferring one before another, to do Good to, in Cases where Love of Power cannot in the least account for the Distinction and Preference? For this Principle can no otherwise distinguish between Objects, than as it is a greater Instance and Exertion of Power to do good to one rather than to another. Again, Suppose Good-will in the Mind of Man to be nothing but Delight in the exercise of Power: Men might indeed be restrained by distant and accidental Consideration; but these Restraints being removed, they would have a Disposition to, and Delight in Mischief as an Exercise and Proof of Power: And this Disposition and Delight would arise from, or be the same Principle in the Mind, as a Disposition to, and Delight in Charity. Thus Cruelty, as distinct from Envy and Resentment, would be exactly the same in the Mind of Man as Good-will: That one tends to the Happiness, the other to the Misery of our Fellow-Creatures, is, it seems, merely an accidental Circumstance, which the Mind has not the least Regard to. These are the Absurdities which even Men of Capacity run into, when they have occasion to belie their Nature, and will perversely disclaim that Image of God which was originally stamped upon it (the Traces of which, however faint, are plainly discernable upon the Mind of Man. † *Hobbs* of Human Nature. c. 9 § 17.

If any Person can in earnest doubt, whether there be such a thing as Good-will in one Man towards another; (for the Question is not concerning either the Degree or Extensiveness of it, but concerning the Affection itself;) let it be observed, that *Whether Man be thus, or otherwise constituted, What is the inward*

SERM. is momentary love; if there be any such
 I. thing as the paternal or filial Affections;
 ~~~~~ if there be any Affection in Humane Nature, the Object and End of which is the Good of another; this is itself Benevolence, or the Love of another. Be it ever so short, be it in ever so low a Degree, or ever so unhappily confined; it proves the Assertion, and

*inward Frame in this particular, is a mere Question of Fact or natural History, not proveable immediately by Reason. It is therefore to be judged of and determined in the same way other Facts or Matters of Natural History are: by appealing to the external Senses, or inward Perceptions, respectively, as the Matter under Consideration is cognizable by one or the other: By arguing from acknowledged Facts and Actions; for a great Number of Actions in the same Kind, in different Circumstances, and respecting different Objects, will prove, to a Certainty, what Principles they do not, and, to the greatest Probability, what Principles they do proceed from: And lastly, by the Testimony of Mankind. Now that there is some Degree of Benevolence amongst Men, may be as strongly and plainly proved in all these Ways, as it could possibly be proved, supposing there was this Affection in our Nature. And should any one think fit to assert, that Resentment in the Mind of Man was absolutely nothing but reasonable Concern for our own Safety, the Falsity of this, and what is the real Nature of that Passion, could be shewn in no other Ways than those in which it may be shewn, that there is such a thing in some Degree as real Good-will in Man towards Man. It is sufficient that the Seeds of it be implanted in our Nature by God. There is, it is owned, much left for us to do upon our own Heart and Temper; to cultivate, to improve, to call it forth, to exercise it in a steady, uniform Manner. This is our Work: This is Virtue and Religion.*

## Upon Humane Nature.

9

and points out what we were designed for, as really as though it were in a higher Degree and more extensive. I must however remind you that though Benevolence and Self-love are different; though the former tends most directly to publick Good, and the latter to private: Yet they are so perfectly coincident, that the greatest Satisfactions to ourselves, depend upon our having Benevolence in a due Degree; and that Self-love is one chief Security of our right Behaviour towards Society. It may be added, that their mutual coinciding, so that we can scarce promote one without the other, is equally a Proof that we were made for both.



SERM.

I.

*Secondly*, THIS will further appear, from observing that the *several Passions and Affections*, which are distinct \* both from Benevolence

\* Every Body makes a Distinction between Self-love, and the several particular Passions, Appetites, and Affections; and yet they are often confounded again. That they are totally different, will be seen by any one who will distinguish between the Passions and Appetites *themselves*, and *endeavouring* after the Means of their Gratification. Consider the Appetite of Hunger, and the Desire of Esteem: These being the Occasion both of Pleasure and Pain, the coolest *Self-love*, as well as the Appetites and Passions themselves, may put us upon making Use of the *proper Methods of obtaining* that Pleasure, and avoiding that

SERM. nevolence and Self-love, do in general con-

I. contribute and lead us to *publick* Good as really  
 as to *private*. It might be thought too mi-  
 nute and particular, and would carry us too  
 great a length, to distinguish between and  
 compare together the several Passions or  
 Appetites distinct from Benevolence, whose  
 primary

that Pain ; but the *Feeling themselves*, the Pain of Hunger and Shame, and the Delight from Esteem, are no more Self-love than they are any thing in the World. Though a Man hated himself, he would as much feel the Pain of Hunger as he would that of the Gout : And it is plainly supposable there may be Creatures with Self-love in them to the highest Degree, who may be quite insensible and indifferent (as Men in some Cases are) to the Contempt and Esteem of those, upon whom their Happiness does not in some further Respects depend. And as Self-love and the several particular Passions and Appetites are in themselves totally different ; so, that some Actions proceed from one, and some from the other, will be manifest to any who will observe the two following very supposable Cases. One Man rushes upon certain Ruin for the Gratification of a present Desire : No Body will call the Principle of this Action Self-love. Suppose another Man to go through some laborious Work upon Promise of a great Reward, without any distinct Knowledge what the Reward will be : This Course of Action cannot be ascribed to any particular Passion. The former of these Actions is plainly to be imputed to some particular Passion or Affection, the latter as plainly to the general Affection or Principle of Self-love. That there are some particular Pursuits or Actions concerning which we cannot determine how far they are owing to one, and how far to the other, proceeds from this, that the two Principles are frequently mixed together, and run up into each other. This Distinction is further explained in the Eleventh Sermon.

## *Upon Humane Nature.*

II

primary Use and Intention is the Security and Good of Society; and the Passions distinct from Self-love, whose primary Intention and Design is the Security and Good of the Individual \*. It is enough to the present Argument, that Desire of Esteem from others, Contempt and Esteem of them, Love of Society as distinct from Affection to the Good of it, Indignation against successful Vice, that these are publick Affections or Passions; have an immediate respect to others, naturally lead us to regulate our Behaviour in such a Manner as will be of Service to our Fellow-Creatures. If any or all of these may be considered likewise as private Affections, as tending to private Good; this does not hinder them from being publick

SERM.

I.




\* If any desire to see this Distinction and Comparison made in a particular Instance, the Appetite and Passion now mentioned may serve for one. Hunger is to be considered as a private Appetite; because the End for which it was given us is the Preservation of the Individual. Desire of Esteem is a publick Passion; because the End for which it was given us is to regulate our Behaviour towards Society. The Respect which This has to private Good is as remote, as the Respect That has to publick Good: And the Appetite is no more Self-love, than the Passion is Benevolence. The Object and End of the former is merely Food; the Object and End of the latter is merely Esteem: But the latter can no more be gratified, without contributing to the Good of Society; than the former can be gratified, without contributing to the Preservation of the Individual.

SERM. lick Affections too, or destroy the good Influence of them upon Society, and their  
 I. Tendency to publick Good. It may be added, that as Persons without any Conviction from Reason of the desirableness of Life, would yet of course preserve it merely from the Appetite of Hunger; so by acting merely from Regard (suppose) to Reputation, without any Consideration of the Good of others, Men often contribute to publick Good. In both these Instances they are plainly Instruments in the Hands of another, in the Hands of Providence, to carry on Ends, the Preservation of the Individual and Good of Society, which they themselves have not in their View or Intention. The Sum is, Men have various Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections, quite distinct both from Self-love, and from Benevolence: All of these have a Tendency to promote both publick and private Good, and may be considered as respecting others and ourselves equally and in common: But some of them seem most immediately to respect others, or tend to publick Good; others of them most immediately to respect Self, or tend to private Good: As the former are not Benevolence, so the latter are not  
 not



## *Upon Humane Nature.*

13

not Self-love: Neither Sort are Instances of SERM.  
our Love either to ourselves or others; but I.  
only Instances of our Maker's Care and Love   
both of the Individual and the Species, and  
Proofs that he intended we should be In-  
struments of Good to each other, as well as  
that we should be so to ourselves.

*Thirdly*, THERE is a Principle of Re-  
flection in Men, by which they distinguish  
between, approve and disapprove their own  
Actions. We are plainly constituted such  
sort of creatures as to reflect upon our own  
Nature. The Mind can take a View of  
what passes within itself, its Propensions,  
Aversions, Passions, Affections, as respecting  
such Objects, and in such Degrees; and  
of the several Actions consequent there-  
upon. In this Survey it approves of one,  
disapproves of another, and towards a third  
is affected in neither of these ways, but is  
quite indifferent. This Principle in Man, by  
which he approves or disapproves his Heart,  
Temper, and Actions, is Conscience; for  
this is the strict Sense of the Word, though  
sometimes it is used so as to take in more.  
And that this Faculty tends to restrain Men  
from doing Mischief to each other, and  
leads them to do good, is too manifest to  
need

SERM. need being insisted upon. Thus a Parent

I. has the Affection of Love to his Children:

~ This leads him to take care of, to educate, to make due Provision for them; the natural Affection leads to this: But the reflection that it is his proper Business, what belongs to him, that it is right and commendable so to do; this added to the Affection, becomes a much more settled Principle, and carries him on through more Labour and Difficulties for the sake of his Children, than he would undergo from that Affection, alone; if he thought it, and the Course of Action it led to, either indifferent or criminal. This indeed is impossible, to do that which is good and not to approve of it; for which reason they are frequently not considered as distinct, though they really are: For Men often approve of the Actions of others, which they will not imitate, and likewise do that which they approve not. It cannot possibly be denied, that there is this Principle of Reflection or Conscience in Humane Nature. Suppose a Man to relieve an innocent Person in great Distress; suppose the same Man afterwards, in the Fury of Anger, to do the greatest Mischief to a Person who had given no just Cause of Offence;

fence: to aggravate the Injury, add the Circumstances of former Friendship, and Obligation from the injured Person; let the Man who is supposed to have done these two different Actions, coolly reflect upon them afterwards, without regard to their Consequences to himself: To assert that any common Man would be affected in the same Way towards these different Actions, that he would make no Distinction between them, but approve or disapprove them equally, is too glaring a Falsity to need being confuted. There is therefore this Principle of Reflection or Conscience in Mankind. It is needless to compare the Respect it has to private Good, with the Respect it has to publick; since it plainly tends as much to the latter as to the former, and is commonly thought to tend chiefly to the latter. This Faculty is now mentioned merely as another Part in the inward Frame of Man, pointing out to us in some Degree what we are intended for, and as what will naturally and of course have some Influence. The particular Place assigned to it by Nature, what Authority it has, and how great Influence it ought to have, shall be hereafter considered.

SERM. FROM this Comparison of Benevolence and Self-love, of our publick and private Affections, of the Courses of Life they lead to, and of the Principle of Reflection or Conscience as respecting each of them, it is as manifest, that *we were made for Society, and to promote the Happiness of it; as that we were intended to take Care of our own Life, and Health, and private Good.*

AND from this whole Review must be given a different Draught of Humane Nature from what we are often presented with. Mankind are by Nature so closely united, there is such a Correspondence between the inward sensations of one Man and those of another, that Disgrace is as much avoided as bodily Pain, and to be the Object of Esteem and Love as much desired as any external Goods: And in many particular Cases, Persons are carried on to do good to others, as the End their Affection tends to and rests in; and manifest that they find real Satisfaction and Enjoyment in this Course of Behaviour. There is such a natural Principle of Attraction in Man towards Man, that having trod the same Tract of Land, having breathed in the same Climate,

*Upon Humane Nature.* 17

SERM.

I.

mate, barely having been born in the same artificial District or Division, becomes the Occasion of contracting Acquaintances and Familiarities many Years after: For any thing may serve the Purpose. Thus Relations meerly nominal are sought and invented, not by Governours, but by the lowest of the People; which are found sufficient to hold Mankind together in little Fraternities and Copartnerships: Weak Ties indeed, and what may afford Fund enough for Redicule, if they are absurdly considered as the real Principles of that Union: But they are in Truth meerly the Occasions, as any thing may be of any thing, upon which our Nature carries us on according to its own previous Bent and Bias; which occasions therefore would be nothing at all, were there not this prior Disposition and Bias of Nature. Men are so much one Body, that in a peculiar Manner they feel for each other, Shame, sudden Danger, Resentment, Honour, Prosperity, Distress; one or another, or all of these, from the social Nature in general, from Benevolence, upon the Occasion of natural Relation, Acquaintance, Protection, Dependance; each of these being distinct Cements of Society. And therefore to have

C

no

SERM. no restraint from, no regard to others in  
 I. our Behaviour, is the speculative Absurdity  
 of considering ourselves as single and independent, as having nothing in our Nature which has respect to our Fellow-Creatures, reduced to Action and Practice. And this is the same Absurdity, as to suppose a Hand, or any part to have no natural Respect to any other, or to the whole Body.

BUT allowing all this, it may be asked,  
 “ Has not Man Dispositions and Principles  
 “ within which lead him to do Evil to  
 “ others, as well as to do Good? Whence  
 “ comes the many Miseries else, which Men  
 “ are the Authors and Instruments of to  
 “ each other?” These Questions, so far as they relate to the foregoing Discourse, may be answered by asking, Has not Man also Dispositions and Principles within, which lead him to do Evil to himself, as well as good? Whence come the many Miseries else, Sickness, Pain and Death, which Men are Instruments and Authors of to themselves?

IT may be thought more easie to answer one of these Questions than the other, but the answer to both is really the same; that Mankind have ungoverned Passions



S E R M. jection: And that the Principles and Passions  
 I. in the Mind of Man, which are distinct  
 both from Self-love and Benevolence, primarily and most directly lead to right Behaviour with regard to Others as well as Himself, and only secondarily and accidentally to what is Evil. Thus, though Men to avoid the shame of one Villany, are sometimes guilty of a greater, yet it is easy to see, that the original tendency of Shame is to prevent the doing of shameful Actions; and its leading Men to conceal such Actions when done, is only in consequence of their being done; *i. e.* of the Passions not having answered its first End.

I F it be said, that there are persons in the World, who are in great Measure without the natural Affections towards their Fellow-Creatures: There are likewise Instances of Persons without the common natural Affections to themselves: But the Nature of Man is not to be judged of by either of these, but by what appears in the common World, in the Bulk of Mankind.

I A M

lawful one Envy aims at, is exactly the same; namely, that Equality or Superiority: And consequently, that to do Mischief is not the End of Envy, but meerly the Means it makes use of to attain its End. As to Resentment, see the Eighth Sermon.



## Upon Humane Nature.


21

I AM afraid it would be thought very strange, if to confirm the Truth of this Account of Humane Nature, and make out the Justness of the foregoing Comparifon, it should be added, that from what appears, Men in Fact as much as often contradict that *Part* of their Nature which respects *Self*, and which leads them to their *own private* Good and Happiness; as they contradict that *Part* of it which respects *Society*, and tends to *publick* Good: That there are as few Persons, who attain the greatest Satisfaction and Enjoyment which they might attain in the present World; as who do the greatest Good to others which they might do: Nay, that there are as few who can be said really and in earnest to aim at one, as at the other. Take a Survey of Mankind: The World in general, the Good and Bad, almost without Exception, equally are agreed, that were Religion out of the Case, the Happiness of the present Life would consist in a Manner wholly in Riches, Honours, sensual Gratifications; insomuch that one scarce hears a Reflection made upon Prudence, Life, Conduct, but upon this Supposition. Yet on the contrary, that Persons in the greatest Affluence of Fortune are no

S E R M.  
I.




SERM. happier than such as have only a Competency; that the Cares and Disappointments of Ambition for the most Part far exceed the Satisfactions of it; as also the miserable Intervals of Intemperance and Excess, and the many untimely Deaths occasioned by a dissolute Course of Life: These Things are all seen, acknowledged, by every one acknowledged; but are thought no Objections against, though they expressly contradict, this universal Principle, that the Happiness of the present Life, consists in one or other of them.

I.  Whence is all this Absurdity and Contradiction? Is not the middle Way obvious? Can any thing be more manifest, than that the Happiness of Life consists in These possessed and enjoyed only to a certain Degree; that to pursue them beyond this Degree, is always attended with more Inconvenience than Advantage, to a Man's self, and often with extreme Misery and Unhappiness.

Whence then, I say, is all this Absurdity and Contradiction? Is it really the Result of Consideration in Mankind, how they may become most easy to themselves, most free from Care, and enjoy the chief Happiness attainable in this World? Or is it not manifestly owing either to this, that they have  
not

## Upon Humane Nature.

23

not cool and reasonable Concern enough SERM.  
for themselves to consider wherein their I.  
chief Happiness in the present Life consists;   
or else, if they do consider it, that they will  
not act conformably to what is the Result  
of that Consideration: *i. e.* reasonable Con-  
cern for themselves, or cool Self-love is  
prevailed over by Passion and Appetite. So  
that from what appears, there is no Ground  
to assert that those Principles in the Nature  
of Man, which most directly lead to pro-  
mote the Good of our Fellow-Creatures, are  
more generally or in a greater Degree vio-  
lated, than those, which most directly lead  
us to promote our own private Good and  
Happiness.

THE Sum of the whole is plainly this.  
The Nature of Man considered in his sin-  
gle Capacity, and with respect only to the  
present World, is adapted and leads him to  
attain the greatest Happiness he can for him-  
self in the present World. The Nature of  
Man considered in his publick or social Ca-  
pacity leads him to a right Behaviour in So-  
ciety, to that Course of Life which we call  
Virtue. Men follow or obey their Nature  
in both these Capacities and Respects to a  
certain Degree, but not entirely: Their Acti-

SERM. ons do not come up to the whole of what  
 I. their Nature leads them to in either of these  
 ~~~~~ Capacities or Respects: and they often vio-  
 late their Nature in both, *i. e.* As they neg-
 lect the Duties they owe to their Fellow-
 Creatures, to which their Nature leads them ;
 and are injurious, to which their Nature is
 abhorrent: So there is a manifest Negli-
 gence in Men of their real Happiness or In-
 terest in the present World, when that In-
 terest is inconsistent with a present Gratifi-
 cation ; for the sake of which they negli-
 gently, nay, even knowingly are the Au-
 thors and Instruments of their own Misery
 and Ruin. Thus they are as often unjust
 to themselves as to others, and for the most
 Part are equally so to both by the same
 Actions.

SERMON II, III.

Upon Humane Nature.

R O M. ii. 14.


For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves.

AS speculative Truth admits of different Kinds of Proof, so likewise Moral Obligations may be shewn by different Methods. If the real Nature of any Creature leads him and is adapted to such and such Purposes only, or more than to any other; this is a Reason to believe the Author of that Nature intended it for those Purposes. Thus there is no Doubt the Eye was intended for us to see with. And the more complex any Constitution is,

SERM.
II.



SERM. is, and the greater Variety of Parts there are
 II. which thus tend to some one End, the
 stronger is the Proof that such End was de-
 signed. However, when the inward Frame
 of Man is considered as any Guide in Mo-
 rals, the utmost Caution must be used that
 none make Peculiarities in their own Tem-
 per, or any thing which is the Effect of
 particular Customs, though observable in
 several, the Standard of what is common
 to the Species; and above all, that the high-
 est Principle be not forgot or excluded,
 That to which belongs the Adjustment and
 Correction of all other inward Movements
 and Affections: Which Principle will of
 Course have some Influence, but which be-
 ing in Nature supreme, as shall now be
 shown, ought to preside over and govern
 all the rest. The Difficulty of rightly ob-
 serving the two former Cautions; the Ap-
 pearance there is of some small Diversity
 amongst Mankind with respect to this Fa-
 culty, with respect to their natural Sense of
 moral Good and Evil; and the Attention ne-
 cessary to survey with any Exactness what
 passes within, have occasioned that it is not so
 much agreed what is the Standard of the
 internal Nature of Man, as of his external
 Form.

Form. Neither is this last exactly settled. SERM.
Yet we understand one another when we II.
speak of the Shape of a Humane Body: 
So likewise we do when we speak of the
Heart and inward Principles, how far so-
ever the Standard is from being exact or pre-
cisely fixt. There is therefore Ground for
an Attempt of shewing Men to themselves,
of shewing them what Course of Life and
Behaviour their real Nature points out and
would lead them to. Now Obligations of
Virtue shewn, and Motives to the Practice
of it enforced, from a Review of the Na-
ture of Man, are to be considered as an
Appeal to each particular Person's Heart and
natural Conscience: As the external Senses
are appealed to for the Proof of things cog-
nizable by them. Since then our inward
Feelings, and the Perceptions we receive
from our external Senses are equally real; to
argue from the former to Life and Conduct
is as little liable to Exception, as to argue
from the latter to absolute speculative Truth.
A Man can as little doubt whether his Eyes
were given him to see with, as he can doubt
of the Truth of the Science of *Opticks*, de-
duced from ocular Experiments. And al-
lowing the inward Feeling, Shame; a Man
can

SERM. can as little doubt whether it was given him
 II. to prevent his doing shameful Actions, as he
 ~~~~~ can doubt whether his Eyes were given him  
 to guide his Steps. And as to these inward  
 Feelings themselves; that they are real, that  
 Man has in his Nature Passions and Affec-  
 tions, can no more be questioned, than that  
 he has external Senses. Neither can the  
 former be wholly mistaken; though to a  
 certain Degree liable to greater Mistakes than  
 the latter.

T H E R E can be no doubt but that several  
 Propensions or Instincts, several Principles in  
 the Heart of Man, carry him to Society, and  
 to contribute to the Happiness of it, in a  
 Sense and a Manner in which no inward Prin-  
 ciple leads him to Evil. These Principles,  
 Propensions or Instincts which lead him to  
 do Good, are approved of by a certain Fa-  
 culty within, quite distinct from these Pro-  
 pensions themselves. All this hath been fully  
 made out in the foregoing Discourse.

B U T it may be said, “ What is all this,  
 “ though true, to the Purpose of Virtue and  
 “ Religion? These require, not only that  
 “ we do Good to others when we are led  
 “ this Way, by Benevolence or Reflection,  
 “ happening to be stronger than other Prin-  
 “ ciples,



“ ciples, Passions, or Appetites; but like- SERM.  
“ wise that the *whole* Character be formed II.  
“ upon Thought and Reflection; that *every* ~~~~~  
“ Action be directed by some determinate  
“ Rule, some other Rule than the Strength  
“ and Prevalency of any Principle or  
“ Passion. What Sign is there in our Na-  
“ ture (for the Inquiry is only about what  
“ is to be collected from thence) that this  
“ was intended by its Author? Or how  
“ does so various and fickle a Temper as  
“ that of Man appear adapted thereto? It  
“ may indeed be absurd and unnatural for  
“ Men to act without any Reflection; nay,  
“ without regard to that particular Kind of  
“ Reflection which you call Conscience;  
“ because this does belong to our Nature.  
“ For as there never was a Man but who  
“ approved one Place, Prospect, Building,  
“ before another: So it does not appear  
“ that there ever was a Man who would  
“ not have approved an Action of Huma-  
“ nity rather than of Cruelty; Interest and  
“ Passion being quite out of the Case. But  
“ Interest and Passion do come in, and are  
“ often too strong for and prevail over Re-  
“ flection and Conscience. Now as Brutes  
“ have various Instincts, by which they are  
“ carried

S E R M. “ carried on to the End the Author of their  
 II. “ Nature intended them for: Is not Man  
 ~~~~~ “ in the same Condition; with this Diffe-  
 “ rence only, that to his Instincts (*i. e.* Ap-
 “ petites and Passions) is added the Princi-
 “ ple of Reflection or Conscience? And
 “ as Brutes act agreeably to their Nature, in
 “ following that Principle or particular In-
 “ stinct which for the present is strongest
 “ in them: Does not Man likewise act a-
 “ greeably to his Nature, or obey the Law
 “ of his Creation, by following that Prin-
 “ ciple, be it Passion or Conscience, which
 “ for the present happens to be strongest in
 “ him? Thus different Men are by their
 “ particular Nature hurried on to pursue
 “ Honour, or Riches, or Pleasure: There
 “ are also Persons whose temper leads them
 “ in an uncommon Degree to Kindness,
 “ Compassion, doing Good to their Fellow-
 “ Creatures: As there are others who are
 “ given to suspend their Judgment, to weigh
 “ and consider Things, and to act upon
 “ Thought and Reflection. Let every one
 “ then quietly follow his Nature; as Passion,
 “ Reflection, Appetite, the several Parts
 “ of it, happen to be strongest: But let
 “ not the Man of Virtue take upon him
 “ to

Upon Humane Nature.

31

“ to blame the Ambitious, the Covetous, S E R M.
“ the Diffolute; since these equally with II.
“ him obey and follow their Nature. Thus, ~~~~~
“ as in some Cafes, we follow our Nature in
“ doing the Works *contained in the Law*, so
“ in other Cafes we follow Nature in doing
“ contrary.”

N o w all this licentious Talk intirely goes upon a Supposition, that Men follow their Nature in the same Sense, in violating the known Rules of Justice and Honefty for the sake of a present Gratification, as they do in following those Rules when they have no temptation to the contrary. And if this were true, that could not be so which St Paul asserts, that Men are *by Nature a Law to themselves*. If by following Nature were meant only acting as we please, it would indeed be ridiculous to speak of Nature as any Guide in Morals: Nay the very mention of deviating from Nature would be absurd; and the mention of following it, when spoken by way of Distinction, would absolutely have no Meaning. For did ever any one act otherwise than as he pleased? And yet the Antients speak of deviating from Nature as Vice; and of following Nature so much as a Distinction, that according to
them

SERM. them the Perfection of Virtue consists there-
 II. in. So that Language itself should teach
 ~ People another Sense to the Words *following Nature*, than barely acting as we please. Let it however be observed, that though the Words *Humane Nature* are to be explained, yet the real Question of this Discourse is not concerning the Meaning of Words, any other than as the Explanation of them may be needful to make out and explain the Assertion, that *every Man is naturally a Law to himself*, that *every one may find within himself, the Rule of Right, and Obligations to follow it*. This St. Paul affirms in the Words of the Text, and this the foregoing Objection really denies by seeming to allow it. And the Objection will be fully answered, and the Text before us explained, by observing that *Nature* is considered in different Views, and the Word used in different Senses; and by shewing in what View it is considered, and in what sense the Word is used, when intended to express and signify that which is the Guide of Life, that by which Men are a Law to themselves. I say, the Explanation of the Term will be sufficient, because from thence it will appear, that in
 some

some Senses of the Word, *Nature* cannot be
but that in another Sense it manifestly is, a
Law to us.

SERM.

II.



I. BY *Nature* is often meant no more than some Principle in Man, without regard either to the Kind or Degree of it. Thus the Passion of Anger, and the Affection of Parents to their Children, would be called equally *natural*. And as the same Person hath often contrary Principles, which at the same Time draw contrary Ways, he may by the same Action both follow and contradict his Nature in this Sense of the Word; he may follow one Passion and contradict another.

II. *Nature* is frequently spoken of as consisting in those Passions which are strongest, and most influence the Actions; which being vicious ones, Mankind is in this Sense naturally vicious, or vicious by Nature. Thus St Paul says of the *Gentiles, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, and walked according to the Spirit of Disobedience, that they were by Nature the Children of Wrath* *. They could be no otherwise *Children of Wrath* by Nature, than they were vicious by Nature.

D

H E R E

* Ephes. ii. 3.

SERM.

II.



HERE then are two different Senses of the Word *Nature*, in neither of which Men can at all be said to be a Law to themselves. They are mentioned only to be excluded; to prevent their being confounded, as the latter is in the Objection, with another Sense of it, which is now to be enquired after, and explained.

III. THE Apostle asserts, that the *Gentiles do by NATURE the Things contained in the Law*. Nature is indeed here put by way of Distinction from Revelation, but yet it is not a mere Negative. He intends to express more than that by which they *did not*, that by which they *did* the Works of the Law; namely, by *Nature*. It is plain the Meaning of the Word is not the same in this Passage as in the former, where it is spoken of as Evil; for in this latter it is spoken of as Good; as that by which they acted, or might have acted virtuously. What that is in Man by which he is *naturally a Law to himself*, is explained in the following Words: *Which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Consciences also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another*. If there be a Dis-

inction to be made between the *Works* SERM.
written in their Hearts, and the *Witness* II.
of Conscience; by the former must be meant
the natural Disposition to kindness and
Compassion, to do what is of good Report,
to which this Apostle often refers: That
Part of the Nature of Man, treated of in
the foregoing Discourse, which with very
little Reflection and of course leads him to
Society, and by Means of which he natu-
rally acts a just and good Part in it, unless
other Passions or Interest lead him astray.
Yet since other Passions, and Regards to
private Interest, which lead us (though in-
directly, yet they lead us) astray, are them-
selves in a Degree equally natural, and of-
ten most prevalent; and since we have no
Method of seeing the particular Degrees in
which one or the other is placed in us by
Nature; it is plain the former, considered
meerly as natural, good and right as they
are, can no more be a Law to us than the
latter. But there is a superior Principle of
Reflection or Conscience in every Man,
which distinguishes between the internal
Principles of his Heart, as well as his exter-
nal Actions: Which passes Judgment upon
himself and them; pronounces determinate-
D 2 ly

SERM. ly some Actions to be in themselves just,
 II. right, good; others to be in themselves evil,
 wrong, unjust: Which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns Him the doer of them accordingly: And which, if not forcibly stopp'd, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual Sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own. But this Part of the Office of Conscience is beyond my present Design explicitly to consider. It is by this Faculty, natural to Man, that he is a moral Agent, that he is a Law to himself: But this Faculty, I say, not to be considered meerly as a Principle in his Heart, which is to have some Influence as well as others; but considered as a Faculty in Kind and in Nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own Authority of being so.

THIS *Prerogative*, this *natural Supremacy*, of the Faculty which surveys, approves or disapproves the several Affections of our Mind, and Actions of our Lives, being that by which Men *are a Law to themselves*, their Conformity or Disobedience to which Law of our Nature renders their
 Actions,

ACTIONS, in the highest and most proper SERM.
Sense, natural or unnatural; it is fit it be II.
further explained to you: And I hope it will
be so, if you will attend to the following Re-
flections.

M A N may act according to that Principle or Inclination which for the present happens to be strongest, and yet act in a Way disproportionate to, and violate his real proper Nature. Suppose a Brute Creature by any Bait to be allured into a Snare, by which he is destroyed. He plainly followed the Bent of his Nature, leading him to gratify his Appetite: There is an entire Correspondence between his whole Nature and such an Action: Such Action therefore is natural. But suppose a Man, foreseeing the same Danger of certain Ruin, should rush into it for the sake of a present Gratification; he in this Instance would follow his strongest Desire, as did the brute Creature: But there would be as manifest a Disproportion, between the Nature of a Man and such an Action, as between the meanest Work of Art and the Skill of the greatest Master in that Art: Which Disproportion arises, not from considering the Action singly in *itself*, or in its *Consequences*; but from *Comparison* of

SERM. it with the Nature of the Agent. And since
 II. such an Action is utterly disproportionate to
 ~~~~~ the Nature of Man, it is in the strictest and  
 most proper Sense unnatural; this Word expressing that Disproportion. Therefore instead of the Words *Disproportionate to his Nature*, the Word, *Unnatural*, may now be put; this being more familiar to us: But let it be observed, that it stands for the same thing precisely.

Now what is it which renders such a rash Action unnatural? Is it that he went against the Principle of reasonable and cool Self-love, considered *meerly* as a Part of his Nature? No: For if he had acted the contrary Way, he would equally have gone against a Principle, or Part of his Nature, namely, Passion or Appetite. But to deny a present Appetite, from Foresight that the Gratification of it would end in immediate Ruin or extreme Misery, is by no Means an unnatural Action: Whereas to contradict or go against cool Self-Love for the sake of such Gratification, is so in the Instance before us. Such an Action then being unnatural; and its being so not arising from a Man's going against a Principle or Desire barely, nor in going against that Principle or Desire which happens

happens for the present to be strongest; it necessarily follows, that there must be some other Difference or Distinction to be made between these two Principles, Passion and cool Self-love, than what I have yet taken Notice of. And this difference, not being a Difference in Strength or Degree, I call a Difference in *Nature* and in *Kind*. And since, in the Instance still before us, if Passion prevails over Self-love, the consequent Action is unnatural; but if Self-love prevails over Passion, the Action is natural: It is manifest that Self-love is in Humane Nature a superior Principle to Passion. This may be contradicted without violating that Nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the Oeconomy of Man's Nature, reasonable Self-love must govern. Thus, without particular consideration of Conscience, we may have a clear Conception of the *superior Nature* of one inward Principle to another; and see that there really is this natural Superiority, quite distinct from Degrees of Strength and Prevalency.

LET us now take a View of the Nature of Man, as consisting partly of various Appetites, Passions, Affections, and partly of

SERM. the Principle of Reflection or Conscience ;  
 II. leaving quite out all Consideration of the  
 different Degrees of Strength, in which  
 either of them prevail, and it will further appear that there is this natural Superiority of one inward Principle to another, and that it is even Part of the Idea of Reflection or Conscience.

PASSION or Appetite implies a direct simple Tendency towards such and such Objects, without Distinction of the Means by which they are to be obtained. Consequently 'twill often happen there will be a Desire of particular Objects, in Cases where they cannot be obtained without manifest Injury to others. Reflection or Conscience comes in, and disapproves the Pursuit of them in these Circumstances ; but the Desire remains. Which is to be obeyed, Appetite or Reflection ? Cannot this Question be answered, from the Oeconomy and Constitution of Humane Nature meerly, without saying which is strongest ? Or need this at all come into Consideration ? Would not the Question be *intelligibly* and fully answered by saying, that the Principle of Reflection or Conscience being compared with the various Appetites, Passions, and Affections

## Upon Humane Nature.

41

Affections in Men, the former is manifestly superior and chief, without regard to Strength? And how often soever the latter happens to prevail, it is meer *Usurpation*: The former remains in Nature and in Kind its Superiour; and every Instance of such Prevalence of the latter is an Instance of breaking in upon and Violation of the Constitution of Man.

SERM.

II.



ALL this is no more than the Distinction, which every Body is acquainted with, between *meer Power* and *Authority*: Only instead of being intended to express the Difference between what is possible, and what is lawful in Civil Government; here it has been shewn applicable to the several Principles in the Mind of Man. Thus that Principle, by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own Heart, Temper and Actions, is not only to be considered as what is in its turn to have some Influence; which may be said of every Passion, of the lowest Appetites: But likewise as being superior; as from its very Nature manifestly claiming Superiority over all others: insomuch that you cannot form a Notion of this Faculty, Conscience, without taking in Judgement, Direction, Super-

S E R M. Superintendency. This is a constituent Part  
 II. of the Idea, that is, of the Faculty itself:

And, to preside and govern, from the very Oeconomy and Constitution of Man, belongs to it. Had it Strength, as it had Rights; had it Power, as it had manifest Authority, it would absolutely govern the Word.

T H I S gives us a further View of the Nature of Man; shews us what Course of Life we were made for: Not only that our real Nature leads us to be influenced in some Degree by Reflection and Conscience; but likewise in what Degree we are to be influenced by it, if we will fall in with, and act agreeably to the Constitution of our Nature: That this Faculty was placed within to be our proper Governour; to direct and regulate all under Principles, Passions, and Motives of Action. This is its Right and Office: Thus sacred is its Authority. And how often soever Men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed Interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of Passion which they cannot otherwise gratify; this makes no Alteration as to the *natural Right* and *Office* of Conscience.

L E T

## *Upon Humane Nature.*

43

LET us now turn this whole Matter another way, and suppose there was no such thing at all as this natural Supremacy of Conscience; that there was no Distinction to be made between one inward Principle and another, but only that of Strength; and see what would be the Consequence.

SERM.


II.




CONSIDER then what is the Latitude and Compass of the Actions of Man with regard to Himself; his Fellow-Creatures and the Supreme Being? What are their Bounds, besides that of our natural Power? With respect to the two first, they are plainly no other than these: No Man seeks Misery as such for himself; and No one unprovoked does Mischief to Another for its own sake. For in every Degree within these Bounds, Mankind knowingly from Passion or Wantonness bring Ruin and Misery upon themselves and others. And Impiety and Prophaneness, I mean, what every one would call so who believes the Being of God, have absolutely no Bounds at all. Men blaspheme the Author of Nature, formally and in Words renounce their Allegiance to their Creator. Put an Instance then with respect to any one of these three. Though we should suppose prophane Swearing, and in general  
that

SERM. that Kind of Impiety now mentioned, to  
 II. mean nothing, yet it implies wanton Disre-  
 gard and Irreverence towards an Infinite  
 Being, our Creator; and is this as suitable  
 to the Nature of Man, as Reverence and  
 dutiful Submission of Heart towards that  
 Almighty Being? Or suppose a Man guilty  
 of Parricide, with all the Circumstances of  
 Cruelty which such an Action can admit  
 of. This Action is done in Consequence  
 of its Principle being for the present strongest:  
 And if there be no Difference between in-  
 ward Principles, but only that of Strength;  
 the Strength being given, you have the  
 whole Nature of the Man given, so far as it  
 relates to this Matter. The Action plainly  
 corresponds to the Principle, the Principle  
 being in that Degree of Strength it was: It  
 therefore corresponds to the whole Nature  
 of the Man. Upon comparing the Action  
 and the whole Nature, there arises no Dis-  
 proportion, there appears no unsuitableness  
 between them. Thus the *Murder of a Fa-  
 ther* and the *Nature of Man* correspond to  
 each other, as the same Nature and an Act  
 of filial Duty. If there be no Difference be-  
 tween inward Principles, but only that of  
 Strength; we can make no Distinction be-  
 tween



tween these two Actions, considered as the SERM.  
Actions of such a Creature; but in our II.  
coolest Hours must approve or disapprove   
them equally: Than which nothing can be  
reduced to a greater Absurdity.

T H E natural Supremacy of Reflection or SERM.  
Conscience being thus established; we may III.  
from it form a distinct Notion of what is   
meant by *Humane Nature*, when Virtue is  
said to consist in following it, and Vice in de-  
viating from it.

As the Idea of a Civil Constitution im-  
plies in it united Strength, various Subordi-  
nations, under one Direction, that of the  
supreme Authority; the different Strength  
of each particular Member of the Society  
not coming into the Idea; whereas, if you  
leave out the Subordination, the Union and  
the one Direction, you destroy and lose it:  
So Reason, several Appetites, Passions and  
Affections, prevailing in different Degrees  
of Strength, is not *that* Idea or Notion of  
*Humane Nature*; but *that Nature* consists  
in these several Principles considered as  
having a natural Respect to each other, in  
the several Passions being naturally subordi-  
nate

SERM. nate to the one superior Principle of Reflection or Conscience. Every Bias, Instinct, Propension within, is a natural Part of our Nature, but not the Whole: Add to these the superior Faculty, whose Office it is to adjust, manage and preside over them, and take in this its natural Superiority, and you compleat the Idea of Humane Nature. And as in Civil Government the Constitution is broken in upon, and violated by Power and Strength prevailing over Authority; so the Constitution of Man is broken in upon and violated by the lower Faculties or Principles within prevailing over that which is in its Nature supreme over them all. Thus, when it is said by antient Writers, that Tortures and Death are not so contrary to Humane Nature as Injustice; by this to be sure, is not meant, that the Aversion to the former in Mankind is less strong and prevalent than their Aversion the latter: But that the former is only contrary to our Nature considered in a partial View, and which takes in only the lowest Part of it, that which we have in common with the Brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our Nature, considered in a higher Sense, as a System  
and

and Constitution, contrary to the whole Oeconomy of Man\*.

SERM.  
III.

AND

\* Every Man in his Phisical Nature is one individual single Agent. He has likewise Properties and Principles, each of which may be considered separately, and without Regard to the Respects which they have to each other. Neither of these are the Nature we are taking a View of. But it is the inward Frame of Man considered as a *System* or *Constitution*: Whose several Parts are united, not by a physical Principle of Individuation, but by the Respects they have to each other; the chief of which is the Subjection which the Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections have to the one supream Principle of Reflection or Conscience. The System or Constitution is formed by and consists in these Respects and this Subjection. Thus the Body is a *System* or *Constitution*: So is a Tree: So is every Machine. Consider all the several Parts of a Tree without the natural Respects they have to each other, and you have not at all the Idea of a Tree; but add these Respects, and this gives you the Idea. The Body may be impaired by Sicknes, a Tree may decay, a Machine be out of Order, and yet the System and Constitution of them not totally dissolved. There is plainly somewhat which answers to all this in the moral Constitution of Man. Whoever will consider his own Nature, will see that the several Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections, have different Respects amongst themselves. They are Restraints upon, and are in a Proportion to each other. This Proportion is just and perfect, when all those under Principles are perfectly coincident with Conscience, so far as their Nature permits, and in all Cases under its absolute and intire Direction. The least Excess or Defect, the least Alteration of the due Proportions amongst themselves, or of their Co-incidence with Conscience, though not proceeding into Action, is some Degree of Disorder in the moral Constitution. But Perfection, though plainly intelligible and un-supposeable, was never attained by any Man. If the higher Principle of Reflection maintains its Place, and as much

as

SERM. AND from all these things put together,  
 III. nothing can be more evident, than that, ex-  
 clusive of Revelation, Man cannot be con-  
 sidered as a Creature left by his Maker to  
 act at Random, and live at large up to the Ex-  
 tent of his natural Power, as Passion, Hu-  
 mour, Wilfulness, happen to carry him;  
 which is the Condition brute Creatures are  
 in: But that *from his Make, Constitution, or  
 Nature, he is in the strictest and most proper  
 Sense a Law to himself.* He hath the Rule  
 of Right within: What is wanting is only  
 that he honestly attend to it.

THE Inquiries which have been made by  
 Men of Leisure after some general Rule,  
 the Conformity to, or Disagreement from  
 which, should denominate our Actions Good  
 or Evil, are in many Respects of great Ser-  
 vice. Yet let any plain honest Man, before  
 he engages in any Course of Action, ask  
 himself, Is this I am going about Right, or  
 is

as it can corrects that Disorder, and hinders it from breaking  
 out into Action, this is all that can be expected in such a  
 Creature as Man. And though the Appetites and Passions have  
 not their exact due Proportion to each other; though they of-  
 ten strive for Mastery with Judgment or Reflection; yet,  
 since the Superiority of this Principle to all others is the chief  
 Respect which forms the Constitution, so far as this Superi-  
 ority is maintained, the Character, the Man, is good, worthy,  
 virtuous.



is it wrong? Is it Good, or is it Evil? I do not in the least doubt, but that this Question would be answered agreeably to Truth and Virtue, by almost any fair Man in almost any Circumstance. Neither do there appear any Cases which look like Exceptions to this; but those of Superstition, and of Partiality to ourselves. Superstition may perhaps be somewhat of an Exception: But Partiality to ourselves is not; this being itself Dishonesty. For a Man to judge that to be the Equitable, the moderate, the right Part for him to act, which he would see to be hard, unjust, oppressive in another; this is plain Vice, and can proceed only from great Unfairness of Mind.

BUT allowing that Mankind hath the Rule of Right within himself, yet it may be asked, “What Obligations are we under to attend to and follow it?” I answer: It has been proved that Man by his Nature is a Law to himself, without the particular distinct Consideration of the positive Sanctions of that Law; the Rewards and Punishments which we feel, and those which from the Light of Reason we have ground to believe, are annexed to it. The Question then carries its own Answer along with it. Your Obligation


SERM. gation to obey this Law, is its being the  
 III. Law of your Nature. That your Conscience approves of and attests to such a Course of Action, is itself alone an Obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to shew us the Way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own Authority with it, that it is our natural Guide; the Guide assigned us by the Author of our Nature: It therefore belongs to our Condition of Being, it is our Duty to walk in that Path, and follow this Guide without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with Impunity.

HOWEVER, let us hear what is to be said against obeying this Law of our Nature. And the Sum is no more than this. “ Why  
 “ should we be concerned about any thing  
 “ out of and beyond ourselves? If we do  
 “ find within Ourselves Regards to Others,  
 “ and Restraints of we know not how many  
 “ different Kinds; yet these being Em-  
 “ barassments, and hindering us from going  
 “ the nearest Way to our own Good, why  
 “ should we not endeavour to suppress and  
 “ get over them?”

THUS People go on with Words, which, when applied to Humane Nature, and the  
 Condition

## *Upon Humane Nature.*

51

Condition in which it is placed in this S E R M.  
World, have really no Meaning. For does III.  
not all this Kind of Talk go upon Supposi-   
tion, that our Happiness in this World con-  
sists in somewhat quite distinct from Re-  
gard to others; and that it is the Priviledge  
of Vice to be without Restraint or Confine-  
ment? Whereas on the contrary, the En-  
joyments, in a Manner all the common En-  
joyments of Life, even the Pleasures of  
Vice, depend upon these Regards of one  
Kind or another to our Fellow Creatures.  
Throw off all Regards to others, and we  
should be quite indifferent to Infamy and to  
Honour; there could be no such Thing at  
all as Ambition; and scarce any such thing  
as Covetousness; for we should likewise  
be equally indifferent to the Disgrace of  
Poverty, the several Neglects and Kinds of  
Contempt which accompany this State; and  
to the Reputation of Riches, the Regard  
and Respect they usually procure. Neither  
is Restraint by any Means peculiar to one  
Course of Life: But our very nature, ex-  
clusive of Conscience, and our Condition  
lays us under an absolute Necessity of it.  
We cannot gain any End whatever without  
being confined to the proper Means, which

SERM. is often the most painful and uneasy Con-  
 III. finement. And in numberless Instances a  
 present Appetite cannot be gratified without  
 such apparent and immediate Ruin and Mi-  
 sery, that the most dissolute Man in the  
 World chooses to forego the Pleasure, rather  
 than endure the Pain.

Is the Meaning then, to indulge those  
 Regards to our Fellow-Creatures, and sub-  
 mit to those Restraints, which upon the  
 whole are attended with more Satisfaction  
 than Uneasiness, and get over only those  
 which bring more Uneasiness and Inconve-  
 nience than Satisfaction? “ Doubtless this  
 “ was our Meaning.” You have changed  
 Sides then. Keep to this; be consistent  
 with yourselves; and you and the Men of  
 Virtue are *in general* perfectly agreed. But  
 let us take Care and avoid Mistakes. Let it  
 not be taken for granted that the Temper of  
 Envy, Rage, Resentment, yields greater De-  
 light than Meekness, Forgiveness, Compas-  
 sion, and Good-will: Especially when it is  
 acknowledged that Rage, Envy, Resent-  
 ment, are in themselves meer Misery;  
 and the Satisfaction arising from the Indul-  
 gence of them is little more than Relief  
 from that Misery; whereas the Temper of  
 Compassion



## *Upon Humane Nature.*

53

Compassion and Benevolence is itself delightful; and the Indulgence of it, by doing Good, affords new positive Delight and Enjoyment. Let it not be taken for granted, that the Satisfaction arising from the Reputation of Riches and Power, however obtained, and from the Respect paid to them, is greater than the Satisfaction arising from the Reputation of Justice, Honesty, Charity, and the Esteem which is universally acknowledged to be their Due. And if it be doubtful which of these Satisfaction is the greatest, as there are Persons who think neither of them very considerable, yet there can be no Doubt concerning Ambition and Covetousness, Virtue and a good Mind, considered in themselves, and as leading to different Courses of Life; there can, I say, be no doubt, which Temper and which Course is attended with most Peace and Tranquility of Mind, which with most Perplexity, Vexation and Inconvenience. And both the Virtues and Vices which have been now mentioned, do in a Manner equally imply in them Regards of one Kind or another to our Fellow-Creatures. And with respect to Restraint and Confinement: Whoever will consider the Restraints from Fear and

SERM.

III.



SERM. Shame, the Diffimulation, mean Arts of  
 III. Concealment, fervile Compliances, one or  
 ~~~~~  
 other of which belong to almost every
 Course of Vice, will soon be convinced
 that the Man of Virtue is by no Means upon
 a Disadvantage in this Respect. How many
 Instances are there in which Men feel and
 own and cry aloud under the Chains of
 Vice with which they are enthralled, and
 which yet they will not shake off? How
 many Instances, in which Persons mani-
 festly go through more Pains and Self-denial
 to gratify a vitious Passion, than would have
 been necessary to the Conquest of it? To
 this is to be added, that when Virtue is be-
 come habitual, when the Temper of it is
 acquir'd, what was before Confinement
 ceases to be so, by becoming Choice and De-
 light. Whatever Restraint and Guard upon
 ourselves may be needful to unlearn any un-
 natural Distortion or odd Gesture; yet, in
 all Propriety of Speech, natural Behaviour
 must be the most easy and unrestrained. It
 is manifest that, in the common Course of
 Life, there is seldom any Inconsistency be-
 tween our Duty and what is *called* Interest:
 It is much seldomer that there is an Incon-
 sistency between Duty and what is really
 our

Upon Humane Nature.

55

Our present Interest; meaning by Interest, Happiness and Satisfaction. Self-love then, though confined to the Interest of the present World, does in general perfectly coincide with Virtue; and leads us to one and the same Course of Life. But, whatever Exceptions there are to this, which are much fewer than they are commonly thought, all shall be set right at the final Distribution of things. It is a manifest Absurdity to suppose Evil prevailing finally over Good, under the Conduct and Administration of a perfect Mind.

SERM.

III.



THE whole Argument, which I have been now insisting upon, may be thus summed up and given you in one View. The Nature of Man is adapted to some Course of Action or other. Upon comparing some Actions with this Nature, they appear suitable and correspondent to it: From Comparison of other Actions with the same Nature, there arises to our View some Unsuitableness or Disproportion. The Correspondence of Actions to the Nature of the Agent renders them natural; Their Disproportion to it, unnatural. That an Action is correspondent to the Nature of the Agent, does not arise from its being agreeable

SERM. ble to the Principle which happens to be
 III. the strongest: For it may be so, and yet be
 quite disproportionate to the Nature of the
 Agent. The Correspondence therefore, or
 Disproportion, arises from somewhat else.
 This can be nothing but a Difference in Na-
 ture and Kind, altogether distinct from
 Strength) between the inward Principles.
 Some then are in Nature and Kind superiour
 to others. And the Correspondence arises
 from the Action being conformable to the
 higher Principle; and the Unsuitableness
 from its being contrary to it. Reasonable
 Self-love and Conscience are the chief or
 superior Principles in the Nature of Man:
 Because an Action may be suitable to this
 Nature, though all other Principles be vio-
 lated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of
 those are. Conscience and Self-love, if we
 understand our true Happiness, always lead
 us the same Way. Duty and Interest are
 perfectly coincident; for the most Part in
 this World, but intirely and in every In-
 stance if we take in the future, and the
 whole; this being implied in the Notion
 of a good and perfect Administration of
 Things. Thus they who have been so wise
 in their Generation as to regard only their
 own

Upon Humane Nature.

57

own supposed Interest, at the Expence and to the Injury of others, shall at last find, that he who has given up all the Advantages of the present World, rather than violate his Conscience and the Relations of Life, has infinitely better provided for himself, and secured his own Interest and Happiness.

SERM.

III.




S E R M O N

S E R M O N IV.

Upon the Government of the Tongue.

J A M E S i. 26.

*If any Man among you seem to be religious,
and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth
his own Heart, this Man's Religion is
vain.*

THE Translation of this Text would SERMON
be more determinate by being more IV.
literal, thus: *If any Man among* 
you seemeth to be religious, not bridling his
Tongue, but deceiving his own Heart, this
Man's Religion is vain. This determines
that the Words, *but deceiveth his own*
Heart, are not put in Opposition to, *seem-*
eth to be religious, but to, *bridleth not his*
Tongue.

60 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. *Tongue.* The certain determinate Meaning
IV. of the Text then being, that he who seemeth
to be religious, and bridleth not his
Tongue, but in that particular deceiveth his
own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain; we
may observe somewhat very forcible and ex-
pressive in these Words of St. *James*. As if
the Apostle had said, No Man surely can
make any Pretences to Religion, who does
not at least believe that he bridleth his
Tongue: If he puts on any Appearance or
Face of Religion, and yet does not govern
his Tongue, he must surely deceive himself
in that Particular, and think he does: And
whoever is so unhappy as to deceive himself
in this, to imagine he keeps that unruly Fa-
culty in due Subjection, when indeed he does
not, whatever the other Part of his Life be,
his Religion is vain; the Government of the
Tongue being a most material Restraint
which Virtue lays us under: Without it no
Man can be truly religious.

IN treating upon this Subject, I will con-
sider,

First, W H A T is the general Vice or Fault
here referred to: Or what Disposition in Men
is supposed in Moral Reflections and Precepts
concerning *bridling the Tongue*.

Secondly,

Government of the Tongue. 61

Secondly, WHEN it may be said of any one, that he has a due Government over himself in this Respect. SERM.
IV.

I. NOW the Fault referred to, and the Disposition supposed, in Precepts and Reflections concerning the Government of the Tongue, is not Evil-speaking from Malice, nor Lying or bearing false Witness from indirect selfish Designs. The Disposition to these, and the actual Vices themselves, all come under other Subjects. The Tongue may be employed about, and made to serve all the Purposes of Vice, in tempting and deceiving, in Perjury and Injustice. But the Thing here supposed and referred to, is Talkativeness: A Disposition to be talking, abstracted from the Consideration of what is to be said; with very little or no Regard to, or Thought of doing, either Good or Harm. And let not any imagine this to be a slight Matter, and that it deserves not to have so great Weight laid upon it; till he has considered, what Evil is implied in it, and the bad Effects which follow from it. It is perhaps true, that they who are addicted to this Folly would choose to confine themselves to Trifles and indifferent Subjects, and so intend only to be guilty of being impertinent:

62 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. nent: But as they cannot go on for ever
IV. talking of Nothing, as common Matters
will not afford a sufficient Fund for perpetual continued Discourse: when Subjects of this Kind are exhausted, they will go on to Defamation, Scandal, divulging of Secrets, their own Secrets as well as those of others, any thing rather than be silent. They are plainly hurried on in the Heat of their Talk to say quite different Things from what they first intended, and which they afterwards wish unsaid; or improper things, which they had no other End in saying but only to afford Employment to their Tongue. And if these People expect to be heard and regarded, for there are some content meerly with talking, they will invent to engage your Attention: and, when they have heard the least imperfect Hint of an Affair, they will out of their own Head add the Circumstances of Time and Place, and other Matters to make out their Story, and give the Appearance of Probability to it: Not that they have any Concern about being believed, otherwise than as a Means of being heard. The Thing is, to engage your Attention; to take you up wholly for the present Time: What Reflections will be made afterwards,

Government of the Tongue.

63

afterwards, is in Truth the least of their Thoughts. And further, when Persons, who indulge themselves in these Liberties of the Tongue, are in any Degree offended with another, as little Disgusts and Misunderstandings will be, they allow themselves to defame and revile such an one without any Moderation or Bounds; though the Offence is so very slight, that they themselves would not do, nor perhaps wish him an Injury in any other Way. And in this Case the Scandal and Revilings are chiefly owing to Talkativeness, and not bridling their Tongue; and so come under our present Subject. The least Occasion in the World will make the Humour break out in this particular Way, or in another. It is like a Torrent, which must and will flow; but the least thing imaginable will first of all give it either this or another Direction, turn it into this or that Channel: Or like a Fire; the Nature of which, when in a Heap of combustible Matter, is to spread and lay waste all around; but any one of a thousand little Accidents will occasion it to break out first either in this or another particular Part.

THE Subject then before us, though it does run up into, and can scarce be treat-

SERM.

IV.



64 *A S E R M O N upon the*

SERM. ed as intirely distinct from all others; yet
 IV. it needs not be so much mixed or blend-
 ed with them as it often is. Every Facul-
 ty and Power may be used as the Instru-
 ment of premeditated Vice and Wickedness,
 meerly as the most proper and effectual
 Means of executing such Designs. But if
 a Man, from deep Malice and Desire of
 Revenge, should meditate a Falshood with
 a settled Design to ruin his Neighbour's Re-
 putation, and should with great Coolness
 and Deliberation spread it; no-body would
 choose to say of such an one, that he had
 no Government of his Tongue. A Man
 may use the Faculty of Speech as an In-
 strument of False-witness, who yet has so
 intire a Command over that Faculty, as ne-
 ver to speak but from Forethought and cool
 Design. Here the Crime is Injustice and
 Perjury: and strictly speaking, no more be-
 longs to the present Subject, than Perjury
 and Injustice in any other Way. But there
 is such a Thing as a Disposition to be talk-
 ing for its own Sake; from which Persons
 often say any thing, good or bad, of others,
 meerly as a Subject of Discourse, according
 to the particular Temper they themselves
 happen to be in, and to pass away the pre-
 sent

Government of the Tongue. 65

SERM.
IV.

sent Time. There is likewise to be observed in Persons such a strong and eager Desire of engaging Attention to what they say, that they will speak Good or Evil, Truth or otherwise, meerly as one or the other seems to be most hearkened to: And this, though it is sometimes joined, is not the same with the Desire of being thought important and Men of Consequence. There is in some such a Disposition to be talking, that an Offence of the slightest Kind, and such as would not raise any other Resentment, yet raises, if I may so speak, the Resentment of the Tongue, puts it into a Flame, into the most ungovernable Motions. This Outrage, when the Person it respects is present, we distinguish in the lower Rank of People by a peculiar Term: And let it be observed, that though the Decencies of Behaviour are a little kept, the same Outrage and Virulence, indulged when he is absent, is an Offence of the same Kind. But not to distinguish any further in this Manner: Men run into Faults and Follies, which cannot so properly be referred to any one general Head as this, that they have not a due Government over their Tongue.

F

A N D

SERM. AND this unrestrained Volubility and
 IV. Wantonness of Speech is the Occasion of
 ~~~~~ numberless Evils and Vexations in Life. It  
 begets Resentment in him who is the Subject  
 of it; sows the Seed of Strife and Diffension  
 amongst others; and inflames little Disgusts  
 and Offences, which if let alone would  
 wear away of themselves: It is often of  
 as bad Effect upon the good Name of o-  
 thers, as deep Envy or Malice: And, to say  
 the least of it in this Respect, it destroys  
 and perverts a certain Equity of the utmost  
 Importance to Society to be observed;  
 namely, that Praise and Dispraise, a good  
 or bad Character, should always be bestowed  
 according to Desert. The Tongue used  
 in such a licentious Manner is like a Sword  
 in the Hand of a Madman; it is employed  
 at random, it can scarce possibly do any  
 Good, and for the most Part does a World  
 of Mischief; and implies not only great  
 Folly and a trifling Spirit, but great Vitiouf-  
 ness of Mind, great Indifference to Truth and  
 Falsity, and to the Reputation, Welfare, and  
 Good of others. So much Reason is there for  
 what St. *James* says of the Tongue, \* *It is a*  
*Fire, a World of Iniquity, it defileth the whole*  
*Body*

# Government of the Tongue. 67

*Body, setteth on Fire the Course of Nature, and is itself set on Fire of Hell.* This is the Faculty or Disposition which we are required to keep a Guard upon: These are the Vices and Follies it runs into, when not kept under due Restraint.

SERM:  
IV.

II. WHEREIN the due Government of the Tongue consists, or when it may be said of any one in a moral and religious Sense that he *bridleth his Tongue*, I come now to consider.

THE due and proper Use of any natural Faculty or Power, is to be judged of by the End and Design for which it was given us. The chief Purpose, for which the Faculty of Speech was given to Man, is plainly that we might communicate our Thoughts to each other, in order to carry on the Affairs of the World; for Business, and for our Improvement in Knowledge and Learning. But the good Author of our Nature designed us not only Necessaries, but likewise Enjoyment and Satisfaction, in that Being he hath graciously given, and in that Condition of Life he hath placed us in, There are secondary Uses of our Faculties: They administer to Delight, as well as to Necessity: And as they are equally adapted

68      *A S E R M O N upon the*

SERM. to both, there is no Doubt but he intended  
 IV. them for our Gratification, as well as for the  
 ~~~~~ Support and Continuance of our Being. The  
 secondary Use of Speech is to please and be
 entertaining to each other in Conversation.
 This is in every Respect allowable and
 right: It unites Men closer in Alliances and
 Friendships; gives us a Fellow-feeling of the
 Prosperity and Unhappiness of each other;
 and is in several Respects serviceable to Vir-
 tue, and to promote good Behaviour in the
 World. And provided there be not too
 much Time spent in it, if it were considered
 only in the Way of Gratification and De-
 light, Men must have strange Notions of
 God and of Religion, to think that He can
 be offended with it, or that it is any way in-
 consistent with the strictest Virtue. But the
 Truth is, such sort of Conversation, though
 it has no particular good Tendency, yet
 it has a general Good one: It is social and
 friendly, and tends to promote Humanity,
 Good-nature and Civility.

As the End and Use, so likewise the A-
 buse of Speech, relates to the one or other
 of These; either to Business, or to Conver-
 sation. As to the former; Deceit in the
 Management of Business and Affairs does
 not

Government of the Tongue.

69

not properly belong to the Subject now before us: Though one may just mention that Multitude, that endless Number of Words, with which Business is perplexed; when a much fewer would, as it should seem, better serve the Purpose: But this must be left to those who understand the Matter. The Government of the Tongue, considered as a Subject of itself, relates chiefly to Conversation; to that Kind of Discourse which usually fills up the Time spent in friendly Meetings, and Visits of Civility. And the Danger is, lest Persons entertain themselves and others at the Expence of their Wisdom and their Virtue, and to the Injury or Offence of their Neighbour. If they will observe and keep clear of these, they may be as free, and easy, and unreserved, as they can desire.

SERM.
IV.



THE Cautions to be given for avoiding these Dangers, and to render Conversation innocent and agreeable, fall under the following Particulars: Silence; Talking of indifferent Things; and, which makes up too great a Part of Conversation, Giving of Characters, Speaking well or evil of others.

THE wise Man observes, that *there is a Time to speak, and a Time to keep silence.*

S E R M. One meets with People in the World, who
 IV. seem never to have made the last of these
 ~~~~~ Observation. And yet these great Talkers  
 do not at all speak from their having any  
 thing to say, as every Sentence shews, but  
 only from their Inclination to be talking.  
 Their Conversation is merely an Exercise  
 of the Tongue: No other humane Faculty  
 has any Share in it. It is strange these Per-  
 sons can help reflecting, that unless they  
 have in Truth a superior Capacity, and are  
 in an extraordinary Manner furnished for  
 Conversation; if they are entertaining, it is  
 at their own Expence. Is it possible, that  
 it should never come into People's Thoughts  
 to suspect, whether or no it be to their Ad-  
 vantage to shew so very much of themselves?  
*O that you would altogether hold your  
 Peace, and it should be your Wisdom\*.*  
 Remember likewise there are Persons who  
 love fewer Words, an inoffensive Sort of  
 People, and who deserve some Regard,  
 though of too still and composed Tempers  
 for you. Of this Number was the Son of  
*Sirach*: For he plainly speaks from Experi-  
 ence, when he says, *As Hills of Sand are  
 to the Steps of the Aged, so is one of many  
 Words*

\* Job xiii.

## Government of the Tongue. 71

*Words to a quiet Man.* But one would think it should be obvious to every one, that when they are in Company with their Superiours of any Kind, in Years, Knowledge, and Experience; when proper and useful Subjects are discoursed of, which they cannot bear a Part in; that these are Times for Silence: when they should learn to hear, and be attentive; at least in their turn. It is indeed a very unhappy Way these People are in: They in a Manner cut themselves out from all Advantage of Conversation, except that of being entertained with their own Talk: Their Business in coming into Company not being at all to be informed, to hear, to learn; but to display themselves; or rather to exert their Faculty, and talk without any Design at all. And if we consider Conversation as an Entertainment, as somewhat to unbend the Mind; as a Diversion from the Cares, the Business, and the Sorrows of Life; it is of the very Nature of it, that the Discourse be mutual. This, I say, is implied in the very notion of what we distinguish by Conversation, or being in Company. Attention to the continued Discourse of one alone grows more painful often, than the Cares and Business we come to be diverted

SERM.

IV.



SERM. from. He therefore who imposes this upon  
 IV. us, is guilty of a double Offence ; arbitrarily  
 ~~~~~ enjoining Silence upon all the rest, and like-  
 wise obliging them to this painful Attention.

I AM sensible these Things are apt to be passed over, as too little to come into a serious Discourse : But in Reality Men are obliged, even in Point of Morality and Virtue, to observe all the Decencies of Behaviour. The greatest Evils in Life have had their Rise from somewhat, which was thought of too little Importance to be attended to. And as to the Matter we are now upon, it is absolutely necessary to be considered. For if People will not maintain a due Government over themselves, in regarding proper Times and Seasons for Silence, but *will* be talking ; they certainly, whether they design it or not at first, will go on to Scandal and Evil-speaking, and divulging Secrets.

I F it were needful to say any thing further, to persuade Men to learn this Lesson of Silence ; one might put them in mind, how insignificant they render themselves by this excessive Talkativeness : insomuch that, if they do chance to say any Thing which deserves to be attended to and regarded, it is
 lost

Government of the Tongue.

73

lost in the Variety and Abundance which SERM. they utter of another Sort. IV.

THE Occasions of Silence then are obvious, and one would think should be easily distinguished by every Body: Namely, when a Man has nothing to say; or nothing, but what is better unsaid; Better, either in regard to the particular Persons he is present with; or from its being an Interruption to Conversation itself; or to Conversation of a more agreeable Kind; or better, lastly, with regard to himself. I will end this Particular with two Reflections of the wise Man: One of which, in the strongest Manner, exposes the ridiculous Part of this Licentiousness of the Tongue; and the other, the great Danger and Viciousness of it. *When he that is a Fool walketh by the Way Side, his Wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a Fool**. The other is, *In the Multitude of Words there wanteth not Sin †*.

As to the Government of the Tongue in respect to talking upon indifferent Subjects; After what has been said concerning the due Government of it in respect to the Occasions and Times for Silence, there is little more necessary,

* Eccles. x. 3.

† Prov. x. 19.

74 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. necessary, than only to caution Men to be
 IV. fully satisfied, that the Subjects are indeed
 ~~~~~ of an indifferent Nature; and not to spend  
 too much Time in Conversation of this  
 Kind. But Persons must be sure to take  
 heed, that the Subject of their Discourse be  
 at least of an indifferent Nature: That it be  
 no way offensive to Virtue, Religion, or  
 good Manners; that it be not of a licentious  
 dissolute Sort, this leaving always ill Impres-  
 sions upon the Mind; that it be no way in-  
 jurious or vexatious to others; and that too  
 much Time be not spent this way, to the  
 neglect of those Duties and Offices of Life  
 which belong to their Station and Condi-  
 tion in the world. However, though there is  
 not any Necessity, that Men should aim at be-  
 ing important and weighty in every Sentence  
 they speak: Yet since useful Subjects, at least  
 of some Kinds, are as entertaining as others;  
 a wise Man, even when he desires to unbend  
 his Mind from Business, would choose that  
 the Conversation might turn upon some-  
 what instructive.

THE last Thing is, The Government of the  
 Tongue as relating to Discourse of the Af-  
 fairs of others, and giving of Characters.  
 These are in a Manner the same: And one  
 can

## *Government of the Tongue.*

75

can scarce call it an indifferent Subject, because Discourse upon it almost perpetually runs into somewhat criminal.

SERM.  
IV.  
~

AND first of all, it were very much to be wished that this did not take up so great a Part of Conversation; because it is indeed a Subject of a dangerous Nature. Let any one consider the various Interests, Competitions, and little Misunderstandings which arise amongst Men; and he will soon see, that he is not unprejudiced and impartial; that he is not, as I may speak, neutral enough, to trust himself with talking of the Character and Concerns of his Neighbour, in a free, careless, and unreserved Manner. There is perpetually, and often it is not attended to, a Rivalship amongst People of one Kind or another, in respect to Wit, Beauty, Learning, Fortune, and that one Thing will insensibly influence them to speak to the Disadvantage of others, even where there is no formed Malice or ill Design. Since therefore it is so hard to enter into this Subject without offending, the first Thing to be observed is, that People should learn to decline it; to get over that strong Inclination most have to be talking of the Concerns and Behaviour of their Neighbour.

BUT

SERM. B U T since it is impossible that this Subject  
 IV. should be wholly excluded Conversation ;  
 and since it is necessary that the Characters  
 of Men should be known : The next Thing  
 is, that it is a Matter of Importance what  
 is said ; and therefore, that we should be re-  
 ligiously scrupulous and exact to say nothing,  
 either good or bad, but what is true. I  
 put it thus, because it is in Reality of as  
 great Importance to the Good of Society,  
 that the Characters of bad Men should be  
 known, as that the Characters of good Men  
 should. People, who are given to Scandal  
 and Detraction, may indeed make an ill use  
 of this Observation : But Truths, which are  
 of Service towards regulating our Conduct,  
 are not to be disowned, or even concealed, be-  
 cause a bad Use may be made of them. This  
 however would be effectually prevented, if  
 these two Things were attended to. *First,*  
 That, though it is equally of bad Consequence  
 to Society, that Men should have either good  
 or ill Characters which they do not deserve ;  
 yet, when you say somewhat Good of a  
 Man which he does not deserve, there is  
 no Wrong done him in particular ; where-  
 as, when you say Evil of a Man which he  
 does not deserve, here is a direct formal In-  
 jury,



jury, a real Piece of Injustice done him. SERM.

This therefore makes a wide Difference; IV

and gives us, in Point of Virtue, much greater Latitude in speaking well than ill, of others.

*Secondly,* A good Man is friendly to his Fellow-creatures, and a Lover of Mankind, and so will, upon every Occasion, and often without any, say all the Good he can of every Body: But, so far as he is a good Man, will never be disposed to speak Evil of any, unless there be some other Reason for it, besides barely that it is true. If he be charged with having given an ill Character, he will scarce think it a sufficient Justification of himself to say it was a true one, unless he can also give some farther Account how he came to do so: A just Indignation against particular Instances of Villany, where they are great and scandalous; or to prevent an innocent Man from being deceived and betrayed, when he has great Trust and Confidence in one who does not deserve it. Justice must be done to every Part of a Subject, when we are considering it. If there be a Man, who bears a fair Character in the World, whom yet ye know to be without Faith or Honesty, to be really an ill Man; it must be allowed in general, that

we

SERM. we shall do a Piece of Service to Society,  
 IV. by letting such an one's true Character be  
 known. This is no more, than what we  
 have an Instance of in our Saviour himself;  
 \* though he was mild and gentle beyond Ex-  
 ample. However, no Words can express too  
 strongly the Caution which should be used  
 in such a Case as this.

UPON the whole Matter: If People  
 would observe the obvious Occasions of Si-  
 lence, if they would subdue the Inclination  
 to Tale-bearing, and that eager Desire to en-  
 gage Attention, which is an original Disease  
 in some Minds; they would be in little Dan-  
 ger of offending with their Tongue; and  
 would, in a moral and religious Sense, have  
 due Government over it.

I WILL conclude with some Precepts  
 and Reflections of the Son of *Sirach* upon  
 this Subject. *Be swift to hear: and, if thou  
 hast Understanding, answer thy Neighbour;  
 if not, lay thy Hand upon thy Mouth.  
 Honour and Shame is in Talk. A Man of  
 an ill Tongue is dangerous in his City, and  
 he that is rash in his Talk shall be hated.  
 A wise Man will hold his Tongue, till he  
 see Opportunity; but a Babler and a Fool  
 will*

*Government of the Tongue.* 79

*will regard no Time. He that useth many* SERM.  
*Words shall be abhorred; and he that taketh* IV.  
*to himself Authority therein, shall be hated.* ~~~~~

*A back-biting Tongue hath disquieted many;  
strong Cities hath it pulled down, and over-  
thrown the Houses of great Men. The Tongue  
of a Man is his Fall; but if thou love to hear,  
thou shalt receive Understanding.*

---

SERMON



---

---

# S E R M O N V.

## *Upon Compassion.*

---

R O M. xii. 15.

*Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep  
with them that weep.*

**E**VERY Man is to be considered in two Capacities, the Private and Publick; as designed to pursue his own Interest, and likewise to contribute to the Good of others. Whoever will consider, may see, that in general there is no Contrariety between these; but that from the original Constitution of Man, and the Circumstances he is placed in, they perfectly coincide, and mutually carry on each other. But, amongst the great Variety of Affections or Principles of Action in our Nature, some in their primary Intention and Design seem to belong to the single or private,

G

SERM.  
V.  
~

SERM. vate, others to the publick or social Capacity. The Affections required in the Text  
 V. are of the latter Sort. When we rejoyce  
 ~~~~~ in the Prosperity of others, and compassionate their Distresses, we, as it were, substitute them for ourselves, their Interest for our own; and have the same Kind of Pleasure in their Prosperity and Sorrow in their Distress, as we have from Reflection upon our own. Now there is nothing strange or unaccountable in our being thus carried out, and affected towards the Interests of others. For, if there be any Appetite, or any inward Principle besides Self-love; why may there not be an Affection to the Good of our Fellow-Creatures, and Delight from that Affection's being gratified, and Uneasiness from Things going contrary to it? \*

O F

* There being manifestly this Appearance of Men's substituting Others for Themselves, and being carried out and affected towards them as towards themselves; some Persons, who have a System which excludes every Affection to this Sort, have taken a pleasant Method to solve it; and tell you it is *not another* you are at all concerned about, but your *self only*, when you feel the Affection called Compassion, *i. e.* Here is a plain Matter of Fact, which Men cannot reconcile with the general Account they think fit to give of Things: They therefore, instead of *that* manifest Fact substitute *another*, which is reconcileable to their own Scheme. For does not every

upon Compassion.

83

OF these two, Delight in the Prosperity of others and Compassion for their Distresses,

SERM.

V.

G 2

the

every Body by Compassion mean, an Affection the Object of which is Another in Distress? Instead of this, but designing to have it mistaken for this, they speak of an Affection or Passion, the Object of which is Ourselves, or Danger to ourselves. *Hobbs* defines *Pity*. *Imagination, or Fiction of future Calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the Sense (he means Sight or Knowledge) of another Man's Calamity.* Thus Fear and Compassion would be the same Idea, and a fearful and a compassionate Man the same Character, which every one immediately sees are totally different. Further, to those who give any Scope to their Affections, there is no Perception or inward Feeling more universal than this: that one who has been merciful and compassionate throughout the Course of his Behaviour, should himself be treated with Kindness, if he happens to fall into Circumstances of Distress. Is Fear then or Cowardice so great a Recommendation to the Favour of the Bulk of Mankind? Or is it not plain, that meer Fearlessness (and therefore not the contrary) is one of the most popular Qualifications? This shews that Mankind are not affected towards Compassion as Fear, but as somewhat totally different.

Nothing would more expose such Accounts as these of the Affections which are favourable and friendly to our Fellow Creatures, than to substitute the Definitions which this Author, and others who follow his Steps, give of such Affections, instead of the Words by which they are commonly expressed. *Hobbs*, after having laid down that *Pity* or *Compassion* is only Fear for ourselves, goes on to explain the Reason why we pity our Friends in Distress more than others. Now substitute the *Definition* instead of the Word *Pity* in this Place, and the Inquiry will be, why we fear our Friends, &c. which Words (since he really does not mean why we are afraid of them) make no Question or Sentence at all. So that common Language, the Words *to Compassionate, to Pity*, cannot be accommodated to his Account of *Compassion*. The very joining

SERM. the last is felt much more generally than
 V. the former. Though Men do not univer-
 ~~~~~ fally

ing of the Words to *pity our Friends*, is a direct Contradiction to his Definition of Pity: Because those Words so joined, necessarily express that our Friends are the Objects of the Passion; whereas his Definition of it asserts, that Ourselves (or Danger to ourselves) are the only Objects of it. He might indeed have avoided this Absurdity, by plainly saying what he is going to account for; namely, why the Sight of the Innocent, or of our Friends in Distress, raises greater Fear for ourselves than the Sight of other Persons in Distress. But had he put the Thing thus plainly, the Fact itself would have been doubted; that *the Sight of our Friends in Distress raises in us greater Fear for ourselves, than the Sight of others in Distress*. And in the next Place it would immediately have occurred to every one, that the Fact now mentioned, which at least is *doubtful*, whether true or false, was not the same with this Fact, which no-body ever doubted, that *the Sight of our Friends in Distress raises in us greater Compassion than the Sight of Others in Distress*; Every one, I say, would have seen that these are not the *same*, but *two different* Inquiries; and consequently, that Fear and Compassion are not the same. Suppose a Person to be in real Danger, and by some Means or other to have forgot it; any trifling Accident, any Sound might alarm him, recall the Danger to his Remembrance, and renew his Fear: But it is almost too grossly ridiculous (though it is to show an Absurdity) to speak of that Sound or Accident as an Object of Compassion; and yet according to Mr. *Hobbs*, our greatest Friend in Distress is no more to us, no more the Object of Compassion or of any Affection in our Heart: Neither the one or the other raises any Emotion in our Mind, but only the Thoughts of our Liableness to Calamity, and the Fear of it; and both equally do this. It is fit such sort of Accounts of Humane Nature should be shown to be what they really are, because there is raised upon them a general Scheme which  
 undermines





fally rejoyce with all whom they see re-joyce, yet, accidental Obstacles removed, they naturally compassionate all in some undermines the whole Foundation of common Justice and Honesty. See *Hobbs of Hum Nat.* c. 9. §. 10.

There are often three distinct Perceptions or inward Feelings upon Sight of Persons in Distress: Real Sorrow and Concern for the Misery of our Fellow-creatures; some Degree of Satisfaction from a Consciousness of our Freedom from that Misery; and, as the Mind passes on from one thing to another, it is not unnatural from such an Occasion to reflect upon our own Liableness to the same or other Calamities. The two last frequently accompany the first, but it is the first *only* which is properly Compassion, of which the Distressed are the Objects, and which directly carries us with Calmness and Thought to their Assistance. Any one of these, from various and complicated Reasons, may in particular Cases prevail over the other two; and there are, I suppose, Instances where the bare *Sight* of Distress, without our feeling any Compassion for it, may be the Occasion of either or both of the two latter Perceptions. One might add, that if there be really any such thing as the Fiction or Imagination of Danger to ourselves from Sight of the Miseries of others, which *Hobbs* speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of Compassion; if there be any thing of this Sort common to Mankind, distinct from the Reflection of Reason, it would be a most remarkable Instance of what was furthest from his Thoughts, namely, of a mutual Sympathy between each Particular of the Species, a Fellow-feeling common to Mankind. It would not indeed be an Example of our substituting others for Ourselves, but it would be an Example of our substituting Ourselves for Others. And as it would not be an Instance of Benevolence, so neither would it be any Instance of Self-love: For this Phantom of Danger to Ourselves, naturally rising to View upon Sight of the Distresses of Others, would be no more an Instance of Love to Ourselves, than the Pain of Hunger is.

SERM. Degree whom they see in Distress: so far as  
 V. they have any real Perception or Sense  
 of that Distress: Infomuch that Words expressing this latter, Pity, Compassion, frequently occur, whereas we have scarce any single one, by which the former is distinctly express'd. Congratulation indeed answers Condolance: But both these Words are intended to signify certain Forms of Civility, rather than any inward Sensation or Feeling. This Difference or Inequality is so remarkable, that we plainly consider Compassion as itself an original, distinct, particular Affection in Humane Nature; whereas to rejoyce in the Good of others, is only a Consequence of the general Affection of Love and Good-will to them. The Reason and Account of which Matter is this: When a Man has obtained any particular Advantage or Felicity, his End is gained; and he does not in that particular want the Assistance of another: There was therefore no need of a distinct Affection towards that Felicity of another already obtained; neither would such Affection directly carry him to do Good to that Person: Whereas Men in Distress want Assistance; and Compassion leads us directly to assist them.

them. The Object of the former is the present Felicity of another; the Object of the latter is the present Misery of another: It is easy to see that the latter wants a particular Affection for its Relief, and that the former does not want one, because it does not want Assistance. And upon Supposition of a distinct Affection in both Cases, the one must rest in the Exercise of itself, having nothing further to gain; the other does not rest in itself, but carries us on to assist the Distressed.

BUT, supposing these Affections natural to the Mind, particularly the last; “ Has not  
“ each Man Troubles enough of his own?  
“ must he indulge an Affection which appropriates to himself those of others? which  
“ leads him to contract the least desirable of  
“ all Friendships, Friendships with the Unfortunate? Must we invert the known  
“ Rule of Prudence, and choose to associate ourselves with the Distressed? Or allowing that we ought, so far as it is in our  
“ Power to relieve them, yet it is not better to do this from Reason and Duty? Does  
“ not Passion and Affection of every Kind  
“ perpetually mislead us? Nay, is not Passion and Affection itself a Weakness, and



SERM. “ what a perfect Being must be entirely free  
 V. “ from ?” Perhaps so : But it is Mankind I  
 am speaking of ; imperfect Creatures, and  
 who naturally, and from the Condition we  
 are placed in, necessarily depend upon each  
 other. With respect to such Creatures, it  
 would be found of as bad Consequence to  
 eradicate all natural Affections, as to be in-  
 tirely governed by them. This would al-  
 most sink us to the Condition of Brutes ;  
 and That would leave us without a suffici-  
 ent Principle of Action. Reason alone,  
 whatever any one may wish, is not in Rea-  
 lity a sufficient Motive of Virtue in such a  
 Creature as Man ; but this Reason joined  
 with those Affections which God has im-  
 press’d upon his Heart : And when These are  
 allowed Scope to exercise themselves, but  
 under strict Government and Direction of  
 Reason ; then it is we act suitably to our  
 Nature, and to the Circumstances God  
 has placed us in. Neither is Affection it-  
 self at all a Weakness ; nor does it argue  
 Defect, any otherwise than as our Senses  
 and Appetites do ; They belong to our Con-  
 dition of Nature, and are what we can-  
 not be without. God Almighty is, to be  
 sure, unmoved by Passion or Appetite, un-  
 changed

changed by Affection: But then it is to be added, that he neither sees, nor hears, nor perceives Things by any Senses like ours ; but in a Manner infinitely more perfect. Now, as it is an Absurdity almost too gross to be mentioned, for a Man to endeavour to get rid of his Senses, because the supreme Being discerns Things more perfectly without them; it is as real, though not so obvious an Absurdity, to endeavour to eradicate the Passions he has given us, because He is without them. For, since our Passions are as really a Part of our Constitution as our Senses; since the former as really belong to our Condition of Nature as the latter; to get rid of either, is equally a Violation of and breaking in upon that Nature and Constitution he has given us. Both our Senses and our Passions are a Supply to the Imperfection of our Nature: Thus they shew that we are such sort of Creatures, as to stand in need of those Helps which higher Orders of Creatures do not. But it is not the Supply, but the Deficiency; as it is not a Remedy, but a Disease which is the Imperfection. However, our Appetites, Passions, Senses, no way imply Disease: nor indeed do they imply Deficiency or Imperfection

SERM.

V.



SERM. fection of any sort; but only This, that the

V. Constitution of Nature according to which

God has made us, is such as to require them. And it is so far from being true, that a wise Man must entirely suppress Compassion, and all Fellow-feeling for others, as a Weakness; and trust to Reason alone, to teach and enforce upon him the Practice of the several Charities we owe to our Kind; that on the contrary, even the bare Exercise of such Affections would itself be for the Good and Happiness of the World; and the Imperfection of the higher Principles of Reason and Religion in Man, the little Influence they have upon our Practice, and the Strength and Prevalency of contrary ones plainly require these Affections to be a Restraint upon these latter, and a Supply to the Deficiencies of the former.

*First*, T H E very exercise itself of these Affections in a just and reasonable Manner and Degree, would upon the whole increase the Satisfaction, and lessen the Miseries of Life.

I T is the Tendency and Business of Virtue and Religion to procure, as much as may be universal Good-will, Trust and Friendship amongst Mankind. If this could be brought to obtain; and each Man enjoyed

*upon Compassion.*

91

SERM.  
V.


joyed the Happiness of others, as every one does that of a Friend; and looked upon the Success and Prosperity of his Neighbour, as every one does upon that of his Children and Family; it is too manifest to be insisted upon, how much the Enjoyments of Life would be increased. There would be so much Happiness introduced into the World, without any Deduction or Inconvenience from it, in Proportion as the Precept of *rejoycing with those who rejoyce* was universally obeyed. Our Saviour has owned this good Affection as belonging to our Nature, in the Parable of the *lost Sheep*; and does not think it to the Disadvantage of a perfect State, to represent its Happiness as capable of Increase, from Reflection upon that of others.

BUT since in such a Creature as Man, Compassion or Sorrow for the Distress of others, seems so far necessarily connected with Joy in their Prosperity, as that whoever rejoyces in one must unavoidably compassionate the other; there cannot be that Delight or Satisfaction, which appears to be so considerable, without the Inconveniencies, whatever they are, of Compassion.

H O W E V E R,

SERM. HOWEVER, without considering this

V. Connection, there is no doubt but that more  
 ~~~~~ Good than Evil, more Delight than Sorrow,  
 arises from Compassion itself; there being
 so many Things which ballance the Sor-
 row of it. There is first the Relief which
 the Distressed feel from this Affection in
 others towards them. There is likewise the
 additional Misery which they would feel
 from the Reflection that no one commi-
 serated their Case. It is indeed true, that
 any Disposition, prevailing beyond a certain
 Degree, becomes somewhat wrong; and
 we have ways of speaking, which though
 they do not directly express that Excess,
 yet, always lead our Thoughts to it, and
 give us the Notion of it. Thus, when Men-
 tion is made of Delight in being pitied,
 this always conveys to our Mind the Notion
 of somewhat which is really a Weakness:
 The Manner of speaking, I say, im-
 plies a certain Weakness and Feebleness of
 Mind, which is and ought to be disap-
 proved. But Men of the greatest Forti-
 tude would in Distress feel Uneasiness, from
 knowing that no Person in the World had
 any sort of Compassion or real Concern
 for them; and in some Cases, especially
 when

when the Temper is enfeebled by Sickneſs SERM.
or any long and great Diſtreſs, doubtleſs, V.
would feel a kind of Relief even from the 

helpleſs Good-will and ineffectual Aſſiſtances of thoſe about them. Over againſt the Sorrow of Compaſſion is likewiſe to be ſet a peculiar calm Kind of Satisfaction, which accompanies it, unleſs in Caſes where the Diſtreſs of another is by ſome Means ſo brought home to ourſelves, as to become in a Manner our own; or when from Weakneſs of Mind the Affection riſes too high, which ought to be corrected. This Tranquility or calm Satisfaction proceeds, partly from Conſciouſneſs of a right Affection and Temper of Mind, and partly from a Senſe of our own Freedom from the Miſery we compaſſionate. This laſt may poſſibly appear to ſome at firſt ſight faulty; but it really is not ſo. It is the ſame with that poſitive Enjoyment, which ſudden Eaſe from Pain for the preſent affords, ariſing from a real Senſe of Miſery, joined with a Senſe of our Freedom from it; which in all Caſes muſt afford ſome Degree of Satisfaction.

To theſe Things muſt be added the Obſervation, which reſpects both the Affections we are conſidering; that they who have
got

SERM. got over all Fellow-feeling for Others, have
 V. withal contracted a certain Callousness of
 ~ Heart, which renders them insensible to most
 other Satisfactions, but those of the grossest
 kind.

Secondly, W I T H O U T the Exercise of
 these Affections, Men would certainly be
 much more wanting in the Offices of Charity
 they owe to each other, and likewise more
 cruel and injurious, than they are at present.

T H E private Interest of the Individual
 would not be sufficiently provided for by
 reasonable and cool Self-Love alone: There-
 fore the Appetites and Passions are placed
 within as a Guard and further Security,
 without which it would not be taken due
 Care of. It is manifest our Life would be
 neglected, were it not for the Calls of
 Hunger and Thirst, and Weariness; not-
 withstanding that without them Reason
 would assure us, that the Recruits of Food
 and Sleep are the necessary Means of our
 Preservation. It is therefore absurd to ima-
 gine, that, without Affection, the same Rea-
 son alone would be more effectual to engage
 us to perform the Duties we owe to our
 Fellow-Creatures. One of this Make would
 be as defective, as much wanting, considered
 with



with respect to Society; as one of the former Make would be defective, or wanting, considered as an Individual, or in his private Capacity. Is it possible any can in earnest think, that a Public Spirit, *i. e.* a settled reasonable Principle of Benevolence to Mankind, is so prevalent and strong in the Species, as that we may venture to throw off the under Affections, which are its Assistants, carry it forward and mark out particular Courses for it; Family, Friends, Neighbourhood, the Distressed, our Country? The common Joys and the common Sorrows, which belong to these Relations and Circumstances, are as plainly useful to Society; as the Pain and Pleasure belonging to Hunger, Thirst, and Weariness are of Service to the Individual. In Defect of that higher Principle of Reason, Compassion is often the only Way by which the Indigent can have Access to us: And therefore to eradicate this, though it is not indeed formally to deny them that Assistance which is their Due; yet it is to cut them off from that which is too frequently their only way of obtaining it. And as for those who have shut up this Door against the Complaints of the Miserable, and conquered this Affection
in

SERM. in themselves; even these Persons will be
 V. under great Restraints from the same Affection in Others. Thus a Man who has himself no Sense of Injustice, Cruelty, Oppression, will be kept from running the utmost Lengths of Wickedness, by fear of that Detestation, and even Resentment of Inhumanity, in many particular Instances of it, which Compassion for the Object, towards whom such Inhumanity is exercised, excites in the Bulk of Mankind. And this is frequently the chief Danger, and the chief Restraint, which Tyrants and the great Oppressors of the World feel.

IN general, Experience will shew, that as want of natural Appetite to Food supposes and proceeds from some bodily Disease; so the Apathy the Stoicks talk of, as much supposes, or is accompanied with somewhat amiss in the Moral Character, in that which is the Health of the Mind. Those who formerly aimed at this upon the Foot of Philosophy, appear to have had better Success in eradicating the Affections of Tenderness and Compassion, than they had with the Passions of Envy, Pride, and Resentment: These latter, at best, were but concealed,
 and

and that imperfectly too. How far this Observation may be extended to such as endeavour to suppress the natural Impulses of their Affections, in order to form themselves for Business and the World, I shall not determine. But there does not appear any Capacity or Relation to be named, in which Men ought to be entirely deaf to the Calls of Affection, unless the judicial one is to be excepted.

AND as to those who are commonly called the Men of Pleasure, it is manifest that the Reason they set up for Hardness of Heart, is to avoid being interrupted in their Course, by the Ruin and Misery they are the Authors of: Neither are Persons of this Character always the most free from the Impotencies of Envy and Resentment. What may Men at last bring themselves to, by suppressing their Passions and Affections of one Kind, and leaving those of the other in their full Strength? But surely it might be expected that Persons who make Pleasure their Study and their Business, if they understood what they profess, would reflect, how many of the Entertainments of Life, how many of those Kind of Amusements which seem peculiarly to belong to Men of Leisure and
H Education,

SERM.
VI.



SERM. Education, they become insensible to by this
V. acquired Hardness of Heart.



I SHALL close these Reflections with barely mentioning the Behaviour of that Divine Person, who was the Example of all Perfection in Human Nature, as represented in the Gospels mourning, and even, in a literal Sense, weeping over the Distresses of his Creatures.

THE Observation already made, that, of the two Affections mentioned in the Text, the latter exerts itself much more than the former; that, from the Original Constitution of Humane Nature we much more generally and sensibly compassionate the Distressed, than rejoice with the Prosperous, requires to be particularly considered. This Observation therefore, with the Reflections which arise out of it, and which it leads our Thoughts to, shall be the Subject of another Discourse.

FOR the Conclusion of this, let me just take Notice of the Danger of over-great Refinements; of going besides or beyond the plain, obvious, first Appearances of Things, upon the Subject of Morals and Religion. The least Observation will show, how little the Generality of Men are capable
of

of Speculations. Therefore Morality and Religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood: It must appeal to what we call plain common Sense, as distinguished from superior Capacity and Improvement; because it appeals to Mankind. Persons of superiour Capacity and Improvement have often fallen into Errors, which no one of meer common Understanding could. Is it possible that one of this latter Character could ever of himself have thought, that there was absolutely no such Thing in Mankind as Affection to the Good of others? suppose of Parents to their Children; or that what he felt upon seeing a Friend in Distress, was only Fear for himself; or, upon Supposition of the Affections of Kindness and Compassion, that it was the Business of Wisdom and Virtue, to set him about extirpating them as fast as he could? And yet each of these manifest Contradictions to Nature has been laid down by Men of Speculation, as a Discovery in moral Philosophy; which they, it seems, have found out through all the specious Appearances to the contrary. This Reflection may be extended further. The Extravagancies of Enthusiasm and Supersti-

SERM.
V.

SERM. tion do not at all lie in the Road of common
 V. Sense; and therefore so far as they are
 ~~~~~ *original Mistakes*, must be owing to going  
 beside or beyond it. Now, since Inquiry and  
 Examination can relate only to Things so  
 obscure and uncertain as to stand in need of  
 it, and to Persons who are capable of it; the  
 proper Advice to be given to plain honest  
 Men, to secure them from the Extremes  
 both of Superstition and Irreligion, is that of  
 the Son of *Sirach*: *In every good Work trust*  
*thy own Soul; for this is the keeping of the*  
*Commandment.* \*.

Ecclus. xxxii. 23.



---

---

# S E R M O N VI.

## *Upon Compassion.*

Preached the first Sunday in *Lent*.

---

R O M. xii. 15.

*Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep  
with them that weep.*

**T**H E R E is a much more exact Cor-  
respondence between the natural  
and moral World, than we are  
apt to take Notice of. The inward Frame  
of Man does in a peculiar Manner answer  
to the external Condition and Circumstances  
of Life, in which he is placed. This is a  
particular Instance of that general Observa-  
tion of the Son of *Sirach*: \* *All Things  
are double one against another, and God  
hath made nothing imperfect.* The several  
Passions and Affections in the Heart of

SERM.  
VI.  
~

H 3

Man,

\* *Ecclus. xlii. 24.*

SERM. Man, compared with the Circumstances of  
 VI. Life in which he is placed, afford to such  
 as will attend to them, as certain Instances  
 of final Causes, as any whatever which are  
 more commonly alledged for such: since  
 those Affections lead him to a certain deter-  
 minate Course of Action suitable to those  
 Circumstances; as (for Instance) Compas-  
 sion, to relieve the Distress'd. And as all Ob-  
 servations of final Causes, drawn from the  
 Principles of Action in the Heart of Man,  
 compared with the Condition he is placed  
 in, serve all the good Uses which Instances  
 of final Causes in the material World about  
 us do; and both these are equally Proofs of  
 Wisdom and Design in the Author of Na-  
 ture: So the former serve to further good  
 Purposes; they shew us what Course of Life  
 we are made for, what is our Duty, and in  
 a peculiar Manner enforce upon us the Prac-  
 tice of it.

S U P P O S E we are capable of Happiness  
 and of Misery in Degrees equally intense  
 and extreme, yet, we are capable of the latter  
 for a much longer Time beyond all Com-  
 parison. We see Men in the Tortures  
 of Pain for Hours, Days, and, excepting  
 the short Suspensions of Sleep, for Months  
 together



together without Intermiffion; to which no Enjoyments of Life do, in Degree and Continuance, bear any fort of Proportion. And fuch is our Make and that of the World about us, that any thing may become the Inftrument of Pain and Sorrow to us. Thus almoft any one Man is capable of doing Mifchief to any other, though he may not be capable of doing him Good: And if he be capable of doing him fome Good, he is capable of doing him more Evil. And it is, in numberlefs Cafes, much more in our Power to leffen the Miferies of others, than to promote their positive Happinefs, any otherwife than as the former often includes the latter; Eafe from Mifery occafioning for fome time the greateft positive Enjoyment. This Conftitution of Nature, namely, that it is fo much more in our Power to occafion and likewise to leffen Mifery, than to promote positive Happinefs, plainly required a particular Affection, to hinder us from abufing, and to incline us to make a right ufe of the former Powers, *i. e.* the Powers both to occafion and to leffen Mifery; over and above what was neceffary to induce us to make a right Ufe of the latter Power, that of promoting positive

H 4                      Happinefs.

SERM. Happiness. The Power we have over the  
 VI. Misery of our Fellow-creatures, to occa-  
 sion or lessen it, being a more important  
 Trust, than the Power we have of promoting  
 their positive Happiness; the former requires  
 and has a further, an additional Security and  
 Guard against its being violated, beyond  
 and over and above what the latter has.  
 The social Nature of Man, and general  
 Good-will to his Species, equally prevent  
 him from doing Evil, incline him to relieve  
 the Distressed, and to promote the positive  
 Happiness of his Fellow-creatures: But Com-  
 passion only restrains from the first, and  
 carries him to the second; it hath nothing to  
 do with the third.

THE final Causes then of Compassion are  
 to prevent and to relieve Misery.

AS to the former: This Affection may  
 plainly be a Restraint upon Resentment,  
 Envy, unreasonable Self-love; that is, upon  
 all the Principles from which Men do Evil to  
 one another. Let us instance only in Re-  
 sentment. It seldom happens, in regulated  
 Societies, that Men have an Enemy so in-  
 tirely in their Power, as to be able to sati-  
 ate their Resentment with Safety. But if  
 we were to put this Case, it is plainly sup-  
 poseable,

posable, that a Person might bring his Enemy into such a Condition, as from being the Object of Anger and Rage, to become an Object of Compassion, even to himself, though the most malicious Man in the World: And in this Case Compassion would stop him, if he could stop with Safety, from pursuing his Revenge any farther. But since Nature has placed within us more powerful Restraints to prevent Mischief, and since the final Cause of Compassion is much more to relieve Misery, let us go on to the Consideration of it in this View.

As this World was not intended to be a State of any great Satisfaction or high Enjoyment; so neither was it intended to be a meer Scene of Unhappiness and Sorrow. Mitigations and Reliefs are provided by the merciful Author of Nature, for most of the Afflictions in Humane Life. There is kind Provision made even against our Frailties; as we are so constituted that Time abundantly abates our Sorrows, and begets in us that Resignment of Temper, which ought to have been produced by a better Cause; a due Sense of the Authority of God, and our State of Dependance. This holds in  
respect

SERM.  
VI.



SERM. respect to far the greatest Part of the Evils of  
 VI. Life; I suppose, in some Degree, as to Pain  
 ~~~~~ and Sickness. Now this Part of the Con-  
 stitution or Make of Man, considered as
 some Relief to Misery, and not as Provision
 for positive Happiness, is, if I may so speak,
 an Instance of Nature's Compassion for us;
 and every natural Remedy or Relief to Mi-
 sery, may be considered in the same View.

BUT since, in many Cases, it is very much
 in our Power to alleviate the Miseries of
 each other; and Benevolence, though nat-
 ural in Man to Man, yet is in a very low
 Degree, kept down by Interest and Com-
 petitions; and Men, for the most Part, are so
 engaged in the Business and Pleasures of the
 World, as to overlook and turn away from
 Objects of Misery; which are plainly con-
 sidered as Interruptions to them in their
 Way, as Intruders upon their Business,
 their Gaiety and Mirth: Compassion is an
 Advocate within us in their Behalf, to gain
 the Unhappy Admittance and Access, to
 make their Case attended to. If it sometimes
 serves a contrary Purpose, and makes Men
 industriously turn away from the mi-
 serable, these are only Instances of Abuse
 and Perversion: For the End, for which the
 Affection

Affection was given us, most certainly is not to make us avoid, but to make us attend to the Objects of it. And if Men would only resolve to allow thus much to it; let it bring before their View, the View of their Mind, the Miseries of their Fellow-creatures; let it gain for them that their Case be considered; I am persuaded it would not fail of gaining more, and that very few real Objects of Charity would pass unrelieved. Pain and Sorrow and Misery have a right to our Assistance: Compassion puts us in Mind of the Debt, and that we owe it to ourselves, as well as to the Distressed. For, to endeavour to get rid of the Sorrow of Compassion by turning from the Wretched, when yet it is in our Power to relieve them, is as unnatural, as to endeavour to get rid of the Pain of Hunger by keeping from the Sight of Food. That we can do one with greater Success than we can the other, is no Proof that one is less a Violation of Nature than the other. Compassion is a Call, a Demand of Nature, to relieve the Unhappy; as Hunger is a natural Call for Food. This Affection plainly gives the Objects of it an additional Claim to Relief and Mercy, over and above what
our

SERM. our Fellow-creatures in common have to
 VI. our Good-will. Liberality and Bounty are
 exceedinglly commendable; and a particular
 Distinction in such a World as this, where
 Men set themselves to contract their Heart,
 and close it to all Interests but their own.
 It is by no Means to be opposed to Mercy,
 but always accompanies it: The Distinction
 between them is only, that the former leads
 our Thoughts to a more promiscuous and un-
 distinguished Distribution of Favours; to
 those who are not, as well as those who are
 necessitous; whereas the Object of Com-
 passion is Misery. But in the Comparison,
 and where there is not a Possibility of both,
 Mercy is to have the Preference: The Affec-
 tion of Compassion manifestly leads us to this
 Preference. Thus, to relieve the Indigent
 and Distressed, to single out the Unhappy,
 from whom can be expected no Returns
 either of present Entertainment or future Ser-
 vice, for the Objects of our Favours; to
 esteem a Man's being friendless as a Recom-
 mendation; Dejection, and Incapacity of
 struggling through the World, as a Motive
 for assisting him; in a word, to consider
 these Circumstances of Disadvantage, which
 are usually thought a sufficient Reason for
 Neglect

Neglect and overlooking a Person, as a Motive for helping him forward: This is the Course of Benevolencé which Compassion marks out and directs us to: This is that Humanity, which is so peculiarly becoming our Nature and Circumstances in this World.

SERM.
VI.

To these Considerations, drawn from the Nature of Man, must be added the Reason of the Thing itself we are recommending, which accords to and shews the same. For, since it is so much more in our Power to lessen the Misery of our Fellow-creatures, than to promote their positive Happiness; in Cases where there is an Inconsistency, we shall be likely to do much more Good by setting ourselves to mitigate the former, than by endeavouring to promote the latter. Let the Competition be between the Poor and the Rich. It is easy, you will say, to see which will have the Preference. True: But the Question is, which ought to have the Preference? What Proportion is there, between the Happiness produced by doing a Favour to the Indigent, and that produced by doing the same Favour to one in easy Circumstances? It is manifest, that the Addition of a very large Estate to one who before had an Affluence, will in many Instances

SERM. stances yield him less new Enjoyment or Satisfaction, than an ordinary Charity would yield to a necessitous Person. So that it is not only true, that our Nature, *i. e.* the Voice of God within us, carries us to the Exercise of Charity and Benevolence in the Way of Compassion or Mercy, preferably to any other Way; but we also manifestly discern much more Good done by the former; or, if you will allow me the Expressions, more Misery annihilated, and Happiness created. If Charity and Benevolence, and endeavouring to do Good to our Fellow-creatures, be any thing, this Observation deserves to be most seriously considered by all who have to bestow. And it holds with great Exactness, when applied to the several Degrees of greater and less Indigency throughout the various Ranks in Humane Life: The Happiness or Good produced not being in Proportion to what is bestowed, but in Proportion to this joined with the Need there was of it.

IT may perhaps be expected, that upon this Subject, Notice should be taken of Occasions, Circumstances and Characters, which seem at once to call forth Affections of different Sorts. Thus Vice may be thought

upon Compassion.

III

thought the Object both of Pity and Indignation: Folly, of Pity and of Laughter. How far this is strictly true, I shall not inquire; but only observe upon the Appearance, how much more humane it is to yield and give Scope to Affections, which are more directly in Favour of, and friendly towards our Fellow-creatures; and that there is plainly much less Danger of being led wrong by these, than by the other.

SERM.
VI.



BUT, notwithstanding all that has been said in Recommendation of Compassion, that it is most amiable, most becoming Humane Nature, and most useful to the World; yet it must be owned, that every Affection, as distinct from a Principle of Reason, may rise too high, and be beyond its just Proportion. And by means of this one carried too far, a Man throughout his Life is subject to much more Uneasiness than belongs to his Share: And in particular Instances, it may be in such a Degree, as to incapacitate him from assisting the very Person who is the Object of it. But, as there are some who upon Principle set up for suppressing this Affection itself as Weakness, there is also I know not what of Fashion on this Side; and, by some Means or other, the whole World almost

SERM. most is run into the Extremes of Insensibility
 VI. towards the Distresses of their Fellow-crea-
 tures: So that general Rules and Exhorta-
 tions must always be on the other Side.

AND now to go on to the Uses we should make of the foregoing Reflections, the further one they lead to, and the general Temper they have a Tendency to beget in us. There being that distinct Affection implanted in the Nature of Man, tending to lessen the Miseries of Life, that particular Provision made for abating its Sorrows, more than for increasing its positive Happiness, as before explained; this may suggest to us, what should be our general Aim respecting ourselves, in our Passage through this World: Namely, to endeavour chiefly to escape Misery, keep free from Uneasiness, Pain and Sorrow, or to get Relief and Mitigation of them; to propose to ourselves Peace and Tranquility of Mind, rather than pursue after high Enjoyments. This is what the Constitution of Nature before explained, marks out as the Course we should follow, and the End we should aim at. To make Pleasure and Mirth and Jollity our Business, and be constantly hurrying about after some gay Amusement, some
 new

new Gratification of Sense or Appetite, to those who will consider the Nature of Man and our Condition in this World, will appear the most romantick Scheme of Life that ever entered into Thought. And yet how many are there who go on in this Course, without learning better from the daily, the hourly Disappointments, Listlessness, and Satiety, which accompany this fashionable Method of wasting away their Days?

THE Subject we have been insisting upon would lead us into the same kind of Reflections, by a different Connection. The Miseries of Life brought home to ourselves by Compassion, viewed through this Affection considered as the Sense by which they are perceived, would beget in us that Moderation Humility, and Soberness of Mind, which has been now recommended; and which peculiarly belongs to a Season of Recollection, the only Purpose of which is to bring us to a just Sense of Things, to recover us out of that Forgetfulness of ourselves, and our true State, which it is manifest far the greatest Part of Men pass their whole Life in. Upon this Account *Solomon* says, that *it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of*

I *feasting.*

SERM. *feasting, i. e.* It is more to a Man's Advantage to turn his Eyes towards Objects of Distress, to recall sometimes to his Remembrance the Occasions of Sorrow, than to pass all his Days in thoughtless Mirth and Gaiety. And he represents the wise as choosing to frequent the former of these Places; to be sure not for its own Sake, but because *by the sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better..* Every one observes, how temperate and reasonable Men are when humbled and brought low by Afflictions, in comparison of what they are in high Prosperity. By this voluntary Resort to the House of Mourning, which is here recommended, we might learn all those useful Instructions which Calamities teach, without undergoing them ourselves; and grow wiser and better at a more easy Rate than Men commonly do. The Objects themselves, which in that Place of Sorrow lie before our View, naturally give us a Seriousness and Attention, check that Wantonness which is the Growth of Prosperity and Ease, and lead us to reflect upon the Deficiencies of Humane Life itself; that *every Man, at his best Estate, is altogether Vanity.* This would correct the florid and gaudy Prospects and

and Expectations which we are too apt to indulge, teach us to lower our Notions of Happiness and Enjoyment, bring them down to the Reality of things, to what is attainable, to what the Frailty of our Condition will admit of, which, for any Continuance, is only Tranquillity, Ease, and moderate Satisfaction. Thus we might at once become Proof against the Temptations, with which the whole World almost is carried away; since it is plain, that not only what is called a Life of Pleasure, but also vicious Pursuits in general, aim at somewhat besides and beyond these moderate Satisfaction.

AND as to that Obstinacy and Wilfulness, which renders Men so insensible to the Motives of Religion; this right Sense of ourselves and of the World about us would bend the stubborn Mind, soften the Heart, and make it more apt to receive Impression: And this is the proper Temper in which to call our Ways to Remembrance, to review and set home upon ourselves the Mis-carriages of our past Life. In such a compliant State of Mind, Reason and Conscience will have a fair Hearing; which is the Preparation for, or rather the Beginning of

SERM. that Repentance, the outward Show of which
VI. we all put on at this Season.



Lastly, THE various Miseries of Life which lie before us wherever we turn our Eyes, the Frailty of this mortal State we are passing through, may put us in Mind that the present World is not our Home; that we are meerly Strangers and Travellers in it, as all our Fathers were. It is therefore to be considered as a foreign Country; in which our Poverty and Wants, and the insufficient Supplies of them were designed to turn our Views to that higher and better State we are Heirs to: A State where will be no Follies to be overlooked, no Miseries to be pitied, no Wants to be relieved; where the Affection we have been now treating of, will happily be lost, as there will be no Objects to exercise it upon: For *God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying; neither shall there be any more Pain; for the former Things are passed away.*

S E R M O N VII.

Upon the Character of Balaam.

Preached the second Sunday after *Easter*.

N U M B. XXiii IO.

*Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and
let my last End be like his.*

TH E S E Words, taken alone, and SERM. VII.
without respect to him who spoke them, lead our Thoughts immediately to the different Ends of good and bad Men. For, though the Comparison is not express'd, yet it is manifestly implied; as is also the Preference of one of these Characters to the other in that last Circumstance, Death. And, since dying the Death of the Righteous or of the Wicked, necessarily implies Men's being righteous or
I 3 wicked,

SERM. wicked, *i. e.* having lived righteously or
 VII. wickedly; a Comparison of them in their
 Lives also might come into Consideration
 from such a single View of the Words them-
 selves. But my present Design is, to consi-
 der them with a particular Reference or Re-
 spect to him who spoke them; which Re-
 ference, if you please to attend, you will
 see. And if what shall be offered to your
 Consideration at this Time, be thought a
 Discourse upon the whole History of this
 Man, rather than upon the particular Words
 I have read, this is of no Consequence: It
 is sufficient, if it afford Reflection of Use
 and Service to ourselves.

BUT, in order to avoid Cavils respecting
 this remarkable Relation in Scripture, either
 that Part of it which you have heard in
 the first Lesson for the Day, or any other;
 let me just observe, that as this is not a Place
 for answering them, so they no way affect the
 following Discourse; since the Character
 there given is plainly a real one in Life, and
 such as there are Parallels to.

THE Occasion of *Balaam's* coming out
 of his own Country into the Land of *Moab*,
 where he pronounced this solemn Prayer
 or Wish, he himself relates in the first
 Parable

Character of Balaam.

119

Parable or prophetick Speech, of which it is the Conclusion. In which is a Custom referr'd to, proper to be taken Notice of: That of devoting Enemies to Destruction, before the Entrance upon a War with them. This Custom appears to have prevailed over a great Part of the World; for we find it amongst the most distant Nations. The *Romans* had publick Officers, to whom it belonged as a stated Part of their Office. But there was somewhat more particular in the Case now before us; *Balaam* being looked upon as an extraordinary Person, whose Blessing or Curse was thought to be always effectual.

SERM.
VII.



IN order to engage the Readers Attention to this Passage, the sacred Historian has enumerated the preparatory Circumstances, which are these. *Balaam* requires the King of *Moab* to build him seven Altars, and to prepare him the same Number of Oxen and of Rams. The Sacrifice being over, he retires alone to a Solitude sacred to these Occasions, there to wait the divine Inspiration or Answer, for which the foregoing Rites were the Preparation. * *And God met*

I 4

Balaam

* Ver. 4. 5.

SERM. *Balaam, and put a Word in his Mouth,* upon receiving which, he returns back to the Altars; where was the King, who had all this While attended the Sacrifice, as appointed; he and all the Princes of *Moab* standing, big with Expectation of the Prophet's Reply. * *And he took up his Parable and said, Balak the King of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the Mountains of the East, saying, come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the Rocks I see him, and from the Hills I behold him: Lo, the People shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the Nations. Who can count the Dust of Jacob, and the Number of the fourth Part of Israel? Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his.*

IT is necessary, as you will see in the Progress of this Discourse, particularly to observe what he understood by *Righteous*. And he himself is introduced in the Book of *Micah* † explaining it; if by *Righteous* is meant

* Ver. 6.

† Micah vi.

Character of Balaam.

121

meant Good, as to be sure it is. O my People, remember now what Balak King of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the Son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal. From the mention of Shittim it is manifest, that it is this very Story which is here referred to, though another Part of it, the Account of which is not now extant; as there are many Quotations in Scripture out of Books which are not come down to us. Remember what Balaam answered, that ye may know the Righteousness of the Lord, i. e. the Righteousness which God will accept. Balak demands, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my first-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? Balaam answers him, He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good: And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Here is a good Man expressly characterized, as distinct from a dishonest, and a superstitious

SERM:

VII.



122 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. tious Man. No Words can more strongly
 VII. exclude Dishonesty and Falseness of Heart,
 ~~~~~ than *doing Justice*, and *loving Mercy*: And  
 both these, as well as *walking humbly with  
 God*, are put in Opposition to those cere-  
 monial Methods of Recommendation, which  
*Balak* hoped might have served the Turn.  
 From hence appears what he meant by the  
*Righteous*, whose *Death* he desires to die.

W H E T H E R it was his own Character  
 shall now be enquired: And in order to de-  
 termine it, we must take a View of his whole  
 Behaviour upon this Occasion. When the  
 Elders of *Moab* came to him, though he  
 appears to have been much allured with  
 the Rewards offered, yet he had such Regard  
 to the Authority of God, as to keep the  
 Messengers in Suspense until he had con-  
 sulted his Will. *And God said to him* \*,  
*Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not  
 curse the People, for they are blessed.* Upon  
 this he dismisses the Ambassadors, with an  
 absolute refusal of accompanying them back  
 to their King. Thus far his Regards to his  
 Duty prevailed, neither does there any  
 thing appear as yet amiss in his Conduct.  
 His Answer being reported to the King  
 of

\* Chap. xxii. 12.

## Character of Balaam.

123

of *Moab*, a more honourable Embassy is immediately dispatched, and greater Rewards proposed. Then the Iniquity of his Heart began to disclose itself. A thorough honest Man would without Hesitation have repeated his former Answer, that he could not be guilty of so infamous a Prostitution of the sacred Character with which he was invested, as in the Name of a Prophet to curse those whom he knew to be blessed. But instead of this, which was the only honest Part in these Circumstances that lay before him, he desires the Princes of *Moab* to tarry that Night with him also; and for the Sake of the Reward deliberates, whether by some Means or other he might not be able to obtain Leave to curse *Israel*; to do that, which had been before revealed to him to be contrary to the Will of God, which yet he resolves not to do without that Permission. Upon which, as when this Nation afterwards rejected God from reigning over them, he gave them a King in his Anger; in the same Way, as appears from other Parts of the Narration, he gives *Balaam* the Permission he desired: For this is the most natural Sense of the Words. Arriving in the Territories of *Moab*, and being  
received

SERM.

VII.



124      A S E R M O N upon the


SERM. received with particular Distinction by the  
 VII. King, and He repeating in Person the Pro-  
 ~~~~~  
 mise of the Rewards he had before made
 to him by his Ambassadors: He seeks, the
 Text says, by *Sacrifices* and *Enchantments*,
 (what these were is not to our Purpose) to
 obtain Leave of God to curse the People ;
 keeping still his Resolution, not to do it
 without that Permission: Which not being
 able to obtain, he had such Regard to the
 Command of God, as to keep this Resolu-
 tion to the last. The Supposition of his be-
 ing under a supernatural Restraint is a meer
 Fiction of *Philo*: He is plainly represented
 to be under no other Force or Restraint, than
 the Fear of God. However, he goes on per-
 severing in that Endeavour, after he had de-
 clared, that *God had not beheld Iniquity in*
Jacob, neither had he seen Perverseness in
Israel * *i. e.* they were a People of Virtue
 and Piety, so far as not to have drawn down,
 by their Iniquity, that Curse which he was
 soliciting Leave to pronounce upon them.
 So that the State of *Balaam's* Mind was
 this: He wanted to do what he knew to be
 very wicked, and contrary to the express
 Command

* Ver. 21.

Command of God ; he had inward Checks and Restraints, which he could not intirely get over ; he therefore casts about for Ways to reconcile this Wickedness with his Duty. How great a Paradox soever this may appear, as it is indeed a Contradiction in Terms, it is the very Account which the Scripture gives us of him.

SERM.
VII.

BUT there is a more surprizing Piece of Iniquity yet behind. Not daring in his religious Character, as a Prophet, to assist the King of *Moab*, he considers whether there might not be found some other Means of assisting him against that very People, whom he himself by the Fear of God was restrained from cursing in Words. One would not think it possible, that the Weakness, even of religious Self-deceit in its utmost Excess, could have so poor a Distinction, so fond an Evasion, to serve itself of. But so it was : And he could think of no other Method, than to betray the Children of *Israel* to provoke his Wrath, who was their only Strength and Defence. The Temptation which he pitched upon, was that concerning which *Solomon* afterwards observed, that it had *cast down many wounded ; yea, many strong Men had been slain by it :*
And

SERM. VII.  And of which he himself was a sad Example, when *his Wives turned away his Heart after other Gods*. This succeeded: The People sin against God; and thus the Prophet's Counsel brought on that Destruction, which he could by no Means be prevailed upon to assist with the religious Ceremony of Execration, which the King of *Moab* thought would itself have effected it. Their Crime and Punishment are related in *Deuteronomy* *, and *Numbers* †. And from the Relation repeated in *Numbers* (a), it appears, that *Balaam* was the Contriver of the whole Matter. It is also ascribed to him in *the Revelation* (b), where he is said to have *taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the Children of Israel*.

THIS was the Man, this *Balaam*, I say, was the Man who desired to *die the Death of the Righteous*, and that his *last End might be like his*: And this was the State of his Mind, when he pronounced these Words.

So that the Object we have now before us is the most astonishing in the World: A very wicked Man, under a deep Sense of God

* Chap. iv. † Chap. xxv. (a) Chap. xxxi. (b) Chap. ii.

Character of Balaam.

127

SERM.

VII.



God and Religion, persisting still in his Wickedness, and preferring the Wages of Unrighteousness, even when he had before him a lively View of Death, and that approaching Period of his Days, which should deprive him of all those Advantages for which he was prostituting himself; and likewise a Prospect, whether certain or uncertain, of a future State of Retribution: All this joined with an explicit ardent Wish, that, when he was to leave this World, he might be in the Condition of a righteous Man. Good God, what Inconsistency, what Perplexity is here! With what different Views of Things, with what contradictory Principles of Action, must such a Mind be torn and distracted! It was not unthinking Carelessness, by which he run on headlong in Vice and Folly, without ever making a stand to ask himself what he was doing: No; he acted upon the cool Motives of Interest and Advantage. Neither was he totally hard and callous to Impressions of Religion, what we call abandoned; for he absolutely denied to curse *Israel*. When Reason assumes her Place, when convinced of his Duty, when he owns and feels, and is actually under the Influence of the divine Authority;

SERM. Authority; whilst he is carrying on his
 VII. Views to the Grave, the End of all temporal
 ~~~~~ Greatness; under this Sense of Things,  
 with the better Character and more desirable  
 State present——full before him—in his  
 Thoughts, in his Wishes, voluntarily to  
 choose the worse—What Fatality is here!  
 Or how otherwise can such a Character be  
 explained? And yet, strange as it may ap-  
 pear, it is not altogether an uncommon one:  
 Nay, with some small Alterations, and put  
 a little lower, it is applicable, to a very con-  
 siderable Part of the World. For, if the  
 reasonable Choice be seen and acknow-  
 ledged, and yet Men make the unreasonable  
 one, is not this the same Contradiction;  
 that very Inconsistency, which appeared so  
 unaccountable?

To give some little Opening to such Cha-  
 racters and Behaviour, it is to be observed  
 in general, that there is no Account to be  
 given in the Way of Reason, of Men's so  
 strong Attachments to the present World:  
 Our Hopes and Fears and Pursuits are in De-  
 grees beyond all Proportion to the known  
 Value of the Things they respect. This may  
 be said without taking into Consideration  
 Religion and a future State; and when these  
 are

## Character of Balaam.

I 29

SERM.  
VII.

are considered, the Disproportion is infinitely heightened. Now when Men go against their Reason, and contradict a more important Interest at a Distance, for one nearer, though of less Consideration; if this be the Whole of the Case, all that can be said is, that strong Passions, some kind of brute Force within, prevails over the Principle of Rationality. However, if this be with a clear, full and distinct View of the Truth of Things, then it is doing the utmost Violence to Themselves, acting in the most palpable Contradiction to their very Nature. But if there be any such Thing in Mankind, as putting Half-deceits upon themselves; which there plainly is, either by avoiding Reflection, or (if they do reflect) by religious Equivocation, Subterfuges, and palliating Matters to themselves; by these Means Conscience may be laid asleep, and they may go on in a Course of Wickedness with less Disturbance. All the various Turns, Doubles, and Intricacies in a dishonest Heart, cannot be unfolded or laid open; but that there is somewhat of that Kind is manifest, be it to be called Self-deceit, or by any other Name. *Balaam* had before his Eyes the Authority of God, absolutely forbidding him what he, for

K

the

130 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. VII. the Sake of a Reward, had the strongest Inclination to: He was likewise in a State of Mind sober enough to consider Death and his last End: By these Considerations he was restrained, first from going to the King of *Moab*; and after he did go, from cursing *Israel*. But notwithstanding this, there was great Wickedness in his Heart. He could not forego the Rewards of Unrighteousness: He therefore first seeks for Indulgences; and when these could not be obtained, he sins against the whole Meaning, End and Design of the Prohibition, which no Consideration in the World could prevail with him to go against the Letter of. And surely that impious Counsel, he gave to *Balak* against the Children of *Israel*, was, considered in itself, a greater Piece of Wickedness, than if he had cursed them in Words.

I F it be inquired what his Situation, his Hopes and Fears were, in respect to this his Wish: The Answer must be, that Conscience of the Wickedness of his Heart must necessarily have destroyed all settled Hopes of dying the Death of the Righteous: He could have no calm Satisfaction in this View of his last End: Yet, on the other hand, it is possible that those partial Re-  
gards

## Character of Balaam.

131

gards to his Duty, now mentioned, might keep him from perfect Despair.

SERM.  
VII.

UPON the Whole, it is manifest that *Balaam* had the most just and true Notions of God and Religion; as appears, partly from the original Story itself, and more plainly from the Passage in *Micah*; where he explains Religion to consist in real Virtue and real Piety, expressly distinguished from Superstition, and in Terms which most strongly exclude Dishonestly and Falseness of Heart. Yet you see his Behaviour: He seeks Indulgences for plain Wickedness; which not being able to obtain, he glosses over that same Wickedness, dresses it up in a new Form, in order to make it pass off more easily with himself. That is, he deliberately contrives to deceive and impose upon himself, in a Matter which he knew to be of the utmost Importance.

To bring these Observations home to ourselves: It is too evident that many Persons allow themselves in very unjustifiable Courses, who yet make great Pretences to Religion; not to deceive the World, none can be so weak as to think this will pass in our Age; but from Principles, Hopes, and Fears, respecting God and a future State;

SERM. and go on thus with a sort of Tranquil-  
 VII. lity and Quiet of Mind. This cannot be  
 upon a thorough Consideration, and full  
 Resolution, that the Pleasures and Advan-  
 tages they propose are to be pursued at all  
 Hazards, against Reason, against the Law of  
 God, and though everlasting Destruction is  
 to be the Consequence. This would be do-  
 ing too great Violence upon themselves.  
 No, they are for making a Composition  
 with the Almighty. These of his Com-  
 mands they will obey: But as to others—  
 why they will make all the Atonements in  
 their Power; the ambitious, the covetous,  
 the dissolute Man, each in a Way which  
 shall not contradict his respective Pursuit.  
 Indulgences before, which was *Balaam's*  
 first Attempt, though he was not so success-  
 ful in it as to deceive himself, or Atonements  
 afterwards, are all the same. And here  
 perhaps come in faint Hopes that they may,  
 and Half-resolves that they will, one Time or  
 other, make a Change.

BESIDES these, there are also Persons,  
 who from a more just Way of considering  
 Things, see the infinite Absurdity of This, of  
 substituting Sacrifice instead of Obedience;  
 there are Persons far enough from Super-  
 stition,



## Character of Balaam.

133

SERM.

VII.

stitution, and not without some real Sense of God and Religion upon their Minds; who yet are guilty of most unjustifiable Practices, and go on with great Coolness and Command over themselves. The same Dishonesty and Unsoundness of Heart discovers itself in These another Way. In all common ordinary Cases we see intuitively at first View what is our Duty, what is the honest Part. This is the Ground of the Observation, that the first Thought is often the best. In these Cases Doubt and Deliberation is itself Dishonesty; as it was in *Balaam* upon the second Message. That which is called considering what is our Duty in a particular Case, is very often nothing but endeavouring to explain it away. Thus those Courses, which, if Men would fairly attend to the Dictates of their own Consciences, they would see to be Corruption, Excess, Oppression, Uncharitableness; these are refined upon— Things were so and so circumstantiated— Great Difficulties are raised about fixing Bounds and Degrees: And thus every moral Obligation whatever may be evaded. Here is Scope, I say, for an unfair Mind to explain away every moral Obligation to itself. Whether Men reflect again upon

K 3

this

SERM.

VII.



this internal Management and Artifice, and how explicit they are with themselves, is another Question. There are many Operations of the Mind, many Things pass within, which we never reflect upon again; which a By-stander, from having frequent Opportunities of observing us and our Conduct, may make shrewd Guessees at.

T H A T great Numbers are in this Way of deceiving themselves is certain. There is scarce a Man in the World, who has intirely got over all Regards, Hopes and Fears, concerning God and a future State; and these Apprehensions in the Generality, bad as we are, prevail in considerable Degrees: Yet Men will and can be wicked, with Calmness and Thought; we see they are. There must therefore be some Method of making it fit a little easy upon their Minds; which, in the Superstitious, is those Indulgences and Atonements before mentioned, and this Self-deceit of another kind in Persons of another Character. And both these proceed from a certain Unfairness of Mind, a peculiar inward Dishonesty; the direct contrary to that Simplicity which our Saviour recommends, under the Notion of *becoming little Children*, as a necessary Qualification for

## Character of Balaam.

135

for our entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. SERM. VII.

BUT to conclude: How much soever Men differ in the Course of Life they prefer, and in their Ways of palliating and excusing their Vices to themselves; yet all agree in the one Thing, desiring to *die the Death of the Righteous*. This is surely remarkable. The Observation may be extended further, and put thus: Even without determining what that is which we call Guilt or Innocence, there is no Man but would choose, after having had the Pleasure or Advantage of a vitious Action, to be free of the Guilt of it, to be in the State of an innocent Man. This shews at least the Disturbance, and implicit Dissatisfaction in Vice. If we enquire into the Grounds of it, we shall find it proceeds partly from an immediate Sense of having done Evil; and partly from an Apprehension, that this inward Sense shall one Time or another be seconded by an higher Judgment, upon which our whole Being depends. Now to suspend and drown this Sense, and these Apprehensions, be it by the Hurry of Business or of Pleasure, or by Superstition, or moral Equivocations, this is in a Manner one and the same, and makes

SERM. no Alteration at all in the Nature of our  
 VII. Case. Things and Actions are what they  
 are, and the Consequences of them will be  
 what they will be: Why then should we de-  
 sire to be deceived? As we are reasonable  
 Creatures, and have any Regard to ourselves,  
 we ought to lay these Things plainly and ho-  
 nestly before our Mind, and upon this, act as  
 you please, as you think most fit; make that  
 Choice and prefer that Course of Life, which  
 you can justify to yourselves, and which fits  
 most easy upon your own Mind. It will  
 immediately appear, that Vice cannot be the  
 Happiness, but must upon the whole be  
 the Misery, of such a Creature as Man; a  
 Moral, an Accountable Agent. Supersti-  
 tious Observances, Self-Deceit though of a  
 more refined Sort, will not in reality at all  
 mend Matters with us. And the Result of  
 the whole can be nothing else, but that  
 with Simplicity and Fairness we *keep Inno-*  
*cency, and take heed unto the Thing that is*  
*right; for this alone shall bring a Man Peace at*  
*the last.*

---

---

# SERMON VIII.

## *Upon Resentment.*

---

M A T T H. V. 43, 44.

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy : But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do Good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

**S**INCE perfect Goodness in the Deity is the Principle, from whence the Universe was brought into Being, and by which it is preserved ; and since general Benevolence is the great Law of the whole moral Creation : It is a Question which immediately occurs, *Why had Man implanted in him a Principle, which appears the direct Contrary to Benevolence?* Now the  
Foot

SERM.  
VIII.  
~

SERM. Foot upon which Inquiries of this Kind  
 VIII. should be treated is this: To take Humane  
 ~ Nature as it is, and the Circumstances in  
 which it is placed as they are; and then con-  
 sider the Correspondence between that Na-  
 ture and those Circumstances, or what Course  
 of Action and Behaviour, respecting those  
 Circumstances, any particular Affection or  
 Passion leads us to. This I mention to distin-  
 guish the Matter now before us from Dis-  
 quisitions of quite another Kind; namely,  
*Why we are not made more perfect Crea-  
 tures, or placed in better Circumstances?*  
 These being Questions which we have not,  
 that I know of, any thing at all to do with.  
 God Almighty undoubtedly foresaw the Dif-  
 orders, both natural and moral, which would  
 happen in this State of Things. If upon this  
 we set ourselves to search and examine, why  
 he did not prevent them; we shall, I am  
 afraid, be in Danger of running into some-  
 what worse than impertinent Curiosity. But  
 upon this to examine, how far the Nature  
 which he hath given us hath a Respect to  
 those Circumstances, such as they are; how  
 far it leads us to act a proper part in them;  
 plainly belongs to us: And such Inquiries  
 are in many Ways of excellent Use. Thus the  
 Thing

Thing to be considered is, not, *Why we were not made of such a Nature, and placed in such Circumstances, as to have no need of so harsh and turbulent a Passion as Resentment*: But, taking our Nature and Condition as being what they are, *Why or for what End such a Passion was given us*: And this chiefly in order to shew, what are the Abuses of it.

SERM.  
VIII.

THE Persons who laid down for a Rule, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour and hate thine Enemy*, made short Work with this Matter. They did not, it seems, perceive any thing to be disapproved in Hatred, more than in Good-will: And, according to their System of Morals, our Enemy was the proper natural Object of one of these Passions, as our Neighbour was of the other of them.

This was all they had to say, and all they thought needful to be said, upon the Subject. But this cannot be satisfactory; because Hatred, Malice and Revenge, are directly contrary to the Religion we profess, and to the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself. Therefore, since no Passion God hath endued us with can be in itself Evil; and yet since Men frequently indulge a Passion in such Ways and Degrees that at length it becomes quite another

SERM. nother Thing from what it was originally in  
 VIII. our Nature ; and those Vices of Malice and  
 ~~~~~ Revenge in particular take their Occasion  
 from the natural Passion of Resentment : It
 will be needful to trace This up to its origi-
 nal, that we may see, *What it is in itself,*
as placed in our Nature by its Author ; from
 which it will plainly appear, *For what Ends*
it was placed there. And when we know
 what the Passion is in itself, and the Ends of
 it, we shall easily see, *What are the Abuses*
of it, in which Malice and Revenge consist ;
 and which are so strongly forbidden in the
 Text, by the direct Contrary being com-
 manded.

R E S E N T M E N T is of two Kinds : *Hasty*
and sudden, or settled and deliberate. The
 former is called Anger, and often *Passion ;*
 which, though a general Word, is frequent-
 ly appropriated and confined to the particular
 Feeling, sudden Anger, as distinct from
 deliberate Resentment, Malice and Revenge.
 In all these Words is usually implied some-
 what vitious ; somewhat unreasonable as to
 the Occasion of the Passion, or immoderate
 as to the Degree or Duration of it. But that
 the natural Passion itself is indifferent, St.
Paul has asserted in that Precept, *Be ye angry*
and

upon Resentment.

I 41

SERM.
VIII.



and sin not * : Which though it is by no Means to be understood as an Encouragement to indulge ourselves in Anger, the Sense being certainly this, *Though ye be angry, sin not* ; yet here is evidently a Distinction made, between Anger and Sin ; between the natural Passion, and sinful Anger.

Sudden Anger, upon certain Occasions, is meer Instinct : As meerly so, as the Disposition to close our Eyes upon the Apprehension of somewhat falling into them ; and no more necessarily implies any Degree of Reason. I say, *necessarily* : For to be sure *hasty*, as well as *deliberate*, Anger may be occasioned by Injury or Contempt ; in which Cases Reason suggests to our Thoughts that Injury and Contempt, which is the Occasion of the Passion : But I am speaking of the former only so far as it is to be distinguished from the latter. The only Way, in which our Reason and Understanding can raise Anger, is by representing to our Mind Injustice or Injury of some Kind or other. Now momentary Anger is frequently raised, not only without any real, but without any apparent Reason ; that is, without any Appearance of Injury, as distinct from Hurt or Pain.

It

* Ephes. iv. 26.

SERM. It cannot, I suppose, be thought that this
 VIII. Passion, in Infants; in the lower Species of
 ~~~~~ Animals; and which is often seen, in Men  
 towards them; it cannot, I say, be imagi-  
 ned that these Instances of this Passion are the  
 Effect of Reason: No, they are occasioned  
 by meer Sensation and Feeling. It is Op-  
 position, sudden Hurt, Violence, which na-  
 turally excites the Passion; and the real De-  
 merit or Fault of him who offers that Vio-  
 lence, or is the Cause of that Opposition or  
 Hurt, does not in many Cases so much as  
 come into Thought.

T H E Reason and End, for which Man was  
 made thus liable to this Passion, is, that he  
 might be better qualified to prevent, and like-  
 wise (or perhaps chiefly) to resist and defeat,  
 sudden Force, Violence and Opposition, con-  
 sidered meerly as such, and without Regard to  
 the Fault or Demerit of him who is the Au-  
 thor of them. Yet, since Violence may be  
 considered in this other and further View,  
 as implying Fault; and since Injury, as distinct  
 from Harm, may raise sudden Anger; sud-  
 den Anger may likewise accidentally serve  
 to prevent, or remedy, such Fault and Injury.  
 But, considered as distinct from settled Anger,  
 it stands in our Nature for Self-defence, and  
 not

not for the Administration of Justice. There are plainly Cases, and in the uncultivated Parts of the World, and, where regular Governments are not formed, they frequently happen, in which there is no Time for Consideration, and yet to be passive is certain Destruction; in which, sudden Resistance is the only Security.

SERM.  
VIII.

BUT from *This, deliberate Anger or Resentment* is essentially distinguished, as the latter is not naturally excited by, or intended to prevent meer Harm without Appearance of Wrong or Injustice. Now, in order to see, as exactly as we can, what is the natural Object and Occasion of such Resentment; let us reflect upon the Manner in which we are touched with Reading, suppose, a feigned Story of Baseness and Villany, properly worked up to move our Passions. This immediately raises Indignation, somewhat of a Desire that it should be punished. And though the designed Injury be prevented, yet that it was designed is sufficient to raise this inward Feeling. Suppose the Story true, this inward Feeling would be as natural and as just: And one may venture to affirm, that there is scarce a Man in the World, but would have it upon some Occasions. It seems *in*

SERM. *us* plainly connected with a Sense of Virtue  
 VIII. and Vice, of moral Good and Evil. Suppose  
 further, we knew both the Person who did,  
 and who suffered the Injury : Neither would  
 this make any Alteration, only that it would  
 probably affect us more. The Indignation  
 raised by Cruelty and Injustice, and the De-  
 sire of having it punished, which Persons un-  
 concerned would feel, is by no Means Ma-  
 lice. No, it is Resentment against Vice and  
 Wickedness : It is one of the common Bonds,  
 by which Society is held together ; a Fellow-  
 feeling which each Individual has in Behalf  
 of the whole Species, as well as of him-  
 self. And it does not appear that This, gene-  
 rally speaking, is at all too high amongst  
 Mankind. Suppose now the Injury I have  
 been speaking of, to be done against our-  
 selves ; or those whom we consider as our-  
 selves. It is plain, the Way, in which we  
 should be affected, would be exactly the same  
 in Kind : but it would certainly be in a higher  
 Degree, and less transient ; because a Sense  
 of our own Happiness and Misery is most in-  
 timately and always present to us ; and  
 from the very Constitution of our Nature,  
 we cannot but have a greater Sensibility to,  
 and be more deeply interested in, what con-  
 cerns

*upon Resentment.*

145

SERM.  
VIII.



cerns ourselves. And this seems to be the whole of this Passion which is, properly speaking, natural to Mankind: Namely, a Resentment against Injury and Wickedness in general; and in a higher Degree when towards ourselves, in Proportion to the greater Regard which Men naturally have for themselves, than for others. From hence it appears, that it is not natural, but moral Evil; it is not Suffering, but Injury, which raises that Anger and Resentment, which is of any Continuance. The natural Object of it is not one, who appears to the suffering Person to have been only the innocent Occasion of his Pain or Loss; but one, who has been in a moral Sense injurious either to ourselves or others. This is abundantly confirmed by observing, what it is which heightens or lessens Resentment; namely, the same which aggravates or lessens the Fault: Friendship and former Obligations, on one hand; or Inadvertency, strong Temptations and Mistake, on the other. All this is so much understood by Mankind, how little soever it be reflected upon, that a Person would be reckoned quite distracted, who should coolly resent an Harm, which had not to himself the Appearance of Injury or Wrong. Men do

L

indeed

SERM. indeed resent what is occasioned through  
 VIII. Carelessness : But when they expect Observance at their due, and so that Carelessness is considered as faulty. It is likewise true, that they resent more strongly an Injury done, than one which, though designed, was prevented, in Cases where the Guilt is perhaps the same: The Reason however is, not that bare Pain or Loss raises Resentment, but, that it gives a new, and, as I may speak, additional Sense of the Injury or Injustice. According to the natural Course of the Passions, the Degrees of Resentment are in Proportion, not only to the Degree of Design and Deliberation in the injurious Person ; but in Proportion to this, joined with the Degree of the Evil designed or premeditated ; since this likewise comes in to make the Injustice greater or less. And the Evil and Harm will appear greater when they feel it, than when they only reflect upon it : So therefore will the Injury : And consequently the Resentment will be greater.

THE natural Object or Occasion of settled Resentment then being Injury, as distinct from Pain or Loss ; it is easy to see, that to prevent and to remedy such Injury, and the Miseries arising from it, is the End for which

which this Passion was implanted in Man. SERM. VIII.  
It is to be considered as a Weapon, put into our Hands by Nature, against Injury, Injustice and Cruelty: How it may be innocently employed and made use of, shall presently be mentioned.

THE Account, which has been now given of this Passion, is in brief, that sudden Anger is raised by, and was chiefly intended to prevent or remedy, mere Harm distinct from Injury: But that it *may* be raised by Injury, and *may* serve to prevent or to remedy it; and then the Occasions and Effects of it are the same, with the Occasions and Effects of deliberate Anger. But they are essentially distinguished in this, that the latter is never occasioned by Harm, distinct from Injury; and its natural proper End is to remedy or prevent only that Harm, which implies, or is supposed to imply, Injury or moral Wrong. Every one sees that these Observations do not relate to those, who have habitually suppressed the Course of their Passions and Affections, out of Regard either to Interest or Virtue; or who, from Habits of Vice and Folly, have changed their Nature. But, I suppose, there can be no doubt but this, now described, is the general Course of Resent-

SERM. ment, considered as a natural Passion, neither  
 VIII. increased by Indulgence, nor corrected by  
 ~~~~~ Virtue, nor prevailed over by other Passions,  
 or particular Habits of Life.

As to the Abuses of Anger, which it is to be observed may be in all different Degrees, the first which occurs is what is commonly called *Passion*; to which some Men are liable, in the same Way or others are to the *Epilepsie*, or any sudden particular Disorder. This Distemper of the Mind seizes them upon the least Occasion in the World, and perpetually without any real Reason at all: And by Means of it they are plainly, every Day, every waking Hour of their Lives, liable and in Danger of running into the most extravagant Outrages. Of a less boisterous, but not of a less innocent Kind, is *Peevishness*; which I mention with Pity, with real Pity to the unhappy Creatures, who, from their inferior Station, or other Circumstances and Relations, are obliged to be in the Way of, and to serve for a Supply to it. Both these, for ought that I can see, are one and the same Principle: But, as it takes Root in Minds of different Makes, it appears differently, and so is come to be distinguished by different Names. That
 which

upon Resentment.

149

SERM.
VIII.

which in a more feeble Temper is Peevishness, and languidly discharges itself upon every Thing which comes in its Way; the same Principle, in a Temper of greater Force and stronger Passions, becomes Rage and Fury. In one, the Humour discharges itself at once; in the other, it is continually discharging. This is the Account of *Passion* and *Peevishness*, as distinct from each other, and appearing in different Persons. It is no Objection against the Truth of it, that they are both to be seen sometimes in one and the same Person.

W I T H respect to deliberate Resentment, the chief Instances of Abuse are: When, from Partiality to ourselves, we imagine an Injury done us, when there is none: When this Partiality represents it to us greater than it really is: When we fall into that extravagant and monstrous Kind of Resentment, towards one who has innocently been the Occasion of Evil to us; that is, Resentment upon Account of Pain or Inconvenience, without Injury; which is the same Absurdity, as settled Anger at a Thing that is inanimate: When the Indignation against Injury and Injustice rises too high, and is beyond Proportion to the particular ill Action it is exer-

SERM. cised upon : Or lastly, when Pain or Harm of
 VIII. any Kind is inflicted merely in Consequence
 of, and to gratify, that Resentment, though
 naturally raised.

IT would be endless to descend into and explain all the Peculiarities of Perverseness, and wayward Humour, which might be traced up to this Passion. But there is one Thing, which so generally belongs to and accompanies all Excess and Abuse of it, as to require being mentioned : a certain Determination, and resolute Bent of Mind, not to be convinced or set right ; though it be ever so plain, that there is no Reason for the Displeasure, that it was raised merely by Error or Misunderstanding. In this there is doubtless a great Mixture of Pride ; but there is somewhat more, which I cannot otherwise express than, that Resentment has taken Possession of the Temper and of the Mind, and will not quit its Hold. It would be too minute, to inquire whether this be any thing more than bare Obstinacy : It is sufficient to observe, that it, in a very particular Manner and Degree, belongs to the Abuses of this Passion.

BUT, butwithstanding all these Abuses,
 “ Is not just Indignation against Cruelty and
 “ Wrong, one of the *Instruments of Death*
 “ which

“ which the Author of our Nature hath pro-
“ vided? Are not Cruelty, Injustice and
“ Wrong, the natural Objects of that Indig-
“ nation? Surely then it may one Way or
“ other be innocently employed against them.”

SERM.
VIII.



True. Since therefore it is necessary for the very Subsistence of the World, that Injury, Injustice and Cruelty, should be punished; and since Compassion, which is so natural to Mankind, would render that Execution of Justice exceedingly difficult and uneasy; Indignation against Vice and Wickedness is, and may be allowed to be, a Ballance to that Weakness of Pity, and also to any thing else which would prevent the necessary Methods of Severity. Those, who have never thought upon these Subjects, may perhaps not see the Weight of this: But let us suppose a Person guilty of Murther, or any other Action of Cruelty, and that Mankind had naturally no Indignation against such Wickedness and the Authors of it; but that every Body was affected towards such a Criminal in the same Way, as towards an innocent Man: Compassion, amongst other Things, would render the Execution of Justice exceedingly painful and difficult, and would often quite prevent it. And notwithstanding that the

SERM. Principle of Benevolence is denied by some,
 VIII. and is really in a very low Degree, that Men
 are in great Measure insensible to the Happiness of their Fellow-creatures; yet they are not insensible to their Misery, but are very strongly moved with it: Infomuch that there plainly is Occasion for that Feeling which is raised by Guilt and Demerit, as a Ballance to that of Compassion. Thus much may I think justly be allowed to Resentment, in the strictest Way of Moral Consideration.

THE good Influence which this Passion has in Fact upon the Affairs of the World, is obvious to every one's Notice. Men are plainly restrained from injuring their Fellow-creatures by Fear of their Resentment; and it is very happy that they are so, when they would not be restrained by a Principle of Virtue. And after an Injury is done, and there is a Necessity that the Offender should be brought to Justice; the cool Consideration of Reason, that the Security and Peace of Society requires Examples of Justice should be made, might indeed be sufficient to procure Laws to be enacted, and Sentence pass'd: But is it that cool Reflection in the injured Person, which, for the most Part, brings the Offended to Justice? Or is it not Resentment and Indignation

upon Resentment.

153

dignation against the Injury and the Author of it? I am afraid there is no Doubt, which is commonly the Case. This however is to be considered as a good Effect, notwithstanding it were much to be wished that Men would act from a better Principle, Reason and cool Reflection.

SERM.
VIII.



THE Account now given of the Passion of Resentment, as distinct from all the Abuses of it, may suggest to our Thoughts the following Reflections.

First, That Vice is indeed of ill-desert, and must finally be punished. Why should Men dispute concerning the Reality of Virtue, and whether it be founded in the Nature of Things, which yet surely is not Matter of Question; but why should this, I say, be disputed, when every Man carries about him this Passion, which affords him Demonstration, that the Rules of Justice and Equity are to be the Guide of his Actions? For every Man naturally feels an Indignation upon seeing Instances of Villany and Baseness, and therefore cannot commit the same without being self-condemned.

Secondly, That we should learn to be cautious lest we *charge God foolishly*, by ascribing That to him, or the Nature he has given

SERM. ven us, which is owing wholly to our own
 VIII. Abuse of it. Men may speak of the Dege-
 neracy and Corruption of the World, accord-
 ing to the Experience they have had of it ;
 but Human Nature, considered as the divine
 Workmanship, should methinks be treated
 as sacred : For *in the Image of God made He
 Man.* That Passion, from whence Men take
 Occasion to run into the dreadful Vices of
 Malice and Revenge ; even That Passion, as
 implanted in our Nature by God, is not only
 innocent, but a generous Movement of
 Mind. It is in itself, and in its Original, no
 more than Indignation against Injury and
 Wickedness : That which is the only Defor-
 mity in the Creation, and the only reasona-
 ble Object of Abhorrence and Dislike. How
 manifold Evidence have we of the divine
 Wisdom and Goodness, when even Pain in
 the natural World, and the Passion, we have
 been now considering in the Moral, come
 out Instances of it !

SERMON IX.

Upon Forgiveness of Injuries.

MATTH. V. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy : But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do Good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

AS God Almighty foresaw the Irregularities and Disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this State of Things ; He hath graciously made some Provision against them, by giving us several Passions and Affections, which arise from, or whose Objects are those Disorders. Of this Sort are Fear, Resentment, Compassion and others ; of which there could
be

SERM.
IX.



SERM. be no Occasion or Use in a perfect State: But
 IX. in the present we should be exposed to greater
 ~~~~~ Inconveniences without them; though there  
 are very considerable ones, which they themselves  
 are the Occasions of. They are Incumbrances indeed,  
 but such as we are obliged to carry about with us,  
 through this various Journey of Life: Some of them  
 as a Guard against the violent Assaults of others,  
 and in our own Defence; some in Behalf of others;  
 and all of them to put us upon, and help to carry  
 us through a Course of Behaviour suitable to our  
 Condition, in Default of that Perfection of Wisdom  
 and Virtue, which would be in all Respects our  
 better Security.

THE Passion of Anger or Resentment hath  
 already been largely treated of. It hath been  
 shown, that Mankind naturally feel some  
 Emotion of Mind, against Injury and Injustice,  
 whoever are the Sufferers by it; and even though  
 the injurious Design be prevented from taking  
 Effect. Let this be called Anger, Indignation,  
 Resentment, or by whatever Name any one shall  
 chuse; the Thing itself is understood, and is  
 plainly natural. It has likewise been observed,  
 that this natural Indignation is generally moderate  
 and low enough in Mankind, in each particular  
 Man, when the  
 Injury



## *Forgiveness of Injuries.*

157

S E R M.  
IX.

Injury which excites it, doth not affect himself, or one whom he considers as himself. Therefore the Precepts to *forgive*, and to *love our Enemies*, do not relate to that general Indignation against Injury and the Authors of it, but to this Feeling, or Resentment when raised by private or personal Injury. But no Man could be thought in earnest, who should assert, that, though Indignation against Injury, when Others are the Sufferers, is innocent and just; yet the same Indignation against it, when we ourselves are the Sufferers, becomes faulty and blameable. These Precepts therefore cannot be understood to forbid This in the latter Case, more than in the former. Nay they cannot be understood to forbid this Feeling in the latter Case, tho' raised to a higher Degree, than in the former: Because, as was also observed further, from the very Constitution of our Nature, we cannot but have a greater Sensibility to what concerns ourselves. Therefore the Precepts in the Text, and others of the like Import with them, must be understood to forbid only the Excess and Abuse of this natural Feeling, in Cases of personal and private Injury: The chief Instances of which Excess and Abuse have likewise been already remarked;

SERM.  
IX.

marked ; and all of them, excepting that of Retaliation, do so plainly in the very Terms express somewhat unreasonable, disproportionate and absurd, as to admit of no Pretence or Shadow of Justification.

BUT since Custom and false Honour are on the Side of Retaliation and Revenge, when the Resentment is natural and just ; and Reasons are sometimes offered in Justification of Revenge in these Cases ; and since Love of our Enemies is thought *too hard a Saying* to be obeyed : I will shew *the absolute unlawfulness of the former ; The Obligations we are under to the latter ;* And then proceed to *some Reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate Tendency to beget in us a right Temper of Mind towards those who have offended us.*

IN shewing the Unlawfulness of Revenge, it is not my present Design to examine what is alledged in Favour of it, from the Tyranny of Custom and false Honour, but only to consider the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself ; which ought to have prevented, and ought now to extirpate, every Thing of that Kind.

*First,* Let us begin with the Supposition of That being innocent, which is pleaded for,  
and

## *Forgiveness of Injuries.*

159

SERM.

IX.

and which shall be shewn to be altogether vicious, the Supposition that we were allowed to *render Evil for Evil*, and see what would be the Consequence. Malice or Resentment towards any Man hath plainly a Tendency to beget the same Passion in him who is the Object of it ; and this again increases it in the Other. It is of the very Nature of this Vice to propagate itself not only by way of Example, which it does in common with other Vices, but in a peculiar Way of its own ; for Resentment itself, as well as what is done in Consequence of it, is the Object of Resentment: Hence it comes to pass that the first Offence, even when so slight as presently to be dropt and forgotten, becomes the Occasion of entering into a long Intercourse of ill Offices: Neither is it at all uncommon to see Persons, in this Progress of Strife and Variance, change Parts; and him, who was at first the injured Person, become more injurious and blameable than the Aggressor. Put the Case then, that the Law of Retaliation was universally received, and allowed, as an innocent Rule of Life, by all ; and the Observance of it thought by many, (and then it would soon come to be thought by all,) a Point of Ho-

nour :

SERM. nou: This supposes every Man in private  
 IX. Cafes to pass Sentence in his own Cause; and likewise, that Anger or Resentment is to be the Judge. Thus, from the numberless Partialities which we have for ourselves, every one would often think himself injured when he was not: and in most Cafes would represent an Injury as much greater than it really is; the imagined Dignity of the Person offended would scarce ever fail to magnifie the Offence. And, if bare Retaliation, or returning just the Mischief received, always begets Resentment in the Person upon whom we retaliate, what would that Excess do? Add to this, that he likewise has his Partialities——There is no going on to represent this Scene of Rage and Madness: It is manifest there would be no Bounds, nor any End. *If the Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water,* what would it come to when allowed this free and unrestrained Course? *As Coals are to burning Coals, or Wood to Fire;* so would these contentious Men be to kindle Strife. And, since the Indulgence of Revenge hath manifestly this Tendency, and does actually produce these Effects in Proportion as it is allowed; a Passion of so dangerous a Nature ought not to be indulged,

## Forgiveness of Injuries.

161

indulged, were there no other Reason against it. SERM.  
IX.

*Secondly*, It hath been shewn that the Passion of Resentment was placed in Man, upon Supposition of, and as a Prevention or Remedy to Irregularity and Disorder. Now whether it be allowed or not, that the Passion itself and the Gratification of it joined together are painful to the malicious Person; it must however be so with Respect to the Person towards whom it is exercised, and upon whom the Revenge is taken. Now, if we consider Mankind, according to that fine Allusion of *St. Paul*, as *one Body, and every one Members one of another*; it must be allowed that Resentment is, with Respect to Society, a painful Remedy. Thus then the very Notion or Idea of this Passion, as a Remedy or Prevention of Evil, and as in itself a painful Means, plainly shews that it ought never to be made use of, but only in order to produce some greater Good.

It is to be observed, that this Argument is not founded upon an Allusion or Simile; but that it is drawn from the very Nature of the Passion itself, and the End for which it was given us. We are obliged to make

M

use

SERM. use of Words taken from sensible Things,  
 IX. to explain what is the most remote from  
 them: And every one sees, from whence  
 the Words Prevention and Remedy are taken.  
 But if you please, let these Words be dropped:  
 The Thing itself, I suppose, may be express'd  
 without them.

T H A T Mankind is a Community, that we all stand in a Relation to each other, that there is a publick End and Interest of Society which each Particular is obliged to promote, is the Sum of Morals. Consider then the Passion of Resentment, as given to this one Body, as given to Society. Nothing can be more manifest, than that Resentment is to be considered as a secondary Passion, placed in us upon Supposition, upon Account of, and with Regard to Injury; not, to be sure, to promote and further it, but to render it, and the Inconveniences and Miseries arising from it less and fewer than they would be without this Passion. It is as manifest, that the Indulgence of it is, with regard to Society, a painful Means of obtaining these Ends. Considered in itself, it is very undesirable, and what Society must very much wish to be without. It is in every Instance  
 absolutely

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 163

absolutely an Evil in itself, because it implies producing Misery: And consequently must never be indulged or gratified for itself, by any one who considers Mankind as a Community or Family, and himself as a Member of it.

SERM.

IX.



LET us now take this in another View. Every natural Appetite, Passion and Affection, may be gratified in particular Instances, without being subservient to the particular chief End, for which these several Principles were respectively implanted in our Nature. And, if neither this End, nor any other moral Obligation be contradicted, such Gratification is innocent. Thus, I suppose, there are Cases in which each of these Principles, this one of Resentment excepted, may innocently be gratified, without being subservient to what is the main End of it: That is, though it does not conduce to, yet it may be gratified without contradicting that End, or any other Obligation. But the Gratification of Resentment, if it be not conducive to the End for which it was given us, must necessarily contradict, not only the general Obligation to Benevolence, but likewise that particular End itself. The End, for which it was gi-

SERM. ven, is to prevent or remedy Injury; *i. e.*  
 IX. the Misery occasioned by Injury; *i. e.* Mi-  
 ~~~~~  
 sery itself: And the Gratification of it con-
 sists in producing Misery; *i. e.* in contradict-
 ing the End, for which it was implanted in
 our Nature.

T H I S whole Reasoning is built upon the
 Difference there is between this Passion and
 all others. No other Principle, or Passion,
 hath for its End the Misery of our Fellow-
 creatures. But Malice and Revenge medi-
 tates Evil itself; and to do Mischief, to be the
 Author of Misery, is the very Thing which
 gratifies the Passion: This is what it directly
 tends towards, as its proper Design. Other
 Vices eventually do Mischief: This alone
 aims at it as an End.

N O T H I N G can with Reason be urged in
 Justification of Revenge, from the good Ef-
 fects which the Indulgence of it were before
 mentioned * to have upon the Affairs of the
 World; because, though it be a remarkable
 Instance of the Wisdom of Providence to
 bring Good out of Evil, yet Vice is Vice to
 him who is guilty of it. “ But suppose these
 “ good Effects are foreseen:” That is, Sup-
 pose

* Serm. VIII. p. 152.

Forgiveness of Injuries.

156

posed Reason in a particular Case leads a Man SERM.
the same Way as Passion? Why then, to be IX.
sure, he should follow his Reason, in this as
well as in all other Cases. So that, turn the
Matter which Way ever you will, no more can
be allowed to this Passion, than that hath
been already *.

As to that Love of our Enemies, which is
commanded; this supposes the general Obliga-
tion to Benevolence or Good-will to-
wards Mankind: And this being supposed,
that Precept is no more than to forgive In-
juries; that is, to keep clear of those Abuses
before-mentioned: Because that we have
the habitual Temper of Benevolence, is taken
for granted.

RESENTMENT is not inconsistent with
Good-will: For we often see both together in
very high Degrees; not only in Parents to-
wards their Children, but in Cases of Friend-
ship and Dependance, where there is no na-
tural Relation. These contrary Passions,
though they may lessen, do not necessarily
destroy each other. We may therefore love
our Enemy, and yet have Resentment a-
gainst him for his injurious Behaviour to-
wards us. But when this Resentment in-

M 3

tirely

SERM. tirely destroys our natural Benevolence to-
 IX. wards him, it is excessive, and becomes Ma-
 lice or Revenge. The Command, to pre-
 vent its having this Effect, *i. e.* to forgive In-
 juries, is the same as to love our Enemies ;
 because that Love is always supposed, unless
 destroyed by Resentment.

“ B U T though Mankind is the natural
 “ Object of Benevolence, yet may it not be
 “ lessened upon Vice, *i. e.* Injury ?” Allow-
 ed : But if every Degree of Vice or Injury
 must destroy that Benevolence, then no Man
 is the Object of our Love ; for no Man is
 without Faults.

“ B U T if lower Instances of Injury may
 “ lessen our Benevolence, why may not
 “ higher, or the highest, destroy it ?” The
 Answer is obvious. It is not Man’s being a
 social Creature, much less his being a moral
 Agent, from whence *alone* our Obligations
 to Good-will towards him arise. There is
 an Obligation to it prior to either of these, a-
 rising from his being a sensible Creature ;
 that is, capable of Happiness or Misery. Now
 this Obligation cannot be superseded by his
 moral Character. What justifies publick
 Execution is, not that the Guilt or Demerit
 of the Criminal dispenses with the Obliga-
 tion

Forgiveness of Injuries.

167

tion of Good-will, neither would this justify any Severity ; but, that his Life is inconsistent with the Quiet and Happiness of the World: That is, a general and more enlarged Obligation necessarily destroys a particular and more confined one of the same Kind, inconsistent with it. Guilt, or Injury then does not dispense with or supersede the Duty of Love and Good-will.

SERM.

IX.



NEITHER does that peculiar Regard to ourselves, which was before allowed to be natural * to Mankind, dispense with it: Because that can no Way innocently heighten our Resentment against those who have been injurious to ourselves in particular, any otherwise than as it heightens our Sense of the Injury or Guilt; and Guilt, though in the highest Degree, does not, as hath been shewn, dispense with or supersede the Duty of Love and Good-will.

IF all this be true, what can a Man say, who will dispute the Reasonableness, or the Possibility, of obeying the divine Precept we are now considering? Let him speak out, and it must be thus he will speak. " Mankind, *i. e.* a Creature defective and " faulty, is the proper Object of Good-
M 4 " will,

* Serm. VIII. p. 144.


SERM. " will, whatever his Faults are, when they
 IX. " respect others; but not when they re-
 ~~~~~ " spect me myself." That Men should be  
*affected* in this Manner, and *act* accordingly,  
 is to be accounted for like other Vices; but  
 to *assert* that it *ought*, and *must* be thus, is  
 Self-partiality possess'd of the very Under-  
 standing.

T H U S Love to our Enemies, and those  
 who have been injurious to us, is so far from  
 being a *Rant*, as it has been prophanelly called,  
 that it is in Truth the Law of our Nature,  
 and what every one must see and own, who is  
 not quite blinded with Self-love.

F R O M hence it is easy to see, what is the  
 Degree in which we are commanded to  
 love our Enemies, or those who have been  
 injurious to us. It were well if it could  
 as easily be reduced to Practice. It cannot be  
 imagined, that we are required to love them  
 with any peculiar Kind of Affection. But  
 suppose the Person injured to have a due na-  
 tural Sense of the Injury, and no more; he  
 ought to be affected towards the injurious  
 Person in the same Way any good Men, un-  
 interested in the Case, would be; if they had  
 the same just Sense, which we have sup-  
 posed the injured Person to have, of the  
 Fault;

## *Forgiveness of Injuries.* 169

Fault: After which there will yet remain SERM.  
real Good-will towards the Offender. IX.


N O W what is there in all this, which   
should be thought impracticable? I am sure  
there is nothing in it unreasonable. It is in-  
deed no more than that we should not in-  
dulge a Passion, which, if generally indulged,  
would propagate itself so as almost to lay  
waste the World: That we should suppress  
that partial, that false Self-Love, which is  
the Weakness of our Nature: That Uneasi-  
ness and Misery should not be produced,  
without any good Purpose to be served by it:  
And that we should not be affected towards  
Persons differently from what their Nature  
and Character require.

B U T since to be convinced that any Tem-  
per of Mind, and Course of Behaviour,  
is our Duty, and the contrary vicious, hath  
but a distant Influence upon our Temper and  
Actions; let me add some few Reflections,  
which may have a more direct Tendency to  
subdue those Vices in the Heart, to beget in  
us this right Temper, and lead us to a right  
Behaviour towards those who have offended  
us: Which Reflections however shall be such  
as will further shew the Obligations we are  
under to it.

N O

SERM. No one, I suppose, would choose to  
 IX. have an Indignity put upon him, or to be injuriously treated. If then there be any Probability of a Misunderstanding in the Case, either from our imagining we are injured when we are not, or representing the Injury to ourselves as greater than it really is; one would hope an Intimation of this Sort might be kindly received, and that People would be glad to find the Injury not so great as they imagined. Therefore, without knowing Particulars, I take upon me to assure all Persons who think they have received Indignities or injurious Treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a Manner certain, that the Offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar Situation, with respect to Injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our Eye can see itself. If we could place ourselves at a due Distance, *i. e.* be really unprejudiced, we should frequently discern That to be in reality Inadvertence and Mistake in our Enemy, which we now fancy we see to be Malice or Scorn. From this proper Point of View, we should likewise in all Probability see something of these latter in ourselves.

*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 171

ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of SERM.  
the former. Thus the Indignity or Injury IX.  
would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps   
at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-  
love is a Medium of a peculiar Kind : In these  
Cases it magnifies every thing which is amiss  
in others, at the same Time that it lessens  
every Thing amiss in ourselves.

ANGER also or Hatred may be confi-  
dered as another false Medium of viewing  
Things, which always represents Characters  
and Actions much worse than they really are.  
Ill-will not only never speaks, but never  
thinks well, of the Person towards whom it  
is exercised. Thus in Cases of Offence and  
Enmity, the whole Character and Behaviour  
is considered with an Eye to that particular  
Part which has offended us, and the whole  
Man appears monstrous, without any thing  
right or human in him : Whereas the Re-  
sentment should surely at least be confined to  
that particular Part of Behaviour which gave  
Offence : since the other Parts of a Man's  
Life and Character stand just the same as they  
did before.

IN general, there are very few In-  
stances of Enmity carried to any length  
but Inadvertency, Misunderstanding, some  
real

SERM. real Mistake of the Case, on one Side how-  
 IX. ever, if not on both, has a great Share  
 in it.

IF these Things were attended to, these Ill-  
 humours could not be carried to any length  
 amongst good Men, and they would be ex-  
 ceedingly abated amongst all. And one  
 would hope they might be attended to: For  
 all that these Cautions come to, is really no  
 more than desiring, that Things may be con-  
 sidered and judged of as they are in them-  
 selves, that we should have an Eye to, and be-  
 ware of, what would otherwise lead us into  
 Mistakes. So that to make Allowances for  
 Inadvertence, Misunderstanding, for the Par-  
 tialities of Self-love, and the false Light which  
 Anger sets Things in; I say, to make Allow-  
 ances for these, is not to be spoken of as an  
 Instance of Humbleness of Mind, or Meek-  
 ness and Moderation of Temper; but as  
 what common Sense should suggest, to avoid  
 judging wrong of a Matter before us, though  
 Virtue and Morals were out of the Case.  
 And therefore it as much belongs to ill Men,  
 who will indulge the Vice I have been argu-  
 ing against, as to good Men, who endeavour  
 to subdue it in themselves. In a Word, all  
 these Cautions, concerning Anger and Self-  
 love,



*Forgiveness of Injuries.* 173

love, are no more than desiring a Man, who was looking through a Glass, which either magnified or lessened, to take Notice, that the Objects are not in themselves what they appear through that Medium. SERM.  
IX.

To all these Things one might add, that Resentment being out of the Case, there is not properly speaking any such Thing as direct Ill-will in one Man towards another: Therefore the first Indignity or Injury, if it be not owing to Inadvertence or Misunderstanding, may however be resolved into other particular Passions or Self-love: Principles quite distinct from Ill-will, and which we ought all to be disposed to excuse in others, from experiencing so much of them in ourselves. A great Man of Antiquity is reported to have said, that, as He never was indulgent to any one Fault in himself, He could not excuse those of others. This Sentence could scarce with Decency come out of the Mouth of any humane Creature. But if we invert the former Part, and put it thus: That He was indulgent to many Faults in himself, as it is to be feared the best of us are, and yet was implacable; how monstrous would such an Assertion appear? And this is the Case in Respect to every humane Creature, in Proportion


SERM. portion as He is without the forgiving Spirit  
IX. I have been recommending.



FURTHER, Though Injury, Injustice, Oppression, the Baseness of Ingratitude, are the natural Objects of Indignation, or if you please of Resentment, as before explained; yet they are likewise the Objects of Compassion, as they are their own Punishment, and without Repentance will for ever be so. No one ever did a designed Injury to another, but at the same Time He did a much greater to himself. If therefore we would consider Things justly, such an one is, according to the natural Course of our Affections, an Object of Compassion, as well as of Displeasure: And to be affected really in this Manner, I say really, in Opposition to Show and Pretence, argues the true Greatness of Mind. We have an Example of Forgiveness in this Way in its utmost Perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is Good, in that Prayer of our Blessed Saviour on the Cross: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

BUT *Lastly*, The Offences which we are all guilty of against God, and the Injuries which Men do to each other, are often mentioned together: And, making Allowances  
for

## Forgiveness of Injuries. 175

for the infinite Distance between the Majesty SERM.  
of Heaven, and a frail Mortal, and likewise IX.  
for this, that He cannot possibly be affected or   
moved as we are ; Offences committed by  
others against ourselves, and the Manner in  
which we are apt to be affected with them,  
give a real Occasion for calling to Mind our  
own Sins against God. Now there is an Ap-  
prehension and Pre-sentiment, natural to  
Mankind, that we ourselves shall one Time  
or other be dealt with, as we deal with others;  
and a peculiar Acquiescence in, and Feeling  
of the Equity and Justice of this equal Distri-  
bution. This natural Notion of Equity the  
Son of *Sirach* has put in the strongest way.  
*\* He that revengeth shall find Vengeance from  
the Lord, and he will surely keep his Sins in  
Remembrance. Forgive thy Neighbour the  
Hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy  
Sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One  
Man beareth Hatred against another, and  
doth he seek Pardon from the Lord? He  
sheweth no Mercy to a Man which is like him-  
self; and doth he ask Forgiveness of his  
own Sins? Let any one read our Saviour's  
Parable of the King who took Account of his  
Servants †; and the Equity and Rightness  
of*

\* *Ecclus. xxviii. 1--4.*

† *Matth. xviii.*

SERM. of the Sentence, which was passed upon  
 IX. him who was unmerciful to his Fellow-Ser-  
 ~~~~~  
 vant, will be felt. There is somewhat in
 Humane Nature, which accords to, and falls
 in with that Method of Determination. Let
 us then place before our Eyes the Time which
 is represented in the Parable; That of our
 own Death, or the final Judgment. Suppose
 yourselves under the Apprehensions of ap-
 proaching Death; that you were just going
 to appear naked and without Disguise before
 the Judge of all the Earth, to give an Ac-
 count of your Behaviour towards your Fel-
 low-creatures: Could any Thing raise more
 dreadful Apprehensions of that Judgment,
 than the Reflection that you had been impla-
 cable, and without Mercy towards those who
 had offended you: without that forgiving
 Spirit towards others, which that it may now
 be exercised towards yourselves, is your
 only Hope? And these natural Apprehensi-
 ons are authorized by our Saviour's Applica-
 tion of the Parable: *So likewise shall my
 heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from
 your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother
 their Trespases,* On the other Hand, sup-
 pose a good Man in the same Circumstance,
 in the last Part and Close of Life; conscious
 of

Forgiveness of Injuries. 177

of many Frailties, as the best are, but con-
scious too that He had been meek, forgiving
and merciful; that He had in Simplicity of
Heart been ready to pass over Offences against
himself: The having felt this good Spirit
will give him, not only a full View of the
Amiability of it, but the surest Hope that
He shall meet with it in his Judge. This like-
wise is confirmed by his own Declaration: *If
ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly
Father will likewise forgive you.* And that we
might have a constant Sense of it upon our
Mind, the Condition is express'd in our daily
Prayer. A forgiving Spirit is therefore abso-
lutely necessary, as ever we hope for pardon
of our own Sins, as ever we hope for Peace
of Mind in our dying Moments, or for the
divine Mercy at that Day when we shall most
stand in need of it.

SERM.

IX.





SERMON X.

Upon Self-Deceit.

2. S A M. xii. 7.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the Man.

TH E S E Words are the Application of *Nathan's Parable to David*, upon Occasion of his Adultery with *Bathsheba*, and the Murder of *Uriah* her Husband. The Parable, which is related in the most beautiful Simplicity, is this:

SERM.
X.
~

** There were two Men in one City; the one rich, and the other poor, The rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds: But the poor Man had nothing, save one little Ew-Lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: And it grew up together with him,*

N 2

and

* Ver. 1.

SERM. *and with his Children ; it did eat of his own*
 X. *Meat, and drank of his own Cup, and*
 ~~~~~ *lay in his Bosom, and was unto him as a*  
*Daughter. And there came a Traveller*  
*unto the rich Man, and he spared to take*  
*of his own Flock, and of his own Herd, to*  
*dress for the way-faring Man that was*  
*come unto him, but took the poor Man's*  
*Lamb, and dressed it for the Man that was*  
*come to him. And David's Anger was*  
*greatly kindled against the Man, and he said*  
*to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the Man*  
*that hath done this Thing shall surely die.*  
*And he shall restore the Lamb four-fold,*  
*because he did this Thing, and because he*  
*had no Pity. David passes Sentence, not*  
*only that there should be a four-fold Resti-*  
*tution made ; but he proceeds to the Ri-*  
*gour of Justice, the Man that hath done*  
*this Thing shall die: And this Judgment is*  
*pronounced with the utmost Indignation a-*  
*gainst such an Act of Inhumanity; As the*  
*Lord liveth, he shall surely die: and his*  
*Anger was greatly kindled against the Man.*  
*And the Prophet answered, Thou art the*  
*Man. He had been guilty of much greater*  
*Inhumanity, with the utmost Deliberation,*  
*Thought and Contrivance. Near a Year*  
 must



must have passed, between the Time of the Commission of his Crimes, and the Time of the Prophet's coming to him; and it does not appear from the Story, that he had in all this While the least Remorse or Contrition.

SERM.  
X.



T H E R E is not any thing, relating to Men and Characters, more surprizing and unaccountable, than this Partiality to themselves, which is observable in many; as there is nothing of more melancholy Reflection, respecting Morality, Virtue and Religion. Hence it is that many Men seem perfect Strangers to their own Characters. They think, and reason, and judge quite differently upon any Matter relating to themselves, from what they do in Cases of Others where they are not interested. Hence it is one hears People exposing Follies, which they themselves are eminent for; and talking with great Severity against particular Vices, which, if all the World be not mistaken, they themselves are notoriously guilty of. This Self-ignorance and Self-partiality may be in all different Degrees. It is a lower Degree of it, which *David* himself refers to in these Words, *Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse thou me from my secret Faults.* This

SERM. is the Ground of that Advice of *Elibu* to  
 X. *Job*: Surely it is meet to be said unto God,  
 — That which I see not, teach thou me; if  
 I have done Iniquity, I will do no more. And  
*Solomon* saw this Thing in a very strong Light,  
 when he said, *He that trusteth his own Heart is  
 a Fool*. This likewise was the Reason why  
 that Precept, *Know thyself*, was so frequently  
 inculcated by the Philosophers of old. For  
 if it were not for that partial and fond Regard  
 to ourselves, it would certainly be no great  
 Difficulty to know our own Character, what  
 passes within the Bent and Bias of our Mind;  
 much less would there be any Difficulty in  
 judging rightly of our own Actions. But  
 from this Partiality it frequently comes to  
 pass, that the Observation of many Men's  
 being themselves last of all acquainted with  
 what falls out in their own Families, may be  
 applied to a nearer Home, to what passes  
 within their own Breasts.

T H E R E is plainly, in the Generality of  
 Mankind, an Absence of Doubt or Distrust,  
 in a very great Measure, as to their moral  
 Character and Behaviour; and likewise a  
 Disposition to take for granted, that all is  
 right and well with them in these Respects.  
 The former is owing to their not reflect-  
 ing

ing, not exercising their Judgment upon themselves; the latter to Self-love. I am not speaking of that Extravagance, which is sometimes to be met with; Instances of Persons declaring in Words at length, that they never were in the Wrong, nor had ever any Diffidence to the Justness of their Conduct, in their whole Lives. No, these People are too far gone to have any thing said to them. The Thing before us is indeed of this Kind, but in a lower Degree, and confined to the moral Character; somewhat of which we almost all of us have, without reflecting upon it. Now consider how long, and how grossly, a Person of the best Understanding might be imposed upon by one of whom he had not any Suspicion, and in whom he placed an intire Confidence; especially if there were Friendship and real Kindness in the Case: Surely this holds even stronger with respect to that Self we are all so fond of. Hence arises in Men a Disregard of Reproof and Instruction, Rules of Conduct and moral Discipline, which occasionally come in their Way: A Disregard, I say, of these; not in every Respect, but in this single one, namely, as what may be of Service to them in particular towards

SERM. mending their own Hearts and Tempers, and  
 X. making them better Men. It never in Ear-  
 nest comes into their Thoughts, whether  
 such Admonitions may not relate, and be of  
 Service to themselves; and this quite distinct  
 from a positive Persuasion to the Contrary,  
 a Persuasion from Reflection that they are  
 innocent and blameless in those Respects.  
 Thus we may invert the Observation which  
 is somewhere made upon *Brutus*, that he  
 never read but in order to make himself a  
 better Man. It scarce comes into the  
 Thoughts of the Generality of Mankind,  
 that this Use is to be made of moral Reflec-  
 tions which they meet with; that this Use, I  
 say, is to be made of them by Themselves, for  
 every Body observes and wonders that it is not  
 done by Others.

FURTHER, there are Instances of Per-  
 sons having so fixed and steady an Eye upon  
 their own Interest, whatever they place it in,  
 and the Interest of those whom they consider  
 as themselves, as in a Manner to regard no-  
 thing else; their Views are almost confined to  
 this alone. Now we cannot be acquainted  
 with, or in any Propriety of Speech be said to  
 know any thing, but what we attend to.  
 If therefore they attend only to one Side,  
 they

*upon Self-Deceit.*

185

they really will not, cannot see or know what is to be alledged on the other. Though a Man hath the best Eyes in the World, he cannot see any Way but that which he turns them. Thus these Persons, without passing over the least, the most minute Thing which can possibly be urged in Favour of themselves, shall overlook intirely the plainest and most obvious Things on the other Side. And whilst they are under the Power of this Temper, Thought and Consideration, upon the Matter before them, has scarce any Tendency to set them right: Because they are engaged; and their Deliberation concerning an Action to be done, or Reflection upon it afterwards, is not to see whether it be right, but to find out Reasons to justify or palliate it; palliate it, not to others, but to themselves.

IN some there is to observed a general Ignorance of themselves, and wrong Way of thinking and judging in every Thing relating to themselves; their Fortune, Reputation, every Thing in which Self can come in: And this perhaps attended with the rightest Judgment in all other Matters. In others this Partiality is not so general, has not taken hold of the whole Man, but is confined to

SERM.

X.



SERM. to some particular favourite Passion, Interest  
 X. or Pursuit ; suppose Ambition, Covetousness,  
 or any other. And these Persons may probably judge and determine what is perfectly just and proper, even in Things in which they themselves are concerned, if these Things have no Relation to their particular favourite Passion or Pursuit. Hence arises that amazing Incongruity; and seeming Inconsistency of Character, from whence slight Observers take it for granted, that the Whole is hypocritical and false ; not being able otherwise to reconcile the several Parts: Whereas in Truth there is real Honesty, so far as it goes. There is such a Thing as Men's being honest to such a Degree, and in such Respects, but no further. And this, as it is true, so it is absolutely necessary to be taken Notice of, and allowed them ; such general and undistinguishing Censure of their whole Characters, as designing and false, being one main Thing which confirms them in their Self-deceit. They know that the whole Censure is not true ; and so take for granted that no Part of it is.

BUT to go on with the Explanation of the Thing itself: Vice in general consists in having an unreasonable and too great Regard

gard to ourselves, in Comparison of others. Robbery and Murder is never from the Love of Injustice and Cruelty, but to gratify some other Passion, to gain some supposed Advantage: And it is false Selfishness alone, whether cool or passionate, which makes a Man resolutely pursue that End, be it ever so much in the Injury of another. But whereas, in common and ordinary Wickedness, this unreasonableness, this Partiality and Selfishness relates only, or chiefly, to the Temper and Passions, in the Characters we are now considering, it reaches to the Understanding, and influences the very Judgment \*. And, besides that general Want of Distrust


SERM.

X.



\* That peculiar Regard for ourselves which frequently produces this Partiality of Judgment in our own Favour, may have a quite contrary Effect, and occasions the utmost Diffidence and Distrust of Ourselves; were it only, as it may set us upon a more frequent and strict Survey and Review of our own Character and Behaviour. This Search or Recollection itself implies somewhat of Diffidence; and the Discoveries we make, what is brought to our View, may possibly increase it. Good-will to another may either blind our Judgment, so as to make us overlook his Faults; or it may put us upon exercising that Judgment with greater Strictness, to see whether he is so faultless and perfect as we wish him. If that peculiar Regard to Ourselves leads us to examine our own Character with this greater Severity, in order really to improve and grow better, it is the most commendable Turn of Mind possible, and can scarce be to Excess. But if, as every Thing hath its Counterfeit, we are so much employed about ourselves

SERM. Distrust and Diffidence concerning our own

X. Character, there are, you see, two Things,  which may thus prejudice and darken the Understanding itself: That Over-fondness for ourselves, which we are all so liable to; and also being under the Power of any particular Passion or Appetite, or engaged in any particular Pursuit. And these, especially the last of the two, may be in so great a Degree, as to influence our Judgment, even of other Persons and their Behaviour. Thus a Man, whose Temper is formed to Ambition or Covetousness, shall even approve of them sometimes in others.

THIS seems to be in a good Measure the Account of Self-partiality and Self-deceit, when traced up to its Original. Whether it be, or be not thought satisfactory, That there is such a Thing, is manifest; and that it is the Occasion of great Part of the unreasonable Behaviour of Men towards each other: That by means of it they palliate their Vices and Follies to themselves: and that it prevents

ourselves in order to disguise what is amiss, and to make a better Appearance; or if our Attention to ourselves has chiefly this Effect; it is liable to run up into the greatest Weakness and Excess, and is like all other Excesses its own Disappointment: For scarce any show themselves to Advantage, who are over sollicitous of doing so.



prevents their applying to themselves those SERM.  
Reproofs and Instructions, which they meet X.  
with either in Scripture or in moral and religious Discourses, though exactly suitable to the State of their own Mind, and the Course of their Behaviour. There is one Thing further to be added here, that the Temper we distinguish by Hardness of Heart with respect to others, joined with this Self-partiality, will carry a Man almost any Lengths of Wickedness, in the Way of Oppression hard Usage of others, and even to plain Injustice; without his having, from what appears, any real Sense at all of it. This indeed was not the general Character of *David*: For he plainly gave Scope to the Affections of Compassion and Good-will, as well as to his Passions of another Kind.

BUT as some Occasions and Circumstances lie more open to this Self-deceit, and give it greater Scope and Opportunities than others, these require to be particularly mentioned.

IT is to be observed then, that as there are express determinate Acts of Wickedness, such as Murder, Adultery, Theft: So on the other Hand, there are numberless Cases in which the Vice and Wickedness cannot be exactly

SERM. exactly defined; but consists in a certain  
 X. general Temper and Course of Action, or in  
 ~~~~~ the Neglect of some Duty, suppose Charity  
 or any other, whose Bounds and Degrees are
 not fixed. This is the very Province of Self-
 deceit and Self-partiality: Here it governs
 without Check or Controul. “ For what
 “ Commandment is there broken? Is there
 “ a Transgression where there is no Law?
 “ a Vice which cannot be defined?.

W H O E V E R will consider the whole
 Commerce of Humane Life, will see that a
 great Part, perhaps the greatest Part, of the
 Intercourse amongst Mankind, cannot be re-
 duced to fixed determinate Rules. Yet in
 these Cases there is a Right and a Wrong:
 A merciful, a liberal, a kind and compassio-
 nate Behaviour, which surely is our Duty;
 and an unmerciful contracted Spirit, an hard
 and oppressive Course of Behaviour, which
 is most certainly immoral and vitious. But
 who can define precisely, wherein that con-
 tracted Spirit and hard Usage of others con-
 sist, as Murder and Theft may be defined?
 There is not a Word in our Language, which
 expresses more detestable Wickedness than
Oppression: Yet the Nature of this Vice
 cannot be so exactly stated, nor the Bounds
 of

of it so determinately marked, as that we shall be able to say in all Instances, where rigid Right and Justness ends, and Oppression begins. In these Cases there is great Latitude left, for every one to determine for, and consequently to deceive himself. It is chiefly in these Cases, that Self-deceit comes in; as every one must see that there is much larger Scope for it here, than in express, single, determinate Acts of Wickedness. However it comes in with respect to the *Circumstances* attending the most gross and determinate Acts of Wickedness. Of this, the Story of *David*, now before us, affords the most astonishing Instance. It is really prodigious, to see a Man, before so remarkable for Virtue and Piety, going on deliberately from Adultery to Murder, with the same cool Contrivance, and, from what appears, with as little Disturbance, as a Man would endeavour to prevent the ill Consequences of a Mistake he had made in any common Matter. That total Insensibility of Mind with respect to those horrid Crimes, after the Commission of them, manifestly shews that he did some Way or other delude himself: And this could not be with respect to the Crimes themselves, they were so manifestly

SERM.

X.



SERM. feftly of the groffest Kind. What the parti-
 X. cular Circumstances were, with which he
 ~~~~~ extenuated them, and quieted and deceived  
 himself, is not related.

H A V I N G thus explained the Nature of internal Hypocrisy and Self-deceit, and remarked the Occasions upon which it exerts itself; there are several Things further to be observed concerning it: That all of the Sources, to which it was traced up, are sometimes observable together in one and the same Person: But that one of them is more remarkable, and to a higher Degree, in some, and others of them are so in others: That in general it is a complicated Thing; and may be in all different Degrees and Kinds: That the Temper itself is essentially in its own Nature vicious and immoral. It is Unfairness; it is Dishonesty; it is Falseness of Heart: And is therefore so far from extenuating Guilt, that it is itself the greatest of all Guilt in Proportion to the Degree it prevails; for it is a Corruption of the whole moral Character in its Principle. Our Understanding, and Sense of Good and Evil, is the Light and Guide of Life: *If therefore this Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great*

*upon Self-Deceit.*

193

*great is that Darkneſs?* \* For this Reason SERM.  
our Saviour puts an *evil Eye* as the direct X.  
opposite to a *ſingle Eye*; the Abſence of W  
that Simplicity, which theſe laſt Words im-  
ply, being itſelf evil and vitious. And whiſt  
Men are under the Power of this Temper,  
in Proportion ſtill to the Degree they are ſo,  
they are fortified on every Side againſt Con-  
viction: And when they hear the Vice and  
Folly of what is in Truth their own Courſe  
of Life, expoſed in the juſteſt and ſtrongeſt  
Manner, they will often aſſent to it, and  
even carry the Matter further; perſuading  
themſelves, one does not know how, but  
ſome Way or other perſuading themſelves,  
that they are out of the Caſe, and that it  
hath no Relation to them. Yet, notwith-  
ſtanding this, there *frequently appears* a Suſ-  
picion, that all is not right, or as it ſhould be;  
and perhaps there *is always* at Bottom ſome-  
what of this Sort. There are doubtleſs many  
Inſtances of the Ambitious, the Revengeful,  
the Covetous, and thoſe whom with too  
great Indulgence we only call the Men of  
Pleaſure, who will not allow themſelves to  
think how guilty they are, who explain and  
O argue

SERM. argue away their Guilt to Themselves : And  
 X. though they do really impose upon Them-  
 selves in some Measure, yet there are none  
 of them but have, if not a proper Knowledge,  
 yet at least, an implicit Suspicion, where the  
 Weakness lies, and what Part of their Beha-  
 viour they have Reason to wish unknown or  
 forgotten for ever. Truth, and real good  
 Sense, and thorough Integrity, carry along  
 with them a peculiar Consciousness of their  
 own Genuineness : There is a Feeling be-  
 longing to them, which does not accom-  
 pany their Counterfeits, Error, Folly, Half-  
 Honesty, partial and slight Regards to Vir-  
 tue and Right, so far only as they are con-  
 sistent with that Course of Gratification  
 which Men happen to be set upon. And,  
 if this be the Case, it is much the same as  
 if we should suppose a Man to have had a  
 general View of some Scene, enough to sa-  
 tisfy him that it was very disagreeable, and  
 then to shut his Eyes, that he might not have  
 a particular or distinct View of its several  
 Deformities. It is as easy to close the Eyes  
 of the Mind, as those of the Body : And the  
 former is more frequently done with Wilful-  
 ness, and yet not attended to, than the lat-  
 ter ; the Actions of the Mind being more  
 quick

quick and transient, than those of the Senses. SERM.  
This may be further illustrated by another X.  
Thing observable in ordinary Life. It is not  
uncommon for Persons, who run out their  
Fortunes, intirely to neglect looking into the  
State of their Affairs, and this from a general Knowledge, that the Condition of them is bad. These extravagant People are perpetually ruined before they themselves expected it: And they tell you for an Excuse, and tell you truly, that they did not, think they were so much in Debt, or that their Expences so far exceeded their Income. And yet no one will take this for an Excuse, who is sensible that their Ignorance of their particular Circumstances was owing to their general Knowledge of them; that is, their general Knowledge, that Matters were not well with them, prevented their looking into Particulars. There is somewhat of the like Kind with this in Respect to Morals, Virtue, and Religion. Men find that the Survey of themselves, their own Heart and Temper, their own Life and Behaviour, doth not afford them Satisfaction: Things are not as they should be: Therefore they turn away, will not go over Particulars, or look deeper, lest they should find more

SERM. amifs. For who would choofe to be put out  
 X. of Humour with himfelf? No one furely, if  
 it were not in order to mend, and to be more  
 thoroughly and better pleafed with himfelf  
 for the future.

I F this fincere Self-Enjoyment and Home-Satisfaction be thought defirable, and worth fome Pains and Diligence; the following Reflections will, I fuppofe, deferve your Attention; as what may be of Service and Affiftance to all who are in any Meafure honeftly difpofed, for avoiding that fatal Self-deceit, and towards getting acquainted with themfelves.

T H E *firft* is, that thofe who have never had any Suspicion of, who have never made Allowances for this Weaknefs in themfelves, who have never (if I may be allowed fuch a manner of fpeaking) caught themfelves in it, may almoft take for granted that they have been very much mifled by it. For confider: Nothing is more manifef, than that Affection and Paffion of all Kinds influence the Judgment. Now as we have naturally a greater Regard to ourfelves than to others, as the private Affection is more prevalent than the publick; the former will have proportionally a greater Influence up-



on the Judgment, upon our Way of considering Things. People are not backward in owning this Partiality of Judgment, in Cases of Friendship and natural Relation. The Reason is obvious, why is it not so readily acknowledged, when the Interest which misleads us is more confined, confined to ourselves: But we all take Notice of it in each other in these Cases. There is not any Observation more common, than that there is no judging of a Matter from hearing only one Side. This is not founded upon Supposition, at least it is not always, of a formed Design in the Relater to deceive: For it holds in Cases, where he expects that the Whole will be told over again by the other Side. But the Supposition, which this Observation is founded upon, is the very Thing now before us; namely, that Men are exceedingly prone to deceive themselves, and judge too favourably in every Respect, where Themselves, and their own Interest are concerned. Thus, though we have not the least Reason to suspect that such an interested Person hath any Intention to deceive us, yet we of Course make great Allowances for his having deceived himself. If this be general, almost universal, it is prodigious that every

SERM. Man can think himself an Exception, and  
 X. that he is free from this Self-partiality. The  
 direct contrary is the Truth. Every Man  
 may take for granted that he has a great deal  
 of it, till, from the strictest Observation up-  
 on himself, he finds particular Reason to think  
 otherwise.

*Secondly*, There is one easy and almost  
 sure Way to avoid being misled by this Self-  
 partiality, and to get acquainted with our  
 real Character : To have Regard to the suspi-  
 cious Part of it, and keep a steady Eye over  
 ourselves in that Respect. Suppose then a  
 Man fully satisfied with himself, and his own  
 Behaviour ; such an one, if you please, as  
 the Pharisee in the Gospel, or a better Man—  
 Well, but allowing this good Opinion you  
 have of yourself to be true, yet every one is  
 liable to be misrepresented. Suppose then  
 an Enemy were to set about defaming you,  
 what Part of your Character would he  
 single out ? What particular Scandal, think  
 you, would he be most likely to fix upon  
 you ? And what would the World be most  
 ready to believe ? There is scarce a Man  
 living but could, from the most transient  
 superficial View of himself, answer this  
 Question. What is that ill Thing, that faulty  
 Behaviour,

## upon Self-Deceit.


199

SERM.  
X.

Behaviour, which I am apprehensive an Enemy, who was thoroughly acquainted with me, would be most likely to lay to my Charge, and which the World would be most apt to believe? It is indeed possible that a Man may not be guilty in that Respect. All that I say is, let him in Plainness and Honesty fix upon that Part of his Character for a particular Survey and Reflection; and by this he will come to be acquainted, whether he be guilty or innocent in that Respect, and how far he is one or the other.

*Thirdly*, It would very much prevent our being misled by this Self-partiality, to reduce that practical Rule of our Saviour, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, even so do unto them*, to our Judgment, and Way of thinking. This Rule, you see, consists of two Parts. One is, to substitute another for yourself, when you take a Survey of any Part of your Behaviour, or consider what is proper and fit and reasonable for you to do upon any Occasion: The other Part is, that you substitute yourself in the room of another; consider yourself as the Person affected by such a Behaviour, or towards whom such an Action is done: And then you would not only see, but like-

SERM. wise feel, the Reasonableness or Unreasonableness of such an Action or Behaviour.

X.  But alas, the Rule itself may be dishonestly applied: There are Persons who have not Impartiality enough with respect to themselves, nor Regard enough for others, to be able to make a just Application of it. This just Application, if Men would honestly make it, is in Effect, all that I have been recommending; it is the whole Thing, the direct contrary to that inward Dishonesty as respecting our Intercourse with our Fellow-creatures. And even the Bearing this Rule in their Thoughts, may be of some Service; the Attempt thus to apply it, is an Attempt towards being fair and impartial, and may chance unawares to shew them to themselves, to shew them the Truth of the Case they are considering.

U P O N the whole it is manifest, that there is such a Thing as this Self-partiality and Self-deceit: That in some Persons it is to a Degree which would be thought incredible, were not the Instances before our Eyes; of which the Behaviour of *Davia* is perhaps the highest one possible, in a single particular Case; for there is not the least Appearance, that it reached his general

*upon Self-Deceit.*

201

ral Character: That we are almost all of us influenced by it in some Degree, and in some Respects: That therefore every one ought to have an Eye to and beware of it. And all that I have further to add upon this Subject is, that either there is a Difference between Right and Wrong, or there is not: Religion is true, or it is not. If it be not, there is no Reason for any Concern about it: But if it be true, it requires real Fairness of Mind and Honesty of Heart. And, if People will be wicked, they had better of the two be so from the common vitious Passions without such Refinements, than from this deep and calm Source of Delusion; which undermines the whole Principle of Good; darkens that Light, that *Candle of the Lord within*, which is to direct our Steps; and corrupts Conscience, which is the Guide of Life.

SERM.  
X.



S E R M O N



---

---

# SERMON XI.

*Upon the Love of our Neighbour.*

Preached on *Advent Sunday.*

---

R O M. xiii. 9.

*And if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

**I**T is commonly observed, that there is a Disposition in Men to complain of the Vitioufness and Corruption of the Age in which they live, as greater than that of former ones; which is usually followed with this further Observation, that Mankind has been in that respect much the same in all Times. Now not to determine whether this last be not contradicted by the Accounts  
of

SERM.  
XI.  
~

SERM. of History ; thus much can scarce be doubt-  
 XI. ed, that Vice and Folly takes different Turns,  
 ~ and some particular Kinds of it are more  
 open and avowed in some Ages than in  
 others : And, I suppose, it may be spoken of  
 as very much the Distinction of the present  
 to profess a contracted Spirit, and greater  
 Regards to Self-interest, than appears to have  
 been done formerly. Upon this Account  
 it seems worth while to inquire, whether  
 private Interest is likely to be promoted in  
 Proportion to the Degree in which Self-love  
 engrosses us, and prevails over all other Prin-  
 ciples ; *or whether the contracted Affection*  
*may not possibly be so prevalent as to disappoint*  
*itself, and even contradict its own End, private*  
*Good.*

AND since further, there is generally  
 thought to be some peculiar Kind of Con-  
 trariety between Self-love and the Love of  
 our Neighbour, between the Pursuit of  
 publick and of private Good ; infomuch  
 that when you are recommending one of  
 these, you are supposed to be speaking a-  
 gainst the other ; and from hence arises a  
 secret Prejudice against, and frequently open  
 Scorn of all Talk of publick Spirit, and  
 real Good-will to our Fellow-creatures ; it  
 will



*Love of our Neighbour.* 205

will be necessary to *inquire what Respect Benevolence hath to Self-love, and the Pursuit of private Interest, to the Pursuit of publick*: Or whether there be any Thing of that peculiar Inconsistence and Contrariety between them, over and above what there is between Self-love and other Passions and particular Affections, and their respective Pursuits.

SERM.  
XI.



THESE Inquiries, it is hoped, may be favourably attended to: For there shall be all possible Concessions made to the favourite Passion, which hath so much allowed to it, and whose Cause is so universally pleaded: It shall be treated with the utmost Tenderneſs and Concern for its Interests.

IN order to this, as well as to determine the forementioned Questions, it will be necessary to *consider the Nature, the Object and End of that Self-love, as distinguished from other Principles or Affections in the Mind, and their respective Objects.*

EVERY Man hath a general Desire of his own Happiness; and likewise a Variety of particular Affections, Passions and Appetites to particular external Objects. The former proceeds from, or is Self-love; and seems inseparable from all sensible Creatures, who can reflect upon themselves and their own  
Interest

SERM. Interest or Happiness, so as to have that Interest an Object to their Minds: What is to be said of the latter is, that they proceed from, or together make up that particular Nature, according to which Man is made. The Object the former pursues, is somewhat internal, our own Happiness, Enjoyment, Satisfaction; whether we have, or have not, a distinct particular Perception what it is, or wherein it consists: The Objects of the latter are this or that particular external Thing, which the Affections tend towards, and of which it hath always a particular Idea or Perception. The Principle we call Self-love never seeks any Thing external for the sake of the Thing, but only as a Means of Happiness or Good: Particular Affections rest in the external Things themselves. One belongs to Man as a reasonable Creature reflecting upon his own Interest or Happiness. The other, though quite distinct from Reason, are as much a Part of Humane Nature.

T H A T all particular Appetites and Passions are towards *external Things themselves*, distinct from the *Pleasure arising from them*, is manifested from hence; that there could not be this Pleasure, were it not for that  
prior

prior Suitableness between the Object and the Passion : There could be no Enjoyment or Delight from one Thing more than another, from eating Food more than from swallowing a Stone, if there were not an Affection or Appetite to one Thing more than another.

SERM.  
XI.  
~

EVERY particular Affection, even the Love of our Neighbour, is as really our own Affection, as Self-love ; and the Pleasure arising from its Gratification is as much my own Pleasure, as the Pleasure Self-love would have, from knowing I myself should be happy some time hence, would be my own Pleasure. And if, because every particular Affection is a Man's own, and the Pleasure arising from its Gratification his own Pleasure, or Pleasure to himself, such particular Affection must be called Self-love ; according to this Way of speaking, no Creature whatever can possibly act but meerly from Self-love ; and every Action and every Affection whatever is to be resolved up into this one Principle. But then this is not the Language of Mankind : Or if it were, we should want Words to express the Difference, between the Principle of an Action, proceeding from cool Consideration that it will be

SERM. be to my own Advantage; and an Action,  
 XI. suppose of Revenge, or of Friendship, by  
 ~ which a Man runs upon certain Ruin, to do  
 Evil or Good to another. It is manifest the  
 Principles of these Actions are totally different,  
 and so want different Words to be distin-  
 guished by: All that they agree in is, that  
 they both proceed from, and are done to gra-  
 tify an Inclination in a Man's Self. But the  
 Principle or Inclination in one Case is Self-  
 love; in the other, Hatred or Love of another.  
 There is then a Distinction between the cool  
 Principle of Self-love, or general Desire of  
 our own Happiness, as one Part of our Na-  
 ture, and one Principle of Action; and the  
 particular Affections towards particular exter-  
 nal Objects, as another Part of our Nature,  
 and another Principle of Action. How much  
 soever therefore is to be allowed for Self-love,  
 yet it cannot be allowed to be the Whole of  
 our inward Constitution; because, you see,  
 there are other Parts or Principles which  
 come into it.

FURTHER, private Happiness or Good  
 is all which Self-love can make us desire, or  
 be concerned about: In having this consists  
 its Gratification: It is an Affection to our-  
 selves; a Regard to our own Interest, Hap-  
 piness



pineness and private Good : And in the Proportion a Man hath this, he is interested, or a Lover of himself. Let this be kept in Mind ; because there is commonly, as I shall presently have Occasion to observe, another Sense put upon these Words. On the other Hand, particular Affections tend towards particular external Things : These are their Objects : Having these is their End : In this consists their Gratification : No Matter whether it be, or be not, upon the Whole, our Interest or Happiness. An Action done from the former of these Principles is called an interested Action. An Action proceeding from any of the latter has its Denomination of passionate, ambitious, friendly, revengeful, or any other, from the particular Appetite or Affection from which it proceeds. Thus Self-love as one Part of Humane Nature, and the several particular Principles as the other Part, are, Themselves, their Objects and Ends, stated and shewn.

FROM hence it will be easy to see, how far, and in what Ways, each of these can contribute and be subservient to the private Good of the Individual. Happiness does not consist in Self-love. The Desire of Happiness is

## 210 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. no more the Thing itself, than the Desire of  
 XI. Riches is the Possession or Enjoyment of  
 ~~~~~ them. People may love themselves with  
 the most entire and unbounded Affection,
 and yet be extremely miserable. Neither
 can Self-love any way help them out, but
 by setting them on Work to get rid of the
 Causes of their Misery, to gain or make use
 of those Objects which are by Nature a-
 dapted to afford Satisfaction. Happiness or
 Satisfaction consists only in the Enjoyment
 of those Objects, which are by Nature suited
 to our several particular Appetites, Passi-
 ons and Affections. So that if Self-love
 wholly engrosses us, and leaves no room for
 any other Principle, there can be abso-
 lutely no such Thing at all as Happiness, or
 Enjoyment of any Kind whatever; since
 Happiness consists in the Gratification of par-
 ticular Passions, which supposes the having
 of them. Self-love then does not consti-
 tute *This* or *That* to be our Interest or
 Good; but, our Interest or Good being con-
 stituted by Nature and supposed, Self-love
 only puts us upon obtaining and securing it.
 Therefore, if it be possible, that Self-love
 may prevail and exert itself in a Degree
 or Manner which is not subservient to
 this.

Love of our Neighbour. 211

this End; then it will not follow, that our Interest will be promoted in Proportion to the Degree in which that Principle engrosses us, and prevails over others. Nay further, the private and contracted Affection, when it is not subservient to this End private Good, may, for any thing that appears, have a direct contrary Tendency and Effect. And if we will consider the Matter, we shall see that it often really has. *Disengagement* is absolutely necessary to enjoyment: And a Person may have so steady and fixed an Eye upon his own Interest, whatever he places it in, as may hinder him from *attending* to many Gratifications within his Reach, which others have their Minds *free* and *open* to. Over-fondness for a Child is not generally thought to be for its Advantage: And, if there be any Guess to be made from Appearances, surely that Character we call Selfish is not the most promising for Happiness. Such a Temper may plainly be, and exert itself in a Degree and Manner which may give unnecessary and useless Sollicitude and Anxiety, in a Degree and Manner which may prevent obtaining the Means and Materials of Enjoyment, as well as the making Use of them. Immoderate Self-love does very

SERM.

XI.



SERM. ill consult its own Interest: And, how much
 XI. soever a Paradox it may appear, it is cer-
 ~~~~~ tainly true, that even from Self-love we  
 should endeavour to get over all inordinate  
 Regard to, and Consideration of ourselves.  
 Every one of our Passions and Affections  
 hath its natural Stint and Bound, which may  
 easily be exceeded; whereas our Enjoyments  
 can possibly be but in a determinate Mea-  
 sure and Degree. Therefore such Excess of  
 the Affection, since it cannot procure any  
 Enjoyment, must in all Cases be useless; but  
 is generally attended with Inconveniences,  
 and often is downright Pain and Misery.  
 This holds as much with Regard to Self-love  
 as to all other Affections. The natural De-  
 gree of it, so far as it sets us on work to  
 gain and make use of the Materials of Satis-  
 faction, may be to our real Advantage;  
 but beyond or besides this, it is in several  
 Respects an Inconvenience and Disadvan-  
 tage. Thus it appears, that private Interest  
 is so far from being likely to be promoted  
 in Proportion to the Degree in which Self-  
 love engrosses us, and prevails over all other  
 Principles; that *the contracted Affection*  
*may be so prevalent as to disappoint itself,*  
 and



*Love of our Neighbour.* 213

*and even contradict its own End, private Good.* SERM.  
XI.

“ B U T who, except the most fordidly  
“ Covetous, ever thought there was any  
“ Rivalship between the Love of Greatness,  
“ Honour, Power, or between sensual Ap-  
“ petites, and Self-love ? No, there is a per-  
“ fect Harmony between them. It is by  
“ Means of these particular Appetites and  
“ Affections that Self-love is gratified in En-  
“ joyment, Happiness and Satisfaction. The  
“ Competition and Rivalship is between Self-  
“ love, and the Love of our Neighbour :  
“ That Affection which leads us out of our-  
“ selves, makes us regardless of our own  
“ Interest, and substitute that of another in  
“ its stead.” Whether then there be any  
peculiar Competition and Contrariety in this  
Case, shall now be considered.

S E L F-L O V E and Interestedness was sta-  
ted to consist in or be an Affection to our-  
selves, a Regard to our own private Good :  
It is therefore distinct from Benevolence,  
which is an Affection to the Good of our  
Fellow-creatures. But that Benevolence is  
distinct from, that is, not the same Thing with  
Self-love, is no Reason for its being looked  
upon with any peculiar Suspicion ; because

SERM. every Principle whatever, by means of which  
 XI. Self-love is gratified, is distinct from it: And  
 ~~~~~ all Things which are distinct from each other,  
 are equally so. A Man has an Affection or
 Aversion to another: That one of these
 tends to, and is gratified by doing Good,
 that the other tends to, and is gratified by
 doing Harm, does not in the least alter the
 Respect which either one or the other of these
 inward Feelings has to Self-love. We use
 the Word *Property* so as to exclude any
 other Persons having an Interest in that of
 which we say a particular Man has the
 Property. And we often use the Word
Selfish so as to exclude in the same Manner
 all Regards to the Good of others. But the
 Cases are not parallel: For though That
 Exclusion is really Part of the Idea of Pro-
 perty; yet such positive Exclusion, or bring-
 ing this peculiar Disregard to the Good of
 Others into the Idea, or Self-love, is in rea-
 lity adding to the Idea of changing it from
 what it was before stated to consist in, name-
 ly, in an Affection to Ourselves *. This
 being the whole Idea of Self-love, it can no
 otherwise exclude Good-will or Love of O-
 thers, than merely by not including it, no
 otherwise,

* p. 208.

Love of our Neighbour.

215


otherwise, than it excludes Love of Arts or Reputation, or of any Thing else. Neither on the other Hand does Benevolence, any more than Love of Arts or of Reputation, exclude Self-love. Love of our Neighbour then has just the same Respect to, is no more distant from Self-love, than Hatred of our Neighbour, or than Love or Hatred of any Thing else. Thus the Principles, from which Men rush upon certain Ruin for the Destruction of an Enemy, and for the Preservation of a Friend, have the same Respect to the private Affection, and are equally interested, or equally disinterested: And it is of no Avail, whether they are said to be one or the other. Therefore to those who are shocked to hear Virtue spoken of as disinterested, it may be allowed that it is indeed absurd to speak thus of it; unless Hatred, several particular Instances of Vice, and all the common Affections and Aversions in Mankind, are acknowledged to be disinterested too. Is there any less Inconsistence, between the Love of inanimate Things, or of Creatures meerly sensitive, and Self-love; than between Self-love, and the Love of our Neighbour? Is Desire of and Delight in the Happiness of another any more a Diminution of



216 *A S E R M O N upon the*

SERM. Self-love, than desire of and Delight in the
 XI. Esteem of another? They are both equally
 ~~~~~ Desire of and Delight in somewhat external  
 to ourselves: Either both or neither are so.  
 The Object of Self-love is expressed in the  
 Term Self: And every Appetite of Sense,  
 and every particular Affection of the Heart,  
 are equally interested or disinterested, be-  
 cause the Objects of them all are equally  
 Self or somewhat else. Whatever Ridicule  
 therefore the Mention of a disinterested  
 Principle or Action may be supposed to lie  
 open to, must, upon the Matter being thus  
 stated, relate to Ambition, and every Ap-  
 petite and particular Affection, as much as  
 to Benevolence. And indeed all the Ridi-  
 cule, and all the grave Perplexity, of which  
 this Subject hath had its full Share, is meerly  
 from Words. The most intelligible Way of  
 speaking of it seems to be this: That Self-  
 love, and the Actions done in Consequence  
 of it (for these will presently appear to be  
 the same as to this Question) are interested;  
 that particular Affections towards external  
 Objects, and the Actions done in conse-  
 quence of those Affections, are not so. But  
 every one is at Liberty to use Words as he  
 pleases. All that is here insisted upon is,  
 that

*Love of our Neighbour.* 217

that Ambition, Revenge, Benevolence, all SERM.  
particular Passions whatever, and the Acti- X.I  
ons they produce, are equally interested or   
disinterested.

**T H U S** it appears that there is no peculiar Contrariety between Self-love and Benevolence; no greater Competition between these, than between any other particular Affections and Self-love. This relates to the Affections themselves. Let us now see whether there be any peculiar Contrariety between the respective Courses of Life which these Affections lead to; whether there be any greater Competition between the Pursuit of private and of publick Good, than between any other particular Pursuits and that of private Good.

**T H E R E** seems no other Reason to suspect that there is any such peculiar Contrariety, but only that the Courses of Action which Benevolence leads to, has a more direct Tendency to promote the Good of Others, than that Course of Action which Love of Reputation suppose, or any other particular Affection leads to. But that any Affection tends to the Happiness of Another, does not hinder its tending to one's own Happiness too. That Others enjoy the Benefit

SERM.

XI.



nefit of the Air and the Light of the Sun, does not hinder, but that these are as much one's own private Advantage now, as they would be if we had the Property of them exclusive of all Others. So a Pursuit which tends to promote the Good of another, yet may have as great Tendency to promote private Interest, as a Pursuit which does not tend to the Good of Another at all, or which is Mischievous to him. All particular Affections whatever, Resentment, Benevolence, Love of Arts, equally lead to a Course of Action for their own Gratification, *i. e.* the Gratification of Ourselves; and the Gratification of each gives Delight: So far then 'tis manifest they have all the same Respect to private Interest. Now take into Consideration further, concerning these three Pursuits, that the End of the first is the Harm, of the second, the Good of Another, of the last, somewhat indifferent; and is there any Necessity, that these additional Considerations should alter the Respect, which we before saw these three Pursuits had to private Interest; or render any one of them less conducive to it, than any other? Thus One Man's Affection is to Honour as his End; in order to obtain

*Love of our Neighbour.* 219

tain which he thinks no Pains too great. SERM.  
Suppose another, with such a Singularity of XI.  
Mind, as to have the same Affection to pub-  
lick Good as his End, which he endeavours  
with the same Labour to obtain. In Case  
of Success, surely the Man of Benevolence  
hath as great Enjoyment as the Man of Am-  
bition; they both equally having the End,  
their Affections, in the same Degree tend-  
ed to: But in Case of Disappointment, the  
benevolent Man has clearly the Advantage;  
since endeavouring to do Good considered  
as a Virtuous Pursuit, is gratified by its own  
Consciousness, *i. e.* is in a Degree its own  
Reward.

AND as to these two, or Benevolence and  
any other particular Passions whatever, con-  
sidered in a further View, as forming a gene-  
ral Temper, which more or less disposes  
us for Enjoyment of all the common Bless-  
ings of Life, distinct from their own Grati-  
fication: Is Benevolence less the Temper of  
Tranquillity and Freedom than Ambition or  
Covetousness? Does the benevolent Man  
appear less easy with himself, from his Love  
to his Neighbour? Does he less relish his  
Being? Is there any peculiar Gloom seated  
on his Face? Is his Mind less open to Enter-  
tainment,

SERM. tainment, to any particular Gratification?

XI. Nothing is more manifest, than that being in  
 ~~~~~ Good-humour, which is Benevolence whilst  
 it lasts, is itself the Temper of Satisfaction and
 Enjoyment.

SUPPOSE then a Man sitting down to consider how he might become most easy to himself, and attain the greatest Pleasure he could; all that which is his real natural Happiness. This can only consist in the Enjoyment of those Objects, which are by Nature adapted to our several Faculties. These particular Enjoyments make up the Sum Total of our Happiness: And they are supposed to arise from Riches, Honours, and the Gratification of sensual Appetites: Be it so: Yet none profess themselves so compleatly happy in these Enjoyments, but that there is Room left in the Mind for others, if they were presented to them: Nay these, as much as they engage us, are not thought so high, but that Humane Nature is capable even of greater. Now there have been Persons in all Ages, who have profess'd that they found Satisfaction in the Exercise of Charity, in the Love of their Neighbour, in endeavouring to promote the Happiness of all they had to do with, and in the Pursuit
 of

Love of our Neighbour. 221

of what is just and right and good, as the general Bent of their Mind, and End of their Life; and that doing an Action of Baseness or Cruelty, would be as great Violence to *their* Self, as much breaking in upon their Nature, as any external Force. Persons of this Character would add, if they might be heard, that they consider themselves as acting in the View of an infinite Being, who is in a much higher Sense the Object of Reverence and of Love, than all the World besides; and therefore they could have no more Enjoyment from a wicked Action done under his Eye, than the Persons to whom they are making their Apology could, if all Mankind were the Spectators of it; and that the Satisfaction of approving themselves to His unerring Judgment, to whom they thus refer all their Actions, is a more continued settled Satisfaction than any this World can afford; as also that they have, no less than Others, a Mind free and open to all the common innocent Gratifications of it, such as they are. And if we go no further, does there appear any Absurdity in this? Will any one take upon him to say, that a Man cannot find his Account in this general Course of Life, as much as in the most unbounded Ambition,

SERM.


XI.



SERM. Ambition, and the Excesses of Pleasure? Or
 XI. that such a Person has not consulted so well
 ~~~~~ for himself, for the Satisfaction and Peace of  
 his own Mind, as the ambitious or dissolute  
 Man? And though the Consideration, that  
 God himself will in the End justify their  
 Taste, and support their Cause, is not formally  
 to be insisted upon here; yet thus much  
 comes in, that all Enjoyments whatever are  
 much more clear and unmixed from the Assu-  
 rance that they will end well. Is it certain  
 then that there is nothing in these Pretensions  
 to Happiness? especially when there are not  
 wanting Persons, who have supported them-  
 selves with Satisfaction of this Kind in Sick-  
 ness, Poverty, Disgrace, and in the very  
 Pangs of Death; whereas it is manifest all  
 other Enjoyments fail in these Circumstances.  
 This surely looks suspicious of having some-  
 what in it. Self-love methinks should be a-  
 larmed. May she not possibly pass over  
 greater Pleasures, than those she is so wholly  
 taken up with?

THE short of the Matter is no more than  
 this. Happiness consists in the Gratification  
 of certain Affections, Appetites, Passions,  
 with Objects which are by Nature adapted  
 to them. Self-love may indeed set us on  
 work

*Love of our Neighbour.* 223

work to gratify these: But Happiness or SERM. XI.   
Enjoyment has no immediate Connection with Self-love, but arises from such Gratification alone. Love of our Neighbour is one of those Affections. This, considered as a *virtuous Principle*, is gratified by a Consciousness of *endeavouring* to promote the Good of others; but considered as a natural Affection, its Gratification consists in the actual Accomplishment of this Endeavour, Now Indulgence or Gratification of this Affection, whether in that Consciousness, or this Accomplishment, has the same Respect to Interest, as Indulgence of any other Affection; they equally proceed from or do not proceed from Self-love, they equally include or equally exclude this Principle. Thus it appears, that *Benevolence and the Pursuit of publick Good hath at least as great Respect to Self-love and the Pursuit of private Good, as any other particular Passions, and their respective Pursuits.*

NEITHER is Covetousness, whether as a Temper or Pursuit, any Exception to this. For if by Covetousness is meant the Desire and Pursuit of Riches for their own Sake, without any Regard to, or Consideration of the Uses of them; this hath as little to do with

SERM. with Self-love, as Benevolence hath. But by  
 XI. this Word is usually meant, not such Mad-  
 ~~~~~ nefs and total Distraction of Mind, but im-  
 moderate Affection to and Pursuit of Riches
 as Possessions in order to some further End:
 namely, Satisfaction, Interest, or Good.
 This therefore is not a particular Affection,
 or particular Pursuit, but it is the general
 Principle of Self-love, and the general Pur-
 suit of our own Interest; for which Reason,
 the Word Selfish, is by every one appro-
 priated to this Temper and Pursuit. Now
 as it is ridiculous to assert, that Self-love
 and the Love of our Neighbour are the
 same; so neither is it asserted, that following
 these different Affections hath the same Ten-
 dency and Respect to our own Interest. The
 Comparison is not between Self-love and the
 Love of our Neighbour; between Pursuit
 of our own Interest, and the Interest of
 others: But between the several particular
 Affections in Humane Nature, towards ex-
 ternal Objects, as one Part of the Compa-
 rison; and the one particular Affection to
 the Good of our Neighbour, as the other
 Part of it: And it has been shewn, that all
 these have the same Respect to Self-love and
 private Interest.

T H E R E

Love of our Neighbour.

225

SERM.
XI.

T H E R E is indeed frequently an Incon-
sistence or Interfering, between Self-love or
private Interest, and the several particular
Appetites, Passions, Affections, or the Pur-
suits they lead to. But this Competition or
Interfering is meerly accidental; and hap-
pens much oftner between Pride, Revenge,
sensual Gratifications, and private Interest,
than between private Interest and Benevo-
lence. For nothing is more common, than
to see Men give themselves up to a Passion
or an Affection to their known Prejudice
and Ruin, and in direct contradiction to
manifest and real Interest, and the loudest
Calls of Self-love: Whereas the seeming Com-
petitions and Interfering, between Benevo-
lence and private Interest, relate much more
to the Materials or Means of Enjoyment,
than to Enjoyment itself. There is often an
interfering in the former, when there is none
in the latter. Thus as to Riches: So much
Money as a Man gives away, so much less
will remain in his Possession. Here is a real
interfering. But though a Man cannot pos-
sibly give without lessening his Fortune, yet
there are Multitudes might give without les-
sening their own Enjoyment; because they
may have more than they can turn to any
real

226 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. real Use or Advantage to themselves. Thus,
 XI. the more Thought and Time any one employs about the Interests and Good of others, he must necessarily have less to attend his own; but he may have so ready and large a Supply of his own Wants, that such Thought might be really useless to himself, though of great Service and Assistance to Others.

THE general Mistake, that there is some greater Inconsistence between endeavouring to promote the Good of Another and Self-interest, than between Self-interest and pursuing any Thing else, seems, as hath already been hinted, to arise from our Notions of Property; and to be carried on by this Property's being supposed to be itself our Happiness or Good. People are so very much taken up with this one Subject, that they seem from it to have formed a general way of thinking, which they apply to other Things that they have nothing to do with. Hence, in a confused and slight Way, it might well be taken for granted, that Another's having no Interest in an Affection (*i. e.* his Good not being the Object of it) renders, as one may speak, the Proprietor's
 Interest

Love of our Neighbour. 227

Interest in it greater; and that if Another had an Interest in it, this would render his less, or occasion that such Affection could not be so friendly to Self-love, or conducive to private Good, as an Affection or Pursuit which has not a Regard to the Good of Another. This I say might be taken for granted, whilst it was not attended to, that the Object of every particular Affection is equally somewhat external to Ourselves; and whether it be the Good of another Person, or whether it be any other external Thing, makes no Alteration with Regard to its being one's own Affection, and the Gratification of it one's own private Enjoyment. And so far as 'tis taken for granted, that barely having the Means and Materials of Enjoyment is what constitutes Interest and Happiness; that our Interest or Good consists in Possessions themselves, in having the Property of Riches, Houses, Lands, Gardens, not in the Enjoyment of them; so far 'twill even more strongly be taken for granted, in the Way already explained, that an Affection's conducing to the Good of another, must even necessarily occasion it to conduce less to private Good, if not to be positively

SERM.
XI.



Q 2

detrimental

SERM. detrimental to it. For, if Property and Happiness are one and the same Thing, as by increasing the Property of another, you lessen your own Property, so by promoting the Happiness of another, you must lessen your own Happiness. But whatever occasioned the Mistake, I hope it has been fully proved to be one; as it has been proved, that there is no peculiar Rivalship or Competition between Self-love and Benevolence: that as there may be a Competition between these two, so there may also between any particular Affection whatever and Self-love; that every particular Affection, Benevolence among the rest, is subservient to Self-love by being the Instrument of private Enjoyment; and that in one Respect Benevolence contributes more to private Interest, *i. e.* Enjoyment or Satisfaction, than any other of the particular common Affections, as it is in a Degree its own Gratification.

A N D to all these Things may be added, That Religion, from whence arises our strongest Obligation to Benevolence, is so far from disowning the Principle of Self-love, that it often addresses itself to that very Principle, and always to the Mind in that State when Reason presides; and there can

Love of our Neighbour. 229

SERM.

XI.

no Access be had to the Understanding, but by convincing Men, that the Course of Life we would persuade them to is not contrary to their Interest. It may be allowed, without any Prejudice to the Cause of Virtue and Religion, that our Ideas of Happiness and Misery are of all our Ideas the nearest and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, that they ought to prevail over those of Order, and Beauty, and Harmony, and Proportion, if there should ever be, as it is impossible there ever should be, any Inconsistence between them: Though these last too, as expressing the Fitness of Actions, are real as Truth itself. Let it be allowed, though Virtue or moral Rectitude does indeed consist in Affection to and Pursuit of what is Right and Good, as such; yet, that when we sit down in a cool Hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other Pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our Happiness, or at least not contrary to it.

COMMON Reason and Humanity will have some influence upon Mankind, whatever becomes of Speculations: But, so far as the Interests of Virtue depend upon the Theory of it being secured from open Scorn,

230 A S E R M O N *upon the*

SERM. so far its very Being in the World depends
 XI. upon its appearing to have no Contrariety to
 private Interest and Self-love. The foregoing
 Observations, therefore, it is hoped, may
 have gained a little Ground in Favour of the
 Precept before us; the particular Explanation
 of which shall be the Subject of the next
 Discourse.

I WILL conclude at present, with observing the peculiar Obligation which we are under to Virtue and Religion, as enforced in the Verses following the Text, in the Epistle for the Day, from our Saviour's coming into the World. *The Night is far spent, the Day is at Hand; let us therefore cast off the Works of Darknefs, and let us put on the Armour of Light, &c.* The Meaning and Force of which Exhortation is, that Christianity lays us under new Obligations to a good Life, as by it the Will of God is more clearly revealed, and as it affords additional Motives to the Practice of it, over and above those which arise out of the Nature of Virtue and Vice; I might add, as our Saviour has set us a perfect Example of Goodness in our own Nature. Now Love and Charity is plainly the Thing in which he hath placed his Religion; in which therefore,

Love of our Neighbour.

231

fore, as we have any Pretence to the Name of Christians, we must place ours. He hath at once injoined it upon us by Way of Command with peculiar Force; and by his Example, as having undertaken the Work of our Salvation out of pure Love and Good-will to Mankind. The Endeavour to set home this Example upon our Minds is a very proper Employment of this Season, which is bringing on the Festival of his Birth: Which as it may teach us many excellent Lessons of Humility, Resignation, and Obedience to the Will of God; so there is none it recommends with greater Authority, Force and Advantage, than this of Love and Charity; since it was *for us Men, and for our Salvation, that he came down from Heaven, and was incarnate, and was made Man*; that he might teach us our Duty, and more especially that he might enforce the Practice of it, reform Mankind, and finally bring us to that *eternal Salvation*, of which *he is the Author to all those that obey him.*

SERM.
XI.




S E R M O N XII.

Upon the Love of our Neighbour.

R O M. xiii. 9.

And if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.

HAVING already removed the Pre-SERM.
judices against publick Spirit, or the XII.
Love of our Neighbour, on the Side 
of private Interest and Self-love; I proceed
to the particular Explanation of the Precept
before us, by shewing, *Who is our Neighbour:*
In what Sense we are required to love him
as ourselves: The Influence such Love would
have upon our Behaviour in Life: And lastly,
How this Commandment comprehends in it all
others.

I. T H E

234 *A S E R M O N upon the*

SERM. I. THE Objects and due Extent of this
 XII. Affection will be understood by attending to
 ~~~~~ the Nature of it, and to the Nature and Cir-  
 cumstances of Mankind in this World. The  
 Love of our Nighbour is the same with  
 Charity, Benevolence, or Good-will: It is  
 an Affection to the Good and Happiness of  
 our Fellow-creatures. This implies in it a  
 Disposition to produce Happiness: And this  
 is the simple Notion of Goodness, which  
 appears so amiable wherever we meet with  
 it. From hence it is easy to see, that the  
 Perfection of Goodness consists in Love to  
 the whole Universe. This is the Perfection  
 of Almighty God.

BUT as Man is so much limited in his  
 Capacity, as so small a Part of the Creation  
 comes under his Notice and Influence, and  
 as we are not used to consider Things in so  
 general a Way; it is not to be thought of,  
 that the Universe should be the Object of  
 Benevolence to such Creatures as we are.  
 Thus in that Precept of our Saviour, \* *Be  
 ye perfect even as your Father, which is in  
 Heaven is perfect*, the Perfection of the Di-  
 vine Goodness is proposed to our Imitation  
 as it is promiscuous, and extends to the Evil  
 as

\* Matth. v. 48.

*Love of our Neighbour.* 235

SERM.

XII.

as well as the Good ; not as it is absolutely universal, Imitation of it in this Respect being plainly beyond us. The Object is too vast. For this Reason moral Writers also have substituted a less general Object for our Benevolence, Mankind. But this likewise is an Object too general, and very much out of our View. Therefore Persons more practical, have, instead of Mankind, put our Country ; and made the Principle of Virtue, of Humane Virtue, to consist in the intire uniform Love of our Country : And this is what we call a publick Spirit ; which in Men of publick Stations is the Character of a Patriot. But this is speaking to the upper Part of the World, Kingdoms and Governments are large ; and the Sphere of Action of far the greatest Part of Mankind is much narrower than the Government they live under : Or however, common Men do not consider their Actions as affecting the whole Community of which they are Members. There plainly is wanting a less general and nearer Object of Benevolence for the Bulk of Men, than that of their Country. Therefore the Scripture, not being a Book of Theory and Speculation, but a plain Rule of Life for Mankind, has

236 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. has with the utmost possible Propriety put the  
 XII. Principle of Virtue upon the Love of our  
 ~~~~~ Neighbour ; which is that Part of the Uni-  
 verse, that Part of Mankind, that Part of our
 Country, which comes under our immediate
 Notice, Acquaintance and Influence, and
 with which we have to do.

T H I S is plainly the true Account or Rea-
 son, why our Saviour places the Principle of
 Virtue in the Love of our *Neighbour* ; and the
 Account itself shows who are comprehended
 under that Relation.

II. L E T us now consider in what Sense
 we are commanded to love our Neighbour *as
 ourselves*.

T H I S Precept, in its first Delivery by our
 Saviour, is thus introduced : *Thou shalt love
 the Lord thy God with all thine Heart,
 with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength ;
 and thy Neighbour as thyself*. These very
 different Manners of Expression do not lead
 our Thoughts to the same Measure or De-
 gree of Love, common to both Objects ; but
 to one, peculiar to each. Supposing then
 which is to be supposed, a distinct Meaning
 and Propriety in the Words, *as thyself* ;
 the Precept we are considering will admit of
 any of these Senses : That we bear the *same
 Kind*

Love of our Neighbour. 237

Kind of Affection to our Neighbour, as we do to ourselves: Or, that the Love we bear to our Neighbour should have some certain Proportion or other to Self-love: Or, lastly, that it should bear the particular Proportion of Equality, that it be in the same Degree.

SERM.
XII.

First, The Precept may be understood as requiring only, that we have the *same Kind of Affection to our Fellow-creatures, as to ourselves: That, as every Man has the Principle of Self-love, which disposes him to avoid Misery, and consult his own Happiness; so we should cultivate the Affection of Good-will to our Neighbour, and that it should influence us to have the same Kind of Regard to him. This at least must be commanded: And this will not only prevent our being injurious to him, but will also put us upon promoting his Good. There are Blessings in Life, which we share in common with others; Peace, Plenty, Freedom, healthful Seasons. But real Benevolence to our Fellow-creatures would give us the Notion of a common Interest in a stricter Sense: For in the Degree we love one another, his Interest, his Joys and Sorrows, are our own. It is from Self-love that we form the Notion of private Good, and consider it as our own:*

SERM. OWN: Love of our Neighbour would teach
 XII. us thus to appropriate to ourselves his Good
 and Well-fare; to consider ourselves as hav-
 ing a real Share in his Happiness. Thus
 the Principle of Benevolence would be an
 Advocate within our own Breasts, to take
 care of the Interests of our Fellow-Creatures
 in all the interfering and Competitions
 which cannot but be, from the Imperfection
 of our Nature, and the State we are in. It
 would likewise, in some Measure, lessen that
 interfering; and hinder Men from forming
 so strong a Notion of private Good, exclusive
 of the Good of others, as we commonly do.
 Thus, as the private Affection makes us in
 a peculiar Manner sensible of Humanity,
 Justice, or Injustice, when exercised towards
 ourselves; Love of our Neighbour would
 give us the same Kind of Sensibility in his
 Behalf. This would be the greatest Security
 of our uniform Obedience to that most
 equitable Rule; *Whatsoever ye would that
 Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto
 them.*

A L L this is indeed no more than that we
 should have a real Love to our Neighbour:
 But then, which is to be observed, the
 Words, *as thyself*, express this in the most
 distinct



distinct Manner, and determine the Precept to relate to the Affection itself, The Advantage, which this Principle of Benevolence has over other remote Considerations, is that it is itself the Temper of Virtue; and likewise, that it is the chief, nay the only effectual Security of our performing the several Offices of Kindness, we owe to our Fellow-creatures. When from distant Considerations Men resolve upon any Thing to which they have no liking, or perhaps an Averseness, they are perpetually finding out Evasions and Excuses; which need never be wanting, if People look for them: And they equivocate with themselves in the plainest Cases in the World. This may be in respect to single determinate Acts of Virtue: But it comes in much more, where the Obligation is to a general Course of Behaviour; and most of all, if it be such as cannot be reduced to fixed determinate Rules. This Observation may account for the Diversity of the Expression, in that known Passage of the Prophet *Micah: To do justly, and to love Mercy.* A Man's Heart must be formed to Humanity and Benevolence, he must *love Mercy*, otherwise he will not act mercifully in any settled Course of Behaviour.

As

SERM. As Consideration of the future Sanctions of
 XII. Religion is our only Security of persevering
 ~~~~~ in our Duty, in Cases of great Temptations :  
 So to get our Heart and Temper formed to  
 a Love and Liking of what is Good, is abso-  
 lutely necessary in order to our behaving  
 rightly in the familiar and daily Intercourses  
 amongst Mankind.

*Secondly*, The Precept before us may be understood to require, that we love our Neighbour in some certain *Proportion* or other, *according as* we love ourselves. And indeed a Man's Character cannot be determined by thy Love he bears to his Neighbour, considered absolutely: But the Proportion which this bears to Self-love, whether it be attended to or not, is the chief Thing which forms the Character, and influences the Actions. For, as the Form of the Body is a Composition of various Parts; so likewise our inward Structure is not simple or uniform, but a Composition of various Passions, Appetites, Affections, together with Rationality; including in this last both the Discernment of what is right, and a Disposition to regulate ourselves by it. There is greater Variety of Parts in what we call a Character, than there are Features in a Face:  
 And

*Love of our Neighbour.* 241

SERM.  
XII.

And the Morality of That is no more determined by one Part, than the Beauty or Deformity of This is by one single Feature: Each is to be judged of by all the Parts or Features, not taken singly, but together. In the inward Frame the various Passions, Appetites, Affections, stand in different Respects to each other. The Principles in our Mind, may be contradictory, or Checks and Allays only, or Incentives and Assistants to each other. And Principles, which in their Nature have no Kind of Contrariety or Affinity, may yet accidentally be each other's Allays or Incentives.

FROM hence it comes to pass, that though we were able to look into the inward Contexture of the Heart, and see with the greatest Exactness in what Degree any one Principle is in a particular Man; we could not from thence determine, how far that Principle would go towards forming the Character, or what Influence it would have upon the Actions, unless we could likewise discern what other Principles prevailed in him, and see the Proportion which that one bears to the others. Thus, though two Men should have the Affection of Compassion in the same Degree exactly; yet one may have the


R

Princi-

SERM. Principle of Resentment, or of Ambition so  
 XII. strong in him, as to prevail over that of Com-  
 ~~~~~ passion, and prevents its having any Influ-  
 ence upon his Actions; so that he may de-
 serve the Character of an hard or cruel Man:
 Whereas the other, having Compassion in
 just the same Degree only; yet having Resent-
 ment or Ambition in a lower Degree, his
 Compassion may prevail over them, so as to
 influence his Actions, and to denominate his
 Temper compassionate. So that, how strange
 soever it may appear to People who do not
 attend to the Thing, yet it is quite manifest,
 that, when we say one Man is more Resent-
 ing or Compassionate than another, this
 does not necessarily imply that one has the
 Principle of Resentment or of Compassion
 stronger than the other. For if the Pro-
 portion, which Resentment or Compassion
 bears to other inward Principles, is greater
 in one than in the other; this is itself suffi-
 cient to denominate one more Resenting or
 Compassionate than the other.

FURTHER, the whole System as I may
 speak, of Affections, (including Rationality)
 which constitute the Heart, as this Word
 is used in Scripture and on moral Subjects,
 are each and all of them stronger in some
 than

Love of our Neighbour. 243

than in others. Now the Proportion which SERM.
the two general Affections, Benevolence and XII.
Self-love, bear to each other, according to 
this Interpretation of the Text, denominates
Men's Character as to Virtue. Suppose then
one Man to have the Principle of Benevo-
lence in an higher Degree than another : It
will not follow from hence, that this general
Temper, or Character, or Actions will be
more benevolent than the other's. For he
may have Self-love in such a Degree as quite
to prevail over Benevolence ; so that it
may have no Influence at all upon his Actions ;
Whereas Benevolence in the other Person,
though in a lower Degree, may yet be the
strongest Principle in his Heart ; and strong
enough to be the Guide of his Actions, so
as to denominate him a good and virtuous
Man. The Case is here as in Scales : It is
not one Weight, considered in itself, which
determines whether the Scale shall ascend or
descend ; but this depends upon the Propor-
tion, which that one Weight hath to the
other.

IT being thus manifest that the Influence
which Benevolence has upon our Actions,
and how far it goes towards forming our
Character, is not determined by the Degree

244 A S E R M O N upon the

SERM. itself of this Principle in our Mind; but
 XII. the Proportion it has to Self-love and other
 Principles: A Comparison also being made
 in the Text between Self-love and the Love
 of our Neighbour; these joint Considerations
 afforded sufficient Occasion for treating here
 of that Proportion: It plainly is implied in
 the Precept, though it should be questioned
 whether it be the exact Meaning of the
 Words, as *Thyself*.

LOVE of our Neighbour then must bear
 some Proportion to Self-love, and Virtue to
 be sure consists in the due Proportion. What
 this due Proportion is, whether as a Principle
 in the Mind, or as exerted in Actions, can be
 judged of only from our Nature and Con-
 dition in this World. Of the Degree in
 which Affections and the Principles of Ac-
 tion, considered in themselves, prevail, we
 have no Measure: Let us then proceed to
 the Course of Behaviour, the Actions they
 produce.

BOTH our Nature and Condition require,
 that each particular Man should make parti-
 cular Provision for himself: And the Inqui-
 ry, what Proportion Benevolence should
 have to Self-love, when brought down to
 Practice, will be, what is a competent Care
 and

Love of our Neighbour.

245

SERM.

XII.



and Provision for ourselves. And how certain soever it be, that each Man must determine this for himself; and how ridiculous soever it would be, for any to attempt to determine it for Another: Yet it is to be observed, that the Proportion is real; and that a competent Provision has a Bound; and that it cannot be all which we can possibly get and keep within our Grasp, without legal Injustice. Mankind almost universally bring in Vanity, Supplies for what is called a Life of Pleasure, Covetousness, or imaginary Notions of Superiority over Others, to determine this Question: But every one who desires to act a proper Part in Society, would do well to consider, how far any of them come in to determine it, in the Way of Moral Consideration. All that can be said is, supposing, what, as the World goes, is so much to be supposed that 'tis scarce to be mentioned, that Persons do not neglect what they really owe to Themselves; the more of their Care and Thought, and of their Fortune they employ in doing Good to their Fellow-creatures, the nearer they come up to the Law of Perfection *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

R 3

Thirdly,

SERM. *Thirdly*, If the Words, *as thy self*, were to
 XII. be understood of an Equality of Affection;
 ~~~~~ it would not be attended with those Consequences, which perhaps may be thought to follow from it. Suppose a Person to have the same settled Regard to Others, as to Himself; that in every deliberate Scheme or Pursuit He took their Interest into the Account in the same Degree as his own, so far as an Equality of Affection would produce this: Yet He would in fact, and ought to be, much more taken up and employed about Himself, and his own Concerns; than about Others, and their Interests. For, besides the one common Affection toward Himself and his Neighbour, He would have several other particular Affections, Passions, Appetites, which he could not possibly feel in common both for Himself and Others: Now these Sensations themselves very much employ us; and have perhaps as great Influence, as Self-love. So far indeed as Self-love, and cool Reflection upon what is for our Interest, would set us on Work to gain a Supply of our own several Wants; so far the Love of our Neighbour would make us do the same for him: But the Degree in which we are put upon seeking and making use of the Means  
 of

of Gratification, by the feeling of those Affections, Appetites and Passions, must necessarily be peculiar to ourselves.

SERM.

XII.



THAT there are particular Passions, (suppose Shame, Resentment) which Men seem to have, and feel in common, both for Themselves and Others, makes no Alteration in Respect to those Passions and Appetites which cannot possibly be thus felt in common. From hence, (and perhaps more Things of the like Kind might be mentioned,) it follows, that though there were an Equality of Affection to both, yet Regards to Ourselves would be more prevalent than Attention to the Concerns of Others.

AND from moral Considerations it ought to be so, supposing still the Equality of Affection commanded: Because we are in a peculiar Manner, as I may speak, entrusted with ourselves; and therefore Care of our own Interests, as well as of our Conduct, particularly belongs to us.

To these Things must be added, that moral Obligations can extend no further than to natural Possibilities. Now we have a Perception of our own Interests, like Consciousness of our own Existence, which we always carry about with us; and which, in its Continuation,

SERM. ation, Kind, and Degree, seems impossible  
 XII. to be felt in respect to the Interests of  
 Others.

FROM all these Things it fully appears, that though we were to love our Neighbour in the same Degree as we love ourselves, so far as this is possible; yet the Care of ourselves, of the Individual, would not be neglected; the apprehended Danger of which seems to be the only Objection against understanding the Precept in this strict Sense.

III. THE general Temper of Mind which the due Love of our Neighbour would form us to, and the Influence it would have upon our Behaviour in Life, is now to be considered.

THE Temper and Behaviour of Charity is explained at large, in that known Passage of St Paul \*: *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, thinketh no Evil, beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things.* As to the Meaning of the Expressions, *seeketh not her own, thinketh no Evil, believeth all Things*; however those Expressions may be explained away,

\* 1 Cor. xiii.


*Love of our Neighbour.* 249

way, this Meekness, and, in some Degree SERM.  
Easiness of Temper, Readiness to forego our XII.  
Right for the Sake of Peace, as well as in  
the Way of Compassion, Freedom from  
Mistrust, and Disposition to believe well of  
our Neighbour, this general Temper, I say,  
accompanies, and is plainly the Effect of Love  
and Good-will. And, though such is the  
World in which we live, that Experience  
and Knowledge of it, not only may, but  
must beget in us greater Regard to ourselves,  
and Doubtfulness of the Characters of  
Others, than is natural to Mankind; yet these  
ought not to be carried further than the Na-  
ture and Course of Things make necessary.  
It is still true, even in the present State of  
Things, bad as it is, that a real good Man  
had rather be deceived, than be suspicious;  
had rather forego his known Right, than  
run the Venture of doing even a hard Thing.  
This is the general Temper of that Charity,  
of which the Apostle asserts, that if he had  
it not, giving his *Body to be burned would  
avail him nothing*; and which he says, *shall  
never fail*.

THE happy Influence of this Temper ex-  
tends to every different Relation and Cir-  
cumstance in Humane Life. It plainly ren-  
ders

SERM. ders a Man better, more to be desired, as  
 XII. to all the Respects and Relations we can  
 stand in to each other. The benevolent  
 Man is disposed to make use of all external  
 Advantages in such a Manner as shall contribute to the Good of Others, as well as to his own Satisfaction. His own Satisfaction consists in this. He will be easy and kind to the Dependants, compassionate to the Poor and Distressed, friendly to all with whom he has to do. This includes the good Neighbour, Parent, Master, Magistrate: And such a Behaviour would plainly make Dependance, Inferiority, and even Servitude, easy. So that a good and charitable Man of superior Rank in Wisdom, Fortune, Authority, is a common Blessing to the Place he lives in: Happiness grows under his Influence. This good Principle in Inferiours would discover itself in paying Respect, Gratitude, Obedience, as due. It were therefore methinks one just Way of trying one's own Character, to ask ourselves, Am I in Reality a better Master or Servant, a better Friend, a better Neighbour, than such and such Persons; whom, perhaps, I may think not to deserve the Character of Virtue and Religion so much as myself?

*Love of our Neighbour.* 251

AND as to the Spirit of Party, which SERM.  
unhappily prevails amongst Mankind, what- XII.  
ever are the Distinctions which serve for a   
Supply to it, some or other of which have  
obtained in all Ages and Countries: One,  
who is thus friendly to his Kind, will im-  
mediately make due Allowances for it, as  
what cannot but be amongst such Creatures  
as Men, in such a World as this. And as  
Wrath and Fury and overbearing upon these  
Occasions proceed, as I may speak, from  
Mens feeling only on their own Side: So  
a common Feeling, for others as well as for  
ourselves, would render us sensible to this  
Truth, which it is strange can have so little  
Influence; that we ourselves differ from  
others, just as much as they do from us. I  
put the Matter in this Way, because it can  
scarce be expected that the Generality of Men  
should see, that those Things which are made  
the Occasions of Dissention and fomenting  
the Party-Spirit, are really nothing at all:  
But it may be expected from all People,  
how much soever they are in earnest about  
their respective Peculiarities, that Humanity,  
and common Good-will to their Fellow-  
creatures, should moderate and restrain that  
wretched Spirit.

T H I S

252      *A S E R M O N upon the*

SERM. THIS good Temper of Charity likewise  
 XII. would prevent Strife and Enmity arising from  
 ~~~~~ other Occasions: It would prevent our giving  
 just Cause of Offence, and our taking it
 without Cause. And in Cases of real In-
 jury, a good Man will make all Allowances
 which are to be made; and, without any
 Attempts of Retaliation, he will only consult
 his own and other Mens Security for the
 future, against Injustice and Wrong.

IV. I P R O C E E D to consider lastly, what
 is affirmed of the Precept now explained,
 That it comprehends in it all others; *i. e.* that
 to love our Neighbour as ourselfes includes in
 it all Virtues.

N O W the Way in which every Maxim of
 Conduct, or general Speculative Assertion,
 when it is to be explained at large, should be
 treated, is, to show what are the particular
 Truths which were designed to be compre-
 hended under such a general Observation,
 how far it is strictly true; and then the Li-
 mitations, Restrictions, and Exceptions, if
 there be Exceptions, with which it is to be
 understood. But it is only the former of
 these, namely, how far the Assertion in the
 Text holds, and the Ground of the Pre-emi-
 nence assigned to the Precept of it, which
 in

Love of our Neighbour.

253

in strictness comes into our present Consideration.

SERM.

XII.

HOWEVER, in almost every Thing that is said, there is somewhat to be understood beyond what is explicitly laid down, and which we of Course supply; somewhat, I mean, which would not be commonly called a Restriction or Limitation. Thus, when Benevolence is said to be the Sum of Virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind Propension, but as a Principle in reasonable Creatures, and so to be directed by their Reason: For Reason and Reflection comes into our Notion of a moral Agent. And that will lead us to consider distant Consequences, as well as the immediate Tendency of an Action: It will teach us, that the Care of some Persons, suppose Children and Families, is particularly committed to our Charge by Nature and Providence; as also that there are other Circumstances, suppose Friendship or former Obligations, which require that we do Good to some, preferably to others. Reason, considered meerly as subservient to Benevolence, as assisting to produce the greatest Good, will teach us to have particular Regard to these Relations and Circumstances; because it is plainly for the Good of the
World

254 *Love of our Neighbour.*

SERM. World that they should be regarded. And
 XII. as there are numberless Cafes, in which,
 notwithstanding Appearances, we are not
 competent Judges, whether a particular Ac-
 tion will upon the Whole do Good or Harm ;
 Reason in the same Way will teach us to
 be cautious how we act in these Cafes of Un-
 certainty. It will suggest to our Considera-
 tion, which is the safer Side ; how liable we
 are to be led wrong by Passion and private
 Interest ; and what Regard is due to Laws,
 and the Judgment of Mankind. All these
 Things must come into Consideration, were
 it only in order to determine which way of
 acting is likely to produce the greatest
 Good. Thus, upon Supposition that it
 were in the strictest Sense true, without Li-
 mitation, that Benevolence includes in it
 all Virtues ; yet Reason must come in as its
 Guide and Director, in order to attain its own
 End, the End of Benevolence, the greatest
 publick Good. Reason then being thus in-
 cluded, let us now consider the Truth of the
 Assertion itself.

First, It is manifest that nothing can be
 of Consequence to Mankind or any Crea-
 ture, but Happiness. This then is all which
 any Person can, in strictness of speaking,
 be

Love of our Neighbour. 255

be said to have a Right to. We can therefore *owe no Man any Thing*, but only to further and promote his Happiness, according to our Abilities. And therefore a Disposition and Endeavour to do Good to all with whom we have to do, in the Degree and Manner which the different Relations we stand in to them require, is a Discharge of all the Obligations we are under to them.

SERM.
XII.
~

As Humane Nature is not one simple uniform Thing, but a Composition of various Parts, Body, Spirit, Appetites, particular Passions and Affections; for each of which reasonable Self-love would lead Men to have due Regard, and make suitable Provision: So Society consists of various Parts, to which we stand in different Respects and Relations; and just Benevolence would as surely lead us to have due Regard to each of these, and behave as the respective Relations require. Reasonable Good-will, and right Behaviour towards our Fellow-creatures, are in a Manner the same: Only that the former expresseth the Principle as it is in the Mind; the latter, the Principle as it were become external, *i. e.* exerted in Actions.

A N D

256 *A S E R M O N upon the*

SERM. AND so far as Temperance, Sobriety, and
XII. Moderation in sensual Pleasures, and the
contrary Vices, have any Respect to our Fellow-creatures, any Influence upon their Quiet, Welfare, and Happiness; as they always have a real, and often a near Influence upon it; so far it is manifest those Virtues may be produced by the Love of our Neighbour, and that the contrary Vices would be prevented by it. Indeed if Mens Regard to themselves will not restrain them from Excess; it may be thought little probable, that their Love to others will be sufficient: But the Reason is, that their Love to others is not, any more than their Regard to themselves, just, and in its due Degree. There are however manifest Instances of Persons kept sober and temperate from Regard to their Affairs, and the Welfare of those who depend upon them. And it is obvious to every one, that habitual Excess, a dissolute Course of Life, implies a general Neglect of the Duties we owe towards our Friends, our Families, and our Country.

From hence it is manifest that the common Virtues, and the common Vices of Mankind, may be traced up to Benevolence,
or

Love of our Neighbour. 257

or the want of it. And this intitles the SERM.
Precept, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as* XII.
thyself, to the Pre-eminence given to it; and
is a Justification of the Apostle's Assertion, that all other Commandments are comprehended in it; whatever Cautions and Restrictions* there are, which might require

* For Instance: As we are not competent Judges, what is upon the whole for the Good of the World; there may be other immediate Ends appointed us to pursue, besides that one of doing Good, or producing Happiness. Though the Good of the Creation be the only End of the Author of it, yet he may have laid us under particular Obligations, which we may discern and feel ourselves under, quite distinct from a Perception, that the Observance or Violation of them is for the Happiness or Misery of our Fellow-creatures. And this is in Fact the Case. For there are certain Dispositions of Mind, and certain Actions, which are in themselves approved or disapproved by Mankind, abstracted from the Consideration of their Tendency to the Happiness or Misery of the World; approved or disapproved by Reflection, by that Principle within, which is the Guide of Life, the Judge of Right and Wrong. Numberless Instances of this Kind might be mentioned. There are Pieces of Treachery, which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one. There are Actions, which perhaps can scarce have any other general Name given them than Indecencies, which yet are odious and shocking to Humane Nature. There is such a Thing as Meanness, a little Mind; which, as it is quite distinct from Incapacity, so it raises a Dislike and Disapprobation quite different from that Contempt, which Men are too apt to have, of meer Folly. On the other Hand; what we call Greatness of Mind, is the Object of another Sort of Approbation, than superiour Understanding. Fidelity, Honour, strict Justice, are themselves approved in the highest Degree, abstracted from the Consideration

SERM. require to be considered, if we were to
 XII. state particularly and at length, what is
 Virtue and right Behaviour in Mankind.
 But,

Secondly, IT might be added, that in a higher and more general Way of Consideration, leaving out the particular Nature of Creatures, and the particular Circumstances in which they are placed, Benevolence seems in the strictest Sense to include in it all that is Good and Worthy; all that is Good, which we have any distinct particular Notion of. We have no clear Conception of any positive moral Attribute in the supream Being, but what may be resolved up into Goodness. And, if we consider a reasonable Creature or moral Agent, without Regard to the particular Relations and Circumstances in which he is placed; we cannot conceive any Thing else to come in towards determining

of their Tendency. Now, whether it may be thought that each of these are connected with Benevolence in Our Nature, and so may be considered as the same Thing with it; or whether some of them be thought an inferiour Kind of Virtues and Vices, somewhat like natural Beauties and Deformities; or lastly, plain Exceptions to the general Rule; thus much however is certain, that the Things now instanced in, and numberless others, are approved or disapproved by Mankind in general, in quite another View than as conducive to the Happiness or Misery of the World.

determining whether he is to be ranked in an higher or lower Class of virtuous Beings, determining whether he is to be ranked in an higher or lower Class of virtuous Beings, but the higher or lower Degree in which that Principle, and what is manifestly connected with it, prevail in him.

THAT which we more strictly call Piety, or the Love of God, and which is an essential Part of a right Temper, some may perhaps imagine no Way connected with Benevolence: Yet surely they must be connected, if there be indeed in Being an Object infinitely Good. Humane Nature is so constituted, that every good Affection implies the Love of itself; *i. e.* becomes the Object of a new Affection in the same Person. Thus, to be righteous, implies in it the Love of Righteousness; to be benevolent, the Love of Benevolence; to be good, the Love of Goodness; whether this Righteousness, Benevolence, or Goodness, be viewed as in our own Mind, or in another's: And the Love of God as a Being perfectly Good, is the Love of perfect Goodness contemplated in a Being or Person. Thus Morality and Religion, Virtue and Piety, will at last necessarily coincide, run up into one and the same Point, and *Love* will be in all Senses *the End of the Commandment.*

SERM.
XII.

O Almighty God, inspire us with this divine Principle; kill in us all the Seeds of Envy and Ill-will; and help us, by cultivating within ourselves the Love of our Neighbour, to improve in the Love of Thee. Thou hast placed us in various Kindreds, Friendships, and Relations, as the School of Discipline for our Affections: Help us, by the due Exercise of them, to improve to Perfection; till all partial Affection be lost in that intire universal one, and Thou, O God, shalt be all in all.

SERMON XIII, XIV.


Upon the Love of G O D.

M A T T H. xxii. 37.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.

EVERY Body knows, you therefore need only just be put in Mind, that there is such a Thing, as having so great Horror of one Extream, as to run insensibly and of Course into the contrary; and that a Doctrine's having been a Shelter for Enthusiasm, or made to serve the Purposes of Superstition, is no Proof of the Falsity of it: Truth or Right being somewhat real in itself, and so not to be judged of by its

SERM.
XIII.
~

SERM. Liableness to Abuse, or by its supposed Distance from or Nearness to Error. It may
 XIII.  be sufficient to have mentioned this in general, without taking Notice of the particular Extravagancies, which have been vented under the Pretence or Endeavour of explaining the Love of God; or how manifestly we are got into the contrary Extream, under the Notion of a reasonable Religion; so very reasonable, as to have nothing to do with the Heart and Affections, if these Words signify any thing but the Faculty by which we discern speculative Truth.

By the Love of God, I would understand all those Regards, all those Affections of Mind which are due immediately to him from such a Creature as Man, and which rest in him as their End. As this does not include servile Fear; so neither will any other Regards, how reasonable soever, which respect any Thing out of or besides the Perfection of the divine Nature, come into Consideration here. But all Fear is not excluded, because his Displeasure is itself the natural proper Object of Fear. Reverence, Ambition of his Love and Approbation, Delight in the Hope or Consciousness of it, come likewise into this Definition of the
 Love


Love of God ; because he is the natural SERM.
Object of all those Affections or Movements XIII.
of Mind, as really as he is the Object of the W
Affection, which is in the strictest Sense called
Love ; and all of them equally rest in him,
as their End. And they may all be under-
stood to be implied in these Words of our
Saviour, without putting any Force upon
them : For he is speaking of the Love of God
and our Neighbour, as containing the whole
of Piety and Virtue.

IT is plain that the Nature of Man is so
constituted, as to feel certain Affections up-
on the Sight or Contemplation of certain
Objects. Now the very Notion of Affec-
tion implies resting in its Object as an End.
And the particular Affection to good Cha-
racters, Reverence and moral Love of them,
is natural to all those who have any Degree
of real Goodness in themselves. This will
be illustrated by the Description of a perfect
Character in a Creature ; and by considering
the Manner, in which a good Man in his
Presence would be affected towards such a
Character. He would of Course feel the
Affections of Love, Reverence, Desire of
his Approbation, Delight in the Hope or
Consciousness of it. And surely all this is
appli-

SERM. applicable, and may be brought up to that
 XIII. Being, who is infinitely more than an adequate Object of all those Affections; whom we are commanded to *Love with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Mind.* And of these Regards towards Almighty God, some are more particular suitable to and becoming so imperfect a Creature as Man, in this mortal State we are passing through; and some of them, and perhaps other Excesses of the Mind, will be the Employment and Happiness of Good Men in a State of Perfection.

THIS is a general View of what the following Discourse will contain. And it is manifest the Subject is a real one: There is nothing in it enthusiastical or unreasonable. And if it be indeed at all a Subject, it is one of the utmost importance.

As Mankind have a Faculty by which they discern speculative Truth; so we have various Affections towards external Objects. Understanding and Temper, Reason and Affection, are as distinct Ideas, as Reason and Hunger; and one would think could no more be confounded. It is by Reason that we get the Ideas of several Objects of our Affections; But in these Cases Reason and
 Affection

Affection are no more the same, than Sight SERM.
of a particular Object, and the Pleasure or XIII.
Uneasiness consequent thereupon, are the 
same. Now, as Reason tends to and rests
in the Discernment of Truth, the Object of
it; so the very Nature of Affection con-
sists in tending towards, and resting in, its
Objects as an End. We do indeed often
in common Language say, that Things are
loved, desired, esteemed, not for themselves,
but for somewhat further, somewhat out of
and beyond them: Yet, in these Cases, who-
ever will attend, will see, that these Things
are not in Reality the Objects of the Af-
fections, *i. e.* are not loved, desired, esteemed,
but the somewhat further and beyond
them. If we have no Affections which
rest in what are called their Objects, then
what is called Affection, Love, Desire, Hope,
in Humane Nature, is only an Uneasiness in
being at Rest; an unquiet Disposition to
Action, Progress, Pursuit, without End or
Meaning. But if there be any such Thing
as Delight in the Company of one Person,
rather than of another; whether in the
Way of Friendship, or Mirth and Entertain-
ment, it is all one, if it be without respect
to Fortune, Honour, or increasing our Stores
of

SERM. of Knowledge, or any Thing beyond the
 XIII. present Time ; here is an Instance of an Affection absolutely resting in its Object as its End, and being gratified, in the same Way as the Appetite of Hunger is satisfied with Food. Yet nothing is more common than to hear it asked, What Advantage a Man hath in such a Course, suppose of Study, particular Friendships, or in any other ; nothing, I say, is more common than to hear such a Question put in a Way which supposes no Gain, Advantage or Interest, but as a Means to somewhat further : And if so, then there is no such Thing at all as real Interest, Gain or Advantage. This is the same Absurdity with Respect to Life, as an infinite Series of Effects without a Cause is in Speculation. The Gain, Advantage or Interest consists in the Delight itself, arising from such a Faculty's having its Object : Neither is there any such Thing as Happiness or Enjoyment, but what arises from hence. The Pleasures of Hope and of Reflection are not Exceptions : The former being only this Happiness anticipated ; the latter, the same Happiness enjoyed over again after its Time. And even the general Expectation of future Happiness can

can afford Satisfaction, only as it is a present Object to the Principle of Self-love.

SERM.
XIII.

IT was doubtless intended, that Life should be very much a Pursuit to the Gross of Mankind. But this is carried so much further than is reasonable, that what gives immediate Satisfaction, *i. e.* our present Interest, is scarce considered as our Interest at all. It is Inventions which have only a remote Tendency towards Enjoyment, perhaps but a remote Tendency towards gaining the Means only of Enjoyment, which are chiefly spoken of as useful to the World. And though this way of thinking were just with respect to the imperfect State we are now in, where we know so little of Satisfaction without Satiety; yet it must be guarded against, when we are considering the Happiness of a State of Perfection; which Happiness being Enjoyment and not Hope, must necessarily consist in this, that our Affections have their Objects, and rest in those Objects as an End, *i. e.* be satisfied with them. This will further appear in the Sequel of this Discourse.

OF the several Affections, or inward Sensations, which particular Objects excite in Man, there are some, the having of which implies the Love of them, when they are reflected

SERM. reflected upon *. This cannot be said of all
 XII. our Affections, Principles and Motives of
 ~~~~~ Action. It were ridiculous to assert, that a  
 Man upon Reflection hath the same Kind of  
 Approbation of the Appetite of Hunger, or  
 the Passion of Fear, as he hath of Good-will  
 to his Fellow-creatures. To be a just, a  
 good, a righteous Man, plainly carries with  
 it a peculiar Affection to, or Love of Justice,  
 Goodness, Righteousness, when these Prin-  
 ciples are the Objects of Contemplation.  
 Now if a Man approves of, or hath an Af-  
 fection to, any Principle in and for itself, in-  
 cidental Things allowed for, it will be the  
 same whether he views it in his own Mind  
 or in another; in himself, or in his Neigh-  
 bour. This is the Account of our Approba-  
 tion of, our moral Love and Affection to good  
 Characters; which cannot but be in those  
 who have any Degrees of real Goodness in  
 themselves, and who discern and take Notice  
 of the same Principle in others.

\* *St Austin observes, Amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis Virtus qua vivitur bene. i. e. The Affection which we rightly have for what is lovely, must ordinate justly, in due Manner, and Proportion, become the Object of a new Affection, or be itself beloved, in order to our being endued with that Virtue which is the Principle of a good Life. Civ. Dei. L. 15. c. 22.*

FROM



FROM Observation of what passes with-  
in ourselves, our own Actions, and the Be-  
haviour of others, the Mind may carry on  
its Reflections as far as it pleases; much be-  
yond what we experience in ourselves, or dis-  
cern in our Fellow-creatures. It may go on,  
and consider Goodness as become an uniform  
continued Principle of Action, as conducted  
by Reason, and forming a Temper and Cha-  
racter absolutely good and perfect, which is in  
a higher Sense excellent, and proportionably  
the Object of Love and Approbation.

SERM.  
XIII.

LET us then suppose a Creature perfect  
according to his created Nature: Let his Form  
be Humane, and his Capacities no more than  
equal to those of the Chief of Men: Good-  
ness shall be his proper Character; with  
Wisdom to direct it, and Power within some  
certain determined Sphere of Action to ex-  
ert it: But Goodness must be the simple  
actuating Principle within him; this being  
the moral Quality which is amiable, or the  
immediate Object of Love as distinct from  
other Affections of Approbation. Here then  
is a finite Object for our Mind to tend to-  
wards, to exercise itself upon: A Creature,  
perfect according to his Capacity, fixt, stea-  
dy, equally unmoved by weak Pity or more  
weak

SERM. weak Fury and Resentment; forming the  
 XIII. justest Scheme of Conduct; going on undisturbed in the Execution of it, through the several Methods of Severity and Reward, towards his End, namely, the general Happiness of all with whom he hath to do, as in itself right and valuable. This Character, though uniform in itself, in its Principle, yet exerting itself in different Ways, or considered in different Views, may by its appearing Variety move different Affections. Thus, the Severity of Justice would not affect us in the same Way, as an Act of Mercy: The adventitious Qualities of Wisdom and Power may be considered in themselves: And even the Strength of Mind, which this immovable Goodness supposes, may likewise be viewed as an Object of Contemplation, distinct from the Goodness itself. Superiour Excellence of any Kind, as well as superiour Wisdom and Power, is the Object of Awe and Reverence to all Creatures, whatever their moral Character be: But so far as Creatures of the lowest Rank were good, so far the View of this Character, as simply good, must appear amiable to them, be the Object of, or beget Love. Further, suppose we were conscious, that this superiour Person so far  
 approved



approved of us, that we had nothing servilely to fear from him; that he was really our Friend, and kind and good to us in particular, as he had occasionally Intercourse with us: We must be other Creatures than we are, or we could not but feel the same Kind of Satisfaction and Enjoyment (whatever would be the Degree of it) from this higher Acquaintance and Friendship, as we feel from common ones; the Intercourse being real, and the Persons equally present, in both Cases. We should have a more ardent Desire to be approved by his better Judgment, and a Satisfaction in that Approbation of the same Sort with what would be felt in respect to common Persons, or be wrought in us by their Presence.

LET us now raise the Character, and suppose this Creature, for we are still going on with the Supposition of a Creature, our proper Guardian and Governour; that we were in a Progress of Being towards somewhat further; and that his Scheme of Government was too fast for our Capacities to comprehend; remembering still that he is perfectly Good, and our Friend as well as our Governour. Wisdom, Power, Goodness, accidentally viewed any where, would inspire

SERM. inspire Reverence, Awe, Love : And as these  
 XIII. Affections would be raised in higher or lower  
 Degrees, in proportion as we had occasionally  
 more or less Intercourse with the Creature  
 endued with those Qualities ; so this further  
 Consideration and Knowledge, that he was  
 our proper Guardian and Governour, would  
 much more bring these Objects and Qua-  
 lities home to ourselves ; teach us they had  
 a greater Respect to us in particular, that we  
 had an higher Interest in that Wisdom and  
 Power and Goodness. We should, with Joy,  
 Gratitude, Reverence, Love, Trust, and  
 Dependance, appropriate the Character, as  
 what he had a Right in ; and make our  
 Boast in such our Relation to it. And the  
 Conclusion of the whole would be, that we  
 should refer ourselves implicitly to him, and  
 cast ourselves entirely upon him. As the  
 whole Attention of Life should be to obey  
 his Commands ; so the highest Enjoyment  
 of it must arise from the Contemplation of  
 this Character, and our Relation to it, from  
 a Consciousness of his Favour and Appro-  
 bation, and from the Exercise of those Af-  
 fections towards Him which could not but  
 be raised from his Presence. A Being who  
 hath these Attributes, who stands in this Re-  
 lation,

lation, and is thus sensibly present to the Mind, must necessarily be the Object of these Affections : There is as real a Correspondence between them, as between the lowest Appetite of Sense and its Object. SERM.  
XIII.  
~

THAT this Being is not a Creature, but the Almighty God ; that he is of infinite Power and Wisdom and Goodness, does not render him less the Object of Reverence and Love, than he would be if he had those Attributes only in a limited Degree. The Being who made us, and upon whom we intirely depend, is the Object of some Regards. He hath given us certain Affections of Mind, which correspond to Wisdom, Power, Goodness ; *i. e.* which are raised upon View of those Qualities. If then he be really wise, powerful, good ; he is the natural Object of those Affections, which he hath endued us with, and which correspond to those Attributes. That he is infinite in Power, perfect in Wisdom and Goodness, makes no Alteration, but only that he is the Object of those Affections raised to the highest Pitch. He is not indeed to be discerned by any of our Senses. *I go forward, but he is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive him : On the left hand where he*

SERM. *doth work, but I cannot behold him : He bi-*  
 XIII. *deth himself on the right hand, that I can-*  
 ~~~~~ *not see him. O that I knew where I might*  
find him ! that I might come even to his
*Seat ! * But is He then a far off : Does he*
not fill Heaven and Earth with his Presence ?
 The Presence of our Fellow-creatures affects
 our Senses, and our Senses give us the Know-
 ledge of their Presence ; which hath diffe-
 rent Kinds of Influence upon us ; Love, Joy,
 Sorrow, Restraint, Encouragement, Reve-
 rence. However this Influence is not imme-
 diately from our Senses, but from that
 Knowledge. Thus suppose a Person neither
 to see nor hear Another, not to know by
 any of his Senses, but yet certainly to know,
 that Another was with him ; this Knowledge
 might, and in many Cases would, have one
 or more of the Effects before-mentioned.
 It is therefore not only reasonable, but also
 natural, to be affected with a Presence,
 though it be not the Object of our Senses :
 Whether it be, or be not, is merely an acci-
 dental Circumstance, which needs not come
 into Consideration : It is the Certainty that
 He is with us, and we with him, which hath
 the Influence. We consider Persons then as
 present,

* Job xxii.

present, not only when they are within Reach of our Senses, but also when we are assured by any other Means that They are within such a Nearness; nay, if they are not, we can recall them to our Mind, and be moved towards them at present: And must He, who is so much more intimately with us, that *in Him we live and move and have our Being*, be thought too distant to be the Object of our Affections? We own and feel the Force of amiable and worthy Qualities in our Fellow-creatures: And can we be insensible to the Contemplation of perfect Goodness? Do we reverence the Shadows of Greatness here below, are we solicitous about Honour and Esteem and the Opinion of the World: And shall we not feel the same with Respect to Him, whose are Wisdom and Power in their Original, who *is the God of Judgment by whom Actions are weighed?* Thus Love, Reverence, Desire of Esteem, every Faculty, every Affection, tends towards, and is employed about its respective Object in common Cases: And must the Exercise of them be suspended with Regard to him alone, who is an Object, an infinitely more than adequate Object, to our most exalted Faculties; Him,

SERM. *of whom, and through whom, and to whom are*
XIII. *all Things?*



As we cannot remove from this Earth, or change our general Business on it, so neither can we alter our real Nature. Therefore no Exercise of the Mind can be recommended, but only the Exercise of those Faculties you are conscious of. Religion does not demand new Affections, but only claims the Direction of those you already have, those Affections you daily feel; though unhappily confined to Objects, not altogether unsuitable, but altogether unequal to them. We only represent to you the higher, the adequate Objects of those very Faculties and Affections. Let the Man of Ambition go on still to consider Disgrace as the greatest Evil; Honour, as his chief Good. But Disgrace, in whose Estimation! Honour, in whose Judgment? This is the only Question. If Shame, and Delight in Esteem be spoken of as real, as any settled Ground of Pain or Pleasure; both these must be in Proportion to the supposed Wisdom and Worth of him, by whom we are contemned or esteemed. Must it then be thought enthusiastical to speak of a Sensibility of this Sort, which shall have respect to an unerring Judgment, to infinite Wisdom;

dom; when we are assured This unerring Judgment, This infinite Wisdom does observe upon our Actions? SERM.
XIII.


'T IS the same with respect to the Love of God in the strictest and most confined Sense. We only offer and represent the highest Object of an Affection, supposed already in your Mind. Some Degree of Goodness must be previously supposed: This always implies the Love of itself, an Affection to Goodness: The highest, the adequate Object of this Affection, is perfect Goodness; which therefore we are to *love with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength.* "Must we then, forgetting our own Interest, " as it were go out of ourselves, and love God " for his own Sake?" No more forget your own Interest, no more go out of yourselves than when you prefer one Place, one Prospect, the Conversation of one Man to that of Another. Does not every Affection necessarily imply, that the Object of it be itself loved? If it be not, 'tis not the Object of the Affection. You may and ought if you can, but it is a great Mistake to think you can love or fear or hate any Thing, from Consideration that such Love or Fear or Hatred may be a Means of obtaining Good or avoid-


T 3 ing

SERM. ing Evil. But the Question, whether we
 XIII. ought to love God for his Sake or for our
 own, being a mere Mistake in Language; the real Question, which this is mistaken for, will, I suppose, be answered by observing, that the Goodness of God already exercised towards us, our present Dependance upon him, and our Expectation of future Benefits, ought, and have a natural Tendency, to beget in us the Affection of Gratitude, and greater Love towards Him, than the same Goodness exercised towards others: were it only for this Reason, that every Affection is moved in Proportion to the Sense we have of the Object of it; and we cannot but have a more lively Sense of Goodness, when exercised towards ourselves, than when exercised to others. I added Expectation of future Benefits, because the Ground of that Expectation is present Goodness.

THUS Almighty God is the natural Object of the several Affections, Love, Reverence, Fear, Desire of Approbation. For though He is simply One, yet we cannot but consider Him in partial and different Views. He is in Himself one uniform Being, and for ever the same without *Variableness* or *Shadow of Turning*: But his infinite Greatness,
 His

the Love of G O D. 279

His Goodness, His Wisdom, are different SERM.
Objects to our Mind. To which is to be XIII.
added, that from the Changes in our own 
Characters, together with his Unchangeable-
ness, we cannot but consider ourselves as
more or less the Objects of His Approbation,
and really be so. For if he approves what
is Good, He cannot, meerly from the Un-
changeableness of his Nature, approve what
is Evil. Hence must arise more various
Movements of Mind, more different Kinds
of Affections. And this greater Variety also
is just and reasonable in such Creatures as we
are, though it respects a Being simply one,
good and perfect. As some of these Affec-
tions are most particularly suitable to so im-
perfect a Creature as Man, in this mortal
State we are passing through; so there may
be other Exercises of Mind, or some of these
in higher Degrees, our Employment and
Happiness in a State of Perfection.

C O N S I D E R then our Ignorance, the SERM.
Imperfection of our Nature, our Virtue and XIV.
our Condition in this World, with respect to 
an infinitely good and just Being, our Creator
and Governour; and you will see what
religious Affections of Mind are most par-
ticularly

SERM. particularly suitable to this mortal State we are
XIV. passing through.



THOUGH we are not affected with any thing so strongly, as what we discern with our Senses ; and though our Nature and Condition require, that we be much taken up about sensible Things ; yet our Reason convinces us that God is present with us, and we see and feel the Effects of his Goodness : He is therefore the Object of some Regards. The Imperfection of our Virtue, joined with the Consideration of his absolute Rectitude or Holiness, will scarce permit that Perfection of Love, which entirely casts out all Fear : Yet Goodness in the Object of Love to all Creatures who have any Degree of it themselves ; and Consciousness of a real Endeavour to approve ourselves to Him, joined with the Consideration of his Goodness, as it quite excludes servile Dread and Horror, so it is plainly a reasonable Ground for Hope of his Favour. Neither Fear, nor Hope, nor Love then are excluded : And one or another of these will prevail, according to the different Views we have of God ; and ought to prevail, according to the Changes we find in our own Character. There is a Temper of Mind made up of, or
which

which follows from all three, Fear, Hope, Love; namely, Resignation to the Divine Will, which is the general Temper belonging to this State; which ought to be the habitual Frame of our Mind and Heart, and to be exercised at proper Seasons more distinctly, in Acts of Devotion.

SERM.
XIV.

RESIGNATION to the Will of God is the whole of Piety: It includes in it all that is good, and is a Source of the most settled Quiet and Composure of Mind. There is the general Principle of Submission in our Nature. Man is not so constituted as to desire Things, and be uneasy in the Want of them, in Proportion to their known Value: Many other Considerations come in to determine the Degrees of Desire; particularly, whether the Advantage we take a View of, be within the Sphere of our Rank. Who ever felt Uneasiness, upon observing any of the Advantages Brute Creatures have over us? And yet it is plain they have several. It is the same with respect to Advantages belonging to Creatures of a superiour Order. Thus, though we see a Thing to be highly valuable, yet that it does not belong to our Condition of Being, is sufficient to suspend our Desires after it, to make us rest satisfied without

SERM. without such Advantage. Now there is just
 XIV. the same Reason for quiet Resignation in the
 ~~~~~ Want of every thing equally unattainable,  
 and out of our Reach in particular, though  
 others of our Species be possessed of it.  
 All this may be applied to the Whole of  
 Life; to positive Inconveniences as well as  
 Wants; not indeed to the Sensations of Pain  
 and Sorrow, but to all the Uneasinesses  
 of Reflection, Murmuring and Discontent.  
 Thus is Humane Nature formed to Compli-  
 ance, Yielding, Submission of Temper. We  
 find the Principles of it within us; and every  
 one exercises it towards some Objects or other;  
*i. e.* feels it with Regard to some Persons, and  
 some Circumstances. Now this is an excel-  
 lent Foundation of a reasonable and religious  
 Resignation. Nature teaches and inclines us  
 to take up with our Lot: The Consider-  
 ation, that the Course of Things is un-  
 alterable, hath a Tendency to quiet the  
 Mind under it, to beget a Submission of  
 Temper to it. But when we can add,  
 that this unalterable Course is appointed  
 and continued by infinite Wisdom and  
 Goodness; how absolute should be our  
 Submission, how intire our Trust and De-  
 pendance?

T H I S

THIS would reconcile us to our Condition; prevent all the supernumerary Troubles arising from Imagination, distant Fears, Impatience; all Uneasiness, except that which necessarily arises from the Calamities themselves we may be under. How many of our Cares should we by this Means be disburthened of? Cares not properly our own, how apt soever they may be to intrude upon us, and we to admit them; the Anxieties of Expectation, Sollicitude about Success and Disappointment, which in Truth are none of our Concern. How open to every Gratification would that Mind be, which was clear of these Incumbrances?

OUR Resignation to the Will of God may be said to be perfect, when our Will is lost and resolved up into His; when we rest in his Will as our End, as being itself most just, and right, and good. And where is the Impossibility of such an Affection to what is just, and right, and good, such a Loyalty of Heart to the Governour of the Universe, as shall prevail over all sinister indirect Desires of our own? Neither is this at bottom any thing more than Faith, and Honesty, and Fairness of Mind; in a more enlarged Sense indeed, than those Words are commonly used.

SERM.  
XIV.

SERM. used. And as, in common Cases, Fear and  
 XIV. Hope and other Passions are raised in us  
 by their respective Objects: So this Submission of Heart and Soul and Mind, this religious Resignation, would be as naturally produced by our having just Conceptions of Almighty God, and a real Sense of his Presence with us. In how low a Degree soever this Temper usually prevails amongst Men, yet it is a Temper right in itself: It is what we owe to our Creator: It is particularly suitable to our mortal Condition, and what we should endeavour after for our own Sakes in our Passage through such a World as this; where is nothing upon which we can rest or depend; nothing but what we are liable to be deceived and disappointed in. Thus we might *acquaint ourselves with God, and be at Peace.* This is Piety and Religion in the strictest Sense, considered as an Habit of Mind: An habitual Sense of God's Presence with us; being affected towards him, as present, in the Manner his superiour Nature requires from such a Creature as Man: This is to *walk with God.*

L I T T L E more need be said of Devotion or religious Worship, than that it is this Temper exerted into Act. The Nature of it consists





consists in the actual Exercise of those Affections towards God, which are supposed habitual in good Men. He is always equally present with us: But we are so much taken up with sensible Things, that *Lo, He goeth by us, and we see him not: He passeth on also, but we perceive him not* \*. Devotion is Retirement, from the World he has made, to him alone: It is to withdraw from the Avocations of Sense, to employ our Attention wholly upon Him as upon an Object actually present, to yield ourselves up to the Influence of the Divine Presence, and to give full Scope to the Affections of Gratitude, Love, Reverence, Trust and Dependance; of which infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, is the natural and only adequate Object. We may apply to the whole of Devotion those Words of the Son of *Sirach*, *When you glorifie the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when you exalt him, put forth all your Strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough* †. Our most raised Affections of every Kind cannot but fall short and be disproportionate, when an infinite Being is the Object of them. This is  
the

\* Job ix. 11.

† Eccus. xliii 30.

SERM. the highest Exercise and Employment of  
 XIV. Mind, that a Creature is capable of. As this  
 ~ Divine Service and Worship is itself absolutely  
 due to God, so also is it necessary in order to a  
 further End, to keep alive upon our Minds  
 a Sense of his Authority, a Sense that in our  
 ordinary behaviour amongst Men we act under  
 him as our Governour and Judge.

T H U S you see the Temper of Mind re-  
 specting God, which is particularly suitable  
 to a State of Imperfection; to Creatures in a  
 Progress of Being towards somewhat further.

S U P P O S E now this something further at-  
 tained; that we were arrived at it: What a  
 Perception will it be, to see and know and  
 feel that our Trust was not vain, our Depen-  
 dance not groundless? That the Issue, Event,  
 and Consummation came out such as fully  
 to justify and answer that Resignation? If  
 the obscure View of the divine Perfection,  
 which we have in this World, ought in just  
 consequence to beget an intire Resignation;  
 what will this Resignation be exalted into,  
 when *we shall see Face to Face, and know as  
 we are known?* If we cannot form any dis-  
 tinct Notion of that Perfection of the Love  
 of God, which *casts out all Fear*; of that En-  
 joyment of him, which will be the Happiness  
 of

of good Men hereafter ; the Consideration of our Wants and Capacities of Happiness, and that He will be an adequate Supply to them, must serve us instead of such distinct Conception of the particular Happiness itself.

SERM.  
XIV.



LET us then suppose a Man intirely disengaged from Business and Pleasure, sitting down alone and at leisure, to reflect upon himself and his own Condition of Being. He would immediately feel that he was by no Means compleat of himself, but totally insufficient for his own Happiness. One may venture to affirm that every Man hath felt this, whether he hath again reflected upon it or not. It is feeling this Deficiency, that they are unsatisfied with themselves, which makes Men look out for Assistance from abroad ; and which has given Rise to various Kinds of Amusements, altogether needless any otherwise than as they serve to fill up the Blank Spaces of Time, and so hinder their feeling this Deficiency, and being uneasy with Themselves. Now, if these external Things we take up with, were really an adequate Supply to this Deficiency of Humane Nature, if by their Means our Capacities and Desires were all satisfied and filled up ; then it might be truly said, that we had found out the pro-  
per

SERM. per Happiness of Man ; and so might sit down  
 XIV. satisfied, and be at Rest in the Enjoyment of  
 ~~~~~ it. But if it appears, that the Amusements,  
 which Men usually pass their Time in, are so
 far from coming up to, or answering our
 Notions and Desires of Happiness, or Good,
 that they are really no more than what they
 are commonly called, somewhat to pass away
 the Time ; *i. e.* somewhat which serves to
 turn us aside from, and prevent our attending
 to this our internal Poverty and Want ; if
 they serve only, or chiefly, to suspend, in-
 stead of satisfying our Conceptions and De-
 sires of Happiness ; if the Want remains,
 and we have found out little more than barely
 the Means of making it less sensible ; then
 are we still to seek for somewhat to be an
 adequate Supply to it. It is plain that there
 is a Capacity in the Nature of Man, which
 neither Riches, nor Honours, nor sensual
 Gratifications, nor any Thing in this World
 can perfectly fill up, or satisfy : There is a
 deeper and more essential Want, than any
 of these Things can be the Supply of. Yet
 surely there is a Possibility of Somewhat,
 which may fill up all our Capacities of Hap-
 piness ; Somewhat, in which our Souls may
 find Rest ; Somewhat, which may be to us
 that



that satisfactory Good we are inquiring after. But it cannot be any Thing which is valuable only as it tends to some further End. Those therefore who have got this World so much into their Hearts, as not to be able to consider Happiness as consisting in any Thing but Property and Possessions, which are only valuable as the Means to somewhat else, cannot have the least Glimpse of the Subject before us; which is the End, not the Means; the Thing itself, not somewhat in order to it. But if you can lay aside that general, confused, undeterminate Notion of Happiness, as consisting in such Possessions; and fix in your Thoughts, that it really can consist in nothing but in a Faculty's having its proper Object; you will clearly see, that in the coolest Way of Consideration, without either the Heat of fanciful Enthusiasm, or the Warmth of real Devotion, nothing is more certain, than that an infinite Being may Himself be, if He pleases, the Supply to all the Capacities of our Nature. All the common Enjoyments of Life are from the Faculties He hath endued us with, and the Objects He hath made suitable to them. He may Himself be to us infinitely more than all these: He may be to us all that we want.

U

As

SERM. As our Understanding can contemplate itself,
 XIV. and our Affections be exercised upon them-
 selves by Reflection, so may each be employed in the same Manner upon any other Mind: And since the Supream Mind, the Author and Cause of all Things, is the highest possible Object to Himself, He may be an adequate Supply to all the Faculties of our Souls; a Subject to our Understanding, and an Object to our Affections.

C O N S I D E R then: When we shall have put off this mortal Body, when we shall be divested of sensual Appetites, and those Possessions which are now the Means of Gratification shall be of no Avail; when this restless Scene of Business and vain Pleasures, which now diverts us from ourselves, shall be all over; We, our proper Self, shall still remain: We shall still continue the same Creatures we are, with Wants to be supplied, and Capacities of Happiness. We must have Faculties of Perception, though not sensitive ones; and Pleasure or Uneasiness from our Perceptions, as now we have.

T H E R E are certain Ideas, which we express by the Words, Order, Harmony, Proportion, Beauty, the furthest removed from any thing sensual. Now what is there in
 those

those intellectual Images, Forms, or Ideas, which begets that Approbation, Love, Delight, and even Rapture, which is seen in some Persons Faces upon having those Objects present to their Minds?—“ Mere Enthusiasm !” —Be it what it will : There are Objects, Works of Nature and of Art, which all Mankind have Delight from, quite distinct from their affording Gratification to sensual Appetites ; and from quite another View of them, than as being for their Interest and further Advantage. The Faculties from which we are capable of these Pleasures, and the Pleasures themselves, are as natural, and as much to be accounted for, as any sensual Appetite whatever, and the Pleasure from its Gratification. Words to be sure are wanting upon this Subject : To say, that every Thing of Grace and Beauty throughout the whole of Nature, every Thing excellent and amiable shared in differently lower Degrees by the whole Creation, meet in the Author and Cause of all Things ; this is an inadequate, and perhaps improper Way of speaking of the Divine Nature : But 'tis manifest that absolute Rectitude, the Perfection of Being, must be in all Senses, and in every Respect the highest Object to the Mind.

SERM.
XIV.

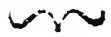
IN this World it is only the Effects of Wisdom and Power and Greatness, which we discern: It is not impossible, that hereafter the Qualities Themselves in the Supream Being may be the immediate Object of Contemplation. What amazing Wonders are opened to View by late Improvements! What an Object is the Universe to a Creature, if there be a Creature who can comprehend its System! But it must be an infinitely higher Exercise of the Understanding, to view the Scheme of it in that Mind, which projected it, before its Foundations were laid. And surely we have Meaning to the Words, when we speak of going further; and viewing, not only this System in His Mind, but the Wisdom and Intelligence itself from whence it proceeded. The same may be said of Power. But since Wisdom and Power are not God, He is a wise, a powerful Being; the Divine Nature may therefore be a further Object to the Understanding. It is nothing to observe that our Senses give us but an imperfect Knowledge of Things: Effects themselves, if we knew them thoroughly, would give us but imperfect Notions of Wisdom and Power; much less of his Being, in whom they reside. I am not speaking of any fanciful

ciful

ciful Notion of seeing all Things in God ;
but only representing to you, how much an
higher Object to the Understanding an infi-
nite Being himself is, than the Things which
He has made : And this is no more than say-
ing, that the Creator is superiour to the Works
of his Hands.

SERM.

XIV.



THIS may be illustrated by a low Ex-
ample. Suppose a Machine, the Sight of
which would raise, and Discoveries in its
Contrivance gratify, our Curiosity: the real
Delight, in this Case, would arise from its
being the Effect of Skill and Contrivance.
This Skill in the Mind of the Artificer would
be an higher Object, if we had any Senses
or Ways to discern it. For, observe, the Con-
templation of that Principle, Faculty or
Power which produced any Effect, must be an
higher Exercise of the Understanding, than
the Contemplation of the Effect itself. The
Cause must be an higher Object to the Mind
than the Effect.

BUT whoever considers distinctly what the
Delight of Knowledge is, will see Reason
to be satisfied that it cannot be the chief
Good of Man: All this, as it is applicable,
so it was mentioned with Regard to the At-
tribute of Goodness. I say, Goodness. Our

SERM. Being and all our Enjoyments are the Effects
 XIV. of it : Just Men bear its Resemblance : But
 ~ how little do we know of the Original, of
 what it is in itself? Recall what was before
 observed concerning the Affection to moral
 Characters; which, in how low a Degree
 soever, yet is plainly natural to Man, and
 the most excellent Part of his Nature : Sup-
 pose this improved, as it may be improved,
 to any Degree whatever, in the *Spirits of*
just Men made perfect ; and then suppose that
 they had a real View of that *Righteousness,*
which is an everlasting Righteousness ; of
 the Conformity of the Divine Will to the
Law of Truth, in which the moral Attri-
 butes of God consist ; of that Goodness in
 the Sovereign Mind, which gave Birth to
 the Universe : Add, what will be true of all
 good Men hereafter, a Consciousness of hav-
 ing an Interest in what they are contem-
 plating ; Suppose them able to say, *This God*
is our God for ever and ever : Would then
 be any longer to seek for what was their
 chief Happiness, their final Good? Could
 the utmost Stretch of their Capacities look
 further? Would not infinite perfect Good-
 ness be their very End, the last End and
 Object of their Affections ; beyond which they
 could

could neither have, nor desire ; beyond which they could not form a Wish or Thought? SERM.
XIV.

CONSIDER wherein that Presence of a Friend consists, which has often so strong an Effect, as wholly to possess the Mind, and intirely suspend all other Affections and Regards ; and which itself affords the highest Satisfaction and Enjoyment. He is within Reach of the Senses. Now, as our Capacities of Perception improve, we shall have, perhaps by some Faculty intirely new, a Perception of God's Presence with us in a nearer and stricter Way ; since it is certain He is more intimately present with us than any Thing else can be. Proof of the Existence and Presence of any Being is quite different from the immediate Perception, the Consciouness of it. What then will be the Joy of Heart, which His Presence, and *the Light of His Countenance*, who is the Life of the Universe, will inspire good Men with, when they shall have a Sensation, that He is the Sustainer of their Being, that they exist in him ; when they shall feel his Influence to cheer and enliven and support their Frame, in a Manner of which we have now no Conception ? He will be in a literal Sense *their Strength and their Portion for ever.*

SERM.
XIV.

W H E N we speak of Things so much above our Comprehension, as the Employment and Happiness of a future State, doubtless it behoves us to speak with all Modesty and Distrust of ourselves. But the Scripture represents the Happiness of that State under the Notions of *seeing God, seeing him as He is, knowing as we are known, and seeing Face to Face*. These Words are not general or undetermined, but express a particular determinate Happiness. And I will be bold to say, that nothing can account for, or come up to these Expressions, but only this, that God himself will be an Object to our Faculties, that He Himself will be our Happiness; as distinguished from the Enjoyments of the present State, which seem to arise, not immediately from Him, but from the Objects He has adapted to give us Delight.

T O conclude: Let us suppose a Person tired with Care and Sorrow and the Repetition of vain Delights which fill up the Round of Life; sensible that every Thing here below in its best Estate is altogether Vanity. Suppose him to feel that Deficiency of Humane Nature, before taken Notice of; and to be convinced that God alone was the adequate Supply

ply to it. What could be more applicable to a good Man, in this State of Mind ; or better exprefs his present Wants and distant Hopes, his Passage through this World as a Progress towards a State of Perfection, than the following Passages in the Devotions of the Royal Prophet? They are plainly in an higher and more proper Sense applicable to This, than they could be to any Thing else.

I have seen an End of all Perfection. Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire in Comparison of Thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth: but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever. Like as the Hart desireth the Water-Brooks, so longeth my Soul after Thee, O God. My Soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before Him? How excellent is thy Loving Kindness, O God! and the Children of Men shall put their Trust under the Shadow of thy Wings. They shall be satisfied with the Plenteousness of thy House: And thou shalt give them Drink of thy Pleasures, as out of the River. For with thee is the Well of Life: And in thy Light shall we see Light. Blessed is the Man whom thou chooseth, and receivest unto Thee:

SERM.
XIV.



SERM. Thee : he shall dwell in thy Court, and shall
XIV. be satisfied with the Pleasures of thy House, even
~ of thy holy Temple. Blessed is the People, O
Lord, that can rejoice in Thee : they shall walk
in the Light of thy Countenance. Their De-
light shall be daily in thy Name, and in thy
Righteousness shall they make their Boast. For
thou art the Glory of their Strength : and in thy
Loving-kindness They shall be exalted. As for
me, I will behold thy Presence in Righteousness :
and when I awake up after thy Likeness, I shall
be satisfied with it. Thou shalt shew me the
Path of Life ; in thy Presence is the Fulness of
Joy, and at thy right hand there is Pleasure for
evermore.

SERMON XV.

Upon the Ignorance of Man.

ECCLES. viii. 16, 17.

When I applied mine Heart to know Wisdom, and to see the Business that is done upon the Earth: Then I beheld all the Work of God, that a Man cannot find out the Work that is done under the Sun: Because though a Man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further, though a wise Man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

THE Writings of *Solomon* are very SERM.
much taken up with Reflections up- XV.
on Humane Nature, and Humane ~
Life; to which he hath added, in this Book,
Reflections upon the Constitution of Things.
And it is not improbable, that the little Sa-
tisfaction, and the great Difficulties he met
with

SERM. with in his Researches into the general Con-
 XV. stitution of Nature, might be the Occasion
 of his confining himself, so much as he hath
 done, to Life and Conduct. However, upon
 that joint Review he expresses great Ignorance
 of the Works of God, and the Method of his
 Providence in the Government of the World;
 great Labour and Weariness in the Search
 and Observation he had employed himself
 about; and great Disappointment, Pain, and
 even Vexation of Mind, upon that which he
 had remarked of the Appearances of Things,
 and of what was going forward upon this
 Earth. This whole Review and Inspection,
 and the Result of it, Sorrow, Perplexity,
 a Sense of his necessary Ignorance, suggests
 various Reflections to his Mind. But, notwithstanding
 all this Ignorance and Dissatisfaction, there
 is somewhat upon which he assuredly rests
 and depends; somewhat, which is the Conclusion
 of the whole Matter, and the only Concern
 of Man. Following this his Method and
 Train of Reflection, let us consider,

I. T H E Assertion of the Text, the Ignorance
 of Man; that the wisest and most knowing
 cannot comprehend the Ways and Works
 of God: And then,

II. W H A T

II. **W H A T** are the just Consequences of this Observation and Knowledge of our own Ignorance, and the Reflection which it leads us to. SERM.
XV.

I. **T H E** wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the Works of God, the Methods and Designs of his Providence in the Creation and Government of the World.

C R E A T I O N is absolutely and intirely out of our Debth, and beyond the Extent of our utmost Reach. And yet it is as certain that God made the World, as it is certain that Effects must have a Cause. It is indeed in general no more than Effects, that the most knowing are acquainted with: For as to Causes, they are as intirely in the Dark as the most Ignorant. What are the Laws by which Matter acts upon Matter, but certain Effects; which some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general Rules? The real Nature and Effence of Beings likewise is what we are altogether ignorant of. All these Things are so intirely out of our Reach, that we have not the least Glimpse of them. And we know little more of ourselves, than we do of the World about us: How we were made, how our Being is continued and preserved, what the Faculties

SERM. Faculties of our Minds are, and upon what
 XV. the Power of exercising them depends. *I am
 ~~~~~ fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvel-  
 lous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth  
 right well.* Our own Nature and the Ob-  
 jects we are surrounded with, serve to raise  
 our Curiosity; but we are quite out of a  
 Condition of satisfying it. Every Secret  
 which is disclosed, every Discovery which is  
 made, every new Effect which is brought to  
 View, serves to convince us of numberless  
 more which remain concealed, and which  
 we had before no Suspicion of. And what  
 if we were acquainted with the whole Crea-  
 tion, in the same Way and as thoroughly  
 as we are with any single Object of it? What  
 would all this natural Knowledge amount  
 to? It must be a low Curiosity indeed which  
 such superficial Knowledge could satisfy. On  
 the contrary, would it not serve to convince  
 us of our Ignorance still; and to raise our  
 Desire of knowing the Nature of Things  
 themselves, the Author, the Cause, and the  
 End of them?

As to the Government of the World:  
 Though from Consideration of the final  
 Causes which come within our Knowledge;  
 of Characters, personal Merit and Demerit;  
 of

## *the Ignorance of Man.*

303

SERM.

XV.

of the Favour and Disapprobation, which respectively are due and belong to the Righteous and the Wicked, and which therefore must necessarily be in a Mind which sees Things as they really are; though, I say, from hence we may know somewhat concerning the Designs of Providence in the Government of the World, enough to enforce upon us Religion and the Practice of Virtue: Yet, since the Monarchy of the Universe is a Dominion unlimited in Extent, and everlasting in Duration; the general System of it must necessarily be quite beyond our Comprehension. And, since there appears such a Subordination and Reference of the several Parts to each other, as to constitute it properly one Administration or Government; we cannot have a thorough Knowledge of any Part, without knowing the Whole. This surely should convince us, that we are much less competent Judges of the very small Part which comes under our Notice in this World, than we are apt to imagine. *No Heart can think upon these Things worthily: And who is able to conceive his Way? It is a Tempest which no Man can see: For the most Part of his Works are hid. Who can declare the Works of*

SERM. of his Justice? for his Covenant is afar  
 XV. off, and the Trial of all Things is in the  
 ~~~~~ End: i. e. The Dealings of God with the  
 Children of Men are not yet compleated,
 and cannot be judged of by that Part
 which is before us. So that a Man cannot
 say, This is worse than that: For in Time
 they shall be well approved. Thy Faithful-
 ness, O Lord, reacheth unto the Clouds:
 Thy Righteousness standeth like the strong
 Mountains: Thy Judgments are like the
 great Deep. He hath made every Thing
 beautiful in his Time: Also he hath set the
 World in their Heart; so that no Man can
 find out the Work that God maketh from
 the Beginning to the End. And thus St
 Paul concludes a long Argument upon the
 various Dispensations of Providence: O the
 Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom
 and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable
 are his Judgments, and his Ways past find-
 ing out! For who hath known the Mind of
 the Lord?

T H U S the Scheme of Providence, the
 Ways and Works of God, are too vast,
 of too large Extent for our Capacities.
 There is, as I may speak, such an Expanse
 of Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, in
 the

the Formation and Government of the World, as is too much for us to take in or comprehend. Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, are manifest to us in all those Works of God, which come within our View: But there are likewise infinite Stores of each poured forth throughout the Imensity of the Creation; no Part of which can be thoroughly understood, without taking in its Reference and Respect to the whole: And this is what we have not Faculties for.

SERM.

XV.



AND as the Works of God, and his Scheme of Government, are above our Capacities thoroughly to comprehend: So there possibly may be Reasons which originally made it fit that many Things should be concealed from us, which we have perhaps natural Capacities of understanding; many Things concerning the Designs, Methods and Ends of Divine Providence in the Government of the World. There is no Manner of Absurdity in supposing a Veil on Purpose drawn over some Scenes of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, the Sight of which might some Way or other strike us too strongly; or that better Ends are designed and served by their being concealed, than could be by

X

their

SERM. their being exposed to our Knowledge. The
 XV. Almighty may cast Clouds and Darknes
 ~~~~~ round about him, for Reasons and Purposes  
 of which we have not the least Glimpse or  
 Conception.

H O W E V E R, it is surely reasonable, and what might have been expected, that Creatures in some Stage of their Being, suppose in the Infancy of it, should be placed in a State of Discipline and Improvement, where their Patience and Submission is to be tried by Afflictions, where Temptations are to be resisted, and Difficulties gone through in the Discharge of their Duty. Now if the greatest Pleasures and Pains of the present Life may be overcome and suspended, as they manifestly may, by Hope and Fear, and other Passions and Affections; then the Evidence of Religion, and the Sense of the Consequences of Virtue and Vice, might have been such, as intirely in all Cases to prevail over those Afflictions, Difficulties and Temptations; prevail over them so, as to render them absolutely none at all. But the very Notion itself now mentioned, of a State of Discipline and Improvement, necessarily excludes such sensible Evidence and Conviction of Religion, and of the Consequences

*the Ignorance of Man.*

307

SERM.  
XV.



quences of Virtue and Vice. Religion consists in Submission and Resignation to the Divine Will. Our Condition in this World is a School of Exercise for this Temper: And our Ignorance, the Shallowness of our Reason, the Temptations, Difficulties, Afflictions, which we are exposed to, all equally contribute to make it so. The general Observation may be carried on; and whoever will attend to the Thing will plainly see, that less sensible Evidence, with less Difficulty in Practice, is the same, as more sensible Evidence, with greater Difficulty in Practice. Therefore Difficulties in Speculation as much come into the Notion of a State of Discipline, as Difficulties in Practice: And so the same Reason or Account is to be given of both. Thus, though it is indeed absurd to talk of the greater Merit of Assent, upon little or no Evidence, than upon Demonstration; yet the strict Discharge of our Duty, with less sensible Evidence, does imply in it a better Character, than the same Diligence in the Discharge of it upon more sensible Evidence. This fully accounts for and explains that Assertion of our Saviour, \* *Bles-*

X 2

*sed.*

\* Joh. xx. 29.

SERM. *sed are they that have not seen, and yet have*  
 XV. *believed*; have become Cliristians and obeyed  
 the Gospel, upon less sensible Evidence, than  
 that which *Thomas*, to whom he is speaking,  
 insisted upon.

BUT after all, the same Account is to be given, why we were placed in these Circumstances of Ignorance, as why Nature has not furnished us with Wings; namely, that we were designed to be Inhabitants of this Earth. I am afraid we think too highly of ourselves; of our Rank in the Creation, and of what is due to us. What Sphere of Action, what Business is assigned to Man, that he has not Capacities and Knowledge fully equal to? It is manifest he has Reason, and Knowledge, and Faculties superior to the Business of the present World: Faculties which appear superfluous, if we do not take in the Respect which they have to somewhat further, and beyond it. If to acquire Knowledge were our proper End, we should indeed be but poorly provided: But if somewhat else be our Business and Duty, we may, notwithstanding our Ignorance, be well enough furnished for it; and the Observation of our Ignorance  
 may



## *the Ignorance of Man.*

309

SERM.  
XV.

may be of Assistance to us in the Discharge of it.

II. LET us then consider, what are the Consequences of this Knowledge and Observation of our own Ignorance, and the Reflection it leads to.

*First*, We may learn from it, with what Temper of Mind a Man ought to enquire into the Subject of Religion; namely, with Expectation of finding Difficulties, and with a Disposition to take up and rest satisfied with any Evidence whatever, which is real.

HE should before-hand expect Things mysterious, and such as he will not be able thoroughly to comprehend, or go to the Bottom of. To expect a distinct comprehensive View of the whole Subject, clear of Difficulties and Objections, is to forget our Nature and Condition; neither of which admit of such Knowledge, with Respect to any Science whatever. And to enquire with this Expectation, is not to enquire as a Man, but as one of another Order of Creatures.

DUE Sense of the general Ignorance of Man would also beget in us a Disposition to take up and rest satisfied with any Evidence whatever, which is real. I mention this as the contrary to a Disposition, of which there

SERM. are not wanting Instances, to find Fault with  
 XV. and reject Evidence, because it is not such as  
 was desired. If a Man were to walk by Twi-  
 light, must he not follow his Eyes as much  
 as if it were broad Day and clear Sunshine?  
 Or if he were obliged to take a Journey by  
 Night, would he not *give heed to any Light  
 shining in the Darknes, till the Day should  
 break and the Day-Star arise?* It would not  
 be altogether unnatural for him to reflect how  
 much better it were to have Day-light; he  
 might perhaps have great Curiosity to see the  
 Country round about him; he might lament  
 that the Darknes concealed many extended  
 Prospects from his Eyes, and wish for the Sun  
 to draw away the Veil: But how ridiculous  
 would it be, to reject with Scorn and Dis-  
 dain the Guidance and Direction which that  
 lesser Light might afford him, because it was  
 not the Sun itself; If the Make and Consti-  
 tution of Man, the Circumstances he is placed  
 in, or the Reason of Things affords the  
 least Hint or Intimation, that Virtue is the  
 Law he is born under; Scepticism itself  
 should lead him to the most strict and inviola-  
 ble Practice of it; that he may not make the  
 dreadful Experiment, of leaving the Course  
 of Life marked out for him by Nature, what-  
 ever

*the Ignorance of Man.*

311

ever that Nature be, and entering Paths of his own, of which he can know neither the Dangers nor the End. For though no Danger be seen, yet Darknefs, Ignorance and Blindnefs are no Manner of Security.

SERM.

XV.



*Secondly,* OUR Ignorance is the proper Answer to many Things, which are called Objections against Religion; particularly, to those which arise from the Appearances of Evil and Irregularity in the Constitution of Nature and the Government of the World. In all other Cases 'tis thought necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the Scheme, even one of so narrow a Compass as those which are formed by Men, in order to judge of the Goodness or Badness of it: And the most slight and superficial View of any Humane Contrivance comes abundantly nearer to a thorough Knowledge of it, than that Part, which we know of the Government of the World, does to the general Scheme and System of it; to the whole Set of Laws by which it is governed. From our Ignorance of the Constitution of Things, and the Scheme of Providence in the Government of the World; from the Reference the several Parts have to each other, and to the Whole; and from our not being able to

SERM. see the End and the Whole ; it follows, that  
 XV. however perfect Things are, they must even  
 necessarily appear to us otherwise, less perfect  
 than they are \*.

*Thirdly,*

\* Suppose some very *complicated Piece of Work*, some *System* or *Constitution*, formed for some *general End*, to which each of the *Parts* had a *Reference*. The Perfection or justness of this Work or Constitution would consist in the Reference and Respect, which the several Parts have to the general Design. This Reference of Parts to the general Design may be infinitely various, both in Degree and Kind. Thus one Part may only contribute and be subservient to another ; this to a Third ; and so on through a long Series, the last Part of which alone may contribute immediately and directly to the general Design. Or a Part may have this distant Reference to the general Design, and may also contribute immediately to it. For Instance : If the general Design or End, for which the complicated Frame of Nature was brought into Being, is Happiness ; whatever affords present Satisfaction, and likewise tends to carry on the Course of Things, hath this double Respect to the general Design. Now suppose a Spectator of that Work or Constitution was in a great Measure ignorant of such various Reference to the general End, whatever that End be ; and that, upon a very slight and partial View which we had of the Work, several Things appeared to his Eye as disproportionate and wrong ; others, just and beautiful : What would He gather from these Appearances ? He would immediately conclude there was a Probability, if he could see the whole Reference of the Parts appearing wrong to the general Design, that this would destroy the Appearance of Wrongness and Disproportion : But there is no Probability, that the Reference would destroy the particular right Appearances, though that Reference might shew the Thing already appearing just, to be so likewise in an higher Degree or another Manner. There is a Probability, that the right Appearances were intended : There

## *The Ignorance of Man.*

313

*Thirdly,* SINCE the Constitution of Nature, and the Methods and Designs of Providence in the Government of the World, are above our Comprehension, we should acquiesce in, and rest satisfied with, our Ignorance, turn our Thoughts from that which is above and beyond us, and apply ourselves to that which is level to our Capacities, and which is our real Business and Concern. Knowledge is not our proper Happiness. Whoever will in the least attend to the Thing will see, that 'tis the Gaining, not the Having of it, which is the Entertainment of the Mind. Indeed, if the proper Happiness of Man consisted in Knowledge considered as a Possession or Treasure, Men who are possessed of the largest Share would have a very ill Time of it; as they would be infinitely more sensible than others, of their Poverty in this Respect. Thus *He who increases Knowledge would eminently increase Sorrow.*

Men

SERM.


XV.



is no Probability, that the wrong Appearances were. We cannot suspect Irregularity and Disorder to be designed. The Pillars of a Building appear beautiful; but their being likewise its Support does not destroy that Beauty: There still remains a Reason to believe that the Architect intended the beautiful Appearance, after we have found out the Reference, Support. It would be reasonable for a Man of himself to think thus, upon the first Piece of Architecture he ever saw.

SERM. Men of deep Research and curious Inquiry  
 XV. should just be put in Mind, not to mistake  
 ~~~~~ what they are doing. If their Discoveries  
 serve the Cause of Virtue and Religion, in
 the way of Proof, Motive to Practice, or
 Assistance in it; or if they tend to render
 Life less unhappy, and promote its Satisfacti-
 ons; then they are most usefully employed:
 But bringing Things to Light, alone and of it-
 self, is of no manner of Use, any otherwise
 than as an Entertainment or Diversion. Nei-
 ther is this at all amiss, if it does not take up
 the Time which should be employed in bet-
 ter Works. But it is evident that there is ano-
 ther Mark set up for us to aim at; another
 End appointed us to direct our Lives to: An
 End, which the most Knowing may fail of,
 and the most Ignorant arrive at. *The secret
 Things belong unto the Lord our God; but
 those Things which are revealed belong unto us,
 and to our Children for ever, that we
 may do all the Words of this Law.* Which
 Reflection of *Moses*, put in general Terms, is,
 that the only Knowledge, which is of any
 Avail to us, is that which teaches us our
 Duty, or assists us in the Discharge of it. The
 Oeconomy of the Universe, the Course of
 Nature, Almighty Power exerted in the Cre-
 ation

the Ignorance of Man. 315

ation and Government in the World, is out SERM.
of our Reach. What would be the Confe- XV.
quence, if we could really get an Inſight into 
theſe Things, is very uncertain; whether it
would aſſiſt us in, or divert us from what we
have to do in this preſent State. If then there
be a Sphere of Knowledge, of Contemplation
and Employment, level to our Capacities,
and of the utmoſt Importance to us; we
ought ſurely to apply ourſelves with all Dili-
gence to This our proper Buſineſs, and eſteem
every Thing elſe nothing, nothing as to us,
in Compariſon of it. Thus *Job*, diſcourſing
of natural Knowledge, how much it is above
us, and of Wiſdom in general, ſays, *God un-
derſtandeth the Way thereof, and He know-
eth the Place thereof. And unto Man He
ſaid, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is
Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil is Under-
ſtanding,* Other Orders of Creatures may
perhaps be let into the ſecret Counſels of
Heaven; and have the Deſigns and Methods
of Providence, in the Creation and Govern-
ment of the World, communicated to them:
But this does not belong to our Rank or Con-
dition. *The Fear of the Lord, and to de-
part from Evil,* is the only Wiſdom which
Man ſhould aſpire after, as His Work and
Buſineſs.

SERM. Business. The same is said, and with the same
 XV. Connexion and Context, in the Conclusion
 of the Book of *Ecclesiastes*. Our Ignorance, and the little we can know of other Things, affords a Reason why we should not perplex ourselves about them: But no Way invalidates that which is the *Conclusion of the whole Matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Concern of Man*. So that *Socrates* was not the first who endeavoured to draw Men off from labouring after, and laying Stress upon other Knowledge, in Comparison of that which related to Morals. Our Province is Virtue and Religion, Life and Manners; the Science of improving the Temper, and making the Heart better. This is the Field assigned us to cultivate: How much it has lain neglected is indeed astonishing. Virtue is demonstrably the Happiness of Man: It consists in good Actions, proceeding from a good Principle, Temper, or Heart. Overt-acts are intirely in our Power. What remains is, that we learn to *keep our Heart*; to govern and regulate our Passions, Mind, Affections: That so we may be free from the Impotencies of Fear, Envy, Malice, Covetousness, Ambition; that we may be clear of these, considered

ed as Vices seated in the Heart, considered as SERM. constituting a general wrong Temper ; from XV. which general wrong Frame of Mind, all the mistaken Pursuits, and far the greatest Part of the Unhappiness of Life, proceed. He, who should find out one Rule to assist us in this Work, would deserve infinitely better of Mankind, than all the Improvers of other Knowledge put together.

Lastly, LET us adore that infinite Wisdom and Power and Goodness, which is above our Comprehension. To whom hath the Root of Wisdom been revealed? Or who hath known her wise Counsels? There is one wise and greatly to be feared; the Lord sitting upon his Throne. He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his Works. If it be thought a considerable Thing, to be acquainted with a few, a very few, of the Effects of infinite Power and Wisdom; the Situation, Bigness, and Revolution of some of the heavenly Bodies; what Sentiments should our Minds be filled with concerning Him, who appointed to each its Place and Measure and Sphere of Motion, all which are kept with the most uniform Constancy? Who stretched out the Heavens, and telleth the Number of the Stars,

SERM. *Stars, and calleth them all by their Names.*

XV. *Who laid the Foundations of the Earth, who, comprehendeth the Dust of it in a Measure and weigheth the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance. And, when we have recounted all the Appearances which come within our View, he must add, Lo, these are Part of his Ways; but how little a Portion is heard of Him? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is as high as Heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than Hell; what canst thou know?*

THE Conclusion is, that in all Lowliness of Mind we set lightly by Ourselves: That we form our Temper to an implicit Submission to the Divine Majesty; beget within ourselves an absolute Resignation to all the Methods of his Providence, in his Dealings with the Children of Men: That, in the deepest Humility of our Souls, we prostrate ourselves before Him, and join in that celestial Song; *Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints! Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name?*

SIX SERMONS

PREACHED UPON

PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

SERM. I. Preached before the Society for
Propagating the Gospel.

MATTH. xxiv. 14.

*And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be
preached in all the World, for a Witness
unto all Nations.* Page 1

SERM. II. Preached before the Lord
Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs, and the
Governors of the several Hospitals of the
City of *London*.

PROV. xxii. 2.

*The Rich and Poor meet together : the Lord
is the maker of them all.* 27

SERM. III. Preached before the House
of Lords, *Jan. 30, 1740-41.*

I P E T.

I P E T. ii. 16.

And not using your Liberty for a Cloke of Maliciousness, but as the Servants of God. 55

S E R M. IV. Preached at the Annual Meeting of the Charity Children at *Christ-Church*.

P R O V. xxii. 6.

Train up a Child in the Way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. 85

S E R M. V. Preached before the House of Lords, on the Anniversary of his Majesty's Accession to the Throne.

I T I M. ii. 1, 2.

I exhort, that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men: For Kings, and for all that are in Authority: that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty 115

S E R M. VI. Preached before the Governors of the London Infirmary.

I P E T. iv. 8.

And above all Things have fervent Charity among yourselves: For Charity shall cover the Multitude of Sins, 133

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 04667 495 6

